

August 20, 1963

Note to Mr. Webb

With regard to the LEM guidance system, you and Dr. Seamans have recently approved the procurement plan and sole source justification to have this work done by MIT and the AC Sparkplug-Raytheon-Coleman industrial support team. At the present time, OMSF has asked that this be held in abeyance and no announcement be made because they now have underway a study by Bellcomm to see if it would be wiser to design a new system based on the present state of the art rather than use the MIT system which was based on the state of the art two years ago. The thought is they might get a better system and save weight and volume. In talking to John Disher about this, he said that OMSF feels that the Bellcomm study will most likely support the plan to have MIT do it. The decision is expected to be made by September 6, and they have a target date of September 15 for negotiating with MIT and the other contractors if the Bellcomm study does validate present plans.

With regard to the abort capabilities of the guidance and control system, Disher said there is a quite unsophisticated abort capability in the stabilization and control system for the Apollo spacecraft and that if they use the MIT design for LEM, it is possible that the stabilization control on the LEM could serve as the abort or backup capability for getting off the moon into some kind of orbit and that the Apollo spacecraft could then make the rendezvous using its guidance and control capability.

Grumman requested and was authorized to make a study of the abort problem for LEM. Disher said that they suspected that Grumman was trying to make this a matter of greater importance than we feel it is worth, possibly with a view to bringing aboard another major subcontractor. Disher's feeling at the moment is that we should look to the company designing the basic guidance and control system to develop the abort or backup capability.

In the event we do decide to go to a new design for the LEM guidance, it would probably not end up as a subcontract to Grumman but rather a direct contract by NASA.

R. P. Young
Executive Officer

RPYoung:plc

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