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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SAGE~~

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JOHN M. POINDEXTER

SUBJECT: Guidance for the Arms Control Support Group

Issue

Should we use the paper at Tab B as the terms of reference for the Arms Control Support Group's work program?

Background

Over the last two weeks we have had a series of discussions, including two NSPGs, on how best to guide and direct the Administration's work program to develop a response to the latest Soviet arms control proposals and position the U.S. for the fall.

Discussion

At Tab A is a sample letter to General Secretary Gorbachev which is based on these discussions and designed to give you a feel for the general direction that we believe you wish us to pursue.

At Tab B is a more detailed paper that is designed to serve as a terms of reference to guide a detailed work program to permit us to be in a position to send such a letter by mid-July. The substance of the sample letter is based upon the approach that is outlined in this more detailed paper.

Recommendation

OK No

— — That you review the letter (Tab A) to satisfy yourself that we are pursuing the general direction that you desire.

— — That you approve the use of the paper (Tab B) to guide the detailed Arms Control Support Group work program.

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Attachments:

- Tab A -- Sample Letter to General Secretary Gorbachev (TS/S)
- Tab B -- Guidance Paper for ACSG Work (TS/S)

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GUIDANCE ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE U.S. ARMS CONTROL POLICY (S/S)

Basic Guidance. The United States will seriously consider the Soviet proposals put on the table in Geneva during the current round of negotiations and develop appropriate counter-proposals, on a priority basis. While this work is in progress, our public posture should project a positive/serious stance. (S)

Soviet Objectives. The Soviet Union fears the SDI program will provide the U.S. with a first-strike advantage. The latest Soviet proposals attempt to "lock in" U.S. compliance with the ABM Treaty to slow/stop SDI development and, failing that, to block SDI deployments. They also seek public diplomacy leverage to weaken the U.S. position with other free governments. (S)

U.S. Objectives. For our part, the U.S. seeks to "lock in" the SDI research program itself and to use SDI to permit a long-term strengthening of stability and deterrence through stabilizing reductions of existing nuclear arsenals and to create the basis for a stable transition to a system of deterrence involving the increasing contribution of defensive systems. The task the USG now faces is to determine how it can best position itself to:

1. begin immediate stabilizing reductions in offensive forces, setting in motion a negotiating process that will lead to significant reductions in offensive nuclear arsenals through equitable and verifiable agreements;
2. maintain near-term support for SDI and institutionalize support so that the program lives beyond this Administration;
3. avoid commitments that constrain U.S. options for SDI;
4. establish the foundation for a stable transition to a more defense dominated deterrence;
5. develop a means to share the benefits of strategic defenses resulting from our SDI research with the Soviet Union and other responsible governments; and
6. maintain Alliance solidarity and integrity. (TS/S)

New U.S. Initiative. The Soviet Union is holding reductions in offensive nuclear forces hostage to a U.S. response to Soviet concerns about SDI. Therefore, to achieve its goals, the U.S. must develop an initiative which addresses Soviet concerns about SDI providing a U.S. first-strike advantage while reducing the size of existing arsenals and leading to a system of mutual deterrence based upon the increasing contribution of defenses. The introduction of the elements of such an initiative should begin no later than by mid-July. (TS/S)

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BY KML NARA DATE 10/8/10

End-game Elements. The U.S. initiative should ultimately lead to U.S./Soviet agreement on the following elements. (S)

1. Both sides hold the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons as a long-term goal. While other nuclear powers will have to be involved in this process, the initial step now needed is the significant reduction in the existing arsenals of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Therefore, both sides agree that this reductions process should begin as quickly as possible. (S)

2. As an element of this reduction process, both sides agree to pursue an outcome in which neither side retains any offensive ballistic missiles, and both sides share the benefit of defenses against such systems as insurance that the threat posed by these missiles never again arises from any source. (TS/S)

3. U.S. SDI research should be permitted to continue, with the U.S.S.R. free to continue its corresponding research. (TS/S)

4. Permitted research will include testing which can demonstrate in principle the potential of advanced systems sufficiently to permit a decision to move from research to system development at the appropriate time. (TS/S)

5. When either side conducts such testing, the other side will be afforded the opportunity to verify the purpose, nature and extent of that testing to its satisfaction. (TS/S)

6. Based upon such testing, from the point that a side decides to initiate system development, there will be an agreed period of negotiation (e.g., one year) before any system deployment based upon this development could begin. (TS/S)

7. When either side determines that it would be appropriate to deploy an advanced defensive system, it would be required to offer to share the benefits of such a system with the other side in return for further mutual reductions in offensive ballistic missiles. This offer would be effective for a specified period of time during which negotiations would be conducted to seek agreement on specific sharing arrangements. No deployments could occur until the completion of this period of negotiation. After the specified time, deployment would proceed. (TS/S)

8. Based upon this sharing of the benefits of advanced defenses, actual deployments of advanced defensive systems would be coordinated so as to be mutually beneficial and linked to further, phased reductions in offensive ballistic missile capability on both sides. (TS/S)

9. An eventual goal would be sharing of the benefits of advanced defenses with all responsible nations so that there is a positive incentive against further investment in offensive ballistic missiles, while also requiring a parallel reduction in nuclear forces by all participating nuclear powers. (TS/S)

Capturing Such an End-game Position in a Framework Agreement. It is unlikely that the Soviet Union would agree to the desired U.S. end-game position if it were presented as a formal, free standing agreement. However, it may be in the U.S. interest to present this position as an executive agreement providing a framework to guide the direction of formal negotiations. Such an agreement could then be supported by an approach designed to move the Soviets to the U.S. position via a series of more limited specific negotiating moves implemented over time. (S/S)

Example of a "Framework Agreement". The following is an example of an "endgame" version of such an agreement. (S/S)

The ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons remains a long-term goal shared by both the U.S. and Soviet Union. While other nuclear powers will have to be involved before this goal can be achieved, both sides agree that the initial step needed now is the significant reduction in the existing arsenals of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This step beginning the reductions process should be taken without further delay. (TS/S)

As a key element of this reduction process, both sides also agree to seek the total elimination of all offensive ballistic missiles, and to share the benefit of defenses against such systems as insurance that the threat posed by such systems never again arises. (TS/S)

To support this goal, research should be permitted to continue. This research includes testing to demonstrate in principle that advanced systems can contribute to stability and to do so sufficiently to permit a decision to move from research to advanced system development at the appropriate time. Agree procedures will be needed to permit the verification of the purpose, nature and extent of such testing. (TS/S)

When a decision is reached to move beyond research to advanced system development, there will be an agreed period of negotiation before any system deployment based upon such advanced system development could begin. Also before deployment begins, there will be an additional agreed period of negotiation on how the benefits of such a deployment can be shared in return for further mutual reductions in offensive ballistic missiles. Actual deployments of advanced defensive systems would be coordinated so as to be mutually beneficial and linked to further, phased reductions in offensive ballistic missile capability on both sides. (TS/S)

The eventual goal would be sharing of the benefits of advanced defenses with all responsible nations so that there is a positive incentive against further investment in offensive ballistic missiles, while also requiring a parallel reduction in offensive nuclear forces by all participating nuclear powers. (TS/S)

Considerations in Developing a Phased Approach. To develop an appropriately phased approach to achieving the U.S. desired end-game, the following considerations apply. (TS/S)

1. In the initial interim phases of such an approach, the U.S. should address the widest range of arms reduction issues that are in the U.S. interest. As a minimum, it should address U.S. goals in START, INF, DST and nuclear testing. This is essential not only to counter the impression that only the Soviet Union has a coherent, comprehensive plan for the reduction of arms, but also to allow the U.S. to use linkage where appropriate to the maximum U.S. advantage. (TS/S)

2. Given limited U.S. negotiating capital, it is essential that this capital be husbanded so that the U.S. continues to have the negotiating leverage needed to achieve its goals in each area over time. (TS/S)

3. Initial U.S. leverage can most likely best be applied by constructively responding to the Soviet suggestions concerning an extended ABM Treaty commitment. However, any US agreement to an extended ABM treaty commitment would require that:

a. the baseline be clarification of the ABM Treaty based upon the broader interpretation of the treaty;

b. the definitions of permitted testing associated with that interpretation clearly include testing to the degree our programs will require during the period of such a commitment;

c. any initial time period of commitment be shorter than the 15-20 years the Soviets want; and

d. future periods of commitment, if agreed to, be based on achievement of substantial offensive system reductions and real promise of still further reductions. (TS/S)

3. Any U.S. counter-proposal should be phased in over time, with the first step balancing a limited US acquiescence to non-withdrawal from the ABM treaty (appropriately clarified) against significant reductions of offensive systems within that same time period. (TS/S)

3. There MUST be an effective "sundown clause" in any such initial interim agreement, a clause that would automatically release the U.S. from further restraint unless specified Soviet performance of obligations permitted positive U.S. commitments to additional time periods of observance. (TS/S)

4. Further codicils to the ABM treaty as needed to restrict deployment of advanced systems or significant improvement of existing ballistic missile defenses, while permitting the legitimate research objectives of both sides to be achieved,

could be a matter of negotiation during the initial interim time period. (TS/S)

5. Any initial interim step should consider addressing nuclear testing in some associated manner so as to allow the U.S. position in this area to reinforce other U.S. goals and deny the Soviets additional propaganda benefits with respect to this issue. (TS/S)

6. Effective verification of Soviet compliance with its commitments during any such initial interim agreement must be fully incorporated into such an agreement. (TS/S)

Example of an Initial Step. The following is an example of an integrated initial interim step. (S)

1. ABM Treaty Clarification. Clarifications of the ABM treaty could be negotiated, working from the base of the broader interpretation, to include definitions of testing, research, and development, that would permit the US (and USSR) to continue their research and investigation programs, but could not deploy or produce operational components of the system. (TS/S)

2. Interim START Reductions. In the START forum, initial, interim agreements on reductions could be agreed, to be accomplished, on a verifiable basis, in a definite time period (perhaps 5 years), the same time to be the period of agreed adherence to the modified ABM treaty. Possible reductions agreements, weighted toward US interests, might include:

a. modifications of elements of either the original U.S. START position (limit on ballistic missile RVs to 5,000) or our latest START position as an interim step;

b. modifications of elements of the latest Soviet proposal to pocket positive elements; and

c. more radical new elements like the elimination of all ballistic missiles (although full achievement of this may not occur until a later stage). (TS/S)

3. Interim INF Reductions. In the INF area, the U.S. most recent U.S. position could be stretched out so that the first, or first and second years' reductions served as the basis for the first stage reductions. (TS/S)

4. Linkages. If both the ABM Treaty Clarification and the Interim Reductions above were agreed, the U.S. would be prepared to agree to abide by the clarified ABM treaty for the period of the initial reductions. During this period, serious negotiations on further reductions would occur, as well as discussions on the concept of satisfying each other on the nature, intent and purpose of specific SDI testing activities. (TS/S)

5. Follow-on Steps. At the end of the agreed initial interim stage, we would determine whether:

- a. the initially-agreed offensive reductions had been implemented and scrupulously observed by both sides;
- b. further reductions in offensive arms, to be achieved during the next period, had been agreed; and
- c. both sides had agreed to make any needed amendments to the the ABM treaty. (TS/S)

If the above conditions had not been met, both sides would be free to exercise the withdrawl clause of the ABM treaty. If all of the above were accomplished, the US would be prepared to consider a follow-on period (perhaps another 5 years) of adherence to the clarified ABM treaty. (TS/S)

6. Nuclear Testing. Associated with this, there could be a parallel program in the nuclear testing area along the following lines. (S/S)

- a. In the initial interim period, the U.S. and Soviet Union could agree on the additional verification procedures required to permit ratification of the TTBT and PNET. (TS/S)
- b. Upon ratification, a baseline level of yearly nuclear testing (based on the higher number of tests conducted that year be either side) would be established. (TS/S)
- c. From that point, the number of nuclear tests conducted by each side would be reduced by some factor associated with progress in the actual reductions achieved in the size of existing nuclear arsenals. (TS/S)

Tasking. The examples provided above are are intended to be purely examples. However, they are consistent with the President's guidance that the USG should take Soviet proposals seriously and develop appropriate counter-proposals. Accordingly, the Senior Arms Control Group and the Arms Control Support Group are directed to undertake an urgent, compartmented effort, working from the guidance and examples cited above, to develop:

- (1) a phased strategy for achieving the desired U.S. end-game;
- (2) a refined ingoing "framework" proposal; and
- (3) a coherent and supporting package of initial U.S. proposals in the appropriate major areas of negotiation. (TS/S)