



S/S 7728

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

May 8, 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McGEORGE BUNDY
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: U.N. Registration of U.S. Space Launches

Last December the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution calling upon "states launching objects into orbit or beyond to furnish information promptly to the U.N. Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, through the Secretary General, for the registration of launchings" and requesting the Secretary General "to maintain a public registry of the information furnished". The proposal was introduced by the United States and adopted unanimously in the General Assembly. It was based on a recommendation which was made in 1959 by the U.N. Ad Hoc Outer Space Committee that such a registry, or census of objects in space, would soon become necessary and would be a specific step which could be taken under U.N. auspices to encourage international cooperation in space activities.

On February 15, the United States submitted to the United Nations its first registration of U.S. space launchings in response to the resolution. We have since submitted four bi-weekly reports covering additional U.S. objects in space through April 10, and are now preparing the next follow-up report which will bring this data up to date through April 24.

Our reports have included the following data on space vehicles successfully launched in escape trajectories into solar orbits or placed in sustained orbit around the earth: the international designation of the object, the conventional designation of the main vehicle

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DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

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(e.g. Atlas-Agena), an indication of the purpose of the launching (e.g. whether for the development of space flight techniques or for space research and exploration or for the development of practical applications of space-based technology), the date and time of launch, and the basic orbital perimeters. This form of registration was designed specifically so as not to expose critical transmitting frequencies, not to reveal details of the purpose and character of certain military launchings and not to include military satellites whose orbits are of short duration. In an effort to avoid being obvious about the latter exclusion, our data have been submitted as a list of those objects in orbit as of the cut-off dates. The registration has been, therefore, a list of U.S. objects in "sustained" orbit in space, not a report of all launchings per se. It did not include objects placed in orbit prior to mid-February, but no longer in orbit at the time of our first report.

On March 24 the Soviets submitted their initial registration. It covered all objects successfully launched by the USSR beginning with Sputnik 1 in October 1957 and running through Cosmos 1 on March 16, 1962. Like ours, it did not include data on transmitting frequencies or details of the purpose and character of the satellites.

The U.S. form of registration has been challenged by the Soviets, and criticized by the press here and abroad, as being incomplete, i.e. designed to suppress certain military launchings which we conduct in "secrecy". In view of the damage which this criticism is doing to the credibility of our stated position that the U.S. space program is an open and peaceful one, conducted in consonance with principles of international law and the U.N. Charter, the State and Defense Departments have made a careful review of the form of our registration, and it will now be modified. The new form of registration is designed to enhance our political position without undue risk to the security of our military activities.

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NASA feels that this new form of registration is a distinct improvement, but that the U.S. may still be vulnerable to criticism for omitting some information the absence of which cannot be satisfactorily explained, e.g. the date of re-entry or decay in the case of all objects and the orbital characteristics in the case of launchings of short orbital duration.

Specifically, we will now include, as supplementary information in our future registrations, a notation of all launchings including (a) those objects which orbit for periods of short duration, but are no longer in orbit on reporting dates, and (b) those objects which are launched during reporting periods, but fail to achieve orbit. We will not report the dates on which objects decay or return to earth. In other respects the form of registration will remain unchanged. (A sample report, using actual launches but hypothetical dates and designations, is enclosed.)

We feel that our compliance with the U.N. resolution, in the form which has now been agreed, is a worthwhile step to demonstrate the responsibility, cooperativeness and openness with which we conduct our space activities and which we seek as an accepted standard for the conduct of such activities by other countries.


L. D. Battle
Executive Secretary

Enclosure:

Sample registration
report

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SAMPLE REGISTRATION

Using actual launchings,
but hypothetical dates
and designations.

REGISTRATION DATA FOR U.S. SPACE LAUNCHES

The following report supplements the registration data
for US space launches as of 1200Z on May 8, 1962

<u>International Designation</u>	<u>Launch Vehicle</u>	<u>Satellite Category</u>	<u>Date of Launch</u>	<u>Nodal Period</u>	<u>Inclination (Degrees)</u>	<u>Apogee (Kilometers)</u>	<u>Perigee (Kilometers)</u>
1962 Alpha Omega 1	Atlas	B	5 May 62	152.97	86.65	3405.2	2786.0
1962 Alpha Omega 2	Atlas	D	5 May 62	112.74	86.64	2602.5	100.2
1962 Alpha Omega 3	Atlas	D	5 May 62	152.70	86.65	3394.4	2785.3
1962 Alpha Omega 4	Atlas	D	5 May 62	153.40	86.65	3432.9	2790.1

The following object was no longer in orbit as of 1200Z on May 8, 1962:

1962 Eta 2

Supplemental Information:

In addition, the United States has launched the following space vehicles which achieved orbit, but are not in orbit as of 1200Z on May 8, 1962:

<u>International Designation</u>	<u>Launch Vehicle</u>	<u>Satellite Category</u>	<u>Date of Launch</u>
1962 Alpha Chi	Mercury Atlas	A	26 Apr 62
1962 Alpha Psi	Atlas Agena	C	30 Apr 62

In addition, the United States has launched the following space vehicles which did not achieve orbit:

<u>Launch Vehicle</u>	<u>Satellite Category</u>	<u>Date of Launch</u>
Thor Agena	A	28 Apr 62
Thor Delta	A	29 Apr 62
Thor Able Star	A	3 May 62
Blue Scout	B	4 May 62
Blue Scout	B	6 May 62