

Mr. Gray

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OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD  
Washington 25, D. C.

October 3, 1960



MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SUBJECT: Highlights of U. S. Position Paper on the SAMOS Program

1. Pursuant to Board discussion September 28, State has developed with Defense and with CIA a U. S. position paper on the SAMOS reconnaissance satellite which establishes the general basis on which the responsible departments and agencies will handle intelligence, public information and foreign relations aspects of the program. The paper incorporates announcements relating to the conduct of the initial SAMOS launching, a SAMOS fact sheet, authorized answers to technical and program questions for use by the Department of Defense, authorized answers to political and legal questions for use by the Department of State. Proposed implementing instructions to diplomatic posts are being developed.

2. At the present time, CIA has reserved its position on the question of public acknowledgment of the type of equipment carried in the payload; State and Defense agreed that disclosure should be made. State advises that they are prepared to issue any change sheets that may be required after other interested department and agency comments are on hand.

3. The highlights of these papers are:

a. Although limited information will be made public, such information should be factually correct, the United States should not be placed in a position of being open to exposure at a time and under circumstances not subject to its control. (Ref. para. 4 - U. S. Position Paper)

b. The fact that the payload includes photographic equipment will be specifically acknowledged. (Para. 5)

c. Public attention will not be drawn to the electromagnetic elements of the program. (Para. 5)

d. No public use of photographs <sup>acquired</sup> required by SAMOS will be made without approval of the Secretary of State and Defense and Director of CIA. (Para. 6)

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e. Public attention will not be drawn to the relationship of the program to SAC and its operations. (Para. 7)

f. No interviews respecting the program will be granted, and U. S. civilian and military officials will generally refrain from volunteering statements or comments. (Para. 14. b.)

g. Defense will inform its contractors that no public comment will be authorized, and no publicity is to be given to programs through advertising or other communications media. (Para. 14. c.)

h. In the event of an official challenge by another government or major adverse reaction, the Secretary of State will initiate appropriate action. (Para. 15. a.)

4. The general U. S. approach to foreign policy aspects of SAMOS reflect the following:

a. The U. S. is engaged in a broadly based peaceful program of exploration of outer space and investigation of some of the practical applications.

b. SAMOS has been preceded into outer space by over 30 spacecraft, at least two of which carried photographic equipment. The first of these two was Lunik III; the second was U. S. TIROS I. No government challenged the right of transit through outer space of any spacecraft, including Lunik III and TIROS I. The SAMOS program is a natural extension of spacecraft capabilities. (Paras. 16. a. -d.)

c. SAMOS cannot contribute to international agreements to keep the peace. Although premature to make specific commitments, the U. S. will bear this application in mind as development of SAMOS proceeds. (Para. 16. e.)

d. As the President has stated, the U. S. is prepared to accept UN verification of payloads carried by U. S. spacecraft. (Para. 16. g.)

e. U. S. view is that SAMOS does not violate UN Security Council resolution May 27, 1960 (para. 16. h.) and that transit of SAMOS through outer space does not present any serious legal questions (para. 16. i.). (Legal Annex will be supplied).

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5. Annex D (Defense Q's and A's) and Annex ~~K~~ (State Q's and A's) should be read in their entirety as they touch upon passes over the Soviet Union, photographs of the Soviet Union, intelligence information, release of photographs, and U-2 relationship.

6. State advises that in the absence of further guidance from the Board, the next step would be for Defense to issue the material in Annex C on a hold for release basis 5 days in advance of the scheduled launching. Barring further slippage, the material would presumably be issued around the middle of this week.

7. Copies of the position paper have been furnished to members of the OCB Working Group on Outer Space for their information.



**Richard Hirsch**

This document consists  
of 17 pages. No. 32  
of 54 copies, Series A

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October 3, 1960

UNITED STATES POSITION PAPER ON THE  
SAMOS RECONNAISSANCE SATELLITE PROGRAM

Problem

1. The United States plans to launch in the near future the first experimental SAMOS reconnaissance satellite. The development program will continue over a period of several years, will involve a number of launchings, and will from the outset employ orbits passing over the Soviet Union. The fact that the United States is undertaking a program of this character is public knowledge, and conduct of the experimental launchings will also be publicly known. The action of the United States in placing a reconnaissance satellite in orbit may be challenged officially by the Soviet Union or other governments or may occasion propaganda resulting in adverse world reaction.

2. The purpose of this paper is to establish the general basis on which the responsible departments and agencies will handle the intelligence, public information, and foreign relations aspects of the program.

UNITED STATES POSITION



Intelligence Aspects

3. Determination of intelligence objectives and handling of the results of the SAMOS program for intelligence purposes will be controlled by the United States Intelligence Board.

Public Information Aspects

4. Official public statements and comments respecting the SAMOS program will be in extremely low key with minimum disclosure. Although only limited information will be made public regarding the program, such information should be factually correct. The United States should not be placed in

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the position of being open to exposure at a time and under circumstances which would not be subject to its control.

5. The fact that the payload includes photographic equipment will be publicly acknowledged; however, no details respecting the equipment will be made available. Public attention will not be drawn to electromagnetic (ferret) elements of the SAMOS development program, and public statements and comments should not differentiate among the types of equipment involved.

6. Operational details and results of the SAMOS program will be handled as classified intelligence information. No public use of photographs acquired by SAMOS will be made without the express approval of the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

7. Public attention will not be drawn to the relationship of the program to the Strategic Air Command and its operations.

8. Official public statements and comments will seek to avoid presenting direct challenge to other countries or placing other countries in the position of having publicly to agree with or dissent from the actions of the United States in respect of this program. However, such statements and comments should provide information and arguments in support of the United States action.

9. No public announcement of the initial launching date will be made.

10. In order to preserve low key treatment, the initial and subsequent launchings will be handled in a routine manner with respect to presence of representatives of communications media.

11. The following procedure will be observed by the launching authority in connection with the initial launching:

a. Immediately following the initial launching, a brief statement confirming the success or failure of the launching will be issued. A draft statement is attached under

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Annex B.

b. Following determination of whether the satellite has successfully attained orbit, a brief statement confirming success or failure in this regard will be issued. A draft statement is also attached under Annex B. In the event the satellite fails to achieve orbit, no further statements or comments by the launching authority, other than those in Annex B, are authorized.



c. In the event the satellite successfully achieves orbit, the launching authority will issue, without further amplification, the official statement and fact sheet attached under Annex C. This action will be taken simultaneously with release of the official statement and fact sheet by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in Washington. The launching authority will refrain from further statements or comments and will refer all questions to the Office of the Secretary of Defense. However, a limited number of photographs related to the launching will be issued in a routine manner.

12. Following the initial successful launching, an official statement and fact sheet will be issued, without further amplification, by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in Washington. A draft statement and fact sheet are attached under Annex C.

13. Technical and programmatic questions will be handled by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and political and legal questions, by the Department of State. In general, it is contemplated that no public comment or only limited comment will be made in response to questions not covered by the official statement and fact sheet. Authorized public responses to certain questions which may be raised following the initial launching are attached as Annexes D and E, which cover technical and political questions, respectively.

14. As a continuing matter, the following procedures will apply in connection with public statements and comments on the SAMOS program:

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a. The Office of the Secretary of Defense will continue to be the spokesman regarding technical and programmatic aspects, and the Department of State, respecting political and legal aspects.

b. No interviews respecting the program will be granted, and United States civilian and military officials will generally refrain from volunteering statements or comments on the character, purpose, status, or results of the program. Any such statements or comments which become necessary should conform with the official statement, fact sheet, and authorized questions and answers included as a part of this paper. Departures from these standards will be made only by joint authorization by the Departments of State and Defense.

c. The Department of Defense will inform its contractors concerned with the SAMOS program that no public comment on the program by such contractors will be authorized and that no publicity is to be given the program through advertising or other communications media.

#### Foreign Relations Aspects

15. The following procedures, which will be implemented by appropriate instructions to diplomatic posts, will apply in connection with relations with other countries respecting conduct of the SAMOS program:

a. All major United States diplomatic posts and additional key posts will be informed on a classified basis of the impending launching and the authorized arrangements respecting it.

b. After receiving official notification of the success of the initial launching, discussions with principal allies will be initiated.

c. In the case of countries other than principal allies, United States representatives abroad will be authorized to initiate discussions at their discretion in the light of reaction to the initial launching. Such action may be desirable

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in the case of certain neutral countries and necessary in countries where Project MERCURY and other civilian scientific facilities of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration are located.

d. All United States representatives abroad will endeavor to avoid precipitating or engaging in public debate regarding the SAMOS program. In particular, an effort will be made to avoid engaging in debate over the legality of SAMOS since such a debate might open a number legal issues respecting outer space which the United States would prefer not to have raised in this manner or at this time.

e. In the event of official challenge by another government or major adverse world reaction, the Secretary of State will initiate appropriate action.

16. The general approach of the United States to substantive foreign policy aspects of the SAMOS program will reflect the following factors:

a. The United States is engaged in a broadly based, peaceful program of exploration of outer space and investigation of some of the practical applications of spacecraft.

b. The SAMOS satellite has been preceded into outer space by over 30 spacecraft. At least two of these carried photographic equipment. The first of these two was the Soviet spacecraft LUNIK III, which carried photographic equipment on a lunar trajectory and then returned to orbit the earth. The second of these was the TIROS I, which utilized photographic equipment to obtain meteorological data. LUNIK III and TIROS I illustrated the potential usefulness of photographic spacecraft for making observations of scientific interest and of beneficial practical application. Future photographic spacecraft may be capable of performing such additional public service functions as the performance of resources surveys, the planning of engineering projects, and the mapping of remote areas.

c. No government challenged the right of transit through outer space of SPUTNIK I or any subsequent spacecraft, including LUNIK III and TIROS I, or contested the peaceful

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character of their activities. It is clear that neither on the basis of experience to date, nor the type of equipment involved, nor the general type of non-interfering and non-harmful activities that can be performed does there exist any presumption against the propriety of placing photographic spacecraft in orbit.

d. The SAMOS program is undertaking a natural and logical extension of spacecraft capabilities. The program is intended to develop new capabilities for making observations of the earth without interference or harm to persons, property, or activities on the earth, in air space, or in outer space. The objective of the program is to develop a capability to obtain information which will strengthen the defense of the Free World and thereby help discourage the initiation of hostilities by the Soviet Union. The United States considers that in today's world secrecy is dangerous and greater openness is desirable as a basis for reducing tensions and increasing confidence. Spacecraft such as SAMOS and its predecessors may make clear the inevitability of openness in the space age and may help remove barriers to effective international agreements to keep the peace.

e. International peace-keeping agreements should be supported by the most advanced technology available to all countries. It is inherent in the type of photographic capability represented by SAMOS that it can contribute to the implementation of international agreements to keep the peace. Although it would be premature to make specific commitments, the United States will bear this possible application in mind as development of SAMOS proceeds.

f. The United States has recognized the need for timely measures to ensure that the exploration and use of outer space should proceed peacefully. With this in view, the United States has proposed an agreement prohibiting the placing in orbit of vehicles carrying weapons capable of mass destruction.

g. As the President has stated, the United States is prepared to accept United Nations verification of the payloads carried by United States spacecraft. Such a measure would itself provide further assurance of the peaceful and non-aggressive

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character of all United States spacecraft, including SAMOS.

h. It is the view of the United States, in the light of the foregoing considerations, that the actions of the United States in respect of the SAMOS program do not violate the resolution adopted by the Security Council of the United Nations at its 863rd meeting on May 27, 1960, which inter alia, appealed to Member Governments "to refrain from the use or threats of force in their international relations; to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence, and to refrain from any actions which might increase tensions."

i. It is the further view of the United States that the transit of SAMOS spacecraft through outer space does not present any serious legal questions. The United States position on the legality of photographic spacecraft is stated in Annex A.



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ANNEX A

LEGAL POSITION

To be supplied.



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ANNEX B

ANNOUNCEMENTS RELATED TO CONDUCT  
OF INITIAL SAMOS LAUNCHING



1. FOR RELEASE IMMEDIATELY AFTER SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH:

An experimental SAMOS satellite was successfully launched by the Air Research and Development Command at \_\_\_\_\_ today. The vehicle consists of an ATLAS booster, as first stage, and an AGENA second stage. Today's launching is the first of a series that will continue the research and development phase of this system.

2. FOR RELEASE IMMEDIATELY AFTER UNSUCCESSFUL LAUNCH:

A launching vehicle carrying an experimental SAMOS satellite (exploded on the launching pad) (exploded shortly after lift-off) (was destroyed by the range safety officer after it veered off course) today at \_\_\_\_\_. The flight was scheduled as part of the research and development phase of the program.

3. FOR RELEASE AFTER DETERMINATION OF WHETHER THE SATELLITE HAS SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVED ORBIT:

- a. Telemetry reports indicate that (the first and second stages of the SAMOS launching vehicle failed to separate) (the second stage of the SAMOS launching vehicle failed to ignite). The vehicle burned up upon re-entry.
- b. Tracking reports indicate that the SAMOS satellite has gone into orbit successfully.
- c. Tracking reports indicate that the SAMOS satellite has failed to go into orbit.

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ANNEX C

ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE ISSUED BY DEPARTMENT  
OF DEFENSE ON OCCASION OF FIRST  
SUCCESSFUL SAMOS LAUNCHING

1. The Department of Defense today initiated a series of experimental launchings of the SAMOS satellite. This series will continue over the period required for SAMOS research and development. Today's launching, which took place from Point Arguello, California, was conducted by the Air Research and Development Command and successfully placed a SAMOS satellite into a near polar orbit about the earth.
2. The SAMOS satellite is the first to be launched in a research and development program looking toward new capabilities for making observations of the earth.
3. Since the SAMOS program will be in the research and development stage for some time, an evaluation of the capabilities of SAMOS is not expected to be accomplished until the results of the present test are analyzed and other experiments have been made.
4. A fact sheet respecting the SAMOS program is attached.



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SAMOS I FACT SHEET**I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Project SAMOS is a research and development program to develop capabilities for making observations of the earth from satellites. The development program is under the executive management of the Secretary of the Air Force.

**II. TEST OBJECTIVES**

SAMOS I was launched from the Naval Missile Facility, Point Arguello, California, into the Pacific Missile Range to place the vehicle in a near circular polar orbit. The purpose of the initial SAMOS flight is component testing to determine the engineering feasibility of obtaining an observation capability from an orbiting satellite.

**III. CONFIGURATION**

The satellite is boosted into outer space by a modified ATLAS and is placed into orbit by an AGENA second stage.

**First Stage**

**Booster:** An Air Force ATLAS modified for the SAMOS I.  
**Height:** Approximately 77 feet. (with adapter section).  
**Launch Weight:** Approximately 262,000 pounds.  
**Propulsion:** Rocketdyne liquid propellant engine; 356,000 pounds thrust.  
**Guidance and Control:** The ATLAS booster is equipped with the GE/Burroughs radio command guidance system. The guidance system can determine position and rate, compare this information with the predetermined projectory data, and command flight correction.

**Satellite Vehicle**

The entire Lockheed AGENA second stage becomes the orbiting satellite vehicle.

**Height:** About 22 feet.  
**Weight:** Approximately 11,000 pounds at launch. Orbital weight after fuel exhaustion is approximately 4,100 pounds.  
**Propulsion:** Following coast period after ATLAS burnout, a Bell liquid fuel rocket engine, developing 15,000 pounds of thrust, propels the second stage into orbit.  
**Instrument Package:** Test photographic and related equipment.

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IV. TRACKING, TELEMETRY AND COMMAND

- a. Primary tracking, telemetry and command during orbit will be performed by:  
Vandenberg Tracking Station, Vandenberg AFB, California  
Hawaiian Tracking Station, Kaena, Oahu, Hawaii  
Kodiak Tracking Station, Kodiak, Alaska
- b. Ascent Guidance (booster)  
GE MOD II, Vandenberg AFB, California
- c. Ascent Tracking and Telemetry  
Vandenberg Tracking Station, Vandenberg AFB, California
- d. Downrange Telemetry and Tracking Ship  
Pvt. Joe E. Mann
- e. Ascent Radar and/or Optical Tracking (FMR)  
Point Arguello, California  
Point Mugu, California  
San Nicholas, California
- f. USAF Satellite Test Center, Sunnyvale, California  
(Control Center receiving all orbital data and exercising command control of SAMOS)



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ANNEX D

AUTHORIZED ANSWERS

TO TECHNICAL AND PROGRAM QUESTIONS

FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE



1. Question: What are the apogee, perigee, and period of rotation?  
Answer: This information will be made available when it has been computed.
2. Question: What is the weight of the payload?  
Answer: As the Fact Sheet points out, the entire second stage goes into orbit. The weight is stated in the Fact Sheet.
3. Question: Are there cameras in the payload?  
Answer: As we have said previously, the instrument package contains test photographic and related equipment. (Details are classified.)
4. Question: Does the SAMOS satellite pass over the Soviet Union?  
Answer: As noted in the statement which has been issued, the satellite is in a near polar orbit about the earth. Consequently, it passes over most of the countries of the earth.
5. Question: Is the SAMOS satellite conducting reconnaissance?  
Answer: SAMOS is a research and development program. Its objectives are explained in the statement that has been issued.
6. Question: Will photographs be taken of the Soviet Union? Other countries?  
Answer: As explained in the Fact Sheet which has been issued, the purpose of the flight is to test the components of the system.
7. Question: Where and how do we receive information, if any, from the satellite?  
Answer: As stated in the Fact Sheet, tracking and similar telemetry functions are received from the various stations at Sunnyvale, California.

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8. Question: Will a recovery attempt be made?  
Answer: No.
9. Question: How good is SAMOS photography expected to be?  
Answer: This is an experimental program. We really don't know. The program is expected to be in the development stage for some time.
10. Question: Will the intelligence agencies receive any information from this satellite?  
Answer: Inasmuch as this is a research and development article, it is expected that any data resulting from this test will be of primary interest to the developing agency, which is the Air Research and Development Command.
11. Question: Will any of the photographs be publicly released? If not, why not?  
Answer: This is a research and development program. There is no plan to release publicly any photographs that may be acquired.
12. Question: Will any kind of data other than photographic be obtained?  
Answer: In any development shot, a considerable amount of varied data is collected.
13. Question: How long will SAMOS remain in orbit?  
Answer: I don't know yet. This depends on stability in orbit and other factors yet to be determined.
14. Question: Can the Soviet Union shoot SAMOS down? Will they want to?  
Answer: I have no information on that.
15. Question: Does the Soviet Union want (have) reconnaissance satellites too?  
Answer: I have no information on that. The Soviet Union clearly has the capability of placing in orbit a satellite similar to SAMOS.

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16. Question: Is SAMOS being pushed to make up for lack of U-2 reconnaissance?

Answer: The SAMOS research and development program has been proceeding at high priority since 1958. It will be in the research and development stage for several more years.

17. Question: Who are the SAMOS contractors?

Answer: (Unclassified information will be provided.)



18. Question: Is SAMOS solely a U.S. reconnaissance satellite or is it and its output available to others? For example, the United Nations.

Answer: The vehicle is a research and development item, and it is premature to judge its degree of efficiency. In general, it is not possible to predict, at this time, just how useful it may be. (Refer any specific questions on the United Nations to the Department of State.)

19. Question: The President in his United Nations speech alluded to prohibition against placing satellites carrying weapons of mass destruction in orbit. Is there such a weapon in the instrument package?

Answer: Emphatically not. The package is of passive and peaceful nature. No such use is even remotely contemplated.

20. Question: Is there any comparison between the SAMOS instrument package and any Soviet satellite?

Answer: LUNIK III carried some photographic equipment as indicated by the issuance of photographs credited by the Soviets to this satellite. Both LUNIK III and TIROS I illustrated the potential usefulness of photographic spacecraft for scientific purposes and practical applications.

21. Question: Is SAMOS primarily for military purposes?

Answer: As stated before, SAMOS is a research and development satellite. As the program develops, we can foresee the possibility of certain peaceful benefits such as conduct of resources surveys, mapping of remote areas, and planning engineering projects.

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ANNEX E

AUTHORIZED ANSWERS TO  
POLITICAL AND LEGAL QUESTIONS  
FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT OF STATE



1. Question: Is SAMOS legal?

Answer: It is the view of the United States that SAMOS does not present any questions of legality.

2. Question: Does SAMOS violate the air space or sovereignty of the Soviet Union?

Answer: SAMOS transits outer space.

3. Question: Is SAMOS peaceful? Does SAMOS represent a peaceful use of outer space?

Answer: Yes, we think it is peaceful. The present satellite, of course, is simply a research and development article. We hope that the program will ultimately strengthen the defense of the Free World and help discourage the initiation of hostilities. These are peaceful objectives. We also hope that SAMOS and, indeed, all spacecraft will help demonstrate that greater openness is inevitable in the space age. One effect of this might be to help remove some of the barriers to effective disarmament.

We might add that the United States has for some time been endeavoring to prevent the unpeaceful use of outer space and has met with little encouragement. We have specifically proposed the prohibition of space vehicles carrying weapons capable of mass destruction. We think such a use of outer space would be highly undesirable and represents the kind of use of outer space that would be of real concern to everyone, ourselves included. We think this use can be avoided if we act now. In this connection, the President has pointed out that we are prepared to have our spacecraft inspected before they are launched. Of course, if we had any unpeaceful intentions, we wouldn't want that.

4. Question: Is it expected that the Soviet Union (other governments) will protest the orbiting of SAMOS?

Answer: No government has challenged the transit of any spacecraft launched to date. SAMOS is essentially undertaking development of a natural and logical extension of spacecraft capabilities. You will recall that both LUNIK III and TIROS I carried photographic equipment.

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5. Question: Would the United States protest the placing of a similar vehicle in orbit over this country by the Soviet Union?
- Answer: Of course not. We would, however, like to see an international inspection system set up so that everyone can be sure just what is being placed in orbit. Assuming the equipment is like that aboard SAMOS, we would not object.
6. Question: Will the United States offer SAMOS or its results to the UN?
- Answer: SAMOS is now in the research and development phase. It is not now possible to make any commitments respecting it. However, this type of capability, if it is successfully developed, may help in the implementation of peace-keeping agreements, and the United States believes that such agreements should be supported by the most advanced technology of all countries.
7. Question: What is the significance of the timing of the first launching?
- Answer: This was a matter of technical readiness.
8. Question: Is there really any difference between SAMOS and the U-2?
- Answer: They are not really comparable. In the first place, SAMOS is a spacecraft, not an aircraft. In the second place, SAMOS is entirely developmental and will be for some time.
9. Question: Are any bases in foreign countries involved in the program?
- Answer: No. The Fact Sheet issued by the Department of Defense lists the tracking and communications stations. Some stations overseas may see the satellite go by, but they don't have any function to perform in support of the program.

