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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAR 13 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR SECDEF

SUBJECT: The Leber Problem Is Bigger than I Thought

The media coverage, cable traffic and our German friends have finally convinced me that the tank gun issue has escalated far beyond a technical one. It has become a major political test of German machismo, of Alliance solidarity, of [redacted] and even of Executive Branch vs Congress. To me all this dwarfs any question of which gun is somewhat better; it even puts in jeopardy our far more important AWACS enterprise.



OSD 3.3(b)(6)

I'm an old hand and I don't panic. But I'm convinced that the damn 120mm smoothbore has become a symbol in German eyes whether the US is serious about a coalition capability. I may not grasp fully your problem with the Congress, but I want to be sure you have my perspective on the possible costs to our relationship with NATO's other critically important pillar--FRG. [redacted]

Recommendation--even agreement in principle to keep working the hybrid tank concept (including smoothbore) on a no-commitment basis would be a lot better than agreement to disagree. It would buy us time to work on the Army and Congress, while calming Germans down.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RND, Fcn. WHS +5 U.S.C. § 552
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Reason: 3, 3 (6) (6)
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Bob
R. W. Komer

330-80-0017, box 76, NATO 451.6, 1477

~~EXEMPT FROM GDS CONTROL~~
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~~SECRET~~

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RWK - I believe we
have agreement with
FRG - MOD to keep working
the concept.
HRS
cc: Gene Mc A - do you agree?
15-M-0237



msk

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