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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 10, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *JEF*

The attached newspaper clipping was returned in the President's outbox with the following question:

"What is this?"

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney

Attachment:

Article entitled "Arms Control Impact"
from NEW YORK TIMES - Sunday, Feb. 8, 1976

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Gen Schweiff

What is this?

Arms Control Impact . . .

A new checkrein is about to be applied to what former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara once called the "mad momentum" of weapons development — "if a weapons system works and works well, there is strong pressure from many directions to procure and deploy," whether or not it adds to American security. Little-noticed legislation adopted by Congress late last year requires three Administration agencies to present an annual analysis to Congress of the arms control impact of every nuclear weapons program in the budget and of all substantial conventional weapons systems.

The measure gives the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency a formal role for the first time in advising Congress on what implications new weapons will have for efforts to negotiate down the spiralling arms race. In a process now getting under way, the agency and the Pentagon will report to the National Security Council, which will advise Congress on the military need for and the arms control impact of important weapons programs.

A measure of this kind a decade ago might have alerted Congress and the country to the dangers in developing MIRV multiple warheads for strategic nuclear missiles. This technological marvel, which can enable one missile to destroy a dozen cities, was designed to penetrate a massive Soviet antiballistic missile (ABM) system if Moscow built one. Moscow didn't, but MIRV, once developed, was deployed anyway, and deployed to the near maximum, increasing American strategic nuclear warheads almost fivefold.

While this may have enhanced American security initially, the parallel deployment now getting into high gear on the Soviet side has increased American insecurity. Insufficient advance thought was given to the question of whether the United States would be better off with MIRV on both sides than on neither.

A similar question now needs to be asked about the strategic cruise missile, a more recent American invention. The Air Force and Navy are dreaming up requirements for thousands of these extraordinary weapons, which undoubtedly could give the United States a new military edge. But when the Soviet Union follows suit, perhaps three or four years hence, will either side be more secure? Even now, argument over this new nuclear delivery system could blow up the decade-long effort to achieve a comprehensive Soviet-American strategic arms limitations treaty (SALT II).

The new arms control impact analysis will not automatically protect the country and the world from such madness, but it will at least give the legislative branch a voice in key decisions. When the initial SALT talks were about to begin in August 1968, proposals to delay the first MIRV flight tests were rejected by both the then Secretary of Defense and the Arms Control Administrator. Both believed that the MIRV tests would provide the United States with a bargaining chip that would hasten a SALT agreement, including a ban on MIRV. Only a few months later, both were pressing for negotiation of a MIRV ban—in vain. The SALT talks had

been delayed more than a year and it was too late. But the 1968 decision to go ahead with the first MIRV flight test was made at a secret meeting of a handful of high Administration officials in the National Security Council. It might have been different had Congress been more thoroughly alerted and brought into the decision-making process.

THE NEW YORK TIMES,

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1976