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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAY 18 2018

CM-276-83
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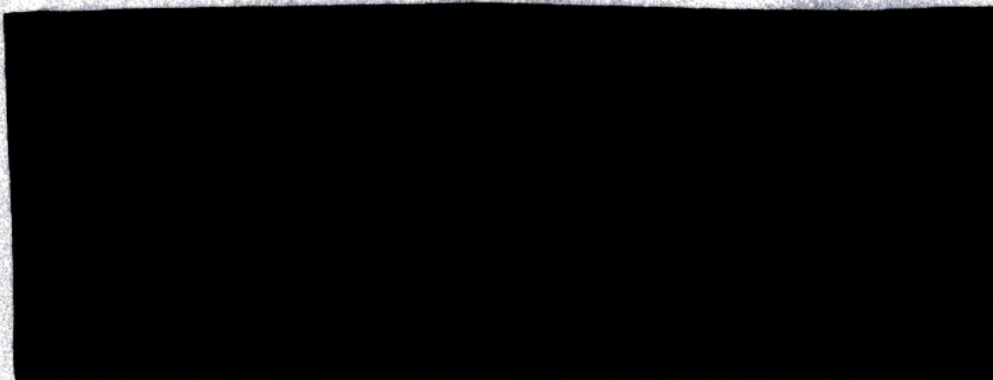
MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

227 3 1983

Subject: Nunn/Cohen/Percy 2-for-1 Build-down Proposal (U)

1. (S) In my 11 April 83 memorandum* to you on this subject, I indicated that in terms of the 2-for-1 build-down proposal, even if applicable only in the START context and only to ballistic missiles, I have difficulty envisioning any implementing proposals which would not be inherently destabilizing and to the disadvantage of the United States. I further stated that the big problem remains that we and the Soviets would be in different starting points in terms of force levels, but more particularly, in terms of modernization. As you know, the Soviets are well along in their modernization programs while the bulk of US modernization is yet to come.

2. (S) To illustrate this point, three-quarters of our strategic weapons are on launchers over 15 years old while the same fraction of Soviet strategic weapons are on launchers under 5 years of age.



3. (S) On the other hand, the Soviets' ICBM force is primarily modified and would require little in the way of replacements. Similarly, their bomber force is relatively constant. Their SLBM forces would, however, be somewhat impeded by 1986. The TYPHOON with 980 warheads would demand 1960 reductions but current Soviet SLBM warheads are 1,500 so only five rather than six TYPHOONS could be built.

USSR 348.3

1 May 83

OSD 33(6X2X5X8) + Section 6.2(a)

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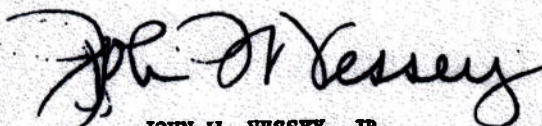
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4. (S) In summary, the 2-for-1 proposal would indeed have the impact on US forces that the 2-for-1 build-down desires. However, it would not constrain the already modernized Soviet ICBM forces. The Soviets would maintain a significant advantage in prompt MKG and prompt hard target kill capability, as well as a considerable advantage on the number of SNDV warheads, and overall equivalent megatonnage (EMT). It is for these reasons that the US START proposal which would permit modernization but at the same time force deep reductions on both sides is more to our national security interest than the 2-for-1 build-down proposal.

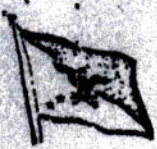


JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Reference
* CM 253-83

This is a hasty "first-look" at the concept. Nevertheless, the JCS have tasked the Joint Staff to search for the most positive way to implement a "build down". We need to examine further. JW —

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CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON

6 May 1983

The Honorable Sam Nunn
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAY 18 2018

Dear Senator Nunn,

(U) I am enclosing answers to the questions you raised during my 21 April 1983 testimony on MX and in your letter of 3 May 1983.

(S) Your build-down proposal deserves careful consideration and we are actively investigating a potential means of incorporating it into a START negotiating position. The major difficulty in adopting such a proposal is the disparity in our relative positions today. The Joint Chiefs fully support the President's goal of reducing nuclear weapons and our primary concern is not to imperil national security.

(U) My answer to your question concerning a five percent growth rate is not as forthright as I would like, but the analysis is simply not available. Additionally, Congress traditionally cuts certain DOD programs and such reductions would be first in any percentage reduction. Finally, we would want to protect our highest priority strategic and conventional modernization programs in any budget reduction effort.

(U) I hope this information will prove useful.

Very respectfully,

John W. Vessey, Jr.
JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Enclosure
as stated

Reference
Ltr from Sen Nunn, 3 May 83

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COHEN-MUNN WARHEAD REDUCTIONS

QUESTION: The second question, if we were to combine an MX authorization with, let us say, what is known as the Cohen-Munn two-for-one warhead reduction, put one in, take two out, would you identify for the record, if hypothetically that was happening, which warhead you would take out of the inventory as a proposal offer? I would ask you to do that with 100 also with whatever increments you have in this first question.

ANSWER: The concept deserves serious consideration. Clearly the goal of the drawdown proposal is one the Joint Chiefs of Staff share with the President: reducing the number of nuclear weapons of the United States and Soviet Union. The Joint Staff, therefore, has been directed to examine how this proposal might be melded into the current START position in order to achieve the desired goal of equal levels of comparable forces. We must, however, be cautious to assure such a proposal is not implemented in such a way that it would be disadvantageous to the United States or imperil national security. The goals of the President's force modernization program must be achieved and there must be parity and equality with the Soviet Union. In conducting this examination, we must be careful to take into account the relative positions of the United States and Soviet Union. To illustrate this point, three quarters of our strategic weapons are on launchers over 15 years old while the same fraction of Soviet strategic weapons are on launchers under 5 years of age. Therefore, while there is a compelling urgency for the United States to modernize, the same is not true for the USSR. If the United States modernizes as it must to restore the strategic balance, but the USSR does not, then the impact of the drawdown proposal would be imposed on the US in a unilateral way. The consequences of such action could be severe.

In summary, if the US proceeds in modernizing its strategic offensive systems in parallel with reductions envisioned by our present START proposal, the US and the Soviet Union could achieve relative equity. From that position of parity, the 2-for-1 build-down proposal could be used to achieve real reductions in strategic nuclear systems. Hence, while the proposal may well have merit, we need to plan for its implementation in a manner that will not jeopardize US national security interests. We need to study the implications in greater detail.

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OSD 3-3(b)(2) (S) + Section 6.2(4)

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Senator Munn: I want to pose for the record the same question assuming the five percent defense budget average growth above inflation over the next decade. I would like you to furnish for the record the best projection you can of the strategic program as we now know it taking the cost over the next ten years because I do not believe that analysis has been done in the Department of Defense, at least I have not seen anything approaching that.

ANSWER: Plans for strategic programs are not based on growth rates nor on percent of GNP. Plans are based on the threat to our national security and what we need for an effective deterrence.

Modernization of our strategic forces to deter nuclear war has the highest priority in our defense budget and I certainly believe it should. Resources in the current Five Year Defense Plan for strategic programs are less than 15 percent of the DoD budget for each year and average 12 percent over the five years. This equates to 1 percent of GNP over the period. Average real growth for strategic programs is 10 percent for the five year period but varies considerably from year to year because of the high cost of developing and deploying a new system and the relatively low cost of operations after deployment.

I cannot give you figures for the entire 10 years because our extended plans beyond the Five Year Defense Plan are not fully costed and are subject to considerable change. If our overall defense budget for FY 1984 is reduced to achieve a 5 percent real growth target, we must re-examine the balance between the various elements. As submitted, the budget is the minimum necessary for effective deterrence against nuclear and conventional aggression. It achieves a balance between strategic and conventional needs as well as readiness, sustainability, and modernization.

Finally, I must emphasize that our plans are subject to whatever may be achieved in arms limitation agreements and I certainly hope that significant and mutually verifiable reductions will result. In the meantime, we cannot reduce the threats to our security if we cut back while others continue building more and more.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: X
Reason: 3.2(h)(2)(B)(i) + 6.2(f)
MDR: 18 - M-0692

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