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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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April 24, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.
Executive Secretary
Department of State

SUBJECT:

Message to PRC on Skylab Missions
(LDX 182)

The attached revised version of the draft cable forwarded as LDX 182 has been approved by Mr. Kissinger for despatch.


Jeanne W. Davis
Staff Secretary

Attachment

DEF 18-8 CHICOM
XR SP 10 US

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Authority NNN 969022By TJ NARA Date 2/24/95CONFIDENTIAL

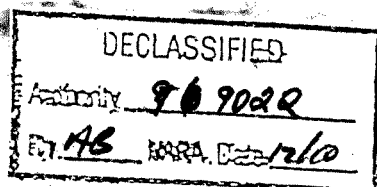
ROUTINE PARIS LIMDIS

SUBJECT: PRC Nuclear Tests During Skylab Missions

Request you pass following information to PRC Embassy:

1. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration is planning extended orbital manned Skylab space flights during the period May 25, 1973 - January 4, 1974. Tentative plans call for manned missions May 15 - June 12, August 8 - October 3, and November 9 - January 4.
2. The United States Government is concerned about possible hazards to the Skylab astronauts from the conduct of nuclear tests during the mission, particularly those at high altitudes (above 50-60,000 feet). Cumulative radiation exposure from augmented radiation belts could necessitate the termination of this mission, with attendant loss of scientific data not only to U.S. experimenters but also to the investigators from 23 other nations and international organizations who will be cooperating with us in this venture. Also, any detonation in the vicinity of the spacecraft could be directly damaging to the health of the astronauts through flash and radiation.
3. The altitude of the skylab mission is sufficiently high (235 nautical miles) so as to minimize hazards from low altitude tests, unless a test and its after-effects should coincide with the return of the Command Module to earth.

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4. The United States Government is requesting the cooperation of all governments having the capability to conduct high altitude nuclear tests in avoiding nuclear tests which could affect the Skylab astronauts. We will appreciate the cooperation of the Government of the People's Republic of China in this regard. Once final Skylab mission schedules are determined, we will inform you of them. If you would like further information concerning Skylab orbital parameters, we will be glad to provide such as well.

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