

July 8, 1969

BRIEFING MEMBERS OF CONGRESS  
ON PREPARATIONS FOR SALT

Informing Congress of our preparations for SALT will require the closest cooperation among ACDA, State, Defense, CIA and the White House. The subject is complex and sensitive, the risks of leaks and misunderstandings high, and an effective briefing will require authoritative statements from several parts of the Executive. Timing will be important; the briefing must be early enough to give Congress some sense of meaningful consultation and late enough to insure basic issues are clearly in focus. (If the USSR does not reply soon to our proposal of July 31, or makes a counter-proposal, the Congressional briefing schedule suggested here would have to be revised.)

If carefully handled, the initial discussions with Congressional leaders could contribute to the development of sympathetic Congressional understanding of the issues, the tactics and the objectives. This understanding will be helpful during the talks and essential for the success of any arrangements that may be reached in the discussions with the Soviets. On the other hand, certain aspects of the SALT plans, e.g., the treatment of ABMs and MIRVs in some of the options, may be so inconsistent with the strongly held views of some members that the briefing could produce active Congressional opposition to the plans. Public expression of adverse Congressional attitudes could seriously weaken the U.S. position in the talks, and special care will be required on these points in preparing the briefings.

This paper outlines three possible plans. Both the first and second proposals call for White House briefings; the third calls for briefings on the Hill with individual leaders, or groups of leaders. The complexity of the subject, the need for statements from several agencies, and the importance of developing maximum common understanding in Congress make either the first or second plan, or some variation thereof, highly desirable. The prestige and persuasiveness of a White House presentation, with the President presiding, cannot be duplicated in briefings on the Hill, and only if there are the strongest overriding considerations should we attempt to inform Congressional leadership of the SALT plans through a series of meetings with individual Congressmen.

Plan I

Two White House Briefings--Parallel with  
NSC Deliberations and Allied Consultations

A. First briefing--at the White House at approximately same time details of SALT alternatives are under consideration

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in NAC and before final NSC consideration. Present schedule calls for detailed consultation with NAC on July 8-9 and July 16-17, and an NSC meeting between July 18 and July 22. July 21 would accordingly be a likely date for the following:

- (1) Brief introductory statement by the President.
- (2) Panel presentation by the Director of ACDA, Secretary Rogers, Secretary Laird and the Director of CIA. The Chairman of the JCS should also make a statement.
- (3) Outline of presentation:
  - (a) Strategic Balance. Laird and Wheeler.
  - (b) Summary of NSSM 28 effort. Smith.
  - (c) Summary of alternatives considered. Smith.
  - (d) Verification. Helms.
  - (e) Some problems anticipated and planned responses. Rogers and Smith.
- (4) See Annex A for list of Congressional participants (30 members).

B. Second White House briefing--after allied consultations completed, after final NSC action, after President returns and before the talks begin. Approximate date--first week of August.

- (1) Panel presentation by same officials who made first presentation.
- (2) Outline:
  - (a) Summary of major features of approach U.S. will make to USSR in SALT. Smith.
  - (b) Comments by Rogers, Laird and Helms.

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- (c) Brief forecast of possible ways talks may develop. Rogers and Smith.
  - (d) Plans for Washington back up and future Congressional liaison. Smith.
- (4) Same Congressional participants as at first briefing.

Advantages: Congressional leadership will be kept informed of our planning before final decisions are reached and on approximately the same schedule we follow with allies. The latter consultations will almost certainly produce leaks, widespread comment, and probably considerable misinformation and misunderstanding. Keeping Congressional leadership informed will help forestall misunderstanding and criticism on the Hill. Two-step process will give time in which to try to develop sympathetic and common understanding by Congressional leaders.

Disadvantages: The two-step process will require more time of top officials, greater risks of leaks than if there is only one briefing, and there will be period of several weeks before talks in which critics could attack the plans on an informed basis.

## Plan II

### One White House Briefing--At Time of Final NSC Action and Allied Consultations

A. One briefing at White House, after final NSC action, after consultations with allies completed and after President returns. Approximate date in present schedule--first week of August.

- (1) Introduction by President.
- (2) Panel presentation as in Plan I.

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(3) Outline:

- (a) Strategic Balance. Laird and Wheeler.
- (b) Brief summary NSSM 28 effort and alternatives considered. Smith.
- (c) Summary of approach U.S. will make to USSR in SALT. Smith.
- (d) Verification. Helms.
- (e) Problems we foresee and to which we are alert. Rogers and Smith.

(4) Same Congressional participants as in Plan I.

Advantages: Short time for leaks and development of unsympathetic attitudes and comments before talks start. Less time required of top officials.

Disadvantages: Almost certain resentment by many members at presenting Congress with a firm, final position without affording any opportunity to comment and only after full consultation with allies. Public expression of this resentment and divergent Congressional views could weaken position of U.S. negotiators at outset of talks.

Plan III

Briefings for Individual Leaders  
at the Capitol

A. Briefings for a selected list (see Annex B) of Congressional leaders in their offices on the Hill. (As possible, arrangements would be made to brief these leaders in small groups.) The White House briefing list (Plans I and II) has been reduced to a more manageable size for a series of private briefings (17 members).

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B. The complexity of the problem and the involvement of the basic interests of various agencies make it necessary to have a panel of briefers, to be headed by the ACDA Director, accompanied by top officials of State, DOD and CIA, or their deputies. The substance of the briefing would be approximately the same as in Plan II, and since only one round of briefings would be possible, meetings would be scheduled to start immediately after final NSC action on July 23. This is a poor third among the plans.

Follow-on Liaison

Continued cooperation among ACDA, State, and Defense, with assistance from the CIA, will be necessary in providing information to Congress as the talks progress. As soon as the plan for the first briefings is approved, ACDA will start planning arrangements for follow-on liaison.

Attachments:

1. Annex A.
2. Annex B.

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ANNEX A

PARTICIPANTS IN WHITE HOUSE CLASSIFIED  
BRIEFINGS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON SALT

Executive Branch

The President.

The Vice President (as President of the Senate).

Secretaries Rogers and Laird, ACDA Director Smith, General  
Wheeler, CIA Director Helms.

Mr. Farley, Mr. Nitze, Ambassador Thompson, Dr. Brown, and  
Maj. General Allison.

Selected Congressional liaison representatives.

Congressional Leaders

Leadership: Senators Mansfield, Dirksen, Kennedy, Scott.  
Speaker McCormack, Albert, Ford.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Fulbright, Aiken.

Disarmament Subcommittee: Gore, Case.

House Foreign Affairs Committee: Morgan, Adair.

Senate Armed Services: Stennis, Smith.

House Armed Services: Rivers, Arends.

Joint Committee on Atomic Energy: Holifield, Pastore, Hosmer,  
(Aiken, ranking Senate Republican, noted above).

Others: Senators Russell and Milt Young (Appropriations  
Committee and particularly interested in security matters);  
Congressmen Zablocki and Thomson (National Security Sub-  
committee of HFAC).

Senators Jackson, Symington, Brooke, Percy and Cooper, and  
Congressman John B. Anderson--influential and especially  
interested.

TOTAL: 30

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ANNEX B

PRIVATE SALT BRIEFINGS  
FOR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

Leadership: Senators Mansfield, Dirksen; Speaker McCormack, Ford.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Fulbright, Aiken.

Disarmament Subcommittee: Gore, Case.

House Foreign Affairs Committee: Morgan, Adair.

Senate Armed Services: Stennis, Smith.

House Armed Services: Rivers, Arends.

Joint Committee on Atomic Energy: Holifield, Pastore, Hosmer, (Aiken, ranking Senate Republican, noted above).

TOTAL: 17 Members

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