

~~TOP SECRET~~

Central System

April 14, 1969



MANNED ORBITING LABORATORY (MOL)

The urgency of achieving the objectives of the Manned Orbiting Laboratory program has never been firmly established. Therefore, a significant funding cutback and the choice to defer the first manned launch by a year or more (-\$165 million) or to reduce the MOL effort to that of optics and payload vehicle technology (-\$325 million) is not a serious penalty for the Nation. This would provide additional time for the Administration to review the relationship of all manned space programs beyond Apollo.

- Intelligence is the only specific military mission which has been identified to date to support the \$3 billion program cost and the related resolution camera system. As to this mission, the Director of Central Intelligence has recently stated that: "...MOL-type photography would make a useful contribution to intelligence; nevertheless, we have not been able to find benefits from the MOL program of sufficient importance to national intelligence to justify the very large cost involved. ..."

- The added costs and pertinence of the MOL system compares with earlier unmanned systems as follows:



BD

BYE-11667/69

Handle via STEMAN
Central System

~~TOP SECRET~~

DORIAN
GAMBIT

BYE-11667/69
COPY 88

(Costs in millions)

	<u>Best Operational Resolution</u>	<u>Development Cost</u>	<u>Mission Cost</u>	<u>Annual Cost (No. of flights per year)</u>
GAMBIT	[REDACTED]	About	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
GAMBIT-3	[REDACTED]	"	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
MOL	[REDACTED]	3,000	150	300 (2)

The table shows that with the MOL system we are nearing the limits of technical performance where the large marginal costs must be carefully compared with the benefits.

- For technical intelligence against enemy weapons systems, the incremental value of the MOL [REDACTED] resolution is not enough of an improvement over the present spotting system (GAMBIT-3) to justify the additional cost. GAMBIT-3 will assure identification of most important weapons features discernible through satellite photography. Other important weapon systems features (such as radars and re-entry vehicle performance) can only be collected by our signals intelligence capabilities.

Under a strategic arms limitation agreement the potential contribution of MOL is highly uncertain. Our present systems can detect visible changes in weapon systems deployments. Many subtle changes in capability such as the use of MIRV's or improved accuracy are difficult to discern photographically even with the much better photography [REDACTED] taken

[REDACTED]

~~TOP SECRET~~

Manila Via BYEMAN
Control System

3

- Satellite photography is often not in time to affect our own military systems decisions and save resources. For example, elements of information, such as warhead or missile characteristics, are either not observable photographically or become visible long after our own decisions have been made because of 5-10 year leadtimes.

- As an ancillary objective for MOL, additional knowledge of manned space flight has been cited by Defense. Much of the additional data from MOL on man's usefulness in space will also be provided by the NASA Apollo Application Program (AAP) which has missions scheduled in the same time period. From the standpoint of our national manned space program there are insufficient benefits to justify the continuation of both programs at a cost of \$4 billion (\$3 billion MOL and \$1 billion AAP). AAP, with flights scheduled in the 1972-73 period, is directed toward man's ability to survive and perform useful and complex tasks in space over an extended time period (56 days per mission). MOL, with a 1971-73 flight schedule, will also evaluate man's utility in space when engaged in a specific, complex, and demanding intelligence mission.

Manila Via BYEMAN
Control System

~~TOP SECRET~~

BYE 11667/49 c48b