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Central Intelligence Agency - *Frank*

SUBJECT: Contingency Plan for Soviet Claims on Anti-Missile Capability

REFERENCE: Mr. Philip Farley, secret Memorandum to General C. P. Cabell, dated 24 October 1961; same subject

1. In our view the draft contingency plan for Soviet claims on anti-missile capability is generally sound. There are several aspects of the problem, however, that may be a cause for concern.

2. We are dealing here with a highly technical problem in which many arguments and counter-arguments are quite sophisticated. Most of these arguments could be followed and understood by only a relatively few people in any country. In many cases even these people could make a sound judgment only if they were aware of a wide range of facts which would seldom be presented in a coherent package in the normal communications media. The United States has had enough experience in trying to present its position on nuclear testing over the past several years to know how difficult it is to convince world public opinion as a whole, or even many key parts of it, in technical matters of this kind.

3. An added problem related to the technical complexity of the issue is that if we base our arguments entirely on scientific rationale we are likely to be placed continually on the defensive by the other side whose claims might have less basis in scientific fact. In such a situation the Soviets could take the initiative with a succession of claims which had strong emotional

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appeal, and we would be left in a relatively disadvantageous position in trying to shoot down these emotional claims by means of an intellectual argument that was basically difficult to understand.

4. The draft contingency plan itself implies the difficulty of the situation in its discussion of the U.S. approach. The introductory paragraph of this section calls for U.S. initiative, but the various specific measures discussed in the subordinate paragraphs are basically designed to react to various actions or arguments that the Soviets might advance.

5. In view of the difficulties suggested above, it might be well to think of a U.S. program aimed at two different types of audience. One approach, aimed at those who could understand the technical argument, should publish all of the pertinent unclassified facts, in as complete and well reasoned form as possible. The other approach, aimed at a wider and less well informed audience, should concentrate more on the emotional problem of creating a feeling of superiority on the U.S. side and disbelief toward Soviet claims. With this latter audience it might be better for us to avoid technical arguments completely by merely stating that we have known about Soviet developments for a long time and that we have taken adequate measures to render our missiles invulnerable to Soviet anti-missile defenses.

6. Two additional points could give us a great deal of difficulty in this matter. One would be if the Soviets were to destroy a satellite in orbit. Although technicians would recognize that such action would not be equal to an anti-missile capability, most of the general public could not make this fine distinction any more than they did with respect to the space shots and ICBM capability. The second point is that our difficulties regarding the production and deployment of the Nike-Zeus system have been publicized and might tend to discredit any claims that we might make for a capability in the anti-missile field equal to the Soviets.

7. To be most effective the U.S. should initiate action before the Soviets make claims or "demonstrations." One or both of the following might be used:

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a. Claim that the technical capabilities (decoys, multiple warheads, radar-neutralization, etc.) make U. S. missiles invulnerable or that the number of U. S. missiles would saturate Soviet systems.

b. Claim that our own anti-missile system is superior to any system that the Soviets might develop. This could be supported by exploiting each success of the Nike-Zeus system as it comes along.

In general the theme of point a. above is a more positive theme and would be more likely to enhance the U. S. position.

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