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72

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

9 OCT 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Joint Chiefs of Staff Views on SALT (U)

~~(TS)~~ The attached memos -- one a formal statement by the JCS and the other a covering memo from General Brown explaining the context of the statement -- summarize the position of the JCS on the options you considered in preparing for the recent round of talks with Foreign Minister Gromyko. As General Brown's cover memo makes clear, these views were known to and considered by you and your advisors in making decisions in the course of those talks.

~~(TS)~~ Since that time the situation has changed substantially because of progress made in recent days toward an agreement. In reviewing this JCS statement (and the others on mobiles, cruise missiles, and Backfire forwarded recently) it seems to me clear that the issues about which the JCS express concern have been accommodated -- although not always by the precise mechanisms and provisions suggested by the JCS.

~~(TS)~~ Overall Levels:

JCS Concern:

1. The difference between the MIRV level and the SNDV level should be small enough to minimize the effect of the limited number of US non-MIRV systems on US ability to match Soviet SNDV numbers.

Result: The effect of the US position of levels of 2160, 1320 and 1200 respectively is to permit us to reach 2160 by 1985, while deploying the programmed 173 ALCMd B-52. One way to do this is to retain the 160 Polaris SSBNs.

- 120 ALCM-Carrying Heavy Bomber (AHB) (above the 1200 limit)
- 450 Minuteman-II
- 54 Titan II
- 160 Polaris
- 176 Penetrating B-52s
- 960 Non-MIRV
- +1200 MIRV
- 2160

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: MAY 25 2016

Downgraded to Secret  
Date: 02/18/2016  
Chief, Declassification Division, WHS

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DECLASSIFY ON: 31 Dec 2007

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15-m-1645  
Sec Def Cont Nr. X-2865

Obviously these figures are only illustrative: the actual force composition would depend on such things as the size of the ALCM-carrying heavy bomber force, deployment of a cruise missile carrier or a new penetrating bomber, and judgment about the cost-effectiveness of postponing retirement of Polaris and/or Titan II. Clearly, we need to keep this problem in mind, but the present position does permit the US to reach the permitted SNDV level.

2. While the 51 Bear reconnaissance variants need not be counted, the 60-odd tanker and ASW variants should be.

Result: This position is embodied in your instructions. The issue is still unresolved. It may be that we will wish to link resolution of the bomber variant problem to flexibility in designating US ALCM-carrying aircraft, rather than to SNDV levels.

~~(S)~~ ALCM Range:

JCS Concern: ALCM range should not be constrained for the long term if air defense improvements are not.

Result: We and the Soviets have agreed that the range limit of 2500 km on ALCMs on heavy bombers will continue only for the duration of the Protocol. Thereafter, new range limits -- possibly linked to limits on Soviet air defense -- will have to be set.

~~(S)~~ ALCM Flexibility:

JCS Concerns:

1. AHB numbers should not be limited below 250.

Result: The formula worked out will permit the US considerable flexibility in determining AHB numbers: A certain number (we have sought 120 and the Soviets have conceded 70) will be outside the MIRV total. Thereafter we could increase the force to the extent deemed appropriate, though we would, of course, have to trade off MIRVs for AHBs.

2. ALCM platform limits should not be in the Treaty unless matched by constraints on additional Soviet systems.

Result: The MIRVed ICBM (MICBM) limit -- which represents a new constraint on the Soviets -- will be in the Treaty.

~~(S)~~ Cruise Missiles

JCS Concerns:

1. "System operational range" should be the measure of range for SALT purposes.

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Result: This definition is embodied in your current instructions.

2. SALT should not impose limits on conventionally armed cruise missiles.

Result: Your current instructions would accept limits on conventional cruise missiles during the Protocol period -- when we have no serious prospect of deploying them -- and reserve the right to seek different treatment in the future.

3. GLCMs and SLCMs development should not be limited and deployment options should be maintained.

Result: We have apparent agreement on a formula to achieve this -- by limiting restrictions on GL/SLCMs to three years, while, in effect, leaving development work not significantly constrained. For this, as for some other issues, we must recognize that the Soviets will attempt to negotiate the Protocol limits into the Treaty during the SALT III negotiations.

~~(S)~~ ICBM Vulnerability and Mobiles

JCS Concerns:

1. Limits on MIRVed heavy ICBMs are inadequate, in isolation, to reduce significantly the threat to Minuteman.

Result: The substitution of an overall MICBM limit for a MIRVed heavy ICBM limit is consistent with this judgment.

2. A MIRVed ICBM limit of 800 is also inadequate, in isolation, to reduce significantly the threat to Minuteman.

Result: I believe it is generally agreed that the agreed 820 MICBM limit does not, in itself, reduce Minuteman vulnerability. However, it will hold Soviet MIRVed ICBM levels about 100 below what the intelligence community was projecting, and serves as a first step toward further limits.

3. To maintain US options in the face of future Soviet anti-ICBM capabilities, the option to develop mobiles and eventually deploy them should be preserved.

Result: We have agreed that the necessary launcher testing can be carried on during the Protocol period. Flight tests will be banned, but we would probably not be ready for such tests before the Protocol expires. The Delegation's instructions, and US proposals made pursuant to them, would make it clear that mobiles would be permitted under the Treaty. Any post-Protocol limits on mobiles would depend on US agreement.

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Date: MAY 25 2016

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4

4. The 120 ambiguous Type III-G launchers at Derazhnaya and Pervomaysk should count as MIRVs.

Result: This has been agreed.

(7S) Backfire

JCS Concern: Backfire's strategic potential is such that it should be covered by SALT TWO.

Result: Freezing the production rate, to which the Soviets have apparently agreed (but which we seek to make more specific), would hold the size of the Soviet Backfire force below what the intelligence community had predicted -- about 366 by 1985 vs. 425 projected. In addition, they have agreed to assurances respecting range, purpose and refueling, which make some, though limited, contributions to reducing our concerns. Obviously, if it could have been negotiated, the preferred solution would have been to count Backfire as a heavy bomber. On balance, however, I believe the likely result will adequately meet the basic problem -- that Backfire not be permitted to be entirely free of SALT-related constraints.

(S) In summary, it is my judgment that the agreement we now seem to be approaching meets the basic thrust of the JCS concerns, although it differs in its provisions from some JCS preferences.

*Harold Brown*

Attachments

1. JCSM-375-77
2. CM-1631-77

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MDR: 15 -M- 1645

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552

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