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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Desktop Div, WDD  
Date: OCT 26 2015

JCSM-440-77  
21 November 1977

Doc # 73

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: SALT (U)

1. (75) The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that, in transmitting JCSM-375-77, 23 September 1977, "SALT Status (U)," to the President, your covering memorandum of 6 October 1977 included the judgment that the progress made in recent days toward an agreement has had the effect of accommodating the concerns expressed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not share that judgment and believe it is constructive to clarify their views on several issues in your memorandum in order to insure that there is no misunderstanding of their position.

*"Covering their positions"*

a. Overall Levels. The currently proposed numerical levels would require the United States to phase out newer systems while retaining older non-MIRVed ones-- an effect not shared to any appreciable extent by the Soviets due to the different nature of their modernization programs. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that it will be exceedingly difficult to maintain a strategic balance or to provide the Soviets with incentives for further reductions in aggregates unless the United States places increased emphasis on strategic force modernization to include deployment of a new non-MIRVed system. In this regard, an examination is being conducted of changes which may be required to current strategic programs.

*Because for general level low 21-280's now*

*I disagree*

*Conclusion (first, study, afterward?)*

b. Air-Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) Range. Your memorandum stated the JCS concern as "ALCM range should not be constrained for the long term if air defense improvements are not" and pointed out that, after the expiration of the Protocol, new range limits--possibly linked to Soviet air defenses--will have to be set. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff view a 2,500 km ALCM range restriction during the period of the Protocol as having little impact on the cruise missile program because of the 1980

*OK*

*15-m-1650*

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initial operational capability for ALCM, they believe that additional range will be required beyond the Protocol even if Soviet air defenses do not improve dramatically and especially if a wide-bodied cruise missile carrier is deployed. They have assessed before--and reaffirm--that an ALCM range of at least 3,500 km is required for the period of the treaty following the Protocol and, unless Soviet air defenses are effectively constrained (not a likely prospect), a range of more than 3,500 km will be required.

*fair enough - Protocol has a few hundred km - But they don't define ALCM range*

c. ALCM Flexibility

(1) Your memorandum indicated that the present formula for counting ALCM-carrying heavy bombers (AHBs) will provide to the United States considerable flexibility in determining AHB numbers. The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that, beyond a certain point (120 or 70 AHBs, as proposed by the United States and USSR respectively), such flexibility becomes extremely "costly," requiring as it would the phasing out of newer US strategic systems while older systems are retained in the force to attain the aggregate. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also note that if a "type rule" is adopted for defining AHBs, the problem of having to phase out the newer MIRVed systems (e.g., MINUTEMAN III or POSEIDON) will be compounded.

*if old systems are retained - systems*

*depend on how "type" is defined*

(2) Your memorandum also stated that the 820 MIRVed ICBM (MICBM) limit justifies placing the AHB limitation in the treaty. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not believe that the AHB limitation is adequately counterbalanced by the 820-MICBM limit.

*we continue to discuss. Perhaps the language in paragraph 10 of the treaty is in keeping with the Chiefs' and language.*

d. Cruise Missiles. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that your memorandum did not adequately treat the potential effects of limiting cruise missiles--especially ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) and sea-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs)--in the Protocol. Your memorandum recognized that the Soviets will attempt to negotiate the Protocol limits into the treaty. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree with this judgment and further point out that the precedent established in the Protocol increases the likelihood of such provisions being carried forward into the treaty, to the net disadvantage of the United States. Limiting cruise missiles which are not strategic systems would penalize US theater forces at a time the United States and its allies are attempting to improve these capabilities. If such limits were

*At y memo today, the same language has been S. They are primarily national political judgments. Potential effects are not the same as effects*

*April 1950-7.*

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coupled with a strict nontransfer provision, as the Soviets are presently insisting, US flexibility in improving theater capabilities could be severely limited.

*I agree that if we accept Sov position we would be making a mistake.*

e. ICBM Vulnerability and Mobile ICBM. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree with your assessment that the current approach would do little to slow the growing threat to US fixed ICBMs and reemphasize that, unless the risk to the land-based ICBM force is contained, the mobile ICBM option must be adequately protected. Again, the provisions regarding a ban on deployment of mobile ICBM launchers and prohibition of "new type" ICBMs in the Protocol establish a precedent and increase the likelihood of these provisions being carried forward into the treaty, without offsetting constraints on Soviet forces to contain the threat to the US fixed-ICBM force.

*could establish a precedent*

f. BACKFIRE

(1) The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not believe that your memorandum adequately considered the BACKFIRE's military potential. They believe that the BACKFIRE should be counted in the strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDV) aggregate because of its inter-continental range and payload capability. None of the "assurances" under consideration in the current approach would be adequate to insure that BACKFIRE could not be used against the United States in time of war.

*As JCS willing to let PBS included in US aggregate & 24 only would become part of the negotiation.*

(2) The projected Soviet production of 425 BACKFIRES, if unconstrained, could account for a 30- to 40-percent increase in Soviet megatonnage (or a 20- to 25-percent increase in equivalent magatonnage) by 1985. A force of 366 BACKFIRES--as postulated under the current approach--would not significantly reduce this increase. Furthermore, should the United States negotiate a lower SNDV aggregate level in SALT III, this impact would be intensified.

*2,500,000 3000-2400*

2. (U) In addition to the concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed above, recent reports from Geneva indicate that, despite the agreements reached with Gromyko in Washington in September 1977, important SALT issues with major significance for strategic balance and stability matters have yet to be resolved or, more disturbingly, may be resolved in a manner which, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would be adverse to the interests of the United States.

*It's a tough world. Things may happen in it that JCS (and I) would have.*

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3. ~~(28)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff were aware that some issues--including the aggregate and MIRV levels and the treatment of BACKFIRE--required final resolution at the political level and that other issues remained to be resolved at Geneva. They are concerned, however, with the direction of the negotiations in Geneva, including proposals which differ from the understanding held by the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the direction to be taken following the agreements reached with Gromyko in September. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize there is a fluid negotiating situation; however, concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the recent negotiations include:

*By and large, a good list*

a. Proposals to adopt a "type rule" rather than an aircraft-by-aircraft rule for defining AHBs.

*except for this one*

b. Soviet proposal to ban development of cruise missiles capable of ranges in excess of 2,500 km, which would have an adverse effect on US cruise missile programs.

c. Soviet insistence that they be allowed to deploy the SS-NX-17, SS-NX-18, and TYPHOON SLBM in exchange for the US right to deploy TRIDENT I.

*SS-NX-17 is, I think, deployed*

d. Soviet attempts to ban transport aircraft as nuclear delivery vehicles, thus eliminating the US option for a wide-body ALCM carrier and raising serious questions as to future freedom to structure the US bomber force with vehicles of US choice.

e. Soviet willingness to count all launchers at Derazhnya and Pervomaysk as MIRVed while they continue to oppose the MICBM launcher "type rule" proposed by the United States and required for adequate verification.

f. Soviet intransigence on the bomber variants issue.

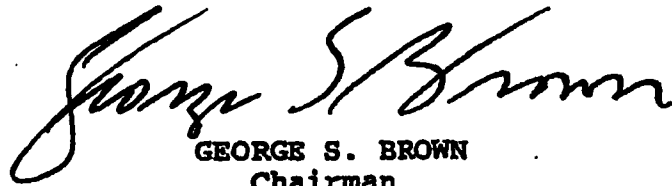
g. Soviet insistence that limitations apply to all armed air-to-surface cruise missiles for the period of the treaty, thus limiting the flexibility of cruise missile deployment/employment following the expiration of the Protocol.

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4. (U) In summary, your memorandum indicated that the agreement the United States now seems to be approaching meets the basic thrust of the concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Although the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe--as communicated earlier to you and to the President--that the agreements reached with Gromyko in September provide the basis for concluding a workable SALT II arrangement, <sup>not</sup> all of the concerns of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have not been accommodated by the September agreements, and departures from the September agreements of the types discussed in this memorandum add significantly to those concerns. As the United States nears the final phase of SALT II, it is essential that the US position not be allowed to erode in a final effort to conclude these negotiations. Additional concessions in the Protocol should be resisted. At worst, such concessions may lead to a treaty that weakens US security to a dangerous degree. At best, they will only make the next phase of SALT more difficult.

*of fair statement*

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



GEORGE S. BROWN  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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