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February 16, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. FARLEY

From: S/P - Gerard C. Smith

Here are some thoughts for possible inclusion in a briefing memorandum for the Secretary's Thursday discussion with the President.

Apart from the question of the difficulty of withdrawing from a previous commitment, it seems to me that the Secretary should argue the merits of the cut-off proposal along the following lines:

Strategically, we understand that the US presently has more than enough fissionable material to accomplish SAC retaliatory missions.

We understand that the US has much larger amounts of fissionable material than the Soviet Union. This relative advantage will likely continue to obtain during any period required to negotiate and establish an effective control system. During any terminal period of permitted production, rates of production of U-235 in the US could be substantially increased.

Tactically, we presently have as a wasting asset an atomic weapons monopoly vs. the Chinese Communists. The military tell us that the planning for hostilities in the Far East assumes continuance of such a monopoly. This assumption will be borne out only if there is a production freeze accompanied by a prohibition of international transfer of nuclear material for weapons purposes. In the absence of such a freeze, it seems to me our entire strategy in the Far East will have to be changed at very large cost.

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In previous discussions of this cut-off problem, it seems to me that there has always been an unnecessary air of mystery, combined with a good deal of ignorance about production figures. I suggest that the Secretary have in mind in general terms present and projected levels of US production and US estimates of Soviet production. With this knowledge, I suspect the Secretary will be one of the best informed men in the discussion and, therefore, have a substantial advantage.

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