

~~SECRET~~

Control System

March 27, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Congressional Contact with Chairman Mahon, Representative Frank T. Bow and Glenard P. Lipscomb of the House Committee on Appropriations

In follow-up to the March 21, 1968 appearance before the above members of the House Committee on Appropriations who were considering NRO programs, a second meeting was held at 1000 hours on March 25, 1968. This meeting was also conducted in a BYEMAN environment with the following personnel from the Executive Branch present.

DOD

Dr. Foster
Dr. Flax
Mr. Joe Hoover

CIA

Mr. Carl Duckett
Mr. John Clark
Mr. Warner

Colonel David Carter

The following is a summation of Colonel David Carter's recollections, as told to me, of those portions of the meeting which related to MOL. Mr. Michaels, Chief Staff Assistant to the Committee read a number of prepared questions to which the witnesses were asked to respond. One of the early questions by Mr. Michaels was substantially as follows. It has been noted by the Committee that all of the MOL program appears in the RDT&E area. Would someone like to comment on the operational control and management of all these resources with respect to the National Reconnaissance Program (NRP)? Dr. Flax answered this question by saying that the Committee recognizes that the MOL is not under the NRP, however, the operational missions will be flown under NRP control.

The next question which Mr. Michaels asked with respect to MOL was to the effect as to whether or not the intelligence community had indicated a requirement for the MOL system. Dr. Flax responded to this question by indicating that in the beginning the intelligence community had endorsed the MOL program; however, since that time the personalities involved changed. (e.g. the DCI and the SecDef). Should he, Dr. Flax, ask the same question today the answer might be different. Dr. Flax explained that the principal question was not that of the value of high

DORIAN/GAMBIT

Page 1 of 3 pages
Copy 2 of 3 copies
SAFSL Control Internal

Control System

~~SECRET~~

resolution but of the cost incurred in obtaining this very high resolution. Dr. Flax stated that when Mr. McNamara left office one month ago, Mr. McNamara was convinced that there was a vital requirement for the MOL system and the resolution that it will provide and, therefore, Mr. McNamara strongly supported the program. Dr. Foster added to these comments by saying that if the MOL program were cancelled it would not be possible to recoup \$600 million. Unfortunately, much undue attention is drawn to the program due to the large amount of money associated with this single project. However, it should be pointed out that this is the only program in which a high resolution reconnaissance system is being developed. He further pointed out that it is just at this point that we are beginning to get the kinds of resolutions from our satellite systems that are required for really useful intelligence work. As an example, Dr. Foster pointed out that the present resolution obtained from the GAMBIT³ system is not sufficient to do the complete analysis of the Tallinn Missile System. Mr. Michaels pointed out that we will not have the MOL system for some time to come. Dr. Flax countered by saying that we will have other Tallinns in the future. Chairman Mahon then asked Dr. Foster and Dr. Flax if they were in favor of the MOL system. Col Carter reports that both Dr. Flax and Dr. Foster responded in the strong affirmative.

Dr. Flax then made the following points in substance to the Committee. He explained that when the Department of Defense buys weapons there are many doubts and uncertainties concerning the threat that the DOD is attempting to counter and therefore, it is necessary to assume the worst case. When a system is developed and put into the inventory, the system is bought on the premise of meeting the worst threat. Dr. Flax then used the Tallinn System as an example, explaining that the DOD was not sure as to whether or not the Tallinn System had an ABM capability so it was necessary to target both Polaris and Minuteman Missiles against the Tallinn System. Therefore, it has been necessary to buy the missile and supporting systems necessary to neutralize this threat on the assumption that the system does have an ABM capability.

Chairman Mahon then asked Mr. Carl Duckett, CIA, about the views of his organization with regard to the MOL system. Mr. Duckett explained that in response to Dr. Foster's query on the subject, Mr. Helms has expressed his reservations with respect to the value of the high resolution in view of the cost of the system. Mr. Duckett explained that Mr. Helms is not opposed to the system but that Mr. Helms felt that now is the time to study the system again to confirm the value of its product versus the cost of acquisition. Mr. Duckett explained these studies are now under way. It is understood that Mr. Duckett had a copy of Mr. Helms memorandum to Dr. Foster in his possession.

DORIAN/GARBIT

Page 2 of 3 pages
 Copy 2 of 5 copies
 SAFSL Control Internal

~~SECRET~~
Control System

The Chairman then asked Dr. Flax how much money will have been expended on the MOL program by the end of FY 68. Dr. Flax gave him the appropriate figure. Dr. Foster explained to the group that the MOL program had just undergone a very thorough review at high level and expressed confidence in the results of this review. Dr. Foster further stated words to the effect that MOL is not the softest spot in the DOD Budget.

RJF
RALPH J. FORD
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Program and Policies Div,
SAFSL

Cys to:
SAFSL - Chron File
SAFSLP - Official File
SCG - Read

Col Ford/SAFSLP/50945/shw/27 Mar 68

DORIAN/GARBY

Page 3 of 3 pages
Copy 1 of 5 copies
SAFSL Control Internal

Handle via DORIAN
Control System