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MEMORANDUM

*Stockpile General*  
*July 1, 1957*  
*A. D. ...*  
*File*  
*Nato Atomic*  
*Lyons*

TO: The Secretary  
THROUGH: S/S  
FROM: EUR - C. Burke Elrick, and  
S/AE - Gerard C. Smith  
SUBJECT: NATO Atomic Stockpile.

1. At the Four Ministerial Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, in connection with the discussion of the "Fourth Country" problem, Pineau suggested the idea of an "integrated NATO atomic capability" at the disposition of the NATO Supreme Commander. You expressed interest in the idea and said we would give it study.

2. Since then, The French have been pressing for our views. They have indicated that they are thinking of firm assurances of the availability of nuclear weapons to them which could only be accomplished by a change in the Atomic Energy Act so as to authorize the peacetime transfer of nuclear warheads.

3. We do not consider it desirable or realistic to contemplate such a change in legislation at this time. It is not believed that the Congress is prepared to go that far at the present time. Serious risks of irresponsible use of nuclear weapons would be created if a legislative change led to actual transfers of weapons to individual foreign nations. While technical developments in the next year or two may then face us with the question of the immediate availability to other NATO countries of nuclear weapons for air defense, this question is not yet before us.

4. However, a pattern of motion toward an integrated NATO nuclear defense has been established. In December 1954 the Council accepted the concept of planning on the use of nuclear weapons in M.C. 48, which was reaffirmed in the Political Directive of 1956. We have informed the North Atlantic Council that nuclear/dual-purpose weapons, such as MIKE, Corporal, and Honest John will be included in our current aid programs for them. We have told them that we are prepared to train their forces in the use of these weapons, and in the case of France, have offered to train them in the technique of delivery by aircraft of atomic

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bombs if we get nuclear storage rights. The inevitable next step in the program is to assure our allies that their forces trained in the delivery thereof would have nuclear warheads available to them in time of hostilities. The French have already asked for such assurances.

5. To accomplish this within the framework of present legislation we could either:

- a) Give bilateral assurances that the United States would stockpile nuclear warheads for use by our respective allies, keeping them in U.S. custody and turning them over in time of war, or
- b) Do the same thing, but give it the flavor of a NATO stockpile, to the extent that the limitations of the present legislation would permit.

6. There are certain possible advantages involved in the latter course of action which the former course of action would not afford:

- a) It is possible, -- but it is no more than a possibility -- that such an arrangement would have some influence on the French decision to embark on a nuclear weapons program. France is the only NATO country which could embark on such a program in the near future. Questions of prestige are primarily involved. In addition, unrealistic though it may be in light of the limited French capacity, the question of lessened dependence upon the United States in times when the United States might be reluctant to use nuclear weapons is also a factor. The Italian Ambassador recently indicated support for a French nuclear effort on those grounds. If we were to seek a pledge of abstention from France in return for the nuclear stockpile, it is believed this would be counter-productive unless we were prepared to transfer weapons to France immediately without any conditions on their use. The French Defense Minister has spoken of the new government's policy to move rapidly in the field of nuclear weapons development and production, and this is the likely attitude of this Cabinet.
- b) We might be able to obtain Council agreement to nuclear storage rights for our own forces as well as for other NATO forces, thus obviating the very difficult problem of bilateral arrangements.
- c) We might be able to obtain some nominal contribution to the stockpile from Britain, although this would probably be of marginal value only.

- d) Should the Soviets reverse their position and accept our disarmament proposal for cut-off of nuclear weapons production, we might be able to deal with the British requirement for nuclear weapons material through the NATO stockpile.
7. Such a formula would also have no overriding disadvantages:
- a) Our allies would be assured of the availability of nuclear weapons to the extent the present law allows.
- b) The rights of the United States to use nuclear weapons in the defense of its own forces, particularly in Germany, could be preserved.
- c) The irresponsible use of nuclear weapons could be controlled to the same extent as at present.
- d) We gather from Defense that Admiral Radford is concerned lest we mislead our allies that the ultimate decision of use would rest other than in the President's hands and lest we create precedent for the SEATO and Baghdad Pact arrangements. As to the first point, our allies are already concerned at this situation, and our proposal is an attempt to alleviate that concern. To emphasize Presidential control of the situation would be to exacerbate our allies' reaction to this inescapable problem. As to precedent for SEATO or the Baghdad Pact this is true only to a degree, and can be said of all activities in NATO.
8. The following outline plan is therefore suggested:
- a) SACEUR should develop military requirements for nuclear warheads for his whole area of command, (and also, to the extent possible, for British forces in the United Kingdom). These requirements should take into consideration the state of readiness of forces to use nuclear warheads.
- b) Taking account of such limited contributions as the United Kingdom would make, SACEUR should forward these requirements to the United States military authorities through CINCEUR (General Horstad is both SACEUR and CINCEUR).
- c) The United States would engage to place such required warheads in locations requested by SACEUR for the ready use of NATO forces able to use them, these warheads remain the property of the United States and to remain in the custody of CINCEUR.

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- d) Transfer of weapons in time of hostilities from CINCEUR to the national military authorities of other members would take place only:
- 1) Upon ~~the~~ agreement in the North Atlantic Council, or
  - 11) In the event of sudden hostilities in Allied Command Europe or United Kingdom requiring action prior to the decision of the NATO nations in accordance with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, at the direction of SACEUR in consonance with the spirit of the Political Directive. (Hostilities in Berlin would be subject to special arrangements).

(As the Council acts only by unanimity, involving United States consent, and as SACEUR/CINCEUR for the foreseeable future will be a United States officer, the requirements for U.S. control would appear to be met by the foregoing formula).

- e) Acceptance of storage rights subject only to technical arrangements should be obtained.

9. The only other alternative conceivable, which might have a chance of being acceptable both to the Congress and to our allies, would be to seek legislation which would authorize the peacetime transfer of nuclear warheads subject to agreement that they will not be used except:

- a) As directed by the North Atlantic Council, or
- b) In case of emergency as directed by SACEUR.

This would go far to meet the desires of our allies who wish to have nuclear weapons in their sole control. Practically, however, it does not provide other than paper safeguards, and it is doubtful whether it would be completely acceptable as a half way house to either us or to them.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the attached draft letter to Defense, setting forth this concept, to insure that it is considered in the current JCS study of this matter (TAB A). We should, after agreement with Defense, have to explore this with the Atomic Energy Commission, and it would be advisable to have appropriate Congressional liaison. We might then discuss this bilaterally with the French, Germans, and British before deciding to present it to the North Atlantic Council.

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CONCURRENCE:

S/P - Mr. Nowie

C - Mr. Reinhardt

RA - Mr. Timmons

EUR:RA:JJWolf:ceh

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By CRW NARA Date 9/15/95

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July 2, 1957

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Dear Mr. Secretary:

I thought it might be helpful to provide you with the preliminary thinking of this Department on the subject of the stockpiling of nuclear components for atomic weapons for NATO forces (both U.S. and foreign), so that these tentative views might be given consideration in the studies which your Department is now pursuing on this matter. POLTO 2765 contained the recommendation of our missions in the field on this subject.

It is our view that at the present time it is neither feasible nor desirable to seek a change in the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 so as to provide for the peacetime transfer of nuclear components to our allies.

At the same time, however, we believe that it might be possible, within the framework of present legislation, to go as far as possible to assure our allies that we will have nuclear warheads readily available for their use in the event of hostilities. This is a natural development, following upon the adoption of a nuclear strategy by NATO, and our programs for providing our NATO allies with equipment and training in delivery of nuclear weapons.

We have been thinking that the United States and (to a nominal extent, the United Kingdom) would maintain nuclear weapons at appropriate sites in the theater to meet nuclear components requirements developed by SACEUR for NATO missions in Allied Command Europe and also, to the extent possible, for British forces in the United Kingdom supporting the NATO mission. While we would call this project a "NATO atomic stockpile", in fact, the United States and the United Kingdom would retain such nuclear weapons in their own respective custody and control. Nuclear components would be earmarked for the forces of other NATO nations over and above those earmarked by the United States and United Kingdom for their own forces.

The United States and the United Kingdom military authorities who would respectively retain custody of their own nuclear components in the stockpile, would turn them over only in the event of hostilities, (a) upon agreement in the North Atlantic Council, or (b) in the event of sudden hostilities at the direction of SACEUR/CINCEUR. As the Council acts only

The Honorable  
Charles E. Wilson  
Secretary of Defense

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by unanimity, involving United States consent, and as SACEUR/CINCEUR for the foreseeable future will be a U.S. officer, the requirements for United States control would appear to be met.

If we were to give this as much of a NATO flavor as possible, subject to the limitations of present legislation, we might obtain large political benefits therefrom while, at the same time, not sacrificing any of the aspects of U.S. control which the present situation now affords. Such a formula appropriately portrayed as a NATO stockpile might be of assistance to us with respect to the Fourth Country problem, the problem of obtaining nuclear storage rights for our own forces, and, should the situation so require, the British desire for an assurance of nuclear weapons material in the event the Soviets should accept our disarmament proposal for cut-off of nuclear weapons production. We realize this is a complex problem, but it is our thought, subject to your views, that there does not appear to be overriding disadvantages.

I hope that this outline of a plan could receive the attention of your Department. It would seem to meet General Horstad's views as set forth in Paris' 6651. Representatives of this Department will be prepared to discuss the matter in detail with your representatives, if that would be helpful.

Sincerely,

John Foster Dulles

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