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IMMEDIATE INFO PRIORITY

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GAMBIT

FOR L. CRESS

FROM: L. MCCHRISTIAN

SUBJECT: RETROFIT OF GAMBIT VEHICLE 51

REFERENCE: KUBISON MSG 2178, DTD 19 DEC 79

MSG 1651, DTD 27 DEC 79

1. AS REFERENCED ABOVE, THE FY 81 PROGRAM BUDGET SUBMISSIONS CONTAINED THE OPTION TO FOREGO RETROFITTING GAMBIT VEHICLE 51 TO THE DUAL MODE CONFIGURATION. THIS OPTION, WHICH WAS APPROVED, PROVIDED A SAVINGS OF APPROXIMATELY [REDACTED] TO THE GOVERNMENT. A PROVISIO WAS ATTACHED WHICH RECOMMENDED THAT VEHICLE 51 BE LAUNCHED BY JULY 81 DUE TO CALENDAR LIFE EXPIRATIONS OF NUMEROUS COMPONENTS IN THE PHOTOGRAPHIC PAYLOAD SECTION (PPS).

2. THE CURRENT GAMBIT MISSION OPTION TO FLY WITH EITHER VEHICLES 51 OR 52 LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT VEHICLE 51 MAY NOT BE FLOWN PRIOR TO MID-YEAR 1981. RECENT TESTING OF SOME COMPONENTS AND A REVIEW OF VEHICLE 51'S HARDWARE STATUS INDICATE THAT WE CAN EXTEND THE LAUNCH AVAILABILITY OF VEHICLE 51 THROUGH AUGUST 81, VICE JULY 81, WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL RISK DUE TO INCREASED HARDWARE LIFE. THIS WOULD ACCOMMODATE A 52 [REDACTED] 51 SEQUENCE FROM SLC-4W

3. HOWEVER, IN THE EVENT THAT VEHICLE 51 IS NOT REQUIRED BY AUGUST 81, WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT IT BE RETROFITTED AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. WE FURTHER RECOMMEND CONVERSION TO THE DUAL MODE CONFIGURATION, AND NOT RETROFIT TO EXTEND LIFE OF THE CURRENT HIGH-RES SYSTEM. THIS WOULD INCREASE PROGRAM FLEXIBILITY AND ELIMINATE THE REQUIREMENT FOR DUAL AGE, DOCUMENTATION, AND TESTING PROCEDURES.

4. WE ARE CURRENTLY GENERATING ESTIMATES FOR CONVERSION OF 51 TO DUAL MODE. COSTS WILL BE SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE FY 81 SUBMISSION FOR THIS EFFORT DUE TO THE YEAR'S DELAY AND TAILOFF IN FACTORY MANPOWER. WE WILL PROVIDE THIS COST AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION BY JANUARY 30.

REVW 15 JAN 81

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#1674

NRO APPROVED FOR RELEASE

DECLASSIFIED BY: C/IART

DECLASSIFIED ON: 10 JANUARY 2013

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