MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

January 28, 1971

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

HENRY A. KISSINGER ANATOLIY F. DOBRYNIN

DATE:

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I told Dobrynin that we had not really had a formal reply to our proposition, and yet it was quite important that we have one. We had to make Congressional presentations on SALT and the ABM and we had to prepare for the next meeting in Vienna. It was therefore quite important that we know Soviet intentions.

Dobrynin said, speaking off the record, it was important for me to understand that SALT presented the Soviets with tough bureaucratic problems. It was very hard for them to handle it since they have no lateral clearances in their bureaucracy. He therefore thought it would be helpful if I would formulate the proposition in the form of an unsigned Note Verbale which he could transmit to Moscow in order to elicit a response. I said to Dobrynin that, for a response to be helpful to us, it should be forthcoming in the next week or two. He said he would transmit the question to Moscow.

Next Dobrynin said that he had, however, a number of other questions of some interest. He said if he had understood me correctly, I was proposing a freeze on offensive deployments -- specifically, land-based missiles -- in return for a formal ABM agreement. I said that was correct. Dobrynin then said that this might present some problem with respect to silos that had already been started but had not yet been completed. Would the Soviet Union be permitted to complete the silos that were started? It would be hard for the Soviet bureaucracy to accept the losses of resources involved in an unfinished silo. I said I could not give him a clear answer, but I was certain that this would be considered a reasonable question to which we would try to find some response. Dobrynin said it had occurred to him that one way of handling the problem would be to put the date at which no further construction could take place at some point in the future -- say, January 1st of next year. If that were done, Dobrynin said, this would enable them to

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finish; they would simply have to pay the price for those that were not finished by then. I said as soon as he was authorized to discuss these issues concretely I would be prepared on my side with a formal position.

Dobrynin then asked me how we were going to conclude the SALT arrangement if he and I talked. I said if he and I could agree in principle to proceed along the lines that we had discussed, -- that is to say, a formal ABM agreement coupled with an offensive freeze -- then I would suggest that the President make a speech early in March in which he puts forward this as an idea and the Soviet Union could respond to it positively. Vienna would then implement the agreement. Dobrynin asked whether we would, together with the speech, plan a formal demarche to the Soviet Government. I said we had really not thought the matter through, and we would be very receptive to their suggestion. Dobrynin said that, given the way the Soviet bureaucracy worked, it would be helpful to have a formal record in addition to whatever the President might say publicly, and to have that formal material part of the record before the speech was made. I said I did not believe this would present an insuperable obstacle.