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S - Mr. Smith

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By JDS NARA, Date 1/17/20

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TO - L. D. Battle

Executive Secretary

Department of State

Room 7224 NS/E

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Kohler (pt)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

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APPROVED BY: White House
4/12/62

DATE: February 6, 1962

SUBJECT: Call of Secretary General of NATO

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E.O. 13526, Sec. 3.3

211/29571
By *JDS*, NARA, Date *1-17-20*

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Mark U. Stikker, Secretary General of NATO
Thomas K. Finletter, US Permanent Representative to NAC
Fey B. Kohler, Assistant Secretary

COPIES TO:	S/S	OSD-Sec. McNamara	GER-Mr. Hillenbrand
	S	Mr. Gilpatric	SOV-Mr. Guthrie
	U	ISA-Mr. Mitze	White House-Mr. Bundy
	M	S/P-Mr. Restow	USRO-Amb. Finletter
	G	EUR-Mr. Kohler	Ma.Bonn-Amb. Dowling
	Mr. Bowie	RA-Mr. Fessenden	
	Mr. Gerard Smith		

The President welcomed Mr. Stikker for his second visit to the U.S. and opened the conversation by inquiring about the state of the Alliance.

Mr. Stikker replied that he thought the state of the Alliance was generally good but that there were many problems and some uneasiness and uncertainties. A number of the NATO Ambassadors had approached him before his departure and German Defense Minister Strauss had even flown down from Bonn to express his concern about his upcoming discussions with the President. The latter had referred to them as not only of political but even of historic importance, an exaggerated statement which did however illustrate the strength of the concern. He wanted to cite two examples. The first was the range of problems connected with Berlin contingency planning, and the Thompson-Gromyko talks. He had just had a telegram this morning reporting on the Council meeting yesterday at which the US Representative had faced many complaints about the handing over of documents to the Russians which had not been cleared with the Council and about which they had not even been informed. Some countries like Canada were capable of saying that if they were only to learn things post facto which might involve NATO in courses of action then they were not prepared to go along. After Mr. Kohler explained that while these documents had not been submitted to NATO they in fact represented

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only previously approved positions or matters about which NATO had been informed, the President said that he thought we should have provided these papers earlier. He added that he had great appreciation for the difficulties which faced Ambassador Thompson in the current exercise. It was difficult enough to get agreement among 3 or 4 but with 15 different views we were likely to face paralysis of efforts at negotiation. However he repeated that he agreed that we must do our best to bring NATO along and not give people an excuse to complain that they were not adequately consulted.

Mr. Stikker then said that a much more important problem was that of Germany. He had visited Germany often for speeches and had had talks with top officials, trade union leaders and others. There was clearly a sense of the growing military strength of the Federal Republic and the beginnings of a wave of nationalism. Even Chancellor Adenauer, the most European of the Germans, had recently referred with evident pride to Germany as the second strongest member of NATO. These sentiments were coupled with widespread uncertainty as to United States policy particularly as regards the concept of limited wars on the continent as against the use of nuclear weapons. Mr. Stikker referred to the discussions which had been going on inconclusively during the past year about NATO strategy. No agreement had been reached. It was important that in the forthcoming discussions agreement be reached if we were not to face serious disunity. There were real indications that the Federal Republic might want to possess its own nuclear weapons. There were also indications that the Federal Republic and France were talking together about this question. The German attitude was also reflected in the Western European Union. He personally felt that an independent German nuclear capability might actually be considered casus belli by the Soviet Union. The President inquired whether Mr. Stikker did not think that the Federal Government was aware of the danger of their independent possession of nuclear weapons vis-a-vis the USSR. Mr. Stikker replied he thought they were, but felt there might be no other way out. Strauss complained about lack of even information with respect to US nuclear capabilities to defend NATO. The President challenged this statement, saying that he was sure the Germans knew a great deal

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about the nuclear situation. He was sure that what interested them was the matter of the conditions for the use of military weapons. Mr. Stikker responded that Strauss had even cited the fact that there were some 200 nuclear sites in Germany and that he did not really know what was in them and raised the question as to what became of German sovereignty in such a situation. The President said that questions of use and control of nuclear weapons were different from matters of size and location of stocks. However, the fact that Herr Strauss raised questions about lack of information made this a factor which had to be dealt with in itself. Mr. Stikker agreed that this was the case but went on to say that he felt this problem was a manageable one. If the nuclear problem now be approached as he had suggested, by the formalization of US guarantees with respect to the availability of nuclear weapons for the European command and with respect to coverage of targets essential to European defense, this would go far to allay German uneasiness. He also hoped that means could be found to provide more factual information, perhaps to a restricted group. Even more important of course was to give the Germans a share in the decision-making as to the use of nuclear weapons. He referred in this connection to his suggestions that the other countries might delegate authority to the President for the final decision under agreed guidelines. Such guidelines could cover the case of a massive nuclear and conventional attack and then more doubtful cases. In addition to these the Council would be discussing the question of the possibility of NATO MREB force.

Referring first to the question of a multilateral NATO missile force, the President reiterated the statement in his Ottawa speech and assured Mr. Stikker that the United States was prepared to join in trying to work out plans for this. He understood that a suggested paper had already been put forward on this. Continuing, the President said he recognized that the Germans might well have a "natural concern" as to the circumstances under which the United States would decide, in the face of risk of destruction of its own territory, to use nuclear weapons. In this connection he commented on the difficulties which the French were experiencing in trying to build up a nuclear capability.

He thought

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He thought the French were finding it so expensive that there was some danger of their turning to the Federal Republic for help. On the question of guidelines, he asked Mr. Stikker what other conditions he foresaw under which nuclear weapons would be used. In reply Mr. Stikker referred to the German formula of the possibility of a decision being made by SACEUR plus the individual NATO country which might be attacked. After indicating the unacceptability of such a formula the President commented that he was satisfied that we would in fact be prepared to use nuclear weapons before the Federal Government would. Mr. Stikker interjected his agreement. The President continued that on the general question of control he agreed that we must make efforts to do whatever was necessary to lock the Germans into the system.

The President then referred to the importance of a build-up of NATO's conventional forces. He felt it essential that the present imbalance be corrected. He realized that some of our partners say that this emphasis on conventional forces means that the US will not use nuclear weapons. He thought however that this was in many cases just an excuse. Mr. Stikker commented that he in fact knew of one country which was deliberately refraining from cooperating in conventional build-up, which it claimed would in fact make the Americans more reluctant to use nuclear weapons. In any event Mr. Stikker said he felt that the Council must take a pragmatic approach and have a factual discussion of these problems. It was necessary to get rid of the prevailing uncertainty. He said there was some difference between himself and Mr. Kohler as to the eventual desirability of amending the existing political directive, but confirmed that this did not affect agreement on the pragmatic approach. He turned them to the question of "Missile X" which he understood was under R and D in the United States as a possible replacement for existing delivery systems. He said he lacked the technical knowledge adequately to deal with this question, but that he had given a list of questions to Mr. Kohler and Mr. Nitze to which he had requested answers. After Mr. Kohler had indicated we would do our best to respond to these questions, Mr. Stikker said he wanted to be sure that the United States would take a positive approach toward helping to find the answer to this problem.

~~EYES ONLY~~ The President

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The President then asked Mr. Stikker how all this would provide the needed reassurances to the Alliance and particularly to the Federal Republic. Mr. Stikker replied that he thought basically if the suggested assurances were given on the part of the United States and guidelines worked out with respect to use of nuclear weapons, this would go a long way toward solving the problem. It was true that Strauss was carrying on considerable agitation but he thought that if Adenauer had solutions to the problems now under discussion this would be sufficient for him to keep control of the situation and for any public opinion to subside. The President commented that in connection with the nuclear question it was necessary to think how an attack would actually take place. If it were not for the exposed position of Berlin the situation would be different and easier to deal with. In any event, control of nuclear weapons must be absolute. Mr. Stikker then cited the possible formulas which had been considered for decision making. He commented that Adenauer, for example, had at one time accepted the concept of weighted voting. Any formula which provided for European participation in the decision would probably be sufficient to contain German nationalism. However he wanted to emphasize that some positive result must be reached.

In response to a question from the President, Ambassador Finletter then referred to the problem of possible amendment of the McMahon Act. He pointed out that while the US veto applied to present stockpile arrangements, a different problem would be presented by a multilaterally-owned NATO force. This implied multilateral control and almost any acceptable formula might go beyond the legal authority of the Act as it now stood. The United States should keep an open mind and the President might want to consider whether or not it might be better to take the initiative and simply go ahead on the US side with having the Act amended. Without commenting directly on this question the President assured Mr. Stikker that in any event we supported his efforts to arrive at a solution of these problems which would reassure the Alliance. He thought that our own objectives and Mr. Stikker's were fundamentally the same: to prevent the development of a demand for an independent national nuclear capability by the Federal Government and to achieve strict and responsible control of nuclear weapons, whether this was a question of US control or whether it was a question of others sharing in that control.

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On the initiative of Mr. Stikker there then ensued a discussion of the question of the US veto on the use of nuclear weapons with both Mr. Stikker and Ambassador Finletter estimating that there might be some difficulties if a US veto were involved. Mr. Kohler said that it was clear that under existing legislation the President alone was responsible for a decision to release nuclear weapons for use and that it would be necessary for the United States to retain a veto over any such decision. In the circumstances the United States Government could not itself make an offer to give up this authority. Indeed to do so could cast some doubt on our own willingness to use the nuclear weapon in defense of NATO. If our European allies did not feel completely assured on this basis then it would be up to them to put forward any proposals which they wanted us to consider. Thus under present legislation the most that could be done would be to say that we would consider such proposals if they were made. The President confirmed this statement and went on to point out that there would be considerable difficulties connected with the amendment of the McMahon Act -- indeed there could be a very bitter fight on the subject. While we wanted to do our utmost to reassure our allies he hoped that a solution could be found which would spare us this difficulty.

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