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PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S STATEMENT ON MOL - PRESS CONFERENCE - 25 August 1965

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

At the suggestion of Vice President Humphrey and members of the Space Council, as well as Defense Secretary McNamara, I am today instructing the Department of Defense to immediately proceed with the development of a Manned Orbiting Laboratory.

This program will bring us new knowledge about what man is able to do in space. It will enable us to relate that ability to the defense of America. It will develop technology and equipment which will help advance manned and unmanned space flights. And it will make it possible to perform their new and rewarding experiments with that technology and equipment.

The cost of developing the Manned Orbiting Laboratory will be One Billion, 500 Million Dollars.

Unmanned flights to test launchings, recovery and other basic parts of the system will begin late next year or early in 1967. The initial unmanned launch of a fully equipped laboratory is scheduled for 1968. This will be followed later that year by the first of five flights with a two-man crew.

The Air Force has selected the Douglas Aircraft Company to design and to build a spacecraft in which the crew of the laboratory will live and operate. The General Electric Company will plan and develop the space experiments. The Titan IIIC booster will launch the laboratory into space and a modified version of the NASA Gemini capsule will be the vehicle in which the astronauts return to earth.