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120 FORGING THE STRATEGY OF CONTAINMENT: NSC-68

NSC-68/4
14 December 1950

Background

President Truman met with his NSC on 14 December 1950 to consider the revised proposals for implementing the strategy of containment as contained in NSC-68/3. With only minor modifications, those proposals were "approved as a working guide for the urgent purpose of making an immediate start" in NSC-68/4, issued later that same day. At the same time, however, the President directed the Secretaries of State and Defense to begin yet another round of the iterative process "with a view to increasing and speeding up the programs outlined." This iterative process was to continue, in various forms, throughout the Cold War.

Documents

Report to the President by the National Security Council

TOP SECRET

WASHINGTON, December 14, 1950.

NSC 68/4

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES
AND PROGRAMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

- References: A. NSC 68 Series
B. NSC Action No. 393
C. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated December 13, and three memos dated December 14, 1950

At their 75th meeting, with the President presiding, the National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Economic Cooperation Administrator, the Director, Bureau of the Budget, and the Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers, considered NSC 68/3 on the subject and adopted the draft report contained therein subject to the following amendments (NSC Action No. 393):

- a. The amendments in paragraphs 4, 7-c, 9, 11 and 15, proposed by the Senior NSC Staff by reference memorandum dated December 14, 1950.
b. The amendment in paragraph 5 proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff by reference memorandum dated December 13, 1950.

The President then issued at the meeting the following directive (NSC Action No. 393-b):

NSC 68/3 as amended is approved as a working guide for the urgent purpose of making an immediate start. However, since this paper points out that the programs contained in it are not final, I hereby direct the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to undertake immediately a joint review of the politico-military strategy of this Government with a view to increasing and speeding up the programs outlined in NSC 68/3 as amended in the light of the present critical situation and to submit to me appropriate recommendations, through the NSC, as soon as possible.

This review is not to delay action upon the basis of NSC 68/3 as amended, the implementation of which by all appropriate departments and agencies of the United States Government is hereby directed.

Accordingly, the report contained in NSC 68/3, as amended by the Council and approved by the President, is circulated herewith for implementation by all appropriate departments and agencies of the U.S. Government as directed by the President in the above paragraph.

It is requested that this report be handled with special security precautions, in accordance with the President's desire that no publicity be given the NSC 68 Series without his approval, and that the information contained herein be disclosed only to the minimum number of officials of the Executive Branch who need to know.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.

[Attachment]

Report to the President by the National Security Council

TOP SECRET

[WASHINGTON, December 14, 1950.]

REPORT BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL ON UNITED STATES
OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

1. The invasion of the Republic of Korea by the North Korean Communists imparted a new urgency to the appraisal of the nature, time, and scope of programs required to attain the objectives outlined in NSC 68. The aggression by the Chinese Communists in North Korea has created a new crisis and a situation of great danger. Our military build-up must be rapid because the period of greatest danger is directly before us. A greatly increased scale and tempo of effort is required to enable us to overcome our present military inadequacy.

2. It must be emphasized that the programs and estimated costs in the tabulation in Appendix A of NSC 68/3 are not final. In the critical, complex, and rapidly changing international situation, it is impossible to blueprint the specific steps and the costs involved. It is our intention to keep this problem, now so greatly accentuated, under continuous scrutiny. The principal value of these first estimates is that they furnish a starting point for the major effort essential to our national security and to our national objectives.

3. The several programs hereinafter briefly described* are all conceived to be mutually dependent. In accordance with the underlying concept of NSC 68, they represent an effort to achieve, under the shield of a military build-up, an integrated political, economic, and psychological offensive designed to counter the current threat to the national security posed by the Soviet Union.

THE MILITARY PROGRAM

4. Present conditions make unacceptable the delay involved in the phasing of our military build-up over a four-year period. It is evident that the forces envisaged earlier for 1954 must be provided as an interim program as rapidly as practicable and with a target date no later than June 30, 1952. We must also proceed at once to establish a production and mobilization

* These programs are described in greater detail in the Annexes to NSC 68/3. [Footnote in the source text.]

base that will permit a very rapid expansion to full mobilization. Such a course is essential in order for us to build rapidly a military strength capable of fulfilling our two fundamental obligations: (a) Protection against disaster; and (b) Support of our foreign policy.

5. The estimates of forces herein which constituted our initial interim goal were based on the assumption that hostilities in Korea would terminate in FY 1951. If this assumption proves invalid, or if the general world situation continues to worsen, these force levels will have to be increased.

6. In arriving at these estimates of forces, with full consideration of the objectives of NSC 68, the following basic tasks were envisaged:

a. To provide a reasonable initial defense of the Western Hemisphere and essential allied areas, particularly in Europe.

b. To provide a minimum mobilization base while offensive forces are being developed.

c. To conduct initial air and sea offensive operations to destroy vital elements of the Soviet war-making capacity and to check enemy offensive operations until allied offensive strength can be developed.

d. To defend and maintain the lines of communication and base areas necessary to the execution of the above tasks.

e. To provide aid to our allies to assist them in the execution of their responsibilities.

7. It should be realized that the forces recommended herein:

a. Will not insure that the United States will be absolutely secure against attack by air or unconventional means.

b. Will not be adequate to defeat the probable enemy unless augmented by full mobilization of the United States and her allies.

c. Will not be adequate to defeat aggressive Soviet or Soviet-directed actions in Soviet-selected areas around the periphery of the USSR, although they will act as a deterrent to further Soviet or Soviet-inspired aggression.

FOREIGN MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

8. The magnitude and phasing of the MDAP reflected in this report are generally designed to accomplish the following: (1) to provide nations which are participants in the North Atlantic Treaty with those quantities and forms of military and economic aid which they will require in order to raise, organize, train and equip by 1954 the forces set forth as necessary for the defense of the North Atlantic Treaty area in defense plans currently approved by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (D.C. 28, dated 28 October 1950); and (2) to furnish military assistance which will, in varying

degrees, assist certain other nations in Eastern Europe and the Middle East (Greece, Turkey and Iran) and in the Far East and Southeast Asia (Indochina, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Formosa, etc.) which are now receiving military assistance to restore or maintain internal security and, in the case of several countries, to perform limited defensive missions in the event of major external aggression. A very substantial portion of the total aid proposed, perhaps 75% thereof, would take the form of armaments produced in the United States, the remainder being primarily devoted to furnishing Western European nations with those additional resources which they will require, in addition to their own, in order (a) to support a complementary European production program of the magnitude now envisaged as necessary, and (b) to raise and maintain the forces which they must provide.

9. It should be specifically noted that the phasing of the MDAP is on an entirely different basis than that of the U.S. military programs--the former being timed, in accordance with the assumptions of the North Atlantic Treaty Defense Plan, to provide forces adequate for the defense of the North Atlantic area by 1954, whereas the target of the latter is to obtain the required U.S. forces as rapidly as practicable. Since the factors which governed the selection of the earlier date in the case of U.S. programs have equal applicability to North Atlantic defense measures, it is of the greatest importance that the phasing of the latter should, to the maximum degree possible, be brought into consonance with the phasing of U.S. programs. Therefore, every method should immediately be explored, and thereafter continue periodically to be explored, for accelerating, if possible to 1952, the completion date of the program envisaged in current North Atlantic Treaty defense plans, including, but not limited to, consideration of (a) additional measures directed toward encouraging, persuading and enabling other North Atlantic Treaty nations to increase and speed up their contributions; (b) new methods for accelerating the work of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; (c) the possibility of setting earlier production targets for MDAP armaments to be produced in the United States; and (d) the possibility of the United States assuming a substantially greater proportion than presently proposed of the actual task of physically producing the capital and replacement requirements of the forces to be raised. To the extent that such acceleration can be achieved, the amounts of U.S. aid required will tend to be telescoped even more sharply in the earlier years and will also be increased in the aggregate. Even in the absence of any such acceleration, the further refinement of NATO defense plans and their firm pricing on an international

basis may indicate a U.S. aid requirement appreciably larger than that now proposed.

10. In the event that the number of nations receiving assistance is increased or in the event of a major change in current military assistance objectives with respect to present aid recipients in the Middle or Far East, as, for example, in the case of Formosa or Indochina, MDAP figures would have to be reviewed.

11. Our objective in providing economic aid outside the NATO areas is to create situations of political and economic strength in the free world especially in critical areas whose present weakness may invite Soviet thrusts. However, as a consequence of increased demands on U.S. resources resulting from the military defense program, claims on U.S. resources for foreign aid have been limited to programs that will meet most urgent and immediate needs. These programs have therefore been restricted to those fulfilling three broad purposes: (1) investment to increase the production and facilitate the distribution of critical materials directly needed for defense; (2) aid to strengthen the defense effort of our allies; and (3) aid to enable governments which are or can be expected to become friendly members of the free world to win the confidence and support of their own peoples as a solid foundation for political stability and national independence. More specifically, United States economic assistance should also be designed to reduce economic dependency of countries on the USSR and its satellites in order to (a) curtail the volume of shipments of items to those Communist dominated areas and (b) reduce availability of foreign currencies to the USSR for strategic purposes in such areas as Southeast Asia and Australia. To reduce the drain on U.S. resources, aid programs have been held to the minimum believed necessary to effect these purposes.

THE CIVILIAN DEFENSE PROGRAM

12. The civilian defense program should contribute to a reasonable assurance that, in the event of war, the United States would survive the initial blow and go on to the eventual attainment of its objectives. Civilian defense programs are designed to serve to minimize casualties in the event of attack, to provide emergency relief immediately after attack, and to help preserve the productive core of the nation. Civil defense programs are tailored to domestic military defense programs and require close and continuing coordination with them. In this regard civil defense programs are currently being reviewed with the objective of revising them, as to timing and magnitude, in accordance with the more urgent and increased military program now being developed.

THE STOCKPILING PROGRAM

13. The stockpiling program is designed to afford the United States those strategic and critical materials, essential for the prosecution of a five-year war, which would not be forthcoming from United States wartime production and imports from accessible sources.

14. Plans developed up to the end of November, 1950, had been designed to have these stockpiles complete and physically on hand in the United States by 1954.

15. The stockpile program is currently being reviewed with the objective to revising in accordance with and subject to the increased military requirements now being developed. In addition, stockpile objectives themselves are undergoing constant review, particularly in the light of such questions as the possible impact on the economic stability of nations friendly to the United States, substitution of other less critical materials, tests of necessity, and changes in military specifications.

THE INFORMATION PROGRAM

16. The information and educational exchange programs are designed to develop the maximum psychological effect from the political, diplomatic, economic and military measures undertaken by the United States and its allies and to convey the implications of these measures effectively to the minds and emotions of groups and individuals who may importantly influence governmental action and popular attitudes in other nations and among other peoples. The primary effort will be directed at creating, in the areas and the nations of most critical importance to the achievement of the national objectives of the United States, (a) popular and governmental confidence and resolution in support of the shared interests of the peoples of the free world, and (b) psychological resistance to the further expansion, whether by overt or covert means, of the influence of Soviet Communism.

17. The peoples of the Soviet Union and its satellites, as well as the peoples of the most vulnerable areas of the free world, are primary targets of this psychological offensive.

INTELLIGENCE AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

18. An intensification of intelligence and related activities is vitally necessary as a safeguard against political or military surprise and is essential to the conduct of the affirmative program envisaged in NSC 68. The intelligence and related programs projected in response to NSC 68 provide for such an intensification of effort. They are being put into execution as rapidly as possible without reference to the phasing of the other programs

presented in this report.

THE INTERNAL SECURITY PROGRAM

19. The elements of the accelerated program recommended by the Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security and the Interdepartmental Intelligence Conference constitute a balanced internal security program within the framework of the original NSC 68 project. There is every reason to believe that if these basic elements are realized they will contribute substantially to the accomplishment of the objectives outlined in NSC 68 by insuring the adequacy of the nation's internal security, which is an indispensable part of a nationally secure United States. The early realization of the objectives outlined by the ICIS and the IIC is essential in order to strengthen our defenses against the dangers of espionage, sabotage, and other types of subversion by impeding the individual and collective will of subversive elements to act to the detriment of internal security by increasing the physical hazards as well as the legal obstacles and penalties incident to the commission of subversive acts. Additionally, it will afford greater protection to the nation's critical governmental and industrial facilities; it will make more secure the orderly functioning of government; it will minimize the possibility of the clandestine introduction of unconventional attack media and of the exportation of strategic materials and information; and it will thus aid in thwarting the strategy and tactics of the Kremlin which are designed to weaken, dominate and destroy us as a free people.

20. In the light of developments since the preparation of NSC 68 and in view of the resulting revisions in The Military Program, ever-increased emphasis should be afforded the projected internal security program to the end that the level of internal security preparedness contemplated by 1954 may be attained by 1952, or as soon thereafter as circumstances permit.