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TALKING PAPER FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND THE CHAIRMAN,  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF - DEFENSE PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (DPRC)  
MEETING OF 15 JANUARY 1970

SUBJECT: Reductions in US Forces Committed to NATO in CY 1970

ISSUE: Should the United States further reduce its commitment to  
NATO of Category A and B naval forces at this time?

BACKGROUND:

a. The President approved on 20 October 1969 a recommendation that the Defense Program Review Committee (DPRC) review further reductions in forces committed to NATO and submit recommendations to him prior to implementation or public announcement.

b. National Security Decision Memorandum #26 directs, inter alia, that the DPRC will review the diplomatic, military, political and economic consequences of issues requiring Presidential determination that result from proposals to change US overseas force deployments and committed forces based in the US.

c. Last October, the US Reply to the NATO 1969 Defense Planning Questionnaire was distributed to NATO nations. It announced some reductions in US force commitments for CY 1969 and in planned commitments for CY 1970. At the same time, Ambassador Ellsworth informed NATO of additional reductions occasioned by Project 703 but not yet incorporated in the DPQ Reply. Most of the reductions were in naval forces.

d. NATO was also informed at that time that the President has directed that he will personally review any further changes that might affect forces committed to NATO and that NATO will be consulted well in advance of any Presidential decision.

e. On 17 October 1969, the JCS recommended the permanent transfer of four (4) destroyers (DD) from the Atlantic Fleet to the Pacific Fleet.

f. On November 24, the JCS submitted to SecDef a proposed Corrigendum (amendment) to the DPQ Reply, which would further reduce our naval force commitments (over and above reductions already made known to NATO) by 3 Category A destroyers, 9 Category A maritime patrol aircraft, and 12 Category B destroyers. Reductions affect only NATO's Atlantic Command forces; forces for its European Command are not changed.

g. The Secretary of Defense, in the 3 December 1969 NATO Defense Planning Committee (DPC) Meeting, said that:

(1) We are, in the FY 71 Budget, planning to maintain US combat forces in Europe at essentially the same level as the one that now prevails

Office of the Secretary of Defense

OSR CHIEF, RDP, RSD, WHS

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Ch. XI  
39

84-87

(2) In this (FY 70) and in the forthcoming fiscal year (FY 71) some adjustments will be necessary.

(3) Some further adjustments may be required in Category B and C naval commitments. <sup>1/</sup>

Subject to these qualifications, the US made firm force commitments for CY 1970 at the 3 December meeting.

#### DISCUSSION:

a. The present US Reply to the DPQ held by NATO is not accurate, and we need to update that document promptly to permit NATO force planning to proceed on the basis of valid commitments. Failure to do so will preclude effective US participation in NATO defense planning, including development of 1971-75 NATO force goals, and will increase Allied fears concerning our real intentions.

b. The related question of the permanent transfer of four (4) destroyers (DD) from the Atlantic Fleet to the Pacific Fleet is of importance to the DPRC only in the sense that it, in conjunction with certain other adjustments, would result in reducing the NATO commitment by three (3) Category A destroyers.

#### c. Options

There are several options, each of which is discussed briefly in the Issues Paper (Tab A).

#### d. Procedures

If the DPRC reaches agreement on all items, and decides to proceed with reductions in Category A, the President should be advised and Ambassador Ellsworth should be instructed to consult the NATO Allies promptly on the reductions; the DPRC would subsequently convey the Allied reactions, together with recommendations, to the President for final decision.

If the DPRC is unable to reach full agreement, we think the matter should be submitted to the President for his preliminary guidance prior to any consultation with the Allies.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

ISA and the Joint Staff disagree.

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- <sup>1/</sup> Category A (forces available within 48 hours)  
 Category B (forces available in 30 days)  
 Category C (forces available after 30 days)

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 Date: JAN 23 2012

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3

ISA recommends:

Option D - maintain present Navy Category A commitments, positioning both destroyers and maritime patrol aircraft in the Atlantic. Reasons: Adverse political impact to be expected from further reductions outweighs the military disadvantages of holding the line on commitments. NATO has already had heavy dose of reductions in US commitments: one Category A CVA; six CVSs (two in Category A); forty-one Category C destroyer types; and others. We weathered that storm, but further Category A reductions now could have an extremely serious effect, and be interpreted as a retreat from high-level Administration assurances. NATO Allies were told in December to expect further adjustments in Categories B and C, so there is no objection to proposed Category B reductions--but impression given in December was that there would be no further reductions in Category A naval forces.

Joint Staff recommends:

Option A - make the reductions as recommended by the JCS. Reasons: The JCS considered the political implications in making their recommendation. They also considered the many recent indications that our Allies have come to expect, and are in fact conditioned to, further reductions. Paramount in the JCS recommendation is their estimate of the military implications of further reductions in the Pacific Fleet in the face of the increasing threat of the Soviet naval presence, particularly the submarine threat. In the opinion of the JCS, this threat to the US and to its Allies cannot be ignored even at the expense, when necessary, of the formal US commitment to NATO.

Approved by

R. M. Ware  
Assistant Secretary of Defense, ISA

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Nelson Johnson  
Director, Joint Staff

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