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7 February 1978

## MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Reaction to the Cosmos 954 Accident

The Nato allies, other than Canada and West Germany, have said little about the Cosmos 954 accident and its implications. Canadian officials spoke highly of US actions and objected to Soviet behavior. West Germany was critical of both the US and the USSR. Of the other countries informed by the US, Japan protested the incident to the Soviets and wants the UN to examine ways to prevent such accidents; Australia and New Zealand have made no comments.

Spain and South Korea--neither informed--are questioning the advantages of their ties with the US. Sweden, on the other hand, was not critical of the US, but delivered a strong protest to the USSR. Eastern Europe generally followed the Soviet line, although Poland emphasized that the incident demonstrated US-Soviet cooperation and detente.

Countries Informed by the US

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau has been extremely laudatory of US aid to Canada. He said "the Americans were very forthcoming...went beyond their obligation as partners in NORAD. They did it as friends; they did it as neighbors; and we are very, very grateful for it." Defense Minister Danson/

reported in the House of Commons that "I am perfectly satisfied that the prime minister, myself and our staffs were kept fully informed at each stage of the operation...Cooperation has been complete with the Americans."

The Canadians have complained that the Soviets should have informed Canada of a potential re-entry problem in advance. Canada is now assessing the USSR's legal obligations under the four existing international space conventions, and the defense minister stated that Canada will press

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a claim on the Soviet Union for the cost of the search and the recovery of the satellite. The USSR will be notified of the recovery only when official identification of the pieces is completed. Soviet offers to send technical personnel were not accepted.

The general media reaction toward the US was favorable although there was some criticism that the US did not notify Canada early enough. The press highlighted, in particular, cooperation between the US and Canada in their airborne radioactivity monitoring effort. Newscasts were generally critical of the USSR for failing to inform Canada.

The West German government tried to allay public concern by minimizing the risk, asserting it had adequate information about the satellite, and suggesting the consequences of the accident will have to be examined in "competent international forums." Initially, government spokesmen said that West Germany was informed about the problem by both the US and the USSR.

The German press was quite critical of the Soviet Union.

On January 31, the influential Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung published an extensive commentary--probably officially inspired--which called the US information policy on the incident "strange." It accused Dr. Brzezinski of playing down the undesirable consequences of the satellite's disintegration and said the US was treating the "other big power" with special care. This commentary implied the US should tell the allies more about the search for the debris than simply what aid it was giving to Canada. The article concluded that international agreement is required to "rule out absolutely that satellites may carry radioactive material, either as a weapon or as an energy generator."

The conservative Die Welt insisted that the interests of the "satellite have nots" must be taken more into consideration. Both newspapers said that Bonn had informed neighboring states of the peril, with the Frankfurt newspaper naming Switzerland, Austria, and Spain.

The UK and France made no official comments and their media gave the incident only spotty coverage with little commentary. The Danes and the Dutch commented briefly on the accident at the NATO political

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committee session on January 31. The Dutch representative expressed his appreciation for US notification and commented that his government would like NATO to consider how information about future incidents could be exchanged so that precautions could be taken. The Danish representative asked whether the allies intended to protest to the USSR about the lack of prior warning of the dangers the satellite posed. The Danish government has announced that it intends to inform the USSR that Denmark would have appreciated advance Soviet notification that the satellite was in difficulty.

Official Italian concern focused primarily on fears about radioactivity and the scientific conclusions that could be drawn from the incident. Italy was put on a three-day nuclear alert, including tests for radioactivity. One commentator deplored the technological gap which makes Italy dependent on the "science, resources and technical protection of another country, the United States." In a press interview, the chairman of the National Nuclear Physics Institute commented that because the satellite was nuclear powered and the US had abandoned nuclear propulsion in space 10 years ago, the USSR is now technologically 10 years behind the US.

Japan was pleased with the US warning and with US willingness to consult fully. In lodging a protest with Moscow on the incident, Tokyo demanded that the Soviets provide the details of the accident, procedures for preventing a recurrence, and information about other Soviet satellites now in orbit. The government's action is designed in part to respond to popular sensitivity about nuclear issues. The incident prompted Japan to press publicly for the UN to consider ways to prevent satellite accidents.

#### Countries Not Informed by the US

South Korean concern over the incident focused on the question of how Washington selected the countries to be given advance notification. Officials in Seoul felt once again that Korea was excluded from the circle of priority US interests.

Immediately after the news broke, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs received a flood of press inquiries about whether Spain had been advised in advance by the US and if not, why not. Spanish media interest remained intense for several days, with criticism focusing on the US role.

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The Soviets were clearly more culpable, but at least Moscow was consistent and did not warn anybody. The US, on the other hand, warned NATO countries but did not inform Spain, in spite of the important bilateral treaty between the two countries. The inference was that Spain is a second class ally.

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In Austria Chancellor Bruno Kreisky made a statement on the fall of the satellite which acknowledged previous information but refused to name his informant. He also said that his information had been confirmed through the Austrian embassy in Moscow. Kreisky claimed that Austria had mobilized a team of experts, probably in an effort to forestall public concern.

The press in Costa Rica has criticized the USSR for not revealing the mission of the Cosmos satellites, pointing out "the danger posed by certain military equipment that has been rotating around the earth."

China has not commented officially on the satellite crash. A Communist controlled newspaper in Hong Kong claimed that as the result of the incident "we have become the victim of US-Soviet contention in space." The official Chinese news agency has limited its coverage to factual reports of the incident and has replayed Western statements criticizing the USSR.

The East European countries have given only light media coverage to the accident. For the most part, they initially limited reporting to a replay of the January 24 Tass statement. Subsequently, the Poles commented that the incident was handled well by all concerned parties and that this is a good example of US-Soviet cooperation and the detente process. Similarly, Budapest commented favorably on President Carter's proposal for a ban on nuclear-powered satellites and gave objective reportage to the US-Soviet cooperation handling of the incident. The

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Czechs and the East Germans, in contrast, played up an alleged Western propaganda effort aimed at exaggerating the radioactive dangers involved; East Berlin radio stressed, in this connection, that the West Germans were particularly at fault. Bucharest radio on February 4 repeated the commentary made by Soviet Academician Sedov and other East European media will probably do the same.

The Yugoslav Tanjug correspondent in Moscow, in addition to quoting from the Tass statement, added that "after this incident, the public will probably follow more carefully the moment when the Soviet space supply satellite "Progress-1" re-enters the atmosphere and burns." Expectedly, Belgrade has linked the accident with the need for increased efforts toward international disarmament and the UN Special Session on Disarmament of which they were initial sponsors.

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