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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 30, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
(Wednesday, 28 September 1960 at 9:15 a. m.)

Present: General Goodpaster
Mr. Gray



I indicated to the President that the subject was the launching of the first SAMOS satellite now scheduled for October 4. I pointed out to him that the OCB has spent many hours discussing the problems associated with this launching and felt that the matter was of sufficient importance to warrant Presidential attention and decision.

I indicated that as to the large problems, the members of the OCB were in agreement except as to the one which involved the question of whether a conscious effort should be made to delay the launching now scheduled for October 4. I said that there were some who felt quite strongly, and I counted myself among them, that the launching should be delayed. On the other hand other members of the Board felt quite strongly that there should be no contrived delay.

As to those in the latter grouping, they feel that because of the substantial number of people working on the project and because it has been proceeding on a high priority basis, including overtime and related measures, any contrived postponement would almost inevitably leak with adverse repercussions at home and abroad. Certainly it was felt that the President would be charged with not going ahead with an important national security program and it would be alleged that we had adjusted our own programs to Premier Khrushchev's threats.

As to those in the former group, they felt that because there had already been one slippage (from September 23 to October 4) the risks feared by the other group would be less than those involved with going ahead with the firing while Khrushchev and his "gang" were in New York in the focus of world attention. It is feared that substantial bodies of opinion would relate the timing of this shot to the May Day flight of the U-2.

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Authority <u>NLE 2010-58 #1</u>
By <u>MMK</u> NLDDE Date <u>5/31/11</u>

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The President wondered why there had to be any publicity at all and whether it could not be labeled as an EXPLORER VI or something of that sort. I pointed out to the President that the SAMOS project had had wide coverage in the press, usually billed as "a spy in the sky" and that there were too many people involved in the project to make the President's suggestion a workable one. He then asked why there needed to be any publicity at all and I pointed out to him that it was being recommended to him that there be no pre-launch publicity.

The President then recalled the Khrushchev statement in Paris to DeGaulle in the presence of the President and Prime Minister Macmillan that he did not care how many satellites were sent over the Soviet Union. I pointed out to the President that the fact that Khrushchev took this approach in Paris would not guarantee that he would take it in New York and especially if he chose to conduct a frontal assault on the reconnaissance satellite program. I acknowledged that there was no indication that he intended to conduct such an assault, and that at a press conference in recent days, when asked by a reporter about reconnaissance satellites Khrushchev replied that no way had been found to control outer space and there was no way to control reconnaissance satellites.

General Goodpaster then said that Secretary Herter had told him the British saw no objection to making public the Khrushchev comment in Paris, and in fact were inclined to think this should be done. He said also that during his discussion of the SAMOS matter with Secretary Herter in the last day or two in New York, Secretary Herter seemed not to have strong feelings one way or another about the timing of the launching of the first SAMOS.

I interjected to say that on the basis of my conversations with various people in the State Department the general view was that it was hoped that the launching might be delayed until after Khrushchev's departure but the State Department was unwilling to make such a request. General Goodpaster felt this was a good summary of Secretary Herter's attitude.

The President then said he thought we should proceed on schedule. I pointed out to the President that there were two bright spots for those of us who were concerned about the timing. One was that experience has demonstrated that whenever the OCB has spent a great deal of time on a prospective problem it normally turned out not to be a problem at all; second, I pointed out that although there was considerable pressure to meet the October 4 deadline, Government experience in the past had indicated that it was not unreasonable to expect slippage of any such

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project. I pointed out to the President that the vehicle to be used was the ATLAS AGENA which has never been reliably tested.

I then suggested the President read the attached paper reflecting the discussions of the members of the OCB and particularly from paragraph 2 to the end of the paper. He read it and said he agreed with the conclusions reached. He said, however, that he wished to make it clear that he wanted those concerned to follow the instructions with respect to what we publicly said and hoped that the publicity would be kept in low key.

I departed, leaving General Goodpaster with the President.



Gordon Gray
Special Assistant to the President

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DRAFT OCB MINUTE

The Operations Coordinating Board has discussed at great length the problems associated with launching the first SAMOS satellite and has agreed that the considerations involved are of sufficient national importance to warrant Presidential attention and decision.



The Board agreed to communicate the following to the President:

1. There is a division among the members of the Board as to whether the Defense Department should contrive technical reasons which would delay the launching of the first SAMOS satellite (now scheduled for October 4) until after Khrushchev's departure from the United States. The issue turns largely on an assessment of the relative political and public relations risks in postponing or proceeding on schedule.

Those who wish to proceed on schedule believe that a leak of the postponement is almost inevitable and that the repercussions could constitute an embarrassment both domestically and abroad which would outweigh the risks attendant upon proceeding on schedule.

Those who favor some delay believe that a firing while Khrushchev has the United Nations as a sounding board with the focus of world attention on New York entails the greater risk, bearing in mind the May 1st flight of the U-2 on the eve of the Paris Summit.

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2. Information on the first launching of a SAMOS satellite should emphasize that the launching is part of a research and development program intended to develop a global observation satellite capability. A major effort should be made to keep press treatment in as low key as possible.

3. Information about the satellite should be held to a minimum, with the explanation that such information is classified. No information other than the fact of launching should be released until it is known how the satellite has performed.

4. The Department of Defense should announce the launching of the first satellite. State and Defense should agree in advance on a list of questions and answers consonant with a decision to release a minimum amount of information about the program at this time.



5. Public information guidelines for the first satellite would not determine future handling of SAMOS launchings. After the first launching, a thorough analysis would be made of world-wide reaction, public and governmental. As soon as possible thereafter, the State and Defense Departments would prepare a report containing alternative policy recommendations as to whether the SAMOS satellite should be treated in a "closed fashion," i. e., as a straight intelligence operation, or in a more "open manner" aimed at facilitating world-wide acceptance of the continued use of observation satellites.

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6. Until the report mentioned above is completed and the policy considerations involved are decided, no information campaign should be launched in the United Nations, and no official statement should be made with reference to the future use of reconnaissance satellites or the disposition of the information obtained from such satellites.



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