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Chem weap  
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TALKING PAPER

FOR

SECRETARY BROWN

PRC Meeting

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Why not go ahead  
with pilot plant  
without deciding  
on more right  
now

SUBJECT: Binary Chemical Munitions Facility

BACKGROUND AND CENTRAL ISSUE: An interagency group (State, Defense and ACDA) has prepared, under NSC direction, a Discussion Paper (Tab A) outlining the binary issue and identifying some problem areas. You will recall that Defense asked the other concerned agencies to express their views on your decision to include funding for Phase I (\$19.3 million) of the binary chemical munitions facility in the Department's FY 81 budget submission. The binary facility funding is included in the basic budget at the Band 2 level.

The central issue is whether the Administration's FY 81 budget request to Congress should include the binary item. After several years of deferring funding for this item, we believe the time has come for the Administration to agree to the construction of a pilot plant. As the NSC Discussion Paper indicates (Military Rationale) considerations of both security and costs argue for the binary facility -- rather than improving the current stockpile. The JCS strongly support the binary option and Defense is in agreement that the supporting rationale for such a decision flows from the need to modernize our CW capability and not from any perceived need stemming from the CW negotiations; we should avoid identifying a binary decision as a "bargaining chip" in the US-USSR bilateral negotiations.

During the work of the interagency group it emerged that there is a consensus supporting the need for the US to keep a CW retaliatory capability until a comprehensive ban on CW is negotiated; and it was recognized that the rationale for modernization of our CW capabilities has merit. Also it was agreed that a crucial aspect of a binary funding decision is the political dimension: both in the Congress, among the general public and in allied capitals stemming from a long history of general sensitivity and repugnance to CW programs. In discussing the complex ramifications of the political dimensions of a binary funding decision, the group recognized that until a specific budgetary proposal for CW modernization is made, it would be difficult to gauge the depth of Congressional support or to judge the intensity of public reaction. We believe a good case can be made in Congress and allied capitals -- in context of the Administration's strong initiatives to improve the Alliance's defense posture (i.e., conventional and TNF modernization and LTDP) -- that the U.S. must keep a CW retaliatory capability as

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long as the Soviets maintain their superior CW capability (Current and projected Warsaw Pact CW Posture) and our national policy objective of negotiating a complete and effective prohibition of all chemical weapons is not attained. Under the most optimistic negotiations scenario, a continuing CW deterrent capability would be required by the US until at least 1995 -- the time required for elaboration of a multilateral treaty by the Committee on Disarmament, entry into force and destruction of stocks.

SOME OBSTACLES

The NSC discussion paper identifies some difficulties which might emerge from a decision to proceed with the binary production facility:

- The negotiations are still underway and requesting funds to build a binary capability could suggest a lack of commitment to or faith in the negotiations and our policy objective of seeking a comprehensive ban on CW. *Do Soviet actions carry the same problems ✓*
- The European allies could balk at accepting further forward deployment of chemical weapons. *Some are opposing us we're in no position to lose anyway ✓*
- At home, Congress may decide not to fund new chemical weapons production. If the Administration failed to persuade Congress on the need for modernization, it could be detrimental to our efforts to improve the overall US deterrent posture. *Some of everything ✓*
- The "unique" pressures of election year politics would have to be considered. *Correct ✓*

FUTURE STEPS

If a decision to proceed with the binary facility is made, we should proceed on a double track approach to mitigate obstacles by:

- Continuing to press in negotiations for agreement on a comprehensive ban

While at the same time:

- Pressing our allies to accept a coherent NATO doctrine and strategy for CW which addresses forward deployment, theater requirements, and stockpile composition. (The Chairman of the NATO Military Committee had already recommended similar action to the Secretary General.)
- Convincing allies that binary munitions are acceptable for storage and have potential for coproduction.

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- Persuading key members of Congress that now is an appropriate time politically to support the Administration's proposal for improving US chemical weapons modernization in context of a clearer allied perception of the Soviet threat in Europe, and in consonance with the President's NATO initiatives reflected in the LTDP, TNF modernization plans and plea for increased NATO defense spending.
- Recognizing the unique pressures of election year politics to make the point that a coherent NATO doctrine and strategy should not be made hostage to the vagaries of domestic politics. Additionally, stress should be made on the advantages of greater safety, reduced environmental hazard in transportation, handling, and storage which would occur from CW munitions modernization. *Some allies (UK) expressing*
- Accepting that a key part to gaining support for and understanding of CW will require presentation to Congress (and allies) of a total Administration position supporting CW modernization. ✓

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the DOD resist binary funding deferral because, inter alia, such deferral would increase future costs substantially, and invite a continuing growth in the CW asymmetries between NATO and the Warsaw Pact forces. Also, from a predominantly military point of view, a US decision not to modernize the CW deterrent capability invites possible primary reliance on nuclear weapons and escalation for CW deterrence. Unless a visible deterrence exists, the allies are potentially subject to political blackmail in addition to the operational deficiency. *misleading*
- The US should not limit the President's options to reliance only on CW protective measures and nuclear and conventional forces for deterring chemical attacks. The US should maintain a chemical weapons retaliatory capability to counter Soviet chemical weapons capabilities. Preemptive use of CW by the Soviets places the US at a severe operational disadvantage and this is unacceptable. This disadvantage is clearly perceived by the Soviets and is potentially provocative. *I agree*
- The climate is as good in NATO for action now as it probably ever will be. The only alternative we currently have to a chemical preemption by the Soviets may well be a tactical nuclear response -- clearly a highly undesirable restriction of options. *I disagree*

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- Both security and costs argue for the binary facility rather than the reopening of existing facilities to fill new weapons from existing stocks of agents. Also, it is possible to couple introduction of binary facility to the promise to destroy all unitary stocks (e.g., Weteye) and thus ease congressional and environmental reservations. ✓
- Finally, older US stocks of offensive chemicals are unusable or unable to be brought to bear quickly, and therefore, offer no reasonable solution. // ✓

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