

LIFETIME OF TACSATCOM

Mr. ROBACK. You mentioned the joint test plan for the tactical satellite. What is the anticipated orbital lifetime of the tactical satellite which will be launched?

Dr. TUCKER. The TacSatCom 1 experimental—Mr. Shelor, can you answer that?

Mr. SHELOR. We estimate approximately 30 months.

Mr. ROBACK. Is that going to be turned off in 30 months due to being a new technology? Offhand, why isn't this a 6-year proposition?

Mr. SHELOR. The answer to the first question is that we will be able to command the turnoff. We have a link that only we can control.

Mr. ROBACK. So you wouldn't have the problem of permanent turnoff?

Mr. SHELOR. That is right. No time limit. The answer to the second question: This is a very sophisticated and complex satellite and we think 2½ years is a pretty good goal to shoot for in the R. & D. program.

Mr. ROBACK. Does this conform to the practice of the trade? Having 30 months lifetime for the first one.

Dr. TUCKER. Practice in the trade? I am not sure there is a practice in the trade.

Mr. ROBACK. What was the operating life with Syncom? Eighteen months predicted or scheduled?

Mr. SHELOR. I am not sure. The IDCSP originally was 18 months.

Mr. ROBACK. Maybe Syncom was 18 months. Apparently, from what we have been advised by General Klocko, he is still getting information out of it, is that right?

General KLOCKO. Yes.

Mr. ROBACK. Still operating?

General KLOCKO. Yes.

Mr. ROBACK. How many years now, General?

General KLOCKO. Four years.

POSSIBLE USES FOR LONGER LIVED TACSATCOM

Mr. ROBACK. In view of the 30-month life of the first tactical satellite, you have not predicated any communications resource on the basis of that satellite. That is, one that would require some extended operational time.

Dr. TUCKER. No. It is an R. & D. satellite. Its purpose is to enable us to carry out the test plan to evaluate the use of satellites in tactical operation so that we can make a proper decision about what kind of operational system we ought to have.

It may well be that at the end of the special program the satellite will still be alive in orbit, and we can then use it for some limited additional purposes, but this is not a major intent of the program.

Mr. ROBACK. If you acquire bonus lifetime, so to speak, Dr. Tucker, what might you do with it?

Dr. TUCKER. Mr. Shelor, can you address what we might do with the capability that remains?

Mr. SHELOR. We might reposition it over any portion of the world where we had a situation that could be helped by a limited number