

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

5 July 1957

MEMORANDUM:

SUBJECT: Revision of the WS-117L Program

1. The decision of the United States to launch a small scientific satellite in orbit during the IGY has committed this country to a program of investigating space. Unfortunately, some people have looked on this project as a stunt which will be completed at the conclusion of the IGY. The fact is, however, that a tremendous public and scientific interest has been generated in upper air research and the impetus provided by the scientific satellite will not easily be halted, if at all. It is generally recognized by the scientific community that the first satellite is an initial step only which, even if successful, would obtain only a small part of the basic data needed and desired. An analysis of the advantages which the Department of Defense can obtain from Project Vanguard, if successful, is attached as Incl. 1. The limited number of orbit attempts in the Vanguard Program will not provide the total amount of data required and many valuable experiments cannot be performed because of the payload limitation in the vehicle. It is apparent, therefore, that a requirement will exist to extend and amplify the Vanguard Program.

2. The National Academy of Sciences is on record in favor of an extension to the Vanguard Program as evidenced by attempts to obtain authority for launching an additional six satellites. Another investigation concerns using a modified Vanguard vehicle with increased payload. A pertinent point in both of these extensions is that they are proposed under continuing Navy management. It should be realized that the Navy is already inserting in publicity releases that the Navy was selected to manage Project Vanguard "because of demonstrated technical superiority in this area." If the Navy is allowed by default to obtain a continuation of the Vanguard Program, then the Navy has a strong possibility of becoming firmly established as satellite and space "experts" and the role of the Air Force in this area will be seriously jeopardized.

3. In 1955 when the services were asked to make proposals for the scientific satellite program, the Air Force was at a critical period in the ICEM program and the 117-L System was not yet authorized. An additional program of questioned value could not then be allowed to interfere with the ICEM effort. Now however a different situation exists. The ICEM effort is well on the way and the 117-L is an established project. The Air Force should now be in a position to aggressively take steps to insure that any further satellite program is under Air Force management. *use this, make it - Not quite*

4. It is recommended that the Air Force revise the WS-117L test program to provide for a Phase I and II as follows:

Phase I - Test of Vehicle and Orbit Capability

Phase II - Capability Test of the Reconnaissance Package

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Weight and space in the satellite during Phase I should be devoted to scientific experiments. A possible method of handling this is to propose a certain number of test vehicles in which the NAS can place instrumentation of a specified weight and volume. If a program is established along these lines, the Air Force will obtain the following advantages:

a. Maximum assurance that space programs will become the role of the Air Force alone.

b. International objections are not likely if the vehicle is for scientific purposes. Thus testing up to the point of putting in the reconnaissance package could be completed prior to any possible objections.

ASA B. GIBBS
Colonel USAF

Incl.

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