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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

JCSM-685-63

3 September 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: US-USSR Negotiations on the Establishment of
Observation Posts and Related Matters (U)

1. By memoranda, dated 10 and 13 August 1963, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) requested the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on several alternative possibilities for negotiating an agreement to establish observation posts in NATO and Warsaw Pact areas.

2. In his 10 August memorandum, Mr. Nitze asked specifically that the Joint Chiefs of Staff review the current US position on ground and air-field observation posts as found in the 11 April 1962 "US Position Paper on Measures to Reduce the Risk of War by Accident, Miscalculation, Failure of Communications, or Surprise Attack." In their review of March of 1962 (JCSM-170-62), the Joint Chiefs of Staff had no specific reservations concerning that portion of the position paper which dealt with the establishment of observation posts, but they did stress that before seeking agreement with the Soviets, the basic concepts of the paper should be fleshed out, with assistance from our Allies.

3. In line with these earlier views and to prepare for the approaching discussions in NATO on these matters, the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, has directed that an outline plan for observation posts be developed. When approved by proper authority, this study could then provide a basis for the US negotiating position on this aspect of the negotiations. It will list preferred locations of observation posts for NATO, with suggested priorities wherever feasible, and will list certain type areas where Warsaw Pact posts in NATO territory should not be located. It will spell out the functions of the observation posts' teams and will also suggest the manning and equipment for each of the various types of posts and teams. Finally, it will

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address the degree and type of advanced notification, if any, of military maneuvers necessary for the successful implementation of the agreement, and compatible with US military considerations.

4. This study will be forwarded to you early in September. Until then, and until the alternative negotiating possibilities have been thoroughly evaluated, it is recommended that the Department of Defense take the position that the United States should not initiate detailed negotiations with our Allies, or with the Soviet Union.

5. In his 10 August memorandum, Mr. Nitze also requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff analyze certain alternatives to the 28 November 1958 Soviet proposal. Each of the alternatives is discussed briefly below:

a. Agreement limited to control posts alone. Although limiting agreement to control posts alone would reduce considerably the possibility of detecting a rapid concentration of forces for a surprise attack, the establishment of such posts would be militarily acceptable as a separate arms control agreement if (1) the control posts were located and allowed to operate so as to provide optimum safeguards against surprise attack and (2) the procedures for advanced notification, if any, were restricted to military movements directly related to NATO and did not include NATO-assigned submarine movements or unilateral US force deployments outside the Allied Command Europe-Warsaw Pact area or NATO naval movements.

b. Agreement limited to control posts plus aerial photography. The United States should seek this proposal in preference to the previous one, with the aerial surveillance being carried out in the defined area on a 24-hour, all-weather basis, with no restriction on sensing equipment. With respect to the defined area, the Soviet 1958 proposal suggested an aerial photography zone in Europe extending 800 kilometers to the east and west of the dividing line between the NATO and Warsaw Pact armed forces, and also in Greece, Turkey, and Iran. If these three countries are to be included, the border areas confronting them should likewise be included. As a general rule, the United States should attempt to make the zone for aerial observation as large as possible. In addition, negotiations on ground observation posts should seek provision for the use of unarmed aircraft to augment the capability of those posts.

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c. Agreement providing for control posts, aerial photography, and a reduction of foreign troops in Europe. The United States should oppose any major reduction or limitation of NATO forces in Europe until the causes of world tension have been reduced and an adequate verification system to police any force reduction agreement has been agreed upon and is in operation. An agreement on observation posts could be a first step toward achievement of this objective. Further, all proposals to reduce troops in Europe must be carefully analyzed to insure that they do not place NATO at a military disadvantage because of the shorter Soviet military lines of communication, and the resultant relative ease with which they could reintroduce their forces into Europe. Assuming a reduction in the causes of world tensions, any major reductions would also have to be evaluated in terms of their impact on NATO strategy and force planning. A significant general purpose force reduction will result in a greater reliance upon nuclear weapons and could lead to a downward trend in Europe's defense efforts at a time the United States is encouraging further build-up of forces.

With specific reference to Mr. Nitze's request for evaluation of a proposal to reduce all foreign troops in Europe to five divisions on each side, such an agreement might be militarily acceptable under the terms described below if it followed establishment of observation posts, aerial surveillance (because of the increased importance of having early warning of enemy concentrations), and their associated adequate verification procedures. If adopted in the near future, the proposal would result in the withdrawal from West Germany to within their national boundaries of approximately six plus divisions -- two plus British, two French, two Belgian. As proposed, it should entail no substantial reduction in US ground forces. It would, however, clearly add to the relative burden of the United States and probably would be domestically unsatisfactory, particularly to the Congress. An alternative to be explored should allow for some reduction of US forces with other Allies moving forward to replace them.

The Soviets, to satisfy the terms of the proposal, would have to withdraw 15 divisions from East Germany. With arrangements for rapidly moving NATO forces into their positions in times of tension, NATO thus could conceivably make a relative gain from an agreement of this kind. At any rate, the proposal has enough advantages to NATO to warrant its consideration in conjunction with our Allies, at the appropriate time, although the imbalance in the reductions probably

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would make the proposal unacceptable to the Soviets. In any such proposal, however, the risk that the Soviets may station volunteers or disguised units within East Germany must be recognized.

d. An agreement providing for control posts, aerial surveillance, and a reduction of foreign troops in Europe, and removal of weapons of mass destruction from Germany. There appear to be no satisfactory methods for determining the yield of a nuclear warhead by verification procedures that would be acceptable from a security (restricted data) point of view. Further, there is no present indication of Soviet weapons of mass destruction in East Germany. Therefore, this proposal has disadvantages to NATO with no compensating gains. It is thus militarily unacceptable and should not be negotiated.

6. On 13 August, Mr. Nitze forwarded a supplementary memorandum and requested that a further alternative be explored. It would include airfields among the observation posts, would eliminate aerial inspection, and reduce forces by one-third in Germany rather than in Europe. After evaluation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reached these conclusions: It would be most desirable to include airfields in the array of observation posts. Aerial inspection should not be eliminated. The reduction of foreign forces by one-third in Germany should be opposed since the reduction of US forces of such a magnitude is not militarily acceptable at this time because it could destroy the military and political cohesion of the Alliance. The Soviet proposal could be modified and made acceptable militarily if any troop reduction was undefined in magnitude at this point in time and was made subject to negotiation following a successful period of operation of effective observation posts and aerial inspection. Alternately, it could be made acceptable by reducing foreign troops in East and West Germany to five divisions, if the reductions were made as discussed earlier.

7. Any agreement on the establishment of aerial inspection, observation posts, and related matters will require agreement in principle with our Allies prior to further exploration of basic Soviet views. Before either of these steps is undertaken, the specific conditions of implementation the United States would prefer must be determined. With respect to observation posts, this should include the types and locations of posts, and the composition of the observer teams. The study now being carried out for the Joint Chiefs of Staff will provide a basis for a more detailed US position on these aspects of the problem. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not believe the list of suggested posts in the 11 April 1962 paper is adequate, and they cannot endorse it for negotiating purposes.

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8. Based on the analysis above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the United States should offer a comprehensive alternative to the Soviet proposal which would preclude the possibility of NATO's becoming immediately involved with the Soviets in discussing troop reductions in Europe or removal of weapons of mass destruction from Germany. We should seek a proposal that is more compatible with NATO political sensitivities and military planning. The US proposal should be based on the fundamental principle that the first step toward agreement between the two blocs should be that of acquiring agreed knowledge of the military forces and movements of the other side. It should set forth as this initial step a comprehensive control and inspection plan for the NATO and Warsaw Pact areas. Reduction in forces would follow later. The inspection area should include as wide an area as possible. Aerial inspection, observation posts with team mobility, and overlapping radar coverage should be included. There should be, however, no control or inspection of nuclear weapons as such; inspection procedures rather should concentrate on delivery means and vehicles.

9. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that a plan along the lines outlined in the preceding paragraph would be more acceptable than any of the alternatives discussed above. Its principal advantages are that it is limited in scope but, at the same time, it provides for a reduction in the causes of tension and a basis for testing Soviet intentions concerning future more significant steps. The Joint Chiefs of Staff therefore recommend that a plan along these lines be evaluated as the United States preferred negotiating position for coordination with our Allies.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Signed

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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