Press coverage and correspondence regarding Soviet accomplishment of first space walk. Also non-LBJ Library background on that space flight and the Soviet postage stamp commemorating the event (1965)
SPACE RACE TODAY, ANNOUNCING THAT A COSMONAUT FOR THE FIRST TIME HAD
STEPPE OUT OF A TWO-MAN SPACE SHIP IN ORBIT AND THEN RETURNED TO IT.

SOVIET TELEVISION STATIONS SHOWED A FILM OF THE FEAT WITH THE CURVE
OF THE EARTH AND THE BLACKNESS OF DEEP SPACE VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND.
TASS, THE SOVIET NEWS AGENCY, ANNOUNCED THAT LT. COL. ALEKSI LEONOV,
30-YEAR-OLD COPILOT OF THE SPACESHIP VOSKHOD-2, WENT 5 METERS (16.4
FEET) FROM THE CAPSULE. HE APPARENTLY WAS ATTACHED TO IT BY A LINE OR
CABLE.

THE OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT SAID HE MADE OBSERVATIONS AND THEN RE-
TURNED SAFELY TO THE SHIP. HE WAS WEARING A SPECIAL "AUTONOMOUS LIFE-
sUPPORT SUIT," THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.

WITH HIM IN VOSKHOD-2 WAS COL. PAVEL BELYAYEV, 39, THE FLIGHT
COMMANDER. TASS SAID A POWERFUL ROCKET SENT THEM INTO ORBIT AT 10
A.M. (2:00 P.M. EST) AND LEONOV STEPPED FROM THE CAPSULE 90 MINUTES
LATER, AT THE END OF THE SHIP'S FIRST ORBIT OF THE EARTH.

MOSCOW--ADD SPACE-SOVIET (2)

SIR BERNARD LOVELL, DIRECTOR OF BRITAIN'S JODRELL BANK OBSERVATORY
WHICH TRACKS SPACE SHOTS SAID LEONOV'S EXPERIMENT WAS "AN ESSENTIAL
STEP IN THE TASK OF JOINING UNITS TO FORM LARGE ORBITING SPACE PLAT-
FORMS."

THE RUSSIANS ARE BELIEVED TO BE PLANNING SUCH A PLATFORM AS THE
SPRINGBOARD FOR THEIR MANNED FLIGHT TO THE MOON.

TASS SAID LEONOV "SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT THE RANGE OF PRESCRIBED
STUDIES AND OBSERVATIONS AND SAFELY RETURNED TO THE SHIP. OUTSIDE
THE SHIP AND AFTER RETURNING TO THE SHIP, LEONOV FEELS WELL."

TASS SAID LEONOV "FLOATED IN SPACE FOR 10 MINUTES. WHILE OUTSIDE
THE SHIP THE COSMONAUT INSPECTED THE SURFACE OF VOSKHOD-2, TOOK SHOTS
WITH HIS CINECAMERA AND CONDUCTED VISUAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE EARTH AND
OUTER SPACE."

"THEN HE RETURNED TO THE SHIP," IT ADDED.

MOSCOW, (AP)-A SOVIET ROCKET HURLED TWO COSMONAUTS TODAY INTO MAN'S
HIGHEST ORBIT AND ONE OF THEM SPENT 10 MINUTES OUTSIDE THE SPACE SHIP.

TASS NEWS AGENCY SAID HE WAS "IN CONDITION OF OUTER SPACE" FOR 20
MINUTES, "INCLUDING 10 MINUTES OUTSIDE THE SHIP." THIS INDICATED HE
SPENT 10 MINUTES IN AN AIRLESS CHAMBER ATTACHED TO THE PRESSURIZED MAIN
CABIN BEFORE GOING OUTSIDE.

THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE NEW SPACE VENTURE WAS INTENDED AS
ANOTHER STEP TOWARD A TRIP TO THE MOON BY EXPERIMENTING WITH THE
TECHNIQUES NEEDED TO JOIN SPACE SHIPS TOGETHER.

TASS, THE SOVIET NEWS AGENCY, SAID LT. COL. ALEKSI LEONOV, 30,-
COPILOT OF THE SPACE SHIP CALLED VOSKHOD-2, WENT 16 FEET FROM THE
SPACE CAPSULE. HE APPEARED TO BE ATTACHED TO THE SHIP BY A LIFE LINE.

SOVIET TELEVISION STATIONS SHOWED A FILM OF LEONOV FLOATING OUTSIDE
THE SPACE SHIP, WITH THE CURVE OF THE EARTH AND THE BLACKNESS OF
SPACE VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND.

TASS SAID LEONOV SPENT ABOUT 20 MINUTES INSPECTING THE SURFACE OF
THE SHIP, TAKING PICTURES WITH HIS CAMERA, AND CONDUCTING VISUAL OB-
SERVATIONS OF THE EARTH AND OUTER SPACE.

LEONOV WORE WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS A SPECIAL "AUTONOMOUS LIFE-
sUPPORT SUIT." ON TELEVISION, THE SUIT APPEARED BULKY. THE HELMET
WAS HEAVY. WHAT APPEARED TO BE OXYGEN CONTAINERS WERE STRAPPED TO
HIS BACK.

March 1965

COPY LIBRARY
Anastas Mikoyan, Chairman
Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Moscow

All of us have been deeply impressed by Lt. Col. Aleksey Leonov's feat in becoming the first man to leave a space ship in outer space and to return safely. I take pleasure, Mr. Chairman, in offering on behalf of the people of the United States, sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Cosmonauts, the scientists, and all others responsible for this outstanding accomplishment.

Lyndon B. Johnson

March 1965
The Voskhod Programme

The Voskhod programme was the Soviet Union's second human spaceflight project and developed out of the earlier Vostok programme. Only two manned flights were made as part of the project which aimed to achieve Soviet milestones in space, particularly the launch of the first multi-person crew. This was achieved by Voskhod 1, which became the first spaceflight to carry more than one person into orbit, beating the American's Gemini programme to yet another first. However, the Voskhod programme is best remembered for the flight of Voskhod 2, when Aleksei Leonov became the first man to carry out a spacewalk or EVA (Extra-Vehicular Activity).

The spacecraft used as part of the Voskhod programme were heavily based upon the earlier Vostok variety. However, the ejection seat was removed to make way for two more cosmonauts and a solid fuel retrorocket was added to the descent module. This booster provided a smoother landing for the descent module which would now carry the crew all the way back to Earth. Further changes were made to the Voskhod spacecraft for Leonov's historic mission, namely the inclusion of the Volga inflatable airlock. This was only extended once Voskhod 2 was in orbit and it was discarded once Leonov was back inside the spacecraft. It was controlled from inside the Voskhod capsule by the mission's commander, Pavel Belyayev.

Leonov's historic spacewalk lasted less than 12 minutes, but it was long enough to beat the Americans to yet another first in space. It had taken the cosmonaut 16 months of intense training to prepare for the EVA for which he wore a special backpack, supplying him with oxygen. However, his mission very nearly ended in disaster when his space suit inflated in the vacuum of space, making it very difficult for him to move. This meant that Leonov was unable to take any photographs of his spacecraft and was also unable to recover the camera that had been filming his spacewalk. By far the most alarming problem, however, was the realisation that Leonov could no longer fit inside the inflatable airlock. The cosmonaut had actually been given a suicide pill for use in just such an event, but was able to solve the problem by venting some of the suit's pressure and squeezing back into the spacecraft.

Voskhod 2 was the final mission in the Voskhod program. A change of leadership in Russia saw the focus of the space program shift towards the moon. Leonov's ability to maintain a cool head during emergency situations had been noted and in 1968 he was selected to command a circumlunar flight. However, with the success of Apollo 8, which successfully orbited the moon in December 1968, this flight was cancelled. Leonov was switched to another important mission, the attempt to land a Soviet cosmonaut on the moon.
Soviet stamp depicting historic Voskhod-2 first space walk on April 18, 1965.