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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

20 SEP 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: MBFR Option III and Equipment Ceilings

I have reviewed your memorandum (JCSM-374-74) on equipment ceilings in MBFR and understand the Joint Chiefs' interest in not seeking explicit or reciprocal ceilings in order to avoid an unacceptable constraint of NATO. However, it is not clear that an agreement providing for certain equipment ceilings would constitute undue risk, particularly if we gained substantial Soviet reductions and limitations on their forces. In any case there could be a provision in the agreement which would allow at the end of a five-year period a review of at least the provisions dealing with equipment ceilings.

The Soviet practice has been to stretch loosely worded agreements to their maximum advantage. In the first instance, we want a firm grasp on the PACT tanks. Beyond that, it is not clear to me how we could construct "generalized non-circumvention provisions" which would effectively prevent destabilizing increases in PACT nuclear capable and other affected forces.

Accordingly, please undertake on an expedited basis additional analysis of feasible MBFR equipment ceilings. Attached are two illustrative ceilings proposals directed toward symmetry of outcome. These concepts, together with any others that may be appropriate, should be included in the analysis.

If, after reviewing this matter, the JCS continue to conclude that explicit ceilings are militarily disadvantageous to us and our Allies, an illustrative example of specific non-circumvention language you would propose would help focus the issue.

Attachments
As stated

J.R. Jones

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 14 2018

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