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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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DATE: December 29, 1960

SUBJECT: Meeting with Three Members and Staff of Joint Committee on Atomic Energy: Nuclear Test Negotiations, MRBM Project and Report of JCAE Trip to Europe.

PARTICIPANTS:	JCAE	Department
	Rep. Holifield	S/AE - Mr. Farley
	Senator Dworshak	RA - Mr. Fessenden
	Rep. Hosmer	H - Mr. Schnee
		RA - Mr. Millar
	Staff	
	Mr. Ramey, Executive Director	AEC
	Mr. Conway	Mr. King
	Col. Lungert	Dr. English

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SUMMARY

Department representatives met with three members and the staff of the JCAE for 3 1/2 hours today to describe (a) developments in the Geneva test negotiations, (b) discussion of the MRBM concept at the NATO Ministerial Meeting and (c) to hear a report of the Committee's trip to Europe. There was little discussion of the test negotiations. The Committee seemed generally satisfied with the conceptual presentation of MRBMs. Mr. Holifield made clear that the Committee intended to analyze the present status of NATO, based on a country by country study of political and economic stability and of military contributions.

During the discussion, the Committee requested the following specific information for the purposes indicated:

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1. NATO forces. The Committee requested a statement of country force commitments to NATO and the degree to which they are being met. This should include data on forces and on manpower with as much breakdown as possible. Any relevant economic data should also be included.

The Committee said that it needs this information to appraise whether NATO is in fact an effective defense organization and to determine whether the other member countries are making adequate contributions. Evaluation of these questions is required, in turn, to determine whether the US should proceed with the MRBM project.

2. F-104 program. The Committee Staff requested a copy of the recently signed agreement for European production of the F-104 aircraft. The Staff requested that the Committee also be given an analysis of the military implications of the F-104 program, including the need for new bases and the degree to which it replaces existing equipment.

The Staff said that it was particularly interested in the F-104 program in order to determine the extent to which the mission of the F-104s duplicated that of MRBMs.

3. Costs of various MRBM deployment systems. The Committee asked for data furnished NATO on the relative costs of deploying MRBMs by nuclear-propelled submarines and by other seaborne delivery systems.

The Committee asked for this information in the context of discussing whether any commitment was made to help other NATO countries in acquiring nuclear-propelled submarines. The Department representatives pointed out that there had been no commitment, that the concept outlined by the Secretary had referred only in general terms to seaborne deployment, and that cost data had been made available to NATO which showed that nuclear-propelled submarines were far more expensive than other means.

4. Political and economic stability of NATO countries. The Committee referred to its letter of December 19 requesting information on the political and economic stability of NATO countries.

The Committee said that it required this information in the context of its appraisal of the over-all effectiveness of NATO. The Committee also said that it was concerned by the prospect that the political situation in some countries was so unstable that US nuclear weapons could be seized by irresponsible elements. (This information is being supplied separately in the form of a reply to the Committee's letter.)

With respect to the Committee's trip to Europe, the Staff indicated that there were serious problems about the actual existing arrangements for custody and deployment of nuclear weapons abroad. They anticipated that the Committee's concern regarding the viability of NATO as a major defense alliance and the current arrangements for the deployment of nuclear weapons will come to the fore in the course of prospective hearings of the 144b Agreement for Atomic Cooperation with Italy.

END SUMMARY

The Department representatives were invited to inform the JCAE Staff of the status of the nuclear test negotiations at Geneva and to report on the discussion of MRBMs and related matters at the NATO Ministerial Meeting. The Staff also agreed to provide a report on the Committee's recent European trip. An hour or so before the meeting a Staff member telephoned to say that the three members of the committee would also like to attend if the Department representatives had no objection.

The discussions were informal and no transcript was kept. Both the members and the Staff were generally friendly and relaxed.

(1) Nuclear Test Negotiations at Geneva. Mr. Farley described the several main aspects of the negotiations during the last three months and distributed a paper summarizing the fourteen main points at issue. He indicated that the new Administration would undoubtedly review the objectives and tactics of the talks. Mr. Hosmer seemed to be generally skeptical of their value and disposed to have them broken off.

There was no other discussion of significance on this subject.

(2) MRBM. Mr. Fessenden distributed copies of the Secretary's presentation on long range planning at the NATO Ministerial Meeting. He also distributed an additional comment by the Secretary in which he: (a) made entirely clear the conceptual nature of his remarks on MRBMs and that no decisions were expected at the meeting; (b) emphasized that Congressional action would be required on certain parts of the concept; and (c) stressed that the Secretary cannot commit the Congress in advance. Mr. Fessenden then read aloud the Secretary's statement on MRBMs. Mr. Hosmer asked about compatibility of the proposed MRBM build up and disarmament efforts. Mr. Farley pointed out that we were trying to negotiate a from a position of strength and show that we are willing to undertake sound negotiations to reduce tensions. Mr. Ramey asked about whether there would be a duplication of effort between the European production of F-104s (dual capable) and the MRBM project. He was told that the F-104s would replace existing aircraft, such as F-100s, and that their mission would not duplicate that of the MRBMs.

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Senator Dworshak asked heatedly whether manpower was considered at the Ministerial Meeting, as well as the general adequacy of the other members' defense contributions. It was clear, he said, that we are sending American boys to defend Europe while the Europeans are not assuming the responsibility themselves. Despite the polished presentations by General Norstad when he comes back to appear before the Committee everyone knew that NATO was a farce and had no capability. Mr. Fessenden said that the relative contributions of the other countries were very much in the minds of our delegates at the meeting and that we dealt with this subject as well as with the balance of payments question. He was sure that, despite shortfalls here and there, the general record of other NATO countries in meeting their requirements was by no means a poor one. NATO, furthermore, does have an effective strength in being today. (The Staff subsequently said that they had hoped Sen. Dworshak would join the European trip so that he could be convinced of the need to mount an adequate effort in the face of the Russian missile threat. This line of argument was the way to sell him on NATO.)

The Committee then said that they had written General Norstad for a statement of country goals and the degree to which these force goals were being met. They were interested in receiving this information in connection with their recent trip. Mr. Holifield asked if the Committee could have a statement of country force commitments and the degree to which they are being met. The Committee needed this information soon in order to evaluate NATO. They wanted to inform themselves of the current status of NATO before considering what further steps the U.S. should take to aid NATO. He said that when the Committee got this information it would put it together with what was learned on the trip. He said he was asking us for this information now in a friendly way. If we complied it would make things easier for us and for the Committee. If it was not provided, the Committee would be forced to extract it item by item in hearings. The Department representatives agreed to provide pertinent information, with a particular effort to obtain readily available data.

Mr. Ramey also asked for a copy of the F-104 Agreement and an analysis of its military implications, including the need for more bases, and replacement of present equipment. Mr. Ramey noted that the F-104 production project would be financed 80% by the Europeans and commented that this was an indication that the Europeans were doing their part. He also noted that Defense had requested, or was about to request, authorization from the President for a further dispersal of about 1,000 nuclear weapons. He wondered, rhetorically, how this related if at all to the F-104 program. The Department representatives agreed with Mr. Ramey's statement that the F-104 program was an indication of European willingness to make a large contribution to the defense effort.

Mr. Hosmer asked for an estimate of the relative likelihood of a Soviet move in Europe with nuclear as distinct from conventional weapons. He was told that the Soviets were capable of both types of attack and NATO had to be prepared to cope with both, but that we did not know of any percentage estimate of the type he mentioned. Mr. Hosmer said that the Committee was interested in judging

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what the needs are for nuclear weapons in Europe and said he personally wondered whether Europe was already over-armed. He then asked whether we agreed that the Soviets conceived that they were engaged in a protracted conflict with us in which they use every available weapon, including negotiations and agreements. The Department representatives agreed, but said that Soviet concepts may be modified by experience so that they may come to believe that they can obtain satisfaction through negotiations. Time alone would tell whether anything could be accomplished by the nuclear test negotiations. An evaluation of the negotiations at Geneva to determine whether further talks there would be worthwhile is undoubtedly a matter the new Administration will look into.

Reverting to the MRBM project, Mr. Ramey asked why it would be necessary to change the law if the 5 Polaris submarines would operate under present procedures. We replied that in the second phase, if a multilateral force were set up, legislative action would be required for US participation in such a force, and possibly for the control arrangements. Members of the Committee recalled that General Norstad, in briefing them, had speculated that control over use might pass from the President's hands to SACEUR or perhaps to some Executive Committee of NATO, and that the decision would no longer be the President's. We explained that the idea had been put forth as a concept and not as a firm proposal because of the Congressional role and in order to get the views of the countries before laying a definite proposal on the table. It was possible that action by the legislatures of other countries would also be required before the multilateral force could be brought into being.

Mr. Holifield said that after existing for 11 years NATO still had not agreed how it would go to war. We replied that we had never tried to agree on an exact procedure in view of the varying circumstances which might exist at the time when the question might arise.

It then developed that there was a certain confusion in terms between what the Department and the JCAE meant by "physical custody" and "control". When the JCAE Staff, last summer, suggested multinational custody, they really meant the concept of a multinational group at the control point; e.g. officers from other countries being present in the trailer which would control the firing of an Italian Jupiter as distinct from simply one or more US officers being present there. We clarified by explaining that we mean by "custody" actual physical custody of the warheads up to the time they were released for use and that we do not consider that "joint custody" exists now and that we do not envisage, even if a multilateral force were created, that custody would go outside US hands until the weapons were released for use.

The Committee asked if there were a link between the commitment of 5 US Polaris submarines and our disposition to facilitate procurement of 100 more missiles by our Allies. We stated that this was a condition of our offer and that this was the meaning of the phrase in the Secretary's statement about expecting that our Allies would want to contribute to the multilateral force. We also explained that the Secretary had made the point again when, during the Ministers' discussion of the Communique, the Secretary had said that our offer

to commit 5 submarines and the European contribution of 100 missiles were to be regarded as a single "package". We also pointed out that the Secretary made clear that we expected the Europeans to buy the additional missiles.

Mr. Hosmer asked whether we implicitly offered to help Europeans develop nuclear submarines when we stated that we expected that the additional deployment of MRBMs would be seaborne. If this were the case Admiral Rickover would vigorously oppose such a proposal and the Committee would also probably be negative. We replied that there were various forms of sea deployment and that no commitment had been given concerning nuclear submarines. We added that we had given the Europeans cost estimates of nuclear submarine and other seaborne deployment methods, which showed that nuclear submarines would be far more expensive. The Committee asked for these estimates, which we agreed to provide.

Mr. Hosmer asked about targetting for our 5 submarines. We pointed out that SACEUR would plan the targetting in coordination with that of the other retaliatory forces. While the exact percentage of US targets would have to be worked out, this proviso meant that the submarines could be used for US targetting requirements. Mr. Holifield then said that the Committee expected to study US targetting in January and would either go to Omaha or have a group from Omaha come to Washington.

There being no further questions on the MRBM concept Mr. Fessenden gave a brief report of the reaction of the other countries to the concept and of Spaak's summary consensus that the subject should be referred to NAC for consideration and study. Mr. Holifield said that his understanding of the situation was that the Committee would have a chance to consider the project before any final decisions were made in the event that it should be carried any further.

Mr. Holifield then emphatically repeated the Committee's intention to give full consideration to the present situation of NATO, examining its capability by analyzing actual contributions on a nation by nation basis. This would include information on the economic and political stability of the member countries, which the Committee had already requested from the Department; and on their actual military contributions. He had been a supporter of NATO all along and hoped he could continue to be but he wondered whether NATO had now fulfilled its function and whether it was obsolete. Is it a going concern, or are we hanging on to a corpse? Can it be revived or should we look to something else? Are we kidding ourselves about the military strength of NATO? He had been shocked to see three Jupiter missiles on an Italian base for which we spent several hundred million dollars. A saboteur could wreck these missiles in two minutes with a rifle. Less than three hundred yards from the missiles was a stand of scrub timber from which anyone could puncture their skin. Furthermore, they were located in an unstable country where the Communist party had 28 per cent of the vote while the Christian Democrats only had 34 per cent. The Jupiter itself was an unreliable missile. Were we counting on chocolate soldiers in NATO? The Alliance was a dumping ground for obsolete US equipment such as Honest Johns and Corporals. The Germans, at least, were smart enough

to know we were providing them with poor equipment and in a period of tension might tell us to give them as good equipment as we had or they would not fight.

Mr. Ramey remarked that it would be cheaper and more secure to have a Polaris submarine off the Turkish coast rather than continue to build the IRBM base now under construction.

Mr. Farley said that we would like to make sure what information the Committee wanted from the Department. He understood that, in addition to the political and economic situation in the various countries already requested by letter, the Committee wanted force goals and actual contributions. Mr. Holifield agreed. He said that they had asked General Norstad for some military information, but that it would take some time to assemble. It was agreed that Department officers would be in touch with the Staff to discuss with it the information that can be given to the Committee soon. If we do not have certain information, Mr. Holifield said, we should so state to the Committee and they would get it from the military. Mr. Holifield said that even if the Department did not have all the detailed military information we should have a general idea of the military considerations since we are the ones who are making policy. (The Committee members left the room at this point, and the Department representatives subsequently agreed that they would get in touch with Defense soon and would then talk to the Staff about providing information.)

(3) Report on JCAE Trip to Europe, November 26 to December 12, 1960.

The Staff began a description of the trip by saying that their own report is not ready yet and that they would give us their impressions from memory. They would be very glad to give us a copy of their report when it is finished but it will not be ready for some time. Two of the officers from General Norstad's staff who accompanied them on the trip are coming to Washington on January 10 to check the factual information in their draft.

The itinerary was planned to permit the Committee to see as many different custody situations as possible in as many different locales as possible. They started off visiting a SAC reflex unit at Upper Hayford, U.K. on November 28. This unit is situated on a RAF installation and is equipped with B-47's which are on fifteen-minute alert. This unit is on a three-month tour abroad and, like others, rotates on a squadron and group basis. The weapons are kept at the base and are placed or ready to be placed in the aircraft that happen to be stationed there at any particular time. A complete SAC alert was staged and the aircraft were at the end of the runway ready to take off in 4½ minutes. The Committee was apparently well satisfied with what they saw on this visit.

In the afternoon of the same day they visited a UK Thor squadron at Driffield. They were very favorably impressed with this operation including the complete harmony between the British unit and the US support unit. There were no criticisms from either unit or from the Commander-in-Chief of the UK Bomber Command who was also there for the visit.

At this point the Staff largely abandoned a country-by-country report and took up individual problems as they occurred to them. They reported that in a number of cases foreign officers complained of the restrictive U.S. regulations on passing Restricted Data, occasionally referring specifically to the Atomic Energy Act. The Committee found that even in countries with whom we have 144b Agreements for atomic cooperation and where a favorable determination has been made to pass Restricted Data, the information has not been passed down by the foreign government to the operational personnel. What then is the effect of 144b Agreements? In Germany, for example, German troops loading Honest Johns do not have Restricted Data on the weapon, even though only a very small amount of such information is involved. German operational forces with this weapons system have a sanitized manual that does not contain Restricted Data. The commanding officers of German and other Honest John battalions do not know the yield options. Commanders of U.S. custodial units are specifically told not to pass this information or other Restricted Data to the commanders of foreign operational units. Nevertheless, the Committee felt that the Germans handled these weapons most effectively.

Contrary to what the Committee had expected, the technical military agreements to implement the 144b Agreements contain the heart of the arrangements, or alternatively, the stockpile agreements are the basis for our arrangements with a foreign country in the atomic weapons field. (The sense of the Staff's comments was that the Executive Branch was avoiding Congressional review of the substantive elements of cooperative arrangements). Furthermore, a 144b Agreement is often not necessary. A responsible U.S. officer at SETAF said that

no 144b Agreement is necessary to give the Italians complete operational capability on the Honest John. Furthermore, in cases where we have 144b Agreements we are not making use of the authority to pass Restricted Data to foreign armed forces. Our custodial commanders cannot tell foreign battalion commanders that we have nuclear weapons stored for use of their units. One officer described an elaborate procedure for decoy shipments in and out of the U.S. custodial area for some time prior to receipt of weapons by his custodial unit to keep the foreign forces from knowing whether or not we had weapons stored there. Our custodial unit commanders can only state that nuclear weapons are on hand after R-Hour has been declared.

A second matter of concern were the actual custodial arrangements. U.S. custody is often maintained by an eighteen-year-old U.S. enlisted man. At one of the first sites visited the single U.S. custodial guarding a loaded Canberra on alert-status was asked what he was supposed to do if anyone tried to take away the weapon or to take off the aircraft. He said he did not know. Afterwards apparently the word was passed to other custodians so that when they were asked in other places they recited a 500-word statement that they had memorized. In a different situation, in Greece, six miles from the Bulgarian frontier, these single U.S. custodians are guarding weapons at remote and inaccessible sites. Their tour of duty is eight hours at a stretch. They usually have no ability to converse with foreign personnel. In the week before the Staff's visit, two of these young men went out of their heads, apparently because of the trying conditions. When the Staff or Committee members pointed out that U.S. custody under these circumstances is fictional and that more U.S. guards were needed to effect real custody, U.S. officers pointed out that this would be prohibitively expensive. Custodial personnel are not weapon trained and have no immediate reaction capability in case anything goes wrong. They are only instructed on a checkout procedure to prepare the weapon for firing, and if any negative element shows up in the checkout procedure or in a test they are to return the weapon to a depot for servicing.

A third concern are the arrangements for coping with an accident. In the case of weapons for the support of the First Greek Corps near the Bulgarian border, weapons are brought from Tanagra south of Athens. The trucks are driven by Greek drivers with American custodians on board. They must go through Athens and then 200 miles to the north. A custodial commander was asked about his capability to cope with an accident during the trip. (About 99 per cent of accidents with nuclear weapons occur while they are being transported.) He said he had no capability whatsoever. For communication enroute he was dependent upon the Greek public telephone system. The nearest explosive ordnance disposal unit was at Verona, Italy. When in position six miles from the Bulgarian border his means of communication is to send a message on the Greek military radio net which is placed at his disposal for this purpose by a Greek officer. The Staff felt that if one accident occurs, in view of the inadequate ability to cope with spillage, the resultant damage might so arouse public opinion that we could not continue to store weapons in a given country or even in a number of European nations, thus jeopardizing the whole stockpile program.

A fourth concern was the possibility that in a politically unstable country such as Turkey, but possibly in Greece or even in Italy, the leaders of an Army coup might seize control of one or more of the inadequately protected weapons and use them to threaten rival forces or the existent government. This is a real threat in Turkey. Despite a highly favorable account of the situation under the new regime by a senior MAAG officer, the Committee learned that the situation was so unstable that twice General Norstad almost ordered all the weapons to be evacuated. The host country has to supply vehicles for the movement of weapons (and in some cases has not done so). The U.S. is totally dependent upon the host country for their transport.

The security situation is carefully examined before a determination is made that, pursuant to a 144b Agreement, Restricted Data can be passed to a foreign government. Is a similar determination made with respect to a new government following a coup? The determination to evacuate nuclear weapons is General Norstad's alone since Defense is responsible for their custody. Thus custodial detachment commanders may withdraw weapons without consulting the MAAG or the Embassy.

A final source of concern was the possibility that host nationals might seize the weapons from U.S. custodians and use them. During a cocktail party in Istanbul a Turkish general told Messrs. Holifield and Aspinall that NATO should not be a defensive alliance but an offensive alliance, and that preemptive war should be started right now. Germany should be reunified by force if necessary and used against the Soviets. The Allies should beat the Soviets to the punch.

Turning to other unsatisfactory aspects of present arrangements the staff described how foreign governments assumed the obligation for full support of U.S. custodial units but then did not provide it. In the case of Turkey, for example, the Turks have no refrigeration equipment capable of holding a 90 day supply of food at advanced installations for the support of U.S. troops. Food, incidentally, is an item that the U.S. must supply itself since U.S. soldiers cannot function on Turkish rations. The Turks will not admit in writing that they cannot supply a reefer, however, and insist that it will be supplied in due course. Our men continue under-equipped in many places although they often see foreign forces using American equipment, paid for by the U.S. as in the case of Turkey, which they themselves cannot obtain.

On another subject the Committee learned that the Dutch are modifying a major naval vessel to take nuclear weapons (a carrier, the Kareldoorman). To the Committee's knowledge, no arrangements have been made for maintaining U.S. custody on foreign naval vessels, so what is the basis for this refitting? Has there been some informal agreement?

Judging by an observation in Turkey there is inadequate consultation concerning certain aspects of military installations. Construction has not started on any of the five IRBM sites in Turkey, and before beginning the Turks wanted to visit the sites in Italy to gain experience, avoid pitfalls and possibly to cut some expenses. The Italians would not agree to such a visit.

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-11-

Mr. Ramey asked about foreign press coverage of the trip and was told that except for the Netherlands, it had been negligible. An announcement by the Dutch Defense Ministry of the existence of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, which came prior to the Committee's visit, was described by the Department representatives as causing the Dutch government some embarrassment but we said that the affair seems to have blown over by now. Mr. Ramey said he could not understand the concern of Embassy Rome about maintaining secrecy of the IRBM deployment in Italy in view of General Norstad's statement in Italy on November 28 that Italy was participating in the IRBM program and the fact that the missiles are visible from an adjacent road and railroad. They are also floodlit at night.

While in Athens the Committee had expressed an interest in talking with the officer at Rome who had conducted the 144b negotiations with Italy. Although an Embassy officer and a MAAG officer in Athens both said they would pass on this interest to Rome, when the Committee arrived on Saturday afternoon, Embassy Rome said they knew nothing of the request. Furthermore, they did not want to call in the knowledgeable officer to meet with the Committee on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning. The officer in charge of the Consulate at Venice had been most helpful and cordial with the group, and the Consulate General at Naples had also been particularly helpful although they had had very short notice of the visit due to a change of plans. All things considered, the visit to Greece had worked out well. The staff had seen a lot at first hand by visiting various sites unostentatiously, and they had been well impressed with the Greeks.

In conclusion, the Staff thought that the Committee's questions concerning NATO might come up during prospective hearings on the 144b Agreements with Italy or Belgium. They understood that the Italian Agreement had already been signed and would be likely to reach Congress soon.

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