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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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December 20, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER  
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Joint Space Docking Mission and the  
President's Visit to the USSR

We have received a copy of a letter dated November 3 sent to you by the Administrator of NASA concerning possible agreement with the Soviet Union on a joint space docking mission.

We would not want to attempt to make a judgment as to either (a) the values and costs of additional manned flights from the viewpoint of their merits within the U.S. space program after the present schedule of Apollo lunar landings and Skylab missions has been completed or (b) the incremental cost and effect on our program of designing such flights to enable a joint U.S.-Soviet docking mission. We believe, however, that such a mission could yield substantial benefits from the viewpoint of foreign policy objectives. There would be a number of advantages in concluding a preliminary agreement to work together toward such a mission at the time of the President's visit next spring.

A joint rendezvous and docking mission would be a highly visible demonstration of U.S.-Soviet ability to cooperate in peaceful projects for which the two countries have unique capabilities. At the same time, U.S.-Soviet space cooperation is likely to appeal to the imagination of other countries without arousing unduly their concerns about super-power collusion.

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The Soviet leadership would probably welcome an agreement to conduct a joint mission. We understand that the NASA delegation at the recent technical talks in Moscow on docking requirements returned with the impression that Soviet space authorities would be receptive to a proposal along the lines contemplated by NASA. Apart from the value of having in readiness an agreement which is attractive to the Soviet Government, we believe a joint space mission could contribute to our own objectives by tapping the reservoir of good will which the Russian people still feel as a result of the cooperation between the two countries during World War II.

*James Curran for*  
 Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.  
 Executive Secretary

cc: Administrator of the  
 National Aeronautics  
 and Space Administration.

<sup>WJ</sup>  
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 Authority NN0969052  
 By TJ NARA Date 5/5/99