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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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August 20, 1980

Leon:

Attached is a paper which was given to Christopher last week which discusses the foreign policy implications of PD-59, and beginning on page 5, lays out a chronology of the PD evolution from a State point of view. Perhaps you can look this over. If you want something more extensive or arranged in a different fashion, let me know.

According to Dave Gompert who checked with Gerry Kahan (intimately involved in the preparations for the Secretary of the SALT testimony) nothing PD-related was discussed in July, September, October of 1979. Cutler may be confusing the SALT testimony preparations with the SCC meetings that occurred in the spring of that year.

R.G.  Seitz

Attachment:

Memo from PM-Gompert to
D-Gene Martin dated 8/15/80
re "Foreign Policy Aspects
of PD-59" (SECRET/SENSITIVE)

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3

August 15, 1980

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TO: D - Gene Martin
FROM: PM - David C. Gompert *[Signature]*
SUBJECT: Foreign Policy Aspects of PD-59

Attached is a revised version of the paper I was asked to do by Mr. Christopher. I want to emphasize that it is not based on actual knowledge of PD-59 but rather my estimate of the thrust of the PD based on our involvement last Spring and on recent press reports.

I have shown this paper to and received useful comments from the following: EUR - Allen Holmes, EUR - Bob Barry, EA - Mike Armacost, and S/P - Dick McCormick.

Please let me know when you have a clearer sense of what this paper might be used for, and also feel free of course to let me know what else is needed.

Attachment:

As stated.

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Evolution and Foreign Policy Consequences
of New Nuclear Targeting Policy (PD-59)

Foreign Policy Implications

Any fundamental national security decision such as PD-59 that shapes or articulates national nuclear strategy has inescapable foreign policy implications. How we choose to maintain and explain the basis of strategic deterrence is a major factor in the way others view us: it influences our friends' willingness to link their security to ours as well as the respect our adversaries have for us during peacetime and crises. The specific foreign policy consequences that flow from the development of the new policy and from the manner in which it became known are assessed below. This assessment does not deal with the effects of PD-59 on deterrence, stability, and strategic force acquisition policy, all of which have major--if not immediate and direct--foreign policy implications.

Policy Content. To the extent that our Allies focus on the substance of PD-59--without regard to how it became known--we expect them to understand and endorse the new policy. The Allies traditionally support efforts to strengthen the credibility of the US deterrent, which is the ultimate step in the escalation ladder on which NATO's flexible response strategy is based. As you know, European support for LRTNF modernization derives in large measure from a sense that, in a period of strategic nuclear parity, a deterrent strategy limited to "assured destruction" of Soviet cities may not be adequately credible. Although PD-59 addresses somewhat different challenges to our nuclear doctrine, the Allies are likely to regard it as part of a broader effort--along with LRTNF modernization--to strengthen deterrence by augmenting the threat of a massive retaliatory attack and thereby strengthening the US strategic linkage to their security.

We should recall, however, that because of their exposed position, our Allies--especially the Germans--are politically, if not psychologically, compelled to think of nuclear strategy solely in terms of deterrence: any doctrine that seems to countenance nuclear warfighting will touch a raw nerve. PD-59's attention to increased targeting flexibility and to the capacity to launch limited attacks over an extended period will be in tension with this deeply held aversion to nuclear warfighting.

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By NY NARA Date 9/29/10

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 2 -

We expect Allied leaders and national security officials to manage that tension successfully. Other political elites and the broader public may have a stronger allergic reaction to any warfighting connotations and be more anxious about PD-59's implications for the nuclear threshold and for crisis stability. The potential for this reaction is likely to be concentrated in the left wing of the German SPD, the Netherlands, and in the Scandinavian countries.

The Soviet public response has been predictable and polemical. It, however, is too soon to know whether their reaction is more or different than it would have been if PD-59 had been revealed in a deliberate, responsible manner. If they could react to the substance of PD-59 rather than to the press distortions, they probably would not genuinely regard the new targeting strategy as provocative. The Soviets have never been comfortable with our "city-killing" philosophy. Provided they recognize the parallels, they would be likely to understand--and even accept--the rationale for our new nuclear targeting doctrine since the weight of their own policy, rhetoric, and force planning has been in the same direction. Their decisions on force modernization and arms control are more likely to be affected by US strategic programs such as MX and ALCM than by a declaratory policy if they recognize that it is not a radical departure from current strategy. (They may even regard PD-59 as little more than a rationalization for MX).

At this early stage in our developing dialogue with the Chinese, we do not have a very good feel for their likely responses. To the extent they react at all, we expect them to support the policy in view of its unmistakable Soviet focus. They are, moreover, generally comfortable with the concept that the best deterrent is an effective warfighting capability and strategy. On the other hand, the Chinese will recognize that PD-59 is a more demanding doctrine. If we engage them in a discussion about our new nuclear targeting policy, we can expect hard questions from them about how we plan to meet PD-59's tougher standards and whether a more demanding strategy is credible in view of the US-Soviet military balance. We will have a better reading on Chinese reactions when Reg Bartholomew returns from his Far East trip.

Press Leaks. This assessment of likely foreign attitudes must be conditioned by the fact that the reactions of our friends and adversaries have been based largely on the press leaks--and distortions--that have occurred over the past several days. Those responses are shaped by three themes that have dominated the news stories:

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Authority NND 48608

By M NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 3 -

- the overblown characterization of the policy as an abrupt and dramatic departure from current doctrine;
- the seriously misleading impression that our policy and doctrine has taken a sharp turn in the direction of nuclear warfighting;
- the continuing controversy over the circumscribed roles of State and ACDA in the formulation of the new targeting doctrine.

Our Allies at the political level probably are reacting as much to the distortions reported in the media as to our belated efforts to brief them on the doctrine's substance and rationale. Understandably confused, they are pressing a series of questions that seek to clarify the policy and its implications for them, as well as to allay their anxieties that we have moved to a nuclear warfighting strategy.

At the same time, however, the substance of PD-59 should not come as a complete surprise to the Allies. Harold Brown's January, 1980 Posture Statement provided a good preview of the "countervailing strategy" embodied in PD-59. In June, Secretary Brown formally briefed the NATO Nuclear Planning Group on the "countervailing strategy."

There also is some irritation that the Allies were not seriously consulted in advance (and that the absence of consultations is apparent to their domestic critics). This is reinforced by a suspicion -- and concern -- in some quarters that US strategic policy has become a gimmick in the Presidential election campaign. Finally, the continuing controversy over the lack of meaningful State participation may feed a persistent European undercurrent of doubt about American competence and steadiness.

As noted above, we expect Allied defense experts and political leadership to understand and support the substance of PD-59. What is unclear now is the extent of damage that has been caused by the press leaks and how quickly--and completely--we will be able to repair it. It is too soon to know whether there will be additional Allied political and press reaction after the August vacations in Europe have ended.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

By M NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 4 -

The potential for an adverse reaction on the European Left could be catalyzed by the way the issue has been handled. The immediate danger is that European public support for TNF modernization could be weakened. The seriousness of that risk depends on the ability of the Soviets and anti-TNF elements in Europe to make an effective case that the US wants to deploy long-range missiles in Europe in order to execute our nuclear warfighting strategy without endangering the US homeland.

The Soviets have seized on all three themes in US press coverage in their prompt -- and predictable -- attack. They have argued that PD-59 signals a US decision to move to a warfighting strategy that makes nuclear war more likely, and reaffirms a US effort for a "first strike" capability that would undercut strategic stability. They insist that PD-59 is the real explanation for NATO's decision on TNF modernization. Finally, they point to the exclusion of State and ACDA as evidence that the anti-Soviet hardliners in the Administration have completed their domination of US foreign policy. We surely can expect the Soviets to use the PD-59 flap in their general peace offensive, which is designed to split us from our Allies and deprive us of European support for our post-Afghanistan policies. In any event, the Soviet public posture probably will be most important for the way in which it ripples through and interacts with European uncertainties and anxieties.

These cynical responses should not obscure the possibility that the Soviets may think that the way we handled the "announcement" of PD-59 is deliberately directed against them and that it portends continued deterioration in the bilateral relationship. They also may not be sufficiently self-conscious about their own nuclear strategy to recognize its parallels with PD-59, and therefore may see provocation where we intend none.

Foreign Policy Management of PD-59. Our ability to get the current flap quickly and cleanly behind us, as well as ensure that the new policy has its intended impact on our Allies and the Soviets, depends on how we portray and explain PD-59. Most important is the way in which the new doctrine gets integrated into and articulated a part of our declaratory deterrence policy. The first official presentation of PD-59 will occur next week in Harold Brown's speech in Newport.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608
By 04 NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 5 -

That speech, and other public and confidential discussions of the policy, ought to build on Harold Brown's recent message to the NATO defense ministers and should emphasize the following themes:

- Our nuclear targeting policy has been evolving over the past several years. PD-59 formalizes that evolution.
- PD-59 is not an alternative to our strategy of nuclear deterrence or a move in the direction of a first strike doctrine, but rather is designed to strengthen deterrence.
- PD-59 enhances deterrence by increasing the targeting flexibility and options available to the President, by demonstrating to the Soviets that we have the retaliatory capacity to destroy the political, economic, and military assets that they value most, and by showing that our forces have sufficient flexibility and endurance to prevent the Soviets from benefiting from any nuclear exchange by whatever definition of "winning" they may apply.

In deciding how to try to repair the damage already done, our dilemma is that the more we try to correct the distortions by stressing these themes, the longer the controversy surrounding the handling of PD-59 will be with us. We will need to find the right combination of steps that sets the record straight and lets the issue fade. Harold Brown's August 20 speech might be the answer: if it is a good presentation of PD-59 that takes full account of the foreign policy dimension, we can dampen further controversy by simply referring back to it.

Evolution of PD-59

The intellectual origins of PD-59 go back at least to 1974 when then-Defense Secretary Schlesinger advanced a similar policy as the rationale for improving the hard-target kill capabilities of the Minuteman III and for developing MX.

The Carter Administration's basic national security review--PRM-10--culminated in PD-18 which was signed by the President on August 24, 1977. PD-18 established general

SECRET/SENSITIVE

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

By 04 NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 6 -

strategic targeting policy and directed the Secretary of Defense to undertake a more comprehensive review of targeting policy. Pending completion of that review, NSDM 242 --issued in 1976--was to remain our nuclear employment policy. (NSDM 242 had already taken us in the direction of greater flexibility and more emphasis on military targets.)

Although the State Department participated extensively in PRM-10, it was unable to become involved in the subsequent nuclear targeting review. That study was conducted by a DOD task force (ironically chaired by an officer on loan from the State Department) during 1978 that made extensive use of outside consultants but did not include any State Department participation. The State Department had expressed an interest in having this and the other PD-18 follow-on studies done on an interagency basis, but was told by the NSC staff that DoD would do the studies and then submit them for interagency review.

State informally received a copy of Phase I of the DoD study--which analyzed the key issues--in June, after it had been approved by Secretary Brown. We provided extensive unsolicited comments in July which made clear our belief that central foreign policy considerations were being overlooked, and which offered State Department expertise and assistance.

We received no reply to our comments nor any follow-up on our offer. Harold Brown sent the completed study, including Phase II which developed the policy recommendations, to the President on November 28, 1978 with a copy to the Secretary of State. This final version remained substantially unresponsive to the concerns we flagged in July.

The targeting review was the subject of three SCC meetings on April 4, 25, and 26, 1979. There was no interagency analysis of the DOD study or of the issues it raised between November and April nor any interagency preparations for the SCC meetings. The April 4 meeting was confined to a broad discussion of general issues. The April 25 meeting was limited to hearing four briefings. The April 26 meeting directed DOD to draft more specific rationales and proposals on several key issues.

The April 26 SCC discussion did not reveal fundamental policy differences. Neither did it make any decisions, other than to have DoD formulate more concrete proposals for subsequent interagency comment and submission to the President.

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DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

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SECRET/SENSITIVE

- 7 -

Again, State proposed that follow-on work be done on an interagency basis but was told that DoD would develop proposals for subsequent SCC review.

Despite these SCC requirements and expectations, no further meetings on nuclear targeting doctrine have been held. Repeated State Department efforts to follow-up with the NSC and OSD staffs--including at senior levels--on the issues and SCC-directed analyses were rebuffed. These approaches began just after the series of SCC meetings. As recently as two months ago, we asked OSD for a status report and some indication of how State was going to play a role. In reply, senior OSD official simply "noted" State's interest. We have not had access to any additional DOD work on nuclear targeting issues beyond the 1978 study and do not know whether any has been done.

We understand that issue of whether there should be a PD remained dormant until this summer when it was revived by the NSC staff. We further understand that the PD was drafted in the NSC staff and was reviewed by Harold Brown and a handful of civilian and military officials in the Pentagon. As far as we can determine, the PD was signed by the President early this month.

The substance of PD-59 has been previewed in Harold Brown's recent Posture Statements, specifically his discussion of the "countervailing strategy." While we have had an opportunity to offer comments on draft versions of these reports, that cannot substitute for active State Department involvement in the formulation and assessment of national security decisions that have significant foreign policy implications.

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