

INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRSASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

22 June 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Advancing Progress in MBFR Negotiations

OSD REVIEWED 08-Mar-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION

Status of Negotiations.

The Allies in Vienna have focused on seeking with the East some understanding on whose forces are to be reduced in MBFR at the outset. In countering Eastern objections to beginning with US/Soviet reductions, we have advanced the possibility that (1) there would be no increase of NATO/Pact ground forces in the area between Phase I and Phase II; (2) a Phase I negotiation involving only US and Soviet forces would be followed after a fixed period of time by a second phase, and (3) a Phase I agreement would be subject to review after a reasonable period of time. NATO is now finalizing a further bargaining chip for use in Vienna which would suggest more specific assurances to the Soviets that West Europeans in fact would take cuts in a second-phase.

The full potential of our negotiating stance has not yet been developed. The next logical step would be to indicate some flexibility toward narrowing the statistical gap between the totals of NATO/Pact ground forces by eliminating some anomalies in the way certain forces are categorized between ground and air forces. This could make the common ceiling concept less unattractive to the Soviets. We foresee no problem in moving ahead with such an indication before the summer break in negotiations which will begin on July 21 and run through mid-September.

There is a further step which the United States has developed and put forward to the Allies as part of our negotiating package but which the Allies have not acted upon to make this part of the NATO position. This, of course, is the nuclear package consisting of 1,000 warheads, 36 Pershing launchers and 54 F-4 aircraft.

Need for Progress.

Given the negotiating schedule and the political realities which continue to put pressure on the United States as well as our Allies for unilateral troop reductions, I think it is extremely important to develop more fully our negotiating hand if we hope in practical terms to make some real movement in the talks even by next spring.

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Besides helping to move the negotiations forward, an approach which would introduce nuclear elements into MBFR can help keep the focus on our Phase I objective of a Soviet Tank Army by offering equipment reductions on our side.

Bruce Clarke reports his continuing assessment that what we are asking from the Soviets in terms of a tank army and 1,700 tanks is not going to be easy to get and has asked that you give the "matter of Option III and its tactical use at this juncture in the MBFR talks" consideration. In his report to you for the period 17-21 June (attached), he has suggested the possibility that something could be done at the forthcoming Summit that would help with progress in Vienna.

#### Method of Introducing Nuclear Elements.

At the Easter negotiating break Ambassador Resor proposed that we inform the Soviets bilaterally at an appropriate point that "The U.S. might be willing in principle to include a substantial amount of its nuclear capability in U.S. withdrawals if the Soviets are ready to accept in principle that in Phase I there would be a substantially asymmetrical withdrawal of Soviet ground force manpower and tanks."

Such a statement would not commit us as to how we would include a nuclear capability and leaves open a variety of options for playing air manpower, warheads, missiles and aircraft.

The press of events has, in my view, not permitted Secretary Kissinger to focus adequately on this issue. Further I think that he has been troubled by the possible interrelationship between MBFR and SALT. There is certainly some SALT relationship, but the MBFR nuclear elements would fall into a special class. They would:

- be associated with the ground forces in Central Europe;
- be played in a limited geographic area -- the NGA;
- not be linked to submarines, aircraft in the U.K., and aircraft afloat.

However, tabling a nuclear proposal in MBFR could be associated with a U.S. statement to the Soviets that it is assumed that they take this as a step toward meeting some of their interest in the SALT, at least to the extent that these systems are included in FBS. The MBFR-SALT linkage should, in any case, not be tightly drawn.

Two ways we could advance a "nuclear hint" along the lines drafted by Ambassador Resor at Easter are:

- if the Soviets seek movement in MBFR at the Summit, indicate U.S. readiness to include nuclears;

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- If the subject does not come up at the Summit, seek rapid NATO agreement to the Allies making a nuclear proposal in Vienna before the July break.

The gains we would expect from either of these approaches are:

- some feeling for the prospect of Soviet willingness to give up a tank army;
- the possibility of progress in MBFR negotiations which could assist us with the Congressional problem;
- a better indication of Soviet intent with respect to MBFR.

We recognize the possibility of there being a misunderstanding in NATO. Therefore, any bilateral discussion with the Soviets must be in the way of a response. It must be guarded and limited. And we must follow any substantive exchange with immediate consultations in NATO. The management of MBFR has evolved as a centerpiece of Alliance unity and solidarity and we should keep it that way. But we should also be prepared to take prudent and measured risk in order to make progress.

The second way of moving the nuclear chip carries the risk that the Alliance machinery may be slow and difficult to the point that our prospects for progress in MBFR in a reasonable time frame may be substantially reduced. However, this risk can be minimized if the U.S. properly prepares its case and exercises strong leadership in NATO.

Recommendations.

- That you draw upon this memorandum to raise the MBFR nuclear issue with Secretary Kissinger before his departure for Europe.
- That you seek a commitment from Secretary Kissinger that the U.S. move rapidly to put nuclear elements into play in the MBFR negotiations before the summer break.
- That you propose initiating Allied action on the issue when the President stops in Brussels enroute to the Summit.
- That you suggest putting forward a "nuclear hint" at the Summit in response to serious Soviet interest in movement in MBFR.

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1 Enclosure

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Drafted by Col. L.G. Michael



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