

PRIORITY

TOP SECRET



~~TOP SECRET~~ 212050Z

PRIORITY [REDACTED] INFO PRIORITY [REDACTED] CITE [REDACTED]

ARGON

REF [REDACTED]

1. UNDERSTANDING AT [REDACTED] IS THAT A FIRM REQUIREMENT EXISTS TO LAUNCH AN ARGON MSN ON AN INCLINED ORBIT OF 65 DEG OR 115 DEG. AS PER REF THIS IS POSSIBLE.

2. AT THE PRESENT TIME TWO [REDACTED] ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE 4 "A" LAUNCHES, AND ONE OF THESE IS THE [REDACTED] REF [REDACTED] INDICATES IT IS TECHNICALLY POSSIBLE TO FLY VEHICLE IN FORWARD DIRECTION. HOWEVER, THE BEST PROCEDURE WOULD BE TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INCLINED ORBIT WITHOUT MODIFYING THE VEHICLE. THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY LAUNCHING ON 115 DEG INCLINATION ANGLE WITH OUT [REDACTED] THIS PROCEDURE IS COMPATIBLE WITH TWO [REDACTED] AND FOUR "A" LAUNCHES UNLESS MORE THAN TWO INCLINED ORBITS ARE REQUIRED.

3. WHAT IS NEEDED AT THE PRESENT TIME IS A FIRM REQUIREMENT TO FLY AN INCLINED ORBIT ON AT LEAST THE 1ST "A" MISSION. THE LEAD TIME IS BECOMING CRITICAL SINCE A THERMAL STUDY MUST BE DONE TO ESTABLISH PAINT PATTERNS FOR "A" ORBITS THAT DIFFER CONSIDERABLY FROM THOSE FLOWN IN THE PAST.

4. REQUEST COMMENTS ON ABOVE.

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Declassified and Released by the NRO

In Accordance with E. O. 12958

on NOV 26 1997

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