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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

8 OCT 1976

In reply refer to:
1-10675/76

#73

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Dir, WHS
Date: SEP 17 2011
by S. S.

INTERNAL SECURITY APPROVED

Folder "NATO 400-450 1976", Box 77,

78-049

13 OCT 76/C
by S. S.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: NATO AEW Program -- ACTION MEMORANDUM

We believe Allied Ministers must make a positive decision this December to acquire an AEW capability based on the US E3A aircraft, subject of course to subsequent ratification by national legislatures.

Several factors compel this conclusion. Perhaps the most urgent stems from the military, economic, and political pressures in the UK which will dictate a go-ahead with their unilateral NIMROD Program by early 1977 unless there is a formal commitment to the multilateral AWACS.

No less disturbing is the impact of delay on program costs and the availability of procurement funds. Of those nations with sufficient defense resources to share in procurement funding, only the UK has monies expressly set aside for acquisition of an AEW capability. The other countries, including the U.S., may well have to adjust program priorities within existing or projected defense budgets in order to participate. Further off-page of the NATO Program will make these adjustments increasingly difficult.

Arguing against a December decision are principally the FRG, where officials are dependent upon program support and ratification by a newly elected parliament, and the smaller Allies who would rather not face up to the need for a new procurement program.

Since the June Ministerial we have conducted an intensive series of military-to-military exchanges on AWACS. These have included military staff talks with the British and the Canadians, the latter involving detailed discussions both of the NATO E3A proposal and the proposed participation of Canada in North American E3A deployment. Dr. Currie and Secretary Reed have discussed the program with their counterparts in a number of NATO countries. We have kept in close touch with NATO Assistant Secretary General LaBerge, who has been charged by Ministers with developing an "affordable package" for presentation to Permanent Representatives. The military requirement for AEW is generally recognized; we believe, the issue is now pre-eminently political/economic.

Our Embassies before and after the June Ministerial have raised AWACS with foreign officials. State, at the Acting Assistant Secretary level, argues that representation should again be made at a lower level (on the ground that we should not use up the Ambassador's "political" capital on AWACS and is so recommending to Secretary Kissinger). In our view, further representation to NATO Allies will only be effective if they are made at the Ambassador to Minister level and demonstrate high-level US interest in AWACS.

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Consequently we have agreed upon a coordinated approach for bringing U.S. political influence to bear in the weeks remaining before the December Ministerials. In this context we have identified a series of actions, keyed to specific events or tailored to particular national sensitivities, which require your personal participation.

(From whom?)

-- We propose to forward a message, instructing our Ambassadors in NATO capitals to make representations to the Governments to which they are accredited in firm support of it. A copy of the message and accompanying Aide Memoire is attached for your approval.

-- The October 15 Washington visit by British MOD Mulley provides an ideal opportunity to discuss the NATO AEW Program and related issues. This will evidently be a critical meeting.

-- We shall also propose a number of talking points for your bilaterals with selected NATO MOD's at the November NPG meeting.

Request your approval of attached telegram to Ambassadors and accompanying Aide Memoire. (Attachments 1 and 2)

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We also request a meeting with you to consider the implementation of the other steps proposed above.

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Office of the Secretary of Defense

Chief, RDD, ESD, WIIS

Date: 17 SEP 1976 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 USC § 552

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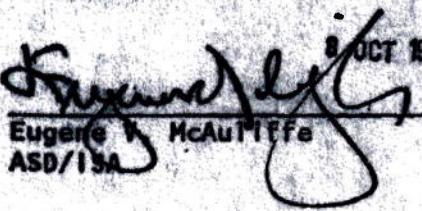
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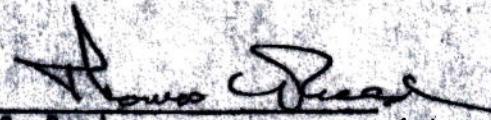
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Malcolm R. Currie
Director, DDRSE


Eugene B. McAuliffe
ASD/ISA

8 OCT 1976


Counsel: Thomas C. Reed
Secretary of the Air Force
17-10-76


General George S. Brown
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

10-7-76

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