

Authority = 0 12958  
By ~~AV~~ NARA Date 6-21-70

cc: AH  
WB

MEMORANDUM

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INFORMATION

April 29, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Secretary Laird Concerned About Leak of Soviet ABM Position

Secretary Laird has written you (Tab A) to make the cogent point that a leak of the Soviet NCA-level ABM proposal could have a serious impact on the Safeguard debate in Congress. He points out that we must stress the integrity of the entire US package and also the tenuousness of the Soviet language "accepting" the NCA defense. (Reporting from Vienna initially was sloppy in that it made Soviet "acceptance" seem more categorical than it was.) He argues that until the Soviets accept an equitable total package we cannot base our actions on Soviet comments on individual ingredients of a package. (These are all points we have already made.)

At the end of the memo, Secretary Laird urges that there be no briefings "outside the Administration" while the SALT talks are in progress. I have checked on the meaning of this with the drafter, Tucker, who assured me that this was not another effort to stop NATO consultations but rather an effort to prevent premature Congressional briefings. (NATO has not so far been briefed on the Soviet NCA position.)

My hunch is that the Soviets will get out their position before long. When they do so, but not before, we should use the Laird line, which is similar to that in your memo to the President reporting the Soviet position.

I do not think a response to Mr. Laird is needed. Farley has no present plans to brief Congress and he will check here before he does so.

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RJ  
MAY 25 1970  
✓

AUSCIB 12958  
By AVI NARA Date 6-21-71

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

29 JUN 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Impact of SALT on the SAFEGUARD Debate

The options which we are tabling at Vienna, in accordance with NSDM-51, both specify the NCA level of ABM. The U. S. is not presently authorized to table any option which permits the SAFEGUARD level of ABM.

The Soviets said Monday, apparently after consultation with Moscow, that they "consider it possible" to limit ABM on each side to defense of the national capitals only. Some of our own delegation have interpreted those words to mean that the Soviets have "accepted in principle" limiting ABM to NCA levels.

A leak which reported that the U. S. had offered to limit ABM to NCA levels and the Soviets had accepted could impact very seriously on the debate in Congress on SAFEGUARD.

The best counter to such a leak, were it to appear, would be to point out that the NCA level of ABM is only one part of a total package which must be considered and assessed in its entirety, and can only be strategically acceptable to the U. S. in its entirety. The Soviets have so far rejected major provisions of the package, including the prohibition on upgrading air defense systems to an ABM role. Moreover, they have not agreed to limit ABM to an NCA level, but have only said they consider such a limitation possible. Until we have some earnest indication that the Soviets will accept an equitable total package of verifiable limitations on offensive and defensive systems, we cannot base our actions on their comments on individual ingredients of that total package.

To avoid premature or misleading reports, I believe that no briefings should be authorized outside of the administration during the talks.

