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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON D. C. 20301

62

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: MAY 3 1 2016

April 25, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: SALT Negotiations

After looking again at the possible proposals that emerged from Saturday morning's meeting, I would like to bring to your attention the following thoughts:

1. Any limit imposed for two years will tend (though this tendency is not a certainty) to become permanent. We should therefore carefully examine the effects if it does become permanent before we propose it formally.

50  
/   
Agree

2. The permanent limits are within reasonable limits of equity. However, the temporary ones, especially if extended, will impact more on the U.S. than on the U.S.S.R.

Office  
can not  
see one off

a. Reduction of aggregate has more impact on them; reduction of MIRV launcher limit has slightly more (that is, earlier) impact on us.

b. The temporary mobile deployment limit impacts on U.S.S.R. (if they don't deploy the SS-16 on SS-20 launchers). If it becomes permanent, it impacts more on us.

assuming  
we plan to  
deploy M X

c. Clearly a 600 km testing limit on most cruise deployment modes hurts us more. If it becomes a deployment limit, it will be much more troublesome to us and our allies than to the Soviets. The Soviets can't be reached at all by SLCMs or GLCMs of 600 km; we can. Even if we get Backfire limits, I think that they are far less useful to us than the cruise missile limits are to the Soviets. As you know, I think the Backfire has in its present configuration more political than strategic military importance.

trace

d. The temporary limits on MLBMs MIRVed, if they become permanent, will limit the Soviets but not us. Limits on total ICBMs MIRVed also affect the Soviets more than us.

trace

3. The formulation and definition of testing restrictions on cruise missiles other than air-launched cruise missiles will be difficult. There will be confusion between the purpose of a development program and the tests carried out in the course of development. There will also be issues involving nuclear armed vs conventionally armed cruise missiles. As an example of one of the confusions, I believe that TOMAHAWK, originally

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designed for submarine launch, has been tested at about 1200 km; it is being adapted for air-launch. Can it now be tested from a submarine at less than 600 km; can it be tested from an aircraft (a bomber? a C-5 transport?) at 2500 km?

*Understand  
yes*

In sum, if our Moscow proposals were (as I believe) equitable, these will be seen as more advantageous to them, even if they are not further altered in that direction during negotiation.

4. Even assuming that Dobrynin has the authority he claims, I believe it would be preferable to have Paul Warnke rather than Cy Vance "think aloud" about such a possibility with Dobrynin, since it would be easier for Paul (and you) to draw back if we don't like the responses than if Cy were the presenter.

*Paul & Warnke  
+ Cy Vance*

In this connection, I also suggest that the negotiation technique be that of indicating that since Dobrynin has asked for certain limits on the U.S. he should "think aloud" about whether the Soviets would be willing to include various of the above (favorable to the U.S.) provisions in such an agreement.

5. I urge that we avoid falling back into the procedure of offering various "improved" proposals to the Soviets until they get one that's like theirs. Moreover, I'd urge that we take enough time to find out whether the proposal we thought you had from Dobrynin on April 12 or 13 is their real fall-back. I believe we could take some time - even a month or two - to do that, on the basis of working from our deferral option.

*Agree*

6. Finally, I'd like to suggest the virtues of more complete intra-agency staffing of U.S. proposals before they become formal to the extent of being voiced even in a "thinking aloud" mode by the Secretary of State. I am fully aware of the disadvantages and risks - possible leaks to the media and the Congress, loss of negotiating room. But public support for compromises is more likely if the inter-agency process has addressed the specific ones offered. Moreover, the agency staffs can pick up mistakes in the language and pitfalls in the provisions; I say this in the immodest conviction that I am as aware of SALT details as any of the principals. In particular, you have a public commitment to the JCS that they will be informed in advance of (though they may not agree with) the provisions of any proposal made to the Soviets. To translate that process into public and Congressional support, which becomes more important the more we give in order to get what we think important in the way of Soviet concessions, will in my judgment require that before such a proposal is made the JCS be consulted rather than informed.

*Agree  
D. M. J. ...*

I would be glad to discuss these points with you further if you wish.

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2  
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