

June 2, 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**SUBJECT: Chronology of Events Leading to UN Registration of Space Vehicles**

I have reviewed the chronology prepared by State on the referenced subject.

The most significant item to me is that there was no coordination in the preparation of the draft resolution with anyone in the Defense Department or in the CIA familiar with some of our most important space programs. The resolution was prepared, introduced, and adopted without the knowledge of people in DOD or CIA who are responsible for these programs. In the meantime, in accordance with policy guidance, we had moved in the direction of providing less and less information relative to our military space launches. A new press policy was initiated with our launch of 22 December 1961. An immediate inquiry came from John Finney of the New York Times asking for the rationale between this new press policy and our position on the satellite registration question in the U.N. This was my first knowledge that such a resolution had been prepared, introduced, and adopted.

Subsequently, as a result of inquiry into the matter, we were asked in early January for our opinions as to what information should be included in the registry. It is true, as the chronology states, that on 12 January 1962 we agreed with the view that the U.S. should take the lead in reporting objects, but the motivation for this, not in the chronology, was that to the maximum extent possible, given a bad situation, we should now take the initiative in establishing the format of the registry rather than have a completely untenable format prescribed either by the U.N. or the Soviets. I still consider this, at best, a holding action, since the question of format will undoubtedly again be raised and almost certainly in the direction of providing additional information, which is bound to be a source of embarrassment to us.

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It is also not clear from the chronology that we were strongly opposed to expanding the registry information at a later date to include the registration of all satellites launched into orbit, and I am sure you will recall the Special Group meeting in regard to this matter. However, as you will also recall, the U. S. Representative to the U.N. felt that we were subject to criticism if this action were not taken - hence the subsequent decision to list all launches but with the compromise to delete orbital data information on short-lived satellites.

In summary then, my feeling is that the chronology of this matter really amounts to actions to limit the deleterious impact of the initial resolution which was prepared and introduced without coordination with people on whose programs its implementation would have the greatest impact. This was done without appreciation of its potential effect on national security or of the embarrassment that might result for U. S. representatives in international discussions where the full impact of this action could be profitably exploited by the Soviets in furthering their obvious aim of preventing or making difficult the launching of such satellites. Recent developments in Geneva, rather predictably but regrettably, justify this concern.

Joseph V. Charyk

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