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~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE XGDS

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETINGON SALT

Monday, January 19, 1976

9:45 a.m. (45 minutes)

The Cabinet Room

From: Brent Scowcroft

I. PURPOSE

To review the U. S. position on SALT prior to Secretary Kissinger's trip to Moscow.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS, AND PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: At the NSC meeting on Tuesday, January 13, you announced your decisions regarding an opening position on SALT for Secretary Kissinger's trip to Moscow. You indicated that the initial U. S. position would be a modification of Option IV which exempts those Backfires produced prior to October 3, 1977 from counting in the 2400 aggregate and includes surface ships equipped with long-range SLCMs in the 1320 MIRV limit. You indicated that if Option IV as modified proves non-negotiable you had decided on Option III (an upper limit on Backfire) as a fallback, with Option I (deferral) as a possible further fallback. (The options are summarized in the tables at Tab B.)

Secretary Kissinger met with Ambassador Dobrynin Wednesday evening (January 14) and passed him a note (Tab C) containing the initial U. S. position. Ambassador Dobrynin reacted very negatively to the proposal for counting those Backfires produced after October 3, 1977 in the aggregate.

B. Participants: (List at Tab A)

C. Press Arrangements: The meeting, but not the subject will be announced. There will be a White House photographer.

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III. TALKING POINTS

At the opening of the meeting

1. I wanted to have a brief meeting before Henry leaves for Moscow to review where we stand.
2. Henry presented the modification of Option IV to Dobrynin last Thursday and the Backfire position got a very negative reaction.
3. Nevertheless, I think we have to make our case for modified Option IV to Brezhnev in forceful terms and get his considered response.
4. I have considered a possible "sweetner," for Option IV, which might improve our proposal: namely, we could offer to drop our proposal to count all Soviet bombers that are configured as tankers, and for reconnaissance, and ASW roles. There are about 115 of these, and that would actually permit a smaller Soviet reduction to get to 2400. I am authorizing Henry to offer this if he thinks it would be useful in getting Soviet acceptance of Option IV.
5. As I indicated at our last meeting, I believe Option III is an acceptable position from a substantive point of view. I think we can sell it to the Congress and the American people; it limits Backfire, and gives us flexibility on surface ship cruise missiles.
6. I think it would be particularly helpful if we could get the aggregate reduced to 2300 -- in which case the upper limit on Backfire might go to 400. In the event Option IV is not negotiable, I want Option III offered as a fallback.
7. I believe we all agree that Option I would be an acceptable outcome if we could get Soviet agreement to the MIRV verification counting rule and the heavy ICBM definition. However, Dobrynin hinted that the Soviets are likely to want some handle on cruise missiles even if the issue is basically deferred.
8. (To Secretary Kissinger) Henry, would you describe your meeting with Dobrynin and give us your views on where we stand now.



At the Close of the Meeting

9. To sum up, I want to proceed as follows:

-- After Henry has discussed Option IV with Brezhnev on Wednesday, he will report to me his recommendations on the next steps; if there is a deadlock, I plan to have him present Option III.

-- If time permits I may convene an NSC, at this point, but in any case I want to send Henry instructions on Wednesday evening, so that he can put our views to Brezhnev in time for a politburo meeting on Thursday.

10. I believe that we are within reach of an agreement that is in our net interest as a nation as well as in the interest of the world as a whole.

11. The important thing at this point is that we present a unified front. I have already seen leaks in the press about various elements of our position and various attitudes around town. We can't afford that, and I want total support as we move forward in this vital enterprise.



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