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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

National Security Planning Group Meeting  
April 16, 1986, 10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m., Situation Room

SUBJECT: Options in Responding to Soviet Violations (N)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

State:

Secretary George Shultz  
Ambassador Paul Nitze  
Ambassador Edward Rowny

White House:

Mr. Donald Regan  
VADM John Poindexter  
Mr. Larry Speakes  
Mr. Craig Fuller  
Mr. Don Fortier  
Colonel Robert Linhard  
Captain William Wright  
Mr. Sven Kraemer

Defense:

Secretary Caspar Weinberger

Justice:

Attorney General Edwin Meese III

CIA:

Mr. William Casey

JCS:

Admiral William Crowe

ACDA:

Mr. Kenneth Adelman

Minutes

The meeting opened at 10:45 a.m. in the Situation Room. The agenda was as shown at Tab A. Admiral Poindexter began the agenda and framed the issue for discussion using the talking points attached at Tab B. [Note: During this presentation, Secretary Weinberger interrupted to note the cost of the OSD option was \$17M, not \$23M.] (PS)

After Admiral Poindexter's introduction, the following discussion ensued (not verbatim): (N)

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Weinberger: The issue should be settled now. We should simply state we are no longer going to observe the treaty. We should make clear we are not breaking out for the purpose of conducting an arms race, but we will no longer conform to the treaty. The least cost option is to drydock Posidon submarines. We can save them for future options. Such options will cost about \$132M later, but we don't have to identify this now. Putting the ships in drydock is the least expensive approach. We don't have to do anything else like change Minuteman warheads [Note: Secretary Weinberger was referring to converting existing Minuteman II missiles to Minuteman III.] Such an approach will show the Soviets what the costs of violations are. (S)

Shultz: (Complained about not having access to military advice.) (S)

Shultz: Ceilings do have impact. Since 1972 they have dismantled [garbled] launchers compared to 144 on our side. By all analyses of military measures we are winning. Freedom and democracy are on the march. We have the advantage everywhere. They do have two perceived advantages: conventional forces and the ability to produce nuclear systems. I doubt their superiority in conventional forces; they could not have done the Tripoli raid. With regard to producing nuclear systems, yes it is an advantage; they have the technology and no political restraint. (S)

Shultz: There are three areas of violations that have the most significance: Krasnyarsk radar, the second new ICBM, and encryption. Responses are needed. The best response is to get the budget where it ought to be. A flamboyant announcement to break numerical SALT limits is unwise. It will hand the Soviets a propaganda windfall. They are ready to expand. Such a step will cause us problems with the Alliance. (S)

Crowe: The Chiefs understand Soviet cheating and the flaws in the treaty, but the best thing to do is to complete the strategic modernization program. That program takes into account Soviet cheating. We also feel strongly on the conventional budget. If we can get the money, SALT I and II are irrelevant. The proposals being considered are a wash. We doubt they will affect the military equation. They may serve as signals, but they will not affect the military balance. Failure to get strategic modernization would. (S)

Crowe: There are three options the Chiefs could support: the Poseidons, converting more Minuteman III (which is a good return on an investment), or encrypting telemetry on future systems. That aside, when you talk about options, where do we get the money for doing these things if we have problems with the modernization program, problems with money for existing systems?

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The treaty does have flaws but not overriding ones. We are in a chess game between the Allies, the Soviets, etc. We want the President to be in the best position to get the money he needs on the Hill. We should not make decisions based on legalistic interpretations of the treaty. (S)

Casey: As long as the Soviets are in violation we are forced to take whatever steps are needed. We need to get the message out that if there is no compliance then there will be no sustained treaty. We are winning because we are calling the Soviets on their transgressions. The Soviets are moving to deploy new mobile MIRVed systems and a nationwide defense. We need to have R&D to develop penetration aids. If we don't reaffirm the treaty, however, it could slow down SDI. The Soviet SA-X-12 could become the basis of a nationwide defense. Any attempt we make to clarify the ABM Treaty will be ambiguous and let them creep out. The Soviets could move beyond SALT II, but I'm not sure it makes a difference. (SS)

Adelman: The political options are not expensive. If we breach a numerical limit we will do it once and for all; if we stay under SALT II we will come up on this decision every year. The Allies will be squeamish. They need leadership. The man on the street will understand. You can't keep abiding by SALT II. (S)

The President asked about the relationship of SALT II to the strategic modernization program. Secretary Weinberger reviewed the strategic modernization program. (S)

Shultz: The key is the strategic modernization program. (S)

Weinberger: We don't ask for anything beyond the strategic modernization program. We just want to make it clear we will not be bound by a meaningless treaty. Carrington [NATO Secretary General Lord Carrington] said he expected us to stop complying with SALT II. (S)

Shultz: The State option is an appropriate response to the Soviets. We hold the numerical limit, but we do other things. (S)

The President: What if we finesse SALT II by saying that our goal is some specific other limit? (S)

Weinberger: We will have to return to the SALT II issue repeatedly. (S)

Meese: Our audience must be Congress and the Allies. Can't we eclipse the whole issue of SALT I and II? We should announce a new doctrine, say what we will do if the Soviets do "x". Make it the basis for bargaining with the Congress. In this approach we

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would get beyond the SALT II debate by indicating certain restraints, by withdrawing systems from service but not destroying them, by monitoring violations, and by seeking arms reduction measures. We are always battling this issue on the Hill; this would be a way to get a change in the terms of the debate. (S)

The President: Modernization must be seen as modernization, not as a build up. I'm willing to bring the number of missiles down if the Soviets will reduce. We can come down to any equal levels if they join us. (S)

Weinberger: This new policy of restraint isn't your policy. (S)

The President: We should say in hearings on the modernization program if that puts us above the Soviets we will reduce. (S)

Rowny: Modernization gets the Soviets attention. We should not give credibility to a flawed treaty. We can still show restraint by adhering to SALT I. We must show SALT II is dead. (S)

The President: People should be reminded that SALT II could not be passed by the Democrats. (S)

Messe: We need to avoid a SALT debate. (S)

Nitze: There is nothing in the State option about complying with SALT. We are not saying we would be restricted in the future. We are just saying that it's not economic today to overhaul these submarines. There is no point in alienating Congress and our Allies. (S)

Weinberger: Carrington is not expecting us to remain within SALT II. The State approach also has us continuing to abide by ABM Treaty. That will kill SDI. (S)

The President: We need to say to people that both sides are modernizing, not engaging in an arms race. The Soviets are ahead in modernization, we are not. This isn't a race to achieve numerical superiority. The end result is no increase in total numbers. Such an approach to modernization lends itself to reductions in warheads and delivery vehicles. We shall eliminate systems as we modernize. (S)

Shultz: The key is what we do about the submarines. (S)

Weinberger: Put them in drydock. (S)

The President: Everyone should be able to understand drydocking, and that that means they are not in service. (S)

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Shultz: But it's still a violation. (S)

Poindexter: [Drawing the meeting to a close.] We still have a few days to think about this.

Admiral Poindexter then closed the meeting at approximately 11:45 p.m. (S)

Attachments:

Tab A            Agenda (S)  
Tab B            VADM Poindexter's Prepared Talking Points (S)

Prepared by:  
Bob Linhard  
Linton Brooks

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