

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION/6192

September 5, 1972

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SECRET/XCDS3

MEMORANDUM FOR: DR. KISSINGER

FROM: MICHAEL A. GUHIN

SUBJECT: More on Chemical Weapons Prohibitions

In response to your query, penned in the margin of the attached, as to how we could monitor limitations on stocks or production of lethal chemical agents and weapons, you will note that any chemical weapons limitations would be unverifiable.

National means provide us very little information (e.g., we do not know the size or location of any Soviet stocks or production facilities), and we could not have any confidence of being able to detect a change in the Soviet CW posture through national means.

Voluntary on-site inspection on challenge and, particularly, mandatory inspections at declared facilities could serve as deterrents, and we would probably be able to detect violations at a declared facility. Also, national means could probably tell us if a declared mothballed facility went back into production. However, we would not know if there were undeclared, clandestine facilities and would have little likelihood of detecting such.

Mandatory on-site inspection on challenge could provide a better deterrent against violations (as we do not know that the Russians know we know so little); but mandatory on-site inspection on challenge is considered unacceptable to us because there are military facilities to which we would not wish to permit unlimited access. Also, mandatory on-site on challenge would not change our inability to monitor compliance.

Even if the Russians were to accept what the bureaucracy considers the maximum verification procedures for CW acceptable to us—consultative committee arrangements for review of developments, compliance and complaints; voluntary on-site inspection on challenge; and mandatory on-site inspection of certain declared facilities—any treaty limitations would remain basically unverifiable. (A treaty proposal which included mandatory on-site inspection of declared facilities would probably prove unacceptable to the Russians and, therefore, not likely result in international agreement.)

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Therefore, as mentioned previously, one of the questions is whether or not we wish to pursue another essentially unverifiable treaty (that is, in addition to the outer space, seabeds, and biological weapons treaties). Another side of the question is whether we wish to place some treaty restraints on the Russians since our CW programs are restrained by congressional and public attitudes and budget priorities.

If not, and if we wished still to attempt to ease international pressures for CW negotiations and to place some restraints on the Russians, we could consider declaring a unilateral or bilateral moratorium for "x" number of years and invite others to subscribe. However, all agencies prefer placing treaty restraints on the Russians over the unilateral moratorium approach unless the latter were accompanied or followed by a treaty proposal.

I still recommend that the issues concerning our position on chemical weapons prohibitions be aired in the NSC before a decision is made. The memorandum for the interested agencies at Tab A reflects this recommendation.

Dick Kennedy, Hal Sonnenfeldt and Phil Odeen have concurred.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab A.

Attachments

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