

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Chron 7144 32
Matlock

CONFIDENTIAL

September 24, 1984

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

RCM HAS SEEN

FROM: JACK F. MATLOCK *JFM*

SUBJECT: Evans and Novak Column Regarding September 18
NSC Session

In case you missed it, I'd like to call your attention to the Evans and Novak column, September 21 Washington Post, which contained a misleading account of the September 18, 1984 NSPG session.

If my understanding of the meeting is correct, the column is quite literally disinformation. Its content seems deliberately meant by the source to give the wrong impression of events at the NSPG. Whatever the source's motives, this "revelation" may create serious problems in our dealings with the Soviets.

Undoubtedly, the Soviets read the reports of "Washington insiders" with care. This one tends to reinforce suspicions they already have: 1) that the column is correct and the President is following a duplicitous policy, i.e., that the positive statements by the President are a cover for more devious things; or 2) that however well-intentioned the President may be, he is not willing or capable of controlling his Administration. (That is, if the President could control his staff, nothing like this would ever happen.)

This is not the first time that Evans and Novak have published misleading reports about what the President's "real policy" is. I am not sure what, if anything, can be done about it. I only want to point out that we need to be concerned not only with leaks of classified information, but also with distorted and misleading information fed to the press by officials with a personal ax to grind.

Attachments:

Tab I Washington Post clipping, Friday,
September 21, 1984.

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Declassify on: OADR

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BY EN DATE 11/27/07

Washington Post, Friday, September 21, 1984,
op-ed page.

Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

Will Gromyko Get a Lecture?

Presiding over an enlarged National Security Council session Tuesday, President Reagan laid down tough guidelines for next week's talk with Andrei Gromyko focusing not on arms control but on unacceptable Soviet conduct in all its manifestations, a decision certain to alarm the arms control bloc.

Reagan's guidelines move the United States away from the obsessive preoccupation with arms control that has motivated previous administrations. Arms control, the president made clear to his top policy aides, is not the centerpiece of American-Soviet relations. The United States, he said, must be more concerned about general Soviet misconduct—particularly intervention in Afghanistan and Central America—than about the troubled course of arms control.

Contributing to these Reagan guidelines on how to deal with Foreign Minister Gromyko's visit are new intelligence reports that have alarmed Reagan and his top advisers.

The lesson in the correct U.S. policy toward the Soviets that Reagan recited behind closed doors suggests a cool presidential approach to the Gromyko meeting not encumbered with the election-year peace imagery urged by some of his advisers.

For months, the president has been buffeted by conflicts between his own convictions and the pleadings of a few aides, notably deputy

chief of staff Michael Deaver. They want Reagan to enhance his peace image with offers to Moscow that would lead to quick resumption of arms control talks.

But Reagan was on a different tack in the 90-minute White House session last Tuesday. As described by one insider, he took a "simple and uncluttered" view of the disrupted talks: The Soviets walked out, not the United States; therefore it is up to the Soviets to return, not for the United States to beg for their return.

That seemed to doom proposals of State Department officials that the United States offer concessions to induce Moscow to return to arms control negotiations, possibly before the election. One proposal: that the United States agree to delay the crucial late-fall test of a new anti-satellite weapon. Although Secretary of State George Shultz did not formally broach that idea Tuesday, Reagan was prepared for it. "He would have said no," a key aide told us, not only on principle but because intelligence reports now moving onto his desk are asking hard questions about hostile Soviet acts at home and around the globe.

The most ominous of these reports from the CIA raises suspicion of an imminent Soviet move from Afghanistan into the northern tip of Pakistan. Moscow has repeatedly warned that it will not tolerate continued Pakistani aid for Afghan

freedom fighters in their struggle against the Soviet invasion. Reagan has been informed that a new buildup of Soviet arms and men in northern Afghanistan points to a spillover of the war into Pakistan itself. If that occurred before Nov. 6, Reagan's course would be excruciatingly difficult.

Another Soviet move now alarming the White House is the most intensive effort ever recorded to conceal tests of its new missiles. This deception and concealment have made it utterly impossible for the United States any longer to monitor Soviet weapons testing—a violation of the SALT II Treaty that Reagan first charged Moscow with almost a year ago.

Reagan may decide to let Shultz bring up encryption and other SALT violations during the secretary's Sept. 26 meeting with Gromyko. That was a detail he did not discuss with his top advisers on Tuesday. Indeed, Reagan discussed no details at all about how he plans to handle his meeting with Gromyko.

The disclosure that his first-ever session with a Soviet leader will center on the real world of America's problems with its adversary, not the narrow and often overdramatized issue of arms control, was comfort enough for his supporters. If he follows through as outlined on Tuesday, the Soviets will now have no trouble knowing exactly where they stand with Ronald Reagan.

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