

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY  
G/PM

December 20, 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Debriefing by Assistant Secretary DOD/ISA Paul H. Nitze  
on recent European Trip

1. Mr. Nitze called on Monday to invite us to attend a debriefing which he was holding for ISA staff covering his recent European trip. When Mr. Kitchen and I arrived the debriefing (which started at 5:30 and ended at 7:05 p.m.) had already been in progress for about ten minutes.

2. BAOR. Mr. Nitze was in process of discussing the British views as to the role which could be played by the BAOR in hostilities in Europe. He indicated that the British had analyzed recent Russian military exercises which appeared to be directed toward taking Hamburg. The British were persuaded that the Soviets had the capability of doing so in a 3 1/2 day period. As a result they felt that present NATO forces would be required to drop back to the Weser River sacrificing a large part of Western Germany. As a result the British had developed a revised strategic concept which involved moving German forces north to take over certain UK responsibilities. In addition, it involved "beefing up" British forces including anti-tank capabilities, better tactical air, APC's, etc.

3. ACE Interdiction Plan. The British indicated that they did not believe that Norstad could execute the current Interdiction Plan. They felt that its planned penetration into the USSR precludes it from being utilized except as a part of a general war. They argue that since Norstad's MRBM requirement was directly related to the ACE Interdiction Plan it therefore really represented a strategic rather than a tactical requirement. The British believe this does not make sense (since presumably the strategic strike forces are what count in meeting such a requirement). Moreover,

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they reiterated their opposition to the Germans either manning or owning MRBM's (which it was implied would be necessitated if one met the MRBM requirement of the Interdiction Plan). But, if the Interdiction Plan is out, what replaces it? The UK response was that a strictly conventional operation would not work. They agree with the German assumption that it would result in a rapid loss of Hamburg and Munich. Therefore, their conclusion is that we should rely on the use of tactical nuclear weapons "ahead of any attack into East Germany." The scheme, involving the use of six tactical nucs, is apparently the brainchild of Air Marshal Earl. Mr. Nitze indicated that he thought it had not yet been fully adopted by the government and it was quite clear that the full consequences of the plan had not been thought through.

4. Polaris Subs. Mr. Nitze asked Watkinson if the U.S. should commit its 5 Polaris Submarines to NATO at this time. Watkinson said "no." He argued that the U.S. should hold off on the actual commitment until some satisfactory overall solution to the MRBM problem was worked out. In this connection he indicated that the UK was also willing to commit some of its nuclear capability (such as its V-Bombers and Thors) to a NATO 4th Force. However, this would be contingent upon the U.S. making a like contribution and upon obtaining German cooperation.

5. Skybolt. In response to our question, Mr. Nitze indicated that Mr. McNamara had pointed out that Skybolt, originally estimated to cost \$93 million, was now up around \$492 million, and we were still not sure that we would have an effective weapons system. He indicated to the British we would do our best but the outlook was uncertain. Watkinson brought up the question of conversion of hunter-killer "ships" (Mr. Nitze indicated that there was some confusion as to whether Watkinson meant subs or surface vessels) to Polaris carrying vessels. Mr. McNamara rejected this as being too expensive. Watkinson stated that the UK needed something after the V-Bombers and would like to collaborate with the U.S. on future plans. Mr. McNamara did not follow up.

6. Political Directive. Mr. Nitze indicated that following the discussions which had been had with the British, he and Mr. McNamara agreed to delete the reference (in Mr. McNamara's speech) to the NATO Political Directive, to which State had earlier objected. The implication

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was that the British views on the need to use nuclear weapons influenced that judgment. He indicated (jokingly) that since Defense had removed any reference to the Polaris commitment from Rusk's speech they felt that this was a fair trade. More seriously he said that he was sorry we had not hit the political directive issue head on since he felt that by not doing so we had probably lost some valuable time.

7. Paris Meeting. Mr. Nitze indicated that when he and Mr. McNamara arrived the Military Committee meetings had already taken place. By and large the Germans there, as elsewhere, disagreed with important aspects of the military discussion. They disagreed with the Standing Group intelligence paper, maintaining that it underestimated the size of the Soviet buildup. The Germans made it clear that they "wanted in" on the development of the intelligence estimates in the future. On MC-96, the Germans made a strong pitch on the importance of MRBM's, disagreeing with the language in MC-96 which qualified the MRBM requirement. They argued that the Military Committee should nail down this requirement within the next year, specifically revalidating those factors which gave rise to inclusion of this requirement in the first place. Similarly, on MC-95 they urged more definitive Military Committee action. In this connection General Lemnitzer noted that the Military Committee had gone as far as it could go without further political guidance. In the NAC meeting itself, Mr. Strauss again asked for an early decision on MC-96, suggesting that the Standing Group settle any outstanding military questions and that the NAC set up a special group to settle political problems. The Council did not act upon the Strauss proposal, though Stikker did suggest an early January meeting of the NAC to consider the MRBM problem. In this connection Stikker has drawn up a questionnaire (which Defense has) which starts with quotations from Herter, Gates, Finletter and the President's Ottawa speech. Apparently this questionnaire will be the focal point of the January meeting. (Comment: Mr. Nitze pointed out that the Stikker questionnaire was not answerable without a lot more work in the U. S. Government. As a result of this and other discussions he and Mr. McNamara feel that we must press forward to get our own thoughts in order. See further on this subject below).

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8. Discussions with Strauss. Mr. Nitze and Mr. McNamara covered a wide range of subjects with Defense Minister Strauss starting with the 104 G. Apparently Strauss was very upset over what he maintained was discrimination against the Germans related to the information provided to them on the atomic conversion of the 104 G as compared to that given the Canadians. Mr. Nitze reported Strauss as "very angry" and asked whether this reflected bad staff work on the U.S. side. Mr. Stanley indicated that this was not the problem and that in fact there was a major substantive issue involved but there was no further discussion of this matter.

9. Strauss stated that the Germans never meant to indicate a belief in the feasibility of "partial nuclear war." They recognized that if SACEUR goes nuclear this would only make sense as a part of a total SAC strike. Strauss also stated that they had no intention of attempting to short-cut the President's release authority on nuclear weapons. When asked by Mr. McNamara how they proposed that the problem of Soviet MRBM's be met, Strauss emphasized that they did not want to own their own weapons system, but did want to be assured of effective coverage of Soviet MRBM's in a way which formed a creditable deterrent. Mr. McNamara then posed the following hypothetical question: "If the U.S. stations the approximate 600 plus MRBM's required in the European theatre, owned and manned entirely by the U.S., but targetted against Soviet MRBM's and with a complete guarantee that they would not be removed without allied agreement, would this meet the German requirement?" Mr. Nitze indicated that Strauss gave an unambiguous "yes" to this question. (Comment: In subsequent discussions we asked Mr. Nitze whether he thought this represented a carefully considered German position. He said his impression was that Strauss sincerely meant it, though he doubted that the German military would be satisfied).

10. Mr. Nitze commented at this point that he had not been aware that MC-96 contained approximately 1100 MRBM's by the end of '66. He identified these as follows: 9 Polaris Subs in the Mediterranean; 27 in SACLANT; 450 land-based MRBM and 55 Thor/Jupiter.

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11. Mr. Nitze stated that Strauss expressed the view that it would be a mistake to rely solely on missiles. Particularly, in order to cover moving (i. e. mobile) missiles, we would need manned aircraft. He did not believe that the VSTOLS could do the full job since their carrying capacity with a nuclear load would restrict their range. There would therefore be a requirement for normal manned aircraft.

12. Nitze Summation. In summing up his views to this point, Mr. Nitze reiterated that he felt that the first need was for the U.S. to make up its mind as to what the military requirement was on a time-cost-effectiveness basis. (He implied he was speaking primarily about the MRBM problem as posed by the British and Germans, however, it is also clear that the entire range of questions relating to nuclear strategy are troubling DOD, especially given the European attitudes during the recent European talks). He thought that with the Germans the main thing was the military problem and that they want an intelligent program to cover the threat. He admitted that the problem of controls still needed to be dealt with. He stated that Ramsbottom of the UK had suggested that the NAC might establish a committee for keeping nuclear matters under constant review, though this action by itself would probably not be enough to satisfy European concern for more information, participation, control, etc. Mr. Nitze indicated that the problem of control also affected the French position. He said it was clear that the French would not be willing, under any circumstances, to release their power of ultimate control over their own nuclear weapons. They might, however, be willing to assign Mysteres to the alliance armed with French warheads for the purpose of covering NATO targets. In the last analysis, however, these could be removed for unilateral French use. Moreover, even for this much of a concession they would undoubtedly want U.S. help in their nuclear program. In connection with the 1100 MRBM requirement, Mr. Nitze stated that he felt there was probably (a) some duplication between commands and (b) that assignment of certain bombers and more limited range missiles (such as the Pershing) could reduce the net requirement.

13. McNamara Studies. Mr. Nitze said that Mr. McNamara felt that the U.S. government should urgently turn its attention to the above problems. As a result he had asked the JCS to undertake a study of the

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military factors involved with ISA to undertake an effort assessing the political/financial situation: (The precise nature and objective of these two interrelated studies was not made clear, but as indicated above, that it relates to a broad range of nuclear strategy questions seems highly likely). Mr. McNamara has set a tentative deadline within Defense of 13 February looking toward an early March governmental agreement which would permit the U.S. to have a firm position in the Spring NATO Ministerial Meeting. Mr. Rowen is in charge of the ISA operation. ISA is shooting for January 3 deadline for first drafts. (Comment: Following talks with Mr. Kohler, I indicated to Mr. Rowen that State should participate in this exercise from the outset. We agreed to undertake follow up discussions in the immediate future).

14. Norstad. As something of a postscript, there was some discussion of a meeting with General Norstad which was originally to have included Secretary Rusk, as well as Mr. McNamara. Secretary Rusk, however, could not make the meeting. The general nature of the exchange of views seems to have resulted in something of a meeting of the minds between Norstad, McNamara and Nitze on Phases I and II of the Poodle Blanket. Mr. Nitze commented that General Norstad "also understands what we have in mind re Phase III, but doubts that the assets exist." General Norstad suggested that further exchange of correspondence between himself and Washington seemed pointless and Mr. McNamara agreed. Mr. Nitze indicated some confusion in his own mind as to General Norstad's plans for securing NAC approval of his plans. (Comment: General Gray indicated today that General Norstad did intend to send forward a description of the concept of the plans and the magnitude of resources (troops) involved. This seems to me to be quite consistent with what Stikker and the NAC expected at the time we participated in drawing up the NATO Military Directive). In response to our question, Mr. Nitze indicated that he did believe that the Poodle Blanket or something like it ought to be introduced into the Quadripartite discussions. Admiral Lee has been assigned primary responsibility for coming up with recommendations. (Comment: Admiral Lee and Colonel Armstrong called to discuss this matter on Tuesday. They are working on a proposal which should be available for State consideration within the next couple of days).

G/PM/Weiss/vl  
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cc: G - Mr. Johnson ✓  
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EUR - Mr. Kohler

G/PM - Mr. Kitchen  
M - Mr. Owen  
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