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MEMORANDUM

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INFORMATION

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

July 14, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: MICHAEL A. GUHIN
THRU: JOHN B. WALSH

SUBJECT: Status of Chemical Weapons Discussions

Since the conclusion of the biological weapons treaty last year, the Geneva Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) has concentrated on two issues: test ban and chemical weapons problems.

In March we submitted a working paper raising chemical weapons arms control problems requiring further expert analysis. Our position is to avoid negotiating a treaty because there are many unanswered questions regarding verification.

Also in March the Soviets submitted a draft chemical weapons treaty almost identical to the recently signed biological weapons treaty. The draft had no verification system other than the Security Council complaint procedure in the biological weapons treaty. Many CCD delegations considered the Soviet approach too simplified.

The Soviets have continued to show interest in a chemical weapons treaty. In June the Soviet delegation asked about US counter-proposals. On July 5, contrary to the long-standing Soviet principle of boycotting and opposing CCD experts meetings, Soviet chemical warfare expert Melnikov attended such a meeting. He mentioned, *inter alia*, international procedures for information exchange and consultative mechanisms for monitoring any prohibitions. No mandatory international inspections were envisaged. Our CCD delegation notes that this Soviet move may provide an impetus toward treaty negotiations.

Because of unanswered questions regarding the effectiveness and importance of various verification measures, our best course may be to continue to avoid negotiations. On the other hand, there may be other acceptable tactical or substantive courses of action. I understand Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have examined some of these questions intensively and are consulting with ACDA prior to requesting that there be an NSC review. I think a review is in order, but believe we should wait to see what Defense and the Chiefs have in mind.

Dick Kennedy, Hal Sonnenfeldt, and Jack Merritt concur.

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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
August 6, 2007

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