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MOL

BRIEFING

POLICY

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MOL BRIEFING POLICY

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MOL BRIEFING POLICY

I. PROBLEM

It is questionable as to whether we can gain and/or maintain the necessary interest in and support for the MOL program among concerned Congressional, military and professional groups and still adhere to currently exercised security policy and briefing procedures.

II. BACKGROUND

We are confronted with some critical MOL information request problems caused by the fact that we have a white program with a black mission. As we progress with the program, legitimate requirements for information at all classification levels will increase, as will the number of requests we cannot fulfill that are prompted by our publicly-stated objectives.

Security and public affairs were considered critical problems by all agencies involved in the decision-making process leading to MOL program approval. Concern that domestic and/or foreign reaction to MOL might prevent the U. S. from using satellites for reconnaissance and the need to protect system capability resulted in current security policies. These require a person to have special security clearance plus a definite need-to-know under a covert control procedure before a complete program briefing can be given. The present MOL security policy states that in areas other than those revealing the reconnaissance aspects of MOL, a less stringent control will be exercised. It implies that other mission objectives may be discussed in the normal security environment. The dilemma arises from the fact that presently there are no other legitimate program objectives to be discussed, and thus we are faced with a difficult, if not dangerous, situation in the white area.

The MOL program had been discussed publicly since Secretary McNamara identified it in December 1963. Countless military, government, contractor and other personnel have been involved in

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it prior to its reconnaissance mission assignment. A great majority of these people do not realize that drastic new security restrictions now prohibit even mentioning reconnaissance in connection with MOL, although previous unclassified and published Congressional testimony by DOD officials contains such information; and security restrictions make it impossible to apprise most of them of the new classification.

In addition, in the past the Air Force had been conducting an extensive public information program on MOL and the requirement for it. There have been many speeches, technical papers and professional articles written about all potential aspects of the program. The problem was further aggravated by the "high key" Presidential announcement of program approval which stressed research objectives.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to put off requests for MOL briefings from Congressional sources considered not eligible for DORIAN information. We are reluctant to give SECRET-level briefings to these people for fear of losing support either through their ignorance of the significance of the program or because of animosity that could arise from giving complete briefings to some and incomplete information to others. There are six Congressional committees with direct interest in MOL and other committees and individual Congressmen with special interests. Indications are that intense interest will be given space station proposals when Congress reconvenes.

Another important but less critical source of requests for MOL information is from military commanders. Their interests range from the possible future support they may have to provide and plan for proposals to participate with operational experiments. While it is undesirable to get all of these individuals and their staffs DORIAN-cleared and briefed, it would be unwise to discourage and/or alienate them. Who in this category should be briefed? What kind of briefing should they be given? What office should dispatch negative replies so that requests are not resubmitted at a higher level of authority?

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Individual scientists, their organizations -- government and civilian -- and professional societies are other sources of MOL information requests. We cannot continue indefinitely to put off these people with an excuse such as: "The program is too new to give a meaningful reply." Ultimately they must conclude that we really do not have serious intentions of conducting a laboratory program.

III. COURSES OF ACTION

Regardless of the course of action to be adopted, there is a fundamental need to refine procedures and define in detail the methods to be used for responding to pressure for information by high-powered peripheral government activities and agencies.

Five alternative courses of action have been considered:

1. Cancel Program -- Go Black.
2. Broaden Black Base.
3. Move decision point for SECRET-level briefings from SAFSL to OSAF.
4. Change security classification of MOL-reconnaissance association to SECRET - Special Access Required.
5. Develop white objectives for a white program.

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ALTERNATIVE I

CANCEL PROGRAM -- GO BLACK

APPROACH:

This approach entails having an official at the highest executive level, i. e., President, Vice President, or Secretary of Defense announcing the cancellation or suspension of the MOL program. In order to lend credence to such a statement, existing MOL resources, personnel, facilities, equipment and contracts (white) must disappear. As a result, replies to inquiries concerning MOL activities can be answered: "Program cancelled/suspended."

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Formal announcement and white memorandum from the Executive Office of the President to the Secretary of Defense, instructing him to cancel or suspend MOL activities; or announcement by Secretary of Defense.
2. A black memorandum authorizing the continuation of the program under expanded covert management procedures, with permission to realign management and resources to be under NRO control.
3. In the white, direct the SAF to abolish MOL management activities in USAF-AFSC -- except as necessary to administer the orderly termination of MOL activities, such as: cancellation of contracts, the retirement of records, and reassignment of MOL resources.
4. In the black, prepare for the relocation and redesignation of the SSD-MOL SPO, and facilities of contractors.

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5. In the black, invent a new space program for SSD to work on; assign Program Number 782 (SAFSP).
6. In a white memorandum from the SAF, direct AFSC to reassign resources from the MOL to SAFSP Program 782.
7. In the white, SAFSP write new contracts for 782 requirements.
8. Relocate, rearrange, redesignate, and do all those things at SSD to give the appearance that the MOL program is phasing out.
9. Relocate, rearrange, redesignate activities at contractor facilities to give appearance of close-out.
10. Reassign all resources to Program 782. Program 782 writes new contracts to cover industrial operations.
11. Give DORIAN briefings where necessary to maintain the continuity and credibility of the scheme. This may entail certain security risks as some people will have to be briefed before the usual investigation is completed.
12. All currently DORIAN-indoctrinated individuals be notified of above action through black channels.

PRO:

This action will take the constant pressure placed on MOL to brief various staff and command elements on MOL activities and avoid logistic, funding, purchasing, and technical reviews, studies, investigations, inspections, and other committee activities normally accomplished by the DOD and Air Staff in management control. These activities, if they were to continue at the present and anticipated scope and depth, would eventually engulf MOL and surface the very secret we must keep submerged.

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CON:

Assuming the program goes to fruition with a manned launch, it will be impossible to deny the existence of men in space to our nation, friends and enemies. By 1968 or later or earlier, state-of-art in space will be such that the nature of the MOL in its space environment, its contents and mission, will be easily gleaned by at least the Russians. The Russians could choose to tell the American public and world that the high official who announced cancellation had, in fact, lied. Black Gemini production could be tried but not at the present location. Many hundreds, possibly thousands, of clearances would be a basic step. Launch, aborts, recovery -- voice transmissions from lab to earth, astronaut training, astronaut selection, astronaut physicals -- all add imponderables to this alternative. To effect a good 782 program cover, many additional people will have to be DORIAN briefed.

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ALTERNATIVE II

BROADEN BLACK BASE

APPROACH:

The approach in this case is to brief DORIAN discreetly selected individuals of peripheral agencies and activities having a functional interest in MOL. The intention is two-fold: To get support from other Air Force staff agencies and commands for the MOL program as needed; and to turn off unnecessary pressures by well-meaning people trying to do their job.

A substantial segment of this problem involves the release of information to Congress. This matter can be resolved by briefing selected Congressmen. There are six Congressional committees that have a legitimate need. The chairmen and other key members of these committees can be briefed. Allowances for off-the-record and on-the-record Congressional testimony can be established.

Other problems concerning individual Congressmen demanding information could be coordinated with General Corbin, Legislative Liaison, and resolved on an individual basis.

PRO:

It becomes evident that more clearances are needed when comparing the clearance base of DORIAN with other NRO programs. There are less than 600 government people cleared for DORIAN. There are in excess of 3100 government people cleared for another program.

CON:

It is necessary in a program such as MOL-DORIAN to restrict clearances as much as possible. Each time an additional person is briefed, security risk increases.

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ALTERNATIVE III

MOVE DECISION POINT FOR SECRET-LEVEL BRIEFINGS

FROM SAFSL TO OSAF

APPROACH:

This approach sets up an escape valve for giving MOL program briefings, when it is decided that the best interest of the program dictates giving no briefing rather than insufficient or too much (DORIAN) information.

Since at this time we have no SECRET-level experiments or military mission other than reconnaissance to discuss, the SECRET-level briefing must by necessity be limited to support, booster, space vehicle, and other support. MOL program briefings by SAFSL to responsible staff elements looking for mission or mission-related information is pointless. Some requests come from sources which cannot be discreetly denied. To effect this solution, a memorandum must be signed by the SAF or USAF, instructing SAFSL to refer all requests for MOL program briefings to OSAF.

PRO:

Relieve pressure on SAFSL from superior and equal agencies that cannot be effectively denied a MOL program briefing by SAFSL.

CON:

Referring inquiries may hurt support of the programs, i. e., we can lose friends we may need -- whether we or SAF turn them down.

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ALTERNATIVE IV

CHANGE SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF MOL-RECONNAISSANCE

ASSOCIATION TO SECRET - SPECIAL ACCESS REQUIRED

APPROACH:

The security policy could be changed to allow identification of the reconnaissance mission in briefings protected by only normal special access security classification (5200.13), not DORIAN. The change would permit mention of the mission but would not allow disclosure of degree of capability planned or other operational details.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Authority to partially exempt the program from the provisions of AFR 190-23.
2. Revision of the program Security Classification Guide.
3. Careful preparation of a briefing that would emphasize the importance of the program and the vital need for security, while supplying enough information to make a plausible reason for current plans and operations.

PRO:

The new classification would alleviate considerably the pressure for information from influential sources not considered eligible for a complete DORIAN briefing. It would also eliminate the dangerous and embarrassing position we are in when non-DORIAN cleared people ask directly about reconnaissance during discussions. At present, our complete avoidance of the subject appears to be more startling than our admitting the mission would be. Another advantage accrues from being able to answer directly and convincingly the question of NASA/DOD duplication. Finally, there would still be security classification protection for the information.

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CON:

Lowering the clearance requirements for this list of information could lead to further security erosion. It could lead to pressure for similar downgrading on other space programs. It would also increase the danger of inadvertent official confirmation of the program mission in public.

Security of information pertaining to reconnaissance from satellites is controlled by the DNRO and DCI. It is not very likely that they will change policy. Even if they wanted to change policy, approval from the President's office may be required. There is considerable evidence that the Executive level wants to keep very secure the association between MOL and reconnaissance.

It is difficult to envision a briefing or discussion stopping at the revelation of MOL having a reconnaissance mission. Once that door is opened, inevitably deeper probes must be made which could threaten the various structures and programs depending upon special security for reconnaissance programs.

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ALTERNATIVE V

DEVELOP WHITE OBJECTIVES FOR A WHITE PROGRAM

APPROACH:

This approach is based on the premise that as long as the MOL program is discussed openly and it is white, it needs white objectives. It is necessary that a bona fide experiments program be developed so that the white program objectives are indeed meaningful and not merely a cover which can be easily penetrated.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Develop a versatile white experiments program which can both serve usefully in the R&D of military space programs and be used for official white discussion of MOL objectives.
2. This implies the broadening of the scope of the MOL program from its present status, but not beyond the originally approved three levels of program objectives.
3. As a consequence of admitting to and fostering tertiary objectives, there is a need to provide either piggyback space and crew time on primary mission flights or set aside separate vehicles for white missions, or both.

PRO:

1. Since the President has made a MOL program announcement and stated some of its objectives, it is relatively easy to follow up on that and continue with a limited set of white objectives.
2. The GE contract, which presently is mostly black and, therefore, raises a lot of questions, could be better protected by expanding its scope to include additional white experiments.
3. Open discussion of white MOL objectives promotes better relations with Congress and thus stimulates support.

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4. The existence of white objectives allows meaningful briefings to be given to military and other government personnel of high rank, satisfying their repeated requests for briefings and possibly leading to new experiment or objective definitions.

5. The existence of white objectives provides a suitable cover against enemy penetration of mission capability as well as political and international speculation and embarrassment.

CON:

1. The serious consideration of experimental objectives in addition to the primary reconnaissance objective will require significant funding increases which may be as high as \$200 million if several flights are to be added to carry experiments.

2. Additional objectives will not only burden financial resources but also government and contractor manpower, and will always be cause for dispute on priorities, design optimizations and distractions from a single-minded pursuit of primary goals.

3. The existence of white objectives encourages the spread of publicity and public discussions of MOL, which is contrary to the policy and generally accepted desire of minimizing public release on MOL.

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IV. CONCLUSIONS

1. Alternatives I and IV seem too difficult to accomplish.
2. Alternative V is an excellent solution, but cannot be accomplished immediately.
3. Regardless of the approach chosen, procedures must be written for:
 - a. Authorizing DORIAN clearances.
 - b. Replying to MOL program briefing requests from individual Congressmen.
 - c. Giving MOL program information in Congressional hearings.
 - d. Briefing Congressional committees.
 - e. Giving negative responses to requests for MOL program briefings received from various staff, command and other military and government elements.

V. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that a combination of Alternatives II and III be adopted. The necessary detailed procedures need to be written and approved. It is further recommended that we should exert every effort to develop a white experiment program so that we can eventually adopt Alternative V, modified by II and III. The basic mechanism for Alternative V is already inherent in the present MOL security policy.

VI. DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

A. ALTERNATIVE I -- "Cancel Program -- Go Black":

This alternative has too many imponderables, such as how to explain Gemini production, launch base activity with astronauts; possible aborts, recovery, astronaut medical care, selection and training. Additionally, the cost of relocating, camouflage, cover and additional clearances makes this alternative clearly unacceptable.

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B. ALTERNATIVE II -- "Broaden Black Base":

This alternative is in essence not a liberalization of DORIAN briefing policy but is a consequence of the realization of the fact that a complete manned system like MOL needs a large number of people to be involved in the process of continuously supporting the program. Specifically, this alternative would solve some of the briefing problem, but still would not be effective in turning off people who should not be briefed DORIAN.

C. ALTERNATIVE III -- "Move Decision Point for SECRET-Level Briefings from SAFSL to OSAF":

The immediate effect of this solution will be, it appears, a reduction of requests for briefings. However, the major weak point of this solution is that the requestor is alienated in his support of the MOL program if he is denied his request, whether it be from SAFSL or OSAF. This alternative has an escape valve and, used with discretion coupled with the solution suggested in Alternative II, should prove helpful.

D. ALTERNATIVE IV -- "Change Security Classification of MOL-Reconnaissance Association to SECRET - SAR":

Although it is true that briefings should be more factual, the major political problems in dealing with other agencies involved in reconnaissance activity appear overwhelming. The time that it would take to change policy, pressing of this alternative as a solution to the problem is not practical.

E. ALTERNATIVE V -- "Development of White Objectives for a White Program":

The original security policy was developed under the assumption that there would be white objectives in a white program. The adoption of this solution would solve the problem of relieving pressures of the MOL program briefings for most sources of concern. However, Alternative II, which suggests expanding the briefing base to include members of Congress, would be an essential adjunct.

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The main problem in implementing this alternative would be trying to identify white objectives (experiments), select contractors, and initiate contracts. Also, additional time and effort would be required to justify the funding for these objectives.

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