

September 23, 1977

**State Department telegram 229507 to U.S. Embassy
London et al., 'Nuclear Suppliers Meeting -
Assessment'**

Citation:

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/119826>

Summary:

This document describes the progress made up to that point and the various concerns of countries within the group regarding the scale of safeguards, particularly from the French and Germans. The NSG also agreed to make the guidelines available to the IAEA so that it could publish them. The State Department had been reluctant to publish them, not least because they did not include full scope safeguards, but overriding that was an interest in dispelling Third World concerns about a "secret cartel."

Credits:

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Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

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AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 229507

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM MNUC

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR SUPPLIERS MEETING - ASSESSMENT

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1. AS WE APPROACHED THE SEPTEMBER MEETING IT APPEARED THAT:

(A) THE FRENCH AND GERMANS WERE NOT PREPARED TO AGREE TO
FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS AS A CONDITION OF SUPPLY; WOULD TRY
TO POSTPONE ANY FURTHER REVIEW OF THIS ISSUE AT LEAST UNTIL
THE END OF INFCE; WANTED TO TERMINATE THE SUPPLIERS' EFFORT

AND BLOCK FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF THE GUIDELINES; AND (IN THE CASE OF THE FRENCH) WERE THREATENING NOT TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN FUTURE SUPPLIERS' MEETINGS IF HELD; AND

(B) THE SOVIETS PLANNED TO EXCORIATE AND ISOLATE THE FRENCH AND GERMANS FOR BLOCKING PROGRESS (DESPITE RISK OF HARDENING FRENCH POSITION AGAINST CONTINUED PARTICIPATION) AND WERE THREATENING TO ABANDON THE SUPPLIERS' GROUP AS HOPELESS AND REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE FURTHER.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE WERE MINDFUL OF THE MANDATE IN THE PENDING NON-PROLIFERATION LEGISLATION TO INTENSIFY OUR EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMON SUPPLIER CONTROLS, AND OF

THE APPROACH MADE THE PRECEDING WEEK BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY TO MESSRS BARRE AND DE GUIRINGAUD ON FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS.

2. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR PRIMARY GOALS WERE TO PREVENT THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SUPPLIERS' GROUP AND TO KEEP OPEN THE OPPORTUNITY FOR IT TO ADOPT A FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS POLICY AT A LATER TIME. WE ALSO HOPED TO STRENGTHEN THE SAFEGUARDS SUPPORT AND SANCTIONS PROVISIONS OF THE GUIDELINES.

3. AT THE SEPTEMBER MEETING WE BELIEVE WE MET ALL THESE
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GOALS. THE THREATS OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SUPPLIERS' GROUP DID NOT MATERIALIZE. WE OBTAINED AN AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 5 THAT ENVISIONED FURTHER REVIEW OF COMMON SAFEGUARDS REQUIREMENTS. ALTHOUGH WE DID NOT SUCCEED IN INCORPORATING A SPECIFIC DEADLINE FOR SUCH REVIEW -- WHICH THE FRENCH ADAMANTLY OPPOSED SINCE IF THEY WERE UNABLE TO CHANGE THEIR POLICY ON FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS, THEY DID NOT WISH TO FACE YET ANOTHER MEETING IN WHICH THEY WERE ISOLATED AND CRITICIZED -- WE DID GET FRENCH AGREEMENT THAT A FURTHER MEETING OF SUPPLIERS WOULD BE HELD, AS NECESSARY, IN THE COURSE OF 1978. MOREOVER, BY ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP DIRECTED TO REPORT TO THE NEXT MEETING, AND BY MAKING CLEAR OUR POSITION THAT ENLARGEMENT OF THE GROUP WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE WITHOUT UNANIMOUS APPROVAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS, WE ESTABLISHED A CLEAR NEED FOR A FURTHER MEETING AND A HANDLE FOR PREVENTING OTHERS FROM BLOCKING PROGRESS BY ADDING MEMBERS WHO WOULD OPPOSE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE GUIDELINES (FOR WHICH ARTICLE 16 REQUIRES UNANIMOUS CONSENT).

4. WHILE THE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ARTICLES ON SAFEGUARDS SUPPORT (ARTICLE 12) AND SANCTIONS (ARTICLE 14) FELL SHORT

OF WHAT WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED, THEY DID CONSTITUTE A SIGNIFICANT STRENGTHENING OF THE EXISTING PROVISIONS ON THESE SUBJECTS, AND THUS DEMONSTRATED THE CONTINUED ABILITY OF THE GROUP TO MAKE SOME TANGIBLE PROGRESS.

5. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO POSTPONE PUBLICATION OF THE GUIDELINES UNTIL FULL SCOPE SAFEGUARDS HAD BEEN ADOPTED, THERE WAS SOME MERIT IN DEFUSING THE CRITICISM OF THE SUPPLIERS' EFFORTS AS A SECRET CARTEL, WHOSE DECISIONS MAY WELL HAVE BEEN IMAGINED TO BE MORE RESTRICTIVE THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE. MOREOVER, THE MECHANISM FOR PUBLICATION (DESCRIBED IN PARA 8 BELOW) IS SUCH THAT WE CAN ENSURE THAT IT IS NOT DONE UNTIL AFTER THE OCTOBER INFCE MEETING, THUS AVOIDING DISRUPTING THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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MEETING BY COMMENTS ON THE GUIDELINES. FURTHER, PUBLICATION WILL ANSWER CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF OUR HAVING KEPT THE GUIDELINES SECRET, AS WELL AS THE CONCERNS OF SEVERAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS (E.G., THE DUTCH AND THE SWEDES) WHO HAVE BEEN UNEASY ABOUT SUCH SECRECY.

6. THE JAPANESE WERE PLEASED AT THE ADOPTION OF THEIR INITIATIVE ON A WORKING GROUP ON OVERLAPPING CONTROLS, WHICH WAS THREATENED BY THE FRENCH AND GERMAN PREFERENCE TO RELEGATE THIS TASK TO THE IAEA. ALTHOUGH THE PROSPECTS FOR FINDING A GENERALLY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM ARE NOT BRIGHT, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME WAYS OF REDUCING ITS SEVERITY CAN BE FOUND.

7. THE GERMANS (WITH SOME JAPANESE AND CANADIAN SUPPORT) MADE AN EFFORT TO CHANGE THE PROVISION OF ARTICLE 1 STATING THAT THE GUIDELINES APPLY TO NUCLEAR TRANSFERS TO NON-NUCLEAR-WEAPON STATES. THEY POINTED OUT THAT MANY OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE GUIDELINES (E.G., THE ARTICLES ON PHYSICAL SECURITY AND RETRANSFERS, AND ARTICLES 11-16) APPLIED ALIKE TO ALL STATES, AND THEY WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE PUBLIC AND PARLIAMENTARY REACTION TO PUBLISHING GUIDELINES WHICH SEEMED TO EXTEND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN NUCLEAR AND NON-NUCLEAR WEAPON STATES EVEN BEYOND THAT IN THE NPT. THESE EFFORTS DID NOT, HOWEVER, SUCCEED, ALTHOUGH THERE MAY BE SOME ATTEMPT TO REFLECT THIS IN THE TRANSMITTAL NOTES SENT BY JAPAN, GERMANY AND CANADA TO THE IAEA.

8. THE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED FOR TRANSMITTING THE GUIDELINES TO THE IAEA WERE AS FOLLOWS: THE CHAIRMAN WILL CIRCULATE A MODEL TRANSMITTAL NOTE, WILL THEN RECEIVE DRAFTS OF THE ACTUAL TRANSMITTAL NOTES PREPARED BY EACH GOVERNMENT, AND WILL CONSULT OTHER PARTICIPANTS ON ANY CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCREPANCIES. NO PARTICIPANT WILL PUBLISH THE GUIDELINES UNTIL THE CHAIRMAN IS SATISFIED THAT THE TRANSMITTAL NOTES ARE GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE AND UNTIL ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE PREPARED TO TRANSMIT. THIS PROCEDURE PROTECTS US AGAINST UNTIMELY PUBLICATION, AND UNACCEPTABLE PROVISIONS IN THE TRANSMITTAL NOTES, AND SHOULD HELP PREVENT SUCH NOTES FROM GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT CONSENSUS AMONG THE SUPPLIERS IS BREAKING DOWN.

9. COMMENT: CHAIRMAN MOBERLY (UK) DID AN EXTREMELY SKILLFUL JOB IN HELPING STEER THE MEETING TO THIS RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL AND AMICABLE CONCLUSION. VANCE

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T/D:DWELCH

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 229507

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 229507 SENT ACTION LONDON INFO VIENNA
OTTAWA BONN MOSCOW PARIS TOKYO STOCKHOLM BRUSSELS THE HAGUE
PRAGUE WARSAW BERLIN BERN ROME SEP 23.
QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 229507

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RELATIVELY SUCCESSFUL AND AMICABLE CONCLUSION. VANCE UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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TAGS: PARM, MNUC, MASS
To: LONDON
Type: TE
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