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Doc #137 ERW

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON D C 20301

April 3, 1978

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: ERW

I understand that Genscher on April 4 is likely to convey a decision by the FRG Security Council to ask you to deploy enhanced radiation weapons in Germany. Such a move, together with FRG and UK concerns expressed to Warren Christopher about how the decision is to be publicly handled, reinforce my belief that there will be very severe costs to an explicit final decision now against ER. These include:

- FRG moves will tend to make the US--and you personally--take all the heat for a "no".
- There will be charges of "another unilateral restraint", that could undermine support at home for foreign policy initiatives, including SALT and possibly even the Panama Canal Treaties.
- Our best public argument for a "no"--the divisive effect of producing and deploying ER on public support for more important defense programs--will be seriously undercut by the likely German position.

I suggest that in light of the rapid changes in the picture since your trip began, we should delay any public announcement until after Minister Genscher's visit gives us a chance to consider the FRG position and perhaps to take some further Congressional soundings.

In the period before an announcement is made, I urge you to consider a decision that would start work on modernized weapons for Lance while leaving open a final decision on whether to complete the installation of the ER feature. This would mean producing the Lance weapon (W-70 Mod3) intended to contain the ER system, without now committing to install the elements that make it an ER weapon. Technically, the Lance weapons that have been designed to contain the ER features can be built without them.



The ER features can later be added if necessary, but an affirmative Presidential decision to do that would be required.

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380-81-0202, box 60, Lance 471.94 (Jan - 20 Apr) 1978

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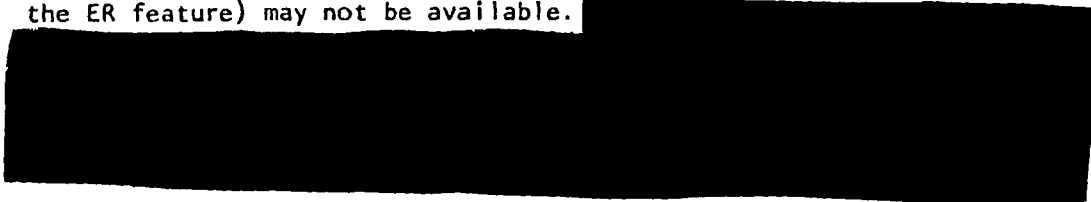
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While it is clear that we would also need to modernize the 8" system-- the other immediate candidate for ER--to improve range and safety, the same option (of producing the newly-designed weapon and leaving out the ER feature) may not be available.



A decision to go ahead with the production of the Lance W 70 Mod 3 without committing to completing the ER features would respond to the very real military need to continue to modernize the Lance system. It would also reassure the allies that the ER issue does not imply abandonment of the battlefield nuclear forces, which failure to modernize would be likely to be read as implying. To achieve these ends, an effective and practical program of modernization would be needed even with an absolute and final decision against ER.

I believe combining such a deferral option for Lance with a call for some "equivalent" Soviet action (if we can define "equivalent" with the right degree of precision or imprecision) would reduce criticism of "unilateralism" or "give away". For that reason, I suggest you consider joining a deferred decision with a call on the Soviets to show restraint in deployments of forces related to the security of Europe that will make it unnecessary to consider whether to incorporate ER features into our modernized battlefield weapons. Such a position would not commit the US to ER if the offer is not taken up, but would make clear that our future decisions in this area depend in part on their conduct.

The announcement could be cast in the following form: The President has decided not to proceed now with enhanced radiation features in the nuclear weapons we will be modernizing. He calls on the Soviets to show restraint in force deployments relating to European security, and his future decisions on ER will depend on their actions.

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AUG 15 2016

Harold Brown

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