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Title: L.A. Minnich, Jr., "Legislative Leadership Meeting, Supplementary Notes,"

February 4, 1958.

Source: Dwight D. Eisenhower Papers, Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

The Soviets had orbited Sputnik I four months prior to the meeting recorded by Minnich. By this time, it was all but certain that a new space agency would be created; however, its responsibilities, form, and location were still undecided. The question of the military or civilian character of a new agency was discussed in a regularly scheduled meeting among President Eisenhower, Vice President Richard Nixon, other White House officials, and Republican leaders in Congress. The issue was raised in response to the impending reorganization of the Department of Defense, which was necessitated in part by the increasing sophistication and cost of weapons systems. Missiles and other space-related hardware were responsible for a significant portion of the technological revolution sweeping the military services at the time. At this time (February 1958), President Eisenhower had apparently not yet decided that most of the U.S. space program should be carried out under civilian auspices.

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LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP MEETING

Pebruary 4, 1955

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Postal Rates and Pay - In a long discussion of the situation concerning postal legislation, Sea, Carlson cautioned against trying to comple in one bill both the rate increase and pay raise. If that were done, he said, the opposition might write in a much larger pay increase than was proper, and that doubt be very embarrassing to the President.

The President said he would not be embarrassed. On the contrary, he would be must concerned with what this Republican Party would look.

P.L., 480 - Sen. Dirkson polyted out the interest of a number of farm-State Senature in having bodgets other than Agriculture's charged with the costs of certain things done under the P.L., 480 program. Secretary Benson was very accious to have this done, and cited figures (which Mr. Metriam, Burson of the Budget) immediately quasiloned pretending to show that only 10% of the P.L. 460 proceeds went to Agriculture, bluck of it should be charged, he said, to the Mutual Security program. The President asked for a quick report of accurate statistics, and also pointed out to Sec. Benson that where we sold produces below the market price, a loss occurred which is directly chargeable to Agriculture,

Other Space Program - A question was raised as to whether a new Space Agency should be set up within Department of Defence (as provided in the pending Defence appropriation bill), or be set up as an independent agency. The President's faciling was essentially a desire to avoid doplication, and principly for the present would seem to rest with Defence because of paramountcy of defence aspects. However, the President thought that in regard to non-military aspects. Defence could be the operational agent, taking orders from some non-military scientific group. The National Science Poundation, for instance, should not be restricted in any way in its peaceful yeararch.

Dr. Killian had some reservations as to the relative interest and activity of military vs. peaceful aspects, as did the Vice President who thought our posture before the world would be better if non-military research in outer space were carried forward by an agency entirely separate from the military.

There was some discussion of the prospect of a loner probe. Dr. Killian thought this might be next on the list of Russian efforts. He had some doubt as to whether the United States should at this late date attempt to press a loner probe, but the question would be fully convessed by the Science Advisory Committee in the broad survey it had underway. Dr. Killian thought the U.S. might do a loner probe in 1960, or perhaps get to it on a orask program by 1959. Sen. Saltonstall had heard, however, that it might even be accomplished in 1958, if pressed hard amongh.

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Dr. Killian outlined for the Londership the various phases of future development (along the lines of the subsequent press release listing projects in the "soon", "later," and "much later"categories.)

Sen. Knowland complained about having to get his information about Space research from the Democratic Senator from Washington (Jackson) -- which was just as had as having to learn from Mr. Symington anything there was to know about the Air Force.

The President was firmly of the opinion that a rule of reason had to be applied to these Spane projects — that we couldn't pour unlimited funds into these costly projects where there was nothing of early value to the Nation's security. He recalled the great effort he had made for the Atomic Peace Ship but Congress would not antiorise it, even though in his opinion it would have been a very worthwhile project.

And in the present situation, the President mused, he would rather have a good Redstone then be able to hit the moon, for we didn't have any enemies on the moon!



Sen. Knowland pressed the question of burrying along with a humar probe, because of the psychological factor. He recalled the great impact of Sprinik, which seemed to negate the impact of our large mutual accurity program. If we are close enough to doing a probe, he said, we should press it. The President thought it might be CK to go should with it if it dould be accomplished with some missile already developed or nearly ready, but he didn't went to just rush into an all-out offert on each one of these possible glamor performances without a full appreciation of their great cost. Also, there would have to be a clear determination of what agency would have the responsibility.

The Vice Prosident reverted to the idea of setting up a separate agency for "peaceful" research projects, for the military would be deterred from things that had no military value in sight. The President thought Defense would insvitably be involved since it presently had all the hardware, and he did not went further deplication. He did not preclude having eventually a great Department of Space.

Presidential Disability Logislation - When Sen. Dirksen noted that a good many proposals were floating around the Senate, the President recalled that Mr. Rayburn had said that for his money there would never be a bill.

The Provident went on in say that he had been working with the Vice President on the matter. Of marse, there would saver be any reason for disagramment between them on this, but it seemed desirable to work it out in the best interests of the sountry -- on a personal basis. In addition, the President continued to went something on the statute book.

Mr. Rogers commented on one proposal on which he was consulted. It provided for an 5-man Commission, including the Vice President, Speaker, Majority and Minority Leaders. Mr. Rogers said he had he dominent

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that this was clearly unconstitutional unless done as a Constitutional amendment. He didn't think it a desirable change since it would transfer power from the Executive to the Legislature.

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