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MEMORANDUM

INFORMATION

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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September 21, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Robert M. Behr

SUBJECT: Visit of Minister Lefevre

Minister Lefevre and his colleagues of the European Space Conference have come and gone. The meeting at State (September 16-17), chaired by Under Secretary Johnson, was an exploratory review of the possibilities for European participation in our post-APOLLO space program.

There were no surprises on either side. The dialogue was frank, pointed and noticeably devoid of luminous abstractions about the benefits of cooperation. Both sides recognized the explicit potential for a mutually advantageous program.

At the outset M. Lefevre reported Europe's inability to fund both their own launcher development and a part of the US Space Transportation System (STS). Cooperation with us would, therefore, be contingent upon US assurances regarding continued availability of launch services.

Ambassador Johnson replied by describing a US formulation for these services, should a suitable agreement be negotiated between the two parties. The US would provide launch services for peaceful purposes consistent with relevant international agreements — with only one qualification. In the event that a European proposal for a communications satellite failed to pass the INTELSAT General Assembly by more than 2/3 of its membership, the US could not, in those circumstances, assure launch services. This qualification raised a red flag.

The Europeans, suffering from a five-year case of dyspepsia over what they regard as US (read COMSAT) heavy-handedness in managing international communications satellites, are hypersensitive about preserving complete flexibility in their own programs over the coming years. Because of their vulnerability to being outvoted (there are some 80-odd members) in INTELSAT, they sought unsuccessfully to obtain iron-clad assurances from us that, regardless of how the consortium votes, we would still guarantee to launch their communications payloads. These importunings were perhaps over-reactions, but nevertheless understandable since the Europeans see regional communications as the

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primary objective of their space program (however it proceeds). This issue may prove to be a very real stumbling block during future negotiations.

Another potential problem area is the degree to which technology would be exchanged. As system manager we would expect full access to relevant European technology. They, on the other hand, would be granted access in depth only to those elements of the program for which they have a need-to-know in conjunction with their specific tasks under the agreed collaboration. This asymmetry may prove unacceptable to the Europeans.

With regard to the magnitude of European participation, they appeared to be comfortable with the notion that we would hope for at least a 10% contribution to what is now estimated to be a $10 billion program.

A final observation is that while the Europeans were businesslike and, I believe, sincere in exploring the modalities of cooperation, they were scrupulously careful to avoid even a suggestion of firm commitment to the post-APOLLO program at this juncture.

We can expect a better signal of their intentions at the conclusion of the ministerial meeting of the ESC* in early November. Meanwhile, we are proceeding with the development of proposed guidelines for a cooperative program and identification of areas of particular sensitivity from the standpoint of US security interests.

At Tab A are an agenda outline for the September 16-17 meeting together with a list of the participants.

*European Space Conference

Attachment

Tab A.