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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE, TIME January 28, 1983; 1:10 p.m.
AND PLACE: Cabinet Room
SUBJECT: Discussion on Defense Program (U)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President USUN
The Vice President Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

State JCS
William Schneider General John Vessey
Adm. Jonathan Howe Vice Admiral Thomas Bigley

Treasury ACDA
Secretary Donald Regan James George

OSD FEMA
Secretary Caspar Weinberger Louis Giuffrida
Fred Ikle
Dov Zakheim

Commerce White House
Lionel Olmer Edwin Meese III
William P. Clark
Robert C. McFarlane
Richard Darman

Energy NSC
Troy Wade General Richard T. Boverie
Allan Myer
Robert Helm

OMB
Alton Keel

CIA
Director William Casey

MINUTES

William P. Clark: Judge Clark opened the meeting by pointing out that the key to a positive Congressional response to the FY 84

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Defense Program will depend on our ability to link the budget submission to policy, strategy, and objectives, and that this was the purpose of this meeting.

Secretary Weinberger: The Secretary provided a thirty minute briefing of the defense program. This briefing included a perspective of US national security objectives, threats to those objectives, the US defense strategy, and the nuclear and general purpose force programs which support the strategy. The briefing concluded with a look at allied contributions to our collective defense posture, an examination of the FY 84 security assistance program, and a discussion of defense budget comparisons. Secretary Weinberger highlighted the following points:

- It is essential to regain our military strength if we are to be able to accomplish fundamental security objectives for the United States.
- With regard to our strategy, the nature of our geo-strategic position requires both forward deployments and a flexible force structure that can move rapidly to a range of global locations.
- The Administration inherited a vulnerable deterrent posture for our strategic nuclear forces. Unless all legs of the Triad are modernized, this vulnerability will reach dangerous proportions.
- With regard to conventional forces, our first priority is to make ready what we have. We have already made a 40 percent increase in the readiness of our units.
- The defense program will provide a 70 percent increase in capabilities for our ground forces, should they be required for commitment in Southwest Asia and a 40 percent increase in air force capability for the same contingency.
- When looking at the budget figures, it becomes apparent that the charge that the defense budget has been immune to cuts is absolutely wrong. The Five Year Defense Program as of today is already \$66 billion less than the program submitted in March of 1981.

The President: The President noted that on the news, during an examination of the defense program, one critic stated that the defense budget was unwise, and that the Administration did not have a strategy that it was attempting to execute.

Secretary Weinberger: Secretary Weinberger noted that the critic was a former Under Secretary of Defense and was in fact the architect of the defense problems that this Administration inherited.

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Secretary Regan: The Secretary asked the Secretary of Defense whether any fallback defense budget positions were being developed so that, should the pressure to decrease the defense budget become a reality, there would be a rational measured program to cope with these budget reductions. Secretary Regan concluded by observing that it might be better to have a clear set of guidelines to cope with budget reductions rather than allowing Congress to indiscriminately reduce the budget by killing programs.

Secretary Weinberger: Secretary Weinberger responded by noting that there is no detailed plan by which to guide budget reductions. He stated that there is no fallback position at this time.

The President: The President stated that the defense budget is already in its fallback position in that the cuts that have been made have resulted in a reduced budget request.

Secretary Weinberger: The Secretary noted that he could cut a number of programs that were added to the defense budget by Congress despite the fact that the Defense Department did not want the additions. He cited the A-10 aircraft as a perfect example, and also noted that it could be possible to close additional US military installations, but you would not accrue any savings for two years.

The President: The President stated that we need to stand where we are with regard to the defense budget; to dig our heels in and stand fast and together. The President then observed that we have to do a better job in getting our message to the public. The President observed that it was simply not a fight with the Congress and that we need to gather the support of the American people. With regard to the Congress, the President said it was not necessary to have them see the light, only to make them feel the heat.

Secretary Weinberger: The Secretary observed that it would be a long struggle but that he will take it on, and he felt confident that the entire Administration would take it on.

Director Casey: Mr. Casey stated that it was important to get a vigorous public affairs effort underway. The Director felt that we needed 20 to 30 people--on a full-time basis--presenting our message and rationale to the American people.

The President: The President noted that the Carter budget of January 1981 was clearly underpriced; meaning that the programs in the budget could not be purchased for the dollars requested. The President felt it would be a good idea to cost-out the Carter budget in order to determine the true nature of that budget.

Ambassador Kirkpatrick: The Ambassador stated that public affairs could indeed be the essential factor and determinant in the defense budget battle. She suggested that the President deliver a strong defense speech which provided clear evidence that the defense program being proposed was both prudent and essential. The

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Ambassador further pointed out that with a clear presentation of the vulnerabilities to American security and wellbeing, we could achieve our objective and secure the defense budget we need. however, it was essential that the President deliver this hard hitting and direct message to the American people.

The President: The President agreed to the recommendation that he provide such a presentation to the American people.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Attachment

Briefing Slides

Prepared by
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