

reviewed at the level of the National Aeronautics and Space Council, whose Executive Secretary has publicly emphasized the need and importance of advancing space power technologies."

Comment

We agree that the availability of a family of nuclear power devices capable of generating 1 kilowatt and more of electrical power may become important to the future of such space systems as those employed in providing satellite communications. DOD will continue to cooperate with the AEC and NASA and prosecute DOD research and development to obtain safe, inexpensive, and reliable generators of this type.

In connection with present space projects, DOD has considered the use of nuclear power devices as a candidate power source. This fact was brought out by Mr. Rogers at your hearings (hearings, pp. 159-160). However, to this point in time, nuclear generators have fared poorly when compared to more conventional power sources on the basis of mission, safety, cost, reliability, survivability, and technical risk. This unfavorable comparison is due, in part, to the fact that the nuclear materials most suitable to this application have been in extreme short supply and, therefore, costly. We will continue to closely watch the developments in this area and will consider their use when they are considered to be reasonable and cost effective.

Dr. JOHN S. FOSTER, Jr.,

OCTOBER 9, 1967.

Director of Defense Research and Engineering, Office of the Secretary, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. FOSTER: As you know, we have been following rather closely the Defense program for satellite communications. When Dr. Tucker appeared before our subcommittee on July 24, 1967, he stated with regard to the next phase that the Department was "aiming for a firm plan and decisions well before" the end of the year (p. 47). Timely decisions would make possible an operational capability by 1970.

The purpose of this letter is to inquire as to the status of these decisions. I am well aware that there are budget pressures in the Department, but I believe very strongly that this is one of the essential programs and quite low-cost relative to its importance.

A progress report would be greatly appreciated. Perhaps this can be included as part of the Department's comment on our recent report (H. Rept. 613, "Government Use of Satellite Communications, 1967"). Mr. Stempler advised me in a letter of September 5 that the report was being reviewed by the appropriate officials.

Sincerely yours,

CHET HOLIFIELD,
Chairman, Military Operations Subcommittee.

DIRECTOR OF DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING,
Washington, D.C., October 20, 1967.

HON. CHET HOLIFIELD,
Chairman, Military Operations Subcommittee, House of Representatives, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am pleased to have the opportunity afforded by your letter of October 9, 1967, to give you a report on the status of our planning the Defense satellite communications program. I am forwarding this information separately from departmental comments on your report, "Government Use of Satellite Communications, 1967."

Currently, my office is completing a comprehensive analysis of departmental communications needs and definition of alternative programs which together will form the basis for my recommendations to Secretary McNamara. I believe that we will have a firm plan and necessary decisions before the end of the year.

I am very much aware and appreciative of your subcommittee's interest in our satellite communications program. Please contact me at any time should you wish further information.

Sincerely yours,

FINN LARSEN
(For John S. Foster, Jr.).