Optical Device Enables Small Detector to See Large Field of View

The problem:
Make a device that images the sun on a mask that transmits it or prevents its transmission to a photodetector behind the mask depending upon image position on the mask. A resolution of 0.5° or less over a 60° field of view is required.

The solution:
A device using a pinhole as the image former to provide a large field of view and diffraction limited resolution.

How it’s done:
Detector and pinhole lie at the center of curvature of a spherical reflector and the path between them is intersected by a mask having a semitransparent reflective coating. When sunlight passes through the pinhole, part of it is reflected from the mask to the left-hand spherical reflecting surface where it is reflected back through the mask and illuminates the detector positioned along the system axis at the right-hand spherical reflecting surface.

Notes:
1. This device could be used as the detector in a servo system to prevent a sensitive optical or photographic instrument from pointing directly toward the sun.

(continued overleaf)
2. Inquiries concerning this invention may be directed to:
Technology Utilization Officer
Western Operations Office
150 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, California 90406
Reference: B66-10263

**Patent status:**
Inquiries about obtaining rights for the commercial use of this invention may be made to NASA, Code GP, Washington, D.C. 20546.

Source: J. H. Arndt of TRW Space Technology Laboratories Inc. under contract to Western Operations Office (WOO-253)