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Assistant Secretary of Defense  
Washington 25, D.C.

March 19, 1954

Dear Dr. Dodge:

I am writing to you with respect to a broad, basic program in geophysical research, planned for the years 1957-58 by the National Academy of Sciences as the United States endeavor during the "International Geophysical Year." The Director of the National Science Foundation, Dr. Alan T. Waterman, has advised me that this program has been submitted, as a major basic research activity, to the National Science Foundation, which in turn is transmitting the program and budget to you for your consideration.

From a scientific point of view the Department of Defense has definite interest in certain elements in the program. There is no doubt that the results of a coordinated world-wide effort in the main fields of atmospheric physics can be expected to yield basic information not only of general technical value but of value to our national defense problems. Of particular importance to us would be basic information relevant to radio and weather predictions and the properties of the upper atmosphere. Advances in these fields require investigation of several phenomena including the ionosphere, aurora, geomagnetism, solar activity, cosmic rays, and atmospheric winds. Many of these observations can be obtained only by the rocket probing capability developed by the Department of Defense.

Up to the present time our examination of the IGY plans has been based upon the provisional IGY program, dated January 1954. The investigation has been carried out by my Coordinating Committee on General Sciences, whose membership includes representatives from each of the three military Services. Based upon the Committee's initial recommendations, I have advised the research and development agencies of the three Services in general terms regarding the DOD position with respect to the IGY program. These guide lines are as follows: first, we will cooperate in the program consistent with defense objectives and within defense means and capabilities; second, we will question any project proposed for Department of Defense funding in light of our mission; and third, will not ask for funds to support anything outside of the defense mission.

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I feel that I should note that Defense also may be able to abet the program by proffering limited logistic support in establishing outlying observation stations as part of the Department's normal operating activity. It is premature to state these possibilities in a more affirmative fashion, since they hinge altogether upon the final program plan and upon the nature and extent of funding the National Science Foundation is able to secure for the program.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Donald A. Quarles

Donald A. Quarles

Honorable Joseph M. Dodge  
Director, Bureau of the Budget

cc: Dr. Alan T. Waterman  
Dr. Detlev W. Bronk  
ASD (Comptroller)