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SENIOR REVIEW GROUP MEETING

August 28, 1974

Restraints on Environmental Warfare

SECRETARY KISSINGER

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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National Security Decision Memorandum

TO:                   The Secretary of Defense  
                      The Deputy Secretary of State  
                      The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
                      The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT:            International Restraints on Environmental Warfare

The President has reviewed the report of the NSC Under Secretaries Committee (USC) on possible international restraints on environmental warfare forwarded by the memorandum of the USC Chairman on May 10, 1974, and associated agency views regarding such restraints.

As reflected in the Joint Statement of the United States and the Soviet Union on July 3, 1974, the President has decided that it is in the United States' interests to consider with the USSR restraints on the use of environmental modification techniques for military purposes and, to this end, to enter into discussions with the Soviet Union to explore the possibility of such restraints.

The President has decided that the U.S. approach to these discussions should be consistent with Option 2 as presented in the USC report, which focuses on those environmental modification techniques having long-term, widespread, or especially severe effects.

The President has directed that the NSC Under Secretaries Committee prepare an appropriate scenario and approach for a meeting between the U.S. and the USSR to explore this issue as well as what steps might be taken to bring about the most effective measures possible in this area. The scenario and approach should be forwarded for the President's consideration no later than September 16, 1974, and should include an approach for dealing with the recent Soviet proposal for the United Nations General Assembly.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES

BY 14 NADA DATE 8/17/05

Henry A. Kissinger



cc: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-186-74

23 MAY 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY  
AFFAIRS

Subject: Environmental Study (U)  
SUBJECT: Possible International Restraints on Environmental Warfare (U)

(S) The NSC Under Secretaries Committee study entitled "Possible International Restraints on Environmental Warfare" has been reviewed both in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff setting forth their views is attached.

(S) I share JCS's interest in maintaining full flexibility in the development and possible employment of these potentially valuable techniques. However, I believe that political considerations require that we agree to some restraints in "environmental warfare." I, therefore, recommend that the U.S. adopt a position along the lines of Option 2.

*H.P. Clement*

Attachment 1  
a/s

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AUTHORITY *DD Directive 5200.30; WH/NSC guidelines*

BY *h/m* NLF, DATE *8/17/05*



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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JCSM-186-74

21 May 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Environmental Study (U)

1. (S) Reference is made to:

a. A memorandum by the Chairman, NSC Under Secretaries Committee, dated 10 May 1974, subject: "Possible International Restraints on Environmental Warfare," which transmitted an Under Secretaries Committee study on possible international restraints on environmental warfare. The study outlined options, but the participating agencies reserve their respective positions concerning their preference among the options presented.

b. A memorandum by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, dated 16 May 1974, subject: "Possible International Restraints on Environmental Warfare," which requested agency views on the options presented in the study forwarded to the President by reference 1a.

2. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that you support Option 1--not to accept any international restraints on military uses of weather, climate, ocean, or terrestrial modification techniques--in order to maintain full flexibility in the development and possible employment of these potentially valuable techniques.

3. (S) Should you feel it necessary for political reasons to accede to the seeking of some restraints on the employment of environmental modification techniques, the Joint Chiefs of

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AUTHORITY DD Directive 5200.30; WH/NSC guidelines  
BY lkh NLF, DATE 2/17/05

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EXEMPTION CATEGORY (3)  
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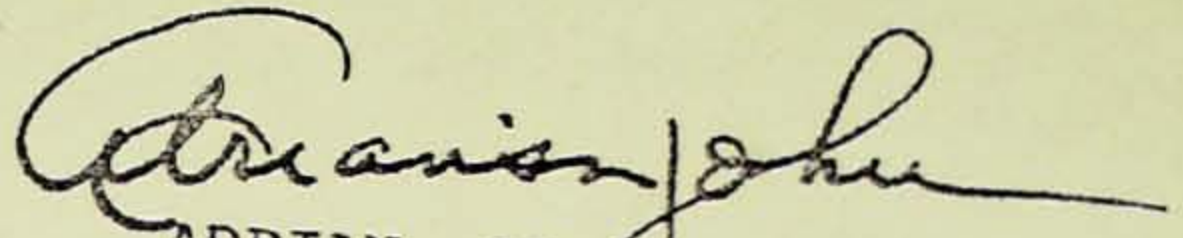
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Staff believe that Option 2 would be acceptable. This option gives up only those techniques having long-term, widespread, or especially severe effects and which are not achievable on a controlled basis in the foreseeable future. No serious damage to national military posture would result from being denied their use.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



ADRIAN ST JOHN  
Major General, USA  
Vice Director  
Joint Staff



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UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

May 22, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL BRENT SCOWCROFT  
THE WHITE HOUSE

SUBJECT: Possible International Restraints  
on Environmental Warfare

REFERENCE: Your Memorandum of May 16 Requesting  
Agency Views on the Subject USC Report

ACDA favors an initiative along the lines of Option 3. We feel on balance, however, that it is preferable not to seek overly specific provisions as to what would be included or excluded. At the present time, environmental warfare is not a real threat, and possible future techniques are poorly understood. Specificity may inadvertently exclude a technique that should be included, or vice versa.

Perhaps under the circumstances, it would be preferable to seek a ban on environmental warfare as part of a broader effort of international cooperation on peaceful uses. (Reference my memorandum of April 26, 1974 to Dr. Kissinger). Although a simple ban against hostile uses may have some merit in its own right, standing alone it might appear overly contrived and inconsequential, particularly if it becomes part of summit diplomacy.

Instead, an international agreement banning environmental warfare could be part of an international convention on peaceful uses of weather modification. This approach would be analogous to the Antarctica Treaty, which focuses primarily on peaceful uses, but also serves to exclude military uses without an extensive cataloging of specifics.



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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES  
BY lh NARA DATE 8/17/05

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For example, we might propose to the Soviets an agreement in principle on cooperation regarding questions of environment modification for peaceful purposes. This could be coupled with an invitation to other nations to join the US and the Soviets:

- (1) In working out, through the UN (possibly in the UN Environment Programme or the World Meteorological Organization), multi-lateral arrangements for the exploration and possible application of environment modification technology for peaceful purposes; and
- (2) In exploring, in an appropriate forum, the possibilities of multilateral restraints on military applications of environment modification.

*Fred C. Ikle*

Fred C. Ikle

Their proposal is presented conditionally so. While the reference to "civil purposes" could cover civil uses of environment and climate modification (in contrast to the Summit Statement), Gromyko's accompanying letter places the agreement in the context of arms control. It seems likely that the Soviets will welcome that their proposal is consistent with the Summit Statement on environmental matters. In contrast, the Soviets are portraying their proposal to other countries as a follow-up to the Summit Statement. The Soviets may in fact expect to support for their proposal, which is Soviet eyes probably made less trackable for the US than any of their previous such statements.

Attitudes on the issue could be that the Soviet proposal are likely to be generally favorable, although there has been





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*Mr. Christopher*

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

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August 21, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: International Restraints on Environmental Modification in Light of the Soviet Initiative in the UNGA

I. Analysis of the Soviet UNGA Proposal

Despite our agreement with the Soviets at the Moscow Summit to hold a meeting this year to explore the problem of environmental warfare, they have not waited for the agreed bilateral consultations but have moved to seek a UNGA resolution on the subject. They have requested an agenda item on environment modification and propose a resolution approving the idea of a broad agreement on the "prohibition of action to influence the environment and climate for military and other purposes incompatible with the maintenance of international security, human well being and health."

Their proposal is presented ambiguously, perhaps intentionally so. While the reference to "other purposes" could cover civil uses of environment and climate modification (in contrast to the Summit Statement), Gromyko's accompanying letter places the agreement in the context of arms control. It seems likely that the Soviets will maintain that their proposal is consistent with the Summit Joint Statement on environmental warfare. We understand the Soviets are portraying their proposal to other countries as a follow-up to the Summit statement. The Soviets may in fact expect US support for their proposal, which in Soviet eyes probably seems less troublesome for the US than any of their previous UNGA disarmament "spectaculars".

Attitudes at the UNGA toward the Soviet proposal are likely to be generally favorable, although there has been

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intervals and declassified  
on December 31, 1982.

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NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES  
BY                      NARA. DATE 8/17/05

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little interest among UN members in restrictions on environmental warfare. However, the Chinese and a few of their friends will probably condemn the Soviet proposal as yet another disarmament fraud, perpetrated to draw attention from the buildup of Soviet arms.

## II. NSC Options on Environmental Warfare

On May 10, 1974, the NSC Under Secretaries Committee submitted to the President a study on international restraints on environmental warfare, with three options:

1. Not to accept any international restraints on military uses of weather, climate, ocean or terrestrial modification techniques.

2. To accept prohibition of "environmental warfare" techniques having long term, widespread or especially severe effects. Tactical fog modification or precipitation modification, unless it involved especially severe effects such as flood or drought, is not prohibited. Precipitation modification on the scale used in Viet Nam would thus be permissible.

3. To accept, in addition to the ban on those activities in Option 2, the prohibition of tactical fog and precipitation modification. This option would not preclude the use of weather modification techniques to protect friendly forces from hazards or fog dispersal to assist search and rescue missions.

In the subsequent agency review of these options the JCS has indicated it preferred Option 1 although it could accept Option 2. OSD favored Option 2. State favored Option 3. ACDA favored a modification of Option 3 that would seek agreement against the use of environmental warfare techniques in the context of a general agreement on peaceful uses.

No further decision has been taken on this study.

## III. Options for US Action Toward Soviet Initiative

Because of our agreement at the Summit that climate and environmental modification techniques "could have widespread,





long-lasting, and severe effects harmful to human welfare", and because of our previous renunciation of climate modification for warfare, outright opposition to the Soviet initiative would reverse past US decisions and create an awkward impression. Similarly, since the Soviet proposal in the UN has multilateralized the issue, a US-Soviet bilateral agreement -- if it were desired -- would not avoid UN consideration of the issue and could alienate other countries.

Our options therefore are:

A. Disassociate the US from the Soviet Initiative.

We could argue that not enough is known of environment modification techniques to formulate meaningful restrictions. We could also propose an amendment to a Soviet resolution calling for studies, and we could abstain if our amendment fails or vote for the resolution with a statement of reservations.

This has the disadvantage of ceding the field to the Soviet initiative. The GA would probably call on the CCD to begin work on a convention, as proposed by the Soviets. If we did not take an active part in those negotiations, we would have little influence over the outcome. On the other hand, this option would permit us to avoid or delay a US commitment to the specific formulations of the Soviet resolution, while continuing to express general support for the objective of restrictions on environmental warfare.

B. Support a Prohibition of the Use of Environment Modification for Hostile Purposes. This could be accomplished either by working with the Soviets on the basis of their resolution or by a competing US resolution. We could cite US interest in the protection of the environment, our unilateral renunciation of climate modification, the Summit Communique, and the Pell Senate resolution.

A joint resolution would probably commit us to seeking broad prohibitions. A separate US resolution would have less immediate appeal than a Soviet initiative if the latter were broader in scope. In either case it would be difficult to avoid unverifiable restrictions on research and development or to restrict the scope of the prohibitions





(e.g. in accordance with Option II of the NSC study permitting such activities as rainmaking for tactical purposes). Either a joint or separate resolution would probably be opposed by the PRC.

C. Promote a Broad Initiative Covering Peaceful and Hostile Uses. This could be carried out in cooperation with the Soviets or, if necessary, as a US initiative for which we would enlist the support of other countries. We would co-sponsor or introduce a resolution suggesting the UN work toward a broad convention to enhance international cooperation on the use and regulation of environment modification technology for peaceful purposes. This convention would provide for:

(1) a continuing program of studies under UN auspices on the feasibility of environment modification for the benefit of mankind;

(2) a commitment to work out regulations to avoid unintended harmful effects of environment modification techniques, on the basis of studies establishing the need and feasibility of such regulations;

(3) a commitment not to use environment or climate modification techniques for hostile purposes.

In addition to stating these objectives, the resolution would as a first step call for the Secretary-General and/or appropriate UN bodies (e.g. World Meteorological Organization) to carry out studies of arrangements to promote peaceful applications of techniques for environment modification and to avoid harmful effects. The resolution would also call on an appropriate committee to draft arms control provisions to be included in the environment modification convention. If the PRC is willing to participate or cooperate tacitly in developing arms control provisions, the appropriate committee would not be the CCD, with which the PRC does not wish to cooperate, but an ad hoc UN committee. On the other hand, if the PRC should be hostile, the appropriate negotiating body might be the CCD.

ACDA favors Option C for the following reasons:

1. Environmental warfare is a low priority arms control issue that has been of little interest to the international





community. A proposal that focuses solely on control of environmental warfare could therefore be subject to criticism as being contrived and a device to divert attention from the genuine priority issues of disarmament.

2. On the other hand, the level of interest in gaining a better understanding of possible peaceful applications of environment modification techniques and avoiding harmful side effects has heightened as a result of the changing climatic patterns and the serious consequences of drought for the world food situation. In the longer term, the prediction of climatic changes and the possibility of environment modification to help in alleviating natural disasters while avoiding harmful effects on the environment, is likely to be of major interest to a majority in the UNGA. By contrast, military applications, which depend on highly unreliable congruences of military need, capability, and exploitable environmental conditions are a more remote concern.

3. At the same time, the prohibition on environmental warfare would form a natural component of this approach. It would serve to reduce suspicions that these technologies will be used for military purposes and promote the open scientific cooperation that is necessary for real progress. Our placing the environmental warfare question into this larger positive context would be analogous to President Eisenhower's Atoms for Peace Program that led to the IAEA and the US initiative that brought about the Antarctic Treaty. This approach could regain the US initiative in an area of great concern to many countries.

4. Moreover, this approach may have the collateral advantage of attracting the interest of the PRC. As noted earlier, China is likely to condemn the present Soviet proposal, and it would probably be negative toward any agreement, regardless of source, that merely limits the use of environment modification techniques for hostile purposes. However, based on China's participation in the World Meteorological Organization and in other subsidiary UN bodies, it might cooperate, or at least acquiesce, in a larger international effort on the use of environment modification techniques for peaceful purposes. In this framework, it might also tacitly, or even explicitly, accept the element of arms control, which would be a useful precedent.





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IV. Tactics for Presenting Broad US Initiative on Environment Modification

If ACDA's recommended approach is approved, we suggest that in your speech to the General Assembly the stage be set for the submission of the resolution discussed above. Your remarks would expand your proposal at the UNGA on April 15 that climatic changes be studied by the International Council of Scientific Unions and the World Meteorological Organization. You could emphasize the importance of international cooperation in understanding the global environment and of gaining a clear grasp of the feasibility of peaceful applications of environment modification technology. You could suggest that research should be expanded, particularly with a view to determining the potential application of environment modification to the world food crisis, and state our readiness to cooperate in all aspects of peaceful uses. At the same time, your remarks would make clear that we are prepared to move concurrently to work out suitable measures prohibiting military use of environment modification techniques, and that we would expect that such measures could be formulated for approval by the next General Assembly session for incorporation into a charter on peaceful uses.

*Fred C. Ikle*  
Fred C. Ikle

Attachments:

- Tab A - Letter from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko to Secretary-General Waldheim.
- Tab B - US-USSR Joint Summit Statement on Environmental Warfare.
- Tab C - 1972 Summit Agreement on Environmental Protection.
- Tab D - Memorandum of Implementation of the 1972 Environmental Protection Agreement.

cc: C - Mr. H. Sonnenfeldt  
PM - Mr. G. Vest  
IO - Mr. W. Buffum  
S/P - Mr. W. Lord

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