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Control System

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JUN 9 1969

Honorable George H. Mahon  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Mahon:

We have decided to terminate the Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) Program.

The primary purpose of MOL, as you know, has always been the collection of technical intelligence through very high resolution photography of Soviet and Chinese weapons and equipment. You will recall that when MOL was approved by President Johnson in 1965, only manual operation of the camera by the MOL flight crew appeared feasible. Later, as fully automatic operation of the camera began to appear more practical, there still were advantages to continuing development of the manned space vehicle. Additionally, it was also apparent that the MOL manned reconnaissance system would always possess certain unique capabilities, operational flexibility, and somewhat better performance.

Unfortunately, the MOL Program development phase has stretched out and the total cost increased for various reasons. At the same time, the technology required to operate the camera in an unmanned satellite has continued to mature. It will be considerably less costly to terminate MOL, and to develop an unmanned system using the MOL camera. We should save about \$275M in FY 70 and \$300M in FY 71.

Since the camera payload in the MOL spacecraft has always been a very closely held matter (and is being developed under a covert contract), the public announcement will indicate that the entire program has been cancelled and that several million dollars will be saved. The continuation of camera development and its incorporation into an unmanned spacecraft will be handled covertly, as are the unmanned reconnaissance satellites in the National Reconnaissance Program.

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Attached is an unclassified notice to you of MOL termination for use  
as you deem appropriate.

Sincerely,

Attachment

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JUN 9 1969

Honorable L. Mendel Rivers  
Chairman, House Armed Services Committee  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Rivers:

We have decided to terminate the Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) Program.

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*Bye 68376-69*

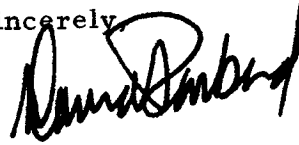
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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

9 June 69

Honorable John Stennis  
Chairman, Senate Armed Services Committee  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Stennis:

We have decided to terminate the Manned Orbiting Laboratory (MOL) Program.

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

*June 69*

Honorable Richard B. Russell  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate

Dear Senator Russell:

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