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BACKGROUND ON US POSITION ON A SEPARATE BAN ON WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN OUTER SPACE

1. The U.S. is on record as having proposed discussion of a separate agreement banning weapons of mass destruction from outer space, along the general lines of the provisions contained in the April 18, 1962, Draft Treaty Outline on General and Complete Disarmament. The matter of such a separate agreement is not now an active agreed agenda item, but it has been included in our list of proposed agenda items.

2. The U.S. is not taking the initiative in again raising the question of a separate agreement banning weapons of mass destruction from outer space. At the same time, we would not reverse our position on readiness to discuss such a ban at Geneva, if the neutrals or Canada insist on raising the issue, and we would attempt to place the burden of rejection of such a ban on the USSR, rather than assuming it ourselves. Our position on a separate disarmament measure on weapons in space is now under review.

3. The U.S. would make very clear its objection to broadening any outer space measure (separate or in a general and complete disarmament provision) to include prohibition on any activity or equipment other than on weapons. Any Soviet or Soviet-supported attempts should be rejected, making appropriate reference to the fact that the USSR Draft Treaty, as well as the U.S. draft treaty outline, specifically and correctly applies to a ban only on weapons.

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US ARCHIVIST (NLK-91-14)
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