

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION/01938

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

March 9, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER
FROM: MICHAEL A. GUHIN
THRU: JOHN B. WALSH
SUBJECT: Signing Ceremony for Biological Weapons Treaty

Handwritten notes and signatures:
T...
RUSH
@

Dave Parker has (1) informed us that the President has decided not to participate in the signing ceremony for the biological weapons treaty, but (2) indicated that an appeal of this decision would be considered if it spelled out what the President's and Secretary Rogers' roles would be in the ceremony.

Secretary Rogers has requested that the President reconsider and agree to attend (Tab A). The Secretary notes inter alia that: (1) In a demarche on March 3, Ambassador Dobrynin proposed that the ceremony for the biological weapons treaty be like the NPT and Seabeds ceremonies with Foreign Ministers signing in the presence of their Heads of State and urged that there be no appearance of downgrading this treaty. (2) The British seem prepared and even anxious to have Prime Minister Heath attend the ceremony in London. (3) A decision by the President not to participate would appear to the Soviets as a specific rejection of Dobrynin's demarche, and would puzzle if not seriously disappoint the British.

In view of the above, I think the President's decision should be appealed. The revised schedule proposal at Tab 1, recommends that he reconsider and attend the ceremony to be arranged for late March or possibly early April.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you forward the revised schedule proposal to the President (Tab 1).

I reluctantly concur in view of Sec Rogers' appeal. (B)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONFIDENTIAL ATTACHMENT

Added that Dobrynin has appealed because Kissinger will participate. H

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

1938

March 9, 1972

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Signing Ceremony for the Convention on Biological Weapons

I understand that you are not certain of the advisability of your attending the ceremony for the signing of the recently negotiated convention to prohibit manufacture and possession of biological weapons. The ceremony could be in late March as proposed by the Soviets and the British, or possibly in April.

I believe that there are important considerations in favor of your attendance, including the following:

1. You attended the signing ceremony for the Seabed Arms Control Treaty. President Johnson attended the signing ceremony for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which took place at the White House. Thus, both recent multilateral arms control treaties were signed in the presence of the President. (The SALT Accidents agreement was a bi-lateral executive agreement.)
2. In a recent demarche of March 3, on instruction of the Soviet government, Ambassador Dobrynin proposed that the Biological Weapons Treaty be signed in Washington, London and Moscow in the presence of heads of government. He urged that there should be no appearance of downgrading the Biological Weapons Treaty in comparison with the Seabed and Non-Proliferation Treaties.
3. A decision conveyed now to the Soviets that you will not participate would appear to them as a specific

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-2-

rejection of Dobrynin's demarche. Since the Soviets might well take a decision by you not to participate as a "snub" in an area where their willingness to reverse their own policy in multilateral negotiations had made international agreement possible, there could be negative ramifications affecting cooperation with the Soviets in future disarmament negotiations.

4. The British seem prepared and even anxious to have their Prime Minister attend the signing ceremony in London. The British correctly claim credit for having initiated the idea of a separate Biological Weapons Treaty even before you announced our renunciation of biological weapons. The British would therefore be at least puzzled, and probably seriously disappointed, if you decided not to attend the ceremony.

5. The Biological Weapons Treaty has been closely associated with your decisions and initiatives in the field of controlling chemical and biological weapons. The United States took the leading role in urging the Soviets to adopt a position parallel to our own (i.e. separate treatment for chemical weapons and for biological weapons), and when the Soviets finally shifted their position towards our own, a treaty was possible. Your participation therefore seems especially appropriate.

6. In view of presidential participation in prior comparable ceremonies and the importance of your earlier decision in renouncing biological warfare for the United States, the Soviets might believe that a decision by you not to participate results from some special consideration in our relations with the People's Republic of China. (The People's Republic has not supported the Biological Weapons Treaty.) The Soviets will, of course, be particularly sensitive at this time to any possible indications of United States "cooling" towards projects or activities in which we and they have played leading and cooperative roles.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

-3-

Recommendation

That you agree to attend the ceremony for the signing of the Biological Weapons Treaty to be held at the State Department, on a date convenient for you which will be coordinated with the British and the Soviets to permit parallel ceremonies in their capitals.


William P. Rogers

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~