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By WBY NARA Date 3/23/00



DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ACTION MEMORANDUM

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COPIES TO:

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RF (jhw)

To: The Secretary
Through: C - Mr. Sonnenfeldt
From: EUR - Arthur A. Hartman
PM - Thomas Stern, Acting

10/8/75
CDB

The DOD Modernization Program for
Tactical Nuclear Forces in Europe

The report sent to Congress last April on the status and concept for the use of tactical nuclear forces in NATO Europe (the so-called "Nunn Report") established an analytical basis for considering the composition and modernization of those forces. Secretary Schlesinger, at the NPG Ministerial meeting last June, left the Allies in little doubt that modernization would involve a new look at tactical nuclear forces (TNFs), their size and their relationship to conventional forces.

Since then, DOD has developed a working draft on modernization which outlines various options on modernizing TNF concepts, stockpiles and deployments, sets them in the context of NATO's existing and projected nuclear doctrine and concepts, and provides a rationale for each option.

As it now stands, however, on the basis of technical military criteria, the draft proposes a reduction of about 2,000 over several years in the present European stockpile of 6,951 warheads. The reduction proposed would be taken from some combination of the options in Attachment 2.

There are sound technical and military reasons for considering modernization and reductions of the stockpile. However, the projected reductions have substantial political and strategic implications:

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-- The Allies will scrutinize our proposals very carefully. As in the past, their main concern will be with any evidence that the US nuclear deterrent is being decoupled from the defense of Europe. The current DOD study suggests retirement of certain systems, modernization of others, reductions in numbers of warheads and shifts in targetting responsibilities from tactical nuclear aircraft to missiles, including Poseidon submarines. Separately, in response to the Presidential request in NSDM 300, DOD and State are considering the concept of a "SACEUR Deployable Reserve" which involves withdrawing nuclear warheads from Europe and storing them in the US for rapid return to Europe in the event of a crisis. Moreover, the US reply to NATO's 1975 Defense Planning Questionnaire (DPQ) foreshadows a major reduction over the next five years in US nuclear capable tactical aircraft based in Europe.

-- Soviet interpretations of such modernization and reduction actions are uncertain. It might be seen as part of the new nuclear strategy of flexible options and a step toward lowering the nuclear threshold in Europe. It might also be considered a precursor to an eventual US effort to turn over to the Germans and other Allies a larger responsibility for delivering nuclear weapons.

-- All of the foregoing, of course, will have consequences for MBFR. Premature exposure of these ideas would damage severely the utility of Option III. The Germans, in particular, will be concerned about this problem because a prime alternative to Option III would be a reduction in German forces as the necessary ingredient to the successful conclusion in MBFR. The Soviets will be less likely to bargain if they know that the US in any event will be withdrawing substantial nuclear forces.

The DOD draft, at our insistence, takes some of these political concerns into account in that it stresses 1) MBFR will be a "controlling factor" in the pace of any nuclear modernization program involving changes in the stockpile,

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2) attention will be given to reinforcing NATO cohesion and improving the deterrent, and 3) NATO political and military authorities and staffs must continue to be directly and deeply involved in any process of modernizing NATO's concepts and posture. In contrast to previous years, State on the staff level has been able to participate actively in the DOD discussion and drafting effort. We remain concerned, however, that Secretary Schlesinger may not adequately underscore some of the caveats with Ministers Mason and Leber when he travels to Europe in the last week of September. His discussions with them will serve as a prelude to the November NPG meeting in Hamburg. Accordingly, we recommend that you take an early opportunity to mention our political and strategic concerns to Secretary Schlesinger prior to his departure for Europe.

Recommendation: That you find an early opportunity to convey to Secretary Schlesinger views on TNF modernization along the lines of the Talking Points at Attachment 1.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments:

1. Talking Points
2. Modernization and Reduction Proposal Paper

Drafted by:
EUR/RPM:GBHelman; PM/ISA:LBrown
9/10/75, x 21627

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Put into a DPC*

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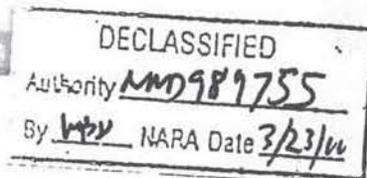
TALKING POINTS

-- Nuclear modernization proposals that improve our military capabilities and increase deterrence should be pursued, but political factors must be controlling. Deterrence will not be increased if the impact of modernization proposals is to lessen US credibility with our Allies; nor will it be increased if discussion of our proposals undermines MBFR.

-- Any presentation to the Allies must be carefully tailored to:

- stress credible military rationales for suggested changes;
- underscore the importance of MBFR and our commitment not to reduce outside MBFR;
- make clear that our proposals at this stage are options, not final decisions, on which we seek their views;
- avoid discussion of numbers.

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Tactical Nuclear Force Modernization
and Reduction Proposals

The Defense Department's working draft proposes reductions in the present European stockpile of 6,951 warheads of about 2,000 over several years. One thousand of these would be part of MBFR Option III. The reduction proposed would be taken from some combination of the following:

Nuclear Capable Aircraft. DOD proposes to target Poseidon and Pershing warheads on fixed targets in SACEUR's General Strike Plan (GSP) now assigned to nuclear strike aircraft in Europe; to replace a large number of nuclear capable F-4s in Europe with non-nuclear F-15 and A-10 aircraft; and to replace older fixed yield nuclear bombs with a new selectable-yield B-61 bomb on a less than one-for-one basis. The net warhead reduction that would result from these proposals is not clear, but it could be substantial (there are currently about 1,600 tactical nuclear bombs in Europe).

Issue. The missile-for-airplane substitution and nuclear bomb reductions raise two special problems: 1) shifting a substantial element of the US theater nuclear deterrent from tactical aircraft in NATO to strategic submarine forces will make the theater deterrent less visible and thus would suggest to the Allies the decoupling of the US nuclear deterrent for Europe's defense; and 2) reductions in the bomb stockpile in Europe could be very substantial, thus raising problems for MBFR.

Air Defense. A 50 percent reduction in Nike-Hercules batteries is proposed by end FY-76, with a gradual removal of all 700-plus nuclear warheads now in Europe. DOD argues that the nuclear Nike-Hercules is useful only against high altitude massed bomber attacks, whereas the threat is from low-level penetration, which must be dealt with by conventional means.

Issue. Nike system is widely held by Allies and, though obsolete, is the only high-altitude system operational in Europe. Accordingly, the Allies will approach the proposition cautiously and will also see it as a potential negotiating problem in MBFR.

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Atomic Demolition Munitions (ADMs). DOD has scheduled 275 high yield ADMs for early retirement, with 100 low yield ADMs retained pending development and possible deployment of a new earth penetrator system that would not require pre-emplacment. (The weakness of the present system is that it requires an early Presidential decision for use if it is to be effective.)

Issue. Since there is no NATO agreement on the use of ADMs, the removal of the high yield systems should pose no serious political problem with the Allies. Removal does, however, raise the negotiating problem associated with MBFR.

ASW. Retirement of some 400 ASROC anti-submarine rockets and ASTOR nuclear torpedoes in the Atlantic and Mediterranean area is proposed on the grounds that the MK-48 conventional torpedo and other non-nuclear ASW weapons now coming into the inventory are more effective.

Issue. None of these weapons are for use by the Allies, so retirement should pose minimal difficulties for them. None are stored in the NGA.

Nuclear Artillery. Both the 8" and 155 mm nuclear artillery shells have very serious technical limitations. Congress has refused to fund a replacement for the 155 mm, but development of a new 8" shell is underway. It is not clear what Defense proposes to do with the 155 mm inventories.

Issue. Both systems are widely held for use by the Allies and the inventory amounts to 1,525. The numbers involved (755) in retiring the 155 mm warheads will have political consequences, not least in MBFR.

Lance. The Lance missile is now replacing Honest Johns and Sergeants in Europe on a less than one-for-one basis.

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Issue. Potential negotiating problem for MBFR.

Site Consolidation. There are 145 nuclear storage sites in Europe. Fifty-three are Nike-Hercules sites, of which 43 are projected for closure. Other consolidations, mostly on security grounds, are being considered.

Issue. Site consolidation offers benefits for peacetime physical security against the cost of higher vulnerability in wartime. The larger issue for the Alliance, however, is not the number of sites but the number and types of weapons within the sites.

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