

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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January 21, 1970

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary
The Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S *[Handwritten initials]*

FROM: FM - *[Handwritten initials]* Ronald I. Spiers

SUBJECT: NSC Discussion of SAFEGUARD - BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

The NSC is scheduled to take up the SAFEGUARD program on Friday, January 23. Two issues will be paramount:

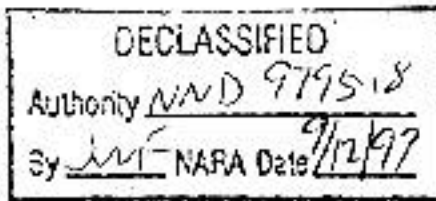
(1) Whether the program Defense proposes for FY 71 (see paragraph 2 below) should be adopted as the Administration position;

(2) How the position we take on ABMs relates to our objectives in SALT. (Gerry Smith is preparing a paper on this subject.)

Defense's proposal is that the Administration reaffirm its commitment to the full 12-site SAFEGUARD system. This position is justified, in Defense's view, by the continued growth of Soviet capabilities against MINUTEMAN and the projected ICBM capability of China. The proposal is that in FY 1971 two additional sites (Northwest and Whiteman Air Force Base) be authorized for construction, that engineering and site selection should be authorized for three additional sites (including Washington, D.C.), and further R&D work should be pursued. The funding for the entire 12-site program would require NOA of 1.5 billion in 1971, 2 billion in 1972 and not more than 2.3 billion in any subsequent year.

This means that a start would be made in 1971 on the "area defense" component of SAFEGUARD (i.e. that part which is designed to protect us against the Chinese threat) as well

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as another MINUTEMAN site. DOD rejects the alternative of continuing only with the Phase I program, which includes just sites dedicated to the protection of two of our MINUTEMAN installations (Grand Forks and Malmstrom AFBs) because this would involve, in their view, unacceptable delays in deployment. As you know, the President at the present time is committed to the area defense "concept", although there is no general agreement as to precisely what this means in terms of actual installations and launchers (which could go up to 651 in number). However, Defense points out that there is no such thing as a "partial" protection against China, since the entire area system will have to be in place before it is effective.

From the technical standpoint there is little that the State Department can add to the discussion of the facts of the Soviet capability or the technical capabilities of the SAFEGUARD system to cope with the projected threat. There are two political matters, however, which are of primary interest to us and on which we recommend you comment during the NSC discussion. They relate to these two facets of the problem:

(1) The relationship of the "area defense" system to the credibility of our future Far East diplomacy; and

(2) The relationship of the decisions we take on SAFEGUARD to the prospects in the SALT talks.

As regards the first point, we believe the SAFEGUARD system could well be an important element in the future credibility of our Far East policy at a time we are likely to be reducing our active involvements and physical presence in the area. In Europe we have the "hostage" of 300,000 American troops to give our military commitments to Europe credibility, but this will presumably not be the case, post-Vietnam, in Asia and, accordingly, our credibility will be more vulnerable to nuclear threats from China. To the extent that it is technically and economically feasible for the U.S. to neutralize, through an ABM defense system, the threat that can be posed by Chinese ICBMs, we will be providing a politically desirable underpinning for diplomacy in the area. Otherwise we will be forced to rely purely on deterrence to

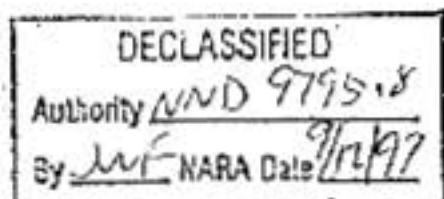
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restrain possible Chinese aggression, and the threat of Chinese retaliation could make our promises of military support for our allies appear less convincing. While many will argue it is adequate to rely on deterrence, there is no reason to accept this option voluntarily if effective defense is possible and we can afford it. Accordingly, our position, we believe, should be to continue to urge, for essentially diplomatic reasons, implementing the concept of the area ABM defense. At the same time, these advantages will have to be weighed in the balance against the advantages of an arms limitation agreement with the Soviets, if the question of ABM levels becomes a crucial element in determining the possibility of such an agreement.

With regard to the relationship between our 1971 budget decisions and the SALT talks, we have a position that differs slightly from that taken by ACDA. We believe that our bargaining power would be somewhat enhanced in the talks if we go ahead another step on SAFEGUARD, thus clearly signaling that we do not intend to moderate or shift our objectives just on the chance there may be an agreement, the possibility, timing, or form of which we do not yet know. On the other hand, we are not convinced that a decision to delay entering into Phase II would seriously undermine our position in the talks, as long as construction of Phase I continued. We believe, however, that a rejection by the Congress of an Administration proposal to go forward with Phase II could have more impact on our bargaining position in SALT, since if it becomes apparent to the Russians that there is little likelihood of our proceeding with SAFEGUARD, any incentive to negotiate reciprocal ABM limitations might be reduced almost to the vanishing point. Therefore, it is this aspect of the problem which we believe should receive the closest scrutiny in the NSC. We understand that Mr. Kissinger will have asked Mr. Harlow to give an assessment of the position in Congress.* If the judgment that the proposal to proceed

*This assessment should be made against the explicit assumption that the Administration's position will be that if and when the Soviets indicate a willingness to reach agreement on strategic arms which permits a reduction from full SAFEGUARD Phase II which is consistent with maintenance of U.S. security, the U.S. will stand prepared to restructure its ABM program accordingly. It should further be made clear to the Congress that in the absence of such a quid pro quo the Administration's ability to negotiate effectively on a limitation for strategic armaments, including a possible limitation on ABM, may be undermined.

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with Phase II would meet with certain Congressional defeat, the Administration should consider a) a modified program for FY 71, emphasizing MINUTEMAN defense, temporarily holding further area defense in abeyance, or b) completion of Phase I, holding any additional deployment of Phase II in abeyance. Emphasis on MINUTEMAN defense would be acceptable to Defense since they are more concerned about the growing Soviet threat than about the Chinese ICBM capability, particularly in view of the fact that our estimates for its IOC have recently slipped a year.

All this having been said, however, we believe it is important the point be made that if it turns out that our willingness to accept a zero or very low (e.g. 100-200 launchers) level of ABMs is the key to an agreement, nothing precludes re-examination of the question by the President. As a practical matter, it seems unlikely that the Russians would be prepared to dismantle their present limited ABM deployment, and they may not even wish to forego installation of an anti-Chinese ABM defense of their own. This possibility cannot be ruled out, however, and if this were the only basis on which an otherwise mutually acceptable agreement could be struck, it would clearly be in our interest to preserve our ability to reassess our position. From Gerry Smith's account of this talk with the President, there is no reason to believe that the latter would demur at this proposition.

cc: PM/ISP - Mr. Sloss

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