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Ki June 17, 1975

LIMITED U. S. STRATEGIC ~~NUCLEAR~~ POSTURE

Q. Can you shed any more light on the story that the Air Force has begun training for fighting a limited nuclear war? Is this a new policy? What is the President's position on this?

A. The policy of flexibility in the possible employment of U. S. strategic nuclear forces is not new. President Nixon addressed this issue in his foreign policy report to the Congress in 1972 and Secretary Schlesinger has addressed the issue repeatedly for a year and a half. For a more detailed explanation of the rationale for this policy I would refer you to the 1976 Defense Posture Statement. The strategy of limited strategic nuclear force is ^{an} ~~one~~ option ~~among others~~ for the U. S. ^{which provides} ~~to consider~~ ^{an essential} ~~and a basic contingency for~~ our armed forces ^{to give them} ~~the flexibility of response, that has characterized our defense posture since the early 1960's.~~

I cannot comment on the specifics of military planning along these lines, but I would refer you to the numerous public comments made on the subject over the last several years.



June 19, 1975

NUCLEAR EXPORTING NATIONS MEETING

(Binder, N.Y. T. 6/18/75; Berger, W.P. 6/19/75)

Q. Can you give us any more details about a meeting in London of eight major nuclear exporting nations?

A. I believe the State Department referred to the meeting yesterday, but I have nothing additional to give you.

FYI: The State Department itself did not get into the specifics of the meeting since the participants decided that they wanted to conduct the meetings without any publicity.

State Department Guidance:

All I can say is that officials from some countries met in London this week to discuss common problems concerning nuclear energy. The discussions were confidential. It was agreed that we would not name the countries that participated or reveal the contents of the conversations.

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TAGS: MCAP, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: SECDEF PRESS CONFERENCE: PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE

1. IF ASKED YOU MAY CONFIRM THAT INTERCHANGE BELOW TOOK PLACE DURING JUNE 20, 1975 SECDEF PRESS CONFERENCE. YOU SHOULD MAKE NO FURTHER COMMENT.

Q: WILL THE UNITED STATES USE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA IF THEY INVADE SOUTH KOREA?

A: AS I INDICATED EARLIER, WE CANNOT FORECLOSE ANY OPTION. WE HAVE DEPLOYED IN KOREA THE TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS AS IS, I BELIEVE, WELL KNOWN. I THINK THAT IT WOULD DEPEND UPON THE JUDGMENT OF THE LEADERSHIP UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES BUT WE HAVE NOW GONE SINCE 1945 WITHOUT ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON BEING DETONATED IN ANGER AND WE WOULD STRONGLY HOPE THAT THAT HISTORICAL RECORD IS MAINTAINED. IF CIRCUMSTANCES WERE TO REQUIRE THE USE OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OF COURSE, I THINK THAT THAT WOULD BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED, BUT THE GROUND FORCES BALANCE IN THE KOREA PENINSULA IS NOT UNSATISFACTORY. SISCO
BT

*****WHSR COMMENT*****

VANDERHYE

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PRO, 3/7/85

NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN KOREA

FYI: Attached is a cable with guidance on Schlesinger's comments on nuclear weapons in Korea.

If asked what the President's policy is, you should say that the United States maintains contingency plans for any situation that may arise, but we do not anticipate the circumstances such as were hypothesized in the Secretary's news conference on Friday.

U.S. Defense Posture: Strike Options

Q: Do you rule out a nuclear first strike by the U.S.?
Would you consider using tactical nuclear weapons as a first defensive response rather than conventional weapons or ground forces?

A: The U.S. position has been and continues to be that our defense posture must be both flexible and determined.
In order to be prepared for all contingencies we must have a full range of options. We must be able to make deliberate choices and to meet rapidly changing conditions under any circumstances. Let me simply say that we will respond to whatever degree is required to protect our interests.

* * * *

A summary of past public statements is attached.

Material put out - June 26, 1975

President Nixon - Report to the Congress on U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's,
February 25, 1971:

...We must not be in a position of being able to employ only strategic weapons to meet challenges to our interests. On the other hand, having a full range of options does not mean that we will necessarily limit our response to the level or intensity chosen by an enemy. Potential enemies must know that we will respond to whatever degree is required to protect our interests. They must also know that they will only worsen their situation by escalating the level of violence...

Secretary McNamara before Senate Armed Services Committee, February 22, 1963,
Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964:

Senator Smith. President Kennedy and General Taylor have said there would be no winner in a nuclear war. You and the President have stressed the growing power of Russia's nuclear forces. Under Secretary Gilpatric has publicly stated that he doesn't know how a war can be limited, and I quote: "Once you start using any kind of a nuclear bang."

It is reasonable to conclude that the overall impression created by these statements is that the United States is afraid to use nuclear weapons for fear doing so would immediately and automatically escalate to a holocaust war, that is the impression I get and I think it is probably that it is the impression that Khrushchev gets.

Yet the world knows that the Communists have a vast superiority in combat forces for conventional warfare including first-rate armored units and the largest tactical air force in the world.

Coupled with this they have interior lines of supply and communication, and an aggressive attitude to conquer the world and some pretty weak opponents on their borders like Iran, Burma, India, and Thailand.

If, in view of these facts, Khrushchev decides to challenge the U.S. and allied conventional forces on a broad scale, what do you intend to do about it?

Secretary McNamara. First, let me say that we have stated many, many times--I have stated on several different occasions, I stated it in Germany, I have stated it on three occasions I can recall in this country--that we will use whatever weapons are necessary to protect our interests, including nuclear weapons. Pravda has printed my statements because we have had them returned to us. There has been conversation among the Soviets regarding such statements as I have made, and as the President has made, about our willingness to use nuclear weapons in defense of our interest.

Finally, it is perfectly clear that Khrushchev believed we would utilize nuclear weapons or any other weapons necessary to destroy the missiles which he deployed in Cuba. It is clear that he believed that by the action he took (deleted) and it is clear that he was right in his belief because we would have used whatever weapons were necessary to destroy those missiles moved into Cuba.

So, I think that the premise on which the statement is made is incorrect.

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Secretary McNamara before Senate Armed Services Committee, -February 21, 1963

Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964:

Senator Thurmond. Mr. Secretary, did I understand you to say if tactical nuclear weapons are used that it would probably bring about an escalation, that is, a general nuclear war?

Secretary McNamara. I think it would be very difficult to handle or use that type of nuclear weapons so as to be certain that one could avoid escalation to strategic nuclear war.

Senator Thurmond. Well, if you had a conventional war, whichever side was losing would probably go to tactical nuclear weapons before being destroyed.

Secretary McNamara. This is a question that only the circumstances could throw light on. I can't answer it. I don't know what the Soviets would do. I know we have stated publicly and the public expressions represent our policy, that we would use tactical nuclear weapons or any weapons-----

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Secretary McNamara. We have stated publicly that we would utilize whatever weapons are necessary to preserve our vital interests; that is our policy, and we will follow that policy. What policy the Russians would follow or the Communist bloc would follow I can't say.

General Goodpaster before Subcommittee on Military Applications, Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, June 29, 1973, Military Applications of Nuclear Technology:

Senator Dominick. Let me pose another question to you. When I was briefed in Germany and a variety of other places in 1961, which was a long time ago, the possibility of being able to contain a mass conventional attack was not viewed with any great plausibility by us.

Suppose the Soviets and the Warsaw Pact countries should decide they were going to conduct a conventional attack, not nuclear, how long would we be able to withstand that now with conventional forces only?

General Goodpaster. I would put it this way. This is a view that I have held now for some years. If they were to come against us with the full forces available to them and sustain the attack and take the losses that we could impose on them, which would be very heavy, and if things were to go reasonably well for them in this process, then within a short period of time, I believe that we would be confronted with the necessity to invoke use of tactical nuclear weapons on at least a selective basis if war were to prevent the rupture of our main battle positions.

Secretary McNamara before Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee -

Department of Defense Appropriations for FY 1965, February 17, 1964:

Mr. Mahon. Mr. Secretary, after the Korean war we were quite disenchanted, and the Secretary of Defense came before this committee and told us that it was the resolve of the administration never again to deal with a situation such as we had been confronted with in Korea in the way we did, and the implication was we would use nuclear weapons and that we would achieve decisive military victory. The massive retaliation theory was in full flower during the 1950 period, particularly after the Korean war.

Now, there seems to be some uncertainty as to whether or not we are willing to risk and employ our maximum nuclear potential in a war. Have we come to the conclusion in the Defense Department that we will not use, and will not be called upon to use, strategic nuclear weapons?

Secretary McNamara. We hope we will not be called upon to use them, because we believe our power is so great and so apparent to our opponents that they realize that were we called upon to use them, we would literally destroy the Soviet Union and its associated satellite states. But certainly we have come to the point where we would say to ourselves, or to others, that we did not use them. Clearly we would use them in the protection of our basic national interests including the collective defense of the free world. But we will not endanger the survival of our Nation and our allies for anything less than a threat that was directed at that survival.

Mr. Mahon. If the survival of the Nation is definitely threatened, we would hazard the use of nuclear weapons in order to prevent it, would we not?

Secretary McNamara. Without question.

Secretary McNamara before Senate Armed Services Committee, -February 22, 1963,

Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964:

Senator Thurmond. Mr. Secretary, in his book "The Uncertain Trumpet," Gen. Maxwell Taylor lists three situations which he says are the only ones imaginable in which our atomic retaliatory forces might be deliberately used. These situations, are, and I quote from General Taylor's book:

Two clear cases would be an atomic attack on the continental United States or the discovery of indisputable evidence that such an attack was about to take place. A third possible case would be a major attack upon Western Europe, since the loss of that area to communism would ultimately endanger our national survival.

Are such limitations on the use of our retaliatory forces now reflected in our official policy?

Secretary McNamara. I can answer only by saying that we would propose to use nuclear weapons or any other weapons whenever we felt our vital interests
were threatened, Senator Thurmond.

I can't speculate on all the situations that might justify such use.

Secretary McNamara before Senate Armed Services Committee, February 21, 1963,
Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964:

I have read Dr. Enthoven's speech, and as I expected it is a rather philosophical discourse on Defense policies in relation to Christian ethics. With reference to the particular issue raised by Senator Symington, namely, our policy on the use of tactical nuclear weapons, rather than comment on Dr. Enthoven's speech I believe it would be more useful if I were to restate at this point our position on this matter.

In my very first appearance before this committee as Secretary of Defense, on April 4, 1961, I stated:

"There has been a tendency since the end of the Korean war to emphasize the nuclear capabilities of these forces. These capabilities are, of course, essential to our overall national strategy. Since all of our forces have a role in general nuclear war. Even in limited war situations, we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons, for no one can foresee how such situations might develop. But the decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons in limited conflicts should not be forced upon us simply because we have no other means to cope with them. There are many possible situations in which it would not be advisable or feasible to use such weapons. What is being proposed at this time is not a reversal of our existing national policy but an increase in our nonnuclear capabilities to provide a greater degree of versatility to our limited war forces."

Some three and a half months later on June 21, 1961, I appeared before this committee to present President Kennedy's third set of amendments to the fiscal year 1962 budget and to request additional authorizations for appropriations for aircraft missiles and naval vessels. At that time I said:

"We feel very strongly that the U.S. Defense Establishment must have a greater degree of flexibility in responding to particular situations. We need to expand the range of military alternatives available to the President in meeting the kind of situation which may confront us in maintaining our position in Berlin."

"I want to make clear, however, that this does not mean we are lessening the effectiveness of our tactical nuclear capabilities. As I pointed out to your committee earlier this year, 'Even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons, for no one can foresee how such situations might develop.' What we are proposing now is not only to strengthen our nuclear capabilities but also to increase our nonnuclear capabilities to provide a still greater degree of versatility to our military forces."

On January 29, 1962, in my appearance before this committee to present the fiscal year 1963-67 Defense program and 1963 Defense budget, I stated:

"After long and intensive study, we have reached the conclusion that, while our nuclear forces are increasing, greater emphasis than in the past must be given, both by ourselves and our NATO allies, to our nonnuclear forces. This does not mean that we would hesitate to use nuclear weapons even in a limited war situation, if needed. As I stated in my appearance before the committee last spring:

"... Even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons, for no one can foresee how such situations might develop." But the decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons in limited conflicts should not be forced upon us simply because we have no other means to cope with them. There are many possible situations in which it would not be advisable or feasible to use such weapons. What is being proposed at this time is not a reversal of our existing national policy but an increase in our nonnuclear capabilities to provide a greater degree of versatility to our limited war forces."

In the statement which I am presenting to the committee this year (on the fiscal year 1964-65 defense program and 1964 defense budget) I treat the same policy in much greater detail and, in fact, address myself to the very point raised by Senator Symington. I believe it would be worthwhile repeating those paragraphs here. In talking about the need to increase our conventional forces in Europe I say:

"The possibility that we may have to fight nonnuclear wars in southeast Asia, the Middle East, and other areas of the world is accepted, generally, without argument, but not so with regard to Europe. Many people would believe that any military action in Europe, short of a very minor probe, would require the immediate use of nuclear weapons, and I stress the word 'immediate.' Certainly, a massive attack on Western Europe would have to be met with whatever weapons are required to counter it. That has always been the policy of the Western alliance. And I have repeatedly stated before this committee that 'even in limited war situations we should not preclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons.'"

"However, we may well be faced with situations in Europe where it would not be to the advantage of ourselves or our allies to use even tactical nuclear weapons initially—provided we had the capability to deal with them through nonnuclear means. Nuclear weapons, even in the lower kiloton ranges, are extremely destructive devices and hardly the preferred weapons to defend such heavily populated areas as Europe. Furthermore, while it does not necessarily follow that the use of tactical nuclear weapons must inevitably escalate into global nuclear war, it does present a very definite threshold, beyond which we enter a vast unknown.

"This does not mean that the NATO forces can or should do without tactical nuclear weapons. On the contrary, we must continue to strengthen and modernize our tactical nuclear capabilities to deal with an attack where the opponent employs such weapons first, or an attack by conventional forces which puts Europe in danger of being overrun. We must defend Europe with every kind of weapon now available.

"But we must also substantially increase our nonnuclear capabilities to force close to our opponent the freedom of action he would otherwise have, or believe

he would have, in lesser military provocations. We must be in a position to confront him at any level of provocation with an appropriate military response. The decision to employ tactical nuclear weapons should not be forced upon us simply because we have no other way to cope with a particular situation. The NATO powers have all the resources, the talents, and the skills needed to match our opponent at any level of effort in Europe. I will discuss this point in greater detail in context with our plans for the general purpose forces."

In my discussion of the general purpose forces, I say:

"Although we are still a long way from achieving the nonnuclear capabilities we hope to create in Europe, we are much better off in this regard than we were 2 years ago. Today the NATO forces can deal with a much greater range of Soviet actions, without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons. Certainly, they can deal with any major incursion or probe. But we must continue to do everything in our power to persuade our allies to meet their NATO force goals so that we will possess alternative capabilities for dealing with even larger Soviet attacks. And until these capabilities are achieved, the defense of Europe against an all-out Soviet attack, even if such an attack were limited to non-nuclear means, would require the use of tactical nuclear weapons on our part."

I really don't know what more I could add to what I have already said to make our policy on the use of tactical nuclear weapons any clearer. I believe the record speaks for itself.

July 2, 1975

Page 2 **nuclear weapons use**

Any waffling of our answer must be put in the context of the letter written by Mel Laird to Senator Brooke dated November 5, 1970: "We have not developed and are not seeking to develop a weapon system having or which could reasonably be construed as having a first strike potential."

And the statement by Kennedy in 1961 which stated: "Our arms will never be used to strike the first blow in any attack."

The stories out of the Schlesinger breakfast are mixed. The New York Times is right. The AP story is right. The Washington Post and the UPI stories however raise the confusion again and the only thing that is going to quiet this whole thing down is a flat disavowal of first strike. Refusing to discuss it or going into the complicated discussion of first strike/first use will not satisfy anyone.

LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR

Q. Can you shed any more light on the story that the Air Force has begun training for fighting a limited nuclear war? Is this a new policy.

A. The policy of flexibility in the possible employment of U.S. strategic forces is not new. President Nixon addressed this issue in his Foreign Policy Reports to the Congress and Secretary Schlesinger has addressed the issue repeatedly for a year and a half.

The strategy of United Strategic Nuclear force is an option for the United States which provides our armed forces an essential capability for flexibility of response. We have always attempted to insure that we can militarily meet any threat. In this regard, the Department of Defense has made some changes in its training programs as part of its continuing daily process of making sure we are capable of handling all military situations.

NUCLEAR WAR GAMES

EXERCISES

OUR STRATEGIC AND GENERAL PURPOSE FORCES CONDUCT ~~WAR GAMES~~ FOR ALL POSSIBLE CONTINGENCIES WHICH THE UNITED STATES MAY FACE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD. THE FACT ^{that} THE STRATEGIC FORCES EXIST DOES NOT INDICATE ANY ~~EXERCISE~~ INTENT TO USE THEM SINCE THEY ARE A DETERRENT. EXERCISES WHICH WOULD INCLUDE STRATEGIC FORCES WOULD BE A NORMAL PART OF THE PREPARATION AND ADDS CREDIBILITY TO THE DETERRENCE.