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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET

ACTION
May 10, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith KWS

SUBJECT: Harold Brown on SALT

Harold Brown has sent you a letter (Tab B) which outlines his views on the next round of SALT. The letter makes the following points:

-- Brown continues to believe that an agreement on defensive and offensive forces is preferable if we can get it. Although, we should remember that silo-based missiles will become increasingly vulnerable in any agreement which now seems feasible.

-- The Soviets' principal tactical interest seems to be the limitation of Safeguard and they have proposed an ABM-only agreement to that end. They would probably accept two Safeguard sites if we pushed the issue.

-- Brown continues to believe that an ABM-only agreement at zero level for both sides would be advantageous to U.S. security (although "zero" now seems non-negotiable). He believes that there may be other ABM-only agreements which would be advantageous.

-- His position on ABM-only is predicated on the view that the Soviets can already threaten Minuteman and the key to stability is to limit ABM in a way to preserve our penetration capability with other systems. [He notes that maintaining a launch-on warning capability (whether or not we have such a doctrine) would decrease the likelihood that the Soviets would find an attack of Minuteman attractive.]

-- Brown asserts that the important issue is to get controls over radars. To that end we could concentrate on ABM-only in the context of zero-level for both sides or Moscow NCA/four-site Safeguard. In the latter case we should be prepared to go as low as one site to get

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radar limits. (He would be willing to accept radar limits involving the specification of numbers of phased-array faces at a given number of locations.)

Failure to control radars could result in the deployment of a large radar infrastructure which could be augmented by missile and launchers to produce a heavy ABM defense over a 300-400 mile radius.

For those who worry about SAM upgrade (which Brown considers theoretically possible but not practical) they should worry even more about the contribution of large phased-array radars.

In summary, Brown believes that a Soviet ABM capability without adequate controls is far more dangerous militarily than more SS-9 missiles and far more dangerous than Safeguard is helpful.

While not totally new, Harold Brown's arguments are persuasively put. The major weaknesses are:

-- He dismisses the potential of SAM upgrade. This isn't critical unless one postulates a major defensive capability in upgraded SAMs but some argue that a significant potential exists.

-- He disposes of the "crisis stability" argument by introducing launch-on-warning capability with the inference it would deter the Soviets from an attack of Minuteman.

-- Finally, he ignores whatever implications there may be to the potential for either Soviet numerical superiority or a continuation of the arms race in offensive systems.

These weaknesses are not, however, fatal to his basic argument.

I have drafted a brief note from you to Brown thanking him for his letter.

RECOMMENDATION

That you sign the letter at Tab A.

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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

PASADENA, CALIFORNIA 91109

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 3, 1971

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
The White House
Washington, D. C. 90606

Dear Henry,

Since I'm not sure I will get to see you before this month's decisions are reached about the next steps in the SALT talks, I am writing down my thoughts about some current questions. I probably will be able to discuss them with Gerry Smith by secure telephone, and I am sending him a copy of this letter as well. Please use these ideas as you think fit, including if appropriate their transmission to the President.

1) I continue to believe that an agreement on offensive and defensive forces is preferable if we can get it, for the usual reasons of stability, minimization of resources expended on strategic arms, etc. It should be remembered, however, that there are some things that will not be achieved by any of the comprehensive agreements that now seem feasible; one example is that silo-based missiles are going to become increasingly vulnerable in any event.

2) The Soviets' principal tactical interest in the negotiations continues to appear to me to be the limitation of Safeguard, because they rate its capabilities, especially as the infrastructure of a thick ABM system, much more highly than I do. The question is, what will they give in order to obtain such limitations? At the moment it is clear that they are willing to go for an ABM-only agreement at the level of NCA on both sides. Indeed they have submitted a treaty to this effect, but with some provisions which I find very troublesome: no control on quality or numbers of radars; no control on ABM capabilities of EW radars; no control of SAM-upgrade.

Probably they would accept a Moscow NCA (100 missiles and launchers) and a two Safeguard site agreement; they keep saying that four is unacceptable and three is unacceptable and five is unacceptable, leaving a pretty clear conclusion. It is not clear, however, whether they would accept other ABM-only agreements. Indeed there remains a possibility that they are trying to manipulate the SALT talks so as to limit Safeguard to two-sites without limiting

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themselves at all; however, I believe they understand the U. S. domestic political situation well enough to recognize that two Safeguard sites have essentially already been funded by the Congress.

3) I have not changed my own view that an agreement involving only ABM, but at the zero level on both sides, would be advantageous to the military security of the U. S. (and of the Soviet Union). But the negotiating situation has changed since I made the suggestion in January that we respond to the Soviet ABM-only suggestion by accepting on condition that it be for a zero ABM. We probably will have to go at the negotiating situation differently now. There are probably other ABM-only agreements which would help U. S. military security, but there are also some such agreements which would not.

My judgments of an ABM-only agreement are based on the view that limiting the Soviet ABM is the most important objective, in terms of military stability, of strategic arms limitation. I believe that it is more important even than the limitation of Soviet modern large missiles, because they now have enough payload (if they MIRV their missiles) to be able to threaten our Minuteman very heavily. But I would note that Minuteman survival is not identical with U. S. supreme national interest. I believe in the three-fold deterrent, but the three legs of this tripod need not be identical in their operation. A U. S. capability to be able to launch Minuteman at Soviet military targets on an unambiguous warning (not a doctrine of doing so) can relatively easily be achieved during the mid-70's. It would present the Soviets with a strong possibility that should they attack Minuteman the result will be not that they destroy it but that instead they lose their bomber bases, if the U. S. does react by launching before their missiles land. This is by no means a sure tactic for us, but having the capability to do so makes Soviet preemption of Minuteman a relatively risky and unattractive choice for them to follow. It could result in a situation for them, involving an unequal degradation of strategic forces, of the sort that you and the President have noted would be most uncomfortable for us. In this particular case they might have lost most of their bombers and used up much of their land-based missile force in attacking missile sites which were empty when their missiles arrived.

4) But to achieve the stability which I believe can be gained from limiting ABM requires real limitation. A limit of one hundred missiles and launchers by itself does not mean very much because, particularly with the Soviet ABM systems, it is easy to move into place launchers and missiles previously built and stockpiled. The geographical limit for the siting of radars is some additional assurance to us. But if they can have as many radars as they want and of whatever kind they want, they could build enough radars within two hundred miles of Moscow to be able to be in a position to create quickly a very heavy defense by moving in interceptors and launchers.

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They could produce a heavy defense over a three or four hundred mile radius if the missiles have several hundred mile interception range.

5) Therefore, I believe that an appropriate response to the current Soviet posture is to be willing to concentrate on talking about ABM limitation for a while, leaving open the possibility of insisting on some sort of side agreement on offensive weapons depending upon how the discussions on ABM turn out. We could start those discussions in terms either of a zero ABM on both sides or with a Moscow NCA plus four-site Safeguard. Perhaps the latter is preferable. We could then offer to go to a two-site, or even a one-site, Safeguard if they will accept tight limits on the radars. In this respect we should insist on limitation of the number of radars, and start with our present insistence on being able to name the numbers, locations, and types of radars--target tracking and missile guidance, acquisition and track, and with supplementary limitations on Henhouse types. We may have to back off on allowing modernization within types. This may be all right providing we can insist that the number of locations be limited along the lines of alternative two (among the six radar limitations considered some months ago), perhaps backing off to alternative four. If they continue to object that such limitations are too complex and unacceptable, then we should proceed to argue that zero ABM is clearer and more easily definable and that we insist on unambiguous qualitative limitations which, if their objection is correct, can be met by only zero ABM.

6) I would add that those in the U. S. who worry about ABM upgrade (which I consider theoretically possible but practically not possible) should be particularly concerned about the lack of qualitative limits on Soviet NCA ABM, which might be inter-netted with their surface-to-air missile systems to create some ABM capability outside of the geographically limited ABM radar circle.

7) I am concerned that there may be willingness, which I have seen exhibited both by the JCS and in the State Department for various reasons, to let the Soviets off the hook of qualitative and numerical limitations on ABM radars. Some may hope that this could in return allow more Safeguard sites, either now in the negotiations, or later as a result of gaining public support for such a program if the Soviets were to build 50 radars within the geographical limitations as allowed by such an agreement. I believe that approach is poor politics and worse security policy. The Soviets are more likely to delude themselves than we are that the capability of a qualitatively unlimited system is enough to allow them to throw their weight around in peacetime or take chances in a crisis. This asymmetry, even in the unlikely event that a qualitatively unlimited agreement and a change in U. S. public opinion allows more extensive ABM on both sides, is likely to be both

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destabilizing and unfavorable to the U. S. It will encourage Soviet adventurism much more than American willingness to act in situations involving less than strategic nuclear war.

8) I should like to repeat in conclusion my main point. A Soviet ABM capability inadequately circumscribed is far more dangerous to us militarily than more SS-9-like missiles, and far more dangerous to us militarily than Safeguard is helpful. Our policy decisions and negotiating tactics at this point should reflect that situation.

Sincerely,

Harold

Harold Brown

cc: Ambassador Gerard Smith

28227

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 15, 1971

Dear Harold,

Thank you for your interesting and thoughtful letter of May 3, 1971, concerning an ABM-only agreement in the SALT negotiations.

You have raised some important issues, particularly with regard to radar deployment limitations. We are continuing to explore all the relevant aspects of feasible SALT options in our quest for a viable agreement with the Soviets, and your thoughts will receive the careful attention they merit.

Your contribution to our understanding of these vital issues is greatly appreciated.

Warm regards,

HK

Henry A. Kissinger

Dr. Harold Brown
California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, California 91109

Let me hear from you when
you come through

HK