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

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

January 25, 1971

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to report further progress in developing space cooperation with the Soviet Union. On January 21, in Moscow, I completed intensive discussions with President Keldysh of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and initialled a written agreement which we expect to confirm within 60 days. Until confirmation, we have agreed that no details are to be made public, although general references to the discussions are entirely proper. (A copy of a joint press communique is attached.)

This agreement, together with the October agreement on the development of compatible rendezvous and docking systems, suggests considerable Soviet progress toward greater concreteness and openness on a wide variety of space-related subjects of mutual interest. The results in many respects exceed our expectations and appear to have considerable potential significance.

The negotiated document (the Summary of Results is attached) has a dual character. It incorporates a number of agreed actions and objectives and, at the same time, provides for a procedure by which joint working groups will, according to specific guidelines in each case, further develop the items and areas of agreement. Among these are the following:

- we agreed to exchange specified quantities of lunar material obtained by the two sides from different regions (about 3 grams from each site) and to provide the background data required for informed analysis of this material.
- we agreed to work out procedures for consulting on the scientific objectives of space research and to exchange information on the objectives and results of our national programs in near-earth, lunar and planetary science.

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- we agreed on joint efforts to coordinate combined surface-air-space research over ocean areas which we will survey together and over sites in our respective territories which we will survey independently. (The agreement in no way limits observations from space by either nation.)
- we agreed to expand and improve in specific ways the exchange of weather satellite data, to improve the application of such data to forecasting, and to explore ways to operate our respective weather satellite systems on a complementary basis.
- we agreed to set up a regular procedure for highly detailed exchanges of biomedical data obtained in our respective manned space flight missions.

Our schedule calls for confirmation by Keldysh and me within 60 days, commencement of the working group activities within 90 days thereafter, and final recommendations by the working groups within six months more. Some of the subjects will probably progress faster than others. If all goes well, we should have rather far-reaching recommendations before us for final consideration at various times within the next year. In practice, these recommendations will at all stages require continuing review and approval by the internal machinery of the two sides.

Thus, the October and January agreements, taken together, provide a point of departure for a growing and constructive relationship between U.S. and Soviet space programs without restricting the freedom of either. The joint processes we are setting in motion could bring with them many additional opportunities for coordination or cooperation as well as for a growth in the mutual confidence which is required to grasp these opportunities together. The critical and unpredictable factors, of course, are the pace and quality of Soviet performance under the agreements. These factors we shall watch carefully and report as appropriate.

Apart from our formal negotiations, I did have one private conversation with Keldysh (along lines discussed earlier with Dr. Kissinger) which I believe to be of particular interest. I explained to Keldysh that we believe it technically possible to modify Apollo spacecraft and Soyuz modules so as to permit them to dock in the 1973-74 period, several years before

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entirely new systems like the space shuttle would become available. Keldysh was receptive to this possibility and invited a fuller technical explanation which we plan to provide at an early date. Until the prospect can be considered within his system, Keldysh has asked particularly that we not discuss it publicly. He is obviously as aware as we are of the potential public impact of a relatively early docking prospect.

I shall, of course, continue to keep you and Dr. Kissinger informed of progress on all these matters.

Respectfully yours,

George M. Low

George M. Low
Acting Administrator

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