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ACDA-2056

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PRINCIPALS

Tuesday, October 8, 1963, 6:00 p.m.
Conference Room of the Secretary of State

CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING U.S. APPROACH
TO AN ARRANGEMENT AGAINST PLACING
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN ORBIT

1. Under present circumstances, a General Assembly resolution would be the most acceptable form of an arrangement against the placing in orbit of weapons of mass destruction. The text of such a resolution would have to be acceptable to the U.S. and Soviet Union, and amendments not acceptable to either would be rejected.
2. Statements supporting the resolution would be made by the two countries. The statements would not be identical, but they would be exchanged in advance of presentation.
3. The U.S. statement would include language designed to provide a basis in the public record for re-opening the question of verification at a future time should it become desirable to do so and for withdrawing if necessary.
4. "Weapons of mass destruction" would have to be interpreted as including all nuclear weapons. The U.S. could accept specific reference to nuclear weapons should the Soviet Union prefer that approach.

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GROUP 1

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Authority: NLT 030-011-2-1
By: 1271-08
NARA, Date: 12/1/08

1175

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 8, 1963

SUBJECT: Meeting of Committee of Principals
Concerning "Bombs in Orbit"*

PARTICIPANTS: See attached list

COPIES TO: Participants

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Authority NJ 030-011-2-1
By 8 NARA, Date 1/9/09

Referring to recent discussions in New York, the Secretary recalled that he had informed Gromyko that while there appeared to be agreement in principle on refraining from placing weapons of mass destruction in orbit, the question of form was a difficult and complex matter. He had told Gromyko that the Soviet draft of a joint declaration looked too formal.

* References: (1) Memorandum for the Committee of Deputies from the Deputy Director, USACDA, Subject: Proposed U.S.--Soviet Arrangement Concerning the Placing in Orbit of Weapons of Mass Destruction, October 1, 1963. (Top Secret)

(2) Memorandum for the Committee of Principals from the Director, USACDA, Subject: Nature of Arrangement for a Prohibition of Bombs in Orbit, October 4, 1963. (Confidential)

(3) JCSM-785-63; Subject: Proposed U.S.--Soviet Arrangement Concerning the Placing in Orbit of Weapons of Mass Destruction, October 7, 1963. (Top Secret)

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The Secretary then stated that from the standpoint of the matters before the Committee of Principals the question of the form of an arrangement appeared bracketed by two considerations. On the one hand, we were not thinking of a treaty or formal agreement. On the other hand, we were not likely to avoid a General Assembly resolution whatever we might think about it.

In the Secretary's view, the rate and pace of agreements with the Soviet Union (in the absence of resolution of such issues as Laos, Vietnam, and Berlin) presented a problem. If we moved too rapidly on less significant matters, we might be creating either the illusion of progress or the impression that we were blind to more important issues. Nonetheless, there was some point in finding particular matters on which agreement could be reached. These might include a consular agreement, improved communications with our Embassy in Moscow, implementation of the civil air agreement, and the sale of wheat. We needed to consider how fast we should move on a particular matter or series of matters.

With respect to the matter before the Committee, the Secretary believed that the simplest way to handle it would be through a General Assembly resolution accompanied by parallel declarations of the two countries. He noted that the Joint Chiefs were concerned about the possibility that a resolution might be amended. The Secretary believed that if the U.S. and Soviet Union had agreed to the text, we would have no difficulty in turning aside unacceptable amendments. He asked for Mr. Foster's comments.

Mr. Foster thought the Secretary's concern about the limits of the form which an arrangement might take was proper. He noted, however, that there was a greater "public education" value in the case of some forms than others. One Senator had commented that a chief value of the test ban treaty was its educational value.

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Whatever the form of the arrangement, Mr. Foster believed that it should not be entered into precipitately. There had as yet been little opportunity to sound out the Hill, but he was aware of concern that we were rushing into something. All indications were that Congressional consultations could be accomplished readily, but their importance should not be minimized. Consultations with other countries were also necessary.

Noting that the arrangement would not include provision for inspection, Mr. Foster emphasized the importance of an opportunity for review and withdrawal. Although the Joint Chiefs were opposed to accepting inspection in this case, we did not want to lose the right to it. These matters might present difficulties with the Soviet Union, which would want a more permanent arrangement.

Mr. Foster noted the preference expressed by the Joint Chiefs for the term "weapons of mass destruction" instead of "nuclear weapons". He wished to hear discussion of this matter.

With respect to the form of an arrangement, Mr. Nitze stated that if only declarations of intentions were involved, the question of a way out was not as important. That was why Defense would feel easier with parallel declarations or a joint declaration.

Gen. Hamlett agreed that this was the Joint Chiefs' view.

The Secretary pointed out that a General Assembly resolution was not binding. He then pointed out that if we used the term "weapons of mass destruction", this would be interpreted as meaning nuclear weapons plus something else. However, the Joint Chiefs intention seemed to be to leave open the question of interpretation.

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Dr. Wiesner said that he had initially thought the term was used since it was broader than "nuclear weapons" and might cover BW-CW, but he understood that there was concern about leaving the way open for orbiting anti-missile systems. That was, in his view, not a likely possibility. He pointed out that one of the basic considerations involved in the arrangement was that the number of orbiting objects would be relatively small. If 100 to 500 objects appeared in orbit, there would be a reason to worry. Once you made it legitimate to place in orbit large numbers of defense satellites with nuclear weapons, you took away the one check on the arrangement.

Amb. Thompson thought that if this question were opened up, the Soviets would want to cover both nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

The Secretary stated that putting some nuclear weapons in orbit would really involve withdrawing from the declaration.

Gen. Hamlett said that the term "weapons of mass destruction" was broader than nuclear weapons. The Joint Chiefs had wished to reserve the right to place small nuclear weapons in orbit. He recognized, however, that if we reached that point, we would be withdrawing from the arrangement. However, another problem with referring to "nuclear weapons" was that there might be some misunderstanding concerning our propulsion developments.

Dr. Wiesner said the only one that might be affected was Project ORION which was ambiguous. In any case, no one took ORION seriously. ROVER was not ambiguous.

Mr. Palfrey agreed that there was no problem respecting ROVER. We should be careful not to prohibit our own development efforts.

Mr. Fisher noted that ORION was prohibited by the test ban treaty.

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Amb. Thompson commented that we would need to tell Gromyko that we will work something out.

The Secretary said that Gromyko wanted something as close to a formal agreement as possible but that he would tell Gromyko we have too many constitutional problems to take on a formal agreement at this time. The Secretary wished to be sure whether or not Defense was requesting that we leave the way open for small nuclear weapons in orbit.

Mr. Nitze said that Defense had not thought that it would present much of a problem to leave this open. In our previous statements, we had referred to "weapons of mass destruction". However, no one had a clear idea of why we needed to leave the interpretation open. The point Defense was making was simply that the main concern was weapons of mass destruction and there seemed to be no reason to tie our hands on other weapons.

Dr. Wiesner thought it would be hard to define if we tried to exclude some nuclear weapons. He did not think "weapons of mass destruction" could be defined in a way that would distinguish between hitting a city with 20 small AICBM's and one large ICBM.

Mr. Barber asked why a definition was necessary.

The Secretary said that the term "weapons of mass destruction" would be generally understood to include all nuclear weapons. If we were asked whether this were the case and if we said anything but "yes", we had better not go into the arrangement at all.

Gen. Hamlett said he thought the Secretary was right.

Turning to the question of withdrawal, the Secretary said that we might put in our declaration some language which would take off from the withdrawal clause of the test

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ban treaty. We might say that "The U.S., of course, as in the case of the test ban treaty, reserves the right to terminate if it determines that extraordinary events, related to the purpose of the declaration, have jeopardized our supreme interests." He questioned a reference to "technological advance" in one of the drafts, commenting that it seemed to him to imply that when we had developed a system, we would put it up.

Mr. Fisher pointed out that the reference to "technological advance" was more related to the possible need for additional assurance at a future time. Additional assurance might also be needed if we got substantial disarmament. Our relaxed approach to this matter might change.

Amb. Thompson said he had told Dobrynin that we would need some withdrawal provision. Dobrynin had said something along the lines of the test ban withdrawal clause might be worked out.

Mr. Chayes cautioned that we did not want to parallel the test ban treaty too closely. If we did that, it would be difficult to explain why we didn't want a treaty.

Mr. Foster commented that we might come back to a treaty before we were through.

Mr. Nitze asked why a termination clause was needed in a declaration of intentions.

Mr. Fisher responded that it was desirable to have something in the public record.

The Secretary then suggested language along the following lines: "The U.S. Government will keep in close touch with developments, and if the U.S. decides that extraordinary events require that it change its view, it will inform the General Assembly." The General Assembly might review the matter in four years time.

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Mr. Nitze noted this implied a General Assembly resolution and asked whether that was what the Secretary wanted.

The Secretary replied affirmatively and said that it would be accompanied by declarations.

Dr. Wiesner asked whether the GA resolution came first and then our declarations?

Mr. Chayes asked whether the declarations would simply be the statements made in connection with the debate?

The Secretary said that the resolution might be sponsored by other countries and that we would make our statements with respect to the resolution.

Mr. Foster said that it would be recognized that the U.S. and the Soviet Union were behind the resolution.

The Secretary said that if we wanted Mexico and they wanted the Czechs, everyone would know, but we needed to negotiate with the Soviet Union a jointly acceptable resolution, with an agreement between the U.S. and Soviet Union not to accept amendments.

Mr. Gardner said he thought such an agreement was possible.

The Secretary recalled that in his talks with the Soviets he had mentioned parallel declarations, but he was not sure they should be parallel.

The Under Secretary, who had joined the meeting, said he had just talked with the President about this matter and that the President was dubious about anything that looked like two agreed statements or like an executive agreement. The President thought a GA resolution would avoid Congressional problems. It could be put forward by other states. He had asked whether we could control the text.

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The Secretary said that the meeting had been moving in the direction of the President's position. The text of the resolution would have to be agreed to by the U.S. and Soviet Union. We didn't exclude the possibility of an agreement at some time but couldn't buy one now.

Mr. Chayes said we would need to avoid two identical statements in connection with the resolution.

Mr. Johnson asked whether in the U.S. declaration, Amb. Stevenson would not simply repeat what we had already said.

Amb. Thompson noted that we would need language to get out if necessary.

25x1A [] asked whether the Soviets would agree not to debate other uses of space.

The Secretary said it was his impression that they would agree not to do this, that they appeared to be tacitly accepting reconnaissance activities, and that this was now less of a problem. They seemed to be undertaking such activities themselves.

25x1A [] said that had been CIA's only problem.

In response to a question by the Secretary, Mr. Gardner said that the Mexicans and Canadians were likely to introduce a resolution whether we did or not.

Mr. Nitze said an effort should be made to coordinate with the Soviet Union to have better control over the UN debate.

The Secretary reaffirmed the need for a jointly agreed text.

Mr. Johnson suggested that we should also exchange statements prior to their presentation.

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Mr. Nitze noted that the intent of this would not be to have the wording the same but simply to coordinate them.

Gen. Hamlett wondered if the Congress might not regard this as an agreement.

The Secretary thought this would not be the case, that we were just showing the Soviets in advance what we planned to say.

Mr. Fisher thought the Congress might consider it advantageous for us to see in advance what the Soviets were going to say.

Mr. Nitze thought we might inform the Congress that the resolution was not an obligation.

The Secretary cautioned against using the "no obligation" argument since that would be picked up by the Soviets. However, the type of obligation reflected the type of arrangement. A GA resolution was a GA resolution and nothing more. We were starting at the bottom of the ladder of "obligations", and we would see how far up we would ultimately go.

Mr. Nitze asked about the status of other limited measures, in particular observation posts.

Mr. Foster said that the JCS report on observation posts had been received, but there had not as yet been an opportunity to review it.

The Secretary commented that there seemed to be less chance that the Soviets would want to move on observation posts without linkage to other measures. The chances seemed somewhat higher that, despite the MLF, the Soviets might move on a non-dissemination agreement.

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PARTICIPANTS

STATE

The Secretary
Mr. Ball (last part of meeting only)
Mr. Johnson
Amb. Thompson
Mr. Chayes
Mr. Gardner
Mr. Garthoff

ACDA

Mr. Foster
Mr. Fisher
Mr. Bunn
Mr. Gathright, Reporting Officer

WHITE HOUSE

Dr. Wiesner
Mr. Smith
Mr. Keeny

DEFENSE

Mr. Nitze
Mr. Barber
Capt. Zumwalt

JCS

General Hamlett
Major General Powers
Col. Sykes

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AEC

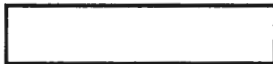
Mr. Palfrey
Dr. Kavanagh

NASA

Mr. Webb

CIA

25x1A



USIA

Mr. Wilson

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Origin

ACTION: USUN NEW YORK 1011

IO

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INFO: Amembassy MOSCOW 1188

SS

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FOR AMBASSADOR STEVENSON

SP

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USIA

INR

RMR

Agreement reached during Gromyko talks Thursday that QUOTE bombs in orbit UNQUOTE problem should be handled through GA resolution co-sponsored by 17 ENDC participants. Also agreed that you and Gromyko should negotiate text of resolution in New York. Gromyko desires to commence negotiations soonest and give res priority in Committee I so it can be adopted by GA while he is still in New York.

If Soviets seem anxious to press ahead with freezing text of resolution and collecting the other sponsors, you are authorized to proceed ~~Monday~~ or soonest ~~thereafter~~, on the basis of text set forth below.

You are also authorized to join in seeking priority for this resolution in First Committee.

(not necessarily agreed)

You should also arrange exchange texts of statements/to be made by U. S. and Soviets in support of resolution. Statements should not REPEAT not be identical.

10-12-63

Drafted by:

IO: UNP: WGJones; HCleveland: aam

Telegraphic transmission and
classification approved by:

IO - Harlan Cleveland

Clearances:

ACDA - Mr. Foster

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

EUR - Mr. Tyler

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L - Mr. Meek

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Oct 12 '63 44 PM '63

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12-11-68

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Foster will come to New York to participate in the negotiations.

~~You authorized brief Western four and France on confidential basis~~
Western four and France should be briefed and given draft text on
~~before meeting with Gromyko~~ confidential basis, before meeting with
Gromyko.

Verbatim texts of resolution and of statement to be made by US follow.

BEGIN VERBATIM TEXT

DRAFT GA RESOLUTION

The General Assembly,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 1721 (XVI) which expressed the
belief that the exploration and use of outer space should be only for the
betterment of mankind,

Determined to take steps to prevent the spread of the arms race to
outer space,

1. Welcomes the expressions by the United States of America and the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of their intention not to station
any weapons of mass destruction in outer space;

2. Solemnly appeals to all states:

(a) To refrain from placing any weapons of mass destruction in orbit
around the earth, installing such weapons on celestial bodies, or
stationing such weapons in outer space in any other manner;

(b) To refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating
in the conduct of the foregoing activities by others.

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DRAFT

INSERT FOR STATEMENT TO BE MADE IN
GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN CONNECTION WITH
ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

On September 5, 1962, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Mr. Gilpatric, made the following statement of U.S. intentions respecting the placing in orbit of weapons of mass destruction:

"Today there is no doubt that either the United States or the Soviet Union could place thermo-nuclear weapons in orbit, but such an action is just not a rational military strategy for either side for the foreseeable future.

"We have no program to place any weapons of mass destruction into orbit. An arms race in space will not contribute to our security. I can think of no greater stimulus for a Soviet thermo-nuclear arms effort in space than a United States commitment to such a program. This we will not do.

"At the same time that we are pursuing cooperative scientific efforts in space through the United Nations and otherwise, we will of course take such steps as are necessary to defend ourselves and our allies, if the Soviet Union forces us to do so. This is in accordance with the inalienable right of self-defense confirmed

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In the United Nations charter."

Our policy in this regard was made clear to the United Nations by Senator Albert Gore speaking as U.S. Representative to the First Committee on December 3, 1962. On September 20, 1963, President Kennedy reaffirmed our intention to keep weapons of mass destruction out of orbit.

Since that time, we have met with the representatives of the Soviet Union on this problem. We are glad that the intentions of the Soviet Union in this regard are the same as our own, and I am happy to report that the resolution which is before the Assembly has the support of both Governments.

Speaking on behalf of the United States, let me say what has been said many times before: the United States has no intention of placing in orbit around the earth any weapons of mass destruction, of installing such weapons on celestial bodies, or of stationing such weapons in outer space in any other manner. The United States intends to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the conduct of the foregoing activities by others.

We all recognize that it is not possible to foresee today all events which may at a future time occur in the newly emerging field of space technology and in the exploration and use of outer space. Nor can we foresee fully the outcome of continuing efforts to achieve disarmament.

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Should events as yet unforeseen dictate the need for additional assurance against the stationing of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, we would seek such additional assurance as might then be required. ^{We} ~~/XX~~ would inform the U. N. should extraordinary events occur which would affect this matter.

END VERBATIM TEXT

END

GP - 3

RUSK

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