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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

10 JUN 1968

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR Honorable Alexander H. Flax  
Assistant Secretary of the Air Force  
Research & Development

SUBJECT: Release of Technical Papers on MOL

The proposal to release carefully selected MOL technical papers to scientific and technical society meetings as set forth in your memorandum of April 19 has been discussed with the State Department and USIA.

State feels the MOL is a potentially inflammable propaganda issue in various U. N. forums. However, since it is no secret that the MOL is being developed, the general feeling of State is that the adoption of an open, business-as-usual stance is much preferred to assuming an elaborate air of secrecy.

USIA expects the MOL to be more of a liability than an asset as far as the U.S. overseas information program is concerned. They did not object to the highly selective action you proposed.

Limited public presentations over a period of time appear to be a favorable approach to disarm hostile propaganda should it arise. Release of information about the MOL, no matter how restrictive, will give rise to questions about the purpose of the program. All the value gained from this exercise would be lost if these questions are answered by a "no comment". We, therefore, must have reasonably responsive guidelines for such questions in order to proceed with this proposal.

I feel your proposal is sound and I concur with its implementation on a highly selective, carefully controlled basis. I would like to reserve final judgment on these presentations on a case-by-case basis since time and place are often as important as the material released.

DOWNGRADED AT 3 YEAR INTERVALS;  
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS.  
DCD DIR 5200.10

*Paul G. Goulding*  
Paul G. Goulding  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(Public Affairs)

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