

*General Berg*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

MAR 23 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. FLAX

SUBJECT: MOL Priority

Reference is made to General Schriever's memo to you of February 3, 1966, subject: MOL Priority, and your oral request for specific examples of where our efforts were being held up by the lack of a DX priority. As you know, the numbers of long-lead items which we currently have under acquisition are so very few that our ability to cite specific examples whereby MOL work is being held up due to lack of priority are rather difficult to come by. However, the general situation relative to increasing lead times is quite well known; I will outline below additional factors which cause me to be very concerned with our ability to live within the current schedules and dollars which are anticipated for FY 1967 for the MOL Program.

As you know, General Schriever in his February 3 memo addressed the general question of MOL/Apollo/GAMBIT relationships. The existing priority imbalance among these programs, which share relatively limited and specialized national resources, creates a set of circumstances which could result in serious impact on MOL schedules and costs. The present situation is one in which MOL requirements are automatically and mechanically deferred to Apollo and GAMBIT requirements. I do not believe this is consistent with the scope and urgency of the MOL/DORIAN effort. Since the Apollo and GAMBIT programs have already received a DX priority, the elevation of MOL to that priority level would merely permit the MOL Program to compete to some degree for the scarce materials and resources required to do our job.

More serious, however, are other emerging activities which also have, or are very shortly scheduled to have, DX priority. These activities are the Supersonic Transport, much of the work involved in supporting the SE Asia operation, and the Apollo Applications Program. One example of a problem which has recently arisen regards the disposition to be made by NASA of

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Page 1 of 4 pages  
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Gemini equipment which is or soon will be excess to the requirements of the Gemini program. The cost of the Gemini B effort at McDonnell will be partially determined by the extent to which NASA Gemini equipment, fixtures, and spares can be released to the MOL effort. Should NASA elect to distribute these resources within NASA rather than releasing them to MOL, there may be a considerable cost and schedule impact on the MOL Program. NASA presently has two uses for Gemini equipment. The first, and minor in nature, is for direct release to the Apollo program. A considerably greater use proposed by NASA for Gemini equipment is in support of or use in the Apollo Applications program. NASA obviously is reluctant to release equipment to MOL when its priority, in their view, is probably not even equivalent to Apollo Applications. They are currently processing a DX priority for Apollo Applications as a part of the Apollo program. Failure of the DOD to at least attempt to get a DX rating for the MOL can only reflect adversely in the costs and schedules for the MOL Program.

A second broad area of concern has recently arisen because of the impact of SE Asia requirements on lead times for certain materials and vendor items. Of particular interest in this regard are forgings, extrusions, electronic components, bearings, gears, copper wire and cable, and alloys of molybdenum, vanadium, tungsten and chromium. I am advised by the Joint Aeronautical Materials Activity that the lead time quoted by suppliers of these items have approximately doubled since mid-1965. There is some evidence that this situation is still deteriorating.

As I pointed out earlier, the MOL Program has not yet progressed to the point where a quantitative assessment of the impact of increased materials lead times on MOL can be accomplished in definitive form. I am able to provide, however, certain specific lead time problems which have been derived from vendor quotes supplied to Douglas Aircraft Company. Listed in the three columns is the example of material lead times formerly used by Douglas, and the latest lead time quotes from vendors. It should be noted that the latest lead time quotes from Douglas were predicated on a DX rating. Any lesser priority will increase the lead times.

<u>MATERIAL</u>	<u>FORMER LEAD TIME</u>	<u>PRESENT LEAD TIME</u>
Aft Rack		
7015-T6 Extrusions	10 weeks	22 weeks
Aluminum Bracket		
2014-T6 Forging		22 weeks

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Page 2 of 4 pages  
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<u>MATERIAL</u>	<u>FORMER LEAD TIME</u>	<u>PRESENT LEAD TIME</u>
Cabin Shell		
Aluminum Plate 2014-T6 Aluminum	10 weeks	28 weeks
Meteriod Shield		
6061-T42 Extrusions	10 weeks	22 weeks
Digital Data Acquisition System	19 weeks (all components)	
Printed Circuit Boards	Vary from 16 to 25 weeks	
Transformers		30 weeks
S0450-3N Switches		28 weeks

These are but a few samples from current planning documents from one contractor. In addition, it is their judgment that if we do not have a DX rating in which to compete with all other users at component and vendor level, our chances of making planned schedules are minimal. It is certainly clear that in order to make our schedules we must now make material orders and engineering releases considerably sooner than we had formerly planned, even with a DX rating. To do this, earlier release and more FY 1967 funds are required. If we have a lesser priority, the funding problem will be aggravated; and, in addition, it also means that manpower for procurement follow-up and expediting at detailed item level must be increased. All of this adds to a very inefficient way to conduct and manage a large program.

In addition to the foregoing, a number of instances, perhaps individually trivial in themselves, have arisen in recent weeks; incidents which might have been avoided had the importance and urgency of the MOL effort been currently and formally established by appropriate master urgency list designator. I do not wish to imply that the following items are fully matured problems for which every avenue of solution has been exhausted. They are not. They do, however, point out that the atmosphere which is created by the lack of formal recognition for MOL priority tends to develop situations such as the following:

a. Informal arrangements have been undertaken with the Office of the Surgeon General to make available to MOL, by name,

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Page 3 of 4 pages  
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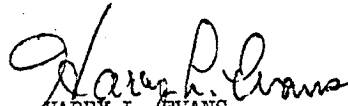
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certain peculiarly-qualified bioastronautics personnel. These arrangements will be consummated when and if the Surgeon General is presented with indications that such a move is warranted by the importance of the MOL effort. In the existing circumstances, the program is in some danger of losing these individuals to other, higher-priority requirements.

b. Difficulty has been experienced recently in concluding satisfactory arrangements with Military Airlift Command for transportation of HSQ flight hardware to ETR. As of today, no MAC commitment has been obtained for these shipments. While this is a problem which we will eventually resolve satisfactorily, I expect that the question will arise with each MOL transportation requirement until BRICKBAT .01 status can be cited to MAC.

In summary, I believe that the circumstances warrant immediate assignment of BRICKBAT .01/DX priorities to MOL. I will continue to gather specific supporting information as it is required. I request that the draft letter forwarded by General Schriever's memo of February 3 be forwarded. If you feel it is not suitable and needs redrafting, request that it be returned, with your comments, for rewrite.

  
HARRY L. EVANS  
Brigadier General, USAF  
Vice Director, MOL Program

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Page 4 of 4 pages  
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