

Kissinger Spokesman: We Must Test The Soviets

While White House National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski is trying to perpetuate a policy of "linkage" between the SALT talks and the Horn of Africa situation, spokesmen for Henry Kissinger are demanding even stronger measures. Here are excerpts from interviews with Helmut Sonnenfeldt, formerly Kissinger's personal lieutenant at the State Department and now operating out of Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies, and Richard Perl, defense advisor to Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.);

Interview with Sonnenfeldt

Q: What is your assessment of the Carter Administration's response to Soviet actions in the Horn?

A: The real problem is that the Soviets seemed to have believed that the U.S. was not very concerned about what happened in the Horn.... Although the Administration seems to be starting to show some concern, they've been much too slow. They've misled the Russians into believing they had a free hand in the Horn and elsewhere. The Administration has been much too disinclined to get involved in the crisis....

Q: Do you think that the Administration is moving to link SALT to the Horn and if so, do you agree with this tactic?

A: The Administration does not seem to be moving in that direction, but I doubt if it will work by itself. Who's to say the Soviets won't decide they'd rather have the Horn than SALT? SALT by itself won't do the trick. We should have a much stronger, multi-pronged offensive. I'd like to see the U.S. pour arms into Somalia, carry out naval maneuvers in the Indian Ocean.... I think that Congress and the country are more hawkish than they were during the Angola crisis and would support a strong stand now... But basically, the President has not been keen about getting involved in a crisis.

Q: Do you think that Vance is responsible for the President's reluctance?

A: Well, Vance is not very combative. But it's the President who's making policy. It's Carter who hasn't shown any inclination to get into the crisis. Apparently, his pollsters are telling him he won't benefit politically by doing so. At what point they'll start telling him he should act like a man and stand up to the Soviets, I don't know.

Q: What about Brzezinski's role?

A: I think you can also say that Brzezinski does have a

strategy, which is Administration policy, of letting the Horn situation develop under the illusion that when the Ethiopians begin to move into Somalia, the Russians will object and then the Ethiopians will throw the Russians out themselves. And Brzezinski will turn up looking like a rose. Personally, I don't think this will work. Brzezinski shares the rather wide-spread belief, which is not justified, that every relationship the Soviets have with a client state eventually sours.

Q: What's your prognosis for a new SALT accord?

A: The Administration has a big problem. On the one hand, you have the Soviets in the Horn. To the extent the Administration does take a stronger stand on this, they'll find it more difficult to sell SALT to the Congress, where is already a lot of skepticism about the intrinsic merits of the agreement, suspicions about Warnke, etc.

Interview with Perl

Q: What are your views on the SALT negotiations?

A: The Administration is "concession-prone." The result is that we have not tested the Soviets as to their real minimum conditions. At the present time, the SALT agreements are going in the wrong direction. The Congress should reject them and send them a message to Administration that it will have to go back and bargain seriously.

Q: Why should the Soviets accept this?

A: Well, if the Soviets perceive a grim future they would perceive it to their advantage to reach agreements with the U.S.

Q: What do you foresee producing this?

A: The Chinese. The key to our Chinese policy is how we handle the Soviets. If they perceive us as an effective counterweight to the Soviets, then they will act in parallel with us.

Q: Won't this produce a garrison mentality within the Soviets?

A: They already have a garrison mentality as witness their arms buildup.

Q: Well, won't this heighten it with the possible result that the Soviets will see the necessity of a preemptive strike.

A: Absolutely not. That would be suicidal.