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In reply refer to:

I-26565/65

8 OCT 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: An Offer of Inspection of the MOL

At a meeting attended by Brock McMillan and Al Friedman on September 22, it was agreed that the Department of State would produce a rough draft on the above subject. The attached is that draft.

Request your views and recommendations on the State Department proposal by 22 October 1965. The JCS are also being asked to review the proposal. A consolidated DOD response to State will thereafter be prepared.

Attachment:

An Offer of Inspection of
the MOL - dtd 10-6-65

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DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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October 6, 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR:	DEFENSE	- Mr. McNaughton
		- Dr. Flax
	ACDA	- Mr. Fisher
	CIA	- Mr. Cline
	WHITE HOUSE	- Mr. Keeny
		- Mr. Charles Johnson
	NASA	- Mr. Seamans
	NASC	- Mr. Welsh
	USIA	- Mr. Marks

SUBJECT: An Offer of Inspection of the MOL

On the basis of our discussion on September 22, my office has prepared the attached paper. In view of the fact that this issue might arise at any time during the present UNGA, I would appreciate your Agency comments and concurrence as promptly as possible.

L E Thompson

Llewellyn E. Thompson
Acting Deputy Under Secretary

Attachment

1. An Offer of Inspection of the MOL

Copy To: ACDA - Dr. Scoville
STATE - Mr. Hughes
- Mr. Rostow
- Mr. Pollack
- Mr. Meeker

GROUP 3

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An Offer of Inspection of the MOL

The Problem

The United States has come under some adverse criticism for allegedly taking new steps to put the military in space, to extend the arms race to space, and even for preparing to place nuclear weapons in space. These charges were mainly inspired by the President's announcement of approval for the Defense Department to undertake development and operation of a "Manned Orbiting Laboratory" (MOL). Soviet spokesmen have, of course, been the most prominent and the most extreme in their charges; but they are not alone, and even an editorial in The New York Times (August 26, 1965), titled "Arms in Space," spoke of "a fantastic, terrifying measure of arms preparedness...manned space vehicles flying around whose capacity for offense or defense will be formidable beyond previous imagination...The key word for mankind is still armament, not disarmament, and the military manned orbital laboratories represent a frightening new development in that trend."

Colonel General Tolubko, Deputy Commander in Chief of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces, was more direct. He charged, in an article on September 10, that "The Pentagon now wants to use space laboratories

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not only for reconnaissance, but also for direct combat missions....
Orbital laboratories will make it possible to install nuclear weapons
on their platforms...." General Tolubko makes explicit acknowledgment
of President Johnson's promise that the United States would continue
to uphold the agreement on not orbiting weapons of mass destruction,
but he argues that the US intends to proceed with the development and
testing of "space carriers for such weapons," which he contends "actually
results in an obvious violation of the agreement on the non-orbiting of
weapons of mass destruction....Everyone has always known that the term
nuclear weapons includes both the carriers and the warheads themselves,"
and finally that after proceeding to develop space nuclear weapons carriers,
the United States "will not stop halfway."

This interpretation of the obligations of the UN Resolution is not
correct; the Resolution does not cover potential weapons carriers. (The
Resolution is also not a legally binding agreement, although we would not
wish to undercut its effectiveness by challenging that point.) But so
long as we do not in fact intend to develop and test space weapons
delivery systems, we should directly refute such Soviet charges. Such
interpretations may reflect real Soviet misunderstandings and belief that,
since space observation is "old hat," there must be something new--relating
to weapons--to justify a major new program. On the other hand, and more

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likely, the Russians may mainly be exploiting the issue for propaganda; in addition, it is likely that some military men such as General Tolubko are interested in having the Soviet Union develop such weapons. (Incidentally, some of the civilian scientific Soviet reactions to Gemini V were entirely complimentary, and even some of the military and other press attacks on both Gemini and the MOL criticize only reconnaissance, and do not raise the charge of weapons system development.)

On September 21, at the meeting of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN Outer Space Committee, Soviet delegate Morozov complained that unrestricted obligations to return any space debris might require returning "an unexploded bomb on a silver platter" to the launching state.

Our main concern is public and official opinion in other countries. The Soviets are probably less likely to misconstrue our intentions, although more ready to distort them for purposes of propaganda. In dealing with such charges, then, it will be important to find effective ways to persuade those in the world who have open minds but are susceptible to hostile propaganda unless it is countered.

In fact, the United States does not now plan to develop or test weapons carriers. The UN Resolution does not proscribe even the orbiting

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of weapons which are not "nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction," (e.g., possible conventional HE shrapnel antisatellite weapons), although we should not draw attention to this latent loophole in any way.

The President's statement of August 25 announcing the MOL program stressed that, in his words: "We intend to live up to our agreement not to orbit weapons of mass destruction...." This position has been restated by Ambassador Goldberg, and will be by others as necessary. Nonetheless, if there is sufficient disquiet over the nature of the American military program in space, it may be desirable to go beyond periodic reiterations of our good intentions and draw the stinger from the Soviet charges. The present memorandum outlines a possible course of action to that end.

A Proposition

The United States could meet Soviet allegations that we are pursuing a weapons-in-space program by publicly offering, on a basis of reciprocity, to permit inspection adequate to demonstrate that there were no nuclear weapons aboard any manned (or, perhaps, "any large"; or even "any") space launchings. At the same time, we should make clear that continued observance of the UN Resolution is not conditioned on Soviet acceptance of the inspection offer.

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Discussion

We are virtually certain that the Soviet Union would turn down such a proposition. The Russians have displayed great sensitivity and secrecy with respect to their own space program, and especially the launching sites and vehicles. The United States would, however, have shown clearly that it had nothing to hide, thus buttressing the credibility of our policy declarations and undercutting the Soviet propaganda charges.

If the Russians accepted the offer, we would be glad to implement it for four reasons: (a) it would dispel concern about our space program; (b) it would dispel any possible future concern on our part over Soviet space activities; (c) it would incidentally provide us useful intelligence on Soviet rocketry, and additional information on the Soviet space program; and (d) it would nail down tacit Soviet acceptance, or at least acquiescence, in the permissibility of space observation, photography, navigation, communications, and such other military uses of space.

The Soviets would, very probably, reject the proposal with some smokescreen of excuse, in an attempt to cover the fact that their own secrecy policy was the obstacle. It might be nothing more than the familiar charge that the United States is seeking intelligence information, inspection without disarmament, etc. But we would have

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made our point to the world, and could emphasize that any time that the Soviets were really concerned, any time Soviet concern over our alleged militarization exceeded their own obsessive military secrecy, they could reassure themselves by accepting the offer. The Soviet parry to our offer might, of course, propose that any inspection must be directed against any military uses of space, including observation. We would then be forced to argue our inherently sound basis for distinguishing between permissible activities, and the one prohibition accepted by all relevant parties in the UN Resolution of October, 1963. One may, of course, conclude that it would be better not to risk such an open precipitation of this issue. On the other hand, the Soviets have open at any time the option of again raising that issue, as they did in UN debates in 1962 and 1963. Moreover, the fact that the Soviet Union is engaged in a very extensive (and expensive) operational reconnaissance satellite program suggests that the Russians are not likely to press too hard on reconnaissance.

Some might argue that the US had some aggressive designs in mind for space, and was therefore attempting to clear its way by making an obviously unacceptable offer to the Russians. To this, we could reply that such was not our intention, that the offer remained open, and that there was no reason that the Russians should "obviously" find the offer unacceptable--presumably if they had real concerns about our program they could accept our offer, now or at any future time.

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The Soviet response might well take the line that the USSR, pursuing exclusively peaceful ends, had no "comparable" system, or no "military" system, to offer for inspection. To this we should reply that we too have no non-peaceful space program, and the purpose of reciprocal inspection would simply be to cement mutual trust. We could consider all manned launchings as one comparable category; or all launchings of vehicles above a certain weight; or all launchings. We understand the Soviet program is entirely run by the military*, while most of ours is run by the civilian agency NASA; but we recognize that in order to meet its purposes any such reciprocal inspection would obviously have to cover all programs, both military and civilian.

It should be possible to arrange either reciprocal adversary inspection, or UN or other multilateral inspection (the latter to include US and USSR representatives). We could afford to be rather flexible about such arrangements, although we would need to consider concrete possibilities carefully from the standpoint of our own security interests, as well as in terms of the possible interest of

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other countries in assurance arrangements. Since we can be flexible, we should be able to expose satisfactorily any transparently one-sided and unacceptable Soviet counterproposals on inspection modalities. We could parry any suggestion for substituting "observers" by noting that while the kind of inspection required would have to be worked out on a mutually satisfactory basis, it is clear that more than mere observation of launchings would be needed.

Summary of Arguments

Pro

1. The move would be an initiative dramatizing our peaceful aims in space, and should deflate any world concern over our military space program stimulated by irresponsible speculation or Soviet propaganda.
2. It would be a good propaganda ploy if the Soviets reject it; a good move in loosening the Russians up on inspection if they accept it.
3. If accepted, inspections would yield valuable intelligence on the Soviet space program and missile development--certainly much more than we would lose.
4. If accepted (and possibly even if rejected, depending on the Soviet response), it would be a good way of nailing down Soviet acquiescence in other military uses of space, such as observation.

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5. If accepted, it would represent another Soviet-Western agreement galling to the Chinese and disruptive in the world Communist movement; if not, it would demonstrate to those in the world impatient for detente agreements that it is the USSR, and not the US, which is reluctant to reach additional accords.

Con

1. By compelling the Soviets to "put up or shut up," they might be led to attempt to distract world attention from their secrecy-mania by again opening up the argument against any military uses of space.
2. Above all, the Soviets might flatly challenge the idea of space reconnaissance and precipitate a wrangle upsetting the present relatively smooth situation with respect to that subject.
3. As a result of such Soviet campaigns, the US might find some other nations restricting still more the use of facilities on their territory, and it might thus embarrass and even inhibit US programs.
4. The issue of "assurance," once raised, might provoke some popular concern in the United States over whether the Soviet Union was engaged in developing spaceborne

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weapons; in particular, the probable Soviet refusal might be interpreted by some as indicating that the Soviets "had something to hide." Even though the US Government might be reasonably confident of what the Russians were up to, and the reasons for Soviet refusal to allow inspection, it might be difficult to douse the sparks of public concern, especially since some would be fanning them.

5. An inspection offer, particularly if rejected, might also generate pressures to "open up" the MOL program unilaterally, either by conducting the program on an unclassified or at least less completely classified basis, or even by admitting outside observers.

Recommendation

That the United States be prepared, if apprehensions over the MOL program seem to be building up seriously, as a result of allegations that the MOL is intended to carry weapons of mass destruction, to offer inspection of such vehicles before launch, on a basis of reciprocity.

State:RLGarthoff:pep
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