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ISSUES PAPERS
on the
U. S. POSITIONS FOR THE EIGHTEEN-NATION
DISARMAMENT COMMITTEE

The Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) resumes its sessions on Tuesday, March 18, 1969, in Geneva. The agenda includes three major issues on which the US should have a position at the beginning of the meeting: (1) the Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB); (2) the Cutoff of Production of Fissionable Material for Weapons; and (3) Seabed Arms Control.

The CTB and Production Cutoff have been basic elements of the US arms control position for the past decade. There is little likelihood that agreement could be reached at this time on the previous US proposals for a CTB and the Production Cutoff since they have been consistently opposed by the Soviet Union. The question of Seabed Arms Control is currently a matter of particular international interest, stimulated by recent UN activities in the field. This appears to offer the most promising area for early agreement with the Soviets on a limited arms control measure of international significance, should we decide that such an agreement is in our interest.

There will be very strong pressure on the US delegation at the ENDC to take a position on these central issues. In view of the change in Administrations, any attempt to avoid discussion of the issues would probably be interpreted as a reversal in the basic US position.

In these circumstances, there are two basic questions to be addressed on each of these proposals:

1. Is the proposal in the net security interest of the US?
2. What position should the US delegation take on the proposal at the ENDC meeting?

Separate issues papers on each of these proposals, examining the pros and cons of these basic questions, are attached.

COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN (CTB)

I. THE PROBLEM

What position should the US take on the CTB at the ENDC?

II. ISSUES

The issues to be examined in determining the US position are:

1. Would agreement on a CTB be in the net security interest of the U.S. now? -- in 3 years if, as now scheduled, we complete sufficient testing of ABM and MIRV warheads for initial entry into stockpile?

2. Should the US reiterate its support for a verified CTB at the ENDC?

The pros and cons on each of these questions can be summarized along the following lines:

1. Would agreement on a CTB be in the net security interest of the US now? -- in 3 years if, as now scheduled, we complete testing of initial operational ABM and MIRV warheads?

PRO:

a. Test ban now or in 3 years -- Such a ban would have security advantages for the US, including: (1) inhibit the Soviets' ability to develop new weapon systems or improve their existing systems by precluding testing of new warheads for MIRVs or advanced ABMs (this would have more effect now than three years from now); (2) reinforce the NPT and serve as a more acceptable non-proliferation measure to some important states (e.g., India) whose acceptance of a non-nuclear weapon status may be essential to success of NPT; and (3) gain Soviet acceptance of on-site inspections.

b. Test ban in 3 years -- US will, according to current schedule, have completed test programs for initial operational MIRV and ABM systems.

CON:

a. Test ban during next 2-3 years -- Underground testing is necessary to accomplish development of presently planned ABM and MIRV systems.

b. Test ban now, or in 3 years --

(1) In order to maintain maximum confidence in stockpiled weapons, it is necessary to continue a quality surveillance program including underground tests, in the event modification is necessary.

(2) It is not clear what arrangements, if any, could be prescribed in a CTB treaty which would permit development and perhaps even effective use of nuclear explosive devices for peaceful purposes without creating a serious loophole for obtaining weapons development data.

(3) US military capabilities could be significantly reduced vis-a-vis potential enemies unless nuclear weapon testing is continued or additional delivery capabilities are acquired. If strategic arms limitations were to be adopted, the latter option could be foreclosed making continued testing even more important. Continued testing is necessary for development in confidence of new or improved warheads and the study of damaging effects on weapons systems.

2. Should the US reiterate its support for a verified CTB at the ENDC?

PRO:

a. The US has supported an adequately verified CTB for more than a decade. A reversal of this position, which has had the formal endorsement of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, would be seen throughout the world as an inauspicious beginning for the new Administration in the field of arms control.

b. The Limited Test Ban Treaty calls on the US to pursue negotiations for a CTB, an obligation recalled in the preamble to the NPT. Additionally, the NPT obligates the parties to work toward further nuclear disarmament. Reversal of our position would be used by opponents of the NPT to support their charges that the Treaty is aimed only at non-nuclear states.

c. Low-key presentation of our present position would almost certainly not trigger negotiations. In the very unlikely event that the Soviets accept on-site inspections, the resulting negotiations would be quite protracted since they would involve the nature and procedures for on-site inspection and the role of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. This would allow us to control the pace of the negotiations so that we could continue testing until we decided it would be in our net security interest to forego nuclear weapons testing.

d. Agreement is in our interest per pros above.

CON:

a. We should not subject ourselves to any additional pressures to cease testing, which would result if the Soviets accepted our position on verification or if advances in detection and verification capabilities undercut our position on on-site inspections.

b. The advent of strategic arms limitations talks would fulfill our NPT obligations to pursue further measures of nuclear arms control and help cover any criticisms of a reversal of our CTB position.

c. Agreement is not in our interest per cons above.

NOTE:

Instead of either low-key reiteration or retraction of our CTB position, we could attempt to evade the problem by either (a) remaining silent on the CTB, or (b) stating that our CTB position was under review.

Neither of these alternate courses of action appears viable. If we remain silent, we will be asked questions at the ENDC about our CTB position and continued silence would then be interpreted as a reversal of our position. If we were to state that our CTB position was under review, this would focus more attention on the CTB issue and would thus increase the costs of any eventual reversal of our position.

3/8/69

CUTOFF OF FISSIONABLE MATERIAL
PRODUCTION FOR WEAPONS PURPOSES

I. THE PROBLEM

What position should be taken at the ENDC on the proposal for the cutoff of fissionable material production for weapons purposes.

For more than ten years the US has proposed that the nuclear weapon powers agree to halt production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons, and to transfer agreed quantities of weapons grade fissionable material to peaceful uses. In addition to the cutoff, the U. S. proposal currently on the table also provides for the transfer to peaceful purposes of 60,000 kilograms of U. S. and 40,000 kilograms of Soviet U-235 weapons grade uranium and up to 4,000 kilograms of plutonium. This material would come from the demonstrated destruction of weapons. Verification would involve IAEA safeguards inspection of material transferred to peaceful uses and of declared facilities, and on-site adversary inspection for clandestine facilities. The question has now been raised as to whether this proposal is in our security interests since our present stockpile of nuclear materials would cover existing requirements; it would not cover all future contingency requirements. The Soviet Union has consistently opposed past U. S. cutoff-transfer proposals and is expected to continue to do so.

II. ISSUES

In these circumstances, the following issues should be examined in determining the U. S. position on the cutoff:

1. Would a cutoff-transfer-destruction agreement now be in the overall U. S. security interest?
2. Should the U. S. reiterate its support for the cutoff-transfer-destruction agreement?
3. Should the U. S. put forward a new proposal?

The pros and cons on each of these questions can be summarized along the following lines:

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1. Would a cutoff-transfer-destruction agreement now be in the over-all U. S. security interest?

PRO:

a. [REDACTED]

It would make it impossible for the Soviets to achieve the "greater-than-expected threat" to the U. S. which the DOD has used for U. S. strategic planning. The U. S., on the other hand, has available enough fissionable material to complete the currently approved weapons stockpile objectives, including the planned Sentinel ABM program and the planned MIRV warheads for Poseidon and Minuteman III, and still meet the transfer-destruction requirements of the proposal.

b. The U. S. has already unilaterally ceased production of all enriched uranium and of virtually all plutonium for weapons purposes. According to the Defense Secretary's Memorandum to the President on Nuclear Weapons Materials, dated January 17, 1969: "Our FY 1969 inventories of uranium and plutonium and programmed tritium production are sufficient for our recommended nuclear warhead stockpile plus the options that may be needed to protect against the combined greater-than-expected Soviet offensive and defensive threats through FY 1977. If we decided to defend Minuteman, we would need additional tritium production for Sprint warheads, but not before FY 1974."

c. Soviet acceptance of IAEA inspection, as required by this proposal, would involve a major opening up of the Soviet Union.

d. If the Soviet Union agreed to the proposed transfer to peaceful uses of contained uranium-235 and agreed amounts of plutonium (up to 4,000 kilograms) by the demonstrated destruction of nuclear weapons, the impact on U. S. programs would be far smaller than the impact on the Soviet program.

CON:

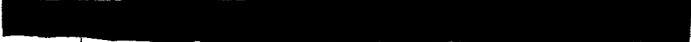
a. [REDACTED]

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b. 

 For example, in FY 1977 the JCS recommend a total nuclear warhead stockpile of nearly twice the size recommended by the Secretary of Defense. Therefore, it would be premature to foreclose on the JCS position by a cutoff of fissionable materials production.

c. There are possible errors as large as 30-40% in U. S. intelligence estimates of Soviet production of fissionable material, still larger uncertainties in the amount of fissionable material the Soviets plan to use in their weapons, and which of various possible options they are likely to select for weapons allocation.

d. Transfer of plutonium to peaceful uses from "demonstrated destruction" of weapons retired from the stockpile on a current basis would make it impossible to meet the options to protect the U. S. against the combined "greater-than-expected" threats, even if serious measures were taken, such as moving all weapons grade plutonium from non-weapons uses to the weapons program at the time of cutoff. Although we have not taken a public position on this question, tritium production for weapons (apart from that required to compensate for the radioactive decay of the tritium in the weapons inventory and the stockpile) would be terminated at time of cutoff according to our previous internal position. If the agreement included this provision, the tritium requirements for the option to expand the Sentinel system by exercising the option to defend Minute-man by adding additional Sprint missiles could not be met.

2. Should the U. S. reiterate its support for a cutoff-transfer-destruction agreement?

PRO:

a. The U. S. has supported an adequately verified production cutoff for more than a decade. A reversal of this position, which has had the formal endorsement of Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson, would be seen throughout the world as an inauspicious beginning for the new Administration in the field of arms control.

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b. NPT obligates the parties to work toward further nuclear disarmament. Reversal of our position would be used by opponents of the NPT to support their charges that the treaty is aimed only at non-nuclear states.

c. Low-key presentation of our present position would almost certainly not trigger negotiations. In the very unlikely event that the Soviets agreed to a production cutoff-transfer agreement in principle, the resulting negotiations would be quite protracted since they would involve the nature of and procedures for on-site inspection. This would allow us to control the pace of the negotiations so that we could continue production until we decided it would be in our net security interest to forego nuclear weapons production.

d. Agreement is in our interest per pros above.

CON:

a. We should not subject ourselves to any additional pressures to foreclose future production, which would result if the Soviets accepted the desirability of a production cutoff and accepted our position on verification.

b. The advent of strategic arms limitation talks would fulfill our NPT obligations to pursue further measures of nuclear arms control and help dover any criticisms of a reversal of our production cutoff position.

c. Agreement is not in our interest per cons above.

3. Should the U. S. put forward a new proposal?

Such a proposal could involve: (a) modifying the inspection procedures to eliminate adversary on-site inspection for clandestine facilities, thus following the lines of the NPT. The Review Group agreed that the change in inspection requirements was acceptable and would improve our image; (b) eliminating the provision for demonstrated destruction of nuclear weapons thereby permitting credit for the transfer of fissionable material other than that removed from weapons on a current basis; (c) requiring equal U. S. and Soviet transfers of fissionable material to

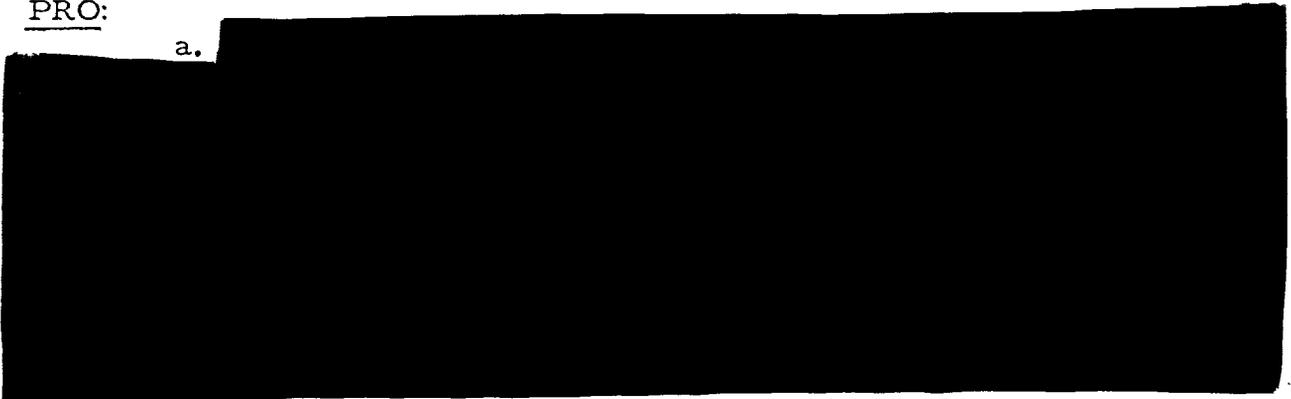
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DECLASSIFIED in Part
PA/HO, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
Date: 8/6/07

TAB A

Should the U. S. cutoff-transfer proposal be modified so as to omit the demonstrated destruction of nuclear weapons, but retain the offer to transfer agreed amounts of uranium-235 and plutonium to peaceful purposes?

PRO:

a. 

b. The U. S. would destroy real nuclear weapons, but we would not know whether the alleged Soviet weapons being destroyed were real or not.

CON:

a. The proposal for demonstrated destruction of weapons has been an effective answer to the Soviet and non-nuclear-weapon countries' argument that the cutoff-transfer proposal is not disarmament.

b. If an agreement were concluded within the next two years, present retirement programs would provide materials for the transfer and still allow sufficient material to meet currently planned U. S. weapon needs through FY 1972. The requirement would not exist to meet the "greater-than-expected" Soviet threat since it would require additional production on their part.

c. Regardless of how the U. S. explains withdrawal of its demonstrated destruction proposal, it will be viewed as a regressive step. Since the Soviet Union will almost certainly continue to reject the entire cutoff-transfer proposal, it would be better to maintain the entire U. S. posture by not retracting any part of it at this time.

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TAB B

Should the 1966 U. S. cutoff proposal be modified to call for equal U. S. and Soviet transfers of fissionable material to peaceful use, instead of our previous proposal for asymmetric amounts?

PRO:

a. The Soviet stockpile has grown appreciably since we offered in 1966 to transfer 60,000 kilograms of uranium-235 if the Soviets would transfer 40,000 kilograms.

b. 

c. Equal transfers might actually be more acceptable to the Soviet Union psychologically since that would avoid an implied public admission on their part that Soviet stockpiles or production capabilities were inferior to those of the United States.

CON:



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SEABED ARMS CONTROL

I. THE PROBLEM

Should the US offer to negotiate an international agreement to prohibit the emplacement or fixing of nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed or should we limit ourselves to discussing the factors vital to such an agreement?

In the past two years the international community has become increasingly interested in the possibilities of exploring and exploiting the resources of the seabed. Many countries, including the United States, have taken the position that the seabed beyond the limits of national jurisdiction should be reserved exclusively for peaceful purposes. Several countries, including the US and USSR, have proposed that the ENDC consider the question of arms control on the seabed. Specifically, President Johnson proposed that the ENDC: "Take up the question of arms control on the seabed with a view to defining those factors vital to a workable, verifiable, and effective international agreement which would prevent the use of this new environment for the emplacement of weapons of mass destruction."

II. ISSUES

In these circumstances, the following issues should be examined in determining the US position at the ENDC on Seabed Arms Control.

1. Would an agreement be in the overall U.S. security interest?
2. Should the U.S. put forward a specific proposal rather than reiterate its willingness to define factors vital for an agreement?

The pros and cons of each of these issues can be summarized along the following lines:

1. Would an agreement be in the overall U.S. security interest?

PRO:

- a. It would prevent the spread of the nuclear arms race to a new environment. It would be much easier to negotiate now before nuclear weapons are actually deployed on the seabed.

- b. The US has no plans or programs for seabed deployment of nuclear weapons.
- c. Such an agreement would not prohibit non-nuclear military uses of the seabed, nor would it limit the deployment of our SLBM forces.
- d. Although at present, cost-effectiveness factors do not appear to justify the deployment of weapons of mass destruction on the seabed, the US would still have many thousands of square miles of underwater area in the narrow band along its coasts within which it could carry on research and development and deploy such weapons, if required by some future situation.
- e. While there seems to be little incentive at present for either the US or USSR to place weapons on the seabed, less advanced powers might be tempted to take advantage of the relatively low technological threshold for using crude nuclear devices on the seabed for the purpose of nuclear blackmail.
- f. While Communist China would not sign, the existence of such an agreement might provide international support for any US actions to negate Chinese deployments prohibited by the treaty.
- g. According to a Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE 11-12-68, dated August 15, 1968), the US probably could verify by national means deployments of weapons of mass destruction under the open ocean, either individually encapsulated weapons or in missile-launching vehicles, before a substantial number became operational.

CON:

- a. An agreement would deny the US the option of using wide areas of the seabed as a means of maintaining the security of its nuclear capability if this should be required in the future.
- b. It would deny the US the military benefit of applying its technological lead in this environment.
- c. While the USSR has a land area over twice that of the US, giving it an obvious land-deployment advantage, the US has a conveniently located territorial base for the effective use and control of a wide range of deep seabed areas in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, whereas Soviet access to the deep oceans is relatively restricted and environmentally difficult.

d. Any such restrictions on seabed deployments may encourage proposals to establish further restrictions on military uses of the super-jacent waters or the air space above.

e. It might result in demands that the US reveal information on sensitive US underwater installations.

f. In light of the current ignorance about the oceans and the seabeds, it is impossible to envision all the ramifications which an arms control regime could impose upon the security interests of the US.

g. According to a Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE 11-12-68, dated August 15, 1968), there are a number of circumstances in which our capabilities by national means are limited. These include deployments under enclosed seas or of small numbers of individually encapsulated missiles or missile-launching vehicles. Moreover, our chances of detecting deployment of untended nuclear mines which did not make use of external command and control would be minimal.

2. Should the U.S. put forward a specific proposal rather than merely discuss the factors vital to such an agreement?

PRO:

a. It would demonstrate our willingness to cooperate in curbing the arms race by foregoing strategic options. This would help gain further support for the NPT.

b. Given the existing range of possible arms control measures available for discussion, such an agreement is the most likely topic on which multilateral arms control discussions could be held and early progress could be expected.

c. It would provide the ENDC with a suitable subject for debate and negotiation and would reduce pressures for premature efforts to achieve agreement on more difficult issues, such as a CTB.

d. It would help keep the seabed discussions in the forum which best serves US interests. Failure to act positively at the ENDC will not head off debate, but will allow the UN Seabeds Committee to seize control of the issue under conditions less favorable to the US.

e. Agreement is in our interests per pros above

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CON:

- a. The US has already proposed that the ENDC examine the question as to whether a viable international agreement may be achieved in which each party would agree not to emplace or fix weapons of mass destruction on the seabed, and the ENDC could undertake an examination of the vital factors without attempting to negotiate a specific proposal. This is an adequate basis for discussion.
- b. Such a measure, even if achieved, would not satisfy demands by other states for comprehensive arms control restrictions for the seabed.
- c. Even serious discussions on seabeds in the ENDC will not satisfy such members as India, Brazil, and Sweden, who can be expected to continue to insist on discussion of, and progress in, more difficult items, such as a CTB.
- d. Regardless of what criterion might be used to limit the zone of application, some states will oppose such an agreement in order to protect their positions on questions of sovereignty and jurisdiction, and the US risks raising a series of troublesome bilateral issues with such states at a time when negotiations on the territorial sea are commencing.
- e. Agreement is not in our interests per cons above.

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