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Scowcroft

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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September 24, 1974

National Security Decision Memorandum 271

TO: Secretary of Defense
Deputy Secretary of State
Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Chairman, United States SALT Delegation

SUBJECT: Instructions for the SALT Talks
Geneva, September 18, 1974

The President has approved the following instructions for the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks beginning on September 18, 1974, in Geneva.

1. The Delegation should state that, in the U.S. view, the purpose of the current session is to exchange views on an agreement which will limit strategic offensive arms through 1985 and will replace the Interim Agreement of 1972. However, the Delegation should avoid discussion of the precise relationship between the Interim Agreement and a new agreement, i. e., whether the new agreement is to extend, follow, or replace the Interim Agreement.

2. The Delegation should emphasize that the United States believes that:

-- An equitable new agreement can be concluded to cover both quantitative and qualitative limitations on strategic arms.

-- The mutually agreed objective of reaching a new agreement extending until 1985 offers new negotiating opportunities for both sides.

-- This new agreement must be an acceptable point of departure for a permanent agreement, but need not deal with all the issues which should be addressed in a permanent comprehensive agreement.



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3. The Chairman of the U.S. Delegation should inform his counterpart that the U.S. views the current phase of negotiations as exploratory and will initially not advance specific proposals, pending a thorough discussion of the principles which might serve as a framework for an agreement through 1985.

4. The Delegation should point to the impact that the characteristics, magnitude, and deployment rate of Soviet strategic programs have on U.S. programs and force structure, especially in the absence of an effective agreement. The future U.S. strategic force level will be determined, to a major degree, by the outcome of the negotiations. The Delegation should convey the notion that the size and characteristics of the central system forces of each side are functionally related, and that the U.S. strategic force will not be less than Soviet strategic force, either in perception or reality.

5. The Delegation should state that any agreement must provide a high degree of equivalence in central strategic systems -- ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers. The Delegation should elaborate this principle in light of the following elements of equivalence and should ascertain Soviet views on each:

a. Aggregate Numbers. The United States believes that equivalence in aggregate numbers of central strategic systems is best achieved through phased mutual reductions to a mutually acceptable common lower level.

b. Throw Weight. In order to constrain the potential destructive capability of central strategic systems, the agreement should provide for limitations on throw weight, taking into account bomber payload.

c. MIRV Limitations. The Delegation should stress the importance which the United States attaches to limiting qualitative aspects of the strategic arms competition, including the deployment of current MIRVs and the development of new MIRVs. The United States believes that the next agreement should limit the number of MIRVed missiles, taking into account the throw weight and number of reentry vehicles of permitted MIRV systems.

6. The Delegation should state that while both sides have expressed support for the goal of reductions, the two sides have not discussed this subject sufficiently to provide the basis for a specific approach. Thus,

reductions should be a major topic of discussion at this session of the negotiations. The United States believes that its preferred approach of phased mutual reduction to a common lower level can reduce the momentum of arms competition and enhance the stability of the strategic balance. The Delegation should solicit Soviet views on how best to provide for reductions in a 1985 agreement.

7. The Delegation should reassert U.S. commitment to achieving an agreement which will contribute to stability in the long-term strategic relationship between the two sides and a stable security relationship in time of crisis. The U.S. views this as a fundamental criterion for assessing the political and security implications of a possible SALT agreement. For our part, the level and composition of U.S. forces -- including new systems -- can be subject to negotiation assuming that current and prospective Soviet forces could be subject to agreed limits.

8. The United States believes that a new agreement should not codify the existing and projected programs of the two sides, but must also constrain the pace and magnitude of quantitative and qualitative developments in strategic offensive arms. In this regard, the U.S. supports the principle of agreed mutual and equitable restraint in the modernization and replacement of strategic systems.

9. Concerning land mobile ICBMs, the U.S. Delegation should reflect no change from the unilateral statement of May 1972. If the Soviet Delegation should raise the issue of land-mobile ICBMs, the Delegation should seek clarification from the Soviets on how they propose that mobiles would be dealt with in the agreement and how an agreement which included land-mobiles would be adequately verified.

10. The Delegation should reaffirm the principle that the provisions of any strategic arms limitation agreement must be adequately verifiable. The Delegation should state that there will be a need for special measures to permit adequate verification in certain cases, such as in limits on MIRV deployments.

11. If the Soviet side should raise the issue of forward-based systems, the Delegation should not enter into a discussion beyond repeating the U.S. view that mutual assurances concerning non-circumvention would form a suitable basis for dealing with non-central systems.

12. The above principles should be developed in both formal and informal meetings with the Soviets, as the Chairman of the Delegation deems most effective. In all cases, a principal aim of the Delegation will be to seek Soviet views as to these principles and any other concepts the Soviets might have for an offensive strategic agreement through 1985. The Delegation is not authorized to discuss any specific proposals the Soviet side might make, emphasizing the importance at this stage of setting a general framework for agreement.


Henry A. Kissinger

cc: Director of Central Intelligence
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff