

Authority MWD 969000
By 88 NARA Date 8-29-01

(21)

#hh13

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

RS/R FILES

March 22, 1968

Attention Mrs. Mullett
Keep this study together.
108.

SECRET

COPIES TO:
S/S:JOF
JFK/RSS
G/PA
RJR
Q

Dear Clark:

I have become increasingly concerned about the way we have recently handled with our NATO Allies new intelligence on Soviet and other Communist military forces. Given current political pressures here and in Europe in the direction of reduced NATO military efforts, I think we must exercise greater than usual care about what is said to foreign governments and others outside the US Government, particularly since these data have not been confirmed as National Intelligence Estimates.

My concerns are that:

- Several US agencies and officials are now making different assessments from the new intelligence data;
- These independent assessments are reaching our Allies through different channels.

I am disturbed that US policy proposals are being put to our NATO Allies before we have agreement here in Washington on the intelligence conclusions upon which they are based. The studies are far from completed, the conclusions still tenuous, subject to revision and susceptible to differing interpretations. Moreover, our NATO Allies, except the UK and Canada, are not privy to our intelligence methods and the sources that produced these data. Under the circumstances, our Allies are likely to question our credibility and intentions.

We should--as the current studies proceed and our judgments acquire greater certainty--give urgent attention to the political implications they may have for us and our Allies. I understand that an agreed National Intelligence

The Honorable
Clark M. Clifford,
Secretary of Defense.

DEF 6 USSR XR DEF 6 Wats

(2)

U/LSE Eagleburger : bsk

SECRET

MICROFILMED BY S/S: CMS

MICROFILMED BY NSA

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AND 969000
By 88 NARA Date 8-29-01

SECRET

-2-

Estimate cannot be expected until much later this year; but I believe that even before that estimate becomes available we should be examining the political significance of the new intelligence and any judgments we may make based on it. We should analyze, in particular, the anticipated reaction of our NATO Allies and then decide how the information could best be put to them. This highlights the need for continuing and intensive contact between the State and Defense Departments on this subject.

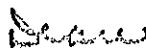
I propose that we have our representatives urgently consider the problem of how to deal with our Allies in the interim. I have recommended to Dick Helms a review aimed at ensuring proper coordination between the intelligence and political agencies of the Government. I believe that as our estimates are made available to our Allies we should inform them, consistent with applicable policies on release of classified information, of all the data and methodology on which our assessments are based.

I also propose that we begin now to examine the policy implications of the conclusions produced by the intelligence studies, and consider an eventual exchange of views--at least with the Allies principally concerned--regarding these implications. It would be particularly useful to make a political appraisal of how our Allies are likely to react.

I have asked Chip Bohlen to act as the Department's contact point in these matters. He will be supported by John Leddy, Phil Farley and Tom Hughes and their staffs.

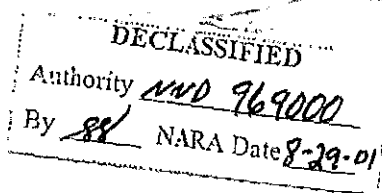
With warm regards,

Sincerely,



Dean Rusk

SECRET



THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

March 22, 1968

SECRET

Dear Dick:

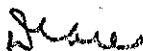
I enclose a letter to Clark Clifford in regard to problems that have recently arisen about conversations with allies on the status of Communist forces in Europe. I understand that we cannot expect agreed national intelligence judgments superseding those contained in your last NIE (NIE 11-14-67) until much later this year. I am, as you know, concerned that we not precipitate adverse effects by disclosure of tentative and provisional conclusions produced in the studies leading up to the next NIE.

I think it may be helpful if you, Tom Hughes and your other interested colleagues could reach some understanding on the best way to handle intelligence contacts with the UK and other allies under present circumstances. We do not of course want to impair intelligence relations with others; but the subject of Communist forces in Europe is one of unusual sensitivity and you may want to establish some special procedures to take account of this. I think it important too that communication with the allies by the intelligence and political sides of the house stay in close step.

I hope that you will stay in close touch with the State-Defense work on this matter which I have proposed to Clark.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,



Dean Rusk

Enclosure.

The Honorable
Richard Helms,
Director,
Central Intelligence Agency.

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *NND 969000*
By *ss* NARA Date *8-29-01*

4413

SECRET

(21)

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Secretary
U - The Under Secretary *WJH* ←

THROUGH: S/S *BSR*

FROM: G - Charles E. Bohlen *cebs*

SUBJECT: The Handling of Revised Estimates of Soviet Ground Force Capabilities with our Allies
ACTION MEMORANDUM

I have previously mentioned that we were having some problems with Defense on the handling in the NATO framework of new intelligence estimates with respect to Soviet ground force capabilities. Recent analyses by CIA and DIA suggest that Soviet forces in the Western USSR have fewer of certain items of equipment than we previously had estimated. It is not at all clear what impact the lower inventories may have on the over-all capabilities of the forces to mobilize; at least two possible differing assessments may be made: a) the forces may be less ready for combat than we had assumed; or b) modernization and streamlining could have made the forces even more mobile and responsive.

Two issues are involved.

First, should we begin passing new intelligence data to our Allies and particularly drawing conclusions from it before such data has been confirmed as national intelligence? Here I am particularly concerned about different US agencies and officials drawing different conclusions from the intelligence data and having it reach our Allies through several channels; this would raise questions in the minds of our Allies as to our credibility and intentions.

Second, there is the question of the foreign policy ramifications of the revised estimates and assessments, and new policy initiatives or approaches. Until these have been more fully thought through, including an appreciation as to how they are likely to be received, I think we should

DEF & USSR XR DEF & USSR

SECRET

IN R/RSB: H Sonnenfeldt
1. 1 Sloss/EUR/RPM; Col G.D. Overbey

CLASSIFIED BY 8008

DECLASSIFIED
Authority MWD 969000
By SP NARA Date 8-29-01

SECRET
-2-

be very cautious about what we say to other countries. While some in Defense believe that more realistic estimates could encourage our Allies to increase their conventional ground forces in the belief that the threat is more manageable, the lower threat estimates, in fact, appear to be causing the opposite effect among our NATO Allies.

The purpose of the attached letters to Clark Clifford and Dick Helms is to suggest the need for caution in discussing this new data with our Allies and for full inter-agency clearance before any such discussions take place. The letters also suggest the need to assess the foreign policy implications of the revised estimates and new US initiatives.



Recommendation:

That you sign the attached letters to Secretary Clifford and Mr. Helms. (Tabs A and B)


Attachments:

- Tab A - Letter to Secretary Clifford
- Tab B - Letter to Mr. Helms
- Tab C - Cables

Concurrences:

- G/PM - Mr. Farley 
- EUR - Mr. Leddy
- INR - Mr. Hughes 

Drafted by:

INR/RSB:HSonnenfeldt/
G/PM:LSloss/EUR/RPM:Col. GDOverbey:mm
x-2550 

DECLASSIFIED

Authority AND 969000

By 88 NARA Date 8-29-01

Handwritten initials

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
EUR

4413

SECRET

MAR 14 1968

MEMORANDUM

TO: G - Ambassador Bohlen ✓
THROUGH: S/S CB
FROM: EUR - John M. Leddy JML

SUBJECT: Furnishing Intelligence Assessments to
NATO Allies
ACTION MEMORANDUM

Mr. Nitze's December NATO Ministerial Meeting speech is continuing to draw sharp comment from various NATO capitals. You will recall that the speech highlighted a new intelligence estimate that Soviet mobilization capabilities had decreased (based upon the observation that Soviet reserve forces are short on some essential items of equipment) and, therefore, are less ready for combat than once presumed. The Intelligence Community considers the assessment premature and inconclusive.

From reactions in several capitals, it appears that the downgrading of Soviet reinforcement capabilities is likely to lead to a decreased defense budget in NATO countries rather than the increased force structure desired. Some in Defense theorized that the projected decrease in Soviet capabilities would be an incentive for West European nations to increase their conventional force structure in an attempt to balance the Warsaw Pact-NATO conventional capabilities. The theory as well as the intelligence upon which it is based are being questioned in West Europe (see messages at Tab C). There are differing views here and in Defense on the answer we should give our NATO Allies.

The increased concern abroad and the view in State that inconclusive intelligence should not have been released to NATO has prompted joint preparation by INR, RPM, and G/PM of the attached letters to Mr. Clifford and Mr. Helms. The letters will put State's position on record and hopefully get the operational and intelligence

SECRET

SECRET

-2-

machinery underway for better inter-departmental coordination on such matters. Although this problem stems from inconclusive intelligence, the basic issue is that NATO Allies are being confused by a disputed assessment which is being used by elements in OSD to support new US policy initiatives.

Recommendation:

That you sign the attached memorandum forwarding the proposed letters for Mr. Clifford and Mr. Helms to the Secretary for signature.

Attachments:

1. Memo to the Secretary with letters to Mr. Clifford and Mr. Helms
2. Tab C - cables

Clearances:

EUR - Mr. Springsteen
EUR/RPM - Mr. McAuliffe

EUR/RPM: Col. G.D. Overbey: mm
x-2550 3/13/68

SECRET