

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Equipment Ceilings in MBFR (U)

1. (S) At the meeting of the Verification Panel on 7 September 1974, there was not a consensus within the Department of Defense concerning equipment ceilings which should be sought in conjunction with Option III in MBFR negotiations. Accordingly, the Verification Panel asked that the Department of Defense reexamine this issue and provide the Panel with a single position.
2. (S) On the related issue of manpower ceilings, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe a common ceiling should be applied to ground manpower, and perhaps Phase I subceilings should be applied to US and Soviet ground forces manpower, in the NATO Guidelines Area (NGA).
3. (S) The issue of equipment ceilings separates into two basic questions: (1) should ceilings be implicit or explicit and (2) what degree of reciprocity is desired? On each of these questions, the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff differ significantly from those held by members of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are providing their views by this separate memorandum.
4. (S) For the West to realize the ultimate goal of MBFR negotiations, i.e., increased military stability in central Europe at lower force levels with undiminished military security for all, there should be no outcome of MBFR which either inhibits or restrains Allied force improvement and modernization programs, permits unconstrained increases by the Warsaw Pact, or impacts adversely on the ability of the United States to reinforce NATO rapidly in time of crisis. Both military prudence and parliamentary interests dictate that MBFR result in an acceptable degree of reciprocity with respect to limitations on force elements specified for reduction. Such reciprocity can be achieved either by reciprocal ceilings or by noncircumvention provisions.

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5. (S) Considerations on Implicit or Explicit Ceilings

- a. Implicit ceilings are generally less restrictive than explicit ones. However, implicit ceilings together with appropriate noncircumvention formulations can be made more restrictive than explicit ceilings.
- b. By obviating the need for negotiated agreement on precise equipment category definitions and the residual numbers of the elements concerned, implicit ceilings allow the focus of negotiations to remain on the reduction packages themselves.
- c. A set of explicit constraints which would assure maintenance of the postreduction force balance in central Europe would be very difficult to construct, negotiate, and verify. All this suggests that a noncircumvention formulation might be more negotiable, might alleviate the problems of verification, and yet could be at least equally as effective as explicit ceilings.

6. (S) Considerations on Reciprocity

- a. Reciprocal ceilings on Eastern nuclear systems in the NGA are desirable, particularly in view of the Soviet Union's tendencies to interpret generalized legal commitments as much in their own interest as possible. In this regard, however, there are two general reservations. First, because of the geographic proximity of the Soviet Union to central Europe, the effects of any limitations on Warsaw Pact air and nuclear elements in the NGA would be less meaningful than similar limitations on NATO air and nuclear elements. Second, negotiating agreed definitions and levels for Eastern equipment would be difficult if not impossible and could be extremely time consuming.
- b. Furthermore, ceilings on Warsaw Pact air and nuclear elements would probably not be negotiable without the West also acceding to ceilings on Allied tanks. Such limitations could seriously restrict planned and potential Allied force improvement and modernization programs.
- c. Reciprocal ceilings would codify the NATO/Warsaw Pact disparities which would exist even after Eastern reductions. Moreover, because of the lack of proximate storage facilities and the problems inherent in reintroducing tanks from offshore bases, such ceilings could freeze NATO in a numerically inferior position.

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(U) Additional discussion on the foregoing views and on the concept of "room at the top" ceilings is contained in the Annex hereto.

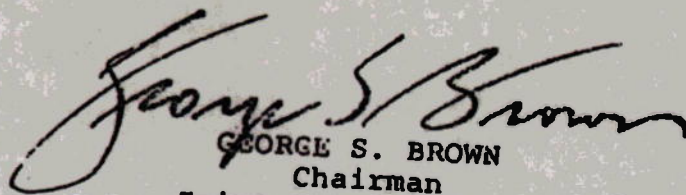
8. (S) Generalized noncircumvention provisions would address NATO concerns regarding a possible Soviet nuclear buildup or continued expansion of Warsaw Pact air forces in the NCA and would also serve to assure the Soviets that NATO would not engage in an unlimited increase in tanks. Such provisions could be constructed in such a manner that moderate adjustments in the levels of equipment concerned could be made, but substantial and destabilizing increases could not.

9. (S) Additionally, the noncircumvention approach retains considerable flexibility for the West: flexibility in negotiations, as the specifics of the noncircumvention formulations can be developed as the negotiations unfold; and flexibility in the postreduction environment, as the decision to challenge Warsaw Pact increases can take account of the existing international situation and tensions.

10. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that with respect to the employment of Option III in MBFR negotiations neither explicit nor reciprocal ceilings should be sought. The United States should recommend to the Allies that NATO seek an acceptable degree of reciprocity in limitations on residual force elements through noncircumvention provisions, accompanied by clarifying statements as necessary.

11. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that you support their views as expressed in this memorandum with its Annex and that these views be forwarded to the members of the Verification Panel.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



GEORGE S. BROWN
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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