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44
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SUBJECT: Minutes of the National Security Planning Group
Meeting on the Military Purposes Served by Nuclear
Testing (S)

PARTICIPANTS: See Tab A (C)

DATE, TIME July 15, 1986
AND PLACE: 11:00-12:00, Situation Room

Admiral Poindexter introduced the subject, making the following points:

-- Today we will be reviewing the subject of nuclear testing.

-- As you know, General Secretary Gorbachov has accepted our suggestion to begin expert level talks on this subject. We have proposed such talks begin later this month, the Soviets have responded positively, and we are now working to establish dates and locations. We will use these talks to advance your goal of improving verification of existing treaties on nuclear testing.

-- In addition, as part of the broad review the President has directed, we have been considering what, if any, arms control steps in the nuclear testing area might be appropriate should we reach agreement on such verification improvements.

-- These developments make it appropriate for the President and his senior advisors to review the important military purposes served by testing so that we can better understand the implications of any negotiated restrictions. (S)

-- Secretary Weinberger prefaced the DOD briefing with a short introduction. He noted that many people say testing is bad, that it leads to war. In fact, there is a military and technological necessity to test; since we depend on nuclear weapons for security, we must make certain they work. This briefing will show that critics of testing are wrong. It has been shown the Allies with great success. (U)

Mr. Frank Gaffney and Dr. Robert Barker then presented a briefing stressing the military utility of testing and concluding that changes in the current Administration position on nuclear testing restrictions would be an error. An annotated copy of the briefing charts is at Tab B. In introducing the briefing, Mr. Gaffney referred to the 1958-1961 moratorium on nuclear testing. The President asked if it was correct to say that when the

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Soviets broke out of that moratorium they did so in a way that made it clear they had been preparing to do so for some time. Dr. Barker responded that it took us a year to conduct a militarily significant test; the Soviets "came out swinging", conducting the largest test program in history. Mr. Adelman recalled that in 1962 President Kennedy said the United States should never again agree to a moratorium, noting that closed societies can prepare for a breakout, while open societies can not. (S)

At the conclusion of the briefing, Secretary Weinberger noted that there was one circumstance in which nuclear testing would not be required; were the Strategic Defense Initiative to be deployed, it would no longer be necessary to test. (S)

Following the briefing, Admiral Poindexter set the background for discussion by reviewing the current arms control situation as follows:

-- With regard to expert discussions, we are working with the Soviets on a date and location for the meeting. Dr. Robert Barker, who just briefed us, will lead the U.S. experts group.

-- We are working on instructions for the experts delegation; some issues remain to be resolved, none of which deserve attention at this meeting.

-- In addition, as part of the compartmented review the President directed of our response to Gorbachev's latest arms control proposals, we are examining options for the period following ratification of the TTBT and PNET.

-- The first step would be verification improvements which would allow us to send the existing treaties to the Hill for ratification. If we got reduction in strategic offensive forces, we want to know what options we have. Agencies have differing views and there is no point in going too fast until we see the Soviet response to the experts meeting. (S)

Admiral Poindexter then opened the floor to discussion. (S)

Mr. Adelman noted that, while the briefing had been well received by Allies, the Allies still publicly hope we will get to a CTB. They always vote for such a treaty in international conferences. He also emphasized the importance of nuclear effects testing since the survival of warning systems in a nuclear environment is essential. Finally he noted that, despite Secretary Weinberger's comments, even with SDI we will need to test so long as we depend on any nuclear weapons. Secretary Weinberger agreed. (S)

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Secretary Weinberger promised to prepare an unclassified version of the briefing and an article or speech on the subject and forward them for consideration. (S)

The President asked if we could say publicly what technical steps we have done to deter terrorism; Admiral Poindexter indicated that we could. (S)

The President concluded the meeting by recalling Jefferson's observation that if the people have the facts the people won't make a mistake. Right now the people don't have the facts on nuclear testing; we should give them to them. (S)

Attachments

- Tab A List of Participants
- Tab B DOD Briefing
- Tab C Charts used during discussion

Prepared by:
Linton Brooks

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47

MEETING WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING GROUP

Tuesday, July 15, 1986
Situation Room
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The President
Secretary of State George Shultz
Secretary of the Treasury James Baker
Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger
Attorney General Edward Meese
OMB Director James Miller
Admiral William Crowe, Chairman, JCS
ACDA Director Kenneth Adleman
Chief of Staff Donald Regan
VADM John Poindexter
Ambassador Paul Nitze
Ambassador Edward Rowny
Assistant Secretary of Energy Robert Foley
CIA Representative Douglas George

Briefers

Mr. Frank Gaffney (DOD)
Dr. Robert Barker (ACDA/Prospective DOD)

NSC Staff

Mr. Rodney McDaniel
Colonel Robert Linhard
Captain Linton Brooks

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