STANDARD FORM NO. 64

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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : The Files - RD-122, Task Order 1

DATE: 15 December 1958

FROM : [redacted] re contract RD-122

SUBJECT: Trip Report - AS-3 on 9 Dec 58

1. On 9 December 1958 a visit was made to [redacted] to monitor the progress of RD-122, Task Order 1, development of [redacted] AS-3. Participating in discussions concerning this program were: 25X1

[redacted] 25X1

2. [redacted] said [redacted] revised development schedule called for the delivery of ten AS-3 prototypes, less AC power supplies, by 1 March 1959. [redacted] asserted that this was an "optimistic" date but that every effort would be made to meet it. As evidence of work performed since the initial prototype was returned to the contractor on 29 October 1958, the writer was shown a skeleton model of a redesigned cartridge and a blueprint of the projected coder. A model of a redesigned hand key was also demonstrated. [redacted] said that effort on the program had been doubled (from 3 to 6 full-time men) since the 29 October conference, but that no work had been started on the AC power supplies. 25X1

3. The contractor was told that he appeared to be in serious trouble on this program and that his progress toward remedying the defects of the initial prototype had been most disappointing. He was reminded that during the Washington conference he had been told of the operational urgency of this program and that any delay beyond January would work a serious hardship on us. He was also reminded that he had agreed at the Washington conference to send us promptly a firm delivery date and an estimate of additional funds required.

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4. [redacted] replied that the time and money estimates had been delayed in an attempt to provide figures as exact as possible, and that all that remained now was to convert man-hour estimates into dollars. He said he felt that doubling the number of men on the program was sufficient evidence of the urgency with which [redacted] was attempting to satisfy our requirements. The AC power supply has been ignored, he said, because [redacted] has concentrated on our principal complaint - that of an unsatisfactory cartridge and coder. He said that he had the impression from the Washington meeting that we would be satisfied with battery-operated units at first, with the AC power supplies to follow later. He was told that while we did not insist that the first AC power supplies be equipped with short-circuit protection if it appeared that this was too great a design job, we certainly expected an AC supply as part of each delivered prototype. 25X1 25X1 25X1

5. The contractor was asked if any steps could be taken now that would make possible the delivery of two complete prototypes by 1 February 1959. He said that this was impossible, but that if we wanted advance delivery of two prototypes he had a 50-50 chance of delivering them by 15 February 1959, with his present effort, and by 6 February if we would authorize overtime. This "50-50" chance assumes that no unforeseen problems arise after assembly of the new coder and cartridge. He said that a "95% probability" of successful delivery would be possible two weeks later, i.e., on 20 and 27 February 1959 respectively. One of these sets would be the initial prototype modified to accept the new cartridge and the other would be a new model furnished without the AC power supply. The remaining eight systems would be delivered by 22 March 1959 with nine AC power supplies to follow about a month later.

6. [redacted] said that one week is all that could be picked up with overtime authorization since only the model shop phase of the program could be profitably accelerated. His engineering people, he asserted, were already giving their best effort. 25X1

7. The redesigned cartridge appears greatly superior to the one delivered with the initial prototype. It plugs into the transmitter with a positive latching action, and contains fewer parts than the original. Since many of the cartridge troubles, such as tape slippage, resulted from improper latching of the cartridge, it is believed that a significant improvement will be obtained in cartridge performance.

8. With the help of [redacted], a mechanical engineer recently assigned to the program, the AS-3 coder has been completely redesigned in order to remedy the defects turned up in our evaluation. A blueprint of the new coder was given to the writer and he was told that some parts were now being fabricated and drawings for others were being made up. The new coder is the same size as the previous one, but contains only half as many parts. Tolerances are much less critical and thicker key levers are used. 25X1

9. [redacted] estimates that the cartridge and coder will be ready for our inspection on 26 January 1959, and the next visit was tentatively scheduled for that time although the contractor was urged to advance this date if possible. [redacted] requested that we bring along a printer and receiver to allow a system test of the complete receiving equipment. He agreed to place in the mail on 10 December 1958 his overrun estimate, and the revised delivery dates we could expect, both with and without overtime authorization. *

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[redacted]

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* actually sent 16 Jan 59