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12/16/74

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Date December 12, 1974

TO: The President

FROM: Paul A. Miltich

FYI X ACTION

OTHER:

*Eballant*

I excerpted the attached paper from Henry Kissinger's press conference of last Saturday. It is being sent out to editorial writers as part of a "SALT package" and also is being sent to members of the Congress by State Department congressional liaison. The paper has NSC approval.

THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT

By Secretary of State Henry Kissinger

For the first time in the nuclear age, a ceiling has been placed on the strategic forces of the Soviet Union and the United States.

That is the significance of the "numbers" agreed to by both sides at Vladivostok.

For the first time in the nuclear age, the arms race will not be fueled by fear of what the other side might be able to do but will be governed by the agreed-upon ceilings.

This can justly be described as a major breakthrough.

Its significance becomes more clear if one compares the numbers not with some hypothetical model but with the situation that would exist without the Vladivostok agreement.

To abide by the ceiling of 2,400 bombers and missiles, including 1,320 multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), the Soviet Union will have to reduce its strategic forces by some 5 per cent. Without the Vladivostok agreement, the Soviet Union could be expected to build a far larger strategic force. This then would give the United States the problem of whether to match the Soviet force or allow the Soviet Union greatly to surpass us in numbers of nuclear weapons.

The argument has been made that the Vladivostok agreement is meaningless because with that many missiles and warheads the Soviet Union and the

United States could wipe out each other's civilian populations many times over -- what is known as overkill.

This would be true at any level of strategic arms publicly suggested by the critics of the Vladivostok agreement. Overkill is a problem inherent in nuclear weapons and in the size of the existing nuclear stockpiles.

Apart from the overkill problem, some critics have attacked the Vladivostok agreement because it does not halt the qualitative arms race. That, of course, is true. However, the agreement does substantially reduce the incentive for an unlimited qualitative arms race.

The nightmare in qualitative weapons changes is that these changes have heretofore always been linked with changes in quantity. And it is the combination of technological improvements and increases in numbers that has consistently posed the threat of possible Soviet strategic superiority.

Under the Vladivostok agreement, it is extremely difficult to conceive how either side can achieve strategic superiority. This is why we have described it as an agreement on equivalency.

Another criticism of the Vladivostok agreement is that the Soviet Union, with its far larger land-based missiles, will continue to enjoy greater throw weight. Throw weight is missile lift power.

Throw weight is significant if it is converted into numbers of warheads, assuming these warheads are of sufficient accuracy to threaten a

definable part of the opposing side's target system. It is therefore a factor that relates both to the power of the weapons and the vulnerability of the targets.

If one side acquires additional throw weight, the other side has the choice of either increasing its throw weight or reducing the vulnerability of its targets.

The major target that is threatened by increases in throw weights is the land-based silo. Over a period of 10 years -- the term of the agreement -- these land-based silos are likely to become vulnerable on both sides, regardless of the throw weight that either side has, simply because of improvements in accuracy and weapons yield.

Under the Vladivostok agreement, the United States has the option to increase its throw weight substantially if we judge that to be in our best interests.

There is a limitation on building new silos, but our existing silos can accommodate missiles with far greater throw weight than the missiles we have now.

Our decision to accept the differential between our missile throw weight and that of the Soviet Union was made 10 years ago and has nothing to do with the Vladivostok agreement.

Not only do we have the option of increasing our throw weight, we also have the option of reducing the vulnerability of our strategic forces

by reducing reliance on land-based silos and increasing the number of our submarine-based missiles.

We will not match throw weight simply for the abstract purpose of being equal with the Soviet Union in every category of strategic power. We will take whatever measures are necessary to assure the invulnerability of our strategic forces and to maintain strategic equality with the Soviet Union.

Critics have said the Vladivostok ceiling figures are too high. The facts are that once the number of MIRVs goes beyond a point where land-based missiles might become vulnerable, a difference of a few hundred MIRVs is not decisive. Therefore we geared the MIRV limit to a minimum program we had established as being in the interests of our own security and made the proposed number consistent with that program.

There is, of course, the criticism that the limits set by the Vladivostok agreement will result in the expenditure by the U.S. of additional billions of dollars beyond what we had originally planned for our program.

The truth is that the limits in the Vladivostok agreement do not involve expenditures beyond the levels the United States had planned.

The facts are that without the Vladivostok agreement we would have to spend considerably more than we will under terms of the agreement. The agreement does not force us to spend any more than we had planned to spend to begin with.

The projection has been made that under the Vladivostok agreement the United States will have about 11,000 warheads by 1985 and the Soviet Union 8,000 or 9,000. Without the agreement, the Soviets could be expected to build anywhere from 11,000 to 20,000 warheads.

When critics say we should have held out for lower numbers, what they are really proposing is a substantially increased budget for our strategic forces next year. The reason I say this is that the only way we could plausibly achieve lower numbers is to build up our strategic forces so dramatically that there would be an incentive on the other side to seek a reduction in numbers.

All of these proposals must be seen in terms of alternatives and not simply from the standpoint of desirable objectives.

As for reductions, once you have agreed upon a ceiling for strategic forces and a limit on MIRVs, the follow-on negotiations for reductions are certain to be much easier than under conditions where both sides are increasing their forces with no limits in sight. And the very fact that it is not decisive whether the ceiling is 2,400 or 2,200 or 2,000 will work in favor of achieving reductions.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 16, 1974

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: PAUL A. MILTICH  
FROM: JERRY H. JONES

The attached material was returned in the President's outbox  
with the following notation:

-- Excellent.

cc: Don Rumsfeld  
bcc: Ron Nessen