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

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

January 12, 1972

SENSITIVE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with the President on January 5, 1972

Jim Fletcher and I met with the President and John Ehrlichman for approximately 40 minutes to discuss the space shuttle. During the course of the discussion, the President either made or agreed with the following points:

1. The Space Shuttle. The President stated that we should stress civilian applications but not to the exclusion of military applications. We should not hesitate to mention the military applications as well. He was interested in the possibility of routine operations and quick reaction times, particularly as these would apply to problems of natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods. When Dr. Fletcher mentioned a future possibility of collecting solar power in orbit and beaming it down to earth, the President indicated that these kinds of things tend to happen much more quickly than we now expect and that we should not hesitate to talk about them now. He was also interested in the nuclear waste disposal possibilities. The President liked the fact that ordinary people would be able to fly in the shuttle, and that the only requirement for a flight would be that there is a mission to be performed. He also reiterated his concern for preserving the skills of the people in the aerospace industry.

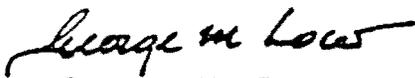
In summary, the President said that even though we now know of many things that the shuttle will be able to do, we should realize that it will open up entirely new fields when we actually have the capability that the shuttle will provide. The President wanted to know if we

thought the shuttle was a good investment and, upon receiving our affirmative reply, requested that we stress the fact that the shuttle is not a "\$7 billion toy," that it is indeed useful, and that it is a good investment in that it will cut operations costs by a factor of 10. But he indicated that even if it were not a good investment, we would have to do it anyway, because space flight is here to stay. Men are flying in space now and will continue to fly in space, and we'd best be part of it.

2. International Cooperation. The President said that he is most interested in making the space program a truly international program and that he had previously expressed that interest. He wanted us to stress international cooperation and participation for all nations. He said that he was disappointed that we had been unable to fly foreign astronauts on Apollo, but understood the reasons for our inability to do so. He understood that foreign astronauts of all nations could fly in the shuttle and appeared to be particularly interested in Eastern European participation in the flight program. However, in connection with international cooperation, he is not only interested in flying foreign astronauts, but also in other types of meaningful participation, both in experiments and even in space hardware development.

3. USSR Cooperation. The President was interested in our joint activities with the USSR in connection with the probes now in orbit around Mars. We also described to him the real possibility of conducting a joint docking experiment in the 1975 time period. The prospect of having Americans and Russians meet in space in this time period appeared to have great appeal to the President. He indicated that this should be considered as a possible item for early policy level discussions with the USSR.

The President asked John Ehrlichman to mention both the international aspects of the shuttle and the USSR docking possibilities to Henry Kissinger.


George M. Low

cc: A/Dr. Fletcher