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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING  
ON SALT OPTIONS

Monday, December 22, 1975

4:30 pm (90 minutes)

The Cabinet Room

From: Brent Scowcroft



I. PURPOSE

To review the status of the deliberations in the SALT Verification Panel on possible options for resolving the cruise missile and Backfire issues.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS, AND PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: The Verification Panel has been reviewing alternative approaches for resolving the major remaining issues in SALT II--cruise missiles and Backfire. We now have three basic approaches for dealing with cruise missiles and Backfire, each of which will be presented to you and discussed at the meeting.

1. Deferral: This approach would defer the cruise missile and Backfire issues to a later negotiation (either SALT III or a separate negotiation on these two issues alone). This approach would set aside the most controversial of the unresolved SALT issues and codify the terms agreed at Vladivostok (equal aggregates, MIRVed launcher limits, no forward-based system limits, etc.).

2. Comprehensive Solution: This approach would count Backfire in the 2400 ceiling, but in return for extensive cruise missile limits. In effect, the only strategic cruise missiles permitted (over 600 km in range) would be on heavy bombers and ships. In addition, the number of heavy bombers equipped with cruise missiles up to 2500 km would count against the MIRV ceiling of 1320.

This requires a severe Soviet restraint, causing them to dismantle over 300 ICBMs and SLBMs to deploy the Backfire. On the other hand, we give up submarine launched cruise missiles and would have to replace about 250-300 MIRVed missiles to deploy air launched cruise missiles (ALCM) on our heavy bombers.

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 1.4 2/19/99

MR 98-40, #39, State (Info) 9/25/98

By W NARA, Date 10/21/98, 7/21/99



3. Mixed Packages: In between these two approaches, there are building blocks to construct various combinations of limits on Backfire and cruise missiles:

Backfire could be limited in different ways: only through assurances on its usage, in a separate numerical limit outside the 2400 total, or it could be allowed to run free in return for permitting cruise missile program as an offset.

Cruise Missile possibilities are: For ALCMs, limit to only heavy bombers and count them in the MIRV total, while banning on all other aircraft. For sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs), allow them to go free as a counter to Backfire, ban them over 600 km range on submarines and either count them on ships or count in a separate category with Backfire.

B. Participants (List at Tab A)

C. Press Arrangements: The meeting, but not the subject, will be announced. There will be a White House photographer.

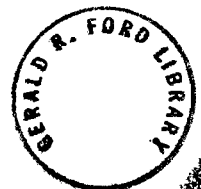
### III. TALKING POINTS

#### At the opening of the meeting

1. I understand that the Verification Panel reviewed some possible options for resolving the cruise missile and Backfire issues.
2. Before we start, I want to emphasize that I consider a good SALT agreement to be strongly in the U.S. interest, and that we have to consider not only the terms of the present negotiations, but the long-term impact of not reaching agreement.
3. We have no deadline, but in this period before the Soviet Party Congress we may have some bargaining leverage.
4. Let's start with a rundown by Bill Colby of any new developments. Bill, go ahead.

(Following Colby presentation)

5. Henry, as Chairman of the Verification Panel, why don't you describe to us the options the Panel has developed.



(Following Kissinger presentation)

6. I would now like to hear the comments of each principal on the options.

(Following the discussion)

7. I have found this meeting very useful. I want to think about the various possibilities and I would like the search for ways of dealing with these two different problems to continue.
8. I reiterate that I want everyone to devote their energies and to give total support to the effort to produce a SALT treaty. We will meet again after the holidays.

Attachment

Tab A--List of Participants



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 09201

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . National security restriction  
TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . Talking Paper  
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RECEIVER'S NAME . . . . . President Ford  
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*Sanitized 4/27/04*

## NSC MEETING -- SALT

TALKING POINTS

Mr. President:

We have held two Verification Panel meetings to develop a range of different approaches to the two key problems--the Backfire bomber and cruise missiles limits.

We have the following discrete issues:

1. How to deal with the Soviet Backfire bombers in light of Soviet insistence that it is outside the negotiations;
2. How to deal with cruise missiles of greater than 600 km deployed on heavy bombers; and, in this connection, how to deal with the same type of cruise missiles (over 600 km) on other aircraft;
3. How to deal with sea-launched cruise missiles of more than 600 km in range in submarines, and on surface ships;
4. Finally, we have the problem of land-based cruise missile: we have presently agreed with the Soviets that they are permitted up to intercontinental range (5<sup>5</sup>300 km), but our analysis suggests that we could limit them to 2000-2500 km--which would ease our verification problems, keep them from being used to circumvent restraints on air and sea-based cruise missiles and possibly prevent a Soviet break-out later.

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E.O. 12958 Sec. 1.5 (a)

NSC Dec 21/9199, OSD Dec 4/27104  
MR 98-40, # 40, at Dec 9/25/98

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By dal NARA Date 2/8/05

We looked at five different Options; but they can be generalized into three basic approaches:

A. The first basic approach is to defer any limits on both Backfire and cruise missiles, and take them up in the next round of SALT beginning in 1977:

-- The idea would be to consolidate what has been achieved at Vladivostok, so that a new agreement would come into effect when the Interim Agreement expires in October 1977, together with a commitment to reach a follow-on agreement, including reductions, by 1979-80.

Under this approach, we would maintain the momentum of the negotiations, retain bargaining leverage with our cruise missile program, and gain a commitment for reductions.

-- As an alternative under this approach, we might propose an upper limit on Backfire through 1980-- say 150--and agree to regulate our cruise missile deployments accordingly.

One problem is that the Soviets would have to accept Backfire as a legitimate system for the next round of negotiations, and would therefore almost certainly counter with a demand to negotiate about our forward based systems; moreover, we risk having cruise missile appear as an obstacle to the negotiation and having Congress force the U.S. to halt testing or deployment.

-- A serious drawback to this approach is the probability that it will not be negotiable. The Soviets have indicated more than once that they could not accept such a solution.

B. At the other end of the spectrum, we could adopt a comprehensive approach that resolves all the issues by linking cruise missile limits to counting of Backfire in the 2400 aggregate:

- Thus, we would ban all cruise missiles of ranges greater than 600 km on aircraft other than heavy bombers, and ban cruise missiles over 600 km on submarines;
- This would mean that the only strategic cruise missiles would be those on heavy bombers and surface ships;
- In turn, these would be limited to the same maximum range, say 2500 km;
- Finally, we would propose that air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on heavy bombers would count as a MIRVed vehicle, and be applied to the 1320 MIRV ceiling.

In this approach we would make two significant concessions compared with our proposal of September: (1) to ban longer range cruise missiles on submarines, and (2) to count ALCMs as MIRVs, which would probably cost us 250 MIRVed missiles in the long run.

- On the other hand, we would require the Soviets to reverse their position that Backfire is outside the definition of strategic vehicles, and to dismantle 300 or more ICBMs and SLBMs if they wish to deploy Backfire under the 2400 limit.
- This raises the obvious problem--that the Soviets will refuse to negotiate on this basis.



-- One reason is that Backfire has probably become a political problem in the politburo; while the Soviet leaders may not grasp the various technical arguments, they may now believe that having given up our forward based systems, to be confronted with a demand that they count Backfire is a test of their resolve.

C. This leads to a third general approach, that falls between deferral and a comprehensive solution.

Under this approach there are several building blocks that can be grouped into packages:

1. Backfire

We could deal with Backfire through some negotiated assurances on its use--for example, a prohibition on a separate tanker force, a prohibition on basing in the Arctic, or training in an intercontinental mode:

-- Such assurances are of some practical value in constraining the Soviets, but would be regarded as marginal importance since there would be no numerical upper limit, and in the event of a termination of SALT, shifting to Arctic bases would be no problem.

-- Alternatively, we could try for an upper limit: for example, in our September proposal we grouped Backfire with sea-based cruise missiles in a separate limit of 300;

-- Or we could propose lowering the ceiling to 2300-2200 and let Backfire go free which would cost the Soviets in first strike capacity.

2'. Cruise Missiles:

We have four separate deployment modes for cruise missiles: on heavy bombers, on other aircraft, on submarines, and on surface ships.

-- We also have the problem that in the negotiations thus far we have discussed cruise missiles of over 600 km in range as "strategic;" we have the problem of establishing a upper range--which for verification purposes ought to be the same for the different deployment modes.

ACLMs

For air-launched, we have proposed that they be limited to 2500 km on heavy bombers and that they be limited to no more than 300 heavy bombers;

-- We have also proposed that cruise missiles with a range greater than 600 km be banned on other aircraft. Thus, we could stick with this position.

Or,

We could take one more step and propose that ACLMs on heavy bombers be counted against the 1320 MIRV ceiling.

-- The effect of this package is that the Soviets would be blocked from any extensive cruise missile deployments unless they

gave up heavy throw-weight MIRVed missiles; they would be barred from improving the Backfire through a deployment of longer range cruise missiles;

-- We would be permitted to equip the [REDACTED] ACLMs but at the expense of some [REDACTED] missiles.

SLCMs

Our current position is that SLCMs, on both submarines and surface ships, with a range of between 600 km and 2000 km would be grouped with the Backfire in a separate limit of 300 outside the 2400 ceiling.

-- Thus, each side is forced to choose between peripheral systems--either medium range bombers such as Backfire, or medium range SCLMs.

We have the alternative of dropping the separate category, and dividing the sea-based systems for separate handling:

-- Thus, we could propose to ban all cruise missiles with a range of more than 600 km on submarines, and letting ship-based cruise missiles up to 2000 km run free;

-- In this case, we would regard the ship-based systems as offsetting Backfire, regulating our deployments according to Backfire deployment;

-- The problem is that we may not deploy for some years and meanwhile Backfire would go forward, without an upper limit.

Thus, we might go further and propose that each ship equipped with SCLMs be counted if we can establish some upper limit on the Backfire.

Conventional and Nuclear Armed Cruise Missile

In whatever limits we adopt, we have the final problem that conventionally armed cruise missiles might be permitted, since SALT has never dealt with conventional systems.

- But distinguishing between a conventionally-armed cruise missile that would be permitted on any aircraft or on submarines, and a nuclear armed one, would be a nightmare;
- We could raise this with the Soviets--which might add a massive complication--or remain silent for now, which is probably preferable.

Land-Based Cruise Missiles

Finally, whatever we do on air and sea-based systems, we may have to reopen the land-based cruise missiles problem.

- As matters now stand, both sides could develop and deploy a land-based cruise missile up to 5000 km in range, which could be easily adapted for installation on aircraft or sea-based systems;

-- The problem is the Soviets probably want such a system against China.

But for our part, we could accomplish any theater force mission with a land-based missile--in Europe with a range of 2000-2500 km.

In sum, we have three basic approaches:

1. To defer both Backfire and cruise missile limits to the next negotiation in 1977;
2. To make a major effort to resolve them both by proposing extensive cruise missile constraints in return for counting all Backfire in the ceiling; or
3. To develop a mixed package, proposing some cruise missile limits in order to nail down the Valdivostok accord, but leaving some cruise missile development to match or offset Backfire.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 09202

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL . . . . National security restriction  
TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . Minute  
CREATOR'S NAME . . . . . Richard Boverie?  
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DATE WITHDRAWN . . . . . 02/26/1998  
WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST . . . . LET

*excised NSC letter 2/10/99  
WT 5/99*

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~ - XGDS

MINUTES  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Monday, December 22, 1975  
TIME: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Cabinet Room, The White House  
SUBJECT: SALT (and Angola)

Principals

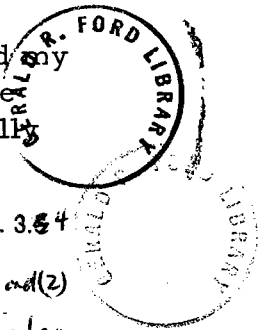
The President  
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger  
Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General George S. Brown  
Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Dr. Fred Ikle  
Director of Central Intelligence William Colby  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft

Other Attendees

White House: Mr. Richard Cheney, Assistant to the President  
Mr. William G. Hyland, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
State: Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt  
Defense: Deputy Secretary William Clements  
CIA: Mr. Carl Duckett  
NSC Staff: Colonel Richard T. Boverie

President Ford: Before we get into the basic part of the meeting, I want to take a minute to talk about Angola. The vote in the Senate on Angola was, to say the least, mildly deplorable. I cannot believe it represents a good policy for the U. S. and it is not fundamentally the way the American people think.

I made a short but tough statement on television, and I reiterated my position in an informal press conference Saturday. I find this the right thing for the U. S. to do. We should spend every dime legally



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that we decided upon. We should spend every nickel and do everything we can. Hopefully -- and Secretary Kissinger recommended this option -- it will lead to some kind of negotiated settlement.

If we become chicken because of the Senate vote, prospects will be bad. Every department should spend all it can legally -- do all we can in that area.

Director Colby: .....

President Ford: .....

Brent Scowcroft: .....

Secretary Kissinger: If we keep going and the Soviets do not think there is a terminal date on our efforts and we threaten them with the loss of detente, we can have an effect.

Director Colby: There has been some fluttering among the Soviets. They have some trouble in their Foreign Ministry.  
[Laughter]

President Ford: Let's exploit this.

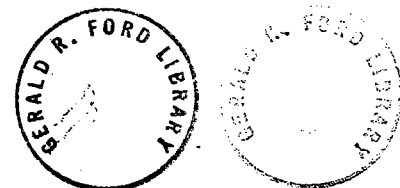
Secretary Kissinger: Who is their top Pentagon official? [Laughter]

President Ford: Let's explore the issues (SALT). We want to have a position for Henry to take to Moscow in January. The Verification Panel paper gives us some alternatives to look at.

Secretary Kissinger: Bill [Colby], do you have a briefing for us?

Director Colby: Yes. I will start. (Note: The charts used in the briefing are attached at Tab A.)

As you know, Mr. President, the Intelligence Community has recently completed a new estimate on Soviet Forces for Intercontinental Conflict through the Mid-1980s. I would like to emphasize some of the key conclusions of that estimate -- particularly as they relate to a prospective SALT TWO agreement.





First of all, I would remind you that the Estimate concluded that, in regard to strategic offensive forces, the Soviets are continuing their broad program of major improvements.

-- The trends are about as we had forecast in last year's Estimate, but the diversity of the ballistic missile submarine program and the potential hard-target capabilities of the new Soviet ICBM systems are somewhat greater than we anticipated.

-- This chart shows our projections of the combined size of Soviet ICBM, SLBM, and heavy bomber forces in 1980 and 1985 under different assumptions. It compares our 'Best Estimate' of total delivery vehicles and MIRVed missile launchers under the Vladivostok limits with alternative forces the Soviets might build in the absence of such limits.

-- The chart illustrates some potential benefits to the U.S. of the ceilings agreed at Vladivostok:

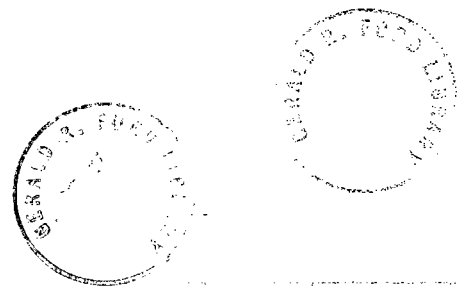
- a small reduction in Soviet forces to get down to the 2,400 ceiling;
- limitation of the Soviet buildup in both total vehicles and MIRVed launchers which would likely occur without SALT TWO.

Secretary Kissinger: You show a substantial reduction in MIRVs -- 400 MIRV vehicles, which is about 2,000 - 3,000 fewer warheads.

Director Colby: The Soviet forces projected on this chart do not include the Backfire bomber -- which, we believe, could be used for strategic attack on the United States.

-- As this map shows, if staged from Arctic bases, the Backfire -- with one aerial refueling -- could reach part of the continental United States on a two-way mission.

-- Were the Backfire to fly on to Cuba, it could reach all of the United States without staging or refueling.



-- Despite these capabilities, however, we believe it is likely that Backfires will be used for missions in Europe and Asia, and for naval missions over the open seas. With the exception of DIA, the Army, and the Air Force, we think it is correspondingly unlikely that Backfires will be specifically assigned to intercontinental missions.

Secretary Kissinger (to General Brown): .....

General Brown: .....

President Ford: .....

General Brown: .....

Director Colby: .....

General Brown: .....

but not now.

President Ford: .....

Director Colby: .....

Secretary Kissinger: .....

Mr. Duckett: .....

General Brown: .....

Director Colby: This board shows our best estimate of Backfire production and deployment. It assumes that the Soviets continue to produce Backfire at a single facility, with somewhat increased production rates. On this assumption, we would expect some 450 to be in operational service by 1985, with total production of some 550 aircraft.

President Ford: What is "LRA"?



Director Colby: Long-range air force -- their SAC.

President Ford: What is "SNA"?

Director Colby: Soviet naval aviation.

Secretary Kissinger: All peripheral missions are conducted by the LRA. This is not like SAC. Maybe the LRA has no strategic mission.

Director Colby: Basically they use their missiles for the strategic mission.

General Brown: No one makes the case that their aircraft are assigned missions against the U.S. They are designed and intended for peripheral attack. The only question is their range; they have the capability to attack the U.S.

Director Colby: I found it interesting to learn that our B-52s are planned for one-way missions.

Mr. Duckett: The Badger is the largest weapon program ever undertaken by the Soviets. It is part of the LRA.

President Ford: What is its range?

Mr. Duckett: It has a 1500 nm radius. It is for use against Europe and China.

Director Colby: Cruise missiles were also excluded from the force projections I just showed. There is no firm evidence that the Soviets are developing long-range strategic cruise missiles.

-- They have the design and development experience to do so, however, and could begin by modifying present air and sea-launched cruise missile systems to give them longer ranges and increased accuracy. Such modifications could be ready for deployment a year or two after flight testing began.

-- By about 1980 the Soviets could have a new generation of large, long-range cruise missiles based on current technology.

-- Small, highly accurate strategic cruise missiles, for either air or sea launching would require technology that we do not believe the Soviets could attain until the 1980s.

The U.S. is about five years ahead of the Soviets in cruise missiles.



Secretary Clements: I think we are more like 8 - 10 years ahead.

General Brown: Right. We have had the Hound Dog in the inventory a long time.

Director Colby: These next boards, reproduced from the Estimate, illustrate that Soviet offensive strategic capabilities will grow significantly between now and 1985.

-- The first chart shows that Soviet offensive forces will exceed those programmed by the U.S. in numbers of missile RVs. The second chart indicates considerable gain relative to U.S. forces even when our bombers are added to the equation, though the U.S. remains ahead in all but the most extreme alternative.

-- SALT TWO limits will not prevent these trends. In our best SALT-limited estimate, for example, we expect Soviet missile RVs to exceed those of the U.S. by the early 1980s.

-- You will note, however, that on both figures our SALT-limited estimates are considerably below the more extreme Soviet growth that would be possible if there were no SALT TWO.

There is also the question of the effectiveness of the Soviet strategic forces against hardened targets in the U.S. Soviet progress in this area will depend on the quality of their missiles, and will be largely independent of SALT TWO.

-- The figure on the left of this chart shows our estimate of the number of U.S. silos that would survive hypothetical attacks by the various alternative Soviet ICBM forces we have projected. Our best estimate of Soviet offensive force developments over the next ten years, even under SALT TWO limitations, is that Soviet ICBM forces will probably pose a major threat to U.S. Minuteman silos in the early 1980s, assuming that the Soviets can perfect techniques for precisely timed two-RV attacks on a single target. Such calculations are affected more by our large range of uncertainty about the accuracies and yields of Soviet ICBMs than they are by the size of the alternative forces. The figure on the right of the board depicts the effect of these qualitative uncertainties. The



black line represents calculations using our best estimates of accuracy and yield, whereas the blue area shows the possible spread of uncertainty.

-- This next chart shows (on the left) our estimate of the number of U.S. warheads -- both ICBMs and SLBMs -- that would survive a hypothetical Soviet surprise attack on our silos, and (on the right) the number of Soviet warheads that would be left over for other uses after such an attack.

Secretary Kissinger: You must be thinking of defecting. The CIA knows how to do this. [Laughter]

Director Colby: The figure on the right shows the quality.

Secretary Kissinger: What accuracy are you assuming?

Mr. Duckett: The accuracy is from .25 nm to .15 nm.

Secretary Kissinger: Under SALT conditions?

Mr. Duckett: Yes.

Director Colby: That is the high figure -- the most they could do under SALT.

Mr. Duckett: The Soviets have large warheads, and therefore they have less uncertainty resulting from accuracy. Accuracy is more important for us.

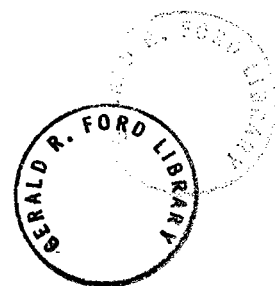
Secretary Kissinger: How many Americans would they kill if they just attack Minuteman?

General Brown: That would be a tough attack on the U.S. if they tried to dig out Minuteman. It would be dirty.

Mr. Duckett: The winds favor the Soviets. The winds in the U.S. would take the fallout to the population.

Secretary Kissinger: How many would they kill?

Director Colby: We don't know.



General Brown: We are looking at this now in a red-on-blue war game based upon discussions at the SIOP briefing on Saturday. This should be interesting and you may wish to see the results, Mr. President.

President Ford: I would like to see what you come up with.

Secretary Kissinger: Your [CIA] figures are based on no launch-on-warning by the U.S. Most of our SLBMs and bombers would survive, plus any missiles launched on warning. Brezhnev must keep that in mind. This would be the case, unless U.S. forces ride out the attack. If he is wrong, they would be in trouble. In any event, we would have 150 Minuteman missiles, which is not a negligible force. He would be foolhardy in the extreme.

General Brown: And we would have bombers that survive. General Dougherty can put bombers on airborne alert if he thinks they might be threatened. They are secure and can be used.

Secretary Kissinger: When people speak of the vulnerability of Minuteman, they are speaking of a worst-case situation for us. They do not take into account our SLBMs and bombers. The Soviets must ask themselves where they would be if they do all these things.

General Brown: These sorts of things give us confidence that we have a deterrent force today.

Director Colby: The figures show that in all cases the Soviet residual force will grow and will come to exceed that of the U.S.; but the number of surviving U.S. RVs -- largely on SLBMs at sea -- will remain quite large, that is, some 3 - 4,000 weapons not counting bomber weapons; and importantly, the right-hand figure shows that the more extreme possible Soviet advantage would be held in check by SALT TWO limitations.

President Ford: The right side is the residual Soviet missile capability.

Secretary Kissinger: The chart does not count our forward-based systems. If they hit our FBS first, it would provide adequate warning to launch Minuteman. If they attack Minuteman first, then some of our FBS would survive.



Dr. Ikle: A launch-on-warning posture could be an accident-prone posture and be more dangerous.

Secretary Kissinger: There should be no public statements saying we should have no launch-on-warning plans. We can fix our command and control systems to guard against launch-on-warning if we like, but there should be no public statements to this effect.

General Brown: We have had a policy for years of giving them [the Soviets] no assurances on this.

Secretary Kissinger: We should take no pain to give the Soviets an impression that we have a launch-on-warning policy.

Brent Scowcroft: It is not to our disadvantage if we appear irrational to the Soviets in this regard.

Director Colby: It could be a problem.

Secretary Kissinger: There are two factors to be considered. First, we would never launch without Presidential authority; we can fix our command and control systems for this. Second, the Soviets must never be able to calculate that you plan to rule out such an attack.

Secretary Rumsfeld: That ambiguity must never be eliminated.

Secretary Kissinger: There would be 80 million Soviet casualties if they attack Minuteman. Therefore, our submarines are a deterrent.

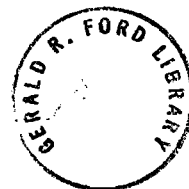
Mr. Duckett: The flat part of the curve (on the projected number of surviving U. S. warheads) does not say "we don't need SALT." The chart is insensitive in this area.

Secretary Kissinger: There is no strategic need for extra surviving warheads, but there is a perceived need--a political benefit.

Director Colby: There is a perceived need. We have 4,000 left on our side, but 600 - 800 can kill their population. Therefore, 3,000 - 4,000 can certainly destroy their population.

Mr. Duckett: The perception is important.

Director Colby: In assessing Soviet strategic capabilities over the next ten years, we have reexamined their very vigorous research



and development programs. We have paid particular attention to prospects for major advances in strategic defense, such as lasers and submarine detection, that might seriously erode U.S. deterrent capabilities.

In general, we concluded that the chances are small that the Soviets can sharply alter the strategic balance through technological advance in the next ten years, although by 1985 the Soviets will probably have made the task of penetrating their air defenses by bombers much more difficult than it is today.

President Ford: You are discounting their lasers as a serious threat?

Director Colby: The chances are small that they would alter the strategic balance.

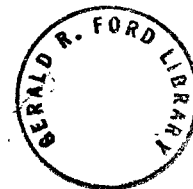
To sum up, Mr. President, the most important judgments in this year's Estimate are:

During the next ten years, the Soviets almost certainly will not have a first-strike capability to prevent devastating retaliation by the United States.

Short of this, however, Soviet strategic programs present what we believe are real and more proximate dangers to the United States -- with or without a SALT TWO agreement. We think there will probably be a continuation of rough strategic equality between the U.S. and USSR, but in the qualitative competition the U.S. technological lead will come under increasing challenge.

Assuming that the judgments of the Estimate are reasonably correct, I believe that foreseeable Soviet strategic forces would not eliminate the USSR's vulnerability to retaliation. Consequently, a crisis resolution probably would not rest on the strategic weapons balance, but rather would depend on other factors, such as the comparative strengths and dispositions of U.S. and Soviet conventional forces. It is relevant in this connection to note the steady increases occurring in Warsaw Pact forces opposite NATO, and in the Soviet Navy.

Let me now turn to the future of Soviet politics, which could affect the Soviet strategic posture fully as much as force projections or progress in R&D. These future developments are best looked at in three stages:





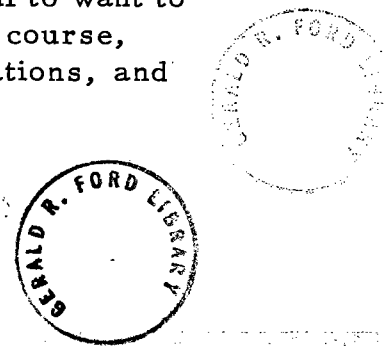
-- At the present, in the two months before the Party Congress, Brezhnev still is the dominant Soviet leader. His authority seems to be in a slow decline, along with his physical vigor. He is still interested in a SALT agreement, but is clearly prepared to go into the Congress without one if necessary. He doubtless recognizes that both sides have to change their existing formal positions to reach a deal, and he has some room for maneuver -- though not, we believe, to the extent of agreeing to include Backfire in a 2,400 aggregate.

-- In the months after the Congress, we will probably have roughly the same Soviet leadership, and no major change in SALT policy. But the gradual erosion of Brezhnev's position will continue, as his colleagues begin to cast their minds forward to the post-Brezhnev period. The further this process goes, the more the individual Politburo members will be inclined to avoid risky decisions that might lay them open to attack at a later, more intense phase of the succession competition.

- More important in this period, however, will be Soviet concern about the uncertainties of the U.S. political process. They will be cautious about such hazards as negotiating during an election year, when the whole Soviet - American relations could be pushed into the forefront of partisan debate. We do not believe they will out-and-out refuse to continue discussions, but they seem prepared to wait until 1977 if necessary.

-- In the third phase, over the next several years, the Politburo will get deeply into what we expect to be a prolonged succession process. Real factional struggles might develop, with none of the aspirants for power wanting to antagonize the military. Thus the preferences of the marshals will probably be given greater weight in strategic and arms control matters.

Finally, what can we say about the prospects for Soviet-U.S. relations if there is no SALT TWO? We believe Moscow sees this as primarily up to the Americans. The Soviets find detente too useful to want to repudiate it, and would hope to continue on a pragmatic course, governed by the opportunities and risks of specific situations, and still call it detente.



The chief consequences for Soviet foreign policy, therefore, of no SALT agreement would lie more in the area of underlying attitudes than in specific behavior on the international scene. Soviet uncertainty about the future strategic balance would encourage darker interpretations of U.S. intentions.

If the strategic dialogue ended, the beginnings of confidence-building would be interrupted. In the absence of treaty limitations, the Soviet military would be relieved of the healthy necessity to dismantle older systems, and to divulge strategic facts to their chief opponents. All this would clearly be damaging to the prospects for positive long-run change in the Soviet system.

These effects would be magnified if the U.S. reaction to a SALT failure was to discredit detente altogether from the Western side.

President Ford: Thank you, Bill. Any comments?

Secretary Kissinger: I would like to comment. Looking back at the seven years I have been here, we have never had to manage a crisis under the current difficult conditions. In 1973, Admiral Zumwalt did not tell us our Navy was vulnerable. We conducted ourselves on the basis of naval superiority. The Soviets had no MIRVs at all -- only the single warhead SS-11 and SS-9. In one crisis, we had a 10-1 warhead superiority on the U.S. side -- and the Soviets caved. In 1962, we had a 100-1 advantage. Never were the Soviets conscious of parity. In every confrontation under circumstances of U.S. superiority, the Soviets caved inordinately rapidly.

We will not be in that position in the future, and we will have a crisis management problem. Therefore we have to look at the Soviet threat and capability over the next ten years. SALT may give us no strategic benefits, but it would give us political benefits.

Our most glaring deficiency will be in dealing with regional conflicts. No President has had to manage a crisis in such a situation where we were not overwhelmingly superior in strategic forces. During the Berlin crisis, the Soviets had no strategic capability. In 1962, they had 70 long-range missiles which took seven hours to fuel.

The situation is changed, and this will present a real strategic problem, not only in a crisis, but in the way the Soviets throw their weight around. This is one reason why Angola is so important; we don't want to whet the Soviet appetite.



Director Colby: The Soviets may send a guided missile destroyer to Angola.

President Ford: Are we sending any ships?

General Brown: None.

President Ford: Should we?

General Brown: Not now, based on projected military scenarios. We must also think about the will of Congress.

President Ford: That doesn't necessarily follow. They were focusing on only one aspect. There was no indication we cannot deploy naval vessels in the Atlantic which would affect Soviet perceptions. The vote would not constrain that.

Secretary Rumsfeld: There is no military basis for deploying ships.

President Ford: I agree, but perceptions are sometimes more important.

General Brown: One beauty of naval forces is that they can signal our intent.

Secretary Kissinger: Our ships would not have to be right off Angola. They could be 700 miles away and the Soviets would still see them.

Director Colby: .....

General Brown: We have ships in the Mediterranean but none in the South Atlantic.

Mr. Hyland: The Soviet ships won't arrive until the sixth, probably, if they go to Luanda.

President Ford: Assume the worst if they go directly.

General Brown: If we send a ship, people will point to this and recall the Gulf of Tonkin affair which led to the Senate resolution to deploy forces. Some will argue that we cannot get so involved. There is no reason militarily for us to deploy ships.



Director Colby: .....

Secretary Kissinger: They can't do anything with a guided missile ship. However, our concern is that if the Soviets make substantial military efforts and taste a local advantage, it would be a dangerous situation. They must have had internal debate. This is an argument for following them and observing them. There is no military need, but there is a psychological benefit. We can send them a message by doing this. They will think about this and say: "Why are we there?" This is an argument for observing them within range of their communications.

Secretary Rumsfeld: The reason I said what I said before was that the point was not a military question. You [the President] were asking General Brown about the matter and I was pointing out it was not a military recommendation.

Secretary Kissinger: You are making me the villain. [Laughter]

Brent Scowcroft: If we send a ship in, we could announce it and avoid the Tonkin syndrome.

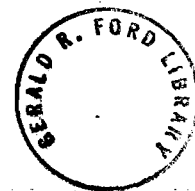
Secretary Kissinger: It would be best to say nothing. This would have the most effect. In the Jordanian crisis, we shut off all communications. We shut down the State Department -- answered no questions. We put our forces into the Mediterranean, and the Soviets collapsed.

President Ford: This is similar to Cuba.

Secretary Kissinger: This was similar to Cienfuegos.

We could move into the South Atlantic on a routine mission. We could say we are watching the Soviets, which is better than saying we are watching Angola. If asked, we could say our ships are on routine patrol.

President Ford: Let's look into this, but I do not want to make a decision this morning.



Secretary Kissinger: The best way is this. We will call in Dobrynin tomorrow and tell him that if he thinks he can keep detente on track, he is crazy. The more signals back to Moscow, the better.

President Ford: Let's don't ignore this. Let's think about it.

Secretary Kissinger: They have a game going in Angola. But it is not the ultimate test yet. They might want it if they can pick it up at a low price. Even if they don't pick it up, they will want to run around Africa and Europe and say: "The Americans can't cut the mustard."

Director Colby: Vietnam is in the back of the thought process of the Soviets.

Secretary Clements: Cuban participation is highly vulnerable for the Soviets and Cuba. This is a plus for our public side. You [the President] should keep this in mind.

President Ford: I mentioned the combat forces in my press conference Saturday. I did not neglect this.

Secretary Kissinger: The Soviets will get many messages. We have notes all over Africa. All our protests will be rejected, but they will go to Moscow.

Secretary Clements: We could watch the ships -- monitor the Cubans.

Secretary Kissinger: They are going by air. But we can monitor the Soviets. We should have an estimate from DOD and the Chiefs. We should not be hysterical, but it should be geared to the Soviets so that they would pick up our signals.

Now let's move into the SALT discussion.

Mr. President, we are not here to ask you for a decision. We simply want to put the issues before you to give you a chance to think about them when you are in Vail. When you come back, we will have a more detailed discussion of the issues.

At Vladivostok, we agreed on the total number of vehicles and MIRVs. We said that missiles with greater than 600 km range on bombers would be counted. There is an ambiguity here as to whether these



include cruise missiles or only ballistic missiles. We said they were ballistic missiles; the Soviets said that all air-launched cruise missiles on heavy bombers should be counted. Nothing was said about SLCMs -- submarine-launched or ship-launched.

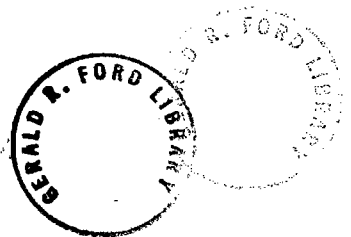
The Soviets would perceive it as a concession on their part if we end up counting anything less than all the cruise missiles. Nothing was said at Vladivostok about the Backfire. This issue emerged afterwards.

Therefore, we have two hang-ups: one the Backfire and the other the cruise missile situation. Our position had been that we should count the Backfire. Their position has been that we should count cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 km on heavy bombers and ban all other cruise missiles. Gromyko told me that SLCMs with a range greater than 600 km were not negotiable.

Since Vladivostok, it is fair to say that the Soviets have made one major concession: that is, they are using our counting rules for MIRVs. The practical effect of this is to limit them to less than 1300 MIRVs unless they MIRV all SS-18s. So far, however, all of their SS-18s have only single warheads. They apparently are planning no more than 180 SS-18s with MIRVs. This would give them a total of 1,180 MIRV launchers rather than 1,316. At 12 RVs each, this gives us around 2,200 warheads free. However, they have linked the MIRV counting rule to the cruise missile issue.

This leaves us now with the following issues: First, how do we deal with the Backfire in light of the forward based system problem and the fact that this is a big issue in the Soviet mind? Second, what do we do about cruise missiles with greater than 600 km range on heavy bombers? Third, how do we deal with SLCMs with greater than 600 km range on submarines or ships? And fourth, what do we do about land-based cruise missiles? The Soviets want to permit land-based cruise missiles up to a 5,500 km range. This is hard to understand; we could cover the Soviet Union with deployments in Europe. This would also be a disadvantage since the Soviets could use their land-based cruise missile program to test all conceivable modes. Our view is that we should limit land-based cruise missiles to a 2,500 km range.

Six options were presented to the Verification Panel for consideration. Don and I have narrowed these to three for purposes of simplification.



The first option is one which would be preferred by the Joint Chiefs. It would defer any limitation on Backfire and cruise missiles at this time, but these would be taken up in the next round of SALT talks in 1977. The Chiefs would agree to a time limit on the negotiations -- for example, two years -- to settle the Backfire and cruise missile issues.

This option would consolidate the gains made at Vladivostok which would go into effect in October 1977. The follow-on agreement would take effect in 1979 or 1980.

An advantage of this option is that it would use cruise missiles to offset Backfire; therefore, both would run free.

I have said I have doubts about the negotiability of this option. First, the Soviets have rejected counting Backfire in SALT as a matter of principle. The Soviets would also feel that it would be bad for them to let cruise missiles run free. They would feel they would be losing in the process. They think our Backfire position is a trick anyway.

From the domestic point of view, I wonder whether there is a danger in this option because all arms controllers will scream "fraud." They will say this will leave more cruise missiles uncontrolled than ballistic missiles controlled. Therefore, the liberal Democrats will be against us on our cruise missile programs and our request for funds for cruise missiles.

I saw Muskie at the football game yesterday and Harriman at dinner last night. They told me, "We will help you by cutting off funds for the cruise missile."

We will be driven by our own debate to limiting cruise missiles to the Backfire numbers. Also, we will have a massive FBS problem.

President Ford: We would be giving up what we gained in Vladivostok.

Secretary Kissinger: Once we accept a unilateral construction, even if the Soviets break it, we are going to have hellish ability to go ahead. I cannot believe the Soviets will give us both the MIRV counting rule, plus a throw weight limitation on the SS-19, plus cruise missiles.

We could only go back to a crude version of Vladivostok, if at all.



However, the option does have these advantages. It is the least contentious option; it would consolidate the Vladivostok gains; and it would maintain momentum in SALT.

Secretary Rumsfeld: There is an opposite argument to the one Henry made. In the event we agree on this option, it may improve the position of the cruise missile in Congress. We would have an argument similar to the one for MBFR troop levels in Europe -- the last thing we want to do is reduce unilaterally. Therefore, this may actually decrease Congressional leverage on the cruise missile.

Secretary Clements: I want to endorse what Don has said. I talked to McIntyre about this and Don is right. They've gone along with us on cruise missiles because it is part of our SALT negotiations. They don't want us to constrain ourselves.

President Ford: In the House they knocked out the Air Force cruise missile, but kept the SLCM.

Secretary Clements: Well, the Congress did this, but not to help our negotiations. The Air Force cruise missile is built by Boeing, but the SLCM is built by LTV. Only one person, George Mahon, wanted to eliminate the Air Force cruise missile, and he did this, in my view, to help LTV and to eliminate the Air Force competition. However, in conference, both programs were put back in. Mahon has been the only one who had been fighting the Air Force program.

President Ford: He was taking care of Dallas.

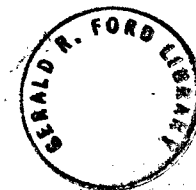
Secretary Clements: And screwing Boeing.

Secretary Kissinger: In my opinion, there is only one chance in 20 that the Soviets would accept this option. They will not accept straight deferral, in my judgment.

Secretary Rumsfeld: The test is to find some language that does not prejudice the matter at all, which could be the Soviet hang-up. We ought to be able to find a way to find the right kind of language.

President Ford: Doesn't deferral give them a free hand to let them go ahead with their cruise missile program?

Secretary Rumsfeld: There is no question about it. However, this option is not really the preferred option. It is useful only in that it





would avoid not having any SALT agreement at all. What it does is allow us to state that we have two problem areas which we have not yet resolved.

President Ford: I can see it from our point of view, but we must face the reality of whether they would do it.

Director Colby: The Soviets see the cruise missile as an enormous problem to them. They have an enormous investment in air defenses and they see the cruise missile as our way to get around their air defenses.

Secretary Clements: They will have an interest in cruise missile programs but it will not be the same interest as ours. They do not have the capability of air-launching cruise missiles.

Secretary Kissinger: They won't see them coming.

Director Colby: We have no air defenses on our side. The Soviets have no urgent reason to develop air-launched cruise missiles.

Mr. Duckett: Our last photography shows that the Soviets have a new cruise missile at the test site. We have not determined its characteristics yet.

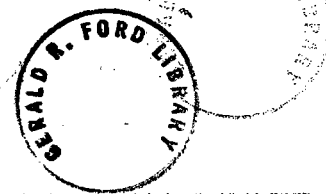
Secretary Kissinger: They have no requirement for a cruise missile. Therefore, we can constrain their optimum size, keeping good ones for us and bad for them. We can make great strides.

Secretary Rumsfeld: This is why we have some leverage with cruise missiles.

Secretary Kissinger: Why must they answer cruise missiles with cruise missiles? Maybe they would answer our cruise missile programs with ballistic missiles.

President Ford: Because they may want to take advantage of their program.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's discuss another option. We could count Backfire in the 2400 aggregate. We could count, within the 1320 MIRV limit, those heavy bombers with cruise missiles of greater than 600 km range. We could ban SLCMs above 600 km on submarines. SLCMs with a 2500 km range or 2000 km range on surface ships would run free.



This would involve two significant concessions: we would ban long-range cruise missiles on submarines and we would count heavy bombers with ALCMs as MIRVs.

General Brown: If we want all our bombers to carry ALCMs, we would have to knock off that many MIRVed missiles.

President Ford: Even if we pulled B-52s out of mothballs, we would not get up to the 2400 level.

Brent Scowcroft: The applicable ceiling here is the 1320 MIRV limit.

Secretary Kissinger: This is a most creative approach. It will interest the Soviets. However, its chief difficulty is whether the Soviets would count Backfire. I do not believe they will count the Backfire. If they have to count 400 Backfire, they will have to dismantle some ICBMs. It will also cause an FBS problem and a domestic political problem for the Soviets.

President Ford: If the Backfire is counted as a strategic weapon, and if they had developed a cruise missile they could put ALCMs on the Backfire.

Secretary Kissinger: Then it would count against the MIRV ceiling. Without an ALCM, the Backfire would be counted in the 2400 level alone. Or, if it carries an ALCM, it would count both against the 2400 level and the 1320 ceiling.

General Brown: I think there was only one reason why they would go to an ALCM for the Backfire. If they get the accuracy with their ALCM, it is better than a gravity bomb.

Director Colby: They could use a shorter range ALCM.

General Brown: It goes back to the fact that we don't have any air defenses to speak of.

Secretary Kissinger: This is worse than the October proposal which they have already rejected. In this option, we would be letting SLCMs go free and counting their Backfire. This is harder than the October proposal where SLCMs and Backfires were outside the basic accords in some kind of grey area. The October proposal was closer to deferral. Their view of this option would be that they would be losing a handle on SLCMs while having to count Backfire.



Mr. President, we are not asking for a decision at this time. We just want to present this for your consideration. The Verification Panel must do more work before we could confidently sell this in Moscow.

Secretary Rumsfeld: One advantage of this option is that the Soviets are already counting a heavy bomber, the Bison. From a domestic standpoint, this has assisted somewhat.

A second point is that we must consider the world perception, as Secretary Kissinger has mentioned. If the Backfire is not counted, we must consider the perception here, in Europe, and elsewhere. Statistically, the Backfire has a substantial capability.

The point I am making is that while we might lose at negotiability, it would help us in selling it here and elsewhere. Whatever we come up with must lend itself to public discussion.

Secretary Kissinger: I am arguing not just for negotiability. What we have must be both negotiable and equitable from a strategic viewpoint.

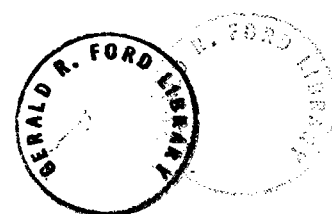
Director Colby: Could we reduce the land-based cruise missile range to 2500 km as a counter to SLCMs? [No answer.]

Secretary Kissinger: If these options are not saleable and acceptable, then we have two issues: Negotiating tactics, and a decision on where we go.

With respect to negotiating tactics, how do we present an option if there is a 90 percent chance that it will be rejected? Also, what can we table that will have a chance of acceptance?

There are two schools of thought on negotiating tactics. One is that we should take a tough stance. The other is that we should make "preemptive concessions," as Don's predecessor phrased it. My view is that this is the better negotiating tactic. We go ahead with some concessions but we then stick hard on what we do have. The other tactics may look tough, but they lose credibility. I think we should get to our concession point fast, but then don't yield. Of course, we must build some air into our proposal for retreat purposes.

With the Chinese, we give them our best judgment and if they agree, they say "ok." However, with the Soviets, if we hand their own proposal to them, they must argue about it for nights and then take it to the Politburo.



Let's now look at the third option category. Basically, this looks for a way of not counting the Backfire, plus it includes elements of the second option counting heavy bombers with ALCMs as MIRVs.

There is a shopping list of elements in these packages.

To hang the Backfire on Soviet assurances would be dangerous. Assurances are inherently soft. For example, if the Soviets staged their bombers through Arctic bases in a crisis, would this result in an abrogation of SALT?

What else could we do with the Backfire? There are several possibilities.

First, we need not offer the Soviets the whole SLCM package. We could go back to something like the October proposal. We could say that all cruise missiles, with the exception of ship-launched cruise missiles, would be limited. We could use the ship-launched SLCM limit as an offset to the Backfire. If they increase their Backfire deployments above a certain number, then our other cruise missile limitations would be off.

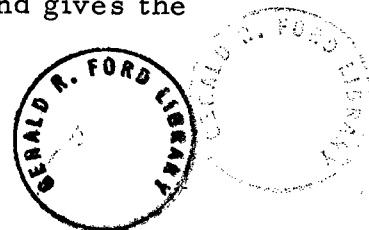
As Fred [Ikle] has suggested, we can put all offset systems into a separate Protocol addressing hybrid systems -- the grey area. We could balance Backfire against the ship-launched SLCMs up to 1980 or 1981 in this Protocol.

Alternatively, we could ask the Soviets to agree to reducing the aggregate to 2300, or even 2200. However, I do not think it would be possible to get the Soviets to agree to a 2200 level. The 2300 level would be a strain on the Soviets, but not on us. This would have the effect of counting 100 Backfires.

No one recommends letting the Backfire run free on assurances alone. Therefore, this would entail having some kind of trade-off such as reducing the total aggregate level, or having a separate Protocol.

Dr. Ikle: The theater balance is of concern to the Soviets. If we use a separate Protocol, it may be more negotiable since no Backfires would be in SALT. It would also limit the upgrading of cruise missiles.

Secretary Kissinger: This would be a compromise. We could have a mixed option where some cruise missiles run free against their Backfire. This hopefully avoids the FBS problem and gives the



Soviets a way out. However, we wouldn't want an agreement on a mixed option that takes Backfire out of the count that is not saleable or in the strategic interests of the United States. The Chiefs and others are now working on developing some kind of updated mixed package.

Director Colby: The Soviets will do nothing on Backfire without raising the FBS issue.

General Brown: If they raise the FBS issue, it automatically brings the Backfire into the picture.

Secretary Kissinger: We can consider various mixed packages. We can have a Protocol as Fred [Ikle] has suggested. We can have a unilateral U. S. statement that says, "When the Soviets produce Backfire above a certain number, the deployment restraints on SLCMs are off."

We can have a mixed package where the Soviets agree to reducing to the 2300 aggregate level and we set off the SLCMs versus Backfire; we can sell this as reducing the Backfire.

President Ford: The perception associated with reducing the aggregate from 2400 to 2300 would be very saleable.

Dr. Ikle: As long as it is not considered a substitute for follow-on reductions.

President Ford: I want to compliment you all for taking a fresh look and expanding the alternatives. There is some flexibility here. Between now and the first week in January, I would like you to look at something beyond the first two options and give me the prospects. Perhaps we can come up with something which is in the best interests of the United States and is saleable.

In the next two weeks, I would like you to finely tune your options and give Henry an option in addition to the first two. Maybe this won't work, but at least we will have made our best possible effort.

Mr. Duckett: Mr. President, I'd like to take one minute on a compliance issue.

Secretary Rumsfeld: In developing a mixed package, we must consider the acceptability in a strategic sense, its negotiability, and its saleability at home. For any mixed package, we must ask also about



its simplicity. We must ask whether it can be explained sensibly.

Dr. Ikle: The verification problem of cruise missiles is hard to explain. I believe we will be able to explain it only if we have a separate Protocol. Otherwise, the verification problem is almost impossible to explain for cruise missiles.

Secretary Kissinger: We must recall the elements to consider. We have to consider the relationship of the FBS and Backfire issues. We must understand the degree to which cruise missiles running free offset Backfire. We must understand the degree to which not counting Backfire is offset, for example, by its inability to carry long-range cruise missiles.

Secretary Rumsfeld: We must also remember the importance of not using soft assurances.

Secretary Kissinger: Assurances are only frosting on the cake.

President Ford: The kind of trust that has been built negates the use of assurances. They won't be bought.

Mr. Duckett: .....  
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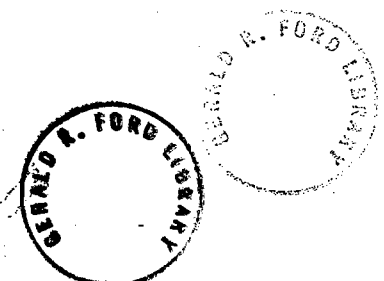
President Ford: .....  
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Director Colby: .....  
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Secretary Kissinger: This is a good example of the need to put this kind of information in a temporary hold status.

Director Colby: I agree.

President Ford: Thank you very much. Have a good holiday.



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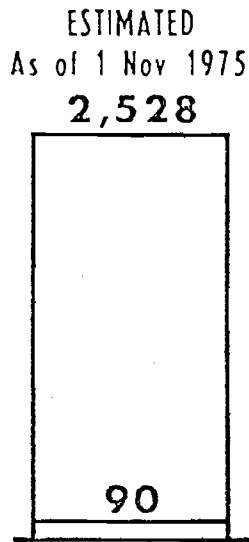
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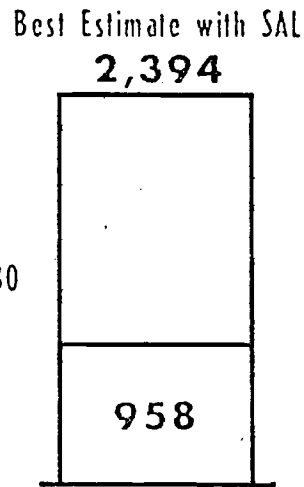


# Projected Soviet Force Levels Under Varying Assumptions (Total Delivery Vehicles)

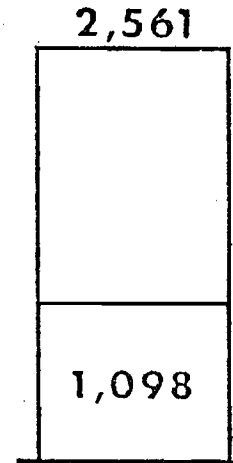
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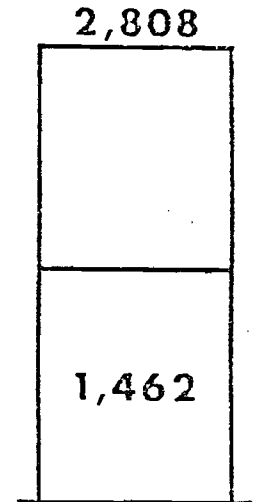
Projected for 1980



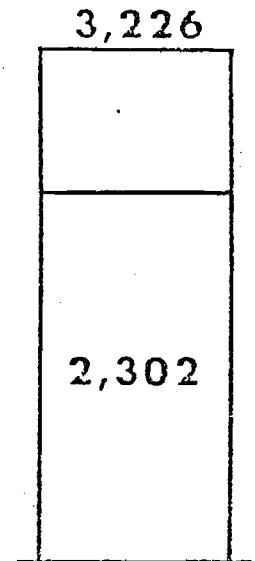
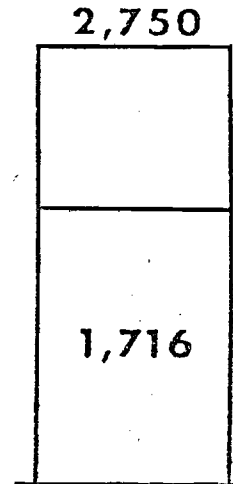
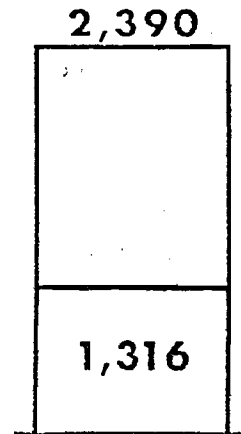
Moderate Estimate without SAL



High Estimate without SAL



Projected for 1985



MIRVed Delivery Vehicles

**Entire page redacted.**

**BACKFIRE PRODUCTION AND DEPLOYMENT**  
**NIE 11-3/8/75 FORCES 1 and 2**

	1975	1980	1985
<b>TOTAL PRODUCTION</b>	67	314	550
<b>LRA</b>	9	140	240
<b>SNA</b>	9	140	210
<b>OTHER</b> <b>(Training, Replacements, etc.)</b>	49	34	100

