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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT, THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: SAMOS II Launch

The inclosures which you requested comprise the information to be released for the second experimental launch of the SAMOS satellite. As you may know, such preparations to launch as well as the firings themselves are impossible to conceal from public view. Therefore, newsmen are permitted to witness the launch.

This material represents a severe reduction from what had previously been issued. Eliminated entirely from former procedures are four pages comprising 22 questions and answers. Press briefings before and after launching have been eliminated. We have reduced the advance notice to correspondents from five to one day. New official photographs will not be volunteered as has been done heretofore. In this connection, since past photographs are in the public record from SAMOS I launch (inclosed), they will be released only upon request. It has been deemed advisable to continue to limit the media to live photography only of the launch as in the past. These modifications have been made of course with the advice of Dr. Charyk, his staff and others.

Annex I contains the standby releases to meet the contingencies of postponement, degrees of unsuccessful launch and successful launch, including the approximate apogee and perigee data.

Annex V comprises the general statement and the Fact Sheet to be issued at approximately the day before launch but not to be released until launch. This enables the correspondents covering the event to gain a better perspective of the program and reduces the possibility of erroneous, distorted, or wildly speculative stories. Experience has indicated that advance co-operation with the media has resulted in more objective coverage.

Dr. Charyk has reviewed these changes and is satisfied that they meet all his security requirements and those of his SAMOS Project Director, Brigadier General Greer. Dr. Charyk agreed to make public this amount of data in view of the great volume of previous news stories which have been written already about SAMOS.

In summary, this readjustment is a big step toward the gradual reduction of volunteering information on our intelligence acquisition systems which Mr. McNamara has informed me is your desire. As might be expected, there may be criticism from the media, the contractors and the Congress as this change in procedure becomes known but we are prepared for it.

Inclosures as noted above.

[redacted]

Arthur Sylvester