

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

By LR Date 02/13/07

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 10, 1970

~~TOP SECRET/NODIS~~

National Security Decision Memorandum 51

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

SUBJECT: Vienna Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

I have made the following decisions with respect to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks which will begin on April 16, 1970, in Vienna.

1. (a) The options which will serve as the basis for U.S. proposals and explorations are those in the enclosure to this Memorandum: "SALT Options," dated April 9, 1970.

(b) The Delegation is not authorized to discuss individual provisions of an Option without having made it clear that individual provisions are acceptable only in combination with all the provisions of the Option, including all corollary verification provisions.

(c) If the Delegation believes that alternative or additional provisions should be presented in order to enhance the possibility that agreement could be reached on the approved provisions of an Option, it must seek instructions.

2. I want the initial discussion to cover as broad a range of issues as possible. Therefore, the Delegation should first present Option C, including the measures specified as required for verification and using the provisions for the NCA level of ABM defense, as a framework for that discussion. The Delegation should also present Option D, using the provisions for the NCA level of ABM defense, as an alternative approach. On the basis of the discussions of these Options, and in the light of any Soviet proposals, I will judge whether an agreement acceptable to the United States is possible or whether other options should be explored.

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3. Before engaging in any discussion of a suspension or modification of ongoing programs prior to agreement, the Delegation will seek instructions from Washington.

4. The Delegation is authorized to discuss Item 5 on the Work Program concerning "Ways to reduce the danger of the outbreak of a nuclear missile war between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., including ways to guard against unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons" in accordance with the approach set forth in the summary Task Y paper, "Protecting Against Nuclear Accidents and Provocative Attacks."

5. The Delegation should take the position that U.S. tactical nuclear forces, strategic forces of other nations and U.S. practices with respect to ballistic missile submarine and strategic aircraft operations should not be included in the talks.

6. I reaffirm my directive of October 31, 1969, entitled "Avoidance of Leaks on SALT." The Chief of the Delegation will be responsible for assuring that all activities dealt with in that directive are conducted in conformity with it.

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