

5 10 2 A  
TOP SECRET

M E M O R A N D U M

To: The Secretary  
 Through: S/S  
 From: EUR - C. Burke Elbrick  
 Subject: NATO Atomic Stockpile

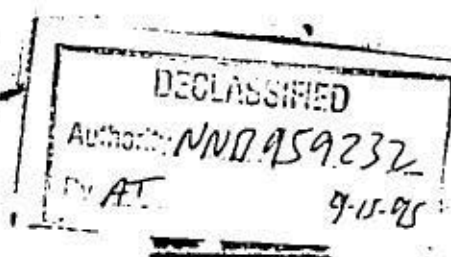
Attached at Tab A is a memorandum of October 18 from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Secretary of Defense concerning "Storage of Atomic Weapons in Continental Europe for U.S. and Non-U.S. NATO Forces".

This further memo from the Joint Chiefs marks some progress over their previous position of July 26, in which they came out flatly against the idea of a NATO atomic stockpile, but in our view the proposals still fall short of implementing the NSC decision in principle that a NATO stockpile will be established.

The concept developed by General Horstad and favored by this Department is that warheads for the nuclear-capable delivery systems of our NATO allies should be kept in a NATO stockpile under General Horstad's control as Supreme Allied Commander Europe. Although the individual depots comprising the stockpile would of course be located in a number of NATO countries, they would form part of a single stockpile, and the weapons held in the NATO stockpile would not be reserved or earmarked for the forces of any particular NATO country. While the stockpile would thus be set up as a NATO stockpile, with all the political advantages deriving therefrom, effective control would be exercised by the U.S. The personnel guarding the weapons in each depot would be U.S. personnel under General Horstad's command in his capacity as U.S. Commander Europe, and release of the weapons in the event of hostilities would be only by personal direction of General Horstad in his dual SACFEUR/CHCEUR capacities.

While it is possible that the Joint Chiefs have in mind a storage system on these lines, this does not emerge clearly from the memorandum. On the contrary, the direction of thinking in the paper seems to be toward bilateral storage arrangements worked out between the U.S. and individual NATO countries, on the pattern of the U.S. arrangements with the U.K.

TOP SECRET



- 8 -

the U.K. in connection with the Canberra and V-bomber programs. The proposed position for communication to M. Spink set forth in the memorandum would reassure him that the U.S. intends to ensure ready availability of nuclear components to NATO delivery forces "should their use be required", but it would not, apparently, enable us to advise M. Spink that availability of these components will be achieved under a common NATO atomic support system under the control of SACSER/CINCEUR, as opposed to a system of release from U.S. depots under bilateral agreements with individual NATO countries.

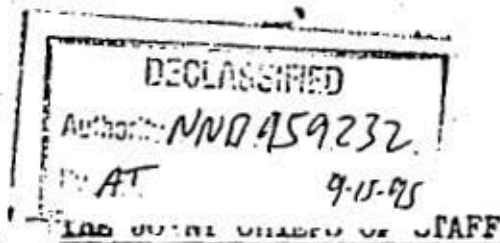
Unless the proposed NATO atomic stockpile is genuinely multilateral and "common", it cannot serve its intended military and political purposes. I therefore do not think that we should be rushed by Defense into approval of the JCS paper as it now stands; rather by working with Defense I believe we can develop a statement to be made in the Council by Ambassador Burgess embodying a NATO stockpile plan satisfactory to us.

Recommendation:

I recommend that the proposed JCS position not be utilized in the discussions with M. Spink but rather that you inform M. Spink that there is agreement in principle in the U.S. Government that a NATO stockpile will be established, and that the State and Defense Departments are now working out the details, which will shortly be communicated to the North Atlantic Council.

RUR/SA:RAP:avy:BELT:imms:mck  
10/23/57

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

18 October 1957

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Storage of Atomic Weapons in Continental Europe for U.S. and Non-U.S. NATO Forces (S).

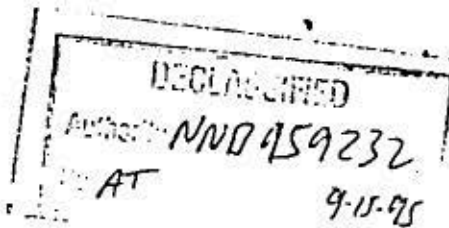
- References: a. Memorandum by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, dated 26 July 1957, subject as above.
- b. Memorandum by the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), dated 15 October 1957, subject as above.

1. By reference a the Joint Chiefs of Staff provided their views on the desirability and feasibility of establishing a "NATO Common Atomic Stockpile". The Joint Chiefs of Staff have re-examined the problem and reaffirm the views expressed in reference a. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the term "NATO Common Atomic Stockpile" has dangerous implications for the United States. It may connote the commitment of weapons to individual nations or their transfer to international control, or infer the allocation of weapons on the basis of the desires of individual countries, rather than upon the basis of NATO approved requirements.

2. However, the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that political advantages might accrue from NATO recognition and understanding of the procedures which can be established to provide atomic weapons for the common defense of the NATO area. Such procedures have been worked out in considerable technical and operating detail with the British in connection with their Canberra and V-bomber programs.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that a document entitled "Procedures for Providing U.S. Atomic Weapons for the Common Defense of the NATO Area" be developed and forwarded through established channels to the Standing Group, the Military Committee and the North Atlantic Council. After review by appropriate NATO agencies, such a document could constitute NATO approved terms of reference, on a uniform and impartial basis, for the necessary bilateral country-by-country agreements for storage sites.

TOP SECRET



TOP SECRET

4. If the above recommendation is concurred in, the Joint Chiefs of Staff will develop the suggested document and forward it to the Secretary of Defense for approval and coordination with the Department of State. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are investigating the acceptability of various terms as an unclassified label to be applied to the final arrangement.

5. For the immediate purpose of consultation with Mr. Spaak, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that:

a. He be advised that U.S. policy is directed toward providing an atomic capability for possible employment by forces of our NATO allies, predicated upon the individual NATO nation's ability and willingness to absorb, utilize, and maintain the atomic capable weapon systems, upon its ability technically and financially to support the effort, and, where applicable, upon the necessary agreements for atomic storage rights.

b. He be advised that, subject to the foregoing conditions, it is possible under existing U.S. law to provide an immediately ready atomic capability to NATO forces. U.S. laws require, however, that the maintenance and custody of the nuclear components be by U.S. personnel; but procedures can be worked out for release of these components to NATO delivery forces should their use be required.

c. He be advised of U.S. intent to forward to NATO the document suggested in paragraph 3 above.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

N. F. TWINING,  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

**NATIONAL  
SECURITY  
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)