

SALT

29 July 1970 - JCS Meeting

General Holloway and his staff briefed the JCS on the results of the latest study they had done concerning the outcomes of the strategic exchange. This is part of the very detailed computer war gaming that JSTPS does in connection with its responsibilities. It involves analyzing what the Soviets' capabilities are in the strategic field, what our own are, calculating what we should do in a second strike situation and how the Soviets would likely bring their weapons to bear against us. It involves estimating what kinds of weapons the Soviets would fire at specific targets in the United States, and then does an analysis of the damage and consequences of execution to both sides. The briefing made it painfully obvious that the relative strength of the United States at that time in an exchange with the Soviet Union for the assumptions used was less than that of the Soviet Union. It made it further obvious that although we frequently hear about over-kill, the United States as of that moment did not have sufficient weapons in a second strike to insure that we could kill all the Russians once. Indeed, it was obvious that the number of U. S. casualties was greater than Soviet casualties. We discussed ways in which changes might be made to improve the outcome, and it was clear that General Holloway and his staff felt that not much could be done with the

weapons then available to change these results.

I was personally startled to discover that for this particular calculation the assumption was made that no weapons would be held in reserve; that is, there was not a planned strategic reserve. It had been the thought rather that those weapons which, for one reason or another, did not get off would be available for such reserve purposes. It seemed to me that this was a very dangerous assumption. First, the probability of the United States being able quickly to sort out what it had available on a random basis after catastrophic series of nuclear explosions seems very small and, second, it seemed to me to very unwise to assume that one would have time to do so during that period when any surviving command authority might be involved in seeking to negotiate with the other side. It seemed to me to be quite clear that after a massive exchange if one side had weapons left, knew where they were and knew it could control them, and the other side did not, that that would be the side that won. And I set for myself the task of getting this national assumption changed. I concluded that one of the major changes that needed to be done with regard to national planning was to bring the Joint Strategic Targeting System to Washington where both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and senior military authority could work with the _____ to insure that there was a much more intimate relationship between

Weapons Systems Development and the requirements for the future as determined from these calculations. I was unsuccessful in ever getting this change achieved. I shared the view of another member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who said, after receiving that briefing, that it is very obvious that the Soviets will "soon be able to blackmail and we will have a Cuba in reverse."

I urged that this briefing be given to the Secretary of Defense in light of budget reductions that were currently being made and resolved that I needed to worry about both sides of the strategic equation, that is, limits placed on us because of dollars and limits placed on us because of strategic arms arrangements, both of which could contribute to worsening the relative balance I had just observed. I expressed my concern to both Admiral Moorer and the Secretary of Defense privately about the need for him and the President to be briefed on these conclusions.

Within a week Admiral Moorer reported to the JCS that many things were churning in the wind concerning the plan that we had been briefed on. Our NATO allies were concerned about the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe and wondering how many would be used and how. General Spivey had indicated the military committee was working on that subject. Much interest had been developed at the White House concerning the strategic exchange. The National Security

Council had been asking questions with respect to missile sites. The President himself had noticed when getting briefed on the exchange that there were some several hundred Soviet missile sites not targeted and asked questions as a result. There were others who were questioning the value of the kind of planning that was being done at Omaha, how was it prepared, under what kind of guidance and what kind of criteria. The chief concern on the part of the Joint Chiefs seemed to be one of concern about the need to hold the information quite close, rather than the legitimacy of the questions being asked by civilian authority.

At the NSC meeting of 19 August, it had been brought out quite clearly that the relative nuclear strengths of the Soviets and the United States were far different today than at the time of the Cuban crisis. The Secretary of Defense was asking for formal replies to many of the questions. We were all properly concerned about not getting many people into the details of the exchange calculations but I thought, as a group, not adequately concerned about the need to get civilian authority more fully involved in the same kinds of frequent briefings in analyses as the members of the JCS.

I concluded, after that 26 August meeting, as stated in the minutes, that we should have asked the Secretary of Defense to go over the President's questions

with him and to insure that only limited numbers of people were brought in to the calculations in view of the sensitivity of the actual data.

On 26 August 1970, the very day that we were discussing the consequences of the President, having been briefed on the results of the strategic exchange, General Allison was debriefing the JCS on SALT II, pointing out that the Soviets were using the talks for exploring and probing what the United States is willing to go for, and how important it was that we consider SALT in our strategic planning. This seemed to me to be a significant step forward from the earlier position that the Chiefs should not propose arms control positions. General Allison went on to stress that we needed to remember that while we're talking at SALT the Soviets continue to build and improve their armed forces.

Note to Bob: There is some good local color in the 26 August 1970, write up on General Allison's comments about the SALT II operation.

With regard to the 10-12-70 item, early in the SALT negotiations one or two people referred to the Alms or Trident as a bargaining chip as ABM had been. I tried to make it clear to everybody, including SEC DEF and the SALT delegation, that we were never going to trade off Trident because we had to have it in any event as a replacement for Polaris and Poseidon, and therefore we should call it a negotiating incentive; that is, that the numbers we were building and the rate

could provide an incentive on the Soviets to negotiate but we should not call it a bargaining chip which implies something to be given away completely. This came to be the Government view, and negotiating incentive came to be the general use for Trident.

The views that Paul Nitze expressed to me privately on return from SALT II were that we were, as a Government, offering the Soviets too many changes in our position in too short a span of time. I use as an example the situation in which we had two ABM positions in conflict at the same time, and also the great repetitiveness with which we gave up Options C and D without demanding any kind of counter action in a negotiating arena with the Soviets. It was his view that the Soviets had been given the impression that we were over-eager for a deal, and that this would have very serious consequences in toughening up the Soviet stand in the SALT's of the future. He believed that the Congressional elections were causing Mr. Nixon and Secretary Kissinger to seek to have substantive progress about which they could talk at the time of the elections, and they were therefore short-circuiting a sound negotiation process and giving the Soviets a negotiating advantage, as a result. He also felt that one could already perceive that the Soviet military were playing a significant role with regard to their decision

makers, and he urged that the JCS seek to do better analytical work in order to have more impact on policy. Paul Nitze suggested that the U. S. had adopted its classic negotiating stance of knowing all and revealing all too soon.

Following this discussion with Paul Nitze, I met with Tom Moorer and relayed this advice. After the discussion, we agreed that the JCS did need to try harder than it had in previous years to have an impact in the arms control area, and to improve its analytical capability. He initiated a special study group within his office to examine various U. S. force structures which would be allowed by the U. S. Government's August 1970 proposal, and the JCS received the results of that study on 3 October. After examining the report, the JCS requested the study group to optimize the strategic force structure under the 4 August proposal. However, the study group, each/^{member}representing a service interest, could not reach agreement on the optimum force structure but did determine that there should be no reduction in Poseidon, Minuteman III or B-52's in connection with the SALT proposals.

With regard to the 10-26-70 item, the significance here is that OSD, meaning really Laird and Nitze in pushing for the zero ABM level, as a tactic to open up Option ECHO because they didn't believe that ECHO was to the advantage of the United States in the long term, were taking on a policy decision,

by the President.

The 11/4/70 business on war games is one more indication that in addition to the unsatisfactory outcome that would result from the July 29th strategic exchange briefing, we also were badly outpointed by the Soviet command in control. And this further points out that the situation is already, as of that date, worse than the calculation because of additional cut backs.

Note: Bob - that we're relying on warning to get to our command posts manned. Note again that I am the one that pressed for SEC DEF to get the briefings and that I followed it up with a request for a CNOM, the purpose of which was to go after the JCS to do more.

The SALT delegation got its guidance for SALT III in NSDM-90, which was published on 2 November 1970, the day that SALT III began. SALT III lasted until 18 December .