



POLICY

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JUN 7 1983

4 June 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Tuesday's NSC Meeting on START

Richard Perle and I prepared the attached memo as an OSD input to the NSC START package. I discussed it with Cap (on his trip) on the secure phone. He suggested I should send it to you, even though he has not yet had an opportunity to go through it carefully himself.

Fred
Fred C. Ikle

Attachment
a/s

cc: Ron Lehman

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: MAY 21 2018

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COMMENTS FOR THE NSC MEETING ON START JUNE 7, 1983

NEXT STEPS IN START

The broad acceptance of the Scowcroft Commission report by Congress and the public, offers the President an opportunity to revise his Start proposal in a manner that will shore up support for his innovative departure from the arms control approaches of the past -- approaches that were marked by abandonment of our fundamental political-military objectives in favor of agreements (Salt I and II) legitimizing unprecedented expansion of Soviet strategic forces.

The present intra-agency paper for the June 7 NSC meeting centers on the question of whether direct throw-weight limits on ballistic missiles (now a critical element of our proposal for Phase II) should be retained in a new, single phase proposal. This question has ramifications that are far broader and deeper than they have been made to appear: at stake is the image and reality of the President's role in shaping arms control policy and the impact this has on the President's stature internationally, as well as in the domestic debate that we must anticipate next year. Missing also from the inter-agency paper is a discussion of probable Soviet negotiating moves and how the selection of a new U.S. proposal will bear on our ability to respond to them.

At the time of our initial position a year ago, State argued that we could achieve significant limitations on the throw-weight of Soviet ballistic missiles (a measure in which they exceed the U.S. by nearly 3 to 1) by limiting launchers to 850, land-based warheads to 2,500, and heavy and medium missiles to no more than 110 and 100, respectively. They now propose dropping or softening all of these limits.

What we would be left with under such a new approach is a U.S. position that in form is strikingly similar to that of Salt II. With only one remaining constraint on missile throw-weight -- the sub-limit of 150 heavy missiles -- we would be perilously close to abandoning altogether the President's earlier decision to seek a low indirect throw-weight limit in Phase I and a lower, equal and direct limit in Phase II. Having come this far in the absence of any Soviet movement, how could we make the Soviets believe that we would not eventually abandon the last remaining limit or throw-weight -- the 150 ceiling or heavy missiles?

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One of the principal flaws of Salt II was its failure to constrain Soviet missile throw-weight, either directly or significantly indirectly.* The failure to obtain a serious throw-weight limit in Salt has had a long history: it was one of the issues debated extensively in the Senate at the time of Salt I; it was an important factor in the passage in 1972 of PL 92-448, a Senate Amendment, enacted into law, requiring that future agreements achieve equality between U.S. and Soviet forces. And it figured prominently in Senate criticism of Salt II.

The President's effort to achieve a throw-weight limitation in his two-phase proposal was one of the distinctive features of his alternative to Salt II. If we move backwards now in the direction of a Salt II type framework, we run a serious risk of the President's critics charging that he, in fact, adhered to Salt II (with the no-undercut policy) and that he negotiated and tabled proposals along lines very similar to Salt II; but that by refusing to ratify the Salt II agreement, he relieved the Soviets of the obligation to dismantle some 300-plus missiles. We must not permit the President to be painted into this corner. We must be prepared to argue that the approach to Start that we have selected better serves the national interest than the flawed Salt II treaty. If we abandoned our longterm goal of direct throw-weight limitations and even relax substantially our earlier proposal to achieve indirect throw-weight limits, we would have gone a long way toward making the Administration's opposition to Salt II confusing and indefensible.

If a new START treaty gave the Soviets the right to throwweight twice that of the U.S. (without an offsetting U.S. advantage), we would live in a situation where the Soviets could rapidly break out of the agreement and increase the number of warheads on their missile force as well as improve their forces in other ways. (Excess throw-weight means that additional warheads can be deployed on the same number of missiles, ICBM's can be more effectively hardened against ABM systems, accuracy can be improved, and ABM defenses can be more effectively defeated with penetration devices.) In short, without throw-weight limitations, we would be more vulnerable to rapid Soviet "Break Out" from a Start treaty and to barrage attacks that could undermine the basis for the deployment of new, small mobile missiles.

*President Carter's Salt II agreement does limit the number of missile warheads (indirectly), the number of deployed missiles to 1,200; (State now advocates 1,150), and the total number of missiles and bombers.

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Anticipating the next Soviet Move

It would be unwise to table a new Start proposal without an analysis of the likely Soviet responses. These need to be judged to determine whether any new proposal is well-crafted to withstand probable Soviet counter moves.

The evolution of the Soviet approach is clear: they are leading up to propose an equal ceiling of "nuclear charges,"

but adequate to accommodate their missile and modest bomber forces. When the Soviets shift to this position, the appearance will be created that -- far from proposing sharp reductions -- the U.S. is actually resisting a Soviet proposal for such reductions. Some misleading arithmetic produces this result: virtually all the Soviet "nuclear charges" are on ballistic missiles;

A Soviet tactic along the lines predicted here -- equal, reduced numbers of "nuclear charges" -- would have great potential to put the U.S. on the defensive, and adoption of the State option would leave us ill-poised to respond. Hence the importance of establishing now that all "nuclear charges" are not equal. Some, like the warheads on the high throw-weight Soviet missiles, are large and capable of destroying hardened targets.

But unless and until we clearly establish throw-weight as a central unit of account, we would be hard-pressed to explain why a Soviet proposal for reductions to a common ceiling in the number of "nuclear charges" should be rejected.

Sustainability

Closely related to the issue of the capacity of our Start proposal to withstand Soviet counters is the question of the sustainability of whatever option we select. A proposal to couch the units to be limited in terms of the two broad aggregates, war-

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heads and throw-weight, would not only be responsive to the thrust of the Scowcroft Commission, it would enable us gradually to increase the level of throw-weight permitted to the Soviets as Soviet concessions of comparable magnitude appeared to justify such movement. Where else are we to look for "trading room?"

If we were to adopt the State proposal, we would have little room for maneuver as the negotiations proceed. We will already have granted them most of their advantage in throw-weight without any significant compensation. What more will we have to concede? We have learned from experience that stalemated negotiations produce pressures for movement -- but only on our side. Without a public opinion to pacify, without a press to persuade, without a peace movement to impinge on their policies, the Soviets are well-situated to wait us out. By proposing an initial low and equal ceiling on throw-weight as well as warheads, we will be in a position, as the negotiations proceed, to grant them manageable increases in throw-weight as an expression of our flexibility.

Simplicity and Flexibility

It has been a frequent -- and telling -- criticism of our current Start proposal that it would require the Soviets radically to restructure their strategic forces along lines that we prefer. Indeed, the array of collateral constraints imposed on the Soviets by our current proposal (dismantlement of much of their existing ICBM force, in particular) arose directly from State's earlier insistence that we attempt to achieve throw-weight limitations indirectly rather than directly. It is one of the virtues of a proposal couched in terms of limits on warheads and throw-weight that it would leave each side free to configure its forces as it sees fit -- provided they remain within the ceiling set on these two broad aggregate measures of strategic power. This is precisely what the Scowcroft Commission had in mind:

"(Stability requires) that arms control limitations and reductions be couched, not in terms of launchers, but in terms of equal levels of warheads of roughly equivalent yield -- each side will naturally desire to configure its own strategic forces. Simple aggregate limits of this sort are likely to be more practical, stabilizing and lasting than elaborate, detailed limitations on force structure and modernization whose ultimate consequences cannot be confidently anticipated."

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