

69D 258 041179
File NATO E22
Strategy R

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR: G - Mr. Kohler

FROM: G/PM - Philip J. Farley

SUBJECT: NATO Strategy

1. The issue of NATO strategy, which I described to you in my memorandum of December 1 (attached), has come to a head more sharply than we had anticipated. For the last several days, the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) has been discussing a document which would forward MC 14/3 to the Ministers for consideration at their meeting next week.
2. The Dutch have proposed language in the covering note to the Ministers emphasizing that NATO strategy should continue to stress the uncertainty as to when and under what circumstances we would escalate. This position is supported by several other major continental members of the Alliance.
3. We have been opposed to this and other qualifying language on several grounds. First, we are concerned that if NATO strategy places too much emphasis on escalation we will be forced to the use of nuclear weapons too early and we want to avoid this. Second, we are concerned that this will reduce the incentives to develop adequate conventional forces. Third, as a matter of procedure, we do not want to see the covering note emphasize one part of the strategic concept as distinct from another.

IS/FPC/CDR JS Date: 5/27/93

MR Cases Only:
EO Citations

TS authority to:
() CLASSIFY as () S or () C OADR
() DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C OADR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

(X) RELEASE () DECLASSIFY
() EXCISE () DECLASSIFY
() DENY IN PART
() DELETE Non-Responsive Info

FOIA Exemptions
PA Exemptions

SECRET

4, While all of these are legitimate concerns, our reluctance to accept the Dutch proposal has created the impression that the US has in some way basically altered its nuclear strategy and its nuclear commitment to NATO. (See attached cable.) If we allow this impression to grow, it could have disastrous effects on the Alliance.

5. Ambassador Cleveland proposed that he be authorized to reach a compromise before the Ministers convene in order to avoid a major, and probably publicly visible, debate among the Fourteen at Brussels. Secretary McNamara has rejected this compromise and said that he wants to debate the issue in the DPC meeting. While it may prove useful for the Ministers to have something concrete to debate, such a debate could also be highly divisive. If the result is an inability among the Fourteen to reach agreement on MC 14/3, this will be widely recognized as a major NATO failure.

6. In our view, the current MC 14/3 reflects a great deal of what the US wants. We should not seek perfection at the expense of losing the whole document. In particular, we should be careful that the discussion of this matter does not leave the impression that the US has fundamentally changed its own strategy or commitments to NATO unless we have. If and we want to now make that explicit, in fact we have, /we should be prepared for very wide-ranging political consequences in the Alliance.

E22
69D258
BY 1179 R



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

SECRET

December 1, 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: G - Mr. Kohler
FROM: G/PM - Philip J. Farley
SUBJECT: NATO Strategy - BACKGROUND MEMORANDUM

1. At the December Ministerial Meeting, the NATO Ministers will be asked to act upon MC 14/3, which will establish a major new strategic concept for NATO. This is the culmination of a process which was started with the French withdrawal from military commands, and which permitted NATO to take a new look at strategy for the first time in almost ten years. In general terms, the strategic concept is being described as "flexible response" as distinct from the old concept of "massive retaliation." However, this is a considerable over-simplification.

2. As you will recall, the first major step in the revision of NATO strategy was the adoption last May by the Defense Ministers of new political guidance to the military authorities. This document in itself was a compromise. MC 14/3 is a further compromise. The US would prefer to go even further towards flexible response. Our allies are prepared to go a long ways, but not as far as we are.

3. The difference between ourselves and many of the Europeans is reflected primarily in two issues. First is the issue of political warning. We have pressed the concept that NATO will probably have weeks of warning in which to mobilize. The best we could get in the Ministerial Guidance and in MC 14/3 was agreement that this is a factor which should be considered in planning, but reliance on political warning involved "considerable risk." The second issue is how NATO strategy should deal with escalation. The Europeans continue to emphasize deterrence and stress the need to pose the risk of escalation

IS/FPC/CDR JS Date: 5/27/93
MR Cases Only: EO Citations
TS authority to: () S or () C OADR () S or () C OADR
CLASSIFY as () S or () C OADR
DOWNGRADE TS to () S or () C OADR
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
(X) RELEASE () DECLASSIFY
() EXCISE () DECLASSIFY IN PART
() DENY
() DELETE Non-Responsive Info
FOIA Exemptions
PA Exemptions

SECRET

in order to deter attack or stop it if it occurs. Increasingly, we have stressed the need to avoid escalation in order to limit damage should a war occur. These issues remain unresolved in 14/3.

4. The proposed US position for the Ministerial Meeting is not to take issue with 14/3 in detail, but to note that in some respects it is not consistent with the Ministerial Guidance. Where it is not consistent, the Ministerial Guidance should govern. While we believe this is a practical and acceptable political compromise, it should not disguise the fact that fundamental differences on strategy continue to confront the Alliance.

5. US views on NATO strategy are prompted primarily by the following considerations:

a. The Soviets have achieved a secure second-strike capability and a major Soviet tactical nuclear arsenal exists. These two factors make it desirable that NATO be in a position to defend European territory against a limited Soviet non-nuclear attack without resort to nuclear weapons. We recognize that we cannot defend against full-scale Soviet attack without resort to nuclear weapons, but we hope to keep the non-nuclear threshold high enough to deter such an attack.

b. At the same time, pressures from Congress and the demands of the Vietnam conflict have made it imperative that we make some reduction in our forces in Europe, while making every effort to maintain allied forces at or above present levels. We have devised political warning and strategic mobility as a rationale for removing forces from Europe without reducing NATO military capabilities.

6. From the European standpoint, the following factors govern their strategic thinking:

a. The Europeans generally believe that a Soviet attack on Western Europe is highly unlikely. While they accept the fact that mutual deterrence exists, they are not prepared to accept a NATO strategy which involves greater risk-taking for the Europeans than for the US. Specifically, they want the Soviets to continue to believe that any attack on NATO would involve grave risks of retaliation on the Soviet Union by

the US. Thus, they are still inclined toward a public posture which emphasizes the risks of escalation rather than avoidance of escalation.

b. While the Europeans generally accept the fact that some reduction in US forces in Europe is inevitable, they are not prepared to fill the gap. Nor are they convinced that political warning will necessarily suffice to trigger the return of US forces to Europe.

7. Clearly there is a conflict between a deterrent strategy and a defensive strategy. To deter, one wants to keep the risks of escalation as formidable as possible. In defense, one wants to keep the possibility of escalation as limited as possible. While both we and the Europeans recognize the need for both a deterrent and a war fighting strategy, the Europeans continue to place higher priority on deterrence. They also place a higher priority on defending territory even at the risk of escalation (this is particularly true of forward countries such as Germany and Turkey), and quite logically the Europeans do not readily accept a strategy in which we try to avoid escalation while Europe is being attacked.

8. In sum, while the Ministerial Guidance and the new 14/3 strategy have undoubtedly brought US and European views on strategy closer together, these documents have also papered over some significant differences which are likely to continue to plague us in the future.