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Policy: MOL

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

1965 AUG 17 07 55

OFF SECY OF DEFENSE

AUG 16 1965

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Dear Bob:

As a follow-up to the July 9 Space Council discussion of the MOL project, Harold Brown has sent to us for comment a proposed memorandum to the President and a draft policy paper setting forth suggested information and publicity controls on the project.

It is likely that we will encounter some international problems, perhaps of considerable difficulty if the MOL project, as now planned, is carried out. I do not consider these problems of sufficient negative import to warrant my advising against going ahead, and if you are fully satisfied the project is justified in terms of the potential contribution to national defense, I have no objection to your going forward with the recommendation to the President.

If a decision is made to proceed with the MOL as now conceived, it is clear that very tight control of the project operation and very careful handling of all publicity will be essential, if we are to succeed in safeguarding the sensitive aspects of MOL and dealing effectively with whatever international problems arise. We have reviewed the draft information policy paper from this point of view and have worked out jointly with your people at the staff level an acceptable concept and guidelines.

The Honorable  
Robert S. McNamara,  
Secretary of Defense.

*Sec Def has seen*

17 AUG 1965

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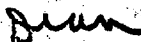
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In terms of potential foreign reactions, I consider it most important that to the extent it can be controlled, everything said publicly about the MOL project emphasize its experimental and research nature, and that statements and implications that MOL constitutes a new military operational capability in space, or an intermediate step toward such a capability, be rigorously avoided. It would be useful to this end if fully knowledgeable people in this Department could work closely and continuously with your own people in devising detailed press and publicity handling guidelines, reviewing the texts of key statements or releases, etc., and I would appreciate confirmation that this is agreeable to you, in order that appropriate arrangements can be worked out.

Sincerely,



Dean Rusk

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