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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
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Date: JAN 30 2012

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

MEMORANDUM FOR: DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: NATO Strategy and Logistics Guidance

Date: 30 JAN 2012 Authority: E0 13526

Declassify: ☒ Deny in Full: ☐

Declassify in Part: ☐
Reason: ☐ MDR: 12-M-0442

Over the past several years the U. S. strategy with regard to NATO has been subjected to numerous reappraisals. The net effect of these to date has been a reaffirmation of the suitability of the NATO policy of "flexible response." Under that policy a nonnuclear attack by the Warsaw Pact would be met in kind up to the point where either its size or its duration threatened the integrity of NATO forces or territory. This had been my understanding of the meaning of "initial defense" in Europe. Your strategy guidance stipulated that our peacetime NATO forces and their logistical support need not be able to sustain a defense against a major attack for longer than about 90 days. This was consistent with the strategy announced in NSDM-27.

When NSSM-84 called for a new study of U. S. strategies and forces for NATO, it included a requirement for considering "different initial defense strategies (for example, 30 or 60 days rather than 90)."

Viewed in this recent context, and in the light of logistics guidance memoranda over several recent years, limiting our capability for conventional combat in Europe to a period of 90 days may appear at first to be a continuation of a long-standing interpretation of NATO strategy. It is in this light that NSSM-84's 60 and 30 day alternatives are "different initial defense strategies." However, based on a recent rereading of DPMs which go back to the early 1960s, I am convinced that even the 90-day limitation, if applied to force design as well as to logistics guidance, is itself a substantial change from earlier interpretations of the capabilities required to support NATO's flexible response policy.

A few quotes will show why I am so convinced. The first two are from the Memorandum for the President on "Recommended FY 1964-1968 General Purpose Forces."

"One of the most critical weaknesses we inherited was the lack of adequate stocks of equipment and ammunition for all three services to fight a nonnuclear conflict for a significant

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1/ Dep Sec Def Memorandum, Strategy Guidance, dated 28 January 1970.

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period of time. ...To correct these serious logistic deficiencies my FY 1963 guidance ... set an an ultimate objective sufficient balanced stocks to cover the period between the outbreak of a large-scale nonnuclear conflict and the time increased wartime production equals wartime consumption. As a strictly interim measure, I set the period at six months for FY 1963, pending study of the D (D-Day) to P (production equals consumption) period for each time."

"For FY 1964, I recommended budgeting \$3.3 billion on Army equipment. At this level, the budget provides sufficient funds to procure the initial complement of combat equipment required for 16 active and 6 priority divisions plus such replacements, spares, and combat consumables as are necessary to permit 16 divisions to operate in combat for the entire period between D-Day and the time when the production resources of the country can furnish equipment equal to combat consumption."

From our intent to provide D to P support for all active forces, including those deployed in and oriented toward Europe, it can be deduced that the flexible response strategy was seen as requiring a capability for indefinite conventional combat.

Subsequent DPMs recognized reasons for backing away from such ambitious logistic goals. The first such reason was the then current (and still largely so) inability of our European allies to sustain their forces to the same degree as we planned to sustain ours. The following are excerpts from the General Purpose Forces DPM of 6 November 1964.

"The Army has been authorized in the past, except for aircraft, to procure both equipment and ammunition to sustain a 16-division force from D-Day until P-Day, when production equals combat consumption."

"I recommend approval of: the acquisition of ammunition for 14 divisions on a D-P basis and for 6 months for the other 8 divisions which constitute the forces to be deployed to Europe by M+30. Equipment for combat support will be provided for 6 months for the 22 divisions. In case the 6 months support level for individual items of equipment substantially impairs the Army's ability to fight 14 divisions indefinitely, procurement beyond a 6 months reserve level will be proposed for approval. Our forces in Europe will continue to be at a substantially higher level of supply than our Allies."

Still later, and possibly under the stress of meeting the requirements for our growing involvement in Southeast Asia, the guidance was reduced

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from six months to 90 days. By and large, however, the gradual diminution in objective level was presented as a matter of logistic guidance only, with no evidence of necessary implication regarding similar constraint on forces, or of anticipated duration of conventional combat. 2/

As an example, the 7 January 1969 DPM on "NATO Strategy and Force Structure" contained a plan to maintain 11 Army divisions (eight active, three reserve) "primarily for NATO/Europe," and to provide them with initial allowances and 90 days of equipment, ammunition, and supplies. The same DPM also stated that the 11 division force "represents only about 35% of the total U. S. land forces programmed worldwide for mid-1969. The NATO force could therefore be substantially supplemented by forces drawn from our Strategic Reserve or from forces held for other theaters." Since both latter classes of forces are provided equipment, ammunition, and supplies for indefinite combat (i.e., D to P) there were reasonable grounds for deducing that, as of early 1969, sustained conventional combat in Europe was still conceived as a viable option.

That option appears to have died only with NSDM-27 as interpreted by your subsequent strategy guidance. Thus, although the President's policy with regard to Europe has usually been represented in the press as maintaining the status quo at least through FY 1971, it is in fact open to other interpretation.

I have been unable to find evidence to support a belief that it would work to our advantage to limit our choice, at the end of 90 days conventional combat in Europe, to one between surrender and escalation. Yet, rigid application of the 90-day constraint to both logistics and force planning could lead to that result. For that reason I have had my staff take a quick look at what possibilities might exist if the 90-day constraint were applied only to logistics guidance in continuance of previous policy. Briefly, it appears that we might be able to fight in Europe for longer than 90 days -- three months at consumption levels associated with intense combat followed by a month or more at sustaining rates -- provided we were

2/ One specific exception to the latter (i.e. duration) is the DPM on "NATO Strategy and Force Structure," 21 September 1966, which stated that "the U. S. should revise its Europe-oriented forces to become more balanced with respect to the realistic limits of NATO's overall nonnuclear capability and those nonnuclear contingencies which are most probable." That DPM went on to recommend 60 combat days' stockage in Europe and total procurement of 90 combat days' stocks for our Europe-oriented forces as "an interim objective." Even here, however, the reference to "overall" capabilities appears to refer to shortfalls in our allies' forces. Also, the DPM was written during a time when support of SEA-deployed forces was becoming increasingly difficult.

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not engaged elsewhere and therefore could divert stocks held for other purposes. Availability of tanks is the limiting factor identified so far, and even this is not a severe limit since our assets would be more than 90% of requirements until about D+4 months. Further study is required, and I am directing my staff to undertake it. I suggest that this one-month bonus, if it really exists in our currently proposed program, would be sufficient cause for considering an interpretation of your strategy guidance which would limit the 90-day constraint to logistics guidance only. This would allow continued planning for deployments thru M+90, and conceivably beyond, in those cases where additional forces might contribute to favorable resolution of a conflict without resort to nuclear warfare.

Broadening the President's feasible choices, at no increase in cost, would be the most important reason for such a reinterpretation. Associated with that reason is a consideration not frequently discussed. Even assuming that our allies will continue to improve their capabilities for sustained conventional combat, it is difficult to predict the full range of possible reasons that might induce them to stop fighting before their resources had been exhausted. If such a situation arose, our committed forces would deserve a fair chance of being able to fight their way either to a coast or to defensible terrain from which they might be extracted. In such a situation, our people at home also would deserve a fair chance to disengage without risking their own destruction for the sake of allies who were no longer attempting to defend themselves. Granted, the situation I have described is unlikely. But the bonus capability I mentioned would be inexpensive insurance against the intolerable loss that such a situation might otherwise entail.

It is necessary to distinguish between the choice of objectives and the determination of the rate at which we proceed toward them. It would be unreasonable for the U. S. to expend resources in the short run to provide a capability for sustained combat out of all proportion to the capability of our Allies. It is also true, therefore, that to the extent our Allies are slow to improve their capability we must stand ready to escalate, not because it offers a clear advantage, but because there would be no real alternative. Similarly it is true that, should our Allies totally reject programs needed to improve substantially the ability to sustain their forces, we would have to seek a modification of our strategic concepts. Because of these facts it is proper to limit the logistic guidance so that we preserve a reasonable balance between U. S. and other NATO force capabilities. At this time the 90-day constraint does this. The balance between U. S. and allied capabilities is reasonable in the sense that U. S. forces have consistently been considered as setting a standard for our allies to emulate.

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As outlined earlier, the 90-day constraint, so long as it is applied only to logistics guidance and not to force planning, allows a capability to fight longer. That capability also results partly from the use in Europe of forces supported for indefinite combat elsewhere and partly from the diversion of assets held in CONUS for the support of allies. But the critical element appears to be how much we buy for our NATO-oriented forces, particularly as regards ammunition. With 90-day NATO guidance and diversion of other assets, ammunition is not a constraint. There are indications that this would probably no longer be true under 60 or 30 day options as considered in NSSM-84. With logistic guidance geared to such severely limited objectives, we could thus expect to lose the "bonus capability" and its resultant broadening of options, despite the equipment surpluses that might be generated as a result of lowered AAOs. This is another area where more study is required, and we are pursuing it.

With regard to the 60 and 30 day options, it should be noted that, at least for the major items of equipment we have been able to examine so far, there would be no large direct savings due to reducing logistic guidance. Under current fiscal constraints, we are not programming substantial buys during the next few years.

In summary, then:

- 90-day logistic guidance is not inconsistent with our historical interpretation of NATO policy, but application of the same constraint to force planning is. Such application is also unduly restrictive in that it denies us flexibility and thus increases the likelihood of escalation to nuclear warfare.

- A 60 or 30 day initial defense strategy would not lead to large direct savings in equipment costs. Either would obviously aggravate the loss of flexibility. Although I have limited myself to discussing the effects of varying guidance levels on our own forces, adoption of such limited objectives would also surely cause serious reverberations within the NATO alliance, and would impact on stability in Europe as a whole.

For the reasons outlined above I recommend that, at this stage of the planning and programming process, you permit the services to proceed as if the 90-day constraint applied only to logistic guidance and not to strategy or force planning. Meanwhile my staff will continue to press toward refining the data which, hopefully, could provide you with a basis for issuing new guidance.

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I also recommend that you use your office to insure that the illusory advantages of a shorter (i.e., 60 or 30 day) guidance be clearly portrayed in any discussion of NSSM-84.

Thaddeus R. Beal
Under Sec of Army

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