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22 February 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR:



Director, Programs Analysis
National Security Council Staff
Executive Office Building

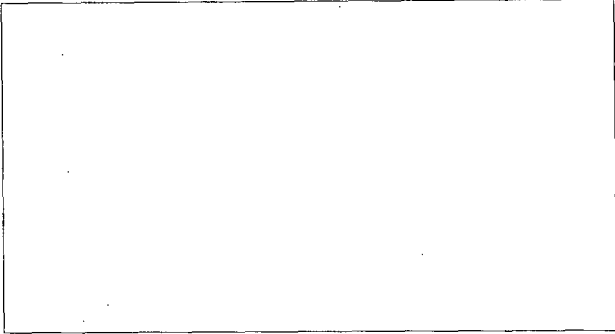
SUBJECT : Memorandum on Soviet Views on
Nuclear Issues

The attached memorandum is in response to
your request made at the VPWG meeting of 12 February.

E. H. KNOCHE
Director
Strategic Research

Attachment:

Blind Memorandum: "Warsaw Pact Views on
the Inclusion of Nuclear Weapons in MBFR"



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22 February 1974

Warsaw Pact Views on the Inclusion of
Nuclear Weapons in MBFR

1. Soviet and Warsaw Pact MBFR spokesmen continue to insist that any agreement must provide for the reduction of nuclear as well as conventional armaments. The draft agreement presented by the chief Soviet delegate on 8 November specifically would require the parties "to reduce their ground and air forces and armaments, including nuclear weapons."* This point has since been repeated regularly in both plenary statements and bilateral discussions. Emphasis on reduction of nuclear weapons is not surprising in view of traditional Pact interest in this subject. In bilateral meetings, however, Soviet and Polish delegates have occasionally hinted that there might be some flexibility in the Pact position.

2. In presenting their case for the inclusion of nuclear weapons in an MBFR agreement, Pact spokesmen have referred to the inherent destructiveness of such weapons, their role in the creation of tensions, and the need to satisfy popular demands for their reduction. The main Pact argument, however, has been presented in terms of the concept that an MBFR agreement must result in "equal security" for both sides. Pact spokesmen have

* Although the term "nuclear weapons" is used in the Pact draft agreement, it is used in a way which makes clear they are viewed as a part of "ground and air forces armaments." The proposed method of reduction is by "units and sub-units equipped with nuclear weapons."

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charged that acceptance of the NATO framework proposal's omission of nuclear weapons would result in a unilateral advantage for the West because it treats only one portion of the military balance in Central Europe, that portion which is most favorable to the Pact.

3. In stressing that the purpose of MBFR is to maintain the current balance in Central Europe, but at a lower level, Pact spokesmen have emphasized that this balance has not resulted from the creation of opposing forces which are mirror images of one another in size and structure. On the contrary, each side has, for various reasons, emphasized different elements in the composition of its forces. Such differences in emphasis have resulted in various disparities, some of which favor the Pact and some NATO, although the overall result has been the creation of a balance.

4. One of the major differences noted by Pact spokesmen has been that the Pact, in order to meet its defensive requirements, has chosen to emphasize the maintenance of large numbers of ground forces, with a particular stress on armored units. According to the Pact spokesman, NATO has decided, for its own reasons, not to try to match the Pact in this regard but rather to emphasize tactical nuclear weapons. The result, according to Pact spokesmen, has been that the "disparity" in ground forces favoring the Pact has been countered by a "disparity" in tactical nuclear weapons favoring NATO. Pact media frequently refer to the NATO stockpile of 7,000 nuclear weapons in Western Europe, although such reports do not specify how many of these weapons are in the NGA.

5. The NATO proposal is said to ignore those disparities which favor the West and to provide for the reduction of elements in which the Pact is superior. The result would be a unilateral advantage for the West, particularly since a reduction limited to conventional weapons would increase the relative importance of nuclear weapons in the

post-reduction period. For this reason, the Pact insists that nuclear systems be included in any reduction.

6. The Pact's interest in the inclusion of nuclear systems in any agreement appears generally consistent with its doctrine regarding the nature of any future war in Central Europe. There is no reason to believe that the Pact has abandoned its belief that any such war would eventually involve the use of nuclear weapons, although it might first pass through a conventional stage. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the Pact really does view itself as being inferior to NATO in terms of nuclear weapons in the NGA.* Consequently, the reduction of such weapons would be desirable in terms of its effects on an aspect of NATO's military capability which is of particular concern.

7. Pact spokesmen have not yet stated precisely which of NATO's nuclear capabilities they would want to see reduced through MBFR. It is important to note, however, that the draft agreement and many other statements on the subject emphasize that any reductions would include units equipped with nuclear weapons. This emphasis on units clearly implies that a reduction of warheads alone would not be satisfactory, but would have to be concomitant with the reduction of the delivery systems organic to units. Such an emphasis on delivery systems, rather than on the warheads themselves, is consistent with earlier estimates of Pact MBFR objectives and is

* From what we know of Pact plans for nuclear war in Europe, fewer nuclear strikes are called for than in NATO plans. The Pact, however, regularly includes strikes by strategic missiles and medium bombers from bases in the USSR. Further, a part of the Pact tactical nuclear stockpile intended for use in the European theater is stored in the USSR to protect it from attack by NATO. Air transport would be used to bring these weapons forward and they would be delivered directly to field units rather than to storage depots.

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unlikely to change, although [redacted]

[redacted] has suggested that these nuclear weapons not integrated with units--presumably stockpiled warheads--might be the subject of a separate negotiation.

8. In bilateral discussions, Soviet delegates have occasionally hinted that Moscow might be flexible on the nuclear issue. In December a Soviet diplomat stated that he was certain that NATO would sooner or later introduce a proposal on nuclear weapons. He added that the inclusion of air forces was more important than the inclusion of nuclear elements. However, it is probable that the Pact's desire to reduce air forces stems primarily from an appreciation of their role as NATO's main delivery system for tactical nuclear weapons. Another Soviet delegate commented that an agreement which did not include nuclear weapons would meet with public criticism, but he added that a withdrawal of nuclear weapons would probably not make much difference militarily to either side. From their remarks, including the Polish delegate's recent references to Pershings, it is possible to conclude that members of the Pact have knowledge of at least some of the details of Option 3, and that it probably will be used as a sweetener for Option 1. The Polish delegates have suggested that it might be possible to confine first stage reductions to conventional forces and put off any nuclear reductions until later. They have also expressed the desire that, in the absence of actual reductions of nuclear weapons, there might at least be an agreement to establish a ceiling on such weapons in the reduction area. Such points, however, have not yet been developed to any great extent.

9. The Soviets and their allies probably are genuinely concerned about the number of tactical nuclear delivery vehicles in the NATO arsenal. They probably also realize that NATO's discussion of reducing nuclear weapons will be difficult and potentially divisive. They might be willing to make

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some compromises concerning the timing of an agreement and the numbers of weapons to be reduced, but are likely to continue insisting that nuclear systems be included in an MBFR agreement.