

MEMORANDUM

#9

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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April 16, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
SUBJECT: Weekly National Security Report #9

ZB.

[Handwritten initials]

1. Opinion

Human Rights: For a Broader Interpretation.

As I signaled to you, some elements in Congress are seizing on human rights as an excuse for blocking constructive initiatives in the area of development aid or at least as an opportunity for attaching all sorts of restrictive conditions on such aid. Abroad, some see our concern as excessively rigid and moralistic.

Despite this, I believe that our affirmative commitment to human rights is not only morally justified but is in keeping with historical trends, thereby giving American foreign policy additional influence and associating America as a society with a vital human concern. Otherwise, America runs the risk of being perceived only as a consumption-oriented society, making us the focus both of envy and of resentment.

However, the point to stress is that human rights is a broad concept. These two words should mean much more than just political liberty, the right to vote, and protection against arbitrary governmental action. Human rights, and this we should stress, means also certain basic minimum standards of social and economic existence. In effect, human rights refers to all three (political, social, and economic) and this is why these words have such universal appeal.

Such a broader, and more flexible definition would have several advantages: it would retain for us the desirable identification with a human cause whose time has come, and yet it would avoid some of the rigidities that are potential in the narrower political definition. It would give us the freedom to point at the most glaring abuses (e.g., political suppression in some countries, or total social indifference in others), though leaving us the necessary margin of flexibility in dealing with most governments. In general, we should stress that achieving human rights is a process and that we are watching carefully progress toward greater respect for human

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rights, realizing that there is no single standard for all the countries of the world.

I believe that all of the foregoing is implicit in what you have been saying, but making some of these points more explicit may make it more difficult for your critics to attack your position and for others to distort it into excessively rigid and politically confining meanings.

2. Facts

PRC Patience on Normalization

We have seen several indications this week of Chinese patience on normalization. Senior Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien emphasized to the Brademas-Schweiker group the importance of concentrating on "major issues" (i. e. combatting the Soviet threat). Nancy Tang commented to NSC member Mike Oksenberg that normalization is not the most important issue in U.S. -China relations. A Chinese diplomat stationed abroad commented that since you had committed yourself to the support of Taiwan, it may take time for you to find a way to accommodate this commitment with a policy of improving relations with Peking. The Chinese, he said, now think this may be a slow process, but they are encouraged by the Administration's affirmation of the Shanghai Communique.

Non-aligned Foreign Ministers Meeting

The Meeting on Non-aligned Foreign Ministers in New Delhi went at least as well as could be expected from our point of view. There were sharp criticisms of lack of progress at CIEC and on the Common Fund and the usual petulant resolutions on the Indian Ocean, Middle East and Puerto Rico. The tone was much less sharp than usual however; some of the worse resolutions were sidetracked; and even on some of these there were important reservations entered. (Voting at these meetings is by consensus; nations can, however, indicate reservations.) In particular, a number of countries including India reserved on Puerto Rico. The emphasis was on economics to a much greater degree than heretofore.

The reason for the relevant moderation included two that are of particular interest to us:

-- The Foreign Ministers are impressed with your Administration and are willing to give it time to come up with constructive answers to the

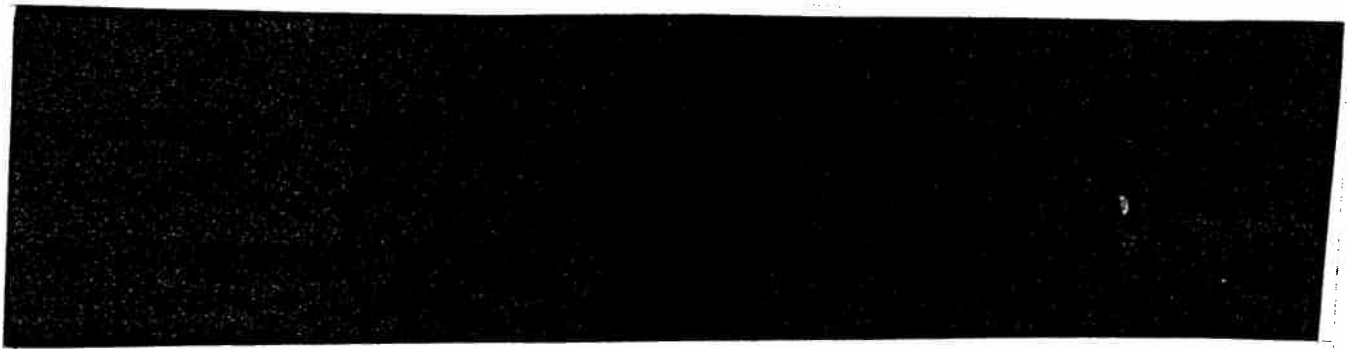
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political and economic issues in the North-South dialogue. (Obviously, of course, our time is not unlimited. We must have a strategy enunciated before the UNGA meeting next fall.)

-- India, the host country, played an important moderating role. While India has always been a relative moderate in this group, its new government clearly put some extra effort into toning down the worst excesses. In addition, the session was opened by an extremely statesmanlike speech by Morarji Desai -- one of the best statements of the non-aligned view of the world in some time. (We are preparing a letter for you to send to Desai which will, inter alia, congratulate him on the speech. State has already expressed gratification to New Delhi for its moderating role.)

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3. Alerts

Somalia -- The Going May be Slow

My staff met with our Ambassador to Somalia, John Loughran, this week. He described the present state of our Embassy in Mogadiscio. He said they lead a life just about as isolated and circumscribed as if they were in Bulgaria -- much more so than in Communist countries such as Poland and Hungary. He gave a vivid account of how you find a Soviet behind every Somali. Nevertheless he sees Siad relatively frequently and talks to him quite frankly -- but doesn't think he has much impact. He is delighted to be going back and carrying messages which PRC decided on Monday he should carry. But he warns that we should not expect too much to happen too fast, we should let the Saudis be out front, and we should be careful not to let our professions of friendship be over interpreted by the Somalis as meaning something they cannot: e. g., support for irredentism, for taking Djibouti, major military aid.

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Meeting with Park: Little Progress

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Ambassador Sneider had a long talk with South Korean President Park on April 8, and found Park defensive and unyielding on the question of political prisoners. Park claimed a desire to exhibit leniency, but said he could justify the release of Kim Dae-jung and others only if they are prepared to "repent". Otherwise, he said, their release would be perceived as capitulation to external pressure; the defendants would resume efforts to arouse students and religious groups; and "social confusion" would result. Sneider doubts that Park will make major gestures on this front in the near future given the current unrest on some campuses. But he is continuing to press your concerns hard with a small circle of officials who have direct access to President Park. If these efforts prove unsuccessful, you may want to think of sending a personal emissary (Dean Rusk or David Rockefeller would be a possibility) to hit the human rights matter again while also passing on our more detailed proposals for adjustments on ground force deployments. Your concerns could then be fit into the context of our ability to secure Congressional and public support for compensatory military aid actions the ROK will press on us in conjunction with troop withdrawals.

4. Concerns

Impact of Your Energy Program on Auto Exports to the US

The provision in your energy package to prevent the tax rebate system from promoting the sale of foreign cars at the expense of cars made in the US or Canada, while clearly appropriate from a domestic point of view, is likely to provoke an enormous outcry from Europe and Japan. It will be seen as discriminatory and as a clear violation of our obligations under the GATT, and cast serious doubts on the credibility of whatever is said and done about trade at the Summit. It might well conjure up allusions to the "Nixon shocks" of April 15, 1971. (See also letter from British Ambassador, attached.)

5. Reactions

OAS Speech

Here are some reactions to Thursday's speech:

Venezuela--Independent El Nacional of Caracas: "The content of the speech could have been written in the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry for its emphasis on human rights, economic social justice, North-South cooperation and Panama."

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Argentina--Conservative La Nacion of Buenos Aires: "President Carter is a person who, when he speaks to us, makes us forget our reservations. But later the effect vanishes and the reservations remain..." Intellectual-left La Opinion of Buenos Aires: It was "direct, concrete and clear.... Mr. Carter has finally recognized that the political unity of our countries makes economic solidarity from the US necessary."

Brazil--Moderate Jornal do Brasil of Rio: He acknowledged "that there are differences between the US and other nations of the Hemisphere.... The historic, political.... and economic linkages which connect the US to Latin America are greater than any chance, ephemeral contingency which may pull in a different direction." Conservative Correio Braziliense of Brasilia: "... Can be regarded as tranquilizing.... What Carter says is not important. His actions are what count..."

Mexico--Nationalistic Excelsior of Mexico City: "... shows Carter to be a profound thinker whose stated principles coincide with the realities of inter-American existence" but the US has been "economically exploitative" and has aided "the proliferation of dictatorships" in the Hemisphere.

Peru--Government TV: "The speech offers an opening to better understanding. Gone are the Big Stick and the interventionism of the past. What we see is a second Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Good Neighbor Policy."

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