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Authority **NND 969000**

By **VAN** NARA Date **1-18-06**

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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September 30, 1969

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NODIS REVIEW

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Through

From: John Brogan  
Reviewed by: [Signature]

Date: 9 Oct 1969

Subject: Meeting of Kissinger Committee on Symington Subcommittee

The Secretary  
The Acting Secretary

S/S [Signature]

J/RM - Robert McClintock

Meeting of Kissinger Committee on Symington Subcommittee

NODIS REVIEW

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Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II

Date: 6-28-76

A meeting was held in the Situation Room at the White House, chaired by Dr. Kissinger, to go over the testimony which should not under any circumstances be divulged to the Symington Subcommittee. Present at the meeting, in addition to yourself and the undersigned, were: the Attorney General, Mr. Mitchell; the Secretary of Defense, Mr. Laird; the Director of CIA, Mr. Helms; and Messrs. Ehrlichman, BeLieu, Krogh and Allen of the White House staff.

After considerable discussion of tactics to be employed in reducing the amount of damage to US foreign policy and national security which might come from divulging secrets of which Senator Symington and his staff were already cognizant, it was the general consensus of the meeting that it would be best to invoke executive privilege on divulgence of nuclear deployments anywhere in the world. Therefore, although careful consideration was given to the State Department's outline of a possible alternative tactic -- to testify in very restricted executive session only to the Senators members of the Committee and with only one copy of the transcript to be retained by the Department of State -- on balance Dr. Kissinger, the Attorney General, Mr. Helms and Secretary Laird felt that executive privilege should be invoked as indicated above. Mr. Ehrlichman vehemently agreed.

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There was also general agreement that the President's directive that no CIA representatives testify on Laos was a sound position, likewise to be protected by executive privilege. However, Dr. Kissinger recognized that the hearings on Laos could not simply be swept under the rug by invoking secrecy and a refusal to discuss the subject at all. "Something," he said, "has to be said about Laos." It was agreed that the undersigned would expedite the inter-departmental analysis of materials requested by the Symington Subcommittee on Laos, organized in a matrix according to developing degrees of releasability, sensitivity and secrecy; and that the Kissinger group would meet again but not later than next Tuesday, October 7, to determine finally what sort of testimony could be authorized. There was general agreement that subordinate personnel should not be permitted to serve as witnesses, and that probably the only witness of State would be Ambassador Sullivan and for Defense Secretary Laird. I suggested that Ambassador Sullivan attend the next meeting of the Kissinger group, when the Laos materials would be analyzed as to category of sensitivity, and this was agreed.

Dr. Kissinger said he could see no distinction between withholding CIA testimony as such and testimony from other intelligence agencies, such as DIA and NSA. It was agreed, therefore, that the group would recommend that the President broaden the definition of executive privilege to govern testimony from these other two agencies. In consequence, there will be no testimony before the Subcommittee by NSA, DIA or CIA.

Mr. Helms pointed out that the hearings were a matter of utmost importance to the Executive and asked that the President himself be given an opportunity to examine every aspect of this problem. The President, in fact, was heading for a direct confrontation with Congress, and in that situation, said Secretary Laird, the Senators would herd together. It was likewise agreed that Secretary Rogers should be thoroughly informed as to the impending impasse between the Symington Subcommittee and the Administration as the Committee involved was in fact the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate only in truncated form.

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