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August 27, 1970

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

From: William E. Timmons
Subject: George Bush and Seabeds Convention

Rep. George Bush (R-Tex) recently called to ask when the seabeds treaty decision was going to be reversed so he can capitalize on the publicity with his oil constituents. He stated that at a meeting with him, Harry Dent and Peter O'Donnell you had indicated he should get out in front on this issue and take credit when the seabeds decision was reversed or reconsidered.

Harry Dent checked with Henry Kissinger who reported that you have firmly decided to go forward to reduce national resource rights to a 200 meter depth limit. Dent's office reported this to Bush who is now upset because he feels your pledge to him is not being carried out by your advisors.

Bush has been invited to the State Dinner honoring the President of Mexico and could very well find occasion to bring the matter to your attention.

RECOMMENDATION

Tell the Texas Congressman you have carefully reviewed the decision and our national security interests (free passage through international straits, freedom of certain military activities on the continental slope, avoidance of jurisdictional conflicts with coastal states) demand a seabed convention.

However, you recognize Bush's political problem and he should underplay the seabeds and take credit for the Administration's not adopting the tariff proposal of the Cabinet Task Force on Oil Import Control and, instead, recommending through the Oil Policy Committee continuation of the quota system.

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