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9 September 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Astronaut Sightings of Objects in Space

The attached memorandum was prepared for the GT-5 flight but not introduced, since we had our hands full with photo control. It is still valid and should be considered for subsequent flights.

Draft Memo


PAUL E. WORTHMAN
Colonel, USAF

Handed to 
Control Section

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DRAFT/Lt Col
August 1965

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McMILLAN

SUBJECT: GEMINI - Astronauts Visual Sightings

Related to your August 9 letter (745-65) to Dr. Seamans, concerning classification of GEMINI acquired photography, is the reporting of visual sightings by the astronauts. Assuming that you may wish to discuss this matter with Dr. Seamans (avoiding the necessity of another repetitive memo), following are some pertinent points:

1. We cannot constrain the astronauts from talking about things or events they see.
2. They should report all sightings -- but should constrain potentially embarrassing real-time details (i. e. , exact description of unusually configured space vehicles, markings denoting national origin, etc.) -- this latter constraint to be in force pending confirmation by SPADATS of position of space debris described and political ramifications (i. e. , possible intentional "rendezvous" for inspection of USSR satellites, etc.).
3. It is possible (but improbable in line with next paragraph) that astronauts could sight and verbally report on classified (NRP) U. S. satellites.

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4. Since NRP activities go into Polar orbit -- and since GEMINI is on a "MERCURY-type", or near Equatorial orbit, the rate, times, and directions of closure are not compatible for detailed sightings.

5. Because of possibility (albeit remote) of sightings of NRP satellite¹ or associated debris -- NASA should coordinate details of such visual sightings with both SPADATS (confirmation of identity) and NRO (appropriateness) prior to public release of details of such sightings.

(General Stewart)