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POLICY

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

26 MAR 81

In Reply Refer to:
I-21047/81

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NETHERLANDS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: SecDef Meeting with Dutch MOD (U)

(U) The Secretary of Defense met with the Minister of Defense of the Netherlands, Pieter de Geus, on 23 March. The following major topics were discussed.

(S) LRTNF - De Geus opened with LRTNF modernization in the context of the overall Dutch contribution to NATO. He stressed the central role of NATO in Dutch security policy, and the loyal, serious and responsible way in which the Dutch had contributed to both NATO's conventional and nuclear forces. The Dutch provided their pro-rata share of NATO defense and saw a continuing need to take resolute action against force. Dutch nuclear role formed part of their share. Dutch LRTNF policy was unchanged since the government's December 1979 decision, which was based on the supposition that SALT would be ratified. The Dutch continued to stress the importance of strategic arms control, as well as the LRTNF discussions begun in Geneva last fall. SecDef noted the continuing importance of the NATO agreement on LRTNF. The enormous Soviet lead in weapons meant that NATO must respond, despite Soviet propaganda efforts and broad public concerns that make any task in the nuclear field difficult. The Soviets continued their efforts to dislodge nations from NATO and to erode NATO's deterrent posture in the central region.

(S) HLG - De Geus stressed importance of completion of HLG study by October to have any prospects of a favorable December solution. Dutch believe that NATO should lessen reliance on battlefield nuclear weapons in particular and seek to use West's high technology lead to develop PGMs or other conventional weaponry to perform nuclear weapons battlefield functions. At the Bonn NPG the Dutch will offer some more specific ideas for HLG next steps and urge the HLG meet soon. Results of the HLG study will be second only to negotiations on arms control in influencing a positive decision. SecDef responded that we were exploring with Allies on HLG meeting in the last weekend in April. It was an open question if the Dutch nuclear contribution would change in the light of the HLG study. We must maintain deterrence in the central front; emphasis on longer-range systems might encourage adventurism at shorter ranges. Soviet and other propaganda efforts have been aimed at what amounts to achieving unilateral disarmament. Soviet deployments were increasing and we

26 MAR 81

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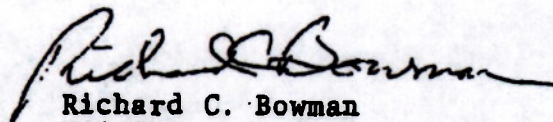
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could not approach the negotiating table empty handed. SecDef and the Chairman noted that there were no breakthroughs in sight which would allow replacement of short-range TNF systems and that Soviet military tactics of concentrating forces for massed assaults makes TNF the only credible deterrent. Also, the former technological gap between the Soviets and the West has narrowed greatly.

Other Items

(S) De Geus briefly mentioned (without explication) implementation of the MOU and the 2 way street, the Portuguese frigate program, the commitment to NATO of Dutch wide-bodied aircraft, the establishment of HNS for transit in crisis situations; stated policies of burden-sharing by division of tasks rather than Dutch participation in an RDF, a rejection of expansion of the NATO areas but a desire for consultations on matters beyond the agreed areas, and the need for greater development aid and cooperation with third world. SecDef concluded by noting that detente was not dead and we would negotiate with the Soviets for real arms control and work at home and abroad to provide a sound defense, including the strategic triad.



Richard C. Bowman
Maj Gen, USAF
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cc: SecDef
DepSecDef
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Mr. Perle
Mr. Kramer
LTG Groves

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