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In reply refer to:
I-24351/73

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: US MBFR Position for NATO (U) - ACTION MEMORANDUM

(U) Attached for your approval is a cable to Ambassador Rumsfeld containing a presentation to the North Atlantic Council on the US MBFR position. This position was developed at the 18 July Verification Panel meeting which Mr. Clements and Admiral Moore attended.

(U) The White House and State are pressing for dispatch of the cable today if at all possible and no later than tomorrow, in order to meet our commitment to the Allies and to hold to our time-table of Allied consultations.

I recommend approval of the cable with a modification to what we tell the Allies about forces to be reduced in the second phase. (We have suggested some editorial changes to State.)

US MBFR Position

The main elements of the US MBFR position in the attached presentation (highlighted in the text) are as follows:

1. Our goal should be a common ceiling on NATO and Pact ground forces in the NATO Guidelines Area reached through a phased ten percent reduction in overall NATO ground manpower and Pact ground reductions to the resulting level of about 700,000 ground personnel.
2. The first phase should include reductions in Soviet and US ground forces sufficient to obtain withdrawal of a Soviet tank army (about 15 percent of Soviet personnel or 68,000 men, plus 1,700 tanks), and an equal 15 percent reduction of US personnel (29,000 men) in an unspecified manner.
3. The second phase of negotiations (49,000 NATO; 122,000 Pact to get a ceiling at 704,000) should, in our view, not be defined at this time or advanced to the Soviets, other than to say that it should complete movement to the overall MBFR goal of a common ceiling on NATO and Warsaw Pact ground manpower in the Guidelines Area. Subsequent negotiations would include predominantly European forces on the Western side and both Soviet and Eastern European forces on the Eastern side, but such considerations should be kept within the Alliance and decided on only later.

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: NOV 18 2019

Dir, DOD MBFR Task Force
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4. In the first phase, NATO is permitted flexibility in the form of its reductions (complete units or thin-out) and the disposition of withdrawn equipment, given the asymmetries in the military situation.
5. US nuclear elements are held in reserve. We would be prepared, if the negotiating situation calls for it, to bring US nuclear elements -- within the limits of 1,000 warheads, 54 F-4s, and 36 Pershing launchers -- to bear in support of achieving a first phase reduction of a Soviet tank army.
6. As in the 30 April US Approach Paper we would seek pre-reduction constraints, including pre-announcement of US and Soviet force movements into the area, pre-announcement and limitations on major exercises by all forces, and exchange of observers at major exercises.
7. Also as in the 30 April paper we would be prepared to rely on national means of verification and a provision for non-interference thereof, but we would also be prepared to consider some negotiated inspection measures such as fewer restrictions on attaches and agreement on mobile inspection teams.
8. We would propose a framework approach to negotiations in which our overall program would be presented to the East in skeleton outline relatively early in negotiations. This would be followed by a return to specific presentations on each element, beginning with an effort to achieve a pre-reduction constraints agreement.

US Nuclear Elements

(S) Regarding the nuclear elements in point 5 above, in the 18 July VP meeting Henry Kissinger suggested, and it was generally agreed, that we should warn the Allies that we might have to include some nuclear elements in order to achieve a first phase reduction of a Soviet tank army. It was argued that we should put the Allies on warning now so that they could not criticize us for making such a proposal later if the negotiating situation calls for it. During this discussion, Mr. Clements raised the problem -- which all immediately recognized -- that stating our willingness to add nuclear elements if the situation warranted could leak to the Soviets in which case they might make demands for nuclear elements early in the negotiations. The VP directed that the VPWG develop a solution to the problem.

(S) The VP Working Group now proposes that Ambassador Rumsfeld make his presentation to the NAC in a session restricted to Perm Reps plus one additional representative from each country and that he make reference to the possible inclusion of nuclear elements only in his oral remarks and not in the written text of US approach which will be circulated to the Allies. Moreover, we will ask Ambassador Rumsfeld to emphasize the security aspects of this issue. This should hold the risk of leakage to a minimum without, of course, totally eliminating it.

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Forces Addressed In the Second Phase

(S) Regarding point 3 above, we do not tell the East during the first phase (restricted to US/USSR) what forces would be reduced in the second phase, and we defer Alliance decisions on this until later. But we also tell the Allies that, "It would be our view that the subsequent (i.e., second phase) negotiations should include predominantly European forces on the Western side and both Soviet and Eastern European forces on the Eastern side...."

(S) The statement that subsequent negotiations should include European forces on the Western side squares with the VP's consensus on offering our European Allies some future prospect of addressing their forces in MBFR. (You will note "European" not "indigenous": this means the Brits, French, Belgians, and Dutch could redeploy from the FRG, thus avoiding exclusive focus on FRG reductions.) But the word "predominantly" and the phrase "both Soviet and Eastern European forces" go further than we have to now and prejudice our flexibility and positions for the second phase. Beyond saying Western European forces should be included in the second phase, the VP specifically said we should hold open our options on the Western side. As for the Eastern side, this formulation would take away from us the option of pressing, if only for bargaining purposes, for only Soviet reductions in the second phase. After all, the Soviets may benefit more than we do from Eastern European reductions; and if we trade FRG forces the target should be Soviet forces.

(S) Thus, I would propose that the relevant sentence be amended to read: "It would be our view that subsequent negotiations should include European forces on the Western side, but considerations of what forces of both the West and the East should be considered in second phase negotiations should be kept within the Alliance and decided on only later."

(S) I understand that the Joint Staff is seeking JCS approval on the cable as it stands. They feel that the phrase "predominantly European" puts a lid on any possible second phase US cuts. Their point is well-taken: but dropping "predominantly" does not preclude this; and the further change does permit us to zero in on Soviet forces.

(S) I should note the attached presentation also includes informing the Allies of the change in our estimates of Soviet (and other) manpower. (See pp. 5-6, and pp. 14-16.)

(S) Recommendation: That you approve the attached message amended as above. Len Sullivan concurs.

Message as amended:

Approve [Signature] 27 JUL 1973

Disapprove _____

Other _____

[Handwritten Signature]

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 18 Nov 2019 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
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Reason: _____
MDR: 18-M-2001

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Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
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MBFR, September 1973–January 1977

340. Editorial Note

On July 10, 1973, Phillip Odeen and Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff sent President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger a memorandum on "data uncertainty in the U.S. position" on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR). They wrote: "As usual when we reach a point of decision in MBFR, the data we have been using for our analysis and to construct options is turning to jelly. This has seriously fouled up our preparations to present the Verification Panel clear choices as to a preferred U.S. proposal which could be given to NATO as we have promised. The short of it is that CIA now reports that the Soviets have 70,000 and possibly 120,000 more ground forces in the reductions area than we thought previously. This means that instead of 390,000 Soviet troops there are probably 460 thousand in the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia." The memorandum continued: "If true, an increase in this magnitude means we are going to have to rethink the problem of MBFR. While parity becomes an even more important goal from a security standpoint it is also made more difficult to attain because of the increased asymmetry of the Soviet cuts. The new data effectively wrecks both the stationed force common ceiling and the U.S.-Soviet percentage parity proposals developed in the VPWG. Under the 10 percent stationed force common ceiling, in which the U.S. would cut 34,000, the Soviet reduction, instead of being 83,000 as we had thought, will now have to be 153,000. This much asymmetry makes the common ceiling proposal for stationed forces ridiculous. The percentage/parity cut becomes too expensive for us. If we try to achieve parity with equal percentages then the equal percentage that is required increases from about 15% to 35-50%. This would represent an increase in the U.S. cut which would grow from 32,000 to 60,000-100,000. This is obviously far beyond the size cut we have contemplated in MBFR." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, MBFR/Measures Agreement Subseries, Box 26, MBFR Verification, 1975-76)

After discussing the new data from CIA, the Verification Panel reached the following conclusions at its meeting on July 18, summarized in the meeting minutes: "The Verification Panel Working Group should coordinate a briefing to NATO that: informs the Allies of our new intelligence information; presents the Options 1, 2, and 3A of the negotiating proposals under interagency discussion; stresses the potential negotiating pitfalls of a simple U.S.-Soviet percentage cut; [and] emphasizes the U.S. preference toward a common ceiling approach that

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is phased with a firm Soviet reduction element. It was further inform key Allies nuclear package to achieve Soviet major tank units to NATO as soon as possible. Materials, NSC Panel Minutes

In a meeting of the National Security Council on July 23, Kissinger. The memorandum MBFR paper should have we should the 29,000 troops equipment. doing them We ought to out a whole Dr. Kissinger. There will going to e that in pre and we for Kissinger's speech. M General S gress, M of Conve

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is phased with a first phase comprising a 15% U.S. reduction and a 15% Soviet reduction including the elements of a tank army or its equivalent. It was further agreed that the United States should very carefully inform key Allied personnel that we would be prepared to consider a nuclear package in addition to the 15% personnel reduction in order to achieve Soviet reductions in the form of a tank army or equivalent major tank units. Finally, it was agreed that a briefing should be given to NATO as soon as possible." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-108, Verification Panel Minutes Originals, 3/15/72 to 6/4/74)

In a meeting with Odeen, President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft, and other members of the NSC staff on July 23, Kissinger discussed the paper being prepared for NATO. The memorandum of conversation reads in part: "Mr. Odeen: On the MBFR paper to NATO. The second draft is out for comment now. We should have a final draft by the end of the week. Mr. Kissinger: I think we should throw in the mixed package. A proposal that we take out 29,000 troops without equipment for their taking out 65,000 troops with equipment. You don't need NATO to start screaming that we are abandoning them again. Mr. Eagleburger: That is my worry. Dr. Kissinger: We ought to say that is just not possible. You can't ask them to take out a whole tank army for 29,000 men. Mr. Eagleburger: We can ask. Dr. Kissinger: Yes, and we saw what happened in SALT. Mr. Odeen: There will be a meeting of the NPC on Friday. Dr. Kissinger: Are we going to explain the new intelligence? Mr. Odeen: We will tell them that in preparation for the meeting we had a review of the intelligence and we found this problem and that we will explain it to them. Dr. Kissinger: It won't do us any good. Unless it gets into Schlesinger's speech. Mr. Odeen: I don't think we can do that. I think it is too late. General Scowcroft: It will make us look like fools." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 271, Memoranda of Conversation, Chronological File)

On July 24, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt forwarded to Kissinger the draft presentation to NATO of the U.S. negotiating proposal for MBFR along with their recommendations on six undecided issues regarding the U.S. negotiating position. Kissinger approved their recommendations. On July 26, the Department of State transmitted the approved U.S. proposal for the Alliance negotiating program to Ambassador Rumsfeld in telegram 146712 to USNATO. On July 27, the Mission to NATO replied in telegram 3582: "Ambassador Rumsfeld read and circulated text of 'US views on MBFR negotiating approach' per reftel in Council meeting on July 27. Initial reaction was positive." (All in National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 264, NATO, Vol. XV)

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