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October 21, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Responsibility and Organization for Certain Space Activities

The Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of NASA have agreed upon, and recommend to the President, certain actions designed to clarify responsibilities, improve coordination, and enhance the national space effort. The actions recommended below are consistent with the steps taken by the Secretary of Defense to clarify responsibilities and assignments in the field of military space applications within the Department of Defense.

The Secretary of Defense and the Administrator have agreed upon and recommend to the President the following actions:

A. The assignment to NASA of sole responsibility for the development of new space booster vehicle systems of very high thrust. Both the DOD and NASA will continue with a coordinated program for the development of space vehicles based on the current ICBM and IRBM missiles and growth versions of these missiles.

B. The transfer from the Department of the Army to NASA of the Development Operations Division of the Army Ballistic Missile Agency, including its personnel and such facilities and equipment which are presently assigned and required for the future use of NASA at the transferred activity, and such other personnel, facilities, and equipment for administrative and technical

support of the transferred activity as may be agreed upon.

c. The provision by the Army to NASA of such administrative services as may be agreed upon to effect a smooth transition of management and funding responsibility of the transferred activity.

The Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of NASA are in agreement on the following:

1. The nation requires and must build at least one super booster and responsibility for this activity should be vested in one agency. There is, at present, no clear military requirement for super boosters, although there is a real possibility that the future will bring military weapons systems requirements. However, there is a definite need for super boosters for civilian space exploration purposes, both manned and unmanned. Accordingly, it is agreed that the responsibility for the super booster program should be vested in NASA. It is agreed that the recommendations to center this function in NASA and to transfer the Development Operations Division of ABMA to NASA are independent of any decisions on whether either or both of the super booster systems currently under development are continued in their presently conceived form.

2. The transfer of the Development Operations Division of ABMA shall include transfer of responsibility for Saturn, together with 1960 funds allocated for the project, and transfer to the NASA 1961 budget of such amounts as may be approved for this project in the 1961 Department of Defense budget.

3. In carrying out its responsibilities, NASA will keep the Department of Defense thoroughly and completely informed on its booster program and will

be fully responsive to specific requirements of the Department of Defense for the development of super boosters for future military missions as requested by the Secretary of Defense.

4. It is NASA's intent to center at the transferred activity the bulk of its space booster vehicle systems work, including an appropriate research and development effort, and ultimately, substantial responsibility for NASA launch operations.

5. It is agreed that NASA will provide support to the Department of Defense and military services at the transferred activity in the same manner as it now does at all other field centers.

6. The management and employment of the transferred activity will be the responsibility of NASA, and no commitment is possible with respect to levels of staffing or funding for the operation. NASA, however, will make every possible effort within its responsibilities and resources to utilize the capabilities of the Development Operations Division of ABMA.

7. The transfer of personnel, facilities, and equipment will be on a nonreimbursable basis.

8. The Department of the Army will provide and maintain on a reimbursable basis station-wide services as required by NASA within the Redstone Arsenal complex.

9. NASA will provide for continuation, transfer, or phasing out of military projects under way at the transferred activity as may be requested and to the extent funded by the Department of Defense, and will undertake at the transferred activity such additional military projects as may be agreed upon by NASA and the

Department of Defense.

10. The Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, and NASA, recognizing the value to the nation's space program of maintaining at a high level the present competence of ABMA, will cooperate to preserve the continuity of the technical and administrative leadership of the group.

11. The detailed implementation of the actions proposed will be accomplished through the subsequent negotiation of cooperative agreements between the Department of Defense and NASA.

The Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of NASA have reached agreement and recommend approval of the above actions in the firm belief that the national space effort requires a strong civilian agency and program and a strong military space effort by the Department of Defense, and clear lines of responsibility and authority if the U.S. is to employ its best efforts in the exploration of outer space and to assure the defense of the nation.

If the President approves the recommended actions set forth in A, B, and C above, the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator of NASA will proceed immediately to form the necessary staff teams to develop the required implementing documents.

[Signed]

T. Keith Glennan
Administrator, NASA

[10/30/59]

[Signed]

Thomas S. Gates
Acting Secretary of Defense

[10/30/59]

[Approved, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 2 Nov 59]