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Record of Decision

Revised January 16, 1968

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: NATO Strategy and Force Structure (U)

NND 942071
HNM/AL

12/17/99

My continuing review of NATO strategy and forces has led me to the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Our strategic nuclear forces are the main deterrent to Soviet nuclear attack on the U.S. and are a major deterrent to Soviet aggression in Europe.
2. Our theater nuclear capabilities add to the deterrence of aggression in Europe, including a nonnuclear attack, but our ability to control a limited nuclear war is uncertain.
3. NATO needs conventional forces: first, to help deter a deliberate nonnuclear attack by denying the Soviets any confidence of success unless they use a very large force that clearly threatens NATO's most vital interests; second, to deal successfully with a conflict arising through miscalculation; and third, to show determination by reinforcing in time of crisis. Our programmed forces are adequate for these purposes, but we will continue to urge improvements in the quality of our Allies' forces.
4. We plan to return to CONUS from Germany 33,281 men in two brigade forces and four squadrons, and to rotate them periodically back to Germany. This will not significantly affect our ability to meet our objectives in Europe.
5. We should continue to program large land reinforcements for NATO, including six heavy division forces (three active and three priority reserve) maintained principally for NATO.
6. The seven tactical air wings committed to NATO in the Central Region and the two attack carriers (CVAs) and three Air Force squadrons deployed in the Southern Region are adequate to meet our objectives in these areas. Nevertheless, we will continue to make provision to use in Europe any additional forces which are available.
7. We should continue to provide ninety days of equipment, ammunition, and supplies for NATO-oriented forces (eleven Army divisions,* two CVA wings, and seven and three-fourths Air Force fighter wings).

* One division in our NATO force is provided logistics for indefinite combat to improve multi-mission capability.

EXCLUDED FROM AUTOMATIC
REGRADEING: DOD DIR 5200.10
DOES NOT APPLY

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8. Many of our Allies' naval forces are excessive compared to their other defense needs;* we will continue to study NATO naval requirements and to persuade our Allies to make more efficient use of their resources.

I. NATO STRATEGY AND FORCE OBJECTIVES

The United States' overall military objective in NATO is to make any kind of aggression grossly unprofitable for the Warsaw Pact.

This year's tripartite talks by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the United Kingdom, and the U.S. concerning future NATO strategy and forces and their economic implications are an important event in our continuous review of how best to achieve this objective. New force planning studies have also been done by SACEUR and the NATO Defense Planning Committee. The latter has issued new political guidance which the NATO Military Committee used for revising the official NATO strategy (MC 14/3) for approval by the Defense Ministers in December. This new strategy should be closer to the U.S. view than formerly and will provide a better basis for NATO and U.S. force planning.

Our strategic nuclear, theater nuclear, and nonnuclear capabilities each play an important and interrelated role in this strategy.

A. Strategic Nuclear Capabilities

The Assured Destruction capability provided by our strategic missiles and bombers is the principal deterrent to Soviet nuclear attack on the U.S. Our unmistakable ability to destroy Soviet society even after a surprise attack is designed to deter nuclear attack over a wide range of situations, including not only a massive surprise attack, but also Soviet escalation to general nuclear war from local war. It is designed to deter the Soviets from a nuclear attack even in crisis situations when the Soviets might otherwise go to war.

U.S. strategic forces have an important relationship to NATO. They not only deter the Soviet Union from undertaking general nuclear war, but also help deter aggression limited to the European theater. In view of our visible political and military commitment to Europe, the Soviets can never be sure that we will not use some strategic nuclear forces in the event of a large-scale attack on Europe, even at the risk of a Soviet attack on CONUS. Our strategic forces would permit us to inflict great damage on Soviet military forces while we continued to hold Soviet cities hostage. Our strategic forces also enhance the deterrent value of our theater nuclear capabilities by making a theater nuclear response to a Soviet attack in Europe a more believable threat.

* The Navy disagrees.

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Although strategic nuclear capabilities strongly deter Soviet aggression, in any conflict involving strategic forces there is grave risk of escalation to attacks on cities. In a nuclear exchange of this kind, there seems to be no way to prevent unacceptable damage to the West. To minimize this possibility, we need theater nuclear and nonnuclear capabilities, both to increase deterrence to limited attacks and to provide options for dealing with conflicts in the theater if deterrence fails.

B. Theater Nuclear Capabilities

NATO's theater nuclear capabilities are provided by over 7,000 nuclear weapons and delivery systems ranging from 155mm howitzers to tactical aircraft and PERSHING missiles.

These weapons increase the deterrence of a Soviet nuclear attack on Europe. They add to our ability to strike Warsaw Pact military targets without escalating to general nuclear war.

They provide a strong deterrent to a deliberate nonnuclear attack. Should a nonnuclear conflict begin through miscalculation, they provide a strong incentive for ending it. In planning a large nonnuclear attack, the Soviets would know that their actions unmistakably threatened NATO's most vital interests, and if NATO were to execute a limited nuclear response, the deterrent to a retaliatory strike on CONUS would still be very high. If NATO did respond to a large nonnuclear attack with theater nuclear weapons, it would have the advantage of a first strike against Soviet theater nuclear delivery systems. Moreover, Pact land forces, when concentrated for nonnuclear attack, would be excellent targets.

While the deterrent value of our theater nuclear capabilities is high, there are great uncertainties concerning the actual conduct and results of a limited nuclear war. The steady pressure to strike deeper targets, the rapidly increasing civilian and military casualties, and the vulnerability of logistics make it likely that the conflict would either end, de-escalate, or escalate quickly. These uncertainties caution against spending great sums to prepare for fighting a prolonged nuclear war in Europe. They are also an important reason for maintaining enough nonnuclear forces to avoid escalation except under extreme circumstances.

C. Nonnuclear Capabilities

For the reasons stated above, the U.S. has held since 1961 that the strategy of a nuclear response to nearly any form of Soviet attack was obsolete. The real problem has been to define precisely the objectives for nonnuclear capabilities in a way which is militarily and economically feasible, and politically acceptable.

During the course of NATO discussions and studies over the past year, specific objectives for NATO nonnuclear capabilities have emerged which appear to be mutually acceptable and feasible within the resources likely to be available. These objectives are the basis for the new political guidance agreed to by the NATO Ministers, and I believe they should be used in evaluating our nonnuclear capabilities. These objectives may be summarized as follows:

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1. NATO nonnuclear capabilities should help deter a deliberate nonnuclear attack by denying the Warsaw Pact any confidence of success except by using a force so large that it clearly threatens NATO's most vital interests. In the absence of adequate NATO nonnuclear capabilities, the Soviets could be tempted to launch a deliberate, limited nonnuclear attack. At the most massive level of attack, however, both the credibility of the nuclear deterrent and the potential Soviet loss greatly increase. Such a deliberate nonnuclear attack would then be no more rational than a deliberate nuclear attack and we are willing to take the risk of having to use nuclear weapons if such a nonnuclear attack occurred. In fact, the military situation in Europe has been quite stable for at least five years, largely because both sides realize that a state of mutual deterrence exists.*

2. NATO should have the capability to deal successfully with a conflict arising out of some unexpected event or miscalculation of intentions during a period of tension or political crisis. NATO's goal in any such conflict would be to end it rapidly without giving up territory. The same dangers which deter each side from deliberate attack in peacetime would operate even more strongly to force rapid termination in wartime. For this reason, where there is a choice, capabilities which contribute immediately to meeting the adversary's attack -- such as close air support and combat troops -- are far more valuable than those which would make their main contribution later in the war, such as interdiction and sustaining logistics support. For this reason, and also because of the low stock levels of our Allies, we do not specifically provide stocks beyond ninety days for our Europe-oriented forces.

Moreover, since a war in Europe is likely only in the event of a change in a fundamentally stable situation, this kind of conflict is very likely to be preceded by a period of tension or crisis. This political warning of possible impending conflict is likely to be measured in weeks or months rather than days. Thus, while we must maintain some forces in place to deal with the Pact's immediately available forces, NATO's mobilization and reinforcement capabilities are also important.

3. NATO should have the ability to build up its forces rapidly and substantially in a crisis. We and the Warsaw Pact might again become locked in a test of wills such as the 1961 Berlin crisis. Despite the adequacy of the deterrent, the risk of war would increase in such a crisis because of the increased incentives for each side to test the intentions and will of the other and the consequent risk of miscalculation. In such a situation, NATO should be able to reinforce, both as a show of determination and to prevent the Pact from substantially changing the normal balance of forces.

These objectives stop short of providing for a capability to deal successfully with any kind of nonnuclear attack without using nuclear weapons ourselves. Thus, there are some situations (which are highly unlikely) where if deterrence failed we would have to initiate use of nuclear weapons. After years of effort, this is the most ambitious strategy we have been able to convince our Allies to accept.

* The JCS believe we cannot assume a continued stable situation in Europe because the Soviets are increasing their nuclear capabilities.

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Therefore, we would have to pay all the additional large cost of a full-scale nonnuclear option ourselves, even if it were feasible for the U.S. to fill the gap. Nevertheless, we are not opposed in principle to a more ambitious nonnuclear strategy, and if our Allies' attitudes and the international political situation were to change, we would be willing to revise these objectives.

II. THE BALANCE OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT CAPABILITIES

My Memorandums on Strategic Offensive and Defensive Forces and Theater Nuclear Forces describe in detail NATO and Warsaw Pact nuclear capabilities and the requirements to meet our objectives for strategic and theater nuclear forces. This memorandum analyzes NATO's nonnuclear capabilities.

The main problems in evaluating NATO's capabilities relative to the Pact arise from differences in the mix, structure, and location of forces. As shown below, NATO commits more men and money to general purpose forces than the Pact, particularly to tactical air forces.

WORLDWIDE 1967 NATO AND WARSAW PACT GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES

(\$ billions; excludes temporary Vietnam augmentation; costs in U.S. prices)

	NATO			Warsaw Pact		
	U.S.	Other NATO	Total NATO	Total Pact	Other Pact	USSR
Land Forces	1,194,000	1,900,000	3,094,000	2,800,000	850,000	1,950,000
Average Annual Expenditure on Land Forces	\$7.2	-	-	-	-	\$9.1
Tactical Aircraft Inventory	7,300	4,609	11,368 ^{a/}	8,737 ^{a/}	3,449	5,288 ^{b/}
Average Annual Expenditure on Tactical Air Forces	\$6.4	- ^{c/}	-	-	- ^{c/}	\$2.6
Average Annual Expenditure on General Purpose Naval Forces (Other Than Tactical Air)	\$4.5	- ^{c/}	-	-	- ^{c/}	\$4.4

^{a/} Does not include strategic bombers for either NATO or the Pact. Does not include Soviet and U.S. homeland air defense aircraft.

^{b/} The Soviets also have 2,300 to 2,500 old model fighters and light bombers in a reserve status.

^{c/} Other NATO expenditures also greatly exceed other Pact expenditures on these forces.

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A. Forces Deployed in Europe

As shown in the table on the next page, NATO's deployed land and air forces are roughly the same size as the Pact's in all regions except Northern Norway. There are, however, important differences in composition, structure, and quality.

In the Central Region, these differences in land forces probably do not change the relative capability of each side from that indicated by the number of combat troops. NATO's forces have a slightly higher ratio of support to combat troops, primarily because the U.S. land forces' ratio is nearly double that of any other force in Europe. NATO land forces have an advantage in training during part of the year because the Pact sends recruits straight to M-Day units and has a large proportion of draftees. Until these draftees are trained, large parts of the Pact forces would be considered unusable in combat by U.S. standards.

On the other hand, because of greater emphasis on tank units relative to mechanized infantry, the Pact has nearly double NATO's proportion of tanks to combat troops. Although most NATO tanks are slightly better than most Pact tanks in a duel, this does not offset the numerical inferiority. Instead, the NATO armies have generally organized themselves with relatively more infantry, counting on anti-tank weapons, mines, and tactical air to stop the Pact's tanks. In the U.S. Army in Europe, for example, 36% of the maneuver battalions are tank battalions, compared to 56% in the Soviet forces in East Germany. This difference is largely a matter of choice and could be changed if we felt it were desirable to do so.* It is not clear how much, if anything, the Pact gains from its greater proportion of tanks, and this is a major uncertainty.

We know less about the relative capabilities of land forces on the flanks. In general, the forces of both sides (except the Soviet forces) are poorly trained and equipped compared to those in the Center. Greek and Turkish land forces are now receiving through the Military Assistance Program a large quantity of modern land armaments, which should in the near future make them at least as well-equipped as non-Soviet Pact forces.

There are also uncertainties regarding the political reliability of various allies both in NATO and in the Warsaw Pact. France remains a NATO ally, but has withdrawn from the integrated command structure. The East European countries would probably cooperate with the Pact "to the extent they conceived their own vital interests to be threatened."**

NATO has a major tactical air advantage over the Pact. Pact aircraft are mostly interceptors with short range, low payload, and limited loiter capability. Very low flying-hour programs by U.S. standards indicate low

* In the case of some allied forces, the low tank ratio reflects not choice, but inadequate funding. The remedy for this is more equipment, not more forces.

** Special National Intelligence Estimate.

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SIZE OF FORCES

Area	General Europe				North Italy Area				Greece and Western Turkey Greece Rumania and Bulgaria
	NATO	Other	Total	Ratio	NATO	Other	Total	Ratio	
North Norway									
Area									
USSR	7	19.0	28.3	4.3	7.0	4.0	4.0	13.0	15.0
U.S.	76,000	67,000	349,000	4.3	29,000	16,000	45,000	13.0	15.0
France	101,000	27,000	142,000	5.0	16,000	45,000	35,000	13.0	15.0
Other Support Personnel	7,000	94,000	348,000	5.0	16,000	45,000	35,000	13.0	15.0
TOTAL STRENGTH OF H-DMY FORCES	104	512	409	1,249	2,170	2,860	955	1,875	739b/ 475
Number of US Tactical Aircraft									

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND FORCES

Area	Central Europe				North Italy Area				Greece and Western Turkey Greece Rumania and Bulgaria
	NATO	Other	Total	Ratio	NATO	Other	Total	Ratio	
North Norway									
Area									
USSR	12	19	19	1.4:1	12	19	19	1.4:1	15
U.S.	22	8	6	40:1	37	9	7	55:1	15
France	8	33	42	69:1	28	29	30	82:1	15
Other	30	752	432	14:1	472	742	752	53:1	15
Armored Personnel Carriers	702	752	432	1.3	1.5	1.6	2.3	3.0	1.7
Percentage of Conscripts (years)	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.3	1.5	1.6	2.3	3.0	1.7
Length of Conscript Tour (years)	12	0	16	16	12	14	14	0	0
Number of Weeks Training Before Entering H-Day Unit									

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF AIR FORCES - ALL REGIONS

Primary Mission Capability	U.S.		Other NATO		USSR		Other Pact	
	Fac.	100%	Fac.	100%	Fac.	100%	Fac.	100%
Percentage Interceptors (high speed, low payload)	8%	11%	9%	34%	31%	33%	3%	3%
Percentage Multi-Purpose (high speed, high payload)	31	30	31	8	11	4	4	4
Percentage Attack (low speed, high payload)	37	5	24	20	29	3	1	1
Percentage Reconnaissance	10	4	7	2	2	2	1	1
Percentage Low Performance (low speed, low payload)	14	30	29	36	24	56	24	56
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Average Payload 100 Miles Ht.-Lo-Ht (Tons per Aircraft)	3.7	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Available Loiter Time on Combat Air Patrol at 100 Miles (minutes)	-	-	20	20	-	-	-	-
MIG-21/SU-7	-	-	116	96	-	-	-	-
F-104	-	-	96	96	-	-	-	-
F-4	-	-	20	20	14	14	9.6	9.6
Average Monthly Flying Hours Per Aircraft	27	18	20	11	14	14	9.6	9.6
Average Monthly Flying Hours Per Aircraft	20	13	15	8.3	9.0	9.0	8.0	8.0

a/ Including eighteen U.S. aircraft.
 b/ Including 176 U.S. aircraft.

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pilot training in peacetime and low sortie rates in wartime. In contrast, NATO aircraft are mostly multi-purpose, with adequate range, payload, and loiter time for nonnuclear operations, and air-to-air capability equal or superior to the Pact's. Although our Allies' offensive air forces are mainly oriented toward nuclear operations, they do have enough nonnuclear ordnance to operate for a limited time, and on the average their pilots are better trained than the Pact's. Furthermore, with the trend in NATO toward nonnuclear missions for aircraft, our Allies will probably buy more modern nonnuclear ordnance and improve their ability to conduct nonnuclear operations.

B. Reinforcement and Mobilization

NATO and Warsaw Pact ability to reinforce depends not only on transportation time, which can be easily calculated, but also, for example, on time required for mobilizing fillers, loading equipment, marrying up troops with equipment in the forward area, and assembling and organizing in the battle area. These times in turn depend on the peacetime readiness of the units, which vary from fully-manned active units to nearly unmanned reserve units. The Pact forces available for early reinforcement of the Center Region (Category I and II divisions) outnumber NATO's M-Day reinforcing divisions by 5.4 to 1 in divisions, but only 2.3 to 1 in peacetime strength (436,000 men versus 191,000).

We estimate deployment times for U.S. forces conservatively, reflecting our intimate knowledge of the problems involved in large scale deployments; by contrast, intelligence estimates of deployment time for Warsaw Pact forces are based mainly on transportation time. For example, a recent JCS study concluded that one and one-third U.S. divisions with equipment prepositioned in Europe and manned at 100% could be deployed from CONUS in about 24 days, of which only six days were for long-haul transportation. Yet the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) currently estimates that the Soviet Union could move thirty to forty divisions to Germany in 21 days, although these units are manned at only 65 to 85% of wartime strength and lack adequate logistics support by U.S. standards. In my judgment, these estimates of Pact capability are most unrealistic, and I have asked the intelligence community to study this issue in depth.

The table on the next page shows potential NATO and Warsaw Pact land reinforcement capabilities. The table shows both the DIA estimate of USSR capability and an illustrative alternative estimate based on JCS factors for U.S. non-transportation times.* These figures show that if both sides begin to mobilize and reinforce the Central Region at the same time the NATO and Pact manpower balance would be summarized as shown in the table on page 10.

* The alternative estimates are still conservative because they assume a Soviet Category I division at 85% manning is as combat ready as a U.S. division at 100% manning.

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POTENTIAL LAND REINFORCEMENTS TO NATO AND WARSAW PACT

CENTRAL EUROPE				WARSAW PACT (WP)			
Reinforcing Forces	U.S. A/ (Post-SEA)		Total	Total Warsaw Pact		USSR	Other WP
	U.S.	Other NATO		USSR	Other WP		
H-Day Army Divisions	6	2	8	Category I Division	29	20	9
1st Echelon Divisions	-	-	-	Category II Divisions	14	14	-
2nd Echelon Divisions	6	4	10	Category III Divisions	8	8	-
Peacetime Manpower	169,000	22,000	191,000	Peacetime Manpower	436,000	370,000	66,000

SOUTHEAST FLANK

Reinforcing Forces	U.S.		Total	Total WP		USSR	Rumania & Bulgaria
	U.S.	Other NATO		USSR	Other WP		
H-Day Marine Division/ Kings Teams C/ 1st Echelon Divisions	2	-	2	Category I Divisions	2	2	-
2nd Echelon Divisions	-	-	-	Category II Divisions	12	7	6
Peacetime Manpower	70,000	55,000	125,000	Category III Divisions	7	6	-
				Peacetime Manpower	145,000	115,000	30,000

Cumulative Deployments	U.S.		Total	Cumulative Deployments (DIA Estimate)		USSR (DIA Estimate)	USSR (Estimate with U.S. Criteria)	Rumania & Bulgaria
	U.S.	Greece & Turkey		U.S.	Total WP			
H-Day	-	13/160,000	13/160,000	H-Day	15/145,000	0/0	0/0	15/145,000
H+15	-	20/200,000	20/200,000	H+15	19/190,000	0/0	0/0	19/190,000
H+30	1/35,000	20/260,000	21/295,000	H+30	29/332,000	8/127,000	2/ 32,000	21/205,000
H+90	2/70,000	23/280,000	25/350,000	H+90	29/332,000	8/127,000	8/127,000	21/205,000

NORTH ITALY AREA				NORTH NORWAY AREA			
1st Echelon Divisions	U.S.	Category II Divisions	Peacetime Manpower	1st Echelon Divisions	U.S.	Category II Divisions	Peacetime Manpower
1st Echelon Divisions	2.5	Category II Divisions	27,000	1st Echelon Divisions	2.7	Category II Divisions	11,000
Peacetime Manpower	37,000	Peacetime Manpower	27,000	Peacetime Manpower	11,000		

Cumulative Deployments (Divisions/Manpower)	U.S.		Total	Cumulative Deployments (Divisions/Manpower)		USSR
	U.S.	Other NATO		USSR	Other WP	
H-Day	7/119,000	-	7/119,000	H-Day	3/ 7,000	7/ 80,000
H+15	9.5/276,000	-	9.5/276,000	H+15	3.0/160,000	7/111,000
H+30	9.5/387,000	-	9.5/387,000	H+30	3.0/180,000	7/111,000
H+90	9.5/387,000	-	9.5/387,000	H+90	3.0/180,000	7/111,000

a/ These forces are not all principally oriented toward NATO. Capability is lower during the war in Southeast Asia.
 b/ Using these assumptions, fourteen more Soviet divisions would arrive between H+30 and H+36 raising the manpower total to 1,418,000 at H+36.
 c/ Weight also be used in other regions.

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	<u>NATO</u>	<u>Pact With DIA Estimate</u>	<u>Pact With U.S. Criteria</u>
M-Day	619,000	628,000	628,000
M+15	906,000	1,268,000	878,000
M+30	1,031,000	1,418,000	1,207,000 ^{a/}
M+90	1,318,000	1,488,000	1,488,000

a/ Using these assumptions, fourteen more Soviet divisions would arrive between M+30 and M+36, raising the manpower total to 1,418,000 at M+36.

The Pact's manpower advantage at M+30 would be 17 to 37%. Their reinforcement adds proportionately more combat units and weapons, especially tanks. Also, the quality of our Allies' mobilized forces is low. In terms of overall combat capability, the total NATO force at this point would probably be some 30 to 40% less than the Pact's. This gap would then begin to narrow.

In tactical aircraft, NATO and Pact forces would be about equal in number until M+30, after which time the U.S. could add 2,000 more aircraft than the USSR. Because NATO air forces are much superior to Pact air forces for nonnuclear war, however, our relative combat power is far greater than indicated by the number of aircraft.

NATO's mobilization capability on the flanks is better than in the Center Region, primarily because the flank countries have large numbers of reserve units. After full mobilization, NATO forces would match or exceed in size the Pact's in all regions, though the Pact would have qualitative advantages, especially in Norway.

Our Allies' forces in all regions could generally be improved by more efficient use of resources. Small expenditures to increase the training and equipment of reserves, to balance stocks of ammunition and supplies, and to fill out existing division forces could increase capability substantially. The Germans, for example, should increase the mechanization of their divisions, add artillery, and provide more racks and modern ordnance for their aircraft. Reductions in less essential areas, such as certain naval forces, would permit most of these improvements within planned total budget levels. Tripartite talks and NATO studies have raised these issues, and we will continue to urge our Allies to improve their forces along these lines.

C. Capability to Meet Strategic Objectives

The above survey of NATO and Warsaw Pact forces shows, in my view, that NATO has the ability to meet the three objectives for nonnuclear capabilities in Europe discussed above.*

* The JCS believe the forces are inadequate.

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