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February 12, 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: MOL Program Briefing, DORIAN Level, for Key Staff Members of the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Department of Defense (Mahon)

At 1000 hours, 9 February 1968, General Stewart gave an MOL/DORIAN briefing to the following named Staff Members of the House Committee on Appropriations:

Robert Michaels
Ralph Preston
Frank P. Sanders

The meeting began with an informal discussion between General Stewart and the Staff Members in which the following points were covered:

a. General Stewart stated that the purpose of the briefing was to review the MOL Program in some detail for the benefit of the Staff Members and to solicit their advice for the need of additional update briefings for the members of the committee. Mr. Michaels pointed out that when Secretary Brown had recently met with Chairman Mahon, during the conversation, Secretary Brown had also made an offer to provide update MOL briefings to the members of the committee. It was Mr. Michaels' opinion that they would have a better feel for additional briefing requirements following Secretary Brown's testimony, as it will be clearer at that point as to how much opposition has developed.

b. Mr. Preston asked as to whether or not General Stewart had heard anything further on the subject of the House Committee on Government Operations reviewing the MOL Program. General Stewart briefly reviewed his talk with Mr. Herbert Roback, Staff Administrator to the Subcommittee on Military Operations (Holifield) on 25 January and his visit with Chairman Rivers, House Committee on Armed Services on 9 February. Both these discussions tended to minimize the possibility of an MOL review by any of the subcommittees of the Government Operations Committee. General Stewart emphasized the point that he has made with other members of Congress that an intelligent debate on MOL vs AAP cannot be made in other than a BYEMAN security environment; therefore if a proposal is made to make an MOL/AAP comparison, at either an open or "normal" classified hearing, he will take every possible positive step to have such a proposal withdrawn.

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c. Mr. Preston made the observation that Mr. Henry Reuss (D-Wisc.), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology Programs of the Committee on Government Operations, who is a Democrat liberal, wants all space expenditures reduced and the money devoted to housing, the inference obviously being that Reuss is unsympathetic to either MOL or AAP.

General Stewart then proceeded with the formal briefing using the same charts as used to brief Congressman Miller on February 5. In the introduction, General Stewart did comment on the move of MOL from Package 6 to Package 3 of the DOD Budget Structure and briefly described the rationale developed within the office for this move. During the course of the briefing the audience asked a limited number of specific questions on the system which were answered by General Stewart.

In the discussion following the briefing, Mr. Sanders pursued at some length the question of how much the program could be advanced with additional funding. The type of questions he asked were, for example, you have lost \$90M in the last two years, how much of your schedule is a dollar slippage?; Where are you taking changes to meet the present schedule?; How about reliability (with the new dollar ceilings)? General Stewart's responses are summarized as follows: The dominating factor in our schedule is the camera system. We are striving for performance in the camera and a development of this nature cannot be accelerated even with unlimited funds. The camera contractor is being funded at the level that he states is necessary and adequate. If additional funds were available they could be profitably used in the other elements of the system to accomplish work at an earlier date and not leave it to be done until the actual need date as determined by the launch schedule. This approach does not leave a margin for uncertainties. The way that the program is now structured, unrestricted fund availability would not alter the proposed launch date by more than a few months at best.

A brief discussion then followed on the subject of the NASA/AAP Program, the Orbital Workshop, and the Apollo vs MOL hardware. General Stewart briefly reviewed the philosophy of the Orbital Workshop and the tests that will be conducted by NASA for MOL. He also recounted the various studies done on Apollo hardware and its application to the MOL mission. NASA's reviews of MOL hardware were also briefly discussed. During these remarks, General Stewart stated that in the original plan for a MOL launch in late 69 the plan envisioned flying a non-production camera system. This concept was abandoned as being very unproductive, however, a flight vehicle without camera could have been available in the late 69 early 70 time period. Mr. Michaels seemed interested in this point and asked if it would still be possible to fly a manned vehicle without a camera by late 70. General Stewart responded by saying that

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it might be possible but the question could not be answered without an examination of the impact that such a plan would have on the rest of the program. Mr. Michaels then asked General Stewart's opinion as to the political and physiological advantages and disadvantages of flying a man at an early date. General Stewart indicated that he felt that such a plan would be a disadvantage as we would, in fact, be duplicating the things that NASA is doing.

Mr. Michaels then posed a question as to whether or not we had any new or more forceful reasons for MOL that could be presented at the hearings. He stated that he felt that MOL was going to get some resistance. General Stewart responded by describing the philosophy expressed in Dr. Brown's draft posture statement.

Mr. Michaels and Mr. Sanders proceeded to ask a series of questions concerning other applications of MOL. These included FOBs, an inspection satellite role, and the use of radar. General Stewart's response may be summarized as follows: The MOL system will have considerable operational flexibility in its primary role as a reconnaissance satellite. Other roles are possible to a limited degree at the expense of the primary mission. Since the vehicle, the software, and the flight profile are all optimized for the photographic mission, the MOL is not well suited to other applications not compatible with the photographic objective. Mr. Michaels asked about the quick read-out capability which he had heard about in his earlier briefings. General Stewart reviewed the history of the removal of the read-out capability from the program and stated that provisions for its subsequent inclusion have been preserved. Mr. Preston asked whether or not a radar in MOL would have an advantage over a radar in a similar vehicle. General Stewart stated that at the present time there are no plans to incorporate a radar into the vehicle. He stated that the intelligence community expresses a great deal more interest in photography than radar imagery.

Mr. Sanders brought out the point that in the congressional testimony of last year, the statement was made that the fabrication of flight hardware would begin in FY 68. He asked if this was still correct. General Stewart responded by saying that the various reprogramming activities which have taken place over the past year have pushed flight hardware fabrication into FY 69. Mr. Sanders then discussed speculation concerning MOL program status and MOL missions that has appeared in various publications such as U. S. News and World Report and News Week. He had extracts of some articles in his possession. A discussion followed concerning the inability to control speculation and the activities of the press. Mr. Michaels observed that a peculiarity of the MOL program was that the publications seem to know the mission but that we (government officials) cannot confirm it.

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The meeting concluded with General Stewart emphasizing the fact that he would make himself available for follow-up refresher briefings on any other information which the Staff Members might find helpful. The Staff Members appeared to be quite satisfied with the briefing and very impressed with the program. They repeatedly offered all possible assistance to General Stewart during the coming congressional season.

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RALPH J. FORD
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Program and Policies Div,
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