

12. National Security Decision Memorandum 3¹

Washington, January 20, 1969.

TO

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Administrator of the Agency for International Development
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of the US Information Agency
The Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness

SUBJECT

The Direction, Coordination and Supervision of Interdepartmental Activities
Overseas

The Secretary of State is my principal foreign policy adviser. He is also responsible, in accordance with approved policy, for the execution of foreign policy. I have assigned to the Secretary of State authority and responsibility to the full extent permitted by law² for the overall direction, coordination and supervision of interdepartmental activities of the United States Government overseas. Such activities do not include those of the United States military forces operating in the field where such forces are under the command of a United States area military commander, such other military activities as I elect as Commander-in-Chief to conduct through military channels, and activities which are internal to the execution and administration of the approved programs of a single department or agency and which are not of such a nature as to affect significantly the overall US overseas program in a country or region.

In discharging this authority and responsibility, the Secretary of State will be assisted by the NSC Interdepartmental Groups and the NSC Under Secretaries Committee, as constituted in NSDM 2³ and in accordance with the procedures set forth therein.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-209, National Security Decision Memoranda, NSDM 3. Confidential.

² Including continuous supervision and general direction of economic assistance, military assistance and sales programs, as provided in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. [Footnote in the source text.]

³ Document 11.

Within the purview of this NSDM, the Secretary of State may delegate full powers of decision to the Under Secretary of State, as Executive Chairman of the NSC Under Secretaries Committee, subject to the right of a member who does not concur to request the referral of a matter to the NSC Review Committee or to the NSC.⁴

Richard Nixon

⁴ NSDM 2 as approved by Nixon on January 11 (see Document 8) did not include this paragraph. On January 28, following a telephone conversation between Rogers and Kissinger regarding the paragraph, Pedersen sent Kissinger substitute wording which Pedersen anticipated would be issued to recipients of NSDM 3 under a covering memorandum explaining that it replaced "incorrect text" that was "inadvertently issued." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-209, National Security Decision Memoranda, NSDM 3) Instead the substitute wording was issued, with revisions, as NSDM 7, which reads: "The authority of the Secretary of State under NSDM 3 includes the right to delegate full powers of decision to the Chairman of the Interdepartmental Groups on all matters within the purview of NSDM 3 subject to the right of a member who does not agree to request the referral of a matter to a higher level of authority." (Ibid., NSDM 7)