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Authorized By: H. D. Browster
August 4, 1975 *mm*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

White House Briefing For Joint Committee On
Atomic Energy, May 1, 1962, Executive Office Building.

Present: Chairman Holifield and senior members of JCAE; Mr. McGeorge Bundy; AEC Commissioners Seaborg and Graham; Deputy Secretary Gilpatric; Deputy Under Secretary Johnson; staff members from State, Defense and AEC.

This briefing was held pursuant to a conversation the President had recently with Chairman Holifield to inform the Joint Committee about the recent Presidential decision to resume the dispersal of nuclear weapons to non-US NATO forces.

Mr. Gilpatric opened the briefing by reviewing the history of the nuclear build-up in NATO. He noted that three classes of nuclear delivery systems have been deployed in Europe: air strike; battle field; and air defense. Until last year about 500 nuclear warheads had been deployed to Europe divided roughly between the air strike and battle field categories. Since January 20, 1961, there has been no further substantial dispersal of nuclear warheads to Europe. During the time that the dispersal was held in abeyance, intensive studies on the custody, control and protection of nuclear weapons have been made. By early 1962 the Defense Department decided in the light of the studies that had been made and ^{of the fact that} the measures for improving the protection of nuclear weapons had been instituted, that it would be desirable to make good our commitments to NATO and resume dispersal of nuclear warheads for those systems which were in place. Early in April DOD, with the concurrence of State and the qualified agreement of AEC, proposed to the President that he authorize the dispersal of 1,000 additional warheads in all three categories of weapons. Under the proposed dispersal plan warheads in the following categories would be dispersed: 125 for air strike, 420 for battle field, and 480 for air defense. Thus by July 1 of this year roughly 1580 warheads will be positioned for non-US NATO forces.

Mr. Gilpatric noted the limitations that the President had placed on dispersal.

- (1) In the case of 2-stage weapons only those with lower yields would be dispersed.
- (2) All dispersals would be subject to review in the light of future decisions on NATO strategy.

Both Mr. Bundy and Mr. Gilpatric indicated that they agreed with the long-standing contention of the Committee that by selling NATO countries particular delivery systems the US had established a strong commitment to furnish the necessary warheads for those systems. Mr. Gilpatric conceded that this was "putting the cart before the horse", but he said that we

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have made commitments which we must go through with. He indicated clearly that before we enter into future commitments on delivery systems we will go through the entire procedure of making the necessary determinations first. At this point Mr. Holifield asked whether the decision on dispersal was primarily military or diplomatic. Mr. Gilpatric explained that the reasons for resumption are both political and military. The military Commanders involved (General Norstad) contended that they needed to have the capability within their own NATO forces to cover Soviet targets with air strike weapons, although the US is now targetting with external forces about 90% of the Soviet targets. We do not see that it is possible to stop short of arming all NATO units which are now in place since the Soviet forces facing them possess nuclear weapons. Mr. Gilpatric continued by noting the third condition placed on dispersal, namely, that the President has directed that top priority be given to installing permissive links in the Jupiter and subsequently in other weapons systems. Mr. Holifield inquired about the technical difficulties involved in installing permissive links. Mr. Seaborg stated that it will be necessary to assign priorities to this work. It would be possible to start with the Jupiter later this summer and complete installation by the end of the year or by next fall. Thereafter installation could be made on air strike weapons, the Sergeants and the Pershings. In reply to a question by Mr. Holifield, Mr. Gilpatric stated that permissive links will not be installed before this dispersal goes forward. A further condition that had been imposed on dispersal was that there will be no dispersal at this time of nuclear weapons for Turkish strike aircraft.

Summing up, Mr. Gilpatric said that the net effect of the defense recommendations would be to avoid damage to the alliance and degradation of its military capabilities. He stressed that the proposed dispersals were not of a character which would create further commitments. As to the future (he mentioned specifically weapons for the F-104 G's) we intend to deal with these on a case by case basis.

Mr. Holifield asked whether the administration was retreating from its intention to stress the conventional build-up. Mr. Gilpatric answered by saying that we are pushing hard to bring convention up to MC-70 levels and ultimately to MC 26/4 levels. Mr. Holifield asked whether that was a quid pro quo for this dispersal, that is, whether we would demand from the Europeans a larger conventional build-up. Mr. Gilpatric stated that we can not expect a quid pro quo for this dispersal. He cited the fact that General Norstad has already noted a 25% improvement over last May in conventional forces. In this connection he noted improvements in both the French and German forces and reiterated that both State and Defense are making a strong pitch to our allies to do more. He underscored the fact that our allies are facing the same threat as are we. If they are assigned the same military missions in NATO as our forces we can not deny them comparable weapons. For example, we can not ask the Germans to build up to 12 divisions and take over a large segment of the line without furnishing them with the same weapons as our allies holding positions on the same front.

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Mr. Johnson

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Mr. JOHNSON strongly supported Mr. Gilpatric stating that we must avoid charges of bad faith. Having given the Europeans these systems we must furnish them with appropriate warheads. Senator Hickenlooper inquired whether that was a greater military necessity for this dispersal. Mr. Gilpatric said yes.

Senator Pastore wondered whether this was not at bottom a German problem. Mr. Johnson indicated that it was really a NATO-wide problem. At this point Senator Jackson asked whether this dispersal would not really amount to a proliferation of nuclear weapons capabilities. He thought that by making these dispersals we would be hurting our chances of agreement with the Soviet Union on proliferation of nuclear weapons to their satellite and ultimately to communist China. He questioned the military basis for dispersal and asked why is it necessary to provide a nuclear capability to allied strike aircraft. He thought it would be desirable to distinguish between battle field type weapons and those for strike weapons. Mr. Gilpatric explained that we are really stuck with our commitments, and noted that the US had encouraged the Europeans to undertake common production of the F-104 G. Senator Jackson continued that he thought that the Europeans would use the dispersal as an excuse for not building up their conventional forces. Mr. Bundy explained that not to resume dispersal would actually be a reversal of our position on conventional weapons; if we were to renege on these commitments the Europeans might well say that we did not defend Europe. Senator Jackson responded by saying that he thought this was not dispersal but rather proliferation. He conceded that we are stuck with supplying warheads for surface to surface delivery systems, but wondered why we could not ask the Europeans to accept a conventional capability by strike aircraft, keeping nuclear weapons for our own strike aircraft. Mr. Gilpatric said that we can not ask the Europeans to accept a conventional capability for the F 104s and Mr. Bundy stressed that to do so would hurt NATO. He asserted that no senior NATO military officer believed that the 104s should have a conventional capability. Mr. Holifield remarked that most NATO nations have not met their conventional requirements and expressed concern that we are getting no quid pro quo for dispersal. Mr. Bundy made the point that we must try to hold NATO in a single nuclear position or risk seeing it disintegrate into a series of national nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Gilpatric noted the final condition attached to dispersal of nuclear weapons, namely, that no 2-stage weapons would be placed on US or allied aircraft on quick reaction alert. Mr. Holifield said that he could not accept the idea of parity of nuclear weapons systems in NATO. The Europeans have not, he said, fulfilled their conventional requirements. This dispersal will, in his opinion, prejudice the chances of the Europeans build-up their forces. Mr. Bundy indicated that the US is trying to turn the attention of the alliance to the fact that US external forces are adequate to provide cover of strategic targets of interest to the alliance but he sought to make the point that within NATO it was desirable for forces having the same missions to have the same kinds of weapons. He conceded, however, that the principle of parity is not an absolute one.

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✓ There then followed discussion of the fact that the prohibition against putting 2-stage weapons on alert aircraft applied to US as well as non-US forces. The Committee indicated that it would not think it was a good idea to apply this restriction to US aircraft as well. In this connection, Mr. Gilpatric observed that studies are being made of the role of strike aircraft. Senator Jackson reiterated his concern about the effect of dispersal of weapons for strike aircraft on the US diplomatic posture. Mr. Bundy said that our intelligence has indicated that the Soviets know that we have dispersed nuclear weapons to non-US forces and that the Soviets accept US custody as a fact. Mr. Conway of the JCAE staff asked whether we proposed to make public our custody concept with respect to quick reaction alert aircraft. It was indicated that we have done so at least in general terms, but that more specific publicity would be quite undesirable at least until by means of the permissive link we have made US custody more effective.

The remainder of the briefing was concerned with reporting to the Committee our intention to announce at Athens that we would commit Polaris submarines. This elicited a favorable reaction from the committee. Mr. Gilpatric also noted our intention to give our allies more nuclear information in particular through Mr. McNamara's proposed statement at Athens and to give the Europeans a better idea of the planning factors in our program. Finally, Mr. Bundy outlined for Mr. Holifield the line we intend to take with the Europeans on a MRBM multilateral forces stressing that we would not make any commitment on such a force at the Athens meeting. Mr. Holifield asked whether subsequently the Committee would be faced with the same kind of situation they were in today with regard to dispersals, namely of being faced with commitments which they did not like but would feel impelled to honor. Mr. Bundy said that it was being made clear in discussions that the US could not take certain actions without legislation; the Committee might be faced with a problem a year from now, but not with a commitment. The NATO discussions might end up with satisfaction with the present nuclear program; it might lead to broad endorsement of a multilateral MRBM force under custody and control arrangements along present lines; or it might lead to a strong push by our allies for a completely integrated force without US custody or veto. In that last case, we would have to weigh with the Congress whether such a force was an acceptable alternative to the dangers of a number of national nuclear forces in Europe.

The Committee did not press the discussion of the MRBM force further, nor did it ask that the dispersal program be held up. There appeared to be a consensus that the briefing had been a useful one.

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