

10 18 December 1968 - Room 7065

by Robert Seamans

Came to Washington 1 September 1960 at end of Ike's administration with Glennan. First month to visit the Centers and some contractors. Intense view of MERCURY. Three contractors teams were studying APOLLO. STG under Gilruth at Langley. Met couple of guys at Langley studying conservation of energy and theory of Lunar Orbit Rendezvous.

RS Swept into new administration decision. Full time. After Kenedy election lot of talk--future of space, of NASA. NASA was to remain civilian agency. Wiesner look for; JFK aware of this. Nobody discussed. Stuff leaked. Early Dec RS took trip - contractor effort. It was clear ought to look at our hole cards = a manned mission beyond MERCURY. FY 62 budget BOB had turned down the follow going which included SATURN launch vehicle.

Space Exploratory Council - VB, Gilruth, Silverstein. My predecessor, Horner, had chaired it. Full-blown discussion of technical feasibility, cost of manned lunar program. Contractors studied only circumlunar flight. No plan then to land on moon.

VB was heavily oriented - study of launch vehicle. Gilruth on s/c Looked at direct descent and earth orbit rendezvous. Wiesner report came out. It was rough on Ike's space program. Then no administrator. Got form letter from BOB to discuss budget, but no detail changes. \$1.095 billions was projected FY 62. Hugh Dryden was a scientist but also good politician. Said put together, not up to 1.4 but put a few things. Wev came along. We discussed \$10 million for COMSAT, \$75 million for SATURN booster, \$25 for advance development for APOLLO.

Got over with Dave Bell who said, "I'll buy that \$10 million; shouldn't be reversible for AT&T. I don't think JFK is going to immerse himself in space until next year's budget."

Dryden said, "I think events will force him."

Webb: We ought to meet with Prex. We did in March. We for the \$75 for Lunar Vehicle work (as Wiesner recommended.) had more life than we. JFK elected not to go for advance development for APOLLO. Wanted more time to measure us. Wiesner had warned him be wary of going ahead with MERCURY.

This added as a supplemental. Whole supplemental \$130 or \$140 million.

ATLAS booster had real problem. Finally worked. If it hadn't would be tough in

Real crunch--Gagarin & VOSTOK; terrific excitement in Congress. "Why aren't you working triple time--How much money you asked for anyway?"

JFK asked VP Johnson for recommendation on what else to do. Johnson already held hearings. Exasperated he said, "You come into me with recommendations."

Then we interrupted APOLLO. Could see for real pretty quick. Purely coincidental. Webb and McN. had schedule meeting day after. Shepard in orbit. JFK making plans medals, mother & father.

Webb, Gilpatrick, Rubel (Defense).

We laid out our two plans--worked remarkably well. McNamara asked me and Rubel to put in a document. Webb "If you don't mind, Bob, I'd like to look into too."

I & Rubel spent weekend working. Webb came in at 2:00 a.m. proof read report--he liked being an editor. At 0330 we left Pentagon. Webb kindly dropped me off & a girl to

that Johnson got it. Grey, rumped, smiles, LBJ went to lunch for Shepard. LBJ
look off for Southeast Asia.

Prex said, "Go..." Wanted to make special message to Congress, including space.

We debated. Could we have a secret project from the Russians? Could we be nearly
equal to Russians? If we announced a goal they will beat us again.

We thought '67 a reasonable date for moon landing - 50th anniversary Red Revolution.
Wanted to avoid date. "Mr. Prex, please take out the 1967?" Say "in this decade." Soren-
son wrote "in this decade."

JFK classmate at Harvard of Seamans, but didn't know him well. JFK word "Proceed", and
tap his tooth, say "I don't quite understand this." Also dismissed APOLLO for EO, LL, or CL.
I been testifying, interjected myself. Seaborg wanted me to go nuclear. I pointed out
nuclear was OK for further future beyond, but not need onlunar landing."

K. "That's good. Have it over here tomorrow morning."

RS "Next time will tell you more about JFK -he was involved more than Ike, though
Eisenhower was interested."

8 May - we delivered report to Johnson. He saw JFK with report in his hand. LBJ
left for sea - his input (influence) then, if any. We never discussed with JFK afterwards.
Did Webb or Dryden? Don't think so. After 8 May (Logsdon says meeting 19 May with Webb
& Dryden then - nothing happened.)

Happened so fast. BOB came over 7th - went through the budget process that after-
noon. (Shapley knows story.) Ask him. Had JFK made up his mind ahead. BOB not sympatico.

*See also
Seamans's 1969 Minuteman
lecture pub. by MIT (soft cover)*