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Mr. B. Van Eenennaam
Head, Military Section
Atlantic Cooperation and Security
Affairs Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dear Mr. Van Eenennaam:

I appreciated your visit on July 18 and having had the opportunity to discuss the Netherland's proposal to the HLG (DAV/MS Nr. 131/79). We certainly agree that the question of NATO's LRTNF cannot be looked upon in isolation but must be seen in close relation with the existing categories of TNF. We also believe that HLG work to date has been consistent with this mutual concern for a comprehensive evaluation of NATO's TNF.

As you know, the HLG has recommended that LRTNF modernization should not entail any change in NATO's strategy, or any increase in the overall numbers of nuclear warheads in NATO's TNF stockpile. The implications of these recommendations are such that there will be a reduction in the number of short- and/or medium-range nuclear warheads in the stockpile as increased numbers of warheads for modern LRTNF systems are deployed. Thus, of necessity, adjustments in the TNF stockpile to compensate for LRTNF deployments must be in the direction suggested in your proposal. As there are political and military consequences for Alliance members stemming from the numbers and types of warheads retired, the stockpile adjustments should be carried out in a reasoned and careful manner based on detailed analysis.

Of more immediate concern over the near term, in our view, is the need for an Alliance decision on LRTNF modernization and arms control by the end of this year. We must be careful to insure that Alliance considerations at this time of the effects of LRTNF deployments upon the TNF stockpile do not

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serve to delay Alliance LRTNF decisions beyond December. However, once a decision on LRTNF is made, the US would look favorably upon a follow-on study regarding both the requirements for short and medium-range systems as part of NATO's overall TNF posture, and the effects of shifts in composition of the nuclear stockpile upon overall TNF requirements. I would be happy to discuss your paper at the next HLG meeting and we would support a recommendation in this fall's HLG report that the Alliance undertake the study I have outlined above.

/fs/

Mr. McGiffert

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