Subject: LARES-2 Support
Date: Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at 11:56:56 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Merkowitz, Stephen M. (GSFC-61A0)
To: David Arnold

Dave,

Sorry for the delayed response; I'm on travel to the ILRS workshop. Erricos did a great job giving your presentation and I found it very interesting and relevant to other work we are doing with retros. I really appreciate the work you've done both for the ILRS and our lunar retroreflector efforts. I've learned a lot from you on the lunar development and the analysis you've performed has really helped define the requirements on the lunar reflector.

With respect to your request for NASA supporting your participation in the LARES-2 project, as I mentioned in a previous email, I am not aware of any agreement between NASA and ASI to cooperate on the design or implementation of LARES-2. NASA support of the ILRS does not include any direct support of foreign agency mission design work. NASA does support analysis of existing designs for the purpose of preparing for tracking, but any effort beyond this limited scope should be supported by the mission's sponsoring agency and/or cooperating partners. This is not a policy choice, but rather a legal restriction set by Congress in the NASA appropriations and the Space Act.

I am also not familiar with the terms of your contract with SAO and I am prohibited from getting involved in another organization's contract management, even if it is using NASA funding. NASA is very strict about this point so I cannot mediate or take any actions with respect to your contract with SAO.

I understand that this response is not what you were hoping for, but I need to be careful to follow the rules and laws that govern my position. I really hope that we are able to find a way for you to stay engaged in the ILRS. Your contributions are widely recognized! Both Erricos and Mike have expressed to me that there is a continuing need for your expertise. With so many new missions applying for SLR tracking, I'm sure there will be a lot of need to analyze the retroreflector configurations in support of NASA and ILRS objectives.

Sincerely,

Stephen