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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
BUREAU OF THE BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

[redacted]

SAFSS

MAR 21 1966

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Honorable Robert S. McNamara
Secretary of Defense
Washington, D. C. 20301

Dear Bob:

In the Memorandum to the President of August 24, 1965 requesting approval of the MOL program, I expressed reservations concerning the additional cost of a manned over an unmanned system. You concurred with the idea that the program should be subject to reappraisal and a new decision if the costs were determined to be substantially different than the original estimates.

Since we were essentially dealing with the cost effectiveness of a manned vs. unmanned system, I believe this effect has been achieved by the recent Air Force studies on the potential design and capabilities of an unmanned version of the MOL. These studies now indicate that an unmanned system can achieve substantially the same resolution as a manned system. I believe that the MOL should now be re-examined to determine whether the benefits other than resolution justify the cost of a manned system.

I understand that the present program will not provide cost estimates for a wholly unmanned system designed to achieve the desired resolution. I believe such estimates are essential if we are to conduct the reappraisal which was discussed in your Memorandum to the President. I would appreciate it if the Department could undertake to develop these estimates. When they are available I suggest that we undertake a joint review to determine whether or not reconsideration of the original decision is justified.

Sincerely,

C Harlie

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