

①
SECRET ATTACHMENT

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON

8620

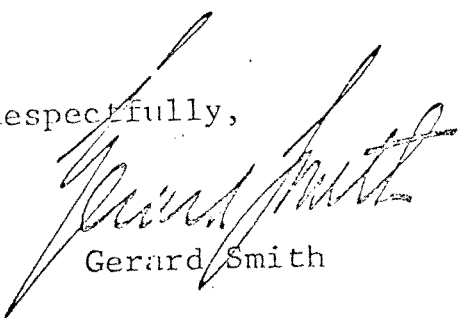
OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

March 23, 1970

Dear Mr. President:

I am not at this time sending copies to anybody of this letter. I would like, however, approval to send copies to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Attorney General, and the Director of the CIA.

Respectfully,


Gerard Smith

The President,
The White House.

SECRET ATTACHMENT

Declassified/Released on 2/28/00
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by R. Soubers, National Security Council
F92-176

⑥

UNCLASSIFIED

8620

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

March 23, 1970

Dear Mr. President:

As we approach the reopening of the SALT talks, I wish to submit for your consideration some views as to the stance the United States should take.

We have learned from some fourteen months of studying SALT problems that there are no clear cut answers to all the important issues. It seems to me that all decisions on these issues are close. There are risks attached to each of the various possible courses of action, as there are risks to continuing on our present course of independent strategic arms development and deployment. Even if the approach best calculated to advance the United States interest could be clearly identified, one cannot foresee clearly what arrangement might be negotiated with the Soviet Union, or on what conditions.

In approaching the next phase of SALT, a central question is whether to try for (1) a relatively simple quantitative arrangement freezing numbers of launchers for major systems, or (2) a comprehensive arrangement including a MIRV ban and perhaps other qualitative limitations.

I think the security interests of the United States would be better served by a more comprehensive agreement if the necessary verification arrangements can be

The President,
The White House.

UNCLASSIFIED

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification.

Declassified/Released on 2/28/80
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by R. Soubers, National Security Council
F92-176

9

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

-2-

negotiated. The current strategic balance, while in process of change, rests on high levels and a variety of strategic weapons on both sides. A limited agreement would not remove a number of the concerns which we now have about the sufficiency of our strategic forces in the years to come. It might also leave unchecked a costly, risky competition in areas not covered by the agreement. Unless we make comprehensive proposals, we will fail to test fully the depth and nature of Soviet interest in agreements to constrain the strategic arms competition.

If a MIRV ban and low or zero ABM levels can be negotiated with the conditions which have been worked out in the Verification Panel, and for a short term of perhaps five years, I think that United States security would be subject to no greater risks than obtain under the present uncontrolled situation. There would be risks in such a controlled environment, but I believe that they are calculable, insurable, relatively short term, and reasonable ones to run. My suggestion is in line with the recent recommendations to you of the General Advisory Committee chaired by John McCloy.

From an international as well as domestic political point of view, it strikes me that if a posture is adopted of not trying for controls over MIRVs or for ABM levels less than the full Safeguard program, there will be heavy psychological costs.

If SALT fails, Congressional support for strategic weapons programs in the future may depend in good part on the nature of United States SALT offers that the Soviet would not accept.

If you reach a similar conclusion as to how this nation's security interests might best be served, I believe from the negotiating point of view that it would be preferable for us to put forward proposals for comprehensive SALT arrangements at Vienna. This will help us to take control

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED
-3-

of the negotiating process. We would, of course, retain the option of agreeing to simpler quantitative arrangements if that proves to be all the Soviets are interested in or all they will agree to on our conditions.

We would of course make clear at the outset that any comprehensive agreement would have to

(1) Cover Soviet systems which we want brought under control as well as excluding Soviet proposals (such as a no-transfer agreement or unacceptable restrictions on operations of our strategic forces) which are contrary to our interests;

(2) Include collateral restraints to make major limitations effective and verifiable;

(3) Provide for a short duration (e.g., five years) which reflects the experimental nature of any agreement in such a sensitive and unprecedented arms control area and limits our commitment to a period of time tolerable even in the event of unexpected technological change or unsatisfactory operation of the agreement without explicit proof of Soviet violation.

If your decision is that the risks and uncertainties leave you unwilling initially to authorize us to put forward proposals for a comprehensive agreement, an alternative would be to propose a simple quantitative agreement, coupled with explicit statement of our readiness to explore actively more comprehensive quantitative and qualitative limitations on strategic arms -- if the Soviets are interested and if we can reach agreement as to scope and equitable balance of commitments, verification, and other provisions such as duration.

Such a posture would still enable us to probe Soviet interests and positions without commitment on our part, and would in my judgment be accepted by the majority of

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

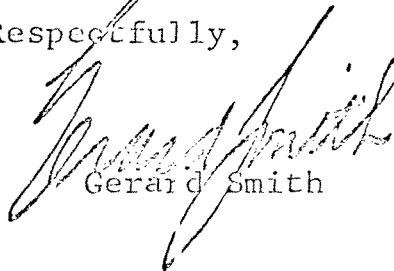
~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

-4-

Congressional and Allied opinion. If the Soviets indicated a positive attitude on such key issues as the collateral restraints we consider essential for verification of the MIRV test ban, or destruction of the major facilities associated with their Moscow ABM system, this might weigh importantly in your decision as to the risks and benefits of a broad strategic arms limitation. My concern is that, if we are not able to make specific proposals on key areas of limitation, such as MIRVs and ABMs, we may find it difficult to ascertain what conditions the Soviets might agree to.

On the question of a negotiating moratorium or some kind of temporary mutual restraint in strategic arms development and deployment, I recommend that our posture be that we recognize the possible value of such action, and would be prepared to consider it with regard to any equitable package of strategic systems on which the Soviets evidence a general interest in reaching agreements under conditions which would make them verifiable.

Respectfully,



Gerard Smith

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED