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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTONACTION
January 16, 1970TOP SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Laurence E. Lynn, Jr. *LEL*

SUBJECT: FY 71 Safeguard ABM Decision

Enclosed is a memorandum for the President which

- describes the DOD proposal on Safeguard,
- recommends that a NSC meeting be held to review the proposal,
- indicates your tentative concurrence in the DOD proposal,
- discusses the arguments we will run into and our counter-arguments.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the enclosed memorandum for the President (Tab A).

Enclosure

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: FY 71 Safeguard ABM Deployment Decision

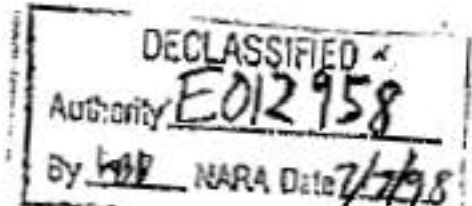
Proposal

Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard has sent me a memo dated January 2, 1970, a copy of which is at Tab A, in which he states that ". . . I believe it is of the utmost importance that we do authorize the full Safeguard Phase 2 system at this time and fund some portion of it in FY 71."

The present DOD position on specific steps for FY 71 is set forth in a separate memorandum, attached at Tab B. It recommends:

1. Construction of two more sites in FY 71 at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, (a Minuteman field) and in the Northwest;
2. Authorization for engineering and site selection for three additional sites in FY 71: Northeast, Michigan/Ohio, and Washington, D. C.;
3. Continued development of the Improved Spartan missile (longer range and lower yield than regular Spartan) for improved area defense;
4. Initiation of a substantial research and development program for small radars and missiles optimized for local, or "hard point," defense against the possibility of "an even more severe threat to Minuteman survival than can be handled with the basic Safeguard system," to be ready for deployment about 1977.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

5. "Planning" the deployment of all twelve sites of the Phase 2 system over the next seven years, with the full system reaching completion at the end of 1977.

The JCS, in a memo attached at Tab C, recommend that:

-- "prior to any further decision to deploy additional elements of Safeguard beyond those addressed. . . above, full consideration be given to alternative deployments which would employ systems utilizing the advantages of early mid-course intercept."

-- "the additional protection of Minuteman take advantage of steadily improving technology if further studies confirm that this is a desirable course of action."

Gerard Smith has recommended "that from the point of view of strategic arms control, it would be desirable to keep Safeguard Phase 2 in R&D status during FY 71." (His letter is at Tab D.)

DOD estimates program outlays in 1969 dollars at \$930 million in FY 71 (only slightly higher than for Phase 1 alone); new obligational authority of \$1.5 billion in FY 71 (compared to \$1.2 billion for Phase 1 alone); and \$11.7 billion total to complete (excluding AEC costs of \$1.2 billion and \$750 million for research and development of new hard point defense radars and missiles). (Total costs for Phase 1 alone are now estimated at \$5.6 billion.)

The DOD program would:

-- commit the Administration to the full Safeguard system, including the thin area defense and National Command Authority protection elements as well as Minuteman defense;

-- begin work on specific sites to serve all three objectives: another Minuteman site, three "area" sites, and a site near Washington, D. C.;

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

3

- continue to give highest priority in actual construction to Minuteman defense by beginning a third Minuteman site next year;
- initiate a major R&D program for a new Minuteman defense system not employing Safeguard components;
- continue actual deployments at a rate which will keep the system working near capacity, taking into account plausible funding levels.

The Defense Program Review Committee has discussed Safeguard at four previous meetings, on November 13, December 9, December 20, and January 15.

However, though ACDA representatives were present at most of these meetings, Gerard Smith does not feel he has had sufficient opportunity to study the issues and present his views. He strongly recommends that an NSC meeting be held to complete your commitment of last March 14 to review the program annually before deciding on next steps.

I believe it would be wise to have such an NSC meeting so that no one will feel that he has had insufficient opportunity to register his views.

Approve NSC Meeting _____ Disapprove _____

Discussion of Proposal

The DOD proposal, by adding a site at Whiteman Air Force Base, would continue to expand the part of the Safeguard system which is primarily oriented to defending the Minuteman force. However, the DOD position, as set forth in the paper at Tab B and elsewhere, raises some troublesome issues with respect to the future role of the Safeguard components (Sprint, Missile Site Radar) for Minuteman defense:

- The paper cites as a "serious technical argument against the system" that the Soviets could, as the paper puts it, "simply overwhelm" the system by additional attacking missiles.
- This technical problem lies behind the DOD proposal to begin a \$750 million R&D program for improved Minuteman defense components - an improved Sprint missile and a smaller and cheaper radar and computer system -- which they believe could be deployed by 1977.
- In his press statements, Secretary Laird discussed additional offensive weapons as the answer to the SS-9 threat. He specifically

TOP SECRET

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mentioned the new bomber, the undersea long-range missile system, and land-mobile ICBMs, but not more Safeguard sites or missiles.

-- We might face a Soviet capability to destroy most of the Minuteman force beginning about 1974, when neither the new hard point defense systems nor the alternative basing arrangements would be available. However, -- and this is perhaps the most disturbing point of all -- I gather it is the view of many technical people, including those in the Army agency responsible for ballistic missile defense, that the Safeguard units we could have ready by then would not make any appreciable difference in the number of Minuteman which would survive such an attack. For example, having Safeguard Phase I is projected in one Army analysis as saving only 20 Minutemen against an all-out counterforce attack by both SS-9s and upgraded SS-11s.

These developments, at the very least, provide ammunition to those who will argue that the Minuteman defense elements of Safeguard may be obsolete by the time they are operational and that even the Defense Department no longer has confidence in Safeguard as a significant protection of the deterrent.

I believe, however, that even if these technical arguments are accepted at their full face value, it is not necessary to consider changes in the deployment plan outlined by DOD. We can hardly stop Phase I's two Minuteman sites. The Minuteman site planned for construction in FY 71 is Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri. That site, more than the other Minuteman sites, provides significant area coverage. Moreover, preliminary site survey work has been done on it, so construction can start sooner than on an area site on which no similar work has already taken place.

In developing the rationale for the decision, we can cover these technical issues thoroughly.

RECOMMENDATION:

I believe it is likely that we will have another bloody fight on the Hill. Whereas last year we took the opposition by surprise, this year they will be well prepared.

Nevertheless, at this point I tend to believe that we should approve the DOD proposal of the NSC meeting and concentrate on developing a sound rationale and plan of action.

Following is a more detailed discussion of the problem we will encounter and proposals for how to implement your decision.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

5

Possible Opposition Arguments

Whatever deployment plan you endorse, we must be prepared to deal with a variety of criticisms, some of which we did not face last year in so sharp a form.

First, with respect to the Minuteman defense mission, we may well be damned if we do and damned if we don't:

-- If we continue to emphasize Minuteman defense, and if the technical arguments discussed above are valid, we will be denounced for proceeding with a virtually worthless system.

-- If we don't add a further Minuteman site, and emphasize the area defense rationale, we will be criticized for inconsistency with DOD's arguments last year.

Second, Gerard Smith's argument that more Safeguard deployments should be deferred for the sake of SALT will be repeated by many.

Third, under either the DOD deployment proposal or an alternative with no new Minuteman site, an important part of the system's objectives will be area defense, which presents special problems of understanding and exposition:

-- The OSD paper makes the point that maintaining expected levels of area defense with the Safeguard system would be "very difficult" after the Chinese deploy sophisticated penetration aids. For the Chinese, such deployment is now thought to be some time away, but Soviet deployment of such penetration aids, which must be regarded as imminent, would presumably also make defense against accidental or unauthorized Soviet attacks "very difficult."

-- We can no longer present the system as intended only to protect our deterrent forces, which is the most easily understood part of our rationale.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

6

-- Critics can be expected to emphasize that the system affords essentially no protection against a determined attack, and only limited protection against even very small, accidental, or unauthorized attacks with sophisticated missiles.

-- Too much hammering on the Chinese threat as the rationale for the area component, when the Chinese have not even tested an ICBM and when we are trying to open a dialogue with them without creating panic in Asia, could have troublesome repercussions for our relations not only with China, but with our Asian allies.

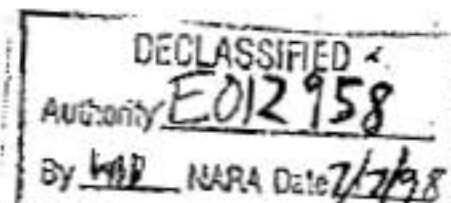
Fourth, we still will have with us the specters of "Will it work?" and "What will it cost?" We have received no detailed reports on either the technical status of the program, including potential problems, or costs.

-- No important technical difficulties have cropped up yet, but it is equally true that we have not yet reached the tests in which the system must operate as a whole. Critics will emphasize that we are proceeding with further deployment before technical questions have been resolved in practice. Moreover, DOD's backpedalling on the system's Minuteman defense capability -- which will probably leak -- may give critics an important new technical argument.

-- During the past year, there have been some increases in the cost estimates. Army estimates for Phase 1 have gone from \$4.4 billion on March 13, 1969, to \$5.1 billion on November 26; for Phase 2 from \$10.0 billion to \$11.7 billion. These increases are not yet terribly substantial and to some extent they only reflect inflation. However, they provide ammunition for those who claim that the costs of the system are both excessive and unknown.

-- Opponents may seize on the R&D proposals and the admitted limitations of the system as a sign that more deployment means more investment in an already obsolescent system, or that DOD is building the base for future requests which go far beyond Safeguard in both concept and cost.

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRETCounterarguments

None of these arguments is unanswerable; none in my mind outweighs the need for further deployments in FY 71:

-- It is of no great significance (if, indeed, it is true) that the two Phase I sites, acting alone, would not be an effective defense of the Minuteman force. They were never intended to act as a separate system. The whole point of Phase 2 is that the system, including two additional Minuteman defense sites, would operate as an integrated whole, enhancing the effectiveness of each part.

-- We should press the Defense Department on what they think of the technical capability of the Safeguard components to defend Minuteman. However, unless the technical objections outlined above are fully borne out, the Minuteman defense component of the Safeguard system as a whole will be at least a useful interim measure, and, for the longer term, a valuable complement to other steps to protect the deterrent.

-- The SALT argument implies that the chances of an agreement are reduced by announcing additional deployments. I think the opposite is true. ABM is the U.S. weapons system the Soviets seem most anxious to stop. Foregoing additional deployments this year would mean they would have much less incentive to negotiate seriously.

-- The area defense issue is complicated because the capability of the system depends so much on the size, sophistication, and deliberateness of the attack. However, the twelve-site Safeguard system would give significant protection against accidents, unauthorized Soviet attacks by a few missiles, and deliberate attacks by the "first generation" Chinese ICBM force. This is not perfect, it would not last forever, and it probably does not protect against any deliberate Soviet attacks beyond a few missiles. Nonetheless, having such a system would give important protection to the country and flexibility to our Asian policy.

-- Having a nationwide area defense tends to reduce Soviet flexibility in launching less than all-out attacks by raising the minimum size of attack which they can be confident will succeed. Their assessment of the strength of our area defense is likely to be far more conservative than ours. Our own very cautious estimates make us concerned that problems of radar blackout and other penetration tactics might allow a properly aimed attack by as few as 3-5 sophisticated missiles to penetrate the area defenses. They, however, probably would be unwilling to rely on such tactics where successful penetration was essential, but would instead attack the defenses before attacking the targets or use enough

TOP SECRET

missiles to exhaust the interceptors available at a site. Using these tactics, they would be forced to much larger attacks -- on the order of 100 missiles.

-- Decision on additional sites this year will keep the production and construction facilities moving forward at full speed. However, we are not going so fast, nor have we yet gone so far, that we could not change our plans if that seemed advisable, either because of developments in SALT or technical changes.

Need for Rationale

However, the possibility that arguments such as those I have outlined will be raised means that, whatever deployment schedule is adopted, a coherent rationale, uniformly understood and adhered to throughout the Government, is even more important this year than last:

-- It will no longer be possible to argue that the deployments definitely planned are only "R&D at an operational site," with the ultimate purpose the one most congenial to the speaker and his audience. Further deployments, especially those relating to area defense, mean we are building a particular operational system with particular capabilities and purposes. We must be able to defend that system in specific terms.

-- The plausibility of the charge that Safeguard is only a way of keeping the door open to later DOD proposals of untold dimension will depend very much on how DOD presents its proposals.

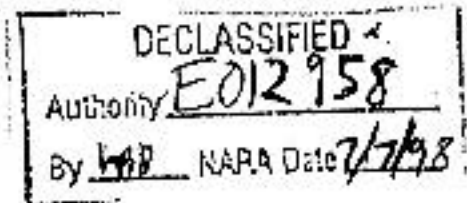
-- The arguments that a limited area defense is diplomatically and strategically useful are easily misstated in dangerous ways.

-- The bargaining value for SALT of announcing additional Safeguard deployment sites could be dissipated by appearing, in our domestic defense of the ABM budget, either too intransigent or too flexible.

I believe the Defense Program Review Committee is the appropriate forum through which to develop a jointly agreed rationale for further Safeguard deployments. If you approve, I will have the Committee set up a task force to prepare the rationale.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

TOP SECRET

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To avoid too early a commitment of your personal prestige and to emphasize that further deployments are a natural development of a continuing program, I believe it would be best to have the decision, when made, announced not by you personally or through the White House, but by the Secretary of Defense.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Attachments

- Tab A - David Packard Memo
- Tab B - DOD Memo
- Tab C - JCS Memo
- Tab D - Gerard Smith Letter

TOP SECRET