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February 6, 1958

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT  
February 4, 1958 (following Legislative Leaders meeting)

Others present:           Dr. Killian  
                              Dr. Kistiakowsky  
                              Dr. York  
                              General Goodpaster

Dr. Killian opened by saying that real progress is being made in the missiles program. It has gone at a faster clip than was foreseen in 1953 and 1954. There are grounds for real confidence that both liquid and solid-propellant missiles will perform satisfactorily, from a technical point of view. He then asked Dr. Kistiakowsky to report in more detail.

Dr. Kistiakowsky said that technical progress has been all that was expected, and more. There are no scientific problems remaining with regard to the first generation of missiles. The problems are engineering problems -- specifically to build the elements so that they will perform reliably. There are certain problems which need attention. We can be sure that the Thor will function satisfactorily. The Jupiter missile is, production-wise, behind the Thor. To go forward with production on both requires the Air Force to set up two different systems for training and handling. Technically the missiles are almost identical. The Thor production model has been better tested, since the Jupiter must be redesigned for production by Chrysler. Dr. Kistiakowsky said that specifically, within the next few months, a decision ought to be made in this matter. Dr. Kistiakowsky said the major additional cost in the Jupiter program is that of putting Chrysler into production. The first missiles from Chrysler may be expected in January 1959. Dr. York added that the biggest cost in other than money terms -- i. e., in talent and decision energy -- is to the Air Force in preparing for the use of two missiles.

The President said that he has come to regret deeply that the missile program was not set up in OSD rather than in any of the services. Personal feelings are now so intense that changes are extremely difficult. Dr. Killian commented that the group was



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