The original documents are located in Box 2, folder: "NSC Meeting, 12/15/1976" of the National Security Adviser's NSC Meeting File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

6640X
INFORMATION

~~TOP SECRET/~~SENSITIVE

January 3, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: Jeanne W. Davis

SUBJECT: Minutes of NSC Meeting
Held December 15, 1976

Attached are the minutes of the National Security Council meeting held December 15, 1976 to discuss NSSM 246--U. S. Defense Policy and Military Posture.

cc: Mr. Hyland
Gen. Boverie

Attachment

~~TOP SECRET/~~SENSITIVE (XGDS (B) (3)

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~ XGDS

MINUTES
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, December 15, 1976

TIME: 3:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

PLACE: Cabinet Room, The White House

SUBJECT: NSSM 246 -- U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture

Principals

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger
Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld
Director, Office of Management and Budget, James T. Lynn
Acting Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, John Lehman
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General George S. Brown
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Enno Knoche
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Brent Scowcroft

Other Attendees

White House: Mr. Richard Cheney, Assistant to the President
Mr. William G. Hyland, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Defense: Deputy Secretary William Clements
Dr. James P. Wade (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy Plans and NSC Affairs)

NSC Staff: Brig Gen Richard T. Boverie

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~ XGDS (B) (3)
Classified by Brent Scowcroft

President Ford: I've looked at the NSSM 246 study. It is obviously a very well done effort, particularly in view of the time pressures. It has been helpful to me, and should be helpful to the next Administration. I've looked at the various alternatives. Don, should we start with the six overall strategies, or perhaps go first with strategic forces and then general purpose forces?

Secretary Rumsfeld: We have the strategies on the boards here today. We could start with the strategic forces and then discuss them; then turn to the general purpose forces. Or we could take them together at one time and then have our discussions.

President Ford: Let's start with strategic forces, then see if we can turn to the general purpose forces.

Mr. Hyland: The boards that are up there now show the overall strategies.

Secretary Rumsfeld: That presumes that we have worked our way through the strategic forces and general purpose forces issues and strategies.

Dr. Wade: (Briefing from the boards on overall strategies.) These overall strategies are notional in character. They are examples only, and they are not the only variations which are possible. (Typed copies of the charts are at Tab A of these minutes.)

Option A assumes that the major buildup of strategic forces by the Soviets compels the U.S. to improve its strategic force posture substantially and rapidly. With respect to general purpose forces, this strategy accepts greater risks, and frees resources for strengthening U.S. strategic forces.

President Ford: Do the figures there mean that we would save from $3 billion to $10 billion?

Dr. Wade: Yes.

Director Lynn: Over what period of time?

Secretary Rumsfeld: These are average annual costs over a period of five to ten years, but they are inaccurate and soft, and they work off a higher base than that recently approved by the President.

Director Lynn: The only things we should really pay attention to are the plus and minus signs.

Secretary Kissinger: Is the base the same for all alternatives?

Director Lynn: Yes.

President Ford: But all are related dollar-wise to one another.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Right.

Dr. Wade: Alternative B assumes that the priority near-term problem confronting U.S. security interests is the buildup of Soviet forces for possible attack in Europe. It also assumes that the growth of Soviet strategic capabilities can be met with acceptable risk by a slower rate of modernization in our strategic forces.

Alternative C is basically the current DOD program as expressed in the latest FYDP (Five Year Defense Plan).

Secretary Kissinger: What is the theory behind each of these alternatives?

Dr. Wade: Alternative A assumes that priority must be given to countering the Soviet strategic buildup. It also assumes a short war in Europe.

Secretary Kissinger: What does it do that we are not doing now?

Secretary Rumsfeld: In this alternative, we would have to stop doing some things we are doing now.

Secretary Kissinger: What about in the strategic forces area?

Dr. Wade: It would accelerate the modernization program. It would bring M-X in in 1984. We would move faster on TRIDENT II. There would be a significant improvement in our counter-silo capability. And we would have improved civil defense and air defense.

General Scowcroft: And basically it would give us a full counter-silo capability.

Dr. Wade: You have some hand-outs in front of you which will help as we go through the strategies. (A copy of the hand-out is at Tab B of these minutes.)

Alternative D assumes that our conventional strategy is adequate, but that we have to do something about the Soviet strategic forces buildup.

President Ford: What about our supply of stocks in Europe for 90 days?

Dr. Wade: Our plan is for 90 days but we are not there yet. The allies are around 30 days.

Secretary Kissinger: Under strategic strategy S-4, you talk about military advantage. What is this?

Dr. Wade: That at any level of determination, if war breaks out, we would insure that there would not be a Soviet military advantage.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Henry, each term is explained in the NSSM 246 report. This one is on page 24.

Secretary Kissinger: I still don't know what it means.

General Scowcroft: It is hard to say in realistic terms.

Secretary Kissinger: What about in terms of the SIOP?

General Brown: This was a hurried study, and there are no hard numbers.

President Ford: It assumes that if we have more, we are better off.

Secretary Kissinger: If we choose Alternative A, but this is certainly not the DOD preference, nor mine. Unless we can establish overwhelming military advantages in strategic forces, we are asking for it in Alternative A. Option A would magnify every problem we have.

Dr. Wade: In Option E, we would have a moderately increased strategic emphasis, today's strategy for Europe, and increased worldwide capabilities.

For Option F, we have increased emphasis on strategic deterrence, increased capability in Europe, and today's capabilities worldwide.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Just to refresh your memory, we first analyzed the strategic forces. We came up with about eight key issues, each of which could be addressed in two or three different ways. Then we combined these issues in various ways to give us alternative strategies for our strategic forces. Then we did the same thing with general purpose forces. The important thing is not whether we are talking about Option "S" or Option "G," but the issues.

President Ford: On the chart for Option C, you refer to "current defense policy." Please relate that to Option E, for example. What is the corresponding line for Option C? Is it consistent with the Navy shipbuilding study?

Secretary Rumsfeld: We looked at various alternatives for sustaining capability in Europe such as 30 days, 90 days, and so forth and we considered other such factors.

Secretary Kissinger: How was it computed? By German standards? When we say we have 90 days capability, they say we have 50 days. Conversely, using our standards for computation, their 30 days is really 60 days.

General Brown: We are a long way from solving that problem. It is a national problem.

Secretary Kissinger: But what way is it computed? Does Haig know what he has got?

General Brown: Yes.

Deputy Secretary Clements: Henry, I don't care how we compute it. We simply don't have it over there.

Secretary Rumsfeld: No. Plus the Middle East has changed our estimates for attrition rates.

Secretary Kissinger: This leaves us with other problems. We will be driven by the lowest days of the critical item.

Deputy Secretary Clements: There are several of those critical items, not just one.

General Brown: This is no secret. It is well known. We took it into account in the FY 78 budget for the first time.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Never before did we have a program to get well. This time we have such a program.

Deputy Secretary Clements: At least now we are talking about it.

Secretary Rumsfeld: If we don't get well, it lowers the nuclear threshold.

Dr. Lehman: The Soviet figures don't look that good either. Their situation is not better.

General Brown: Our knowledge of their situation is limited. It relates to how we estimate they fill up their buildings. The estimates are pretty soft in many areas.

Secretary Rumsfeld: This forces the Services to continue to reassess the situation.

Secretary Kissinger: I am strongly in favor of that.

Vice President Rockefeller: Mr. President, let me ask two questions, please. Were these plans developed with a budgetary ceiling in mind?

President Ford: No.

Vice President Rockefeller: Then why don't we have an Option G where all three areas (strategic, Europe, worldwide) are improved.

General Scowcroft: You are right. It stops at Option F.

Vice President Rockefeller: That means Japan has got to go. That is bad.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Not if you take Option E.

General Scowcroft: You have no option that improves strategic forces, Europe, and worldwide.

Vice President Rockefeller: That is why we need an Option G.

Secretary Rumsfeld: What we should do is look at the issues. Why don't we take a look at the issues?

Vice President Rockefeller: I didn't make up the charts.

Secretary Rumsfeld: An interagency group prepared the charts.

Vice President Rockefeller: Why don't we have an option for improvements in all three areas?

Secretary Rumsfeld: Maybe there should be one. We don't have to take any of these options that are shown on the chart. We can take a look at the issues, and then come up with the strategy we think is best.

Vice President Rockefeller: Then why are we doing it this way?

Secretary Rumsfeld: There are an infinite number of combinations possible. These are only illustrative.

Vice President Rockefeller: But none of them includes all three areas for improvements.

Director Lynn: With respect to today's policy, I think we are moving from S-2 to S-3 for strategic forces. For general purpose forces, this assumes that we are trying to do better in Europe with our stockpile and the like.

Secretary Rumsfeld: The current general purpose forces strategy is G-2.

Director Lynn: That has the United States at 90 days sustainability and the allies at 30 days.

Secretary Kissinger: What is the rationale for that?

Director Lynn: The allies don't get it up there.

Vice President Rockefeller: The plan today is inadequate, based on the analysis in the report.

President Ford: Nelson, we had a drawdown in Vietnam. We had a drawdown for the Yom Kippur War. We have had Congressional cuts in the budget over 10 years. It is very easy to say "let's turn the switch on and get it right," but where are we going to get the money? We have problems with inflation and taxes. It's great to go for all of it, but goddamn it, we can't do everything. We should show these charts to Mr. Carter, with all his talk.

Secretary Rumsfeld: The strategies are for illustration only. The way it ought to be done is as follows. Let's take one of each of the strategic and general purpose options and modify them. Let's keep the differences in mind. We have to think about what we have now, what policy we have in mind, and what budget plan is necessary for that guidance.

Vice President Rockefeller: But somebody thinks that each of these options is right.

General Scowcroft: But we didn't put up the minimal option either.

Vice President Rockefeller: The poor President of the United States is responsible for the defense of the country.

Secretary Kissinger: The question isn't what the human mind can conceive. First, the problem is with the Soviet strategic buildup. The second point is that it is unlikely for us to be able to develop a decisive military superiority in strategic forces, of the kind we had in the 1950s. Third, we should not permit perceptual discrepancies; we have to consider what drives the political and perceptual problems. These considerations could lead us to an unspecified increase in strategic forces.

Next, the overwhelming strategic problem we will face over the next 10 years is the Soviet capability for regional attack -- in Europe and elsewhere. And we have to consider what the U. S. position would be with respect to peripheral attack.

Therefore, we should have a strategy to augment our strategic forces, plus what is needed for worldwide capability, plus we have the special problem of Europe since it has a more explicit nuclear threshold.

For example, what if the Soviets put four divisions in Damascus in a Middle East war, or in Iran, or real forces in Africa. That is the real problem.

Secretary Rumsfeld: That is what the Pentagon has concluded and what the Vice President is saying. I think we should go with strategy S-3 with some elements of S-4, and strategy G-3 with elements of G-4 or G-5. This includes worldwide capabilities. We would not add troops to Europe, but we would put stocks in, and there would be increases in the strategic area.

Now the debate is about what pieces to add in. We have discussed most of the issues except for civil defense. For civil defense, I think we should go from something which is practically non-existent to some better planning. We have no base for civil defense plans, and I am not talking about going back to bomb shelters.

Vice President Rockefeller: There is nothing wrong with bomb shelters.

Secretary Rumsfeld: You're for bomb shelters? (Laughter)

Vice President Rockefeller: I just built one at my home.

General Brown: We can pick and choose through the charts. As for the JCS, we come out somewhere between three and five in each case.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Then we have to determine what pace to do it.

Secretary Kissinger: Then we have the Vice President's question. We have no budgetary figures for the Defense preference. If it's from three to five, then the budget would go up.

Secretary Rumsfeld: This is not a budget exercise.

Vice President Rockefeller: I still don't understand why we have no option which improves all three areas.

Secretary Rumsfeld: DOD was acting as the Chairman of an NSC subgroup. It tried to do the work in a reasonably orderly way.

Deputy Secretary Clements: Mr. Vice President, you are right. Ultimately, we must manage all of this, and figure out what it costs.

Secretary Rumsfeld: You can forget some strategies like G-1 and G-2. We ought to think about improving our worldwide capabilities. We can do the studies identified at the end of the study. And we can cost out those strategies which look particularly interesting to us.

Vice President Rockefeller: And explain what the reasons are.

Secretary Rumsfeld: We have another question, Mr. President. Mechanically, given the electoral situation, we must determine physically how to handle the study. Would you want to speak to it? Hand it off? Pursue it further?

President Ford: I'm reminded of the first debate in the House I attended in 1950. The Administration was cutting back on defense following the post-war period. Carl Vincent took up the cudgel for DOD. But George Mahon gave a speech in which he used the following analogy. He said he was for defense. His record for 1950 was good on this. But then he took his son to the Smithsonian. He came to a man in armor surrounded by a coat of iron. His son bumped into it, and it toppled over. His son asked him why it toppled over. And George replied, "Because it had no bone and muscle inside."

My point is this. The country can put a coat of iron around it, but if it has no economy and will, it is no good. Sometimes I think we want to put a coat of iron and steel around us, and let the economy go to hell. The country would not be worth a damn internally.

We must take a rational view to meet the challenge militarily. This has been a damn good exercise, but we must be realistic. I'm a little fed up when I see what we try to do but see what the next generation will be doing. We cannot go through an unrealistic exercise. Let's see what is reasonable and go from there.

Vice President Rockefeller: Mr. Carter wants to spend $10 billion on public works; if we want to spend it on the military, I think it would be just as good.

President Ford: That is why I vetoed the public works program. I see none of his solutions aimed at military strength. Jobs, cities, public works -- but not one penny for defense of the United States.

Secretary Rumsfeld: As Mr. Carter was leaving the Pentagon after his briefing, someone asked him whether he still intended to cut the Defense budget. He said yes.

General Brown: That's not exactly what he said. He said: "I've seen something about the Soviet forces but I've not yet seen the U.S. forces."

President Ford: He is as inaccurate as I know, but we must be realistic. If we do not have a healthy economy, we can't do anything.

Secretary Rumsfeld: The Mahon analogy would fit if the case were that the present burden of defense on society is dangerous. But this is not the case. Defense is the lowest percentage of the federal budget and the gross national product in many years. This goes to macroeconomics. Does an incremental increase of defense spending of X percent do damage to the economy? No! I believe that. Of course, Mr. President, you could find some economist somewhere who takes the other side. But I say there is no danger of damaging the economy.

President Ford: In keeping programs the way they are.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Yes, sir. You must begin with the fact that the United States is not an economic enterprise. The first function of government is freedom and security of our people. Therefore, it is not a question of what spending level we should have, but what is the right policy or strategy.

I got in this debate in Europe with some of the people after the meeting. They say they can't afford increased defense. But that is false. Look at Israel; look at the United States in World War II. It is a matter of priorities.

General Scowcroft: But we have to ask what is politically sustainable year after year after year. We either do that or we have to get into a frenzy with the threat.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Where are we in a frenzy with the threat?

General Scowcroft: Look at Vietnam.

General Brown: And in the late 50s when we talked about the missile threat.

Director Lynn: I don't really see a lot of changes from the overall strategies vice what we determined in the study in 1969. We are looking at how many days we should provide for sustainability in Europe and issues such as this. These should be identified and we are doing this. We have to look closely at the idea of fighting for 90 days in light of attrition rates, prepositioning, and the like.

Secretary Kissinger: Particularly when we put our prepositioned stocks all in one depot to save money.

Secretary Rumsfeld: General Haig is working his can off to fix this.

Director Lynn: There are very few things we want to change. We must consider non-exclusive reliance on sea lanes, given the vulnerabilities of sea lanes. We are moving that way. If I can convince Congress to slow down domestic programs, we ought to also be able to make our case for defense.

The strategy should be, Mr. President: (1) Address the problem hard in the State of the Union Address. Put out a very strong signal. (2) We should address it in the Defense Posture Statement, that we are moving to strategy S-3. I wouldn't go to S-4, though, if someone paid me.

President Ford: We can't even build three TRIDENTs a year.

Director Lynn: Third, we could prepare a draft NSDM. You would not have to sign it; just give it to Mr. Carter. He can then compare his ideas against that sheet. The turnaround you have made over the past two years has been remarkable. To keep it going, discipline on domestic programs must be imposed.

And then we can do some other things. For example, with Japan, there is some room for ASW and air defense improvements on their part.

Secretary Rumsfeld: And even economic aid in the region.

Director Lynn: This is confusing. Current defense policy has words such as "increased," "improved." We are now moving to S-3, now moving to counter-silo capability.

General Scowcroft: A partial counter-silo capability.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Right. A limited counter-silo capability.

Director Lynn: I am not that sure that Henry would want to signal this. I hope the M-X program we have is good enough for the signals we want this year.

Secretary Rumsfeld: I presume Henry's views are in the study since the State Department has been involved throughout the entire process.

Secretary Kissinger: I have no quarrel with the study.

Secretary Rumsfeld: A draft NSDM is being prepared. I can give it to Brent.

General Scowcroft: I am not sure I wouldn't sign it.

Vice President Rockefeller: When the General says sign, that is good. Also, you can give a strong signal and sign the NSDM. You can say these are the details. These are the essential things to say to the American people. If you, Mr. President, pull back, he'll pull back from that. We should plant the flag on a field where it is sound and right.

Secretary Kissinger: The most important thing is to explain this to the American people. You can do this, Mr. President, in a valedictory occasion, such as the State of the Union Address. You can say that we have been focusing on the long-term problems over 15 years, so it doesn't look like you've neglected anything.

Basically, in the 1960s we stopped all strategic programs, so we gave the Soviets an opportunity to get ahead. It wasn't until SALT ONE that we did something about it. And about four years ago we got our force programs moving again. These programs are just now coming into the force.

Also, we can talk about Vietnam, how we had to draw down the stockpiles to support the war in Vietnam.

However, this has not been the result of a sudden Soviet buildup. They have been building up at a steady pace year after year.

Also, we should worry about the way we allocate our money. We spend a disportionately large amount for personnel.

However, it has not been a sudden Soviet buildup, but a steady buildup. You were the first President who has had a chance to meet this. We would not just want to be sticking the new Administration, but making sure that there is not a chance that they could say that you failed.

In 15 or 20 minutes of your speech, you could say this, and how you would conduct our defense policy. There should be both some theory and some numbers in the speech.

President Ford: I think that is a good approach. My comments were aimed at trying to get well yesterday, and feeling we haven't done the job. We have done the job! What worries me is that they say they will do a better job with less money. That simply is not possible.

Secretary Kissinger: We would want to put the necessity in terms of forces, not dollars. We could talk about the need for forces for intervention. Then, if stated conceptually, it would be much harder for him to cut.

Secretary Rumsfeld: There is an advantage in stating it that way. Then we could add the next comment: They can cut, but we will slip. This is exactly what happened in Vietnam, and with the Congressional budget cuts.

The President is left with the tools from his predecessors. If Carter makes the cuts of the kind he is talking about, he will compound the problem and we will not get well from the Vietnam and Congressional cuts.

Secretary Kissinger: You can put this before the American people. You can talk about the problems you see over the next 10 years. You have had a tremendous record over the past two years.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Right. And only if his record is sustained in the future will things be right.

President Ford: Let's take a look at Strategy E. It talks about a moderately increased strategic emphasis. Haven't we done that?

General Brown: Yes!

Secretary Rumsfeld: Except for civil defense.

President Ford: I don't like the idea of bomb shelters in backyards. It reminds me of the time I was in Michigan and some shyster salesman tried to sell me one. It was a bunch of crap.

Vice President Rockefeller: The salesman must have been from New York. (Laughter)

President Ford: I am down on civil defense -- not one penny for it. Forget it!

Secretary Rumsfeld: Then you are for S-3 minus civil defense, if I understand you correctly.

President Ford: Amen. Cross civil defense out. We are going ahead strongly with F-15s, F-16s, and A-10s. We are improving our capabilities.

Secretary Kissinger: If General Brown would like to give me a going away present, he can give the F-15 a nuclear capability.

President Ford: We are doing everything we can in Europe. We are going to fix up our stockpiles over a six year period. We are increasing our worldwide capability. Look what we are doing with the shipbuilding program.

General Scowcroft: And we need some airlift.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Right. We need some airlift.

President Ford: On the other issues: We are going to stay in Korea. We are augmenting our Navy shipbuilding. If Carter cuts Korea, he is cutting off from what I would do. We are going for a responsible worldwide capability that we have endorsed.

Secretary Kissinger: You can say that in your valedictory, plus you can look four to five years ahead. You can say you see the need for building up regional forces against an increasing danger; but this is a 10-year steady program. We can't go through peaks and valleys. You can say that this is your best judgment.

Deputy Secretary Clements: We can emphasize the steadiness of the program.

Secretary Kissinger: You have supported many levels.

Vice President Rockefeller: Where do we go from here now?

Secretary Rumsfeld: We can come up with a paper. You can identify areas for further study and direct that these studies be taken. You can draft up the essence of what you have said. We can draft a NSDM. And you can take a draft of your statement from that NSDM. We can erect this in the defense report, and the State of the Union Address or some other valedictory. You can plant the flag down the road, so if they deviate from it, they must admit it.

President Ford: Or they can accept it, and the peril that goes with it.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Yes.

President Ford: Let's do this.

Obviously, I favor S-3. I favor today's strategy for Europe. I favor the Navy shipbuilding program. I favor keeping forces in Korea. And I favor a regional capability.

Secretary Kissinger: That includes increased worldwide capability.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Are there any other issues we haven't looked at?

Director Lynn: NATO.

General Scowcroft: G-3 is too general for NATO.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Mr. President, as I understand it, you favor no increase in manpower for Europe but you do want to increase our stocks, keep our modernization program going, and have a war-fighting capability.

President Ford: Yes.

Secretary Rumsfeld: You favor, as I understand it, a more flexible response concerning warning time. That is, an ability to defend against an unreinforced attack with little warning, or reinforced attack with more warning.

President Ford: What about the 90 days sustainability?

General Scowcroft: We can increase our prepositioned supplies.

Deputy Secretary Clements: Definitely.

Secretary Rumsfeld: We would not give U.S. money to the allies for sustainability, but rather prod them to do more. Also, we should look at the NATO flanks.

President Ford: I'm not clear on the flanks. What are we talking about? Troops? Materials?

General Brown: Basically, we're doing better. You gave us sealift and airlift mobility.

President Ford: If we have the Navy shipbuilding and airlift, we should be able to handle that.

General Scowcroft: To increase our worldwide capability, we need strategic mobility.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Yes, we need strategic mobility.

General Brown: Are we talking about G-3?

Director Lynn: We ought to put this in writing.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Mr. President, where do you stand on civil defense? (Laughter)

President Ford: Mr. Carter can put his moleholes around here. (Laughter)

Vice President Rockefeller: Does the study address adequate training?

General Brown: We're getting better in this, although the O&M dollars are still a little thin.

Vice President Rockefeller: Isn't this the guts of the matter? It ought to be here. This is another illustration of the man-in-armor analogy.

President Ford: We are doing what we can to recover from Vietnam and the Yom Kippur War.

Vice President Rockefeller: How much money is involved?

General Brown: I don't know.

President Ford: Approximately $2 billion in O&M. We are up to 18 percent growth in O&M, which is what you wanted. We are up to 14 percent on other accounts.

Vice President Rockefeller: This will fit into Henry's projection for the future.

President Ford: These things are in the budget, not for five years, but over a six-year period.

Director Lynn: The reason it is hard to be that final, is that we disagree on attrition rates, strategies the East might use in an attack, and so forth. We can do our best at this time and when further facts are available, then we can always adjust.

Vice President Rockefeller: All the Services are way behind on training. But this is not my business.

General Brown: You are going in the right direction, but the problem is a little overstated.

Dr. Lehman: Israeli statistics show a direct relationship between flying hours and kills. If a pilot had ten times the flying hours, he had ten times the kills.

Secretary Rumsfeld: Henry said to me, jokingly, before the meeting that I was going to scare everybody about the Russians ahead.

Secretary Kissinger: I said that?

Secretary Rumsfeld: Jokingly. But this does affect the pace.

Vice President Rockefeller: I am concerned. I read the intelligence reports every day.

Secretary Kissinger: I am concerned by statements that the Soviets will engage in a Hitler-like attack. What they have done is the same thing they have done all along; that is, increase their budget about 8-10 percent a year for defense. As their economy increases, their military grows. We have to live with this.

Secretary Rumsfeld: What I don't like is the impression that this is not that serious. The President's paper must say that it is serious. Had

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the President not demonstrated his concern, we would be in an unstable situation.

President Ford: But I don't think you can realistically say that they have all of a sudden done this. The problem is not what they have done, but what we haven't done over a period of years.

General Scowcroft: We must do this on a sustaining basis.

Secretary Rumsfeld: We can't run a war and drain off our supplies to somewhere else.

Deputy Secretary Clements: We need to be realistic in a simple way. We have to be steady with this. In the past some have talked about Cloud 7 plans that we can't meet. We must project this in a simple, honest way. We must say that we can't do it in NATO because of our stocks.

General Brown: We have talked about two things: our muscle and our will. But there is a third thing. This is our relationships with others. How can we talk about a contingency in the Middle East and have no base agreements in Turkey? This is true around the world.

General Scowcroft: One thing that we have overlooked is the depth of the study. It has been a very fine study, but we must consider its depth. Jim Lynn mentioned the coincidence with the 1969 study. There was nothing on 90 days versus 120 days. Also, we really haven't addressed theater nuclear war. With regard to strategic forces, we have to consider what we mean by such things as parity. Don says casualties are important. We talk about people, but our last document said that we should not kill people. Maybe we need a people-targeting doctrine, to show the Soviets that they could not get away with anything if they attacked.

President Ford: How does this compare with the 1969 study in depth?

Secretary Rumsfeld: This one was done in 60 days. Henry, you ran the last study. How long did you have, six months?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. But the strategic problem today is not all that different. In 1969, with Congress cutting the budget, we could only turn our doctrine around. However, we eventually went with MIRV, TRIDENT, B-1, and other programs but not until 1971 or 72. It is not that amazing that the doctrine is about the same. What is different is the Soviet forces' buildup, as some predicted in the 1950s.

In 1961, I was a consultant on the Kennedy plan to send a battalion down the autobahn. It was a crazy plan, but we could think about it because we had a clear strategic superiority. We could take out whatever missiles they had very easily. But if the same situation faced us tomorrow, what would we do? Go to nuclear war? Execute the SIOP? Kill 120 million people? What will we send down the autobahn? This is no reflection on anybody.

What would we do in the next Middle East War if the Israelis decide to go to Damascus, and the Russians drop paratroops in Damascus?

Secretary Rumsfeld: They have improved their airlift and their tactical air.

Secretary Kissinger: With regard to the future, we are ahead in strategic forces and this may last from four to five years. But there is no way to deal with strategic superiority. This is why I want SALT. We could never have enough for an overwhelming capability in strategic forces. This is why we should build up our conventional capability.

General Brown: This is why the JCS are 100 percent for SALT.

Secretary Rumsfeld: But we are forgetting that strategic forces are not a big percentage of the budget.

Deputy Secretary Clements: People are the high cost item.

President Ford: Let's prepare to go along these lines.

Vice President Rockefeller: I would hate to leave these options on the chart that cut the budget. Carter could say that President Ford gave serious consideration to cutting the budget.

President Ford: Thanks very much.

OVERALL STRATEGIES

OVERALL STRATEGY A (- $3-10 B)

Increased Emphasis on Strategic Deterrence

Short War (30 Days) in Europe

Reduced Capabilities Worldwide

OVERALL STRATEGY B (- $0 - 5 B)

Today's Level of Emphasis on Strategic Deterrence

Increased Capability in Europe

Reduced Capabilities Worldwide

OVERALL STRATEGY C (Base)

Current Defense Policy

OVERALL STRATEGY D (+ $2 - 3 B)

Increased Emphasis on Strategic Deterrence

Today's Strategy for Europe

Today's Worldwide Capabilities

OVERALL STRATEGIES

(continued)

OVERALL STRATEGY E (+ $1 - 3 B)

Moderately Increased Strategic Emphasis

Today's Strategy for Europe

Increased Worldwide Capabilities

OVERALL STRATEGY F (+ $4 - 5 B)

Increased Emphasis on Strategic Deterrence

Increased Capability in Europe

Today's Capabilities Worldwide

Note: Korea is a separable issue.

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TITLE . . . . . Alternative Strategies for Strategic Nuclear Forces

CREATION DATE 12/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 1 page

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031200038
COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . National Security Adviser. National Security Council Meetings File
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TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . Chart

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MEMORANDUM

09234

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE - XGDS

December 14, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: RICHARD T. BOVERIE RTB

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting on NSSM 246, 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 15, 1976

The attached materials are provided for your use at Wednesday's NSC meeting on the NSSM 246 study on defense policy and military posture. Your meeting memo to the President (Tab III) summarizes the relevant issues and strategies. In addition to the issues and strategies, another major item for discussion will probably be alternative ways in which the President might make use of the NSSM 246 study.

Agency Views

Our informal discussions indicate the following potential agency views:

-- OSD. Secretary Rumsfeld has apparently decided to suggest selecting strategies S-3 and G-3 for our strategic forces and general purpose forces, respectively. Strategy S-3 (offset USSR strengths/ military gain denial) basically reflects the current FYDP thrust. Strategy G-3 continues our current strategy in Europe and improves our capability worldwide through greater capability for Unilateral Military Action (which could involve improved strategic mobility, among other things). These strategies do not appear inconsistent with the President's budget decisions for FY 78 and could be cast as responding to an increased global challenge in the future.

-- The JCS. For strategic forces, the Chiefs reportedly prefer S-3, plus some elements of S-4. The idea is to adopt an offsetting/ military gain denial strategy, while working toward a matching/ intrawar military advantage concept. For general purpose forces, the Chiefs like G-3 (some improved capability worldwide) plus elements of G-5 (increased sustainability on the part of NATO allies, and some

improvement in NATO response capability). -- It is interesting that the Chiefs are opting for relatively realistic goals rather than JSOP-type programs. Their preferred strategies would push the budget up somewhat in the out-years, but apparently are not inconsistent with the President's near-term (FY 78) budget decisions.

-- State. The State staff has recommended that Secretary Kissinger continue Deputy Secretary Robinson's theme, i.e., that the study has been useful as a basis for identifying issues needing further analysis, but that no action should be taken at this time to change policies. State's position would not preclude utilizing the study in the State of the Union or other public statements, so long as the strategy advocated is basically consistent with present policy.

-- ACDA. The ACDA staff has suggested to John Lehman (Fred Ikle will not be in town) that the President should use the report to select or ratify a strategy (with S-3 and G-3 being likely specific choices) and should reflect this action in the State of the Union address and the budget submission.

-- OMB. The OMB staff is recommending to Jim Lynn that he support strategic forces alternative S-2 (Triad/strategic reserve/retaliation against postwar recovery targets), which is basically our current policy (although DOD is moving toward S-3 in its FYDP). For general purpose forces, the OMB staff reportedly likes G-4, which improves our NATO posture but reduces capabilities worldwide for an average annual savings of $0-4 billion. -- Jim Lynn will likely continue to urge the President to use the study to state publicly his choices for the direction which future strategy should take.

Our Views

Our views on the use of the study and on strategy alternatives are as follows:

-- Use of the Study

The President can use the NSSM 246 report to do two things -- indicate the basic direction he would like to see US defense policy take, and highlight any of the specific issues treated in the study which he may wish to emphasize. He could give visibility to his views in various documents or speeches over the next month. For example,

he could indicate the extent to which his views should be conveyed in the DOD Posture Statement and his State of the Union address. Also, if he would like to state his preferences in a much more formal way, he could ask that a draft NSDM be prepared reflecting his dicisions.

With respect to documents and speeches, the President could:

-- State his views as to the appropriate defense strategy for the United States.

-- Describe the NSSM 246 study and the way in which it examined the central issues underlying the strategy determinations.

-- Stress the Ford Administration's legacy of increased emphasis on critical defense issues and programs, noting the close relationship between our efforts in the past two years to improve US capability and the central issues (sustainability, warning time, deterrence criteria, etc.) analyzed in the NSSM 246 report.

-- Highlight certain of those central issues of particular importance or concern, where increased future attention and analysis are deemed necessary; and

-- Emphasize in broad terms the utility of our defense strategy in supporting the foreign policy objectives of the United States.

We believe that a disposition of the NSSM 246 report along these lines could be useful, would allow the President to leave an important and lasting personal mark in the major policy area, and would be acceptable to most if not all of the other NSC principals. The only exception might be that some agencies, particularly State, would likely be displeased if the President indicated an interest in issuing a NSDM.

-- Strategic Forces. There are some things we can write off immediately. We do not want to initiate a major defensive damage limiting policy. We think it would be counterproductive to develop a full counter-silo capability, because of the crisis instabilities such a capability could introduce. We should not move downward from a Triad to a Dyad, because of the loss of assurance in our ability to retaliate effectively, loss of time-urgent capabilities, and perceptions problems. With these assumptions, we are left with two strategies for consideration: S-2 and S-3.

S-2 represents our actual policy today, while S-3 would move us toward using our technology to offset Soviet strengths, insuring military gain denial in a conflict, an ability to attack withheld Soviet ICBMs, and enhanced civil defense planning (principally for crisis relocation). From a purely military standpoint, S-3 is sound, but it has some drawbacks in terms of perceptions, stability, and arms race implications. Our preferred approach would be to use S-2 as a basic strategy but add selected elements of S-3 which make sense for at least the near-term future, such as enhanced civil defense planning for crisis relocation, and possibly modest improvement in our peripheral attack capabilities (which really means cruise missiles). However, we would stay away from a heavy commitment to large, very rapid M-X deployments because of the potential impact on Soviet perceptions and possible contributions to crisis instability. (S-2 would deploy about 150 M-X starting in the mid 80's; S-3 would accelerate deployments and increase the quantity to about 200. S-4 and S-5 would deploy 300-350 M-X.)

-- General Purpose Forces. Again, we can start with those things which we would write off immediately. We could not reasonably expect to obtain the funds that would be required to support a massive increase in our NATO and worldwide capabilities as called for by G-6. At the same time, we would not want to reduce our capabilities in Europe or elsewher worldwide, which therefore eliminates G-1 and G-4.

Looking at the individual elements of the remaining strategies, we think we should maintain our current basic strategy in Europe but improve our ability for rapid response through improved strategic mobility. By improving our strategic mobility for a better response posture for Europe, we would simultaneously be increasing our ability to respond worldwide against unforeseen contingencies and a possibly increasing global challenge. Also, in Europe we would encourage greater sustainability on the part of the allies, either through their own efforts or, if necessary, through US assistance to the allies.

With respect to Korea, we do not think we should undertake any force reductions at this time. For the future, we could think about reducing (but not phasing out) ground forces from a division to one forward deployed brigade and selected artillery units. A modest force in Korea would continue to show US interest and add greater flexibility should additional forces ever be needed.

-- Overall Strategies. The notional overall strategies (identified in the report and the President's briefing paper) represent some of

the possible combinations of strategic and general purpose forces alternatives. The overall strategies are illustrative only; other combinations are clearly possible.

Our views on the strategic and general purpose forces issues tend to lead to a modified version of Overall Strategy E. That is, we would moderately strengthen our strategic forces strategy and our strategic mobility capability (which improvesrapid response for Europe and worldwide).

Conduct of the Meeting

DOD will start by referring to the earlier NSC meeting and its discussion on strategic and general purpose forces alternatives, and then make a brief presentation on the notional overall strategies. This format will keep the lead-in briefing to a minimum, and permit the principals to start their discussions early in the meeting. During the meeting, DOD may hand out copies of the charts in the report which summarize the strategic and general purpose forces alternatives, in order to facilitate the discussions. These charts are at Tab B and Tab C of the President's briefing paper (Tab II).

Also, there is some speculation that Secretary Rumsfeld may try to initiate discussions on binary weapons. We will keep you informed on potential developments.

Your Book Contains:

Tab I - Talking Points

Tab II - Draft Charts on Overall Strategies

Tab III - The President's Briefing Paper

- Tab A - List of Participants
- Tab B - Alternative Strategies for Strategic Forces
- Tab C - Alternative Strategies for General Purpose Forces
- Tab D - U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture, Response to NSSM 246, November 30, 1976

MEETING POINTS

Use of Study

1. The President's views could be conveyed through the DOD Posture Statement and in his State of the Union address.

2. [If the President prefers a more specific and formal approach] -- We could have the working group draft a NSDM for the President's review.

Strategic Forces

1. There are some things we can probably write off now. We would not want to adopt a major defensive damage-limiting policy at this time. We should not go for a full counter-silo capability, because of the crisis instabilities it could introduce. We don't want a Dyad. Therefore, we are left with two strategies: S-2 and S-3.

2. S-2 looks our actual policy today. We can stick with it as a basic strategy, but pick up some elements of S-3 that look worthwhile, such as enhanced civil defense planning for crisis relocation and some modest improvement in peripheral attack forces to offset the SS-X-20 and Backfire.

3. I like the idea of moving out on a survivable M-X, but I think we should stay away from a heavy commitment to very large, very rapid M-X deployments because of their potential impact on Soviet perceptions and possible contributions to crisis instability.

General Purpose Forces

1. Our basic strategy for Europe is sound, but we could improve our ability for rapid response through improved strategic mobility.

2. By improving our strategic mobility for a better response posture for Europe, we would simultaneously be increasing our ability to respond worldwide against unforeseen contingencies and an increasing global challenge.

3. In Europe, we could also encourage greater sustainability on the part of the allies, either through their own efforts or, if necessary, through US assistance to allies.

4. With respect to Korea, we should not undertake any reductions at this time. For the future, we could -- at the right time -- think about reducing (but not phasing out) ground forces from a division to one forward deployed brigade and selected artillery units. A modest force in Korea would continue to show US interest and add greater flexibility should additional forces be needed.

Overall Strategies

1. The notional overall strategies identified in the study are only examples of how strategic and general purpose strategies can be combined. Other combinations are obviously possible.

2. I think we could point toward an overall strategy which moderately strengthens our strategic forces posture (crisis relocation planning, some cruise missiles), and improves our NATO and worldwide capabilities through improved strategic mobility.

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TYPE OF MATERIAL . . . . . Memorandum

CREATOR'S NAME . . . . . Richard Boverie
RECEIVER'S NAME . . . . . President Ford

TITLE . . . . . NSC Meeting on NSSM 246 and the Navy Study, 12/2/76

CREATION DATE 12/01/1976

VOLUME . . . . . 1 page

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031200038
COLLECTION TITLE . . . . . National Security Adviser. National Security Council Meetings File
BOX NUMBER 2
FOLDER TITLE . . . . . NSC Meeting, 12/15/76

DATE WITHDRAWN 02/26/1998
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~~TOP SECRET~~/SENSITIVE XGDS

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
ON THE NSSM 246 REPORT ON
U.S. DEFENSE POLICY AND MILITARY POSTURE
AND THE NSC STUDY ON
NAVAL FORCE REQUIREMENTS

Thursday, December 2, 1976
9:00 A.M. (3 hours)
The Cabinet Room

From: Brent Scowcroft

I. PURPOSE

To be briefed on and discuss NSC studies on U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture (NSSM 246) and Naval Force Requirements.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS, AND PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background

1. NSSM 246. In September, you directed through NSSM 246 that the NSC conduct a broad review of U.S. defense policy and military posture. The study, which was conducted by the NSC Defense Review Panel, has been completed. It provides a range of illustrative strategies for both our strategic and general purpose forces, taking into account their military, arms control, and budgetary implications.

In the area of strategic forces, the study highlights the following issues as central to U.S. strategy:

-- Deterrence Criteria: What criteria for selecting and sizing U.S. strategic offensive and defensive forces will assure achievement of our fundamental objective of deterring nuclear attack?

-- Force Diversity: How much force diversity and redundancy is necessary to provide adequate confidence in performance, to hedge against unexpected technological breakthroughs or catastrophic failures, and to complicate any Soviet first strike designs? The study examines the triad of

of bombers, ICBMs, and SLBMs and possible alternatives such as a dyad of bombers and SLBMs only. Force modernization programs such as the M-X are related to this analysis.

-- Countersilo Capability: Do we need to increase our capability to attack the hardened Soviet ICBM force? This issue deals with weapons effectiveness and crisis stability. It relates directly to the future of the M-X and Trident II programs.

-- Defensive Damage Limitation: What level of emphasis should be placed on U.S. civil defense programs, air defense, and ABM R&D?

The study points up the growth in the capability of Soviet general purpose forces and examines alternate U.S. responses. Among the key general purpose force issues raised in the report are:

-- Adequacy of Forward Deployment: What are the appropriate levels of forward deployed forces in Europe and elsewhere?

-- Assumptions on Warning Time: Should U.S. planning for initial NATO defense, mobilization, and short-term reinforcement continue to assume approximately three weeks of warning time?

-- Sustainability: How long should U.S. NATO forces be capable of sustaining conflict, and what is the relative likelihood of a very short (days or weeks) versus a longer (months or years) war? Central to the sustainability factor are the issues of Soviet capabilities, U.S. equipment stocks, and mobilization and preparedness programs.

-- Conflict Outside the NATO Central Region: How much combat capability should the U.S. maintain for conflict on the NATO flanks and outside the European theater? We currently maintain land, air, and naval forces for a range of possible contingencies outside Central Europe. Decisions on the future nature and size of these forces have major implications for the Navy and Marines, and are tied to special considerations such as Mid-East oil supply continuity and Korean defense.

Alternative approaches derived from different responses to these fundamental issues have been combined to form a number of illustrative notional strategies -- five for strategic forces and six for general purpose forces. These in turn are combined into a number of overall strategy alternatives. These combinations provide a useful framework for examining each issue in the context of overall defense policy. Two of the notional strategies approximate current policy, with alternatives ranging on either side of these base points. Tentative and extremely rough cost estimates have been provides for each strategy.

The study lends itself to a number of possible uses. Each of the Defense Review Panel principals has an independent view on the utility of the study and on the individual issues and alternative strategies presented in the report. There are differing opinions as to the extent to which the study in its present form provides an appropriate basis for decisions affecting our national strategies. As Secretary Rumsfeld points out in his transmittal memorandum to you, there is a need for additional analysis to reduce uncertainties associated with the strategy alternatives, the force requirements and the cost implications of each.

2. NSC Study on Naval Force Requirements. The NSC study on U.S. Strategy and Naval Force Requirements was initiated early in 1976 and conducted by the NSC Defense Review Panel. Its early development provided the basis for the May supplemental budget request to the Congress for additional shipbuilding funds. Your FY 1977 budget requested $6.3B for 16 ships. The supplemental added $1.2B for five more ships and long-lead funding for an additional carrier (CVN-71). Congress approved $6.2B for 15 ships and the long-lead funds for the carrier.

As a basis for U.S. force projections, the study has examined trends in the growth of the Soviet Navy, its capabilities for conducting naval warfare in areas more distant from the Soviet Union, and the increasing willingness of the Soviet leadership to employ naval forces in support of foreign policy objectives. The basic questions governing U.S. naval force requirements as set forth in the Navy study are:

-- Should we accelerate current shipbuilding plans? The numerical size of the Soviet Navy has stabilized but newly constructed ships possess increased capabilities.

-- Should the force mix of ship types stress expensive, highly capable ships, or should we concentrate on numbers, building less expensive ships of lower unit capability? Within this broad question, the study addresses such issues as carrier vulnerability and force levels; a program to modernize the existing carrier force; the nuclear/conventional power mix; the qualitative mix of other surface combatants; alternative methods of providing air power to the fleet; and the impact of future systems such as V/STOL aircraft and cruise missiles.

-- Should the program stress new construction or should it emphasize the readiness of existing units while adding more slowly to the size and strength of the fleet?

Based on the projected threat and alternative responses to these basic questions, the study outlines major naval force alternatives. The current FY 78 Defense Plan builds an average of 22 ships per year for a force of 535 ships by 1990 at an average annual cost of $6.9B in FY 1977 dollars. Three other major program options are offered:

-- Option 1 would build no more large-deck carrier and would use the funds formerly devoted to carrier construction to build more surface combatants (an average of 28 ships per year for a force of 586 ships by 1990 at an average annual cost of $6.9B in FY 1977 dollars).

-- Option 2 would build one more large-deck carrier, develop V/STOL aircraft and deploy them aboard a few smaller aviation ships, and build additional surface combatants -- stressing numbers over unit capability (an average of 32 ships per year for a force of 608 ships by 1990 at an average annual cost of $8.0B in FY 1977 dollars).

-- Option 3 would build one more large-deck carrier, develop V/STOL aircraft and deploy them aboard more aviation ships, and build a mix of surface combatants -- stressing unit capability and numbers of ships (an average of 32 ships per year for a force of 609 ships by 1990 at an average annual cost of $8.4 B in FY 1977 dollars).

Subsequent to the completion of the study, Defense added a Low-Mix Option. This option falls between Options 1 and 2 in overall Navy size and costs. It does not build one more large-deck carrier or any strike cruisers. It develops V/STOL aircraft and deploys them aboard one aviation ship, and includes additional surface combatants of lower unit capability and additional support ships. It emphasizes numbers of ships (an average of 32 ships per year for a force of 604 ships by 1990 at an average cost of $7.5 B in FY 1977 dollars).

The study concludes that there is a need to improve our naval capability and that the current Defense Plan already includes an ambitious program to raise both the quality of our ships and overall force levels. The options presented provide a means to accelerate and expand the current plan. A choice among the options centers on the question of whether we should build one more large-deck carrier and the qualitative mix of surface combatants necessary to improve the fleet's anti-air and anti-missile capability.

3. Relationship between NSSM 246 Strategies and Navy Study Options. The NSSM 246 study outlines alternative defense strategies, and provides notional force structures, including naval forces, for each. The Navy study postulates three alternative force structures designed to implement current U.S. strategy. The options in the two studies therefore are not strictly comparable. However, some general correlation is possible, and a chart illustrating the general relationship is at Tab D.

B. Participants: (List at Tab A)

C. Press Arrangements: The meeting, but not the subject, will be announced. White House photographer only.

III. TALKING POINTS

(At the opening of the meeting)

1. The basic purpose of this meeting is to become acquainted with the results of two major NSC studies, both of which could provide important contributions to future U.S. defense policy and military posture. Don, would you brief us first on the response to NSSM 246?

(Following briefing and discussion of NSSM 246)

2. We also now have the final version of the Navy study which we discussed in a preliminary version last spring. Don, could we have the briefing on that study?

(Upon conclusion of discussion of the Navy study)

3. These studies clearly represent a major effort to grapple with the future direction of our military strategy and force posture. I want to consider them both in greater detail and will probably want further NSC discussion of NSSM 246.

Attachments

Tab A - List of Participants

Tab B - U.S. Defense Policy and Military Posture, Response to NSSM 246, November 30, 1976

Tab C - NSC Study on U.S. Strategy and Naval Force Requirements, November 16, 1976

Tab D - Implications of Navy Study Alternatives and Options for NSSM 246 Strategies