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15 December 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Senator Nunn and Senate Staff on NATO-Related
Issues, Old Senate Office Building, Friday, 14 December 1973

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The principal issues discussed during the meeting were:

1. Current issues in NATO. We said that, in the past year, the government had been engaged in a dialogue with the Congress and with the Allies, on the larger political issues affecting the Alliance: (a) the Alliance often seemed to be pulling in opposite directions, with the NSC and the Atlantic community being posed as opposites, rather than as complementary; (b) the Europeans, in the American judgement, were not bearing their fair share of the defense burden; and (c) there was a need to demonstrate, if true, that NATO was relevant to the future as well as to the past. We noted the extensive SecDef discussions with MODs on these issues.

2. Conventional Forces. We noted that the Secretary had explained to NATO Ministers, with considerable success, the importance to deterrence of conventional forces and a conventional balance in the central region at a time of strategic parity. The alternative was a tripwire strategy, and this would not serve the Alliance well. We noted, moreover, that the military facts in NATO did not add up to only a tripwire capability. NATO had a substantial conventional force.

Nunn recalled his having been briefed on the Army/Systems Analysis land forces study, which had been incomplete since it had not included air forces and logistics. We said that while it had been incomplete, and was still incomplete, it was not because we have ignored those factors. Indeed, as we examine the air situation it reinforces our view that NATO has a credible conventional force. The air forces are a considerable plus for NATO, offsetting certain of the ground disadvantages. As for logistics, our studies so far show that, while NATO has logistic difficulties, there are also difficulties on the other side. Nunn asked for an update, in the new year, of his earlier briefing of the Army/Systems Analysis study. Murray agreed.

We noted that, while there were still disagreements in NATO on the capabilities of the present force, we had achieved a fair measure of agreement on the importance of the conventional forces in deterrence. We observed that much of the remaining disagreement was political: some of

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6. Future Force Reductions. At various points in the discussion, Senator Nunn indicated that it was the opinion of the Senate that reductions in American forces in Europe were needed and inevitable. He believed there would be greatly renewed pressures in this direction in the new year. He thought that reductions might be successfully opposed for a year or two, but pressed on several occasions for our view of the implications of unilateral reductions. He said the Administration view that "not one man could be reduced" was as wrong as the views of certain Senators that large numbers could be reduced. There was a middle ground, which he suggested was around 50,000 - 75,000 men, which could be cut from headquarters and support.

We suggested that reductions were no doubt possible, that we were not saying that not one man could be reduced. Indeed, we have underway an examination of the headquarters and support structure with an eye to reductions there. We are looking at specialization ideas, which would enable us to pass certain missions and activities off to the Allies, and we are hopeful of negotiated reductions in MFR. We said we see no alternative to maintaining substantial American forces in Europe for the next decade. What is needed is to make Allied forces work better together, and to achieve a more equitable sharing of the defense burden. What we want to do is put together in a package such things as headquarters and support reductions, specialization, and MFR, so that any reductions we take in our forces in Europe are not taken at the sacrifice of our political and security interest. This requires a measure of Congressional and Executive agreement on the tactics to achieve reductions, and agreement also on the larger purposes for which we and our Allies maintain forces. We would like to see the Congressional debate focus on these larger purposes, and not on the narrow question of "how can we achieve reductions."

Nunn agreed that the Executive and Legislative branches need to work together, and said he was prepared to try for such agreement. He urged that we prepare a packaged approach to reductions incorporating the elements we described and that we seek Congressional agreement on it in March or April.

PARTICIPANTS

Congress

Senator Nunn
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Mr. Horner (Sen. Jackson's staff)
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