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MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting of General Spidel, FRG, and
General Taylor, CJCS

The following is a summary of the meeting on 28 October 1963 between General Taylor, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Hans Spidel, Special Advisor to Federal Government for Questions of Atlantic Defense, FRG.

1. OPENING REMARKS

General Spidel stated that the most striking thing about NATO today is its appearance of a disintegrating organization, resulting largely from French nationalism. He expressed hope that this is only a passing situation. He added that the forces available to NATO were so limited and, particularly in the north, so poorly and weakly disposed, that resort to nuclear weapons is NATO's only recourse if attacked in strength. He then spoke of exercises BIG LIFT and LONG THRUST, indicating that it was his understanding that BIG LIFT had as its purpose the demonstration of the capability to reinforce NATO. He said he had used every opportunity to convince others of this true purpose. However, others had interpreted the Exercise as having the purpose of establishing a rationale for withdrawal of troops from NATO. He stated that if BIG LIFT were, in fact, to be used as the basis for

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withdrawing US combat forces from Europe, other countries would do likewise, and the result would be to further the disintegration now apparent in NATO. General Taylor responded by stating that the purpose of BIG LIFT was, indeed, to demonstrate a reinforcement capability and was not intended as a prelude to or a rationale for withdrawal of US forces. It was the first of other planned strategic mobility exercises. General Taylor made two additional points. First, rotation of units and adjusting types of units by the US must be allowed to take place freely without making each such move a major political issue. Second, logistic support units must also be maintained along with combat forces in Europe for, if only combat forces are retained in Europe, the US force structure would be a facade rather than a true capability.

2. Item 1 - NATO STRATEGY

General Strother discussed the current status of MC 100/1 and indicated that he felt the Standing Group would be able to produce an agreed paper shortly. He pointed out that MC 100/1 contained various options open to NATO, a commitment to the Forward Strategy (and rejection of a Trip-Wire Strategy), definitions of "major" and "limited" aggression, and provision for Berlin Contingency planning. In its present form it provides a framework within which major NATO Commanders can submit alternative force structures and related military evaluations. General Speidel expressed interest in the relation between

capability to employ tactical nuclear weapons successfully and the strength of the conventional forces and their ability to defend.

Following a short briefing on the use of tactical nuclear weapons,

General Taylor emphasized that tactical nuclear operations are superimposed on conventional operations. He pointed out that after having studied tactical nuclear warfare, the US military authorities were agreed that tactical nuclear operations were very difficult to analyze precisely as opposed, for instance, to strategic operations. From US studies it is generally agreed that we need tactical nuclear weapons in quantity, and we need a variety of types of these weapons. Success in tactical nuclear warfare, our studies indicate, is affected by numerical superiority of tactical nuclear weapons, variety of types of weapons, and the initiative in employing them. He added that it must be realized that tactical nuclear weapons do not reduce force requirements; they impose many casualties and cause substantial physical destruction; they also carry with them a risk of escalation. The US wants to develop and maintain the ability to use nuclear weapons selectively in a series of stages: first might be a selective demonstration use of such weapons; second might be their employment throughout the battlefield area; third their use in the interdiction mission and communications zone; and, finally, if necessary, in strategic warfare. General Spidel said he had one point he wished to make and a question to ask. First,

he wanted to say that he felt that air reconnaissance is a major unresolved problem throughout NATO. Reconnaissance is necessary for target acquisition, and yet the ability to execute air reconnaissance effectively without promoting escalation is realized by all. He knows of no solution to it. He then asked whether or not the PERSHING missile was considered obsolete by the US. General Taylor replied that he recognized the problem of air reconnaissance and target acquisition in general. We must have a means of acquiring targets. Other than tactical aircraft, drones offer some possibilities. In connection with the PERSHING he added that the US did not consider PERSHING obsolete. General Goodpaster added that the US is looking forward to acquiring more PERSHING missiles. We hope the weapon will be effective well into the 1970's. It has good penetration capability and its mobility enhances survival. We think it is a very promising system.

3. Item 2 - OPERATIONAL POSSIBILITIES IN EUROPE

General Spoidel indicated that the most likely avenues of Soviet attack were across northern Germany -- either directly west through Hanover or somewhat to the south in the Kassel-Frankfurt area. In either event, he felt a very desirable response by NATO might be to seize the initiative by attacking the Soviet flank with the main effort through the Hof gap from

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the south. Such an attack had been under consideration by the Germans and it was envisaged as being conducted by the 7th US Army, including two German corps. In order to make such a plan feasible, the Czechoslovakian border would have to be heavily prepared with obstacles to include ADM's in order to enhance the defensive nature of this terrain. General Speidel added that he did not think it likely that there would be a substantial attack from Czechoslovakia by Czechoslovakian forces. General Taylor responded that he had never been satisfied with NATO's passive defense planning, but emphasized that a lack of reserves had been and continued to be a big problem for NATO in making any plans to seize the initiative. General Taylor passed to the question of surprise attack. He stated that the US thought a substantial Soviet surprise attack possible but not likely. The UK Representatives have indicated that they feel it would never happen; that there would always be a period of tension before hostilities. He asked General Speidel's opinion of the extent of strategic warning that might be expected before a Soviet attack. General Speidel stated that he would expect a fair period of warning, a time of tension, prior to attack, but that he was concerned that political authorities would be reluctant to permit military measures to be undertaken during times of tension in order to improve NATO's military posture, with which General Taylor agreed.

4. Item 3 - NATO'S REQUIREMENTS FOR MRBM'S

General Taylor said that it has been the position of successive SACEUR's that MRBM's are needed in NATO to assume many of the targets in SACEUR's Scheduled Program. Also, the release of aircraft from such missions would provide the conventional aircraft necessary for conventional air and ground support operations in Europe. If mobile missiles were available, they could take over a large portion of SACEUR's Scheduled Program and let aircraft perform reconnaissance, conventional support, and armed strike reconnaissance. The US sees a possibility of the role of aircraft changing, with missiles being assigned many of the pre-planned targets. The question is, how this is to be done. One possibility is Missile X, which is now under development. This missile, with its primary characteristics of mobility, accuracy, and a range of yields which provide flexibility, promises to be an effective weapon. Whatever is done, NATO does need some weapon of this general type to replace aircraft. Perhaps Missile X is a solution; PERSHING might also be used in this role; the MLF, using POLARIS, in conjunction with short-range PERSHING missiles, could be considered. Or, perhaps, external forces without any MLF might be the solution. Cost is a big problem in choosing the means by which strike aircraft could be replaced. The central issue is, whether

there a need to replace strike aircraft, and what means should be adopted to accomplish it.

5. STRENGTH OF SOVIET FORCES

General Speidel indicated that since there had been some divergencies between US and German estimates of Soviet strength, he had brought with him a tabulation indicating the current German appraisal of Soviet forces. He provided the document to General Taylor but it was not discussed. General Taylor stated that it was difficult to believe that all the divisions that were attributed to the Soviets were, in fact, fully manned, fully equipped with modern equipment, and fully supported logistically. It does not seem reasonable that the Soviets could maintain such a force. We think the Soviet divisions may not be of the same standard as our divisions in terms of manpower levels, equipment, and logistic support.

The discussions were conducted in a frank and friendly atmosphere, and seemed to be deeply appreciated by General Speidel.