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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, April 30, 1981

TIME AND PLACE: 11:10 - 12:40
The Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: Theater Nuclear Forces -
Negotiations Timing

PARTICIPANTS:

President Ronald Reagan

Vice President George Bush

State

Secretary Alexander Haig

Deputy Secretary William F. Clark

Defense

Deputy Secretary Frank Carlucci

Under Secretary Fred Ikle

USUN

Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick

CIA

Director William Casey

JCS

General Lew Allen

Lt. General John Pustay

White House

Edwin Meese III

James Baker

Richard V. Allen

RADM James W. Nance

Janet Colson

Office of the Vice President

ADM Daniel J. Murphy

NSC

Major General Robert L. Schweitzer

Major Christopher Shoemaker

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Review on April 30, 1987

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MINUTES OF MEETING

Richard Allen began the meeting by explaining that today's agenda was very heavy. He explained that the props and charts displayed around the room related to the TNF issue to be discussed. He then summarized the issues for discussion as: the position the US should take on TNF negotiations with the Soviet Union; a brief word on Libya; US-Japanese relations and the submarine and grain embargo issues; and the East-West trade paper which the Secretary of State will discuss while in Europe.

Issue 1: TNF Negotiations

Mr. Allen began the discussion by reviewing the equipment and capabilities which underlie the TNF issue. He explained that in order to understand the issue, it is important to know what the various systems look like and what they can do. He reviewed the capabilities of the BACKFIRE bomber in its intra-theater role, the SS-20, the SS-4, and the SS-5 missiles. He made the point that the SS-20, the basic Soviet IRBM, has three warheads and will be deployed in warhead numbers over 1,400 by 1985. Mr. Allen then discussed US systems, including the PERSHING-II and GLCM (ground-launched cruise missiles) which are the systems involved in the NATO modernization program. He pointed out that neither of these new systems is deployed today. He then discussed the range of the new NATO systems, showing that PERSHING-II and GLCM could reach well into the Soviet Union.

Mr. Allen then turned to the question at hand: whether or not to set a specific date for negotiating TNF arms control with the Soviet Union. He noted that the SIG and IG had met several times on the subject and that there remained differences of opinion on how to proceed. He pointed out that DOD and State had agreed on an options paper which the President had before him. He then asked Secretary Haig to discuss the issue.

Secretary Haig began by saying that we are faced with NATO ministerials next week in which the Allies will expect us to tell them how we will meet the December 1979 commitment to negotiate TNF arms control with the Soviet Union while we are modernizing TNF. He said that the Europeans want us to speak realistically and to give a specific time schedule for the resumption of TNF negotiations. He said that in his discussions with Lord Carrington, Prime Minister Thatcher, and above all, Chancellor Schmidt, it became apparent that European leaders cannot maintain domestic consensus behind TNF modernization without a specific date for the start of TNF negotiations. Secretary Haig said that it was vitally important that he and Secretary Weinberger commit the US to a specific date to initiate arms control discussions in the ministerials and DPC. He said that some people fear that if we commit ourselves to a date, Europeans will use that as an

excuse not to proceed with modernization. Moreover, he said that there was a good deal of concern that our modernization process has not been based upon an honest threat assessment or military requirements study. He said the State Department shared these concerns but felt that we need to deal with them within the context of a "date certain" decision.

Secretary Haig then laid out the State position. He said State feels strongly that we cannot put conditions on a timetable for negotiations. He also said that negotiations must be conducted using the "SALT framework" language. This will convey a subtle yet important message to the Europeans and will firmly establish the relationship between theater and central nuclear systems. The UK and France feel very strongly about this because of their "gray" systems, those systems which do not fall strictly into the definition of either strategic or theater nuclear forces. The FRG is afraid that we will decouple TNF from strategic forces and will therefore not be willing to use our strategic forces to deter the Soviet Union from war in Europe. The last Administration did not reassure the Europeans on this point. Secretary Haig said that State's position on these issues was that we should lay out a timetable to meet with Gromyko by the Fall and to negotiate with the Soviets on TNF by the end of the year. In addition we should keep the negotiations within the "SALT framework." We cannot afford to send a message to our Allies that we are now imposing new conditions on the beginnings of the TNF negotiations. This will endanger modernization.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci said that DOD was not opposed in principle to negotiations or discussions of timetables but felt that any negotiations with the Soviet Union must be preceded by a common assessment of the threat and of our requirements. He said that it is only sensible that we develop a work plan based on these two studies. Without such a work plan, we are vulnerable to cosmetic Soviet proposals which are on the surface appealing and which can throw the Alliance into disarray. We should take a public position that we hope to begin negotiations by the end of the year and should work out details of the work plan with the Allies immediately.

Under Secretary Ikle then said that it is essential that we develop the studies with the Allies before we negotiate. This will help the Allies meet their Leftist oppositions. We should not enter into blind negotiations with the Soviets, nor should we use the "SALT context" phrase.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci said the Allies are really not interested in theater nuclear deployments for survivability. They regard TNF simply as a tripwire which would lead to use of US strategic weapons.

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The President said that we all agree that we need positive movement on modernization before we go into the negotiations. If we do not, then the Soviets will drag their feet because of their large advantage in TNF.

Mr. Allen said that that really isn't the problem because all the Allies agree to the two-track procedure which includes both modernization and negotiations. The real issue at hand is whether or not we should set a date certain for the beginnings of negotiations. We need to meet for domestic European requirements and provide leadership across a broad spectrum of issues in the Alliance. This decision will set the tone for our leadership and as a much broader scope than meets the eye.

Secretary Haig said that there really is no difference in the positions of State and DOD. We agree on the need for a threat assessment and requirements studies which have not been adequately done. But the influence that we are attaching conditions to our willingness to negotiate is counterproductive. We must not point a pistol at the Allies' head.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci argued that the DOD position did not point a pistol at the head of Allies but rather represented normal procedures in preparing for negotiations. We do not want to negotiate from a position of disarray. Moreover, the Allies will delay questions of survivability and dispersal and the studies which address these issues as long as they can. If we take a position that we will complete our studies by the end of the year and then will be in negotiations with the Soviets, that should be sufficient to placate the Leftist domestic constituencies in Europe.

Under Secretary Ikle then argued that if we give a date certain, the Soviets will intrude into the Allied preparation process.

Secretary Haig responded that the US will take the lead in the preparation of studies. We are not captive to Soviet or Allied pressures. He then said the President has another problem and that is the need to express some willingness to start the talks to the Soviets in the near future. The President promised as much in his letter to Brezhnev. In this regard, it is important that we give a date certain.

Secretary Haig then said other preparations for meaningful negotiations are important as well. He cited as example the need to agree with the Soviets on data for negotiations. We need to educate the Soviets into our perception of TNF balances in Europe, but this does not mean that we will yield control of our preparations to the Soviets. The net result of an agreement to resume negotiations on a specific date will be foreign policy gains with the Soviets and with the Allies.

Mr. Meese then asked how long discussions with the Soviets could take.

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Secretary Haig said that the data talks themselves could go on for a year.

Mr. Meese asked what would happen about TNF deployment during that period.

Secretary Haig responded that a deployment schedule was the crux of the problem and that is why we need a date certain.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci stated that it's risky to assume that we can complete our preparations by December because if we can't, we guarantee Allied disarray in the negotiations.

Mr. Meese then said that the real issue is whether we set a certain date for the negotiations or whether we wait to assure completeness of the studies.

Secretary Haig said that the two are not incompatible.

Mr. Casey then pointed out that the key question is how to ensure the continuation of the TNF modernization schedule. He asked what it takes to ensure that the Allies will continue.

Mr. Meese asked what the chances are of the Allies backing out of the modernization process once negotiations begin.

Secretary Haig assured the meeting that this would not happen. Indeed, if we do not set a date certain for negotiations, we will give them the opportunity to back out. He stressed again that all the Allies had told him of the importance of setting a firm date.

Mr. Casey confirmed that the Italians had given him the same message.

Mr. Meese asked how the modernization process was going as of now.

Secretary Haig said in the case of Italy, the FRG and, in particular, the UK, things were on schedule.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci added that the real problems are with the Dutch and the Belgians.

Mr. Meese then asked what we would be willing to give up in the negotiations with the Soviets. Would we be willing to cut back our planned deployments of TNF in order to secure Soviet restraint?

Secretary Haig said that, on the contrary, following our threat assessment review, we will probably find that we will have to build beyond the levels we are now projecting.

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Deputy Secretary Carlucci then said this point reinforces the need for completed threat assessment before we begin negotiations.

Secretary Haig said we know the answers to those questions now; we don't need a threat assessment before we begin.

Mr. Meese then asked if our planned deployments then represented the lower bound of our negotiating position.

Mr. Allen asked how, if the talks with the Soviets go on for years, will we be able to brake the growth in Soviet TNF?

Mr. Meese answered that without any negotiations, the Soviets will continue to deploy anyway.

Mr. Casey argued that current imbalance of TNF demands an immediate response.

Secretary Haig then said that we need to look beyond the balance of TNF to strategic systems as well. This is another advantage of the "SALT framework" language.

The President then asked what the expression 'SALT framework' means.

Secretary Haig said that it means nothing in practical terms but implies a linkage between TNF negotiations and the broader SALT process, and again he argued that this linkage is important to the European Allies.

Mr. Allen added that he understood Secretary Haig's argument to be that this decision will help us get our leadership position in order.

Mr. Meese summarized DOD's position by saying that the Allies may not agree to the threat assessment and requirement studies and that therefore we may go into the negotiations in disarray.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci reiterated that this exposes us to cosmetic proposals by the Soviets. DOD's position is that we should go in with firm positions and hold the Allies' feet to the fire.

Mr. Meese suggested that our position be that we will begin the needed studies to be completed by the end of the year, and we will begin negotiations as soon as the studies are finished.

Secretary Haig said that we should present this in the following manner: First, we should establish a date certain for negotiations and pressure the Allies on threat assessment and requirement studies. Second, we need to be sure that these studies are completed. We can guarantee this because we

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control the schedules, and even in the worst case, we control the negotiations and could postpone. He reiterated that the Allies are nervous about our position and need a date certain.

The President said that if the studies are not completed, we will not negotiate.

Under Secretary Ikle asked if this means that we will be willing to postpone.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci asked why we need to approach the Soviets as early as September.

Secretary Haig responded that it is important to show some progress in negotiations for domestic political reasons.

Mr. Meese added that all bets are off if Poland is invaded. He then said that Options 2 and 3 in the State paper leave considerable ambiguity. We need a simple articulation of our plan.

The President said that he did not see much difference between State and DOD positions. We will conduct the studies; we will continue to deploy modern systems; we believe the study can be done by the end of the year, and look forward to negotiations in that time frame. We will discuss with Gromyko in the Fall; if the studies are not ready by the end of the year, we will take that into consideration. The language "SALT framework" is okay but needs to be clearly separated from an interpretation that we are resuming the Carter SALT approach.

Mr. Meese then said that we should reword Option 2.

Mr. Baker suggested that we draft guidance along the lines of the President's enunciation.

Secretary Haig said that we must speak from one sheet of music on this matter.

The Vice President then asked for a summary of the position.

Mr. Meese said: (1) Tell the Allies that we hope to start the talks by the end of the year; (2) We will talk to Gromyko in the Fall; (3) We need to start studies now; (4) These studies will be the basis for our talks; (5) We must proceed with modernization on schedule.

Deputy Secretary Carlucci argued that we should introduce language to stress the necessity of the studies as a precondition for negotiation. The Allies need to understand this point.

Secretary Haig said they would understand without strong language.

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Mr. Meese said that his suggested wording emphasizing that the studies would be the basis for the negotiations would take care of DOD's concerns without ruffling the Allies.

Secretary Haig said that he was comfortable with this position.

Mr. Allen said that we would rewrite Option 2 and circulate it within an hour.

Mr. Meese then stressed that all statements we make need to hew to the agreed position. Communiques should be centralized. He asked Secretary Haig to clear communiques in Washington before release.

Secretary Haig said that there is usually no time to do this.

Issue 2: East-West Trade Paper

Secretary Haig raised the issue of East-West trade and noted that a paper had been worked in connection with the Ottawa Summit.

Mr. Allen said that, from a standpoint of overall national security guidance, the paper should proceed through the NSC loop.

Secretary Haig agreed and said he wanted the NSC to look at the paper but with the understanding he would be giving it to the Allies.

Issue 3: Middle East/Lebanon

Secretary Haig said that we were ejecting the Libyan Peoples Bureau after having caught them in a murder plot in Chicago.

Mr. Meese asked if anything will happen in Lebanon.

Secretary Haig responded that the situation was very grave; that Israel will take out the SAMs. Main preoccupation of Israel is that high ground of the Sannin Ridge is an unacceptable place for Syrian Army to be. The important thing to remember is that the Syrians have overreacted. The situation is being driven by the goal of the Soviets to be in the Middle East and to become part of any solution.

Mr. Meese asked what press guidance should be followed.

Secretary Haig responded that we should say the situation is very serious; we are carefully watching the diplomatic steps being taken.

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