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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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*Didn't
present to
Admiral start 4/25?*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: US Approach to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (U) 4/26

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 02 2018

1. Reference is made to National Security Decision Memorandum 211, dated 16 April 1973, subject: "Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR)," which promulgated the US Government's approach to MBFR as approved by the President for forwarding to NATO.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the reference and its attached US approach paper in the light of three considerations: (1) the conventional military balance in Europe favors the Warsaw Pact; NATO currently possesses a marginal capability to defend itself against a full-scale attack; (2) analysis has repeatedly demonstrated that MBFR wargaming outcomes are highly sensitive to the specifics of option construction and assumptions; and (3) the options presented in the US approach paper are conceptual, and the specifics of strength and structure accompanying the concepts are illustrative, included therein to provide depth and perspective to the US views. Further, it is noted that the US approach paper holds the US positions open for modification, and, therefore, preliminary comments for consideration both now and as the US and NATO positions are being developed appear appropriate. Recognizing that none of the options offered may, of themselves, redress present NATO deficiencies for conventional war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the following:

a. That Option Concept I be presented to NATO to include specific reductions of stationed forces only to a common stationed force ceiling, ~~to focus on reductions of US and Soviet Forces~~, and to forward the US desideratum that US reductions not exceed 19,000 personnel; and to indicate that indigenous forces should be considered in undefined, follow-on reduction talks, with the Allies themselves developing and presenting the levels, reduction structure, phasing, and general considerations therefor.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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SEC DEF CONT. NO. 4-1876

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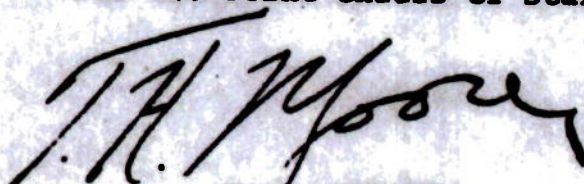
b. That Option Concept 2 be presented to the NATO Alliance in a manner which will show clearly its principal disadvantages, i.e., it reduces more US and less Soviet forces than would Option Concept 1; unless very specifically and completely structured, it will likely result in lessened relative Alliance security since US reductions would exceed 19,000 personnel; and it is contrived so that almost any changes in the variables tend to work to NATO's disadvantage.

c. That Option Concept 3 be presented to NATO only as a later, follow-on concept and not as an initial reduction approach.

3. (U) The Appendix hereto discusses in more detail the rationale for the above conclusions and recommendations, as well as provides additional discussion of prereduction force limitation agreements and phasing of negotiations.

4. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff further recommend that you support the views expressed in this memorandum and forward them to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



T. H. MOORER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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Attachment