

SECRET

OFFICE OF THE ~~ATTORNEY GENERAL~~ **ATTORNEY GENERAL** DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

April 27, 1959

MEMO FOR Mr. Albert P. Toner
The White House

The attached items are submitted by the Department of Defense for possible inclusion in the daily summary for the President.

Items 1 through 4 have also been sent to Dr. Killian.


O. M. Gale
Special Assistant

Attachments

4 items

SECRET

SecDes Cont. No. S-622

WHEN WITH ATTACHMENTS

5:30 p

Handwritten notes:
88
no name
1 - [unclear]
[unclear] (AG...)
[unclear] re [unclear]
[unclear] [unclear]

Handwritten: 4/27

Mr. T -

4/27

see Item #4 - I handcarried the original to G late. (Didn't have the opportunity to get it thermofaxed for CHR in event you use it further).

See Items #1 and #2 - Took the liberty of preparing SSN on these since Goodpaster's office was still open, and one is for tomorrow (launching, that is).

Mrs. Hope will call first thing in morning re Item #2, whether E means EDT or EST. (over)

CHR:

4/27

See Mr. T's original Defense of 4/27 for Item #4 (I did not have the opportunity to get it thermofaxed since I was along - I carried the original to G; also with SSN made from Items #1 and #2.

sm

Also Mrs. Hope is to call first thing in morning and say whether E is EDT or EST - see Item #2 - AND WE SHOULD TELL ALICE.

I assumed EDT, but asked her to check for
sure. Alice should be notified as soon as
we know and our copy and VP copy clarified.

sm

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 27, 1959

To: General Goodpaster

From: A. P. Toner

Ref: Memo of 4/27 on DIS-
COVERER II

This is the full contents
from Defense.

Attachment

Orig. Item #4 of DOD 4/27/59.

(K. ref 8/3)

4. DISCOVERER II Recovery Capsule and Finale of Vehicle
~~(Secret)~~ (Reference Item 2, April 23, 1959 Report)

DISCOVERER II recovery capsule was approximately hemispherical in shape, 12 3/4 inches radius, 18 inches deep. It contained recovery equipment, life cell equipment and radiation film packs.

The life cell equipment included a magnesium container consisting of Air Conditioner, fan, oxygen system, telemetry transducers, small motors and life simulation thermo-couples. Weight of life cell was 15 pounds.

The recovery equipment included VHF Beacon, batteries, dye marker, flashing light and programmer to control beacon, flashing light and deployment of a 16 ft. parachute. Weight of recovery equipment was 45 pounds.

Several pounds of emulsion film packs were carried to measure cosmic radiation. The film packs require recovery with analysis under laboratory conditions.

If the Soviets should have recovered this capsule, none of the above would give them anything likely to be more advanced than their present knowledge. However, from such bits of evidence as the marks of the explosion made for separation of the capsule from the vehicle, and the explosion made by the retroactive rocket, from springs and from the accelerometer with a wire leading to the package that releases the parachute, they might be able to reconstruct our sophisticated system of ejection and, thus, increase their knowledge.

Project SPACE TRACK has reported that DISCOVERER II,, the vehicle itself, is no longer in orbit with probable "burn-in" early on turn 206 prior to 1140 EST on April 26, 1959. Observational data was solid through turn 203, including a South Pole Station sighting. Period on last observed turn was 87.6 minutes, considered to be very close to critical point with further reduction in period resulting in heating to ignition level and consequent destruction. Conclusion that DISCOVERER II was definitely down was reached at 1140 EST on 26 April, when Millstone radar, well within range of orbit turn 206, failed to detect passage of the vehicle.

Handwritten: Part 1 Digest 8.10 plus + read in.
SSN # 276 538

Handwritten: (Also see Memo 8.4.127
encl. w/known information)

Handwritten: (Carbon destroyed 8/11/59)
(G. put d 8/3/59)

Handwritten: (note: this item was at
specific request 4/21 to
Galt by [unclear] - may
E. phone to APT on 4/25
P. [unclear])
DoD 4-27-59

~~Reference to Defense reports~~

DISCOVERER. ~~Reference to Defense reports~~ Defense reports that the only part of the DISCOVERER II capsule that would be particularly useful to the Soviets is the sophisticated ejection system which we believe to be superior to any system that they possess. We believe that the Soviets have instruments similar to the remainder of those contained in the capsule (eg., a horizon scanner for stabilizing the capsule; a film pack for measuring accumulated radiation). They ~~would be able to deduce~~ ^{would} from ~~the capsule~~ ^{instruments in} the capsule the radio frequency on which information was transmitted, but we ~~can~~, of course, ^{will use a different} ~~change~~ frequencies in ~~the~~ future tests.

~~Defense~~ Defense now believes that it was a mistake to include an automatic ejector in the capsule and ~~that~~ next time the ~~right~~ ejector will only function if the satellite is on exact schedule; ~~the~~ ^{an} ejection will not occur if the satellite is off course.

(Note: Above information via phone from Gale to Russell 4/27/59 - per Maj. Eisenhower's request to APT for info. on 4/25/59 (Saturday) for the P. written report from Defense will follow.)

~~SECRET~~

Confirmed
or written
Report 4/27/59
Rec'd DOD
4/27/59
File
Defense
1-9

Handwritten initials

Handwritten initials