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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 20330



MAY 19 1969



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President re MOL

A meeting was held with the President on May 17 so that DoD could present the counter-case to the BoB proposal to terminate MOL. The following were present:

- o The President
- o Mr. Laird
- o Dr. Seamans
- o Gen Stewart
- o Dr. Kissinger
- o Mr. Mayo
- o Dr. Schlesinger

Mr. Laird began the session by stating that he believed the responsible people should be given an opportunity to speak on difficult, complex problems, and that was why Dr. Seamans and I were there.

Dr. Seamans then gave the President an informal briefing on MOL, using the charts listed in Attachment 1 (These charts are filed in MOL Program Office). The major points emphasized by Dr. Seamans follow:

- o He had accompanied Mr. McNamara on the latter's visit to Boeing just before Dynasoar was cancelled. Although NASA supported Dynasoar, Mr. McNamara felt it was more important that the Defense Department explore the utility of man in space for military purposes than maneuvering reentry technology. Thus, Dynasoar was terminated and the MOL concept announced.

- o Two years of study followed before very high resolution photography was identified as the primary area for MOL experimentation. Subsequent budgetary problems had delayed a possible first flight date from 1970 to mid-1972.



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o There now are about 19,000 Associate Contractor and 1st-tier subcontractors people aboard -- perhaps, 65,000 in all (end-tier subs, vendors, etc.). About \$1.3 billion has been spent to date, with another \$1.9 billion to go.

o The primary objectives of MOL are to acquire very high resolution photography and gain military manned spaceflight know-how and experience.

o The GANEF Missile picture montage (Chart 1, Atch 1) illustrated why very high resolution photography is needed to analyze weapon performance and provide confidence, for example, in the ability of B-52's to penetrate at low level.

o Man was described as having particularly important functions in "targetting" (pointing; 20-25 percent more cloud-free targets per day; high-value target selection, etc.); "fine-tuning" (alignment, focus, exposure, and tracking); and "reading-out information (visual recce; and on-board interpretation of processed Bimat film).

o



o The manned MOL system was described as offering the highest confidence for the best possible photography during the President's tenure (which, per Dr. Seamans, was the next 7½ years -- not 3½). It was added that it appears feasible to convert to an unmanned system at lower cost (\$1.2-1.4 billion to go vs \$1.9 in present program), but it would have serious limitations.

o VHR photography was described as being very important both for determining weapon system performance and in any future arms limitation agreement situation (for credible, irrefutable evidence).

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o Also described as being very important was acquiring experience with military manned space systems to explore their value quantitatively (MOL being about 1/10 the cost of Apollo).

o The MOL Program was described as having more value than anything under consideration by the President's Space Task Group.

o Dr. Seamans observed that cancellation of MOL would be a "bitter pill" both for the AF and him personally to "swallow", and stated that he would find \$350 million somewhere in the AF Budget, if necessary, to continue the program. (Notes used by Dr. Seamans are included as Attachment 2).

At one point, Mr. Laird reminded the President that he had supported MOL in the past -- having once prepared a Committee minority report criticizing Mr. McNamara for not putting more money in the program.

PSAC (Land Panel) views were discussed briefly -- with the President indicating some familiarity with their support of the feasibility of an unmanned system and desire to spend the money saved on "something else" (readout). . . . The President said the "Intelligence Community" wanted to do "everything" and expressed annoyance (the background for this statement was not clear to me) with "scientists" who lectured him on "international politics", stating that was as much a waste of his time as his lecturing them on "science".

During the brief discussion on the possibility of building an unmanned system using the MOL camera, Dr. Seamans stated that such an approach was not very well-defined; and it was always possible to build a better "paper system" than an on-going program. Mr. Laird expressed the opinion that "HEXAGON" (he apparently was referring to HEXADOR -- the informal code word used for the possible MOL camera/HEXAGON spacecraft combination) was a "long way off" and "uncertain". (Dr. Schlesinger told me, in an aside, that he didn't think the "HEXADOR" approach made much sense.)

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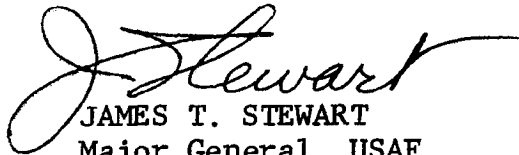
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Mr. Mayo and Dr. Kissinger (perhaps thinking Mr. Laird was discussing "HEXAGON" rather than "HEXADOR") reminded the President that they had considered terminating HEXAGON and that this would "save \$1. billion" in future years if the KH-4 were used for search purposes. . . . The President recalled that Mr. Helms had argued against terminating HEXAGON.

Just before the meeting concluded, the President asked me for my "opinion". I expressed the view that if the US achieved an arms limitation agreement with the Soviets, he would be "pushing us to accelerate MOL" and would desire even higher resolution photography than we could provide for the highest possible confidence that the agreement was being followed.

The President concluded the meeting by waving his hand in the direction of Mr. Laird, Mr. Mayo, and Dr. Kissinger and stating that they would have to discuss this matter further (the President made numerous notes while Dr. Seamans was discussing MOL). . . . As we walked out, Dr. Seamans reminded the President that FY 71 actually would be the peak year for MOL; the President indicated he understood but that FY 70 was his immediate concern.



JAMES T. STEWART
Major General, USAF
Vice Director, MOL Program

Atch
a/s

cc: Dr. Seamans ←
Dr. McLucas

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PHOTOCHARTS USED BY DR. SEAMANS

1. GANEF photo Montage
2. Baseline MOL manned Mode schematic
3. Gemini/Laboratory schematic
4. Acquisition Telescope System operating concept
5. Low-power view of Sheremetyevo
6. High-power view of Sheremetyevo
7. Tracking mirror substitute being installed (GE)
8. SLC-6 construction at VAFB
9. Control and recovery net
10. MOL Program schedule.

Attachment 1

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