MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

April 14, 1971

Subject: Transmission to Senate of February 2, 1971 Convention to prevent and punish acts of terrorism, etc.

The underlying Report of the Acting Secretary of State to the President and the Message from the President to the Senate are for the purpose of transmitting the Senate for advice and consent to ratification the Convention to Prevent and Punish the Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion That Are of International Significance, signed at Washington on February 2, 1971 by plenipotentiaries of the United States and 12 other member states of the OAS.

This Convention is designed to deal with the problem of kidnapping and other crimes against foreign officials. The OAS General Assembly met in Washington in January 1971 for the specific purpose of formulating a convention that would express condemnation of such acts of terrorism and would establish a mechanism for cooperation among the governments for dealing effectively with the perpetrators of such acts. Under the terms of the Convention, it remains open indefinitely for signature by OAS member states and by any other state that is a member of the United Nations or its specialized agencies or a party to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. Other states may be invited by the OAS General Assembly to sign.

As of April 6, 1971 Mexico, Nicaragua, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Uruguay had indicated plans to submit the OAS Convention to their respective senates within the next few months or upon the convening of the next regular legislative session. An early favorable decision by the President on the matter would put the United States, with Costa Rica and Uruguay, among the first states to seek Senate ratification.
The representative of Panama at the General Assembly felt it necessary to include with the Convention text a statement concerning the effect of the Convention on the right of asylum in the Canal Zone. At the time the U.S. delegate stated orally that it agreed with the representative of Panama that the Convention had no effect on the question of asylum in the Canal Zone, and noted that the United States and Panama have differing views regarding refugees in the Canal Zone under existing treaties. This statement is part of the minutes of the meeting. The U.S. delegation did not seek inclusion of the statement with the Convention text because (1) asylum in the Canal Zone is not affected by the Convention, and (2) the OAS General Assembly did not seem a proper forum for discussion of one of the principal matters to be treated during the renegotiation of the Canal treaties.

Robert C. Brewster
Acting Executive Secretary

Enclosures:

Report and Message with Convention.