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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

November 12, 1969



National Security Decision Memorandum 33

TO: The Members of the National Security Council  
The Attorney General  
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Preliminary Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

The President has made the following decisions with respect to the preliminary strategic arms limitation talks with the Soviet Union, which will begin on November 17, 1969 in Helsinki.

1. During this phase of the talks, the primary objective of the U.S. Delegation shall be to develop a work program for the main talks and to acquire information concerning Soviet views in order to aid in the formulation of future positions. The Delegation shall therefore avoid statements that would prejudice these positions.
2. The United States is prepared to discuss (a) limitations on all offensive and defensive weapons systems, and (b) proposals the Soviets may advance for the work program. The Delegation should make it clear that in accepting subjects for further discussion the United States is not thereby committed to the inclusion of any given measure of limitation in a final agreement either individually or in combination with others. The President will make the judgment on what limitations are acceptable, and he will do so in light of the criteria for strategic sufficiency set forth in NSDM-16, the evaluations of the Verification Panel, and other considerations he deems pertinent.
3. Furthermore, the Delegation should emphasize that any agreed measures must be subject to adequate verification. The verification issues associated with any measures should be discussed on the basis of the work of the Verification Panel.

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4. As a contribution to the work program and in order to elicit Soviet views, the Delegation should draw on the elements in Option II as illustrative of a possible approach to limitations. At the same time the Delegation should indicate that this illustration does not exclude additions, modifications or other approaches. In the interest of exploring Soviet attitudes, the question of MRV/MIRV may be included in a work program. The Delegation should discuss it in the light of the prior examination of limitations on defensive systems and within the context of the verifiability of (a) limitations on defensive systems and (b) possible bans on MIRV flight testing and deployment and the constraints associated therewith. The President will judge the feasibility of restraints on MIRV in terms of their strategic consequences and their verifiability.

5. As regards limitations on defensive systems, the President is committed to the area defense component of the Safeguard program. Consistent with this commitment the Delegation may explore limitations on strategic defensive systems together with the related problems of verification. It may be useful to begin this part of the discussion with exploration of the minimum area defense requirements against third country threats.

6. The Delegation is authorized to discuss throw weight limitations as a type of qualitative restriction we are prepared to explore further.

7. As for other elements to be included in a work program, the Delegation is authorized to discuss quantitative and qualitative limitations raised by the Soviet Union.

8. Before engaging in a discussion of moratorium issues, or agreeing to their inclusion in a work program, the Delegation should seek instructions from Washington.

9. Issues related to numerical reductions of strategic weapons may be discussed and included in the work program after authorization from Washington and consultation with Allies, who have not yet been informed of this possibility.

10. The Delegation should take the position that tactical nuclear forces and strategic forces of other nations are not to be included in these talks.

11. The Delegation is not authorized to accept Helsinki as the site for the main talks.

12. The President reaffirms his Directive of October 31, 1969, entitled "Avoidance of Leaks on SALT." The Chairman of the Delegation shall ensure that all activities dealt with in that Directive are conducted in conformity with it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Henry A. Kissinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Henry A. Kissinger

Copy: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Senior Members, U.S. Delegation  
to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks