



NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20546

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

AUG 14 1973

Academician M. V. Keldysh  
President  
Academy of Sciences of the USSR  
Leninsky Prospect 14  
Moscow, V-71, USSR

Dear Academician Keldysh:

I have reviewed the progress of the Apollo/Soyuz Test Project with Dr. Lunney after his recent meeting with Professor Bushuyev, and am pleased that the Project is progressing well, and that much has been accomplished since the May 1972 Summit agreement.

At the same time, and since the joint test flight is less than twenty-four months away, it seems to me that it would be wise for you and me to meet at an early date to assess the progress of the ASTP project in mid-course. In particular, I believe we should try to give special consideration to those areas which could most likely present difficulties in the months ahead.

To this end, I suggest that we meet in Moscow immediately following the working sessions which the ASTP Technical Directors have been planning for early October. Dr. Lunney and Professor Bushuyev could report to us at that time on their progress and could identify the more difficult questions which either or both of them feel should have our attention. Perhaps one day would be adequate to hear and question Dr. Lunney and Professor Bushuyev. We could then devote the following day to agreeing on any actions which we might feel to be desirable in the light of the discussions.

I would not, of course, wish to prejudge the discussions which I am suggesting take place in Moscow. Nevertheless, I recognize that you would want to have some advance understanding of any subject areas which I feel at this time

could benefit from discussion between us. I list these subjects for this purpose:

(a) System failures -- For the understanding and confidence of both sides, we believe there should be early exchange of detailed information regarding failures in any systems which are similar to or related to those carried by the Apollo and/or Soyuz ASTP spacecraft. Recent discussions on this subject in Houston were not adequate in this regard.

(b) Participation in and observation of test activity and flight preparation -- Again, to give both sides the fullest confidence in the work, it would be desirable to provide for the earliest assurances of opportunities for observation and/or participation in the presentation and testing of compatible Apollo and Soyuz equipment. For example, advance arrangements should be made for joint participation in and observation of preflight checks of the interconnecting communication cables in the Apollo and Soyuz flight spacecraft. Similarly, there should be early arrangements for exchange of observers for life support systems testing and for US participation in the installation, test and preflight check-out of the NASA VHF/AM equipment in Soyuz.

(c) Milestones -- I believe we should together question the Project Technical Directors as to their current confidence level for meeting key milestone dates, including the July 1975 launch.

(d) The preparation of documentation -- We have some feeling that the time targets for the preparation of documentation may be unduly extended, thereby slowing down overall progress. The solution to this problem might lie in assuring that the Project Technical Directors and the Working Group Chairmen on both sides have equivalent authority to commit to and accelerate documentation tasks.

I hope you will agree with this suggestion for a mid-term review. If so, and assuming that the Working Groups will meet in the first two weeks of October, I would plan to

arrive in Moscow on October 14. We could then devote as much of October 15 as may be necessary for the reports of the Project Directors. The remainder of October 15 and October 16 could be devoted to resolving any problems they may identify and to preparing a brief summary recording our decisions and detailing any future steps we might consider necessary.

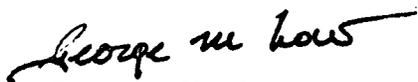
Unfortunately, I do not have a great deal of flexibility in the proposed date, because I am unable to leave the United States during a manned Skylab flight. The suggested mid-October time period, according to present plans, is between the second and third manned visits to Skylab.

I would like, if you agree that it would be useful, to remain in the Soviet Union for an additional two or three days in order to visit Soviet space facilities. I would appreciate your suggesting an itinerary, but I would, of course, be interested in visiting installations of the sort you visited at NASA last October.

I would plan to bring with me Mr. Arnold Frutkin and Mr. Chester M. Lee, Program Director for the Apollo/Soyuz Test Project. Dr. Oscar E. Anderson, who will be in Moscow for the prior project meetings, would remain on during our discussions.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,



George M. Low  
Deputy Administrator