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13 August 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

THROUGH: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: INF Initiative: Nondeployment of Pershing II ~~18~~

We understand that the President wanted to insure that he was aware of any military concerns from the Joint Chiefs of Staff about losing Pershing II and keeping GLCM. This memorandum responds to that question.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that there may be some position other than zero/zero at which Pershing II could be traded for a radical reduction in SS-20 missiles. The Nitze-Kvitsinskiy package, as presently written, does not appear to be a suitable tradeoff for the surrender of the Pershing II capability in Europe.

The Nitze-Kvitsinskiy package should be considered more as form than substance. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff support cautious exploration of the initiative, if and when the Soviet Union responds with a specific proposal, the provisions of the Nitze-Kvitsinskiy package ought to be viewed as an example for study rather than as elements of a proposal to be negotiated.

The threat of deployment of the Pershing II ballistic missile system has been a key factor in bringing the Soviet Union to the bargaining table on INF. The decision to extend the range of the Pershing IA as part of the INF modernization program was taken in February 1979 to counter SS-20 deployments with a European-based ballistic missile system capable of striking Soviet territory with little or no warning. Deployment of a system which the Soviets perceive can attack Moscow from Western Europe, which can disrupt their strategic command and control on a timely basis, and against which they have little or no defense, is a bargaining chip which the United States should play only to eliminate or radically reduce the SS-20 missile threat.

Any reduced number of SS-20s remaining to the Soviet Union must be at a level which significantly lowers the threat to Western Europe, is offset by United States nuclear systems, and does not pose an unacceptable threat to United States interests in the Far East. What this number is must yet be determined.

Without further study, however, the JCS believe it unwise to give up the capability of the Pershing II as a starting position in discussion with the Soviets of any proposed package.

John W. Vessey, Jr.
JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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