

File 3/25/66

46 Russian Satellites Are Spy Suspects

ORLANDO, Fla., March 24 (AP)—The Soviet Union has orbited 46 satellites that probably were spy-in-the-sky spacecraft, according to one of the Johnson Administration's specialists on Russian space activities.

"Nobody has suggested anything other than photoreconnaissance" for a particular series of unmanned Cosmos satellites, said Charles S. Sheldon II, senior member of the National Aeronautics and Space Council's professional staff.

The Council is the President's top advisory group on U.S. space policies.

The 46 satellites—launched since 1962, including five this year—"don't fit any pattern" of scientific, navigational or communications-type satellites, Sheldon said.

"They fly low, 100 to 200 miles above the earth, and after eight days they disappear from orbit," probably to be recovered so film inside can be removed, the space expert said.

Sheldon, who came to Orlando to speak to local members of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, expressed his views in a speech and later in an interview.