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13 October 1961

Dear Dick:

I visited the DPD "Area" during 26-28 September, as you know, in connection with our current survey of that Division. The arrangements for the visit were managed smoothly, and all staff at the site were most helpful in assuring that we got a full view of their current activities.

The visit left reservations in my mind on several key aspects of the overall program and I would like to raise these with you now, considerably in advance of our final report.

The "Area" in my opinion appears to be extremely vulnerable in its present security provisions against unauthorized observation. The high and rugged northeast perimeter of the immediate operating area, which I visited in order to see for myself, is not under government ownership. It is subject to a score or more of [redacted] claims, at least one of which is visited periodically by its owner. Several claims are sites of unoccupied buildings or cellars which together with the terrain in general afford excellent opportunity for successful penetration by a skilled and determined opposition. I doubt that the [redacted] applying to the area can be considered in itself a sufficient deterrent to a penetration effort. In view of the numerous high risk factors built into the overall project, I do not see that the added risks presently being assumed in the category of hostile observation can be justified.

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On the subject of security I would also note that the "Area" is already demonstrably vulnerable to air violation including landings; that major installations are not rigorously protected against sabotage; that a calculated risk has been taken during construction in the use of construction personnel in advance of full security clearance; and that some work issues involving labor union officials have been referred to the latter's international headquarters here in Washington, D. C. for resolution. I suggest that the security program at the "Area" be resurveyed by DPD and Office of Security staff jointly to determine additional appropriate measures.

My second observation is that the overall project has now reached a stage where the top management at the "Area" needs consolidation with clear and precisely defined authority. The

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present senior Agency representative at the site is competent and conscientious, but his authority and even his powers of observation over the present complex relationships existing between organizations working at the site appear to me to be seriously inadequate. I appreciate that major construction is to be completed in the near future, and that the operating complement is due to arrive shortly thereafter. I have in mind, however, the articulation of base support activities with research and testing programs and both of these with the developing operations. The organizations responsible for testing and instrumentation were in disagreement or misunderstanding on key aspects of their program, and no one at the "Area" seemed to be in a position to bring their issues into focus with Headquarters and to expedite their resolution. This situation is likely to prove increasingly detrimental as the program moves into its testing phase.

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The final point on which I wish to comment at this time is the question of survivability of the program's hardware when and if employed in actual operations. We discussed this subject with [REDACTED] while at the "Area", and my survey team raised it at length with the people at the principal fabrication site on the West Coast. As I understand the present situation, there have been very encouraging results from the work on AR; however, the proof lies in actual testing. Here the principal research, testing and instrumentation organizations appear to be in wide disagreement on methods, objectives and even responsibilities. In the IR field and on the question of shock waves serious problems are not yet being examined, and perhaps cannot even be approached in advance of actual testing. Finally, it appeared that the principal fabricator on his own initiative has spent more time on the evaluation of the probable countermeasures of the opposition than has anyone in the intelligence community. I appreciate in this connection that an updating of a survivability study in this field by the ATIC is under discussion at present. My reaction to all of this is that a comprehensive program should be established immediately in the field of operational planning. The longer this is delayed, the greater the likelihood, it seems to me, of delay, surprises, and missed opportunities.

I would particularly like to see prepared a chart, which would be periodically updated, in the nature of a net evaluation, comparing the vehicle's capabilities against all possible opposition countermeasures.

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[REDACTED]
Lyman B. Kirkpatrick

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