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GAMBIT/HEXAGON

WHIG FOR DR. COOK FM: GEN KULPA

SUBJECT: DUAL MODE GAMBIT

1. IN RESPONSE TO YOUR MESSAGE, WHIG 0544, WE ARE EVALUATING THE REDUCED CALL-UP AND SURVIVABILITY CAPABILITIES OF THE GAMBIT DUAL MODE VEHICLE. OUR EVALUATION WILL BE COMPLETED BY 20 JUNE 1977 AND WE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THE TECHNICAL TRADE-OFFS AND COST IMPACTS AT THAT TIME.

2. SEVERAL ALTERNATIVES OF REDUCED CALL-UP TIME ARE BEING EVALUATED. THESE INCLUDE A READINESS CAPABILITY FOR CONTINUOUS EARLY CALL-UP FROM TWO MONTHS TO ON-PAD STANDBY, AS WELL AS A CAPABILITY TO BACK UP HEXAGON LAUNCHES FOR PERIODS FROM 30 TO 90 DAYS. OF COURSE ALL OF THESE ALTERNATIVES HAVING VARYING DEGREES OF COST IMPACT. IN OUR CURRENT GAMBIT BUDGET SUBMITTAL, WE HAVE PRICED A MINIMUM COST ONE PER YEAR STRETCHOUT WHICH PROVIDES VERY

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LITTLE FLEXIBILITY FOR EARLY CALL-UP. THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT FOR INCREASING GAMBIT READINESS POSTURE INDICATES THE LIMITING FACTORS WOULD BE FILM LOADS, TANKED VEHICLE STANDBY TIMES, BATTERY WET STAND LIFE, AND HARDWARE RETEST REQUIREMENTS.

3. THE DUAL MODE GAMBIT VULNERABILITY/SURVIVABILITY ASPECTS ARE BEING EVALUATED RELATIVE TO THE ASAT, [REDACTED]

THREATS.

A. FOR THE ASAT THREAT, GAMBIT DOES HAVE AN EXISTING EVASIVE MANEUVER CAPABILITY WITH THE ORBIT ADJUST PROPULSION SYSTEM (ISPS). WITH ADVANCE TIPOFF, IN A DUAL MODE CONFIGURATION, GAMBIT COULD ORBIT ADJUST TO A HIGHER ALTITUDE AND CONTINUE THE PHOTOGRAPHIC MISSION IN THE SEARCH MODE. GAMBIT ORBIT ADJUST CAPABILITIES CERTAINLY COMPLICATE THE ASAT INTERCEPT PROBLEM.

B. THE CURRENT GAMBIT VEHICLE CAN [REDACTED]

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SPACE APPLICATIONS ARE OPERATIONAL. PRELIMINARY STUDIES ARE IN  
PROGRESS. HOWEVER, FOR A

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4. IN SUMMARY, THE DUAL MODE GAMBIT APPEARS TO HAVE POTENTIAL  
FOR PROVIDING A REDUCED CALL-UP CAPABILITY WITH A SUBSTANTIAL  
DEGREE OF SURVIVABILITY.

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