

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 2, 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

SUBJECT:

NSC Weekly Report #81 (U)

#10  
~~SECRET~~  
365. You comment  
as though you've  
not been involved  
in the process, &  
that everyone has  
been wrong  
except you  
J

1. Opinion

On Negotiating

The comments which follow are not meant to be just negative -- but I feel that I should share my concern that the way we have been conducting our negotiations on some key issues may be reducing our credibility and therefore also our ability to attain our goals.

In negotiations there often comes the time to force the issue to a head by making the other side take stock of the consequences of failure. One should even be willing to deliberately create such circumstances, as Sadat has done from time to time. Of course, before one does so one should carefully marshal one's resources and calculate timing very carefully.

SALT

We have been dribbling our concessions, and asserting from time to time that we would go no further. Yet time after time we would then make additional concessions.

The latest example pertains to the ALCMs: as a major concession we told the Soviets that we would accept the limit of 35 as an average. The Soviets countered with 25. We immediately offered 30 as a compromise. The Soviets are now talking of a figure of between 25 and 30 as the outcome, despite our accommodation on the definition issue.

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Review on December 1, 1998  
Extended by Z. Brzezinski  
Reason for Extension: NSC 1.13(f)

*SU does  
the same*

*only  
symbolically  
important*

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DECLASSIFIED  
E.O.12958, Sec.3.6  
PER 6/5/97 NSC/H/RE NLC-96-122  
BY [Signature] NARS. DATE 1/26/98

Indeed, Cy put the new definition to Dobrynin earlier this week on the assumption that this would solve all the remaining issues -- an assumption Dobrynin led us to suspect is true. The opposite has happened, and the Soviets are even reopening some old issues.

I am convinced the Soviets want a SALT agreement, and I think there is a good probability that we could have obtained one some months ago had we been prepared to establish credibly the position that we are no longer able to make further adjustments and that we can wait.

*3.5.  
We've  
waited  
2 years*

Cuba

We told the Cubans we would not go to Havana without an expectation of concrete positive developments -- by which we clearly meant their troops in Africa. We then proposed to go to Havana if they would simply let out the four American political prisoners. When they refused to do even that, we end up sending a delegation anyway, albeit at a somewhat lower level. This does not help our credibility.

*Your proposal*

The Middle East

I suspect that the root cause of our current difficulty is that Begin feels he can get away with almost anything; and that Sadat and the Saudis no longer have confidence that we can deliver either on the wider peace nor on regional protection from the Soviets. Not having pressed at Camp David for some direct linkage between the accords, we have failed to respond in any concrete way to Begin's subsequent negative actions regarding the West Bank.

*True  
What have  
you  
suggested?*

South Africa

The basic reason why our difficulties are mounting is that our middle-of-the-road solutions are collapsing as the situation becomes polarized. The fact of the matter is that neither the whites nor the blacks take us very seriously. There is no bite to our proposals, because we are visibly reluctant to press the Soviet-Cuban issue (and thus leave the radical blacks with an increasingly attractive militant option), or to apply sanctions to the whites (thus encouraging them to engage in dilatory tactics).

*Almost all  
blacks*

In brief, we should be prepared to demonstrate to all concerned that the U.S. has clout as well as patience, and that there are evident and predictable costs for disregarding U.S. interests. Instead, we have given rise to the view that the best way of dealing with us is to simply keep nibbling away, and that eventually the U.S. will simply adjust its position. Stonewalling or even breaking off negotiations is an established part of the negotiating tradition. The Soviets, the Israelis, the French and others practice it well. We should, too -- and every one of the above negotiations should be reviewed from that standpoint.

*When?*

## 2. Alert

### The Arc of Crisis

If you draw an arc on the globe, stretching from Chittagong (Bangladesh) through Islamabad to Aden, you will be pointing to the area of currently our greatest vulnerability. All at once, difficulties are surfacing in Iran and Pakistan, and they are thinly below the surface in India and are very manifest in Bangladesh, and there is reason to believe that the political structure of Saudi Arabia is beginning to creak. Turkey is also becoming more wobbly.

As I mentioned to you, George Ball will spend the next two weeks as an NSC consultant working on the Iranian problem. He is very pessimistic and concerned about the situation. His pessimism is shared by Clark Clifford, who has sent me a long memo bearing on Iran, Pakistan and the Persian Gulf. Both feel that we will increasingly have to search for alternative arrangements.

There is no question in my mind that we are confronting the beginning of a major crisis, in some ways similar to the one in Europe in the late 40's. Fragile social and political structures in a region of vital importance to us are threatened with fragmentation.

The resulting political vacuum might well be filled by elements more sympathetic to the Soviet Union. This is especially likely since there is a pervasive feeling in the area that the U.S. is no longer in a position to offer effective political and military protection.

If the above analysis is correct, the West as a whole may be faced with a challenge of historic proportions. A shift in Iranian/Saudi orientation would have a direct impact on tri-lateral cohesion, and it would induce in time more "neutralist" attitudes on the part of some of our key allies. In a sentence, it would mean a fundamental shift in the global structure of power.

President Truman confronted a similar crisis in the late 40's in Western Europe. At that time, internal weaknesses also interacted with an external challenge. It took a very major and collective effort to respond effectively. That response involved a long-term solution for political initiatives as well as more direct security commitments.

I have asked an interagency group to review this problem on an urgent basis. Though Ball will work primarily on Iran, I might have him give some thought to this subject as well.

Before too long, we may have to consult also with our primary allies regarding the need for a collective response, lest the kind of instability that we are seeing in Pakistan and Iran becomes also manifest in the Persian Gulf. This subject will doubtless come up in the January meeting, and before then we will have some recommendations for you regarding what needs to be done by the U.S. alone, by the U.S. and its principal allies, and by the countries directly concerned.

In the meantime, it might be appropriate for you to mention this emerging problem in some of your discussions with Congressional leaders and also to bear it in mind when you are making some of your key decisions regarding the defense budget and other foreign policy issues (SALT, China, the Arab/Israeli dispute).

#### Beryllium Production

According to Jim Schlesinger, a rather serious situation is developing with respect to beryllium metal.

Beryllium -- a material used in the manufacture of nuclear warheads, missiles and military electronic components -- has been found to be a carcinogen, requiring the imposition of strict new occupational safety standards at the two free world beryllium production plants (both in the U.S.).

If OSHA were to demand immediate, full compliance with the new standards when they are published next January, there is a chance that both production plants would close because they couldn't absorb the costs of compliance. In this event DOE claims it would have to cease producing nuclear weapons after next September until some remedial solution (unspecified) is found.

There are several reasons that make it impossible to predict what will actually happen in this matter:

-- OSHA may well be liberal in enforcing the new standards, provided the affected plants take some immediate, positive compliance actions. In this case, DOE would request an FY 79 supplemental to enable them to subsidize some of the compliance activities and to stockpile beryllium.

-- DOD -- which consumes two and one half times more beryllium (for non-nuclear purposes) than DOE -- has not decided whether a beryllium cutoff would be catastrophic to them, since they have been considering going to substitute materials for some time.

-- We already have at least six years worth of DOD/DOE peacetime beryllium requirements sitting in the strategic stockpile, which we might be able to use to avert any weapons production crisis that develops.

We will continue to watch this situation closely. However, it would be politically unwise for you to get directly involved at this time, since there is no way to come out of a "national security vs. cancer" controversy without bruises.

3. National Security Calendar (attached)