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Mr. Harline

NLE MR Case No. 98-66

May 12, 1955

Document No. 1

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Submitted by CIA

COPY NO. 15

RECOMMENDATIONS* ON WHICH CIA HAS SECONDARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING TO THE NSC, SUBJECT TO COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES



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Specific Recommendation C. 8

1. This recommendation reads as follows:

C. 8. Intelligence applications warrant an immediate program leading to very small artificial satellites in orbits around the earth. Construction of large surveillance satellites must wait upon adequate solutions to some extraordinary technical problems in the information gathering and reporting and its power of supply, and should wait upon development of the intercontinental ballistic missile rocket propulsion system. The ultimate objective of research and development on the large satellite should be continuous surveillance that is both extensive and selective and that can give finescale detail sufficient for the identification of objects (airplanes, trains, buildings) on the ground.

2. Discussion:

The psychological warfare value of launching the first earth satellite makes its prompt development of great interest to the intelligence community and may make it a crucial event in sustaining the international prestige of the United States.

There is an increasing amount of evidence that the Soviet Union is placing more and more emphasis on the successful launching of the satellite. Press and radio statements since September 1954 have indicated a growing scientific effort directed toward the successful launching of the first satellite. Evidentially the Soviet Union has concluded that their satellite program can contribute enough prestige of cold war value or knowledge of military value to justify the diversion of the necessary skills, scarce material and labor from immediate military production. If the Soviet effort should prove successful before a similar United States effort, there is

*Of the Technological Capabilities Panel.

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no doubt but that their propoganda would capitalize on the theme of the scientific and industrial superiority of the communist system.

The successful launching of the first satellite will undoubtedly be an event comparable to the first successful release of nuclear energy to the world's scientific community, and will undoubtedly receive comparable publicity throughout the world. Public opinion in both neutral and allied states will be centered on the satellite's development. For centuries scientists and laymen have dreamed of exploring outer space. The first successful penetration of space will probably be the small satellite vehicle recommended by the Technical Capabilities Panel. The nation that first accomplishes this feat will gain incalculable prestige and recognition throughout the world.

The United States' reputation as the scientific and industrial leader of the world has been of immeasurable value in competing against Soviet aims in both neutral and allied states. Since the war the reputation of the United States' scientific community has been sharply challenged by Soviet progress and claims. There is little doubt but that the Soviet Union would like to surpass our scientific and industrial reputation in order to further her influence over neutralist states and to shake the confidence of states allied with the United States. If the Soviet Union's scientists, technicians and industrialists were apparently to surpass the United States and first explore outer space, her propaganda machine would have sensational and convincing evidence of Soviet superiority.

If the United States successfully launches the first satellite, it is most important that this be done with unquestionable peaceful intent. The Soviet Union will undoubtedly attempt to attach hostile motivation to this development in order to cover her own inability to win this race. To maximize our cold war gain in prestige and to minimize the effectiveness of Soviet accusations, the satellite should be launched in an atmosphere of international good will and common scientific interest. For this reason the CIA strongly concurs in the Department of Defense's suggestion that a civilian agency such as the U.S. National Committee of the IGY supervise its development and that an effort be made to release some of the knowledge to the international scientific community.

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The small scientific vehicle is also a necessary step in the development of a larger satellite that could possibly provide early warning information through continuous electronic and photographic surveillance of the USSR. A future satellite that could directly collect intelligence data would be of great interest to the intelligence community.

The Department of Defense has consulted with the Agency, and we are aware of their recommendations, which have our full concurrence and strong support.



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