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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: October 6, 1971

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SUBJECT: Post-Apollo Space Cooperation and US Assurance of Launch Assistance

PARTICIPANTS: Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson, State
Dr. Edward E. David, Jr., OST
Dr. Norman P. Neureiter, OST
Dr. James C. Fletcher, NASA
Mr. Donald Morris, NASA
Mr. John Walsh, NSC Staff
Mr. George Mansur, OTP
Mr. Herman Pollack, SCI, State
Mr. Robert F. Packard, SCI/SAM, State

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This meeting was held in Under Secretary Johnson's office at noon on October 6 to consider three questions:

1. On the basis of Europe's reactions thus far to his September 1 letter to Lefevre does it appear that modification (further liberalization) of our stated position on launch assistance would increase the possibilities that Europe would divert resources from the development of its own launch capability to participation in the development of the space transportation system? Would it be feasible to liberalize our policy?

2. How should we respond to adverse European press coverage of our position? Should we make public disclosure of the content of your proposal?

SCI/SAM: RFPackard: lam

(Drafting Office and Officer)

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Clearances:

SCI - Mr. Pollack J - Mr. Peck

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3. What terms of reference should apply to Charles Mathews' meeting with the Europeans in late October?

Concerning modification of our position on launch assistance it was the consensus of the group that:

1. On the basis of reactions reported thus far from Europe to Under Secretary Johnson's letter to Minister Lefevre of September 1 there is no basis to believe that further liberalization of our position would significantly affect Europe's choices as to participation in the post-Apollo program and the further development of its own launch capability (Europa-III), nor does it appear likely that this situation will change over the next few months. Our position is not considered adequate by the French, but appears to seem adequate to the other countries insofar as their own interests are concerned. Although this position is no longer tied to substantial European participation in the development of the space transportation system, the adequacy of our assurances is clearly not the sole, nor the principal, consideration for either France or Germany in deciding whether to proceed with Europa-III.

2. Nonetheless, we should not consider our present position as irrevocable, but rather as open to modification in the future, if these circumstances should change. Under Secretary Johnson observed that the position is probably as liberal as we can make it. Further modification, which could apply only to launch assistance for communication satellite systems separate from the Intelsat system, would be extremely difficult to arrange.

3. It is not our objective to keep the Europeans from developing Europa-III, but to engage their interest and participation in ongoing projects of mutual value such as the development of the space transportation system. In fact, it has been US policy to be willing to assist the Europeans to develop an independent, multilateral European launch vehicle capability, if they should seek our assistance. It was noted that one effect of our position on launch assistance appears to be that the Europeans now seem inclined toward a stretched-out development program for Europa-III which would preserve their option

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whether to complete the task and would reduce their annual expenditure to a level which would enable them, if they so chose, to participate to some measure in the development of the space transportation system as well. Dr. Fletcher noted that NASA had initially proposed foreign consideration of participation in the post-Apollo program on this basis and at the explicit instruction of the President. Under Secretary Johnson noted that this objective was confirmed in Dr. Kissinger's memorandum to the Secretary of State on August 18. Dr. Fletcher pointed out that this will require that we provide the Europeans a clear and attractive opportunity. In view of our own uncertainty thus far as to when the US will develop a space transportation system and the specific parameters of the system we would propose to develop, we have not yet provided the Europeans a sufficient basis to decide how they wish to participate, if at all. He would hope to be in a position to do so within another month or two.

Concerning public disclosure of Under Secretary Johnson's letter to Minister Lefevre of September 1 it was the consensus of the group that:

1. In the event of further inaccurate or adverse public comment about the letter we should make it public. This would not have the effect of precluding further modification of our position on launch assistance.

2. It would be preferable to do this on a low-key basis (a routine statement and release by the State Department press officer rather than a presidential announcement or a White House press statement), but in such a manner as not to preempt the President's option to make a subsequent statement. Mr. Walsh will confirm this choice with Dr. Kissinger and will work directly with the State Department in framing an appropriate press statement.

3. If time permits Under Secretary Johnson should inform Minister Lefevre of our intention to make the letter public and should solicit Lefevre's views as to this course of action without affording him a veto.

4. Our new position on launch assistance, although developed specifically in response to inquiries from the members of the European Space Conference, would also apply to interested non-western-European countries to the extent possible (i.e.: with respect to communist countries to the extent possible under US export legislation and foreign policy considerations at the time such assistance is requested; to other countries such as Japan and India to the extent consistent with our relationships with those countries at the time such assistance is requested). In response to inquiries as to whether the position applies beyond western Europe we should acknowledge that it could apply generally to other countries, but reserve comment as to its specific application pending an expression of interest by others and consideration of any legal or policy restraints which might apply at that time.

Concerning Minister Lefevre's request that Charles Mathews of NASA meet with the European Space Conference Committee of Alternates and senior officials in late October it was noted that we are now charged by the President to include in our technical discussions with the Europeans, not only the definition of possible cooperative relationships in a program for the development of the space transportation system, but also an exchange of views regarding the content of space activities in the post-Apollo era including, at an appropriate time, other potential areas for cooperation. The meeting in late October should therefore anticipate this dual dialogue.

Dr. Fletcher urged that the ensuing technical discussions should concentrate initially on defining tasks and working relationships for the space transportation system project, since time is catching up with us. NASA expects to define the concepts and configurations for the system within the next two or three months and to select a prime contractor for the task by next Spring. It will be imperative to know the extent of possible European participation by that time.

Dr. David emphasized that, nonetheless, the discussions should concern objectives and missions for a broad range of space activities in which the Europeans might be interested,

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not solely the specific technical aspects of cooperation in hardware development. Under Secretary Johnson observed that this dichotomy suggests the possibility that we should establish a new mechanism for dealing with the long-range, conceptual discussion as a matter separate from the technical discussions of the joint expert group. He proposed that Dr. Fletcher and Dr. David consider organizing a small group of American officials concerned with long-range possibilities and purposes for the exploration and use of space who could meet with a similar group designated by the European Space Conference for an initial exchange of views at a two or three day seminar here in the United States later this Fall,

In the light of these considerations it was the consensus of the group that:

1. Even though a meeting of the sort proposed by Minister Lefevre for late October would not be consistent with our preferences to resume discussions on a technical basis, we should nonetheless accede to his request.
2. Mr. Mathews participation should be focused on an exchange of current program plans and technical information, i.e.: presentations by him on the current status of NASA's overall program plans for the 1970s - 1980s and on the latest developments emerging from NASA's studies of alternative concepts and configurations for the space transportation system. He could solicit and receive any suggestions which the Europeans have as to the agenda for ensuing meetings of the joint expert group. NASA should consult with the other interested agencies in establishing the parameters for Mathews' presentations.

The question of how best to proceed after the late October meeting was left open for further consideration.

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