

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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ACTION

May 17, 1979

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
SUBJECT: Vance/Brown Memo on TNF (C)

Tab A is an important memo from Cy Vance and Harold Brown outlining our approach to TNF, which I endorse in full. The approach aims at reaching an Alliance consensus on TNF deployments, as well as a TNF arms control approach, by December of this year. (S)

The memo underscores the important role that you must play in leading the Alliance to this consensus. First by making clear to Allied leaders, starting with Schmidt next month, your concern with Soviet TNF efforts and your commitment to see this process through to TNF deployments. Next by giving your endorsement to a set of concrete US proposals for TNF modernization that would be discussed with the Allies by a Presidential emissary over the course of the summer. And, finally, by going on record publicly to set the tone for the debate that must necessarily occur before the Alliance announces its decision in December. (S)

Since the Vance/Brown memo was drafted, we have had indications that the prospects for the success of this approach are increasing:

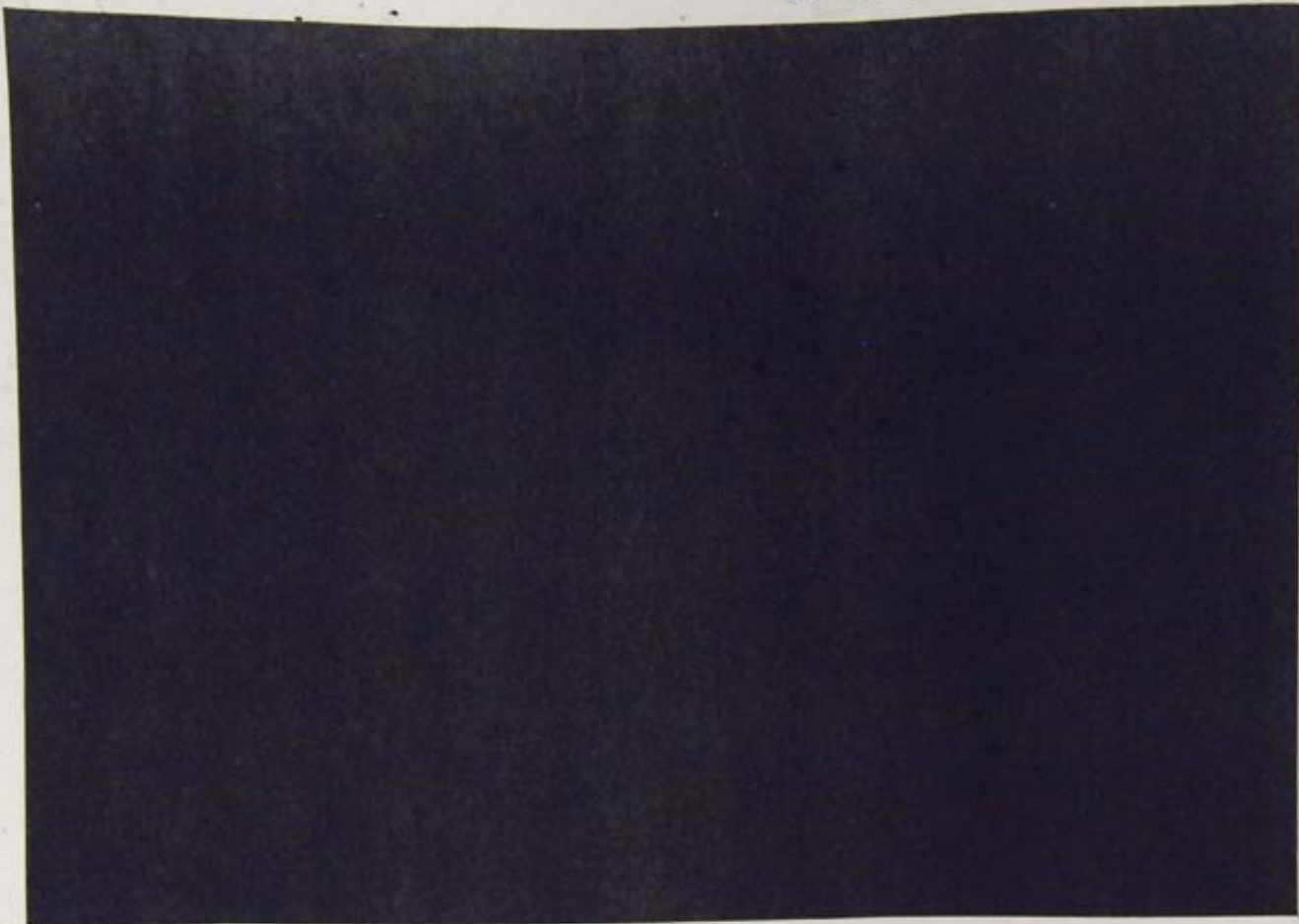
- The Germans have emerged from the uncertainties of the March Bundestag debate with a more constructive attitude. Even Minister of Defense Apel, who has wavered in the past, has taken a more strong and supportive position with Harold, so long as the new systems are based in more than one country (as the Germans have repeatedly said).

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DECL REVS ON 9 May 1985

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PER 8/27/97 NK/H RE NLC-96-145
MARS 11/10/97



Despite these positive signs there are clearly risks in this approach. But Cy's and Harold's judgment, which I share, is that we will face greater risks -- for us and for the Alliance -- if we do not take a strong lead now in forging the Alliance consensus. Because they are uncertain that you are willing to take that lead, Cy and Harold are seeking your guidance. If we are to continue on the track that Cy and Harold outline -- a track that we have already started to move down -- we need to move quickly. We have little time before December and much to do, as the Tab B decision / consultation track, which the NSC staff drafted, shows. To get the ball rolling, we need your authorization:

- To initiate SCC studies aimed at pulling together by the end of June an initial US TNF modernization proposal to be discussed bilaterally with the Allies in July.

- To prepare a letter to Schmidt, outlining your approach to the TNF problem as described in the Vance / Brown

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memo (if you agree), to prepare him for your discussions. This letter would also provide an opportunity to link MBFR with TNF, making clear that MBFR progress, if it occurs, should not stand in the way of TNF deployments or implementation of the remainder of the LTDP. (S).

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the above course of action. (U)

✓ Approve _____ Disapprove

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

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May 9, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
From: Cyrus Vance *CV*
Harold Brown *HB*
Subject: TNF Modernization -- US Diplomacy,
Your Role and the Schmidt Visit

Background

Soviet theater nuclear modernization efforts, coupled with Soviet attainment of strategic parity, enhance the significance of the situation in which NATO does not have missiles on the continent of Europe that can strike Soviet territory. Although this situation has existed since the early 1960s, it now has political, as well as military, significance: vocal Allied -- (especially West German) concerns about the SS-20 and Backfire and about the SALT II protocol constraints on US cruise missiles manifest this. Chancellor Schmidt defined this issue politically in a 1977 speech.

In order to meet both political and military requirements, we believe that the US needs to take the step of deploying new long-range nuclear systems on the European continent -- either Pershing ballistic missiles or cruise missiles, or perhaps some combination. This would maintain a perception of a firm US commitment to the defense of Europe, forge Alliance unity, and strengthen deterrence by providing credible escalation options. Without prodding from us, the NPG High Level Group (HLG) has reached the same conclusion. The HLG believes that deployments of 200 - 600 additional long-range warheads are all that is needed; there is no need to match the large Soviet long-range theater force, and doing so might be seen as "decoupling" US strategic forces from Europe. The total number of US nuclear warheads in Europe would be held constant and might even decrease.

Diplomacy

We are embarked on a course designed to secure by December an Alliance consensus for new deployments. The Allies must share in the responsibility for the decision; they agree and are calling for a consensus themselves,

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- 2 -

especially the Germans.

The Europeans will not come independently to a consensus within the Alliance, nor should we expect them to: the US bears the ultimate responsibility for the nuclear affairs of the Alliance and reaps substantial benefits (political leverage, non-proliferation, internal European stability, etc.). In our role as Alliance leader on nuclear matters, we have been building the basis for consensus by gathering Allied views through consultations and then periodically by injecting our own views as the basis for consensus. Consistent with this approach, David Aaron, per your instructions, has informed senior officials in six Allied capitals of US support for the High Level Group recommendations.

We now need to reach a consensus on a concrete Alliance deployment program. To reach this consensus, we will have to approach each country soon and explain our view that a security problem exists and that the Alliance must undertake deployments of long-range systems to fix it, and suggest to each how we feel they should participate in the consensus solution (what systems on whose soil, and what statements we expect). It will take time to work out these details bilaterally. Once this is done, we will be in a position to forge a consensus in the Alliance. Before we can begin discussing our ideas we need to develop our own position on the details of participation; this is the immediate task before us internally.

Obtaining a consensus will not be easy. It will require steady guidance from us in the face of Allied wavering. Each Ally confronts major political problems, both domestically and vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. Nuclear issues provoke strong reactions among European publics. The certain Soviet propaganda campaign against deployments will find resonance in many countries because of this, and because of interest in protecting detente.

Each Ally has special conditions that must be taken into account if it is to support deployments. The conditions of the smaller countries are made all the more important by the German condition that at least one other NATO country on the Continent must participate concretely in deployment (by what means the Germans have not made clear). Given concerns about the military, especially nuclear, role of Germany, we ought to share the German view that they should not play a singular role on this most sensitive nuclear matter, but this doesn't make obtaining consensus any easier.

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- 3 -

There are risks for us as well. For instance, the political reaction from Moscow will strain US-Soviet relations. The Europeans' desire for complementary TNF arms control efforts could burden the SALT process, even if we are able to devise a workable proposal for negotiating TNF. But, if we fail to take this step, the problem will remain with the Alliance, seriously aggravated by the knowledge -- here, in Europe, and in Moscow -- that NATO was unable to respond.

Your Role

Your personal role -- first in private and later in public -- will be pivotal in influencing the outcome. Until you have communicated your views to the European leaders, we are likely to find ambivalence as we consult with their governments on how to proceed. These leaders are influenced by the legacy of the neutron bomb affair. For this reason, once leaders in Europe are prepared to deal with the issue, it will be necessary for you to go on record publicly.

Even though a formal, public NATO consensus would not be reached until year's end, at the earliest, it's important for you personally to become engaged now. If Allied leaders see US leadership, they'll assume that in the end NATO will decide for deployment, and they will begin to work toward that end. If they are unsure of where you stand, they will try to put off a decision and not become politically exposed.

Alternatives

Recognizing the risks, we could, of course, decide now not to pursue this potentially rough course and adopt a fall-back position. For example, we could stand aside from the leadership role and hope that the issue subsides. Or, we could seek only new deployments at sea (of SLCMs) or in the UK (of GLCMs); or, we could commit more SSBNs to NATO. But these fall-backs, if adopted now, would not be seen as answering the challenge posed by Soviet deployments. Nor would they ease European doubts about US political will and commitment to European security; on the contrary, these doubts could even increase. The ultimate outcome could be a weakened NATO and a Western Europe more independent of the United States. More immediately, should it become known that the US was attempting to side-step the issue of

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- 4 -

new long-range TNF deployments, chances for SALT ratification would clearly be harmed.

Some of these fall-backs (SLCM) might be more politically acceptable if the Europeans conclude in the face of US leadership that a consensus on Continental systems is not possible.

Schmidt Visit

If you agree with the course outlined here, your personal role in our diplomacy should begin with the Schmidt visit. Schmidt has got to be convinced of both our constancy and our willingness to accept the responsibility of leading the Alliance -- and Germany -- to a consensus for deployments in the face of political wavering in Europe and hostility from the Soviets.

You should also give the Chancellor an opportunity to tell you if he sees real problems for Germany in following the course toward eventual deployments. If he has strong misgivings, or if he has ideas on how to respond to the problem militarily in ways different from the consensus of the HLG, we should know now.

Schmidt's domestic situation encourages procrastination and equivocation on his part. The Left Wing of his own party -- the main source of his problem -- wants to avoid deployments, largely because of fear of damage to Ostpolitik; the opposition and his coalition partner (the FDP) favor deployments. Schmidt's strategy for managing this situation involves his conditions for deployments in the FRG: it must be an "Alliance decision;" at least one other NATO country on the Continent must participate concretely in deployments; a deployment decision must be accompanied by sincere arms control attempts.

We share Schmidt's interest in SPD party unity and the political and humanitarian gains of Ostpolitik for the German people. But at the same time, Schmidt has to realize that there are stakes that transcend the vicissitudes of German politics. Schmidt probably agrees: he wants an Alliance consensus and US leadership to help contain the problem on his Left and to limit the impact of Soviet political and propaganda maneuvers.

In June, you should tell Schmidt that you believe that the Alliance faces an important military and political problem and that some deployments are needed to correct it,

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- 5 -

including deployments in Germany -- probably of the Pershing II missile. You should tell him that the US intends to work with other countries on this basis and to move to an Alliance consensus by December. You will have to convince the Chancellor of your determination to bring about the conditions (including second country participation in deployments and a serious TNF arms control approach) that would make a deployment consensus as painless as possible for him and for Germany. You will want to make clear to Schmidt that you are sensitive to his -- and Germany's -- political problem on this issue, and that you are therefore willing to accept primary responsibility, though his support of our efforts is necessary.

Ideally, it would be desirable if Schmidt responded by giving you unconditional agreement to deployments in Germany. He will almost certainly not do so, at least partly out of concern that we would only make a perfunctory effort to meet his conditions; but we can expect him to be fairly positive and to indicate his support. He does not want the burden of derailing deployments after you have indicated that you think there's a need, especially since he was instrumental in raising the issue in the first place.

Even if we can't expect an unconditional agreement to deployment in Germany, presenting your thoughts to Schmidt will show him that you have assumed a firm lead and that the burden for not going forward with deployments will be that much more on his shoulders. Also, having given him this chance to state misgivings, he'll feel he has less freedom to maneuver later on if he does not give you a negative signal.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurs with the thrust of this memorandum.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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May 18, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: TNF Modernization (C)

The President has approved the general approach outlined in your memorandum of May 9, and, more specifically, he has authorized: (S)

-- SCC studies aimed at pulling together by the end of June an initial TNF modernization proposal which will be discussed bilaterally with the allies in July. (S)

-- A letter to Schmidt outlining the U.S. approach to the TNF problem as described in your memorandum. This letter could also preview a possible link between TNF and MBFR progress, making it clear that the latter would not be an obstacle to the necessary steps on TNF within the context of the LTDP. (S)

I will have my staff by in touch with yours regarding the proposed text of such a letter, which we could submit to the President in time for dispatch to Schmidt, so that Schmidt can consider it before coming to Washington. (S)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

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Review on May 18, 1985

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