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Date: SEP 03 2019

8 January 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Verification Panel MBFR Meeting, 1040-1140, 7 Jan 74, White House  
Situation Room

The full VP was present, with Secretary Kissinger chairing. DepSecDef and CJCS represented Defense, supported by R. Bartholomew and Major General Grittenberger, the JCS MBFR representative in Vienna.

The main points covered at the meeting were as follows:

1. CIA presented their revised data raising Pact air manpower in the NGA from 112,000 to 202,000. Kissinger noted that once the Soviets learn this, it might cool their interest in including air manpower in a common ceiling as a way of making reductions less than equal.
2. There was consensus behind the Delegation's proposal (Option 2A) to try to get the Soviets to agree to begin discussion of Phase I US/Soviet reductions in January by offering the Soviets assurance that Phase II will include European (including FRG) forces under the common ceiling concept. It was clear that inclusion of European forces was always to be linked to the common ceiling concept. This was the preferred DOD position.
3. There was discussion of the possible damaging effects on the Bundeswehr and on the prospects for European defense cooperation that inclusion of European forces in MBFR could have, with the implication that it might be in our best interest to drop European forces entirely and concentrate on Soviet/US forces only. Kissinger said that this would mean we would either have to drop the common ceiling and totally revise our position, or reach the common ceiling through US/Soviet reductions alone (78,000 vs. 225,000). If the effect was to set up or signal an escalation leading to eventual total U.S. withdrawal, this would be worse than what the common ceiling might do to FRG forces or European defense cooperation. We should not in any case automatically assume that European defense unity is in our interest.
4. To avoid harsh constraints on the German defense effort or European defense cooperation, we should avoid any sub-ceilings in MBFR on European forces. The only manpower ceilings we should accept are the common ceiling at 700,000 men and sub-ceilings on U.S. and Soviet manpower levels in the NGA. Thus, European forces could be substituted for U.S. or Soviet forces but not the other way around.

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5. Kissinger made the point, citing SALT as an example, that if at any point the MBFR talks appear to be stalemated this will increase Congressional pressures.

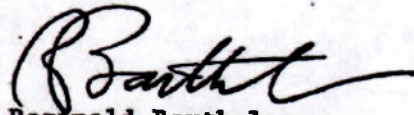
6. Kissinger stated that there is no way we can hope to get a Phase I reduction of 29,000 U.S. men without equipment for 68,000 Soviets with equipment, without using the nuclear package. He proposed to use the nuclear MBFR package both to get the Soviet tank army in MBFR and to offer the Soviets a way to drop FBS in SALT. The SALT FBS problem had to be dealt with in some way and the best way was in the MBFR context, not only for us but for our allies. This meant we had to be prepared to advance the nuclear package in MBFR soon. He proposed the following strategy:

a. Definition of our SALT position over the next two weeks.

b. Approaching the Soviets in the SALT context to test their interest in doing nuclears in MBFR and dropping FBS from SALT.

c. On the basis of Soviet reactions, then approaching our allies.

Accordingly, the US/UK/FRG trilaterals on the MBFR nuclear package scheduled for late January will be slipped to sometime in February.



Reginald Bartholomew  
Director, DOD MBFR Task Force

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