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INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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In reply refer to:
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) (U)

(4) This memorandum is in response to your request for a proposed scenario for moving MBFR forward within the USG and in NATO. The scenario I suggest takes into account the scope and timing of decisions we need, and the present state of play in Washington, Brussels, and Vienna. Since it is built around the position we have been taking on MBFR for some months, I thought it best first to provide you with a brief summary of the substantive elements of that position.

Development of Our Position

(5) Until the fall of 1971, USG efforts on MBFR largely consisted of a series of disparate military, political, and verification studies, with little attempt made to integrate them into a coherent framework. Beginning that fall, however, Secretary Laird began pressing for US decisions on an MBFR approach which could be transmitted to our Allies. He argued that what was needed was the development of comprehensive policy approaches to MBFR, not detailed analyses. These approaches, he said, should be focused on a clear set of objectives and deal not only with MBFR options, but also with the benefits, problems, and tactics of the negotiating process.

(6) In October 1971, the Secretary sent a memorandum to the President which set forth two alternative policy approaches to MBFR.

Alternative I.

(7) The first alternative was relatively fast paced negotiation with limited objectives, involving an initial 10% reduction of stationed ground forces, followed by a further 10% reduction of stationed and indigenous forces. All reductions were to be accompanied by constraints and verification provisions.

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~~AMENDMENT 1~~
~~21 Dec 1981~~

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Alternative II.

(b) The second alternative was a deliberately paced negotiation based on a set of tough agreements involving:

- an initial constraints and verification agreement;
- then a 10% reduction of stationed and indigenous ground forces and a 10% stationed air reduction; together with more constraints and verification provisions;
- and finally, a mixed package trading NATO aircraft, nuclear warheads, and a 10% stationed force reduction in exchange for Pact tanks and a ceiling on MR/IRHMs.

(c) In putting these substantive policy approaches forward, the Secretary proposed that other Washington agencies collaborate in developing and refining them for presentation to NATO. State and ACDA responded favorably, and State informally provided us some suggestions for changes to the paper. Henry Kissinger, however, responded by burying our specific reduction packages in another of a series of analytical MFN Evaluation Reports.

Later Refinement

(d) In two subsequent memoranda to the President, Secretary Laird refined the position taken in his initial memorandum. Together, these three memoranda form the basis of the present DOD position on MFN. In general terms, this position is to approach MFN as a long-term process beginning with limited steps and building -- if possible -- toward more comprehensive ones. It is based on the underlying reasoning that, given the military and political uncertainties and risks involved, it is prudent to move toward our MFN objectives with limited steps at the outset, rather than quickly and directly to large-scale agreements. Any limited, first-stage agreement should permit us to test Soviet intentions and the effects of MFN, and lay the groundwork for possible future steps.

(e) Our basic MFN objective is a more stable military balance at lower levels of forces. To obtain this, we seek to reduce or limit the size, character, and activities of military forces in the heart of Europe. More specifically, we seek:

- a reduced Soviet conventional military threat to Western Europe;
- a reduced Soviet military presence in Eastern Europe, with increased inhibitions on the use of military force for political purposes therein;
- a reduced US military presence in Europe;

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- a reduction in the potential for escalation of tension in the event of misunderstanding or miscalculation by either side, and thus a reduced potential for accidental conflict in Europe;
- greater responsibility on the part of our NATO Allies for their own defense and security.

(b) Within this general policy framework, we have proposed that MFWR be approached in a phased, step-by-step manner, and include comprehensive treatment of reductions, collateral constraints, and verification provisions. We have said an acceptable outcome to an initial agreement should include:

- An informal force limitation agreement at the outset of negotiations;
- Stabilizing constraints on force movements and activities, preferably before, but -- at a minimum -- together with reductions;
- A limited NATO stationed force reduction (about 10%) while seeking from the Soviets as much as we can get but never accepting less than a matching 10%;
- Adequate verification provisions.

If an agreement of this sort is possible, then we could build toward more comprehensive agreements, possibly including indigenous force reductions, further stationed force reductions, and air and nuclear systems.

(c) If you agree with the approach and position we have taken on MFWR, I believe it is important that you affirm this support to the Washington MFWR Community. Following is a proposed scenario for future action to further USG and NATO acceptance of our position.

Scenario

Timing and Character of Decisions We Need

(d) The key point in any MFWR scenario is that the US must submit its views on a preferred MFWR approach to NATO no later than around the first of April.

(e) If NATO is to be adequately prepared for the September-October negotiations, we must begin work on a common negotiating position as early as possible this spring. NATO ministers will wish to approve at least the essential outlines of a negotiating approach at the June Ministerial. Thereafter, work could go forward over the summer on developing and refining the preferred position. But, as the Allies have made clear, serious work on a NATO position cannot really get underway until the US has made known its views. This point was repeatedly made to Bartholomew in Brussels and Vienna, particularly by the British.

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(c) An equally, if not more compelling reason to submit US views to NATO as soon as possible, is to allay Allied anxieties that we will take a "cut and run" approach that will not give sufficient weight to their security concerns. I cannot overemphasize how disruptive a factor this has been in our dealings with NATO on MBFR, permeated as it is with fears and suspicion of bilateral US-USSR deals. It has clearly affected our dealings with the Allies in Vienna and complicated an already difficult enterprise.

(d) Finally, we need to decide the main elements of our approach so that we can, within the USG, begin to focus our efforts on the necessary refinement and development of a negotiating rationale. These elements should include:

- The scope and formality of a possible force limitation agreement;
- The constraints we wish to negotiate and our views on whether negotiation and/or implementation of constraints should be a prior condition for negotiation and/or implementation of reductions;
- The initial reduction step we wish to table (e.g., a 10% stationed ground force common ceiling);
- Our views on possible reductions and limitations of aircraft, nuclear systems and warheads, including our initial position if the Soviets raise this, and our views on the MBFR/SAIT relationship.

State of Play in Washington

As I described in our MBFR briefing, Washington is now developing and analyzing six MBFR options with the idea of sending one or more of them to NATO by mid-April. Working back from that date, the NSC staff has broached a tentative schedule which calls for an NSC meeting in early April for final decision on options, preceded by two Verification Panel meetings in late and mid-March.

The six options in play are:

- Option A: A 10% NATO-Pact stationed ground force common ceiling, followed by an indigenous common ceiling, and then a mixed package trade of different force elements.
- Option B: A NATO-Pact common ceiling on tanks and aircraft.
- Option C: A US-USSR trade of nuclear systems and tank armies.

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- Option D: A US-USSR mixed package trade of ground personnel, aircraft, and tanks.
- Option E: A NATO-Pact 20% common ceiling on stationed and indigenous forces.
- Option F: A US-USSR 20% reduction of ground and air personnel.

(4) ~~Option A was~~ designed by the DOD MBFR Task Force and State along the lines of the DOD approach I delineated above, which has significant support in State. It is a phased approach, consistent with the objectives and criteria described above, and incorporates these steps:

- 1. Informal force limitation understanding.
- 2. Collateral constraints agreement preferably before reductions.
- 3. Common ceiling on stationed ground forces based on a 10% NATO cut. (US would withdraw about 23,100 men.)
- 4. Limitations on air force facilities, movements, and training.
- 5. A testing period or pause.
- 6. Common ceiling on indigenous ground forces, based on a 10% NATO cut.
- 7. Another testing period or pause.
- 8. A mixed package involving NATO tac air, PERSHINGs and warheads for Pact tanks, tac air and possibly medium bombers. Also possibly limitations on the level of nuclear capability in the area.
- 9. A possible further 10% stationed force reduction.

(4) The Task Force has just completed and circulated to the VPWG a detailed development of Option A, including specification of the US and Allied units and personnel that might be withdrawn (Tab A). It is clear to me that this is the most viable and well-thought-out of the options now in play, and it has been most favorably received by the Washington MBFR community, particularly by the NSC and State.

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(U) Apart from the advantages of this approach set out above, it has one additional advantage that is, in my view, crucially important: This approach is consistent with the views and preferences of our Allies and would not only win their support, but also do much to reassure them that the US is pursuing a serious and prudent line on MEFR that takes full account of their interests. I do not believe this would be nearly the case for any of the other options in play and, indeed, some of them could even worsen our problem with the Allies.

Next Steps

(U) If you agree with the approach and position we have taken on MEFR, we should then pursue these objectives:

- Press for US decisions on a preferred MEFR approach and its submission to NATO by mid-April, and counter any proposals to postpone this decision point once again.
- Press for adoption of Option A as the US position.

(U) We can, of course, advance these lines in the Washington MEFR community and in the context of the options work in the VPWG. But your personal intervention will be essential.

(U) I believe the most useful opening gun would be a memorandum from you to Henry Kissinger making some of the central points I have sketched above. In addition to making the major points on the timing and substance of our MEFR approach in the memorandum, I believe you should propose an early meeting to discuss how best to proceed. This would include the question of whether it might not be possible to reach some early decision -- perhaps in the mid-March Verification Panel meeting -- that would narrow the range of options and alternatives that are to be seriously examined and considered. This would, I believe, move us a step closer to Option A and would also permit us to focus our efforts and analytical resources so that we can build a better product for decision and transmission to NATO.

(U) I would also recommend that you send a letter to Secretary Rogers making the same points and proposing that State and Defense agree to support Option A and collaborate in moving things ahead. If you could reach agreement -- and as I said above there is significant State support for the approach we have taken -- we could also work toward a joint State-Defense memorandum to the President prior to the early April NSC meeting.

Recommendation 1: That you approve the MEFR approach and position we have taken and Option A.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

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Recommendation 2: That you sign the attached memorandum to Henry Kissinger and letter to Secretary Rogers.

Enclosure


Acting Assistant Secretary

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