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CONTROL SYSTEM~~(S)~~ NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

15 August 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. PLUMMER

SUBJECT: Status of Action to Reduce HEXAGON/GAMBIT Launch Rates

REFERENCE: a. WHIG 0947, 24 July 1974 (Attachment 1)  
b. Meeting with General Bradburn, 2 August 1974

The following is a status update of the planning for future HEXAGON and GAMBIT launch rates and strategies.

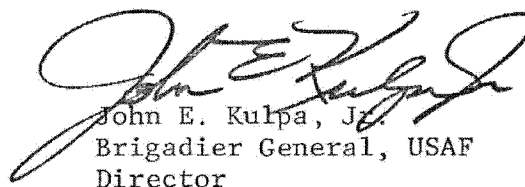
Following the July ExCom your message to General Bradburn (Attachment 1) provided him official guidance on the ExCom decisions concerning future HEXAGON and GAMBIT procurement and launch rates. Subsequently, General Bradburn briefed you on 2 August 1974 on his tentative plans. You agreed with the approach and requested that we work out the remaining details. As a result of that meeting, our respective staffs have ironed out the specific aspects of the plan. (See Attachment 2 for associated message traffic.) This plan is shown in a generalized sense in Attachment 3 and is based on not only optimized intelligence value but cost effective delivery date planning and other contractual aspects as well. Further minor modifications may occur as a result of the iterations with the contractor or changes in intelligence requirements. The overall plan is designed to accommodate such small perturbations with no impact. This plan permits General Bradburn to proceed with his requests to the contractors.

One item still to be finalized is the relative value of avoiding duplicate management and overlapping operations between systems. The capability to process and fly GAMBIT and HEXAGON at the same time exists today. This capability is valuable from two standpoints; it permits optimum scheduling against intelligence needs and it avoids the problem or "domino effect" of a

HEXAGON GAMBIT

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slip on one system effecting the others (and eventually impacting optimum scheduling for both systems). On the other hand, potential efficiencies and cost savings may make a no overlap ground rule desirable. This area will be carefully addressed by General Bradburn so that we and the community can make the proper tradeoff inputs to you with respect to relative cost savings versus impact on intelligence value. Your direction to SAFSP will then allow contract changes.

  
John E. Kulpa, Jr.  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Director

3 Attachments

1. WHIG Msg 0947, w/Atchs
2. CHARGE Msg 5885, w/Atchs
3. Pre-FY 78

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Col. Wheeler

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PRIORITY CHARGE, PILOT INFO CONCERT.

SECTION ONE OF TWO  
HEXAGON/CAMBIT/KENNEL [REDACTED] EARNPOP [REDACTED] SECUP.  
FOR GEN BRADBURN, CHARGE, MR. DUCKETT, PILOT, INFO GEN ALLEN,  
CONCERT FROM J.W. FLUTTER.  
SUBJECT: 19 JULY 1974 EX COM DECISIONS.

IN EXECUTIVE SESSION ON 19 JULY 74, THE EX COM MADE THE  
FOLLOWING DECISIONS FOR THE WEP, AS AMPLIFIED BY DNRD INSTRUCTIONS:  
HEXAGON:

APPROVED A REVISED PROGRAM TO LAUNCH TWO PER YEAR FOR FY 1975  
THRU FY 1977, THEN REDUCE TO 1 LAUNCH PER YEAR FOR FY 1978 THRU  
1981, COVERING THRU VER. 18, BUT WITH THE PROVISIO THAT EARLIER  
TERMINATION POSSIBILITIES WOULD BE EXAMINED AFTER KENNEL FIRST  
LAUNCH EVALUATION. FUND PROTECTION WAS ESTABLISHED FOR CONTINUED  
PROCUREMENT OF ONE PER YEAR BEYOND VEHICLE 18, WHICH CUMULATIVELY

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PAGE 2 WHIG 0947 ~~TOP SECRET~~

PROVIDED FYEP FUNDING FOR OPTION 2A, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE DNRD.  
ON THIS BASIS, NO PROVISION WAS MADE FOR A 25 PERCENT FIRM INCREASE.  
ALSO, ANY FOLLOW-ON MAPPING CAMERAS WILL BE FUNDED OUTSIDE THE  
WRP.

GMIDII:

APPROVED A REVISED PROGRAM TO LAUNCH TWO PER YEAR STARTING IN  
FY 1978 THRU 1983, COVERING THRU VER. 54, BUT ALSO WITH THE PROVISIO  
THAT EARLIER TERMINATION POSSIBILITIES WOULD BE EXAMINED AFTER  
KENNEL FIRST LAUNCH EVALUATION. FUND PROTECTION WAS ESTABLISHED  
FOR CONTINUED PROCUREMENT OF TWO PER YEAR BEYOND VEHICLE 54, WHICH  
CUMULATIVELY PROVIDED FYEP FUNDING FOR OPTION 4A.

KENNEL:

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HEXAGON GAMBIT

FOR MR PLUMMER FROM GEN BRADBURN

SUBJECT: REVISED PROCUREMENT DELIVERY DATES FOR  
 GAMBIT AND HEXAGON

1. I AM PREPARING TO REDIRECT THE GAMBIT AND HEXAGON  
 CONTRACTORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRETCH OUT  
 OPTIONS SELECTED BY THE JULY EX COM. I HAVE WORKED  
 OUT A REVISED SET OF LAUNCH SCHEDULES AND A BACKUP  
 PHILOSOPHY WHICH I BELIEVE WILL BE SUITABLE. I WOULD  
 LIKE YOUR CONCURRENCE ON THESE KEY ELEMENTS BEFORE  
 I GIVE FORMAL DIRECTION TO THE CONTRACTORS.

2. SCHEDULE:

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GAMBIT	HEXAGON	FY
MONTH VEH	MONTH VEH	
AUG 4343		75
	OCT 1209	
FEB 4344		
	MAR 1210	
AUG 4345		76
	SEP 1211	
FEB 4346		
	MAR 1212	
AUG 4347		77
	SEP 1213	
FEB 4348		
	APR 1214	
SEP 4349		78
NOV 4350		
	JAN 1215	
JUL 4351		79
OCT 4352		

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OCT 4354  
JUL 4355 JAN 1217 81

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3. BACKUP CAPABILITY

EACH GAMBIT AND HEXAGON VEHICLE WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR LAUNCH SIX MONTHS AHEAD OF THE SCHEDULED LAUNCH DATE. THAT IS, THE CONTRACTORS WILL GO THRU THEIR FINAL ASSEMBLY AND CHECKOUT SEQUENCES JUST SIX MONTHS EARLIER THAN THE NEED DATES. THIS WILL PROVIDE REASONABLY GOOD BACKUP FOR SOME CONTINGENCIES AS OUTLINED IN THE FOLLOWING DISCUSSION.

4. LAUNCH STRATEGY

A. THE BASIC STRATEGY FOR 1978 AND SUBSEQUENT IS TO LAUNCH ONE HEXAGON (WINTER AND SPRING, 150 DAYS) AND TWO GAMBITS (SUMMER AND FALL, 60 DAYS EACH).

B. THERE WILL BE NO OVERLAP BETWEEN GAMBIT AND HEXAGON, BECAUSE BOTH WILL BE IN SUN SYNCHRONOUS ORBITS AND WOULD HAVE SERIOUS SCF CONFLICTS.

C. REACTION IN CASE A HEXAGON FAILS: THE GAMBIT VEHICLES WILL BE PULLED UP AND FLOWN IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER. THE HEXAGON NEXT IN LINE WILL BE FLOWN AS A FALL-WINTER MISSION. THIS SEQUENCE WILL BE CONTINUED WITH HEXAGON.

PAGE 4 CHARGE 5885 ~~SECRET~~

REGULARLY FALL-WINTER.

D. STRATEGY ON FAILURE OF SUMMER GAMBIT: CAPABILITY TO REPLACE IN 15 DAYS WITH THE FALL GAMBIT. DO NOT REPLACE THE FALL GAMBIT.

E. STRATEGY ON FAILURE OF FALL GAMBIT. NO REPLACEMENT ACTION.

5. THE LAUNCH DATES AND REPLENISHMENT STRATEGY ARE ILLUSTRATIVE AND QUITE FLEXIBLE. I WOULD LIKE YOUR CONCURRENCE TO PLACE MY CONTRACTORS ON THIS REVISED SCHEDULE AND WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO HAVE EACH VEHICLE READY TO FLY AHEAD OF THIS SCHEDULE. I WILL BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU AT OUR MEETING ON FRIDAY, 2 AUG.

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 HEXAGON/GAMBIT/KENNEN  
 REFERENCE: (1) CHARGE 5085

(2) 2 AUG MEETING BRADBURN/KULPA  
 CHARGE FOR BRADBURN; WHIG FOR KULPA/WHEELER

AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT EXCOM MEETING WE ARE  
 ATTEMPTING TO DEFINE A LONG RANGE SCHEDULE DESIGNED TO  
 OPTIMIZE INTELLIGENCE VALUE. THE TENTATIVE SCHEDULE  
 WHICH FOLLOWS IS BASED ON CURRENT COMMUNITY GUIDANCE.

THROUGH FY 1977

GAMBIT - MARCH AND AUGUST (45 DAYS)

HEXAGON - APRIL AND OCTOBER (105 DAYS GOING TO  
 120 DAYS)

FY 1978 AND SUBSEQUENT

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GAMBIT - MARCH AND AUGUST

HEXAGON - OCTOBER

ADDITIONAL ON ORBIT DAYS FOR BOTH SYSTEMS IN THE FY 78  
 AND LATER TIME PERIOD WOULD BE UTILIZED BY SHIFTING BOTH  
 GAMBITS TOWARDS HIGHER SUN. IN ANY CASE PLANNING WOULD  
 BE FOR NO REPEAT NO MISSION OVERLAP. THE ACTUAL IMPLI-  
 MENTATION OF THE SCHEDULE WOULD AVOID OVERLAP UNLESS  
 INTELLIGENCE REQUIREMENTS FORCED OTHERWISE. THIS WOULD  
 BE ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR GAMBIT SUN SYNCHRONOUS MISSIONS.

WITH REGARD TO BACK-UP CAPABILITY WE ASSUME THE  
 CURRENT BACK-UP CAPABILITY WILL EXIST FOR SOME TIME;  
 HOWEVER, IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY CHANGE AS THE PIPELINE  
 STRETCHES TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW LAUNCH RATES. WE CUR-  
 RENTLY ADVERTISE THE PRESENT CAPABILITY:

HEXAGON TO HEXAGON - Approved for Release: 2025/06/18 C05137302

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SCHEDULES, ETC., PLEASE INFORM US AS TO BEST BACK-UP

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CAPABILITY THROUGH THE PRESENT VEHICLE BUYS AND TIMING ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHANGE IN BACK-UP STRATEGY. IN ANY CASE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO MAINTAIN AT LEAST R-60 BACK UP FOR BOTH SYSTEMS UNTIL KENKEN HAS COMPLETED OPERATIONAL DEMONSTRATION.

OUR PREVIOUS REQUEST (WHIG 0970, 211956ZJUL74) FOR ANALYSIS OF GAMBIT MISSIONS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WILL YIELD DATA WHICH MAY CAUSE SOME FINE TUNING OF THE PLANNED SCHEDULE BUT SHOULD HAVE NO LARGE IMPACT. WE WOULD LIKE THE RESULTS OF THIS ANALYSIS BY THE END OF AUGUST.

FINALLY, THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH FROM MR. PLUNKER'S RECOMMENDED PROGRAM WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE EXCOM IS QUOTED IN ITS ENTIRETY. QUOTE: "OPERATING PROGRAMS. CONTINUE APPROVED OPERATING PROGRAMS WITH HIGH RELIABILITY AND DEMONSTRATED PERFORMANCE, ON APPROVED SCHEDULES, AND WITHIN APPROVED COSTS. MINIMIZE SYSTEM CHANGES AND MISSION IMPROVEMENTS ON MATURE PROGRAMS EXCEPT TO MATERIALLY INCREASE OPERATING LIFETIME AND RELIABILITY."

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NEXAGONY GAMBIT  
REFERENCE: WAH00 0903  
FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY REP  
INDICATES A CONTINUING DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CAPABILITY FOR  
OVERLAP BETWEEN MISSIONS WHEN NECESSARY. THIS IS ESPE-  
CIALY TRUE WHEN A LAUNCH DELAY OF ONE SYSTEM IMPACTS  
THE SCHEDULED LAUNCH OF THE OTHER. IF THERE ARE SIGNI-  
FICANT COST SAVINGS TO ACCRUE FROM A HARD "NO OVERLAP"  
POLICY AS TENTATIVELY OUTLINED IN REFERENCED MESSAGE,  
THEN SUCH A POLICY WOULD BE VIEWED FAVORABLY. HOWEVER,  
IF SIGNIFICANT SAVINGS ARE NOT EVIDENT, WE SHOULD MAIN-  
TAIN THE TYPE OF FLEXIBILITY FOR OVERLAP AS EXISTS  
TODAY. THE SPECIFIC QUESTION ASSOCIATED WITH OVERLAP

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BETWEEN SUN SYNCHRONOUS MISSIONS WOULD BE ADDRESSED ON  
THE BASIS OF RELATIVE INTELLIGENCE VALUE IF AND WHEN  
THE SITUATION AROSE.

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