

IS - MK 444

file

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~TOP SECRET~~
(outside system)

ACTION
March 31, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt *[Handwritten mark]*

SUBJECT: Smith's Backchannel re President's Press Conference
and SLBMs (Tab B)

Attached for your approval and urgent transmission to Smith is a (Tab A) telling him that the "Soviet interpretation" of the President's press conference statement is wrong.

25X1
 25X1

RECOMMENDATION

That you initial the attached message and have Dick Kennedy arrange for its urgent transmission.

Hal
HK
Paul
Paul
[Signature]

DOS, NSS reviews completed.

~~TOP SECRET/outside system~~

015-174-1111-1

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE



25X1
25X1

EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY TO: Ambassador Gerard Smith, SALT, Helsinki
FROM: Henry A. Kissinger, The White House
REFERENCE: Your Helsinki 0275

There can be absolutely no question that QUOTE Soviet interpretation UNQUOTE is wrong. We wish SLBM question settled as part of effort to finalize agreement at Helsinki. Please ensure that there is no misunderstanding on this score. Warm regards.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

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WHCA

EYES ONLY

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FM SALT HELSINKI
TO THE WHITE HOUSE

ZEM
T O P S E C R E T/SENSITIVE 311440Z MAR 72
FM AMB. SMITH SALT HELSINKI 0275
TO THE WHITE HOUSE EXCLUSIVE EYES ONLY DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER

25X1
25X1

DEAR HENRY:

ON MARCH 30TH KISHILOV TOLD GARTHOFF THAT THE TRANSCRIPT OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S MARCH 24TH PRESS CONFERENCE HAD RAISED QUESTIONS IN THEIR MINDS AS TO THE US POSITION AND THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS LEFT OBSCURE WHETHER THE PRESIDENT WISHED THE SLBM QUESTION TO BE LEFT FOR A DECISION AT THE SUMMIT. WHEN GARTHOFF SAID THAT THAT WAS AN INCORRECT INTERPRETATION, KISHILOV SAID THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND GARTHOFF'S EXPLANATION, BUT "THERE WERE OTHER WHO MIGHT CONTINUE TO INTERPRET THE PRESIDENT'S OWN VIEWS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF SALT TO THE SUMMIT IN A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT WAY."

I THINK THIS SOVIET INTERPRETATION IS NOT FARFETCHED, BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS ONE WHICH THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE IN THE SOVIET MIND.

I HAVE ASSURED SEMENOV THAT OUR PURPOSE AT HELSINKI IS TO DO OUR BEST TO FINALIZE AGREEMENTS HERE. BUT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF I COULD TELL HIM THAT I HAVE CHECKED WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THAT THE SOVIET INTERPRETATION OF HIS REMARKS ON 24 MARCH IS NOT CORRECT. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF THE PRESIDENT FOUND AN OCCASION TO SAY TO THE PRESS THAT ALTHOUGH ONE CANNOT FORESEE THE OUTCOME OF THE HELSINKI PHASE, HE DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SALT AGREEMENTS MAY BE REACHED IN HELSINKI BEFORE THE UPCOMING SUMMIT.

WARM REGARDS.

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EYES ONLY

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