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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

January 7, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Since its inception, the Manned Orbiting Laboratory Program (MOL) has been managed without the benefit of a listing in the Department of Defense Master Urgency List. As the program has progressed in the development cycle, we have encountered increasing difficulty in assuring subcontractor and supplier response to program needs. Although MOL requirements do not call for large quantities of major industrial supply items, inability to obtain single units or small quantities of needed items on a timely basis, whether or not they are a part of the pacing reconnaissance payload, increasingly threatens to disrupt orderly program progress with attendant detriment to schedules and costs. Also, since many of the MOL program subcontractors and suppliers are involved as well in the NASA Apollo Program which carries a DX industrial priority, there is an inevitable tendency for subcontractors and suppliers to use their MOL commitment as a cushion against slippage in their high-priority Apollo commitments.

The overall assignment of Category S (Brick-Bat .01) military urgency designation to the other satellite reconnaissance programs of the NRO cannot be effectively utilized in support of the MOL program because of the open identification of the program (except for its covert mission). Also, for this reason the usual DOD channels for processing actions relating to priorities have not been used for transmitting this memorandum.

In order to insure the progress of the MOL program at a rate compatible with the pace set by the optical technology and without detriment to optimum cost and schedule, I believe it is essential that this program be assigned a rating of Category S (Brick-Bat .01) on the DOD Master Urgency List. I recommend that you take action to establish this rating for the MOL program.

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In recognition of the need to limit the number of programs having the highest National priority, I recommend that Program 437AP be removed from the S (Brick-Bat .01) Category and placed in the S (Brick-Bat Other than .01) Category.

Harold Brown
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