

MEMORANDUM

DECLASSIFIED
PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
August 6, 2007
29608

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

June 25, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *K* **THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN** *AD*

SUBJECT: Soviet Proposal for Conference of Nuclear Powers

In their Government statement given to us on June 15 and also to the other nuclear powers, the Soviet Union proposed the convening of a Five-Power nuclear disarmament conference, or the establishment of a preparatory committee. The Soviet statement indicated they would continue to pursue the question through diplomatic channels, and Ambassador Dobrynin told Secretary Rogers that the USSR would shortly publish its statement.

Thus far only the French have agreed. (De Gaulle supported the idea which Khrushchev at one time promoted.)

Ambassador Smith has written you a preliminary analysis (Tab A), pointing out that there are no realistic prospects for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, or even agreement of the French and Chinese to end nuclear testing, but that limited measures might be considered. He feels we should take the Soviet proposal seriously, and study some of its ramifications. For example, he points out that in SALT we have virtually negotiated an agreement with the USSR on certain measures to reduce the risk of accidental war. The Soviets have suggested that other nuclear powers be asked to accede to such an agreement, and this might be a starter for a Five-Power conference.

While there may be a serious aspect to the Soviet proposal (especially since it originated at the Party Congress in Brezhnev's speech), there is also a self-serving political aspect:

-- Moscow can be fairly certain that the Chinese will not cooperate in a conference organized by the USSR -- especially on this subject.

-- It is difficult for the other nuclear powers, including us, to come out against "disarmament."

-- Thus the Soviets gain a propaganda point to belabor the Chinese, and Peking in turn becomes even more suspicious of Soviet-American collusion.

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-- In this proposal, as in Brezhnev's "equal bargain" limiting the deployment of navies, the Soviets achieve some credit for their "initiative."

Ultimately, however, we do have an interest in drawing China (and France) into a disarmament dialogue.

In short, we will have to steer a rather careful course between rejecting all of the recent Soviet disarmament proposals and accepting them without qualification.

I will have asked that some preliminary evaluation be made of what kind of issues would be realistic to consider at such a conference. I have given some interim guidance so that we can speak with one voice on this matter. The guidance makes the following points:

-- We believe the idea of a conference of nuclear powers is worth serious consideration.

-- Such meetings would have to be carefully prepared, and this could best be done by discussing substantive issues and isolating realistic measures that might be discussed.

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