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March 3, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN HUNTSMAN

FROM: AL HAIG

**SUBJECT: Draft of Rebuttal to the Symington
Speech**

Attached is our initial draft of the rebuttal to the Symington speech. I am having an additional paragraph prepared which will be available shortly. It will address the issue of the NSC budget, especially as it pertains to reimbursement to the Departments for personnel costs for the coming year in line with the ongoing efforts to surface White House costs accurately.

We have undertaken a program of reimbursement for personnel on loan from the various departments and agencies where they fit into a support role. This would not apply to career personnel who are on regular departmental payrolls, such as career military, career State, career CIA professionals.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

Attachment

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Senator Symington shows a surprising lack of knowledge of how the NSC system works. The function of the National Security Council system is to advise the President and support him in his decision making role and does not as an entity itself make decisions -- only the President does. There are a number of factual errors and misconceptions contained in Senator Symington's statements among which are:

- That Dr. Kissinger makes major foreign policy decisions and therefore should justify his actions before the proper committees of the Congress. Dr. Kissinger has the dual role of adviser to the President and manager of the NSC system. Foreign policy decisions are made by the President and the Secretary of State in those areas where authority has been delegated by the President.
- The number of substantive officers on the NSC staff is approximately 50 not 110 as implied by Senator Symington.
- Mr. Schultz as Director of the Budget has traditionally testified before the appropriate professional committees on the overall national budget. Dr. Kissinger's counterpart in domestic affairs, John Ehrlichman is like Dr. Kissinger a member of the President's personal staff and therefore does not testify before Congressional committees but is accountable directly to the President.
- The purpose of the NSC staff is not as described by Senator Symington "to advise the members of the Council." The purpose of the staff rather is to "provide the President and the Council with the strongest possible support."

- The workhorse of the system are the six interdepartmental groups and these are chaired by the Assistant Secretaries of State. They do the basic policy development and produce the basic policy papers for consideration by the NSC. The authority rests in the representative of the Department of State.
- Dr. Kissinger is not a member of the National Security Council; the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense are members.
- Senator Symington did not even mention the Under Secretaries Committee which is a key element of the NSC system. Policy matters of the level of importance not requiring deliberation by the National Security Council are handled by the Under Secretaries Committee chaired by the Under Secretary of State.
- The implementation of Presidential decisions is charged to the Under Secretaries Committee which is chaired by the Under Secretary of State.
- The basic responsibility for preparing policy papers and ideas forwarded to the Council remains with the statutory departments and agencies. One of the virtues of using the more formal procedure of the Council is that it assures all interested parties within the Executive Branch of full hearing of their views. The function of the Council staff is to see that this is done in a systematic manner prescribed by the President and to insure that once policy decisions are made, they are disseminated and fully explained to those

responsible for their implementation.

- All major decisions that involve the U. S. in Indochina have been made by the President only after full and complete deliberation with all of the relevant senior advisers.
- Senator Symington also makes a number of allegations based upon speculative newspaper accounts concerning the ARVN incursion into Laos and the conduct of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. Neither of these allegations is supported by fact.
- The DPRC ~~is the~~ for the first time provides a forum wherein the State Department, ACDA and the domestic agencies get an opportunity to consider the national defense budget in light of overall national priorities. This group has had significant influence upon decisions on basic weapons policy and related matters.
- While this Administration has followed the unbroken precedent of four presidents not to release National Security Council documents (quotation from 1961 Kennedy letter), this Administration has not invoked executive privilege and has directed that the exercise of executive privilege will be reserved to the President himself.
- The various allegations that Dr. Kissinger was "responsible" for one or another particular point of view is based on a misconception of Dr. Kissinger's role in the National Security Council machinery. Further, these rumors have no basis in fact.

- Senator Symington's curious account of the genesis of the State of the World message 1969 is simply false. The intention to produce such a report originated with the President elect and all departments were asked for contributions through the NSC system.
- Since the beginning of this Administration, State and Defense Departments have assisted in the preparation of background information for the President's use for press appearances.
- The Senator's allegation that Dr. Kissinger is isolated from members of the Senate is simply not true. Dr. Kissinger and members of his staff have met with and have briefed members of Congress and the Senate on many many occasions and remained accessible to Senators and Congressmen on an informal basis.