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**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503**

SPECIAL

August 20, 1987

USA FILE

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LEGISLATIVE REFERRAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Liaison Officer -

- Department of Defense (State only)
- Department of State (DOD only)
- National Security Council
- Department of Justice
- Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: DOD and State draft reports on H.R. 2805, concerning the establishment of a commission to foster more cooperative planning and response by our NATO and Asian allies to our-of-area threats to Western Security interests.

The Office of Management and Budget requests the views of your agency on the above subject before advising on its relationship to the program of the President, in accordance with OMB Circular A-19.

A response to this request for your views is needed no later than FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1987.

Questions should be referred to **SUE TRAU/ANNETTE ROONEY** (395-7300), the legislative analyst in this office.

Ronald K. Peterson

**RONALD K. PETERSON FOR
Assistant Director for
Legislative Reference**

Enclosures

- cc: J. Eisenhower
- B. Howard
- E. Murdock

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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Bereuter:

Since receiving your letter of July 9, we have given additional thought to the establishment of a commission on out-of-area issues, as proposed in the legislation which you recently introduced. In my letter of March 9, which responded to your previous correspondence on the commission proposal, I outlined several considerations which we continue to endorse.

As you and your colleagues have correctly observed, global trends since the immediate post-war period have considerably reshaped Western security interests. Many of today's most pressing issues -- terrorism, access to raw materials including petroleum, Soviet adventurism in unstable areas -- were barely perceptible just a few decades ago. We, and our allies in Europe, East Asia, and the Pacific, must confront new challenges which have evolved since the establishment of the NATO alliance and other collective security arrangements.

An effective allied approach to out-of-area challenges must rest on three elements: consensus among interested allies on how best to address out-of-area issues, proper machinery to coordinate allied policy, and the means to pursue whatever response or action is decided upon. I would like to take up each of these elements in more detail.

In recent years, the industrial democracies have recognized recurring threats to their security interests. Many of these threats are a direct function of such factors as chronic instability in the developing world, increasing economic interdependence, and the growing capacity of the Soviet Union to project power on a world-wide basis. We face relatively little difficulty in identifying the problems; the more difficult task is to agree on whether a particular out-of-area problem presents sufficient potential costs to merit collective action, and if so, what action would be appropriate. To take the example of international terrorism, nations have tended to interpret somewhat differently what combinations of vigilance, precautionary safeguards, legal initiatives, pre-emptive strikes, or retaliation best address the threat at hand.

The Honorable
Doug Bereuter
House of Representatives.

-2-

In this respect, consensus on policy solutions is the starting point, and sine qua non, for coordinated allied out-of-area action. I believe that an allied out-of-area commission could sometimes serve to build consensus on particular issues. There is, however, considerable risk that a commission's diverse membership would simply replay official national differences of view, or even prompt intra-alliance disagreements which did not previously exist at official levels.

Much "machinery" for coordination on out-of-area issues already exists. On March 9, I outlined several of the NATO Alliance's consultative processes. In broad terms, out-of-area challenges to our security interests are frequently discussed in many fora including the press and academic community, international organizations such as the United Nations, and bilateral as well as multilateral discussions among the Allies, to name a few. We engage in regular bilateral consultations with our allies and friends in the course of constant diplomatic exchanges. Groups of allies meet periodically every year, consistent with informal but regular commitments to consult with one another on global security issues. NATO's North Atlantic Council and Defense Planning Committee meet in plenary session at the ministerial level twice per year. Political and military related consultative meetings take place at NATO, on a less senior level, almost every week. Out-of-area challenges are frequently part of the agenda for such meetings. As you are aware, the United Nations Security Council, of which key allied powers are both permanent and rotating members, regularly reviews international developments as they affect global security. Other mechanisms, such as the annual Western economic summits, consistently take up pressing out-of-area concerns as matters for coordinated action.

On balance, I would signal as most effective our bilateral, and limited multilateral, exchanges as a means of organizing out-of-area policy. These exchanges are especially effective in bringing together knowledgeable experts, who command sufficient authority, and can preserve essential confidentiality, in coordinating out-of-area action. Participants are well acquainted with longstanding historical trends, as well as the immediate conditions which surround a particular problem. Equally important, such exchanges can be carried out on a timely basis, within hours if conditions so warrant.

-3-

The final element of out-of-area coordination concerns implementing policy goals agreed upon by allied nations. Effective response to threats demands political, economic, diplomatic and military resources. We have found that we can best promote joint allied action by engaging primarily those partners who have the means to carry out collective commitments. Once consensus is achieved, interested nations must commit their resources to a given problem -- often in the face of opposition from various quarters. For this reason, we keep a sharp focus in coordinating out-of-area policy. We concentrate our efforts with other nations most likely to share our views, who have the means to support policy objectives, and who would be ready to commit those means in concerted action. None of these points undermines the idea of an Allied Commission for out-of-area issues as a forum for exploring policy. These considerations do, however, suggest that a commission would be unlikely to promote timely and mission-oriented activities.

Recent policy toward the Persian Gulf demonstrates the elements which I have tried to convey. Through extensive bilateral and multilateral discussion, including the Venice Economic Summit and the UN Security Council, industrial democracies have succeeded in taking joint action. Most recently, the British and French decided to send minesweepers to the Gulf. In addition, the July 20 UNSC resolution which called for a ceasefire/withdrawal in the Iran-Iraq War marked an effective response to an out-of-area threat. This resolution was the product of many contacts which spanned related issues: Operation Staunch designed to halt arms flows to Iran; the Venice Summit Statement calling for an end to Iran/Iraq War and freedom of navigation in the Gulf; and close consultation with allies on regional political developments.

In sum, the present system for allied out-of-area policy coordination meets our key requirements. While there are evident merits to the Allied Commission for out-of-area issues proposed in your recent legislation, it is difficult for us to see how this proposal, if put into effect, would overcome already existing problems. Moreover, the proposal raises budgetary concerns discussed in my previous letter, and there is some question whether other allies would also endorse the idea of setting up yet another institution to address global security questions. Please forgive the length of this reply.

-4-

I have, however, sought to respond in kind to the serious thinking and concerted effort which you and your colleagues have devoted to these important issues.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Betsy R. Warren
Acting Assistant Secretary
Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs