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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: INF Initiative

Ambassador Paul Nitze has recently developed, with his Soviet counterpart, a proposal for moving INF negotiations to a rapid conclusion. It calls for major changes in the US and USSR positions. This preliminary evaluation is designed to assist you in deciding whether the proposed package should be abandoned, or pursued to see if it can be the basis for an INF agreement.

Status of the INF Negotiations

At your direction, the US has proposed elimination of the Soviet SS-20 missiles and older SS-4s and SS-5s in return for cancellation of our plans to deploy the Pershing II and the ground-launched cruise missile in Europe. The US "zero/zero" proposal would prohibit all such missiles wherever located globally. It would not limit aircraft or sea-based systems, and would not include or compensate for third-country systems.

The Soviet approach has been much different. They propose a prompt moratorium, which would prohibit deployment of the PII and GLCM, but would permit the Soviets to maintain their present INF forces in Europe. This would be followed by a reduction in the aggregate number of medium-range missiles and aircraft in Europe on each side to 300. British and French forces would be included, as would US carrier-based aircraft. The net effect of the Soviet proposal would be to prevent deployment of the US PII and GLCM. It would also reduce our tactical aircraft in Europe to a token level, with little or no constraint on the SS-20 and other modern Soviet forces in and near Europe, and no constraints in the eastern Soviet Union.

As a result of the negotiations since November 1981, each side now understands the other side's approach and underlying rationale. Our allies are content with our position at this time, although pressures for progress are expected to mount in 1983 as actual GLCM and PII deployments begin.

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Proposed Package

The present question is whether to seek a package that could result in an agreement in the near term. We should not make any substantive change in our zero/zero position at this time except in the context of Soviet commitment to prompt agreement on an overall package. Otherwise, the US would simply weaken its bargaining position with nothing in return. The Soviets may hold to their present position for similar reasons.

Ambassador Nitze and Ambassador Kvitsinskiy have discussed the possibility of such a package for an INF agreement. In response to Soviet signals of interest in a compromise solution, Nitze discussed a possible draft package with Kvitsinskiy on July 16. Following revisions based on Kvitsinskiy's comments, the two representatives agreed to recommend an approach to their governments.

The key elements of the package are:

- A ceiling of 225 medium-range missile launchers and aircraft in Europe by 1987, of which no more than 75 can be missile launchers.
- The Soviet Union would reduce its SS-20s in Europe from 225 to 75, and reduce its Backfire, Badger, and Blinder aircraft in Europe from more than 450 to 150.
- SS-20s in the Far East would be frozen at the present level of 90.
- The US would give up its Pershing II deployment program in Europe and reduce the planned GLCM deployment in Europe from 116 launchers to 75. We would reduce our F-111 aircraft in Europe (165) plus FB-111 aircraft in the US (63) from 228 to a maximum of 150.
- The Soviets would keep 75 SS-20s with 225 warheads in Europe; the US could have 75 GLCM launchers with 300 missiles and warheads in Europe.
- No constraints on British and French forces, or US sea-based forces or air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs).

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There are a number of important supplementary provisions (Tab A). Several ambiguous provisions need clarification (e.g., could the US deploy GLCM and PII to Asia? Could excess aircraft simply be withdrawn from Europe or would they have to be destroyed?) In addition, elements such as duration of an agreement have not been addressed.

Military Assessment

While the proposal is more equitable than the provisions of the Soviet Draft Treaty, it falls short of meeting the military needs of the United States in several areas:

-- The United States foregoes deployment of the Pershing II ballistic missile, the system perceived by the Soviet Union to be the most threatening and by the United States to be militarily more effective than our cruise missile (GLCM). The Soviet Union retains in being a potent force of SS-20 missiles with 225 warheads with a much shorter time of flight and greater survivability than the cruise missiles permitted the United States.

-- If the United States must destroy over fifty F-111s in Europe to meet the ceiling of 150 aircraft, loss of these aircraft would sacrifice certain capabilities that, taken together, are unique: all-weather, radius of action, payload, and multiple role at longer ranges. To be sure, the Soviet Union would have to destroy several hundred more than the United States would be required to destroy, but these would be older aircraft (Badger and Blinder). The current Backfire deployments would be essentially protected.

There are certain advantages to be gained by the United States through this proposal:

-- The Soviet side is limited to 225 RVs on missiles and 150 nuclear capable aircraft, a reduction of about 750 missile RVs on SS-4, SS-5, and SS-20 missiles, and 200-300 nuclear capable aircraft by most conservative count.

-- The United States retains the capability to deploy up to 300 cruise missile RVs.

-- Sea-based and Allied systems are not included in the agreement.

Considerations which would make the proposal militarily more acceptable include:

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-- a ban on refires, as in our current INF proposal. GLCM has no refire capability; SS-20 has a rapid reload/refire capability.

-- additional examination of where the line of withdrawal should be placed is required in light of the difference between the Soviet-asserted SS-20 range of 4000 km, and the CIA-DIA estimates of 4400-5000 km. The distance between the inner-German border and 80 degrees East is about 4600 km.

-- to protect the F-111s which would be above the aircraft ceiling in Europe, the proposal should make explicit that aircraft may be withdrawn to reduce to the permitted level, while medium range missiles in Europe above the limit of 75 (SS-20s, 4s and 5s) must be destroyed.

-- inclusion of FB-111 requires further study. Inclusion may establish an unwarranted precedent.

Political Assessment

Allied Interests

A zero/zero outcome would be preferable to the NATO allies, since it would further reduce Soviet forces and eliminate the need to base US INF missiles in Europe, but many of our allies are skeptical that this is a plausible outcome.

The proposed package would fulfill our commitment to negotiate an agreement that reduces the SS-20 threat. It would require Soviet dismantling of about two-thirds of the SS-20s now deployed opposite Western Europe, and all of the older SS-4s and SS-5s. While the remaining SS-20s and Soviet strategic forces would continue to threaten Europe, the agreement would represent a substantial reduction in the most destabilizing missiles in Europe.

An agreement with the Soviets permitting 75 US GLCM launchers in Europe would cause a dramatic shift in the debate in Europe over our INF deployment plans. Although there would be some criticism of movement from the high ground of the zero/zero position, NATO allies would probably welcome an agreement along the lines of the proposed package. The Germans, for example, have indicated they favor finite limits in the 75/75 - 150/150 range. In the absence of a zero/zero solution, they are determined to follow through on deployments but do not want to be the only INF basing country on the continent. (Allocation of the reduction of the 41 GLCM launchers would require complex discussions with the five basing countries.) Without an agreement, many of these basing countries face formidable opposition to deployment. Since missiles and launchers will begin arriving in Europe in the late spring of 1983, an

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agreement or the clear prospect of one by next spring should help overcome this problem.

The impact on our Far Eastern interests has to be seriously considered. China, Japan and South Korea must not perceive that we are simply transferring our European imbalance to them. Under the proposed package, SS-20 deployments in the Far East would be frozen at 90, but Soviet aircraft (above the 150 limit) could redeploy to the Far East (unless required to be destroyed). We should preserve options for US deployment to the Far East to offset Soviet INF in that region and consider other changes in the package to make this problem manageable.

Even if the Soviets reject the Nitze-Kvistinskiy approach, we will have established that we have negotiated seriously.

Domestic Interests

The heart of the Administration's argument against the freeze movement is that we are negotiating arms control agreements that would be better than a freeze. While not reaching the ideal goal of zero/zero, this agreement would demonstrate that substantial asymmetric reductions in Soviet forces to equal levels are feasible and practical. Such reductions are clearly preferable to a freeze which would continue the present high and unequal levels.

While some opposition is inevitable, an agreement along the lines proposed, providing for substantial reductions to equal ceilings, should command broad support in the Congress.

Given the controversy surrounding Soviet compliance with other arms control agreements, special attention must be given to the verification measures in the agreement. The current INF proposal is difficult to verify, and moving from zero/zero will further complicate this problem. The specific measures we need for verification must be part of any settlement on a package.

Impact on START

The proposed agreement would establish a number of positive precedents for START -- asymmetric Soviet reductions to equal levels, focussing the most meaningful reductions on the most destabilizing systems, substantial progress on the medium-range land-based missile and aircraft issues, and refusal to compensate for British and French forces. While the US would reserve the right to pursue Backfire further in START, acceptance of Backfire as a medium-range system will complicate obtaining its inclusion in START.

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Next Steps

If you decide to pursue this approach further, a number of substantive and procedural questions need to be addressed:

1. What is our position on the package?

We should await a Soviet indication of interest in pursuing this approach. While the Soviets appear to be deeply concerned about PII, it is by no means assured that they will accept this package without substantial modifications. We expect that Kvistinskiy will contact Nitze with a Soviet response to the package, or Gromyko will raise it with Secretary Shultz in September. At that time, the US will need to be in a position to state whether or not we wish to pursue this approach and what specific changes we require.* The exact timing and procedures will require further analysis.

2. What organizational arrangements should be made?

To date, all discussion of this subject has been between Nitze and Kvitsinskiy. Initially, the exchanges should continue in this channel until an agreed package covering all of the elements of a deal is worked out. Then the full delegations would work out the text of a treaty. This should also be discussed by Shultz and Gromyko in late September. (If there has not been progress by then, the regular negotiating round, which begins on September 30, should proceed with its currently planned agenda.)

To date, only a handful of officials in Washington are aware of the elements of the proposed package, (in order to minimize the chance of a serious leak while Moscow and Washington are considering their response). If you decide to pursue this approach, we recommend that the National Security Planning Group, supported by a small interagency group, evaluate this proposal and make specific recommendations to you. The number of staff people involved will be held to the minimum necessary to give each element of the package the detailed analysis that this important subject requires, in order to minimize public disclosure until we know whether or not we have the basis for an agreement.

3. When to inform our Allies

The NATO allies, especially the basing countries, have a major political interest in knowing the prospects for an agreement prior to deployment of US INF missiles. If we receive a positive Soviet response, US officials, on a close-hold basis, should brief selected officials in the basing countries on the basic outlines of the package solution. Our objective would be to avoid their first hearing of this effort

* Weinberger footnote to effect
that U.S. doesn't talk to USSR on this until

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from the Soviets or the press. We should guard against generating excessive optimism until we know whether or not the basis for an agreement exists. As the exchanges proceed, we should continue to keep the leadership in NATO countries informed, as well as Allies in the Far East.

4. When to inform the Congress

The Congress will have similar interest. Once the Soviet response has been evaluated and a decision made to negotiate on this basis, key Congressional leaders should be informed on a close-hold basis.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that you proceed with the plan outlined above.

APPROVE _____

DISAPPROVE _____

Secretary of State

Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

Secretary of Defense

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Director of Central Intelligence

Director, Arms Control and
Disarmament Agency

Attachments

Tab A - Nitze Proposal

Tab B - Summary of the INF Balance

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