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COUNTRY USSR REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Miscellaneous Comments on the Launching DATE DISTR 28 November 1957
of the First Soviet Earth Satellite
(incidence of influenza mentioned)

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE: [REDACTED]

1. When S.M. Poloskov, member of the USSR Academy of Sciences and delegate to conference, was asked by source when the Soviets would launch their satellites, he replied, "I cannot tell you because I do not know". He made the same reply when asked where the satellite would be launched. Source feels that Poloskov was sincere and that he really did not know these details. Poloskov stated that the purpose of the satellite is to use it as a vehicle for collecting information. Source has the impression that there is much conflict between Soviet scientists and the military as to how much information the scientists could discuss. The scientists had hoped that by the time of the conference they would be allowed to give the United States full details of the Soviet earth satellite program. However, they did not win. Blagouravov said to source that they actually did not have time to prepare their reports. In reply to this source said to Blagouravov "but the conference has been set for some time." Blagouravov replied, "Yes, but we did not know about it until just before we left." Poloskov told source that Sedov and Masevich were going to the IAF (International Astronautical Federation) Conference in Barcelona the week of October 7, 1957.
2. Poloskov told source that the Soviets are going to maintain 66 moon-watch observation stations along a meridian between the 70th and 75th meridian east. When asked about the earth satellite's orbit, Poloskov replied that it would incline several degrees to the meridian, and said that he did know that the orbit would just miss the north and south poles and those would be the only two regions on the earth where the satellite cannot be observed. Poloskov asked the United States to help the USSR observe their own satellite. Poloskov said that they would be extremely glad to establish some sort of cooperation and get the US observations. A delegate had previously said that in order to accomplish this the United States would have to know when the Soviets would launch their satellite. Poloskov replied, "You will have advance warning." Another delegate also asked how long the radio signals would last in the satellite. Poloskov said in Russian, "I am sorry, I cannot understand the question." With the assistance of an interpreter Poloskov then said, "You tell them that it will be several weeks. I should say three weeks."

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3. Source was told by Poloskov that there would be one battery in the satellite which would be chemical and a second battery which would be solar. When the newspaper reporters pressed Poloskov as to whether the USSR would announce future satellite launchings in advance, Poloskov said, "I do not know," and added that he was told by his superiors that there would be plenty of warning, two or three weeks. The launching stations would be three in number. One at 80 degrees north latitude, one between 50 and 60 degrees, and one between 47 and 58 degrees.

4. When asked why so few people were present, Poloskov replied, "We have run into a terrible flu. I just got through with the flu. Mirtov now has flu and is in a very bad way." Poloskov had gone to London this summer at the same time as the Toronto IUGG (International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics) meeting. He did not give a reason for going but made the statement that when he arrived home he caught the flu. Poloskov said the flu in the USSR is much more serious than in the United States and that people are dying right and left. Poloskov is in the Institute of Alpine Geophysics under Fedorov. This institute is in the Academy of Sciences.

5. According to Poloskov, Subbotin is the director of the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy and is responsible for orbits. He is an authority in that line. Sedov also has a very responsible position.

6. Poloskov told source that the USSR had definite plans for launching several satellites, six or even more. He stated that if they were able to launch even one, many of their problems would be solved, and after the initial launching they would be able to launch hundreds.

1. Comment: By this the assumption is that the delegates only knew that they were coming to the United States five or six hours before they left the USSR. This is precisely what occurred at the recent conference in Toronto. At that time, they were only given five hours advance notice.

