

**June 11, 1981**

**Memorandum for the National Security Council from  
Richard V. Allen, 'National Security Council Meeting  
(NSC), Friday, June 12, 1981, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30  
p.m.'**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/270552>

**Summary:**

ACDA Director-Designate Eugene Rostow explains his pro-Israel stance, and argues that Israel should be given an exemption from the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 11, 1981

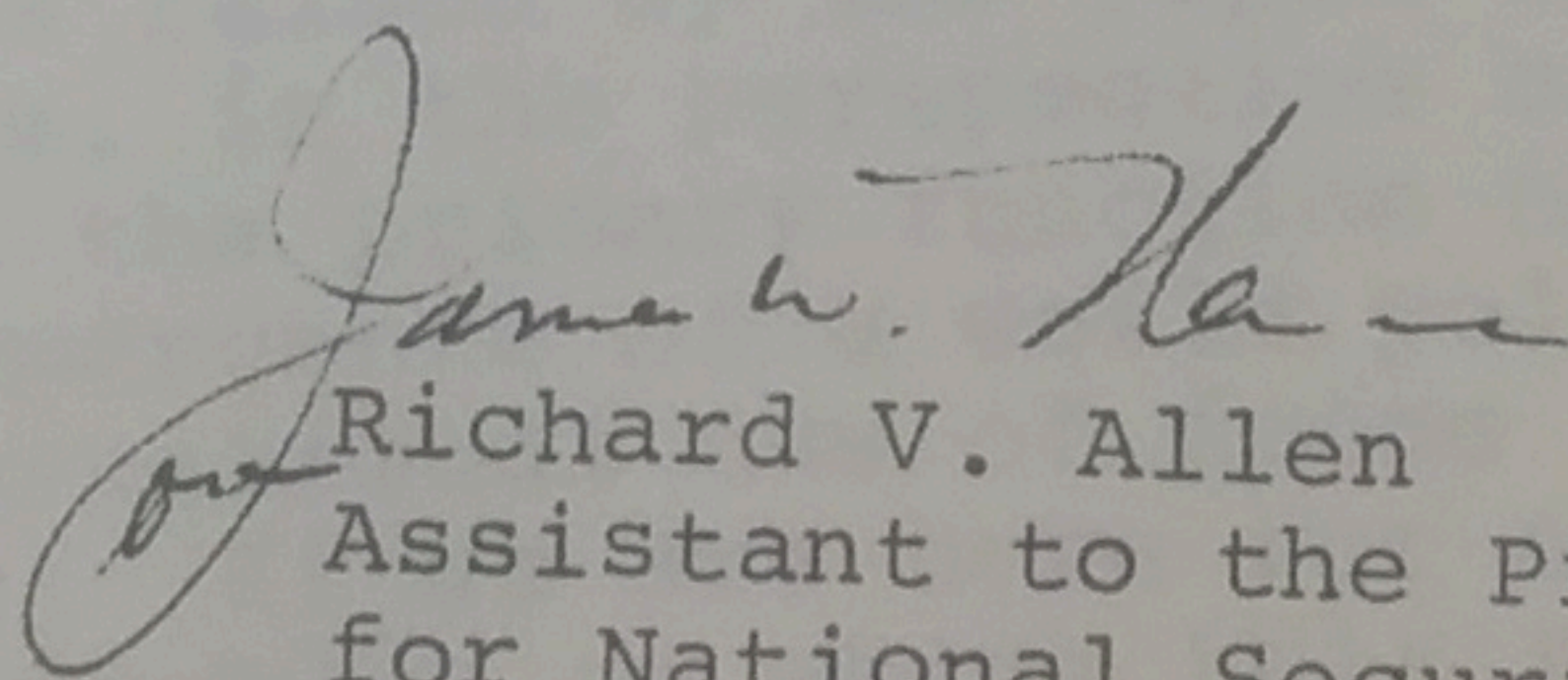
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
THE COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT  
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
THE U.S. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT  
THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT  
THE CHAIRMAN, THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
THE DIRECTOR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

SUBJECT: National Security Council Meeting (NSC)  
Friday, June 12, 1981, 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

There will be an NSC meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, June 12, 1981. The agenda item will be Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Cooperation. The agenda paper on this subject will be the same prepared for the NSC meeting on Wednesday, June 10, 1981.

Attached are comments submitted by the Director-designate of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency on this agenda item.

  
Richard V. Allen

Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

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Review on June 11, 1987

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White House Guidelines, August 28, 1987  
By CS NARA, Date 11/24/04

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2014-12 JUNE 1981 (Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Cooperation Policies)  
Box 91882 EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

12 June 1981 (Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Cooperation Policy)

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Washington, D.C. 20451

June 11, 1981

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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MEMORANDUM FOR

- The Vice President
- The Acting Secretary of State
- The Secretary of Defense
- The Counsellor to the President
- The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- The Director, Office of Management and Budget
- The Director of Central Intelligence
- The United States Representative to the United Nations
- The Chief of Staff to the President
- The Deputy Chief of Staff to the President
- The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Additional Comment on NSC Discussion Paper: Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Cooperation

I believe an additional comment on the Paper is required by the Israeli attack of June 7 on the Iraqi nuclear plant. The Israeli preemptive strike is a foreboding event, more serious in its implications for international security even than the 1974 Indian nuclear test.

I approach the issues raised by the paper before us, and by the Israeli strike, in the perspective of the ACDA statute, which says that the primary function of ACDA is to give impetus to the emergence of a world political system in which the international use of force is subordinated to the rule of law. If we are here for eight years, we shall not confront a problem to which this statutory mandate is more relevant, and more compelling.

First, let me say that I agree with the broad lines of the analysis of the paper. So far as they go, they are unexceptionable. Rumors and the South African incident have caused more concern among our Allies that our policy in this sensitive area has changed. It is therefore

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important to stress that the paper does not call for a new policy but for a continuation and reinforcement of the non-proliferation policy the United States has been developing since the middle 1960s -- encouraging the peaceful uses of nuclear energy; opposition to the spread of nuclear weapons and support for the NPT; strict safeguards monitored not only by the IAEA but our own intelligence to minimize the risk of NPT violations.

I do not believe however that the recommendations of the paper are now sufficiently concrete or urgent to deal with the non-proliferation problem, which has become a crisis, or rather a visible symptom of the general crisis of world order.

The discussion paper offers this sentence as guideline (2) on page 2 -

"(2) The U.S. will strive to reduce the motivation for acquiring nuclear explosives by evincing - through its policies and actions - a more stable and deep rooted interest in the legitimate security concerns of other states."

This statement hardly does justice to the gravity of the Israeli strike or the magnitude of the efforts which will be required to limit and offset its consequences. Let me take a specific illustration: South Africa, one of the pariah countries, now being attacked by many countries committed to its destruction. What does the guideline tell us to do? Help South Africa make nuclear weapons? Send the Navy to Simonstown? Establish air bases there? Help South Africa fight guerrillas? Or offer our sympathy?

The crumbling of world public order during the last decade has led many beleaguered nations to become interested in acquiring nuclear weapons. However delusive their belief may be, a number of countries facing grave risks are convinced that small nuclear forces could protect them against aggression or nuclear blackmail. We and other nations have frequently said in the past that in a world where many states have nuclear weapons, politics will become nearly unpredictable and instability will reach the level of explosiveness.

The Israeli attack on Iraq translates that thesis from the realm of forecast to that of reality. Israel

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perceived the potential development of nuclear capabilities by Iraq as a mortal threat, despite Iraq's adherence to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its agreement with the IAEA. Whether Israel's fears were well grounded will doubtless be sorted out in time, but they are of no real significance to our problem. The fact is that they existed and prevailed. We are dealing here, as Dean Acheson said of the Cuban Missile Crisis, with events which touch the nerve of sovereignty and survival.

The Israeli move parallels our own behavior in the Cuban Missile Crisis, and represents a similar combination of circumstances. There was no immediate threat of armed attack in either case. Both the United States in 1962, and Israel in 1981, saw very great danger in an imminent change of circumstance, made worse in Israel's case by Iraq's refusal to carry out Security Council Resolution 338 (1973), which orders all the states concerned to make peace with Israel, and its endless proclamations of its intent to destroy "the Zionist Entity." Both American behavior in the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Israeli action of June 7 come within the inherent right of a state to defend itself under Article 51 of the Charter. As Elihu Root once said, the international law of self-defense permits "every sovereign state to protect itself by preventing a condition of affairs in which it will be too late to protect itself. Of course each state must judge for itself when a threatened act will create such a situation."

But the legal issue, important as it is, is secondary. The question is what can be done to cure the deadly volatility of politics in a world of nuclear proliferation. The task cannot be accomplished by threats or reassuring words or pious votes in the United Nations. Nor are strict controls over exports a sufficient remedy. The phenomenon will continue and get worse until world public order is restored -- that is, to be concrete, until we lead great coalitions in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Middle East, and the Caribbean, to restore the policy of containment, based on firm and reciprocal respect for the rules of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the international use of force. We must pursue this policy for many other reasons of security policy. Until we have taken that step, the policies recommended in the Non-Proliferation Paper will be empty words. No one can ask or expect nations facing destruction to adhere to NPT or to accept IAEA inspection in good faith.

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I agree that the principles of the NPT and the IAEA should be the lodestars of our policy. The Defense Department has reservations about IAEA. So do I. But it is the only mechanism there is. It has done useful work. Strengthening IAEA will cost some money -- not much, but some. And if strengthened and supplemented by our own efforts, it should be worthwhile, particularly in the blinding light of what happened on June 7. I agree as well that we should press even more strictly than we do today for a concerted policy on the part of the main industrial nations in supplying nuclear fuel and nuclear technology. And we should make a major effort to upgrade the export controls of the supplying nations. But such policies will be hollow and meaningless unless we accompany them with determined and clearly successful efforts to restore the general peace.

This is not a reproach to the conscientious experts on non-proliferation who prepared this paper that their recommendations do not go so far. Within their own field, their recommendations are satisfactory. My point is different -- that the President's statement on the subject should treat non-proliferation policy in a much wider and more political framework.

For that purpose, I suggest that a draft public statement be prepared and circulated for the President's consideration during the next week or so, and that nothing be released until the President's statement is ready.

*Lucy V. Rostow*

Director-Designate

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Full Nuclear Non-Proliferation Policy