

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

By *LSH* Date *6/27/07*

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

~~CONFIDENTIAL/XGDS(3)~~

July 29, 1974

National Security Decision Memorandum 263

TO: The Secretary of the Treasury
 The Secretary of Defense
 The Secretary of the Interior
 The Secretary of Commerce
 The Deputy Secretary of State
 The Director of Central Intelligence
 The Director, Federal Energy Administration
 The Director, National Science Foundation
 The Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality

SUBJECT: U. S. Policy on Antarctic Mineral Resources

The President has reviewed the NSC Under Secretaries Committee (USC) report regarding United States policy on Antarctic mineral resources, as forwarded by the USC Chairman on April 26, 1974.


The President has approved the attached statement of United States policy, and has authorized preliminary consultations with other Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to gain acceptance of the idea that there should be an internationally agreed approach to the issues of commercial exploration for and exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources.

These exploratory consultations should be designed so as to preserve the U. S. interests detailed in the USC report and in no way prejudice any options regarding the possible nature and scope of international mechanisms, understandings, or agreements pertaining to Antarctic mineral resources. The Department of State, in coordination with the other interested agencies, will be responsible for the conduct of these consultations.

In addition, the President has directed the Under Secretaries Committee to conduct a prompt analysis of what the United States might wish to seek or to avoid in any later discussions on establishing an internationally agreed approach.

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A report on the preliminary consultations, and a proposed action program outlining what diplomatic and political steps might be taken to accomplish the substantive recommendations should be forwarded for the President's consideration prior to the undertaking of any further actions in this area.


Henry A. Kissinger

Attachment

cc: Assistant to the President for International
Economic Policy
Counselor to the President for Economic Policy

Statement of United States Policy on Antarctic Mineral Resources

It is the objective of the United States:

- To ensure that, if undertaken, commercial exploration and exploitation in Antarctica are carried out in a manner that does not disrupt the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty as long as it is in effect, and does not become a cause for significant international discord.
- To ensure that any exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources is compatible with environmental considerations and with United States obligations under the Antarctic Treaty.
- To gain acceptance of the concept that there should be an internationally agreed approach for any commercial exploration and exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources, which should at the same time (a) permit free access by the U.S. and other nations for exploitation purposes to any part of the Antarctic Treaty area except those areas specifically designated for other uses; (b) be without prejudice to and appropriately compatible with United States law of the sea interests; (c) provide for the protection of the Antarctic environment; and (d) preserve the rights under the Antarctic Treaty of scientific research.

During the time that the United States is seeking an internationally agreed approach, the United States will oppose actions by any nation with the purpose of commercial exploration and exploitation of Antarctic mineral resources, and will urge other nations to join the U.S. in such an interim policy. At the same time, however, the United States will continue as feasible and appropriate within the present scientific program to determine the mineral resource potential of Antarctica more accurately. (This position will be reevaluated periodically in light of the progress of any negotiations, actions by other countries, and continuing economic and technological assessments of United States and foreign capabilities to be provided by a Subcommittee of the Under Secretaries Committee.)

The United States will continue to maintain and be prepared to augment as appropriate an active and influential presence in Antarctica in keeping with its present and future scientific, economic (including resource potential), political, and security interests in Antarctica.