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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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National Security Council Meeting

September 18, 1984, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon,
White House Situation Room

SUBJECT: Next Steps in the Vienna Process (S)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President's Office
Admiral Daniel J. Murphy

State:
Secretary George P. Shultz
Under Secretary Kenneth Dam
Dr. Henry Cooper

OSD:
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger
Dr. Fred C. Ikle

CIA:
Director William J. Casey
Mr. Robert Gates

USUN:
Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

JCS:
General P. X. Kelley
Admiral Arthur S. Moreau

ACDA:
Director Kenneth Adelman
Ambassador Edward L. Rowny
Ambassador Paul H. Nitze

White House:
Mr. Edwin Meese, III
Mr. Robert C. McFarlane

NSC:
Mr. Ronald F. Lehman
Col. Robert E. Linhard

Minutes

Mr. McFarlane: Over the last four months we have worked in developing a position on anti-satellite systems that would be in the US interest and aid stability. On June 29, the Soviets offered to talk to us about the militarization of space. We agreed but reformulated their offer so as not to let the Soviets off the hook on discussing offensive systems. Since that time, the interagency has concluded its work in planning against two contingencies:

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- What should be the US position if the Soviets agree to the talks?
- How should we handle the situation if they do not agree to the talks? (S)

Three alternative approaches were developed. Each addresses both anti-satellite capabilities and offensive systems. (S)

The first option suggests that we use a Vienna meeting to simply discuss with the Soviets issues of concern to both sides. (S)

Option two suggests that we use such a meeting to negotiate an incidents-in-space agreement. Such an agreement would provide rules of the road for space operations. Such an agreement would largely depend upon goodwill and be more of a statement of intent to abide by these rules of the road than anything else. (S)

Option two also suggests that we could possibly offer not to test our anti-satellite systems against high-altitude objects if others show similar restraint, and to suspend testing of the F-15 system after completing some certain number of tests. (S)

With respect to offensive systems, this option would have us encourage the Soviets to return to the negotiating table by signalling our willingness to discuss possible trade-offs, e.g., limits on bombers and cruise missiles. The approach would have us implicitly link negotiations on ASAT limitation or changes to other arms control positions to specific progress in negotiations. (S)

The approach would also make it clear that we are willing to talk about the offensive, defensive force relationship and to discuss how we could both move toward a greater reliance on defensive forces while maintaining stability. (S)

The third option suggests a comprehensive proposal envisioning two phases. In Phase One, we would suggest to the Soviets that we agree to a temporary moratorium on the testing of specific ASAT interceptors and an interim agreement to cap or limit offensive systems. This cap could perhaps include INF forces. This agreement would also involve a commitment to certain objectives for later phases of negotiations. (S)

Phase Two would involve a long-term ban on the testing and deployment of ASAT interceptors. This would require the Soviets to dismantle their existing ASAT systems. It would also involve the negotiating of an incidents-in-space agreement. On the other hand, with respect to offensive forces, we would expect progress toward deep reductions, a discussion of the offensive, defensive force relationship, and in the context of these items, we would consider whether we would accept limits on defensive systems. (S)

Beyond the content of these specific options, we must consider how the Soviets are currently looking at arms control and what the Soviet calculus may be. For example, when will it be in their interest to engage the US across-the-board in this area? It may be that our assessment will argue against any proposals being made right now. To make such proposals may cause us to appear too anxious and may signal to the Soviets that they could coerce us into concessions. The other view that one could hold is that pursuing any initiatives now would demonstrate US leadership and put the Soviets on the defensive. Could we have agency views on this issue? (U)

Secretary Shultz: We should try to move the ball along now. To do so, we need to make reasonably concrete proposals. (S)

First of all, unconstrained military growth by the Soviet Union is not to our advantage. We have more difficulty with the politics of modernization than they do. Reductions are to our advantage. (S)

Secondly, the Soviets' Vienna proposal has some interesting aspects. It provides us the opportunity to change venue from Geneva. It provides a way to rearrange the situation, to permit them to go back to the table at a different place (i.e., saving face). (S)

Third, the idea of holding simultaneous discussion of offensive and defensive systems is good. They are worried about our SDI program. (S)

We should take timely action on this. We should show to the Soviets where they could go with the U.S. at this time. We need to put out enough concreteness to demonstrate to Gromyko that we are interested in serious negotiations. (S)

I think a quick interim agreement would be to our advantage. We could go on from there to a better agreement, and short-term constraints may be a real benefit to us. (S)

With respect to your upcoming UNGA speech, any arms control initiatives offered in such a speech would not be viewed by the Soviets as serious. I feel we should make our points privately and make them directly to Gromyko. (S)

Mr. McFarlane: We are all agreed on that point. (U)

Secretary Weinberger: Now is very inappropriate for any proposal. (S)

- There is no interagency position on ASAT or defensive systems. (S)
- The Soviets most fear SDI and that will be what they urge us to give up. (S)

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Secretary Weinberger (continued)

- What we limit on an interim basis now could harm us in the future. This applies to a temporary ASAT moratorium as well as an interim agreement on offensive forces. (S)
- We will find it impossible to back away from an interim agreement. (S)
- We're not ready to set the trend which a set of interim agreements establishes. (S)
- We would be binding ourselves at a time when the Soviet leadership is in a state of turmoil. (S)

With Gromyko, Mr. President, I would recommend that you reaffirm your commitment to genuine reductions. Make it clear you are prepared for general discussion but discussions aimed at framing specific negotiations. Note the advantages and disadvantages of our different force structures, etc., and highlight the benefit of understanding how we both view first principles. (S)

Now is the worst time in the world for a temporary ASAT moratorium interim agreement proposal. It can lead us to preclude SDI development, and interagency agreement is lacking. (S)

We should use the Gromyko meeting to reaffirm U.S. commitment and the need for resumption of START/INF. Beyond this, we should stay flexible. (S)

We could set the stage for more substantive talks later. (S)

Given the total lack of verifiability associated with ASAT options and no real Soviet government, any accord would prematurely bind us to patterns of behavior not in our interest. (S)

General Kelley: I echo the SecDef. We should avoid a premature accord which binds our SDI activity. Our understanding of the relationship between offensive and defensive systems and SDI is vague at best. (S)

Director Adelman: I would recommend Option Two once we are in the negotiations. But the real problem is, how do we get back into negotiations? If the Soviets are serious, we need to find a way. We could have a delegation go to talk about offensive and defensive systems, SDI, START, INF, and ASAT, along the lines of SALT I. (S)

I would avoid concrete proposals now. We should only pursue general discussion, because the Soviets will pocket specific

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proposals. On interim accords - it's a good idea to seek reductions, but the reductions should not be interim. It's too optimistic to hope for militarily significant reductions any quicker by approaching the project as an interim accord. (S)

With respect to your meeting with Gromyko, we should revisit the idea of on-site inspection of our sites and theirs, and move on a Threshold Test Ban Treaty. (S)

Ambassador Kirkpatrick: No comments. (S)

Director Casey: I agree with Cap and General Kelley. The Soviets want to cut SDI. Bellikov is here in the U.S. trying to build Backfire as a counter to SDI. There are two in Geneva who tell that there has been a fivefold increase in science to counter SDI; trying for counter measures by cutting IR plume of ICBMs by 60 percent or by a small nuclear explosion in space; they are worried about optics. (S)

This degree of open discussion is unusual in the amount of detail concerning Soviet plans; it is authorized to create a public backwash. (S)

The Soviets see ASAT as an opening wedge to SDI. We could entangle ourselves on SDI via ASAT. There could be an opportunity if we were able to handle ASAT as a part of discussions of the range of offensive and defensive systems; then ASAT weapons would be only a small portion of all weapons. (S)

Option One is an approach which could provide a framework for the future. We should work toward the future. (S)

Secretary Shultz: I agree with most but not all of this. We should use ASAT both as a stalking horse to protect SDI and as a way to get limits on offensive system. (S)

The idea of waiting for the interagency group to agree is a non-starter. The IG never agrees. If we wait for it to agree, nothing will go to the President. The IG is not a fourth branch of government. We can't give it a veto power. (S)

The idea of general palaver now and specifics later is unreal. We have been around four years. What have we been doing? (S)

The President: Gromyko's visit may have an effect. I had not anticipated specifics. I have to believe that the USSR (mainly its leaders) has a world aggression program. But, in meetings we have to show an understanding of its concerns: a fear of invasion, a fear of being surrounded. It's the only country in the world with an internal passport. During World War II, no Allied planes were routinely permitted to land in the USSR. Since World War II they approach us with suspicion; they're not

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getting soft. Maybe we have tried too hard for specifics; we fear world aggression. (S)

" Maybe we need a general discussion to clear the air, telling them "here are the reasons why we fear your actions." We are not going to seek advantage, but we will keep our defenses up. The Soviet must be made to have a healthy respect. They must know we will stay even. This being the case, our mutual choices are: We can keep going up and up, or reduce down down to a point neither side is a threat. We should avoid an arms race which impoverishes both sides. We should explore in a general way how to get agreement; if there is any agreement, then discussions on specifics can follow later. (S)

Secretary Weinberger: It's important that you let them see your desire for reducing but also that we are not going to permit them to maintain an advantage. If we get into specifics, we are likely to preemptively preclude areas where our greatest hopes lie. We could be playing into their hands, limiting what they fear--like Pershing II. (S)

About the IG: My point is not that they decide; my point is they haven't sent you options on this subject so that you can see options and agency positions. (S)

Viewing this meeting as a theater for progress is wrong. (S)

Let him leave knowing that we have strength and will. Then let's discuss reductions. (S)

The President: We need to understand the other actors pushing us to make reductions. We have weakness we must correct soon; they don't. Without us honestly moving on track, Congress will prevent us from doing what's needed. (S)

We can't ignore developing specific proposals. (S)

You are tempting me with the idea of having no IG papers to review. (S)

We need to take care. We are moving toward defense programs that could make certain destabilizing offensive weapons useless. We don't want to be trapped from that path. However, with respect to ASAT--maybe we could make some progress, maybe through some high-level informal discussion. (S)

The idea of interim agreement is aimed at carrying us until we can find a way back to more comprehensive agreement. (S)

Secretary Weinberger: The Soviets did cave in the face of U.S. resolve during the Cuban missile crisis. But, of most importance is the simple fact that an interim agreement is not interim; as a

first stage, it has total lack of verifiability. They have no public or Congress to deal with. They can engage in "interim" policies that we can't. They need to see and know your resolve. (S)

The President: During the Cuban missile crisis, we had an eight to one advantage. They said they'd never be in that position again. (U)

Secretary Weinberger: We must recognize that our ASAT program is linked to SDI in many ways. The Soviets are working on defense just as hard as we are. (S)

Ambassador Kirkpatrick: The Russians think we do everything for a purpose. If we don't say something, it means something. They worry about CW and BW. In your meeting with Gromyko, you must include some reference to CW and BW and to the problem of verifiability. (S)

The President: That is a good point. (S)

Director Casey: [REDACTED]

Director Adelman: The Soviets have shown us they are able to shift their positions. For example, in 1979 they argued they would never negotiate on the basis of NATO's dual-track decision, and reversed themselves. The US should not make their return to START and INF more difficult. (S)

The President: I agree. But when they reversed themselves, we had not yet deployed weapons. (S)

Director Adelman: If there are general discussions in a grand setting, the discussion of the relationship between offensive and defensive systems would be a good springboard back to negotiations on offensive systems. (S)

Richard Pipes notes that the USSR did not move from a small duchy to eleven time zones by being invaded. In 1898 the Czar's General Staff did a study that concluded that 80 percent of the wars fought by Russia were okay since Russia started them. (S)

The President: Gentscher told us that they still have left the World War II barbed wire up near Moscow, to show how far Hitler got in World War II. The U.S. is allied with the FRG. The Soviets have great fear of US/FRG capacity. How do you argue with this fear? (S)

Secretary Weinberger: That's what we need to tell the Soviets: make them understand that we understand their fear, yet we still can't let them possess enough force to dominate the world. (S)

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Secretary Shultz: But suppose Gromyko says "okay; let's talk. Why not set a date before the end of the year?" Could we take "yes"? (S)

Director Adelman: Yes, the preparatory work is laid out. (S)

Secretary Weinberger: No, we have not figured out a full approach. (S)

Secretary Shultz: Don't need the full approach. We need agreement on the end points. (S)

Mr. McFarlane: Mr. President, you have already reviewed the options for START and INF. (S)

The President: Yes. (S)

Ambassador Nitze: I'm a skeptic on interim agreements. They are all poison. If you want a useful agreement, don't go down the interim agreement path. (S)

The President: Concerning the ASAT thing, all theirs are ground-based. Ours are on a plane. I don't know how limits on either ground-based or airborne ASAT systems interferes with SDI. (S)

Secretary Weinberger: Because you offer a moratorium, they won't move. It puts us on a slippery slope. If we could limit the final agreement to matching our opening position, fine, but we can't. By beginning, we must open the entire area for discussion. (S)

We need to have final limits in mind before entering into negotiation; therefore we must avoid a three-year moratorium or incidents-in-space. (S)

Mr. McFarlane: It is their ability to argue that an ASAT is a system that hits a satellite; but that SDI systems can do so too. They are difficult subjects to keep separate. (S)

Secretary Shultz: We're not ready to take "yes." (S)

Secretary Weinberger: No. (S)

Director Casey: I want us to be able to say "yes," but we need to be ready to take on negotiations on all areas. We must not negotiate just ASAT and mortgage SDI. We risk being out-traded. If we start in ASAT, they will push into SDI. (S)

Secretary Weinberger: They should go home sincerely convinced of the President's desire for arms reduction. (S)

Mr. McFarlane: Mr. President, I think you have heard it all. (S)

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The President: Ed -- (U)

Ambassador Rowny: The Soviets are interested in trade. You should make clear we are ready to discuss trade-offs in START. (U)

The President: No matter what happens, no one should consider giving away the horse cavalry. (U)

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon. (U)

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