

29 July 1982

SUBJECT: Rostow/Nitze Initiative on INF Talks

Professor Rostow and Mr. Nitze visited you on July 27, 1982, and discussed on a close-hold basis an INF initiative which Nitze has been working in secrecy with his Soviet counterpart. (I sat in on the meeting.)

I have reviewed Mr. Nitze's basic package (Tab II). I have also reviewed the assessment of advantages and disadvantages (Tab I) provided by Professor Rostow (which I believe he said was prepared by Jim Timbic at ACDA). The advantages and disadvantages listed seem to be generally on track, although arguable in places.

The Rostow/Nitze approach has uncertainties, but could form a basis for early movement if there were a political judgment to discard the currently existing Presidential guidance and push for an early agreement.

However, we are now faced with potentially very severe bureaucratic and substantive problems. Mr. Nitze has strayed way off the reservation -- he has gone far beyond his instructions. If his efforts are legitimized with a Presidential umbrella now, it could set a precedent for future end-runs and undermine the integrity of the interagency process. Moreover, Mr. Nitze may have undercut the future of the Administration's "zero option" with the Soviets by dealing informally with the Soviets on a "non-zero" approach. And he took upon himself discussion with the Soviets regarding the possibility of a summit this fall.

For reasons of substance and process, Mr. Nitze's effort will probably be viewed heatedly in various departments. With respect to process, my guess is that essentially all departments other than ACDA will have major heartburn because Mr. Nitze went far beyond the President's instructions. With respect to substance, those who supported the "zero option" selected by the President will probably be outraged by Mr. Nitze's efforts, while those who opposed the "zero option" may privately applaud Mr. Nitze's approach. Also, if word of this leaks out publicly, our NATO allies could raise cries about "double-dealing", and the press could have a field day.

Because this is such a tenuous situation, I do not think it would be fair to the President to have him inserted into this briar patch without first having the matter vetted in the interagency process. However, if it goes into the interagency arena without some prior Presidential umbrella, it is possible that Mr. Nitze will come in for some very severe criticism. I have the greatest admiration and respect for Mr. Nitze, and I would hate to see him thrown into a potential meat-grinder; however, the President's interests clearly and unequivocally come first.

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In my opinion, taking this to the President now (without prior interagency vetting) could be in the President's interest only in the event the President is eager for a quick agreement and is prepared to force-feed the departments from on top in order to get such a quick agreement.

Recommendations

- First, ensure that Rostow /Nitze brief Secretary Shultz fully on what has happened. Then have Rostow /Nitze brief Secretary Weinberger.

- Next, you, Secretary Shultz and Secretary Weinberger discuss this privately.

- After that, if you, Secretary Shultz, and Secretary Weinberger believe it is appropriate, have State convene a SIG (senior-level principals only), which would be briefed by Rostow /Nitze and then make a recommendation to you.

*P.S. SEE IMPORTANT LATE NOTES
ON THE NEXT PAGE.*