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February 21, 1956

To: S - The Secretary
Through: S/S
From: EUR - Mr. Merchant
S/AE - Mr. Smith
Subject: European Atomic Problems.

We are becoming increasingly impressed with the range of atomic problems with widespread political implications which we are facing in the European area. This situation is, of course, in many respects a natural consequence of the technical revolution that is taking place, both with respect to the development of atomic weapons and to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. To the extent, however, that nuclear developments increase their impact on national sovereignties, including the effectiveness of national defense forces and the strength of national economies, new and unparalleled problems are brought to the fore affecting the whole range of our relations with these Governments.

The purpose of this memorandum is to suggest a coordinated study of how we can cope with certain immediate problems in this field which require early solution. Bearing on this problem are the following broad U.S. policy objectives as now established or as they are beginning to emerge:

1. Our disarmament objective is to prevent, retard or minimize the development of nuclear weapons programs by nations other than the three who have already achieved a competency in this field.
2. In the European area, it is still our objective to build and maintain an effective deterrent based on an atomic strategy. This is accepted NATO doctrine to which we have given our concurrence.
3. On the peaceful use side, it is our objective, within security limitations, to assist friendly governments in the development of non-military programs. As yet unresolved is the issue of whether we will extend such assistance to countries which seek to develop a nuclear weapons capability.
4. It is our objective to encourage European integration by the Community of 6 and we believe the proposed EURATOM project gives the greatest hope for progress in this direction.

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SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

S/AE

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5. Nuclear questions will increasingly engage the interest of the public and be exploited as far as possible by the Soviet Union for propaganda purposes. It is our objective to persuade world public opinion that the U.S. and the West in general is 1) willing and able to help other peoples to advance in the peaceful uses of atomic energy and reap the benefits they provide, and 2) sincerely desirous of cooperating in steps to remove the threat of nuclear warfare, within the limitations imposed by reasonable free world security requirements.

The realization of these objectives raises a host of problems, both in themselves and with respect to current projects under consideration in various parts of the Department and elsewhere in the Government. To a large degree, these problems are interrelated. Almost all of them have far-reaching political implications. The main issues with which we are currently dealing are:

1. The U.K.

Possibility of storage of nuclear weapons in the U.K. under Joint U.S.-U.K. custody for use by British in wartime. You have already approved a proposal for a joint AEC/State/Defense study of this problem.

2. Canada

Prospective negotiations to secure U.S. advance rights in connection with air defense to carry and use nuclear weapons in Canadian air space and to take off from Canadian bases with such weapons.

3. France

a) U.S. requirement to introduce and store nuclear weapons.

b) French desire for Air Force training in use of nuclear weapons and for assurance that U.S. nuclear weapons would be made available to French forces for use in event of war.

c) French plans for development of nuclear weapons production program.

4. Italy

U.S. requirement to introduce and store nuclear weapons for use of U.S. forces stationed in that country.

5. Spain

U.S. requirement to introduce and store nuclear weapons for use of U.S. forces stationed in that country.

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6. Denmark (for Greenland) and Iceland

Use of nuclear weapons in ADIZ areas.

7. Other Countries (e.g. Portugal for Azores, Germany, Iceland, Morocco and Turkey)

Anticipated requirement for use of nuclear weapons in air defense of U.S. bases.

8. NATO in General

a) Implementation of NATO Atomic Agreement, especially in field of training.

b) Expectation that NATO countries will desire assurance of availability of nuclear weapons for air defense and for the implementation of NATO strategy and plans.

The totality of these problems on the military side of the picture seems to present us with the following dilemmas:

1. On the one hand, we are encouraging our NATO allies to cooperate in the building of an effective deterrent based on the use of nuclear weapons. On the other hand, we wish to discourage the inauguration of nuclear weapons programs by kth countries and, at the same time, are not presently willing or able to furnish our allies with such weapons from our own resources.

2. For reasons of national prestige and legitimate defense concern, there is strong pressure in certain European countries for the development of a national nuclear weapons program. France is the most obvious case in point. For us to pursue a policy of discouraging the development of French nuclear capability and, at the same time, to withhold furnishing such weapons from our own resources is likely to create a host of problems affecting the whole range of our relationships with France. The problem, while less acute in other countries, is likely to be a developing one. Further problems arise, in this connection, from the WEU Agreements prohibiting the development of a nuclear weapons industry in Germany (e.g. if the French decide to develop an industry, could the Germans over a period of time resist the pressure to do likewise?)

3. If we wish to obtain the military storage and use rights which we require in foreign countries, we must be prepared to pay some price for them. In some cases at least, our allies will probably desire that the price take the form of an increased sharing of nuclear know-how, assured availability of weapons for their own defense, and participation in decisions with respect to use.

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On the peaceful uses side, there are additional problems with far-reaching political implications:

1. What should be the nature of our support for EURATOM if, as appears probable, Monnet's efforts are not successful to bring about a forswearing by national Governments of the right to produce nuclear weapons?

2. Is it politically feasible for us to make our peaceful uses assistance through IAEA or in bilateral arrangements dependent on a renunciation of or moratorium on weapons development by 4th countries?

The foregoing is not intended as a full inventory of the problems we face. We think, however, that it gives some idea of their scope and the common problems they present. All of them are of obvious concern to State, Defense and AEC and will, in due course, have to be considered by those three agencies.

We believe, however, that a desirable and perhaps necessary first step would be to undertake a comprehensive political analysis of the nuclear problems we are facing in the European area, including examination of the means by which and the extent to which it is politically feasible to achieve the objectives set forth above. Once such a study is completed we should be in a position more effectively to examine these problems with Defense, AEC and Mr. Stassen's Office (as appropriate), to test possible courses of action against military and technical considerations and to arrive at a practical program.

Recommendations:

That you authorize a small Departmental working group to prepare, on an urgent basis, a political analysis along the lines outlined above, together with tentative suggestions for politically feasible action. This is intended to serve as the basis for discussions at the earliest possible date with other interested agencies leading to the formulation of a working-level recommended program of action for your consideration and for the consideration of the heads of the other agencies. Participants in the political phase of the study would be S/P, S/AS and EUR and other interested offices of the Department as their responsibilities are affected.

Clearance:

S/P

Approval _____

Disapproval _____

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