



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

September 25, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Requesting Australian Assistance in Verifying
Possible South African Nuclear Test

Gerry Oplinger called this evening to say that Brzezinski had approved our approaching the Australians on this subject. This was based on the intelligence community's urgent recommendation and on the assumption that the Department of State supported this recommendation.

Brzezinski believed that not to level with the Australians at this point on the nature of our concern would be a mistake. We should provide the GOA the minimum facts concerning our detection of a possible nuclear explosion. Our disclosure should be limited to a very small group in the GOA. Below senior levels, U.S. Air Force activities conducted from Australian territory would be described on the basis of a cover story.

We should make clear to the Australians in giving them our facts that we have not verified whether a test occurred, much less its origin. We simply do not know at this point.

An appropriate back channel message was prepared and dispatched with the clearance of David Mark (INR), Richard Moose (AF), and Allen Locke (S/AS). Ray Seitz, with the Secretary's party in New York, was informed of our action. He undertook to inform Under Secretary Newsom that the United States was briefing the Australian Government on our intelligence.


Allen W. Locke

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