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INFORMATION

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March 17, 1970

OSD Review Completed

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Your Meeting Today with Senator Aiken on Safeguard

You are scheduled to meet this afternoon with Senator Aiken to discuss the Safeguard program.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard met with the Senator on March 16 and discussed the Chinese and Soviet threats, the technological progress since last year's Safeguard decision, and the relationship of Safeguard to SALT and the success of the Nixon Doctrine. DOD's present assessment is that Senator Aiken might support the modified Phase II decision if he determines that the FY 71 program is essential to our SALT negotiating position and to the implementation of the Nixon Doctrine.

Questions Senator Aiken May Raise

How serious does the threat really seem?

Suggested response:

-- It is very serious and growing. The entire intelligence community agrees that the threat estimates given Congress last year by Secretary Laird were conservative.

-- The Soviets continue vigorous testing of ICBM multiple reentry vehicles, improved ABM missiles and radars, and SLBM's. They have tested strategic missiles at twice our rate since the beginning of SALT. Their Yankee class submarine threat is rising.



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How important is the FY 71 progress to our negotiating position at SAET?

Suggested response:

- Continued progress, even at the minimum level requested for FY 71, is important to our SALT negotiating position.
- The Soviets would have little incentive to negotiate if, while they continue work on their ABM and multiple reentry vehicles, the US unilaterally foregoes its own work in these fields.
- We must preserve the capability during this transition year to protect ourselves should SALT fail.

How important is the FY 71 program to the long-term success of the Nixon Doctrine?

Suggested response:

- Your foreign policy statement emphasized the need to maintain allied confidence in U. S. capability and resolve.
- In a period in which we hope to encourage our allies to assume more defense burdens, particularly through troop contributions, the U. S. should not be left open to possible strategic blackmail in coming years by nations such as Red China.
- Our capability to defend our strategic deterrent will also bear heavily on future NATO policy.
- The success of the Nixon doctrine of shared responsibility will rest heavily on the credibility of our nuclear deterrent.

Points You May Wish to Raise

- The Safeguard decision this year has been limited to the absolute minimum progress and expenditure which will preserve our future options.
- A future system will be tailored carefully to any SALT agreement and to the strategic threat.
- You expect to consult with Senator Aiken and other ranking members of the Foreign Relations Committee during the coming year as SALT progresses.

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