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Office of the Prime Minister
Secretary of State for Scientific Policy and Planning

30 Rue Montoyer
1040 Brussels
December 27, 1972

Mr. Secretary:

I have the honor to refer to the discussions which have taken place between United States representatives and the European Space Conference concerning Europe's participation in the post-Apollo program, and in particular to the correspondence exchanged between Mr. U. Alexis Johnson, Under Secretary of State, and myself.

The Ministerial Meeting of the European Space Conference, which took place in Brussels on December 20, 1972, adopted an important decision in this regard. Indeed, taking into account and within the framework of the proposal of the United States Government, it agreed that the "Sortie-Module" program should be undertaken, carried out, and administered within a common European framework.

The participation of member countries and the mode of financing will be settled in the near future.

Mr. William P. Rogers,
Secretary of State,
Department of State,
Washington, D.C. 20500

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This means that at the outset this program will be carried out as a special project on the European Space Research Organization.

Since the Ministers of the European Space Conference also decided to form a new European space organization from ESRO and ELDO, to be established if possible by January 1, 1974, this new organization, upon its creation, will take over the continuation of this program.

All appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the continuity of obligations undertaken by member countries as well as of management and of contracts already awarded.

During its meeting on January 18, 1973, the ESRO Council will take all appropriate measures, and the Council President will inform the American authorities of the steps taken and will make suggestions for the continuation of negotiations.

I am very pleased to be able to inform you of the adoption of this decision by the Ministers of the European Space Conference.

Without doubt it marks the beginning of an important new period of cooperation in space matters between the United States and Europe.

Accept, Mr. Secretary, the assurances of my highest consideration.

[s] Theó Lefevre
Th. Lefevre

Minister of State

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