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THE SECRETARY OF STATE

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

From:

Alexander M. Haig, Jr. *[Signature]*

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Subject:

Enhanced Radiation Warhead (ERW)

We are at a critical juncture on two major elements of your program to revitalize the nation's defense. By the end of August, you will announce your decision on our strategic force modernization. The decision is likely to be at best highly controversial, both here and abroad. And in the next three months, we hope to solidify allied support for modernizing our nuclear forces in Europe (TNF). These issues are of extraordinary importance to America's security in the decades ahead. In my judgment, you could jeopardize both by going forward at this time to produce the ERW.

LRANCE

As you know, I have for years supported the eventual deployment of ERWs to Europe. I still do. The issue now is the timing of our decision to produce them.

European leaders can be expected to react negatively to an early production decision. Over the past three months, they have uniformly told our people that such a decision would be "disastrous" at a time when the TNF modernization decision hangs tenuously in the balance. They say the decision:

-- would provide grist for the Soviet propaganda mill which would accuse the US of being "warlike";

-- would undercut allied leaders' efforts to support TNF;

-- would preempt your intention to announce the MX decision;

-- would counteract the positive effort on European TNF attitudes coming out of my meetings with Gromyko in September.

No matter what we say publicly, West Europeans would see the decision as a thinly veiled first step toward deployment in Europe. The Soviets would certainly encourage this conclusion. Belgium and Holland, where we hope to deploy TNF forces, would oppose ERW and might use the excuse to opt completely out of TNF. Schmidt might have to oppose the decision publicly. Even the French, who are developing their

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own neutron bomb, would likely join the British and Italians criticizing the decision for its adverse impact on TNF. While the British might still be willing to accept TNF deployments, this could be a Pyrrhic victory since the decision could generate increasing momentum in the Labour Party for unilateral disarmament. In Scandinavia, the decision would fire leftists to push for a Nordic nuclear free weapons zone and would give impetus to growing neutralist sentiment there.

In sum, European officials from Norway to Italy would conclude that your Administration, like its predecessor, had expended political capital for the sake of a system which is militarily and politically far less important than TNF.

It is my strongly held conviction that we should fight the main battle on your strategic force decisions first. Then we should focus on the next most important issue, the modernization of our European nuclear weapons for which we depend on European support. Both of these extremely important decisions will be jeopardized if we precede them with an ERW decision.

I therefore recommend that we not decide to produce the ERW until after:

1. Your strategic force decisions are announced and explained;
2. I have met with Gromyko in September;
3. our program to try to seize the propaganda initiative on arms control and East-West relations has gotten up momentum;
4. our TNF talks with the Soviets have begun in November.

Ideally, I would recommend we hold up until after the SPD Party Congress next spring. However, it may be that Poland or other events would affect our ongoing assessments and provide an acceptable backdrop to proceed before next spring.

Drafted by: S/S:LPBremer, III
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