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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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July 7, 1984

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: Kenneth W. Dam, Acting *KWD*
SUBJECT: Chernenko's Response to Your July 2 Letter
on the Vienna Talks

Soviet Chargé Isakov came in to see Rick Burt Saturday afternoon under urgent instructions from Moscow to hand over a reply from Chernenko to your July 2 letter on the Vienna talks. An unofficial translation, as well as the Russian original, are attached.

Chernenko's letter stresses the following points:

-- It insists that you have not yet given a positive response to the Soviet proposal to negotiate on preventing "the militarization of space" in September, and that "the American side" is still talking about some "conference" without a definite agenda.

-- It very forcefully makes the point that nuclear negotiations are frozen, and that linking them to negotiations on outer space is therefore a recipe for deadlock on outer space too. The resulting arms race in space would accelerate the arms race on earth as well, Chernenko says, and would make it harder to limit and reduce armaments in general.

-- As a result of these two factors, the letter goes on, "it is necessary to come to a clear understanding as to the subject of these negotiations" before our delegations meet at the negotiating table. If it is hard for us to agree to such negotiations in September, they will "take that into account."

In response, Burt first recalled that it was we who had suggested beginning talks later if the Soviets preferred. He said we would study the letter and reply soon, but stressed that both you and the Secretary have told the Soviets we are prepared to come to Vienna with clear substantive ideas on outer space arms control. At the same time, we believe that if we are going to address this topic we must also discuss related issues like offensive nuclear weapons. In any event, however, we are prepared to enter into diplomatic discussions of the agenda for talks, and Burt invited the Soviets to begin such preparatory discussions without delay.

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BY 11300 NARA, DATE 5/17/85

Isakov replied by asking again whether we are ready to negotiate on "preventing the militarization" of outer space. If we were making an announcement, would we be willing to say that, he asked. Burt said that in discussing the agenda for a Vienna meeting, we could address the issue of what any announcement might say. Isakov concluded that he would report the exchange, and the specific question of initiating a discussion of the Vienna agenda, to Moscow.

On the way out, Isakov commented to the State Department official accompanying him that the Soviets are offering the Administration a political "bumper harvest" if negotiations on outer space begin in September; all that was being asked was that the agenda be fixed before the two delegations sat down. The official replied that you do not need Soviet help to get reelected, and that the Administration is approaching the talks on the assumption that they must be to mutual benefit, without regard to such considerations.