

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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August 7, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Cyrus Vance *CV*  
Paul Warnke *PW*

SUBJECT: SALT Verification

As you know, verification is emerging as one of the key elements in the public Congressional debate on SALT. There is widespread concern among the general public that the emerging SALT agreement is unsound because the Soviets cannot be trusted to comply with its terms. This concern has been fanned by opponents of SALT who charge that the Soviets have cheated on SALT I and that the U.S. cannot adequately verify compliance with SALT II.

Government spokesmen are prohibited by current security regulations from stating explicitly that the U.S. conducts satellite reconnaissance, including photoreconnaissance, as part of the broad range of technology which is used from outer space to monitor SALT compliance. They are restricted to using the euphemism "National Technical Means" (NTM) when describing our monitoring capability. The fact that NTM includes satellite photography and other sensors is a notorious non-secret in the press and among the more sophisticated members of the foreign affairs community, but the term NTM is lost on most of the public. Moreover, the necessity to talk by indirection can give the public the impression that the Administration is being evasive and trying to cover up an inherently weak case for SALT.

Declassifying the specific fact that satellite reconnaissance is used to verify SALT would allow government spokesmen to make specific mention of this capability. This would help allay public concern that we are merely trusting the Soviets to live up to the

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Declassified/Released on *4/14/00*  
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by R. Soubers, National Security Council

*F88-1450*

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terms of SALT and would also strengthen the ability of our spokesmen to defend government statements concerning Soviet compliance with SALT I and the verifiability of SALT II.

We emphasize that we are recommending only that the government declassify "the fact of" satellite reconnaissance, including specifically photoreconnaissance, not its product, such as the photographs themselves or operational information.

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