

10 APR 1956

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** Director of Central Intelligence

**THROUGH:** Special Assistant to DCI

**SUBJECT:** NSC 5520, Earth Satellite Program

In connection with the Secretary of Defense letter to the President on the above subject, there is forwarded herewith a summary of the information which you requested as follows:

**Soviet Earth Satellite Program - TAB A**

It is our estimate that the USSR will launch an earth satellite vehicle possibly as soon as late 1956 or early 1957.

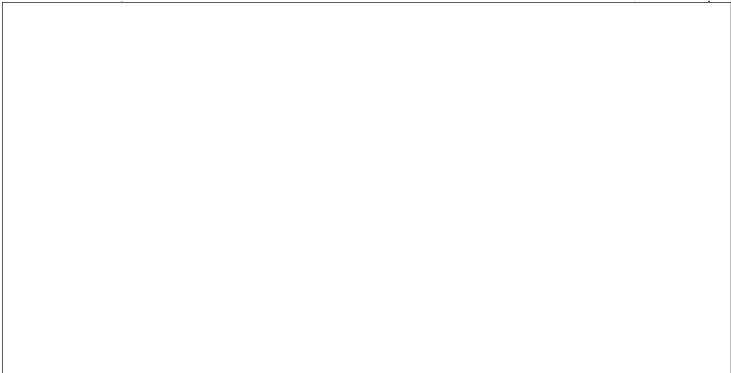
**Proposed Agency Position - TAB B**

We recommend that the Agency position be to support the reduced Defense program of six vehicles because abandonment or deferral would cause serious damage to U. S. international scientific prestige. Although the Agency has a strong interest in this program due to its bearing on the development of a truly advanced reconnaissance satellite for intelligence purposes, it cannot strongly endorse the six additional Defense vehicles for this program in light of the estimated cost, and the small psychological advantage to be obtained from additional orbiting vehicles.



EO 13526 3.5(c)

**HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.**  
Assistant Director  
Scientific Intelligence



EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs

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TAB A

10 APR 1956

~~MEMORANDUM FOR:~~ Director of Central Intelligence  
~~THROUGH:~~ Special Assistant to DDI  
~~SUBJECT:~~ Soviet Earth Satellite Program

1. In accordance with your request, there is summarized herewith the latest information available to OSI on the above subject.

a. Known Soviet guided missile developments together with their estimated capabilities indicate that the USSR possesses all the necessary knowledge and basic components to attain the altitude and velocity necessary for an orbiting earth satellite vehicle.

b. The numerous statements by Soviet officials and scientists indicate both a strong Soviet interest in earth satellite vehicles and an intention to launch such a vehicle at an early date. Specifically, it has been stated that such a vehicle would be launched within the period of the International Geophysical Year 1957-58, and another statement as of January 1956 indicated a possible launching within a year. In September 1955, Zhuravskiy boasted [redacted] that the USSR was aimed at the U. S. in preparation for space satellites. EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs

c. The most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet guided missiles (NIE 12-12-55, 20 December 1955) estimated that the USSR could launch a relatively un-instrumented vehicle by 1958 and a much more sophisticated version by 1961. From later assessments of Soviet capabilities and the foregoing indications of Soviet intentions, we in OSI now estimate that if the Soviets consider the psychological advantages of producing the world's first satellite vehicle to be of prime significance, and if cost and effort is not spared, the USSR could launch a satellite vehicle in late 1956 or early 1957.

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**SUBJECT: Soviet Earth Satellite Program**

4. The more advanced type of satellite could not only serve scientific research, but also could be an invaluable aid to military operations and intelligence collection activities. We believe that the majority of the work of designing, fabricating, testing and launching an unmanned earth satellite vehicle of the similar type could be accomplished without significant interference with high priority Soviet guided missile work.

EO 13526 3.3(b)(8)>25Yrs



**WALTER BOYD, JR.**  
Assistant Director  
Scientific Intelligence

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10 APR 1956

TAB B

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: Special Assistant to DCI

SUBJECT: RSG 5520

1. In reference to Secretary Wilson's letter to the President on the above subject in which Mr. Wilson detailed four possible courses of action, it is felt that serious damage would be done to United States international scientific prestige if the earth satellite program were either abandoned or placed on a normal course of business basis. The President's announcement of 29 July 1955 indicated a strong U. S. intention to launch such vehicles within the period of the International Geophysical Year. Abandonment or deferment of the program in the face of what may well be a successful Soviet counter-part program might impair world confidence in U. S. advanced scientific and technical capabilities.

2. The cost of the original Defense program comprising a dozen vehicles [redacted] seven of these were to be used for test purposes and the rest for specific scientific experiments on orbit. Subsequently, [redacted] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs has requested a supplemental appropriation for six additional scientific satellites to be launched following the Defense program. With the Defense costs rising at the present alarming rate, we would suggest that the Agency position be to support as a minimum the core limited Defense program with the clear understanding that this program will encompass all requisite testing to enable the [redacted] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs [redacted] vehicles to meet the President's commitment during [redacted] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs period of the International Geophysical Year.

3. Aside from the psychological aspects cited above, the Agency has a strong interest in this program, as it is expected to solve many of the problems that will be encountered in launching a truly advanced reconnaissance satellite for intelligence purposes.

[redacted]

EO 13526 3.5(c)

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.

Assistant Director

Scientific Intelligence

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cc: DD/I

GIA Control No. TS 115675/B

[redacted] EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)>25Yrs

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18 January 1956

VIA

Assistant Director, Scientific Intelligence  
:Deputy Assistant Director for Collection  
Deputy Assistant Director for Production  
Acting Chief, Guided Missiles Division, O/SI

Status of the Soviet Earth Satellite Program

In accordance with the verbal instructions of Dr. Weber and pursuant to detailed discussions with Mr. Paul Smith of Mr. Furnas' office, subject paper has been prepared. Five copies of this paper are attached--two for forwarding to Mr. Smith by appropriate memorandum and one for each of the above addressees.

SIDNEY N. GRAYBEAL

Attachments: a/s

EO 13526 3.3(b)(1)&gt;25Yrs

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