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Memorandum L-71

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Digital Computer Laboratory  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

SUBJECT: GROUP LEADERS' MEETING, November 24, 1952

To: Group Leaders

From: David R. Brown

Date: November 24, 1952

Present: Jay W. Forrester, C. W. Adams, D. R. Brown, S. H. Dodd,  
R. K. Everett, H. Fahnestock, H. H. Taylor, C. R. Wieser,  
F. Youtz

- Agenda: 1. Air Defense  
2. Budget  
3. Vacuum Tube Reliability

1. Air Defense

A report describing the Lincoln Laboratory system of air defense is being prepared for evaluation by those in the military establishment who must decide on a system to be produced for this country's defense. The Lincoln-AFRC system is to be compared with the Rome-University of Michigan system described in UMM-100. Some factions within the military are now advocating limited production for the Rome-Michigan system. The Lincoln system has been discredited in comparison with the Michigan system. One reason for this is that the only report available outside the laboratory is the Project Charles Report. Our plans have changed since the time of that report. The Lincoln Laboratory will have parts of a final system in operation before the date quoted for the final air defense system in the Charles Report. The report now being written will correct some mistaken ideas of the capabilities and delivery schedule for the Lincoln System. No decision on limited production or increased support of the Michigan effort will be made until after our report has been received.

We must consider what development is possible during the next year and have a demonstration in about September of 1953 with the equipment operating in July 1953. This calls for an increased emphasis and scope for the Cape Cod program. Considerable display equipment will be required. Assistance from the IBM-WWII development group will be required. The program, of course, cannot have overriding priority. The magnetic memory priority remains high.

We must remember that the Lincoln Laboratory and the University of Michigan have a common objective--an adequate air defense system.

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2. Budget

All divisions of the Lincoln Laboratory have submitted revised budgets for fiscal 1953 which come to 10 to 15 per cent above the funds available. No action is required at this time with respect to the 1953 budget. The budget for fiscal 1954 is described in Memorandum L-33. This should be reviewed and a budget for fiscal 1955 prepared. Note, however, that the average staff during 1955 may be considerably above that for 1954. Note, also, that the staff listed in L-33 for fiscal 1954 is less than the staff now expected during fiscal 1954. The budget for 1955 will probably not exceed that for fiscal 1954.

We should consider how we can make more rapid progress through the use of subcontractors and consultants. We might benefit by working with subcontractors having a very small staff and located in this area. We should look for good men working in small units.

3. Vacuum Tube Reliability

Taylor commented on the joint MIT-IBM visit to tube plants made during the last week. We presented intermittent failures as our major tube problem at the present time. All of the tube plants appear anxious to work with us and improve their production techniques. Most of these were aware of the Lincoln Laboratory program.

The next step is for us to let the tube companies know what types we want to use so that they can begin to improve these designs.

Signed

*David R. Brown*

David R. Brown  
Secretary

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