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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

25 August 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Strategic Modernization Programs -- Importance for START

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL  
Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: APR 10 2018

One of the most compelling conclusions which I draw from the first round of START is that the current U.S. strategic modernization programs are critically important to our prospects for success in Geneva. Such programs as the MX missile, the D-5 missile, the cruise missile and the Trident submarine have had a tangible and substantial effect on the seriousness with which the Soviets are approaching the negotiation. In both formal and informal discussions, the Soviets betrayed intense interest in these programs. A substantial portion of the proposals tabled by the Soviets in the first round were transparent efforts to block or sharply curtail all these programs. Their repeated assertions that modernization must be restricted "to the utmost" strongly suggested that they are prepared to expend substantial negotiating capital in an effort to constrain our modernization programs.

Moreover, the Soviets expressly recognized for the first time that survivability of strategic systems can enhance stability -- a proposition that is central to our own position in START. This is a significant departure from previous negotiations in which the Soviets generally refused to address the destabilizing effects of vulnerability, since it was only our land-based force that was vulnerable to their highly accurate and powerful ICBMs. The Soviet willingness to discuss survivability in START directly results from the fact that our strategic modernization programs have forced the Soviets to view survivability as a mutual problem. The Soviets are clearly concerned that if such programs as the cruise missile, the MX and the D-5 proceed unimpeded, the Soviet Union may lose the strategic advantage it now enjoys. Frequent exaggerated accusations by the Soviet delegation that the United States is giving all its strategic systems a so-called "counter-force" capability revealed the depth of their concern.

Remarks by Soviet delegates reflected that the Soviets closely monitor Congressional debate on our modernization programs for any developments that would undercut our negotiating position or suggest a lack of U.S. resolve. By maintaining those programs intact, we will provide the Soviets a strong incentive to accept our proposal for substantial reductions to equal levels of strategic forces.

*Michael H. Mobbs*

Michael H. Mobbs  
Representative of the  
Secretary of Defense to the  
Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

USSR

380-84-0004, 6/27, 5883

(Aug)

~~Reviewed by: Dir, START Policy~~  
~~Reviewed by: Originaling Agency's~~  
~~Determination Required~~

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SECDEF HAS SEEN 9 SEP 1982

In reply refer to  
I-13385/82  
25 August 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THROUGH: Under Secretary of Defense (Policy) *7* 31 AUG 1982  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(International Security Policy) *RR*

SUBJECT: Strategic Modernization Programs -- Importance for START  
-- ACTION MEMORANDUM

In response to your request for material demonstrating the importance to START of our strategic modernization programs, I have prepared the attached memorandum that summarizes from the negotiator's viewpoint why those programs are crucial to our prospects for success in Geneva. The memorandum is in a format suitable for you to use on a confidential basis with key members of Congress and other officials as you see fit. Use on a confidential basis will serve to minimize the possibility of Soviet accusations that we have breached the confidentiality agreement governing the negotiation.

Recommendation: That you use the attached memorandum as appropriate, on a confidential basis, to emphasize to key members of Congress and other officials that preserving our strategic modernization programs will substantially enhance our likelihood of success in START.

*Michael H. Mobbs*

Michael H. Mobbs  
Representative of the  
Secretary of Defense to the  
Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

Attachment  
a/s

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
Date: 10 APR 2018 Authority: EO 13526 *+5USC3552*  
Declassify: X Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
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MDR: 18 -M- 0682

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: APR 10 2018

*USC 3552 388.3*

*(25 APR 1982)*

Classified by: BIT., START Policy  
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