

Completely Outside System

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/KEYWORD

April 10, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: JAN M. LODAL/^{int}HELMUT SONNENFELD^{11/5}

SUBJECT: Intelligence Questions Raised in Moscow

As you recall, there were a number of questions raised in the Moscow discussions on which the Soviets appeared to be confused or perhaps were intending to mislead us. Among these were:

- Whether the new Soviet ICBMs are really new missiles or merely modifications of older systems.
- The Soviet claim that none of their ICBMs carry more than three RVs.
- The Soviet claim that a US ICBM was tested carrying 5 RVs and that POSEIDON carries 12 RVs.
- The Soviet references to their "160" bombers.

We have reviewed the Soviet claims with the intelligence community and DOD. The key conclusions of our review are discussed below.

1. Are the new Soviet ICBMs really new missiles or merely modifications of existing systems?

This question arose when Brezhnev indicated that all of the "new" Soviet ICBMs are really just modifications of existing missiles. At one point, he even said "new" ICBMs would violate the Interim Agreement.

On this point, we suspect that Brezhnev confused new ICBMs with new ICBM launchers, (the construction of which would violate the Interim Agreement). It is the Soviets existing ICBM launchers that are being modified to accept their new missiles.

We also asked CIA to evaluate whether the new ICBMs could conceivably be modifications of existing missiles.

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NSA review completed

OSD Review
Completed

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You may wish to consider raising this point in your talks with Gromyko on the off chance that the Soviet military has deliberately misled the leadership.

2. Do the Soviet ICBMs carry more than 3 RVs?

Brezhnev asserted on several occasions that his ICBMs have no more than 3 RVs (though at one point he indicated the possibility of up to 5).

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It is at least possible that Brezhnev was genuinely confused on the subject. Perhaps he was referring to existing MRV systems such as the SS-11 MOD 3 now being extensively deployed, or possibly he had been poorly briefed. (You will recall last year at Zavidavo, Brezhnev claimed eight warheads for his new heavy missile which has not been proven out.)

Beyond simple confusion, or a deliberate Soviet attempt to mislead us, (which could not possibly succeed), we can find no plausible explanation for the Soviet statements.

3. Soviet Claims About US MIRVs

At one point Brezhnev claimed the US had tested an ICBM with five MIRVs; at another point he claimed Poseidon carried twelve RVs.

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On the two ICBM questions, the US has never launched an ICBM with five RVs. In the weeks prior to your Moscow visit the US launched three ICBMs, including:

- A Minuteman II carrying the Emergency Rocket Communications System and no reentry vehicle. The missile failed and was destroyed in flight.
- A Thor rocket placing a weather satellite in orbit.
- An Atlas rocket which launched a single maneuvering reentry vehicle.

None of these vehicles could plausibly have looked like five RVs to the Soviets.

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This apparently is standard Soviet practice in monitoring our missile tests. As we surmise it, the Soviet approach to monitoring our ICBMs relies heavily on US open source literature for much of their intelligence data; they apparently monitor our tests with trawlers to confirm that things are pretty much as expected. In fact, if we secretly prepared and tested an ICBM with five RVs the Soviets would probably never know it.

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In sum, we can find no plausible explanation for the Soviet claim.

On the Poseidon question, we can identify some indications of how the Soviets might have concluded that Poseidon carries twelve RVs. For example, early literature on Poseidon included reference to a configuration of twelve RVs plus a penetration aids package. On the other hand, Poseidon has never actually been tested with twelve RVs. Poseidon can actually carry up to fourteen RVs and it is routinely tested in the mode -- the most recent fourteen RV test was in January -- and is also tested with payloads of ten and six RVs. These are the three basic payload configurations that we have actually deployed. As actually deployed, Poseidon has an average of ten RVs permissile; some Poseidons are deployed with fourteen.

From a SALT standpoint, we have usually counted Poseidon as carrying ten RVs. On the other hand, the Soviets would be justified in trying to credit it with its maximum tested payload, i. e. fourteen RVs. (This tends to make the possibility of a deal based on RVs less attractive from the US standpoint since our 500 Poseidons could theoretically carry 7,000 RVs.)

4. Soviet References to Their "160" Bomber - Brezhnev offered on several occasions to trade their contemplated "160" bomber for our B-1.



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