

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BRIEFING PAPER

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BRAZIL - SALT AND EAST-WEST BALANCE 10

Essential Factors

Brazilian leaders have expressed the belief that the East-West strategic balance is tipping in favor of the USSR and that SALT simply accelerates Soviet achievement of nuclear superiority. Brazilian officials were briefed in general terms on the status of SALT by State Department officials in November 1978.

US Objectives

To alter the Brazilian beliefs about American strategic inferiority and suspicion of SALT.

Brazilian Objectives

To obtain an updating on the progress of SALT and an understanding of SALT's effect on the strategic balance.

Points to be Made

-- In terms of overall strategic nuclear power, the two nations are roughly equal. The Soviets have more nuclear launchers, but we have better technology. For example, both nations have secure retaliatory weapons on ballistic missile firing submarines, but our submarine launched ballistic missiles have many more warheads. They have more and larger ICBMs but ours are more accurate. Soviet air defenses are extensive but we have more sophisticated bombers to counter their defenses--as well as a larger bomber force.

-- The SALT agreement is nearly complete. Unresolved technical details are being negotiated by the two sides.

-- SALT will improve US security in several ways. The Soviets will have to dismantle or destroy over 250 strategic systems. It will prohibit increases in Soviet launchers which we otherwise expect to be deployed. It caps the fractionation of warheads and limits other qualitative features of ICBMs. At the same time the US can proceed, if we choose, with deployment of new systems such as our Trident submarines and missiles, the MX ICBM and cruise missiles on heavy bombers.

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-- We have had regular consultations with other NATO members. Our principal allies announced their support for the agreement at the conclusion of the Guadeloupe meeting a month ago.

-- When an agreement is signed it is our intention to provide special briefings to a number of governments, among them Brazil. We will be pleased to brief your government additionally on SALT when appropriate U.S. officials visit Brazil and to provide information from time to time through your representatives in Washington.

Department of State
February 1979

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