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UNITED STATES ARMY COMBAT AND ENGINEERING SERVICE

January 6, 1966

MEMORANDUM

TO: G/ME - MR. GARTNER
DOD/ISA - MR. BARBER
White House - MR. Keeny
ADA - MR. LaBowitz

FROM: ACDA/IR - ROBERT H. KRANICH

SUBJECT: SOVIET ORBITAL ROCKETS AND THE US MOL

ENCLOSED ARE COPIES OF A DRAFT ENDC CONTINGENCY PAPER, BEARING IN MIND THAT THE ENDC WILL CONVENE ON JANUARY 27. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR AGENCY'S COMMENTS AND CONCURRENCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. WOULD YOU MAKE WHATEVER INTERNAL DISTRIBUTIONS IN YOUR AGENCY YOU DEEM NECESSARY AND REQUEST THAT COMMENTS OR CLEARANCES BE PROVIDED TO JAMES S. BODNER, ACDA/IR, CASE 182, EXT. 4184.

cc: State (7 copies)
Defense (11 copies)
White House (2 copies)
NSA (15 copies)
ADA - Mr. Bodnar (1 cc)

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Series A.

*Col Sanders
for comment &
clearance
to M Anderson (AC)*

ENDC MEETING
Geneva, January 27, 1966

Contingency Paper

Soviet Orbital Rockets and the US MOL

I. Problem:

The recent official exchange of assurances by the US and USSR as regards their intentions to abide by the GA "no bombs in orbit" resolution, though reducing the possibility that the Soviets might raise US plans for a MOL as an issue in the ENDC, may cause other delegations to question the applicability of the UN resolution with respect to both the Soviet claim to possess orbital rockets and the US MOL. Should the Soviets raise the MOL, they might - as they have done in the past - exploit it in an attempt to show that US policy is one of increased militarization rather than disarmament.

II. Recommended US Position:

The US should endeavor to avoid debate on the details of the question of the plans for a MOL and Soviet orbital rockets, including controversy over whether the UN "no bombs in orbit" resolution is being observed. Nevertheless, if necessary, the US should be prepared to provide complete assurance that the US is and will continue to abide by that resolution and to state that it hopes the USSR will do likewise. Equally important, the US should take the position that GA resolution 1884 represents a significant, though limited, arms control accord and, as such, we should encourage all states to abide by both the spirit and letter of the resolution.

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The US position is that its plans for a MOL and the Soviets' claim to possess orbital rockets are not comparable in terms of the UN resolution. For our part, we have stated that the MOL has no relationship whatever to the resolution banning the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space since the MOL incorporates no capability to carry or deliver such weapons and the purpose of the MOL involves no such intent. While the Soviets' display of orbital rockets, and official statements accompanying them, led the US to question Soviet intentions with respect to their adherence to the spirit of the resolution, we have taken the position that these Soviet actions and statements do not violate the express terms of that resolution.

In light of these developments and to clarify Soviet intentions with respect to their adherence to the UN resolution, the US approached the Soviets privately. Mutual assurances have been exchanged and made public. (For additional details, see Section IV, E.)

The US assessment is that Soviet claims as regards these weapons were made primarily for psychological reasons to attempt to prove the strength of the USSR to all concerned. Neither Soviet orbital rockets nor mobile ICBMs are credited by the US with being anywhere near operational status which the Soviets implied. (For additional details concerning our technical assessment of Soviet orbital rockets, see Section IV).

A suggested contingency statement is set forth in Annex A.

III. Anticipated Foreign Positions:

A. USSR

The Soviet Union will probably continue to depict the MOL as a further illustration of US efforts to militarize its

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space activities. More specifically, the Soviet Union may, as did Ambassador Dobrynin in his statement to Ambassador-at-Large Thompson on December 8, 1965 -- and despite President Johnson's assurances to the contrary -- raise the charge that the MOL program will involve the use of orbital space laboratories to study or devise methods for orbital nuclear bombardment in support of land, sea, air, and cosmic armed forces.

The Soviets may be expected to state that their possession of orbital rockets is wholly compatible with the October 17, 1963 "no bombs in orbit" UN General Assembly resolution. They may argue, if the subject is raised, that the resolution, though banning the orbiting of weapons of mass destruction, in no way placed restrictions on the development, construction, production and acceptance of such equipment for its armed forces. They may well reaffirm their intent to abide by the resolution. At the same time, however, the Soviets might charge that the US MOL can be adapted to carry nuclear weapons; in fact, they may claim that the MOL is the vehicle for developing this capability. In this connection, the Soviets may attempt to play up or exploit any existing fears arising from the MOL, particularly among the less-sophisticated members both of the non-aligned eight and in the wider audience outside.

B. Major US Allies

It is expected that our principal allies will uphold our position that the MOL bears no relation whatever to the UN resolution. While initial West European reaction to the President's August 25, 1965 announcement on the MOL was favorable, it tended to show some concern over the long-range implications of the MOL; some viewed the MOL as either a warning to the Soviets or as an assertion of a U.S. right to do no more than the Soviets were already doing.

In general it is believed that our allies will follow closely our position on the MOL and refrain from commenting

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friendly cooperation among all states engaged in the peaceful exploration of space. In his announcement the President reaffirmed the United States agreement not to orbit weapons of mass destruction and its commitment to abide by the terms of UN General Assembly Resolution 1884 (XVIII) of October 17, 1963 (Text in Annex C).

US Ambassador to the UN Adlai Stevenson on October 16, 1963 noted that the proposed GA resolution set forth a policy which had already been adopted by the United States as early as September 5, 1962. At that time, the then U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric stated:

"We have no program to place any weapons of mass destruction into orbit. An arms race in space will not contribute to our security. I can think of no greater stimulus for a Soviet thermonuclear arms effort in space than a United States commitment to such a program. This we will not do."

United States policy in this regard has been reaffirmed on several occasions since then. President Kennedy on September 20, 1963 firmly stated the U.S. intention to keep weapons of mass destruction out of orbit. And, more recently, Ambassador Goldberg on September 23, 1965 at the GA stated that the United States fully subscribed to the principle that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only.

B. Soviet Reaction to the MOL

The Soviet Union was not instantly critical of the U.S.-proposed MOL which was factually reported by TASS. This initial hesitancy possibly stemmed from the fact that Soviet officials themselves have since 1962 alluded to intentions to develop their own MOL. Soviet cosmonaut Leonov in Athens

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and space expert Gorbanev in Tokyo on September 16, 1965 both mentioned Soviet plans for a MOL. Instead of attacking the concept of a MOL per se, Soviet officials and propaganda media issued a series of sustained criticisms, but apparently within certain self-imposed limits, alleging that the United States intended to militarize its space efforts. To the Soviets, this appeared to be a more appropriate maneuver, particularly since they themselves have never drawn any distinctions as to what parts of their own space program were civilian or military. The bounds within which the Soviets could exploit the U.S. MOL were probably dictated by a decision to avoid any inordinate amount of emphasis on satellite reconnaissance and the use of the MOL for purposes of orbital bombardment -- fields in which the Soviets had to some extent already claimed a capability. Thus, the Soviets may have preferred not to precipitate a discussion of these aspects, especially the latter and its possible bearing on Soviet intentions with respect to the UN resolution.

While one charge common to all of the Soviet commentaries to date has been that the MOL is intended for reconnaissance, they have stopped just short of explicitly reviving the USSR's often repeated arguments that space reconnaissance is illegal -- possibly in deference to Soviet interests in protecting the USSR's own satellite reconnaissance program. Nonetheless, and despite President Johnson's assurances to the contrary, one Soviet commentary raised the charge that the United States might be on the threshold of developing an orbital bombardment system which would violate the UN resolution. Col. Gen. Tolubko, Deputy Chief of the Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces in a recent weekly publication Life Abroad suggested that the U.S. program was aimed at developing an orbital nuclear bombardment system. This allegation, however, was not followed up in subsequent Soviet media treatment of the MOL.

Informally, two other Soviet officials have expressed apprehension over the possible implications of the United

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States MOL. At the UN Outer Space Committee session, Soviet representative Blagonravov on October 6, 1965 cited to NASA officials the MOL program as a factor that would tend to limit the scope of US-Soviet space cooperation. A Soviet Foreign Ministry officer, attached to the Soviet mission to the UN in New York, expressed apprehension not only over the MOL project itself, but the form in which it had been announced. Aside from these comments, the Soviets have not mentioned the MOL program in their formal statements at recent international conferences -- the UNGA or the ENDC.

C. Soviet Orbital Rockets

The Soviet Union on May 9 and November 7, 1965 displayed in its military parades what it claimed to be "orbital" rockets. According to a TASS report on the military parade in Red Square on November 7, 1965, Marshal Katuykov announced that included in the parade were "orbital missiles whose warheads, unexpectedly to the aggressor, can deliver their blow at the first or any other loop around the earth." The Soviets had also previously claimed possession of such missiles -- CPSU First Secretary Brezhnev on July 3, 1965 claimed that the Soviet Union possessed "orbital rockets", a different term than the "global" missiles referred to by Khrushchev since 1961.

A Soviet commentary on July 4, 1965 described "orbital rockets" as ones which are "shot into a terrestrial orbit from where they are capable of hitting any target on earth when needed." Deputy Chief of Soviet Strategic Rocket Forces Col. Gen. Tolukbo on November 13, 1965 also stated that the USSR was developing an orbital rocket capable of maneuver in orbit.

D. U.S. Assessment of Soviet Orbital Rockets

On the basis of a preliminary technical analysis of the aspects of the "orbital" missiles paraded in Moscow on May 9

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and November 7, 1965, the appearance of these rockets on these occasions, together with a series of increasingly explicit Soviet statements referring to orbital bombardment constituted the sole evidence of the Soviets' consideration of such weapons. It appeared likely that if the missiles paraded on November 7 were the same as those displayed earlier on May 9, the authenticity of Soviet claims were highly questionable. Neither Soviet orbital missiles nor mobile ICBMs were credited by the U.S. with being anywhere near operational status which the Soviets implied. (Izvestiya on November 10, 1965 did not state whether or not the missile shown had been tested).

The United States believes that flight testing would have been observed by U.S. intelligence prior to the attainment by the Soviets of an operational system particularly one which was accurate and reliable. Accordingly, it believes that Soviet orbital weapons will not compare favorably with ICBMs for cost, effectiveness, reaction time, target flexibility, vulnerability, average life, and positive control. The U.S. assessment, therefore, is that Soviet claims as regards these weapons were made primarily for psychological reasons to attempt to prove the strength of the USSR to all concerned. UN General Assembly Resolution 1884 (XVIII) does not expressly prohibit the development of such systems and the parading of rockets and the accompanying Soviet statements do not appear to violate the express terms of that resolution. However, Soviet claims regarding the possession of orbital missiles raised some speculation as to the USSR's intentions with respect to that resolution.

E. The Thompson-Dobrynin Talks

In consideration of the question of action to be taken in light of the above developments, the United States concluded that it would be preferable to approach the Soviets

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privately and to stress that these Soviet actions and statements seemed contrary to the spirit of the UN resolution and have caused speculation as to Soviet intentions thereto. Accordingly, U.S. Ambassador-at-large Thompson met with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on November 15, December 8, and December 16, 1965 to discuss the problem and to clarify Soviet intentions in this regard. In their first meeting, Ambassador Thompson presented an oral statement which took note of the above Soviet actions and statements and included our position with respect to the UN resolution. (The full texts of the memoranda of conversation between Ambassador Thompson and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin are found in Annex D. A summary follows.) The United States, Ambassador Thompson said, did not contend that there had actually been a violation of the UN resolution, but in view of the importance attached by the United States to the UN resolution, the United States would welcome a public clarification by the Soviet Union of its intentions by a reaffirmation of continued support for the UN resolution.

Ambassador Dobrynin said that he would inform his government of the matter but opined that he did not see how recent Soviet statements regarding the possession of orbital rockets violated the UN resolution. These Soviet statements, he noted, should not be construed to mean that the USSR intended to put such rockets in space and particularly that the statements did not indicate that the Soviet Union would equip such rockets with nuclear weapons.

In the interim between the two Ambassadorial meetings, U.S. Department of State press spokesman, Mr. McCloskey, on November 18, 1965 acknowledged that while the parading of a large orbital rocket may not have violated the UN resolution, the uncertainties about Soviet intentions raised by it and by related statements seemed to place upon the Soviet Union an obligation to make clear its future

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intentions with respect to that resolution. He indicated that the United States had been in contact with the Soviet Union on this matter.

In a formal statement to Ambassador Thompson, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin on December 8, 1965 stated that the exhibition of Soviet orbital rockets was not in contradiction to the spirit of the UN resolution, a point which, he noted, had been publicly reiterated by Mr. McCloskey. The UN resolution, he emphasized, called upon states to refrain from launching into space objects bearing nuclear weapons and "not a word was said therein about banning the development, construction, production and acceptance of such types of weapons as equipment of the armed forces."

In rejecting speculation as to the USSR's conscientious fulfillment of the terms of the UN resolution, Ambassador Dobrynin alleged that the U.S. plan for a "military" manned orbital laboratory (MOL) "to study methods of firing rockets from orbits as well as bombing for purposes of aiding land, sea, air, and cosmic armed forces" could, on the basis of the US view of Soviet orbital rockets, also be considered as a violation of the UN resolution.

Ambassador Dobrynin concluded by stating that the Soviet Union regarded the recommendations in the UN resolution as "very important, strictly observes them, and will in the future undeviatingly comply with this resolution, on the understanding, of course, that other states will adhere to the same position."

As to the previous U.S. suggestion that it would be helpful if the Soviets would make a public statement to the same effect, Ambassador Thompson inquired whether the United States could make use of the Soviet statement presented by Mr. Dobrynin. The latter replied that he had no specific instructions in this regard, but he assumed that

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the United States could say that the Soviet Union had informed the United States of its intention to uphold the UN resolution. The Department of State on December 10, 1965 publicly announced that it had received assurances that the Soviet Union would continue to abide by the UN resolution.

Pravda, on December 9, 1965, reiterated the arguments adduced by a November 10, 1965 article in Izvestiya regarding the non-applicability of the UN resolution to Soviet orbital rockets. Also, in what appeared to be a possible public response to the U.S. suggestion above, Pravda reiterated Ambassador Dobrynin's remarks that the USSR regarded the recommendations contained in the UN resolution as "very important" and that it "abides and will continue to abide by them."

Ambassador Thompson on December 16, 1965 welcomed the stated intention of the USSR to abide by the UN resolution, but at the same time termed "entirely incorrect" Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin's earlier conception of the US plan for a MOL. Ambassador Thompson stated that there was no relationship whatever between the MOL and the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space. (See Annex D.)

Attachments:

1. Annex A - Contingency Statement
2. Annex B - Statement by the President, August 25, 1965.
3. Annex C - UN General Assembly Resolution, October 17, 1963.
4. Annex D - Memorandum of Conversation, November 15, 1965, Memorandum of Conversation, December 8, 1965, and Memorandum of Conversation, December 16, 1965.

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ANNEX A

Contingency Statement

SOVIET ORBITAL ROCKETS AND THE US MOL

Recently, various questions have been raised as to the nature and aims of the United States plan to construct a manned orbiting laboratory (MOL) as announced by President Johnson on August 25, 1965. While many nations have recognized the significant potential offered by this project in the further peaceful exploration of space, we regret that the Soviet Union has taken a view to the contrary, alleging that it is just another manifestation of a US intention to use outer space for other than peaceful purposes.

Our position as regards the MOL is clear. As stated by President Johnson, the MOL project will be non-aggressive in nature and will be designed to contribute to the further development of technology and equipment essential to manned and unmanned space flights and friendly cooperation among all states in the peaceful exploration of space. The plan to construct a MOL in no way marks a new US policy with respect to military activity in space. It is a logical step in the continuation of the US space program to help develop space for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all mankind and at the same time utilize space efforts in the defense of the United States and the Free World. As such, the MOL project will be entirely peaceful in character. To remove any misconception as regards the MOL, I would like to assure all concerned that there is no relationship whatever between the MOL and weapons of mass destruction in space. The design of the MOL incorporates no capability to deliver such weapons and the purpose of the MOL involves no such intent.

Mr. Chairman, the United States remains firmly committed to the principle that outer space should be used for peaceful purposes only. My Government has on several occasions re-

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affirmed its adherence to this principle. In announcing plans for a MOL on August 25, 1965, President Johnson strongly reaffirmed the US commitment to support UN General Assembly resolution 1884 (XVIII). (President Johnson's statement is contained in Annex B.) Ambassador Goldberg on September 23, 1965 at the General Assembly stated that the US fully subscribed to the principle embodied in that resolution. Vice-President Humphrey, at the White House Conference on International Cooperation on November 29, 1965 reiterated that the US sought to use outer space as a laboratory for man's progress. And, more recently, President Johnson on December 5, 1965, expressed the hope that the Gemini 7, which was then in flight, would be "a continuous reminder that the peaceful conquest of space is the only form of conquest in which modern man can proudly and profitably engage."

Mr. Chairman, this is the position of the United States. I should like to point out that our space program from its inception has been notable for its predominantly civilian tone, but military components and personnel - as in the case of the USSR's space program - have made indispensable contributions. (FYI: The Soviets have only one space program which relies heavily on military inputs including boosting facilities and personnel).

U.S. plans for a MOL were not conceived as a reaction to any space project undertaken by another nation and the decision to embark on the project was motivated entirely by the reasons I have already set forth.

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ANNEX B

EXCERPT OF THE OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S
WHITE HOUSE NEWS CONFERENCE, AUGUST 25, 1965.

"After discussion with Vice President Humphrey and members of the Space Council, as well as the Defense Secretary McNamara, I am today instructing the Department of Defense to immediately proceed with the development of a manned orbiting laboratory.

This program will bring us new knowledge about what man is able to do in space. It will enable us to relate that ability to the defense of America. It will develop technology and equipment which will help advance manned and unmanned space flight. It will make it possible to perform very new and rewarding experiments with that technology and equipment.

The cost of developing the manned orbiting laboratory will be \$1 billion 500 million. Unmanned flights to test launchings, recovery and other basic parts of the system will begin late next year or early 1967.

The initial unmanned launch of a fully equipped laboratory is scheduled for 1968. This will be followed later that year by the first of five flights, with two-man crews. The Air Force has selected the Douglas Aircraft Co. to design and to build the spacecraft in which the crew of the laboratory will live and operate. General Electric Co. will plan and develop the space experiments. The Titan III-C booster will launch the laboratory into space, and a modified version of the NASA Gemini capsule will be the vehicle in which the astronauts return to earth.

Even as we meet, Gemini 5, piloted by two very gallant men, backed by hundreds of dedicated space scientists and engineers and great administrators, now orbits the earth as a dramatic reminder that our American dream for outer space is a dream of peace and a dream of friendly cooperation among all of the nations of the earth.

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We believe the heavens belong to the people of every country. We are working and we will continue to work through the United Nations--our distinguished Ambassador, Mr. Goldberg, is present with us this morning--to extend the rule of law into outer space.

We intend to live up to our agreement not to orbit weapons of mass destruction and we will continue to hold out to all nations, including the Soviet Union, the hand of cooperation in the exciting years of space exploration which lie ahead for all of us. Therefore, I have today, in fact, directed Mr. James Webb, the Administrator of our civilian space program, after conferring with Secretary of State and our Ambassador to the United Nations and others, to invite the Soviet Academy of Science to send a very high-level representative next month here to observe the launching of Gemini 6.

I hope that he will find it convenient to come. We will certainly give him a warm welcome in America."

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UNITED NATIONS
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ANNEX C

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A/RES/1884 (XVIII)
17 October 1963

Eighteenth session
Agenda item 26

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the First Committee (A/5571)]

1884 (XVIII). Question of general and complete disarmament

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 1721 A (XVI) of 20 December 1961, in which it expressed the belief that the exploration and use of outer space should be only for the betterment of mankind,

Determined to take steps to prevent the spread of the arms race to outer space,

1. Welcomes the expressions by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America of their intention not to station in outer space any objects carrying nuclear weapons or other kinds of weapons of mass destruction;

2. Solemnly calls upon all States:

(a) To refrain from placing in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, installing such weapons on celestial bodies, or stationing such weapons in outer space in any other manner;

(b) To refrain from causing, encouraging or in any way participating in the conduct of the foregoing activities.

1244th plenary meeting,
17 October 1963.

Approved in S/AL 11/15/65

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: Nov. 15, 1965

SUBJECT: Soviet Possession of Orbital Rockets

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR
Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-Large
Department of State

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I made the attached oral statement to Dobrynin on the Soviet statements concerning their possession of orbital rockets. Dobrynin said that he would, of course, inform his Government but that he did not see how these statements violated the United Nations Resolution. He pointed out that we were orbiting satellites frequently for observation or other purposes and that any of these could be used to carry nuclear weapons. He said that the fact that his Government had a capability of putting such rockets into space did not mean that they intended to do so, and particularly that this did not indicate that they had any intention of putting weapons of mass destruction on them.

I said I understood it was not our contention that there had actually been a violation of the United Nations Resolution but that the making of such satellites and stating that they were capable of carrying nuclear weapons raised questions as to the intentions of the Soviet Government and that it was for this reason that we would welcome a reaffirmation of the Soviet Government's continuing support of the Assembly Resolution.

Annex D (1)

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The United States Government notes with concern continuing references by official Soviet sources to the possession of orbital rockets. Reviewing the military parade in Red Square on November seventh, TASS reported that Marshal Katyukov announced that included in the parade were "orbital missiles whose warheads, unexpectedly to the aggressor, can deliver their blow at the first or any other loop around the earth." This assertion is even more explicit than one made earlier this year. On July third, L. I. Brezhnev told Soviet military graduates that the USSR had "orbital" rockets. Radio Moscow several days later defined such rockets as ones ". . . shot into a terrestrial orbit from where they are capable of hitting any target on earth when needed. Distinct from other types of rockets, they have practically no flight limit and are capable of carrying superpowerful nuclear charges."

The Soviet Government is aware that the General Assembly, in unanimously adopting Resolution 1884 of October 17, 1963, welcomed the intention of both our governments not to station nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction in outer space. The General Assembly solemnly called on all States not only to refrain from orbiting such weapons but also to refrain "from causing, encouraging or in any way participating in the conduct of the foregoing activities."

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Such public Soviet statements as are noted above seem contrary to the spirit of General Assembly Resolution 1884. They have caused speculation as to the intentions of the Soviet Government with respect to the Resolution. We are coming under considerable public pressure to explain the meaning of Soviet claims and intentions, and may have to do so at any time. In view of the foregoing, and the importance the world attaches to the General Assembly's Resolution 1884, which was co-sponsored by the USSR, my Government believes that a public clarification of Soviet intentions by reaffirmation of the Resolution would seem to be in order.

November 15, 1955

Approved in S/AL 12/9/65

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: Dec. 8, 1965

SUBJECT: Soviet Orbital Rockets

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR
Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-Large
Department of State

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The Ambassador said he had been instructed to make the following remarks in reply to my statement to him on November 15, 1965, concerning the Soviet orbital rockets:

"The statement that the exhibition of Soviet orbital rockets allegedly contradicts the spirit of the General Assembly resolution of October 17, 1963, calling upon nations not to launch into orbit around the earth objects carrying nuclear weapons was received in Moscow with surprise. The same thing, in essence, was publicly reiterated by State Department representative McCloskey at a press conference November eighteenth. It is well known that this General Assembly resolution, of which the USSR was one of the sponsors, called upon states to refrain from launching into space objects bearing nuclear weapons, and not a word was said therein about banning the development, construction, production and acceptance of such types of weapons as equipment of armed forces.

"Moscow rejects the attempts to cast a shadow over the Soviet Union's conscientious fulfillment of the

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General Assembly resolution of October 17, 1963. The thought inevitably arises that the fuss raised in the American press about this question is clearly designed to distract the attention of world public opinion from the USA's military preparations in space, particularly from the program announced by the U. S. for the creation of a military, manned, orbital laboratory (MOL) which is designed to study methods of firing rockets from orbits as well as bombing for the purposes of aiding land, sea, air and cosmic armed forces. From the point of view you have set forth, the availability to the U. S. of the above-mentioned laboratory can be considered as a violation of the resolution.

"The Soviet Union regards the recommendations contained in the UN General Assembly resolution of October 17, 1963, as very important, strictly observes them, and will in the future undeviatingly comply with this resolution, on the understanding, of course, that other states will adhere to the same position."

I pointed out that what we had in fact suggested was that it would be helpful if the Soviets would make a public statement to the effect that they adhered to the resolution of the General Assembly on this subject. I inquired whether we could make use of the statement he was making to me today. The Ambassador replied that he had no instructions but he assumed that we could say that the Soviets had told us that they were upholding the Assembly resolution.

In this connection, the Ambassador remarked that he had been very careful in reporting our conversation and had said that we had no present intention of making a public statement, but that such might become necessary. He said that in fact Mr. McCloskey had made a public statement the next day, which had reached Moscow about the same time as his cable. He thought in cases of this kind that it would be better if we told them frankly what our intentions were.

I explained that the purpose of my remarks had been to warn him that we might be subjected to pressure to say something and that

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this had in fact occurred the next day, although at the time I talked to him, we had hoped we could avoid saying anything until they had had an opportunity to reply.

The Ambassador merely observed that he thought we were too sensitive to pressure from the press on questions of this kind.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Approved in S/AL 12/16/65

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: Dec. 16, 1965

SUBJECT: Soviet Orbital Rockets

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, USSR
Llewellyn E. Thompson, Ambassador-at-Large
Department of State

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I made the following statement in reply to the Ambassador's remarks to me on December eighth concerning Soviet orbital rockets:

"We welcome the stated intention of the Soviet Government to abide by the UN General Assembly Resolution 1884 of October 17, 1963, and have so stated publicly.

"In your comments on December eighth, you implied that the United States Government had stirred up the question in the American press in order to distract the attention of world public opinion from American military space activities. This is not correct. I do not need to repeat the actual reasons for concern about the intention of the Soviet Government, which I noted on November fifteenth. I do, however, wish to state on direct authorization that your statement that the planned U. S. military manned orbiting laboratory (MOL) is designed to study methods of firing rockets and bombing from

Annex D (3)

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orbit is entirely incorrect. There is no relationship whatever between the MOL and weapons of mass destruction in space; the design of the MOL incorporates no capability to deliver such weapons and the purpose of the laboratory involves no such intent.

"I trust this statement will remove any misconception on the part of the Soviet Government with respect to the MOL, as reflected in your statement of December eighth."

I said that as he could realize, the statement was prompted by some remarks which he had made. He laughed and said that they had explained their statement and now we were explaining ours.

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