

DRAFT OCB MINUTE

The Operations Coordinating Board has discussed at great length the problems associated with launching the first SAMOS satellite and has agreed that the considerations involved are of sufficient national importance to warrant Presidential attention and decision.

The Board agreed to communicate the following to the President:

1. There is a division among the members of the Board as to whether the Defense Department should contrive technical reasons which would delay the launching of the first SAMOS satellite (now scheduled for October 4) until after Khrushchev's departure from the United States. The issue turns largely on an assessment of the relative political and public relations risks in postponing or proceeding on schedule.

Those who wish to proceed on schedule believe that a leak of the postponement is almost inevitable and that the repercussions could constitute an embarrassment both domestically and abroad which would outweigh the risks attendant upon proceeding on schedule.

Those who favor some delay believe that a firing while Khrushchev has the United Nations as a sounding board with the focus of world attention on New York entails the greater risk, bearing in mind the May 1st flight of the U-2 on the eve of the Paris Summit.

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2. Information on the first launching of a SAMOS satellite should emphasize that the launching is part of a research and development program intended to develop a global observation satellite capability. A major effort should be made to keep press treatment in as low key as possible.

3. Information about the satellite should be held to a minimum, with the explanation that such information is classified. No information other than the fact of launching should be released until it is known how the satellite has performed.

4. The Department of Defense should announce the launching of the first satellite. State and Defense should agree in advance on a list of questions and answers consonant with a decision to release a minimum amount of information about the program at this time.

5. Public information guidelines for the first satellite would not determine future handling of SAMOS launchings. After the first launching, a thorough analysis would be made of world-wide reaction, public and governmental. As soon as possible thereafter, the State and Defense Departments would prepare a report containing alternative policy recommendations as to whether the SAMOS satellite should be treated in a "closed fashion," i.e., as a straight intelligence operation, or in a more "open manner" aimed at facilitating world-wide acceptance of the continued use of observation satellites.

6. Until the report mentioned above is completed and the policy considerations involved are decided, no information campaign should be launched in the United Nations, and no official statement should be made with reference to the future use of reconnaissance satellites or the disposition of the information obtained from such satellites.

