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DECLASSIFIED BY: C/IART
DECLASSIFIED ON: 10 JANUARY 2013

DACOM

7 July 80

FOR COL McCHRISTIAN, [REDACTED]

FROM L. CRESS, [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: GAMBIT Flyout Strategy

REF: [REDACTED] 0844 & 0855

This memo summarizes my concerns on the subject strategy. Some are self-evident which you have no doubt already noticed. My comments relate only to technical and functional characteristics of a GAMBIT flyout but these points may influence your funding impacts response.

1. The current program requires that:
 - a. 4351 be launched prior to July 1981; and,
 - b. on-demand backup capability be maintained through 1985.

The flyout strategy (ref 0855) implies that 4352 and 4353 would fly in FY81, and that 4351 and 4354 would fly in FY82. This strategy eliminates the capability to backup [REDACTED] HEXAGON beyond FY82. Also 4351 would have to be maintained for approximately one year longer than programmed. [REDACTED]

2. As we have discussed several times, most people seem to overlook or fail to understand that one Dual Mode GAMBIT is approximately equivalent to one-third of a HEXAGON when imagery is collected in the valid stereo/mono mode. Therefore, two Dual Mode GAMBITs in FY81 would not replace a planned HEXAGON gap as suggested in paragraph F of ref 0844. At best, only two-thirds of the search collection requirements would be met.

3. A GAMBIT flyout eliminates the possibility of adequately updating the high resolution Scientific and Technological data base. If no backup need for [REDACTED] HEXAGON occurs, GAMBIT vehicles can be selectively scheduled for higher resolution S&T missions when the number of vehicles remaining vs the number of committed backup years indicates that flying a GAMBIT is prudent. I believe that, barring any HEXAGON [REDACTED] failures, the user community will desire to use the remaining GAMBITs for high resolution shortfalls. Some of the users' representatives are starting to informally discuss the need to fly 4351 in the Spring of 81.

I believe this flyout strategy is without any significant intelligence merit. It eliminates the little remaining depth of the imagery mix and leaves the users vulnerable to shortfalls if a vehicle failure occurs. [REDACTED]

Larry

Handle via BYEMAN
Control System

GAMBIT HEXAGON

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