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Authority NND 48608

By CH NARA Date 9/29/10

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 4, 1980

Leon:

Attached is a draft composite chronology of the development of PD 59, based on a separate chronology prepared at NSC, State and DoD and my subsequent interviews with each of the three principals.

Lloyd

Top Secret Attachment

Sec - This appears to be both accurate and impartial.



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Chronology of the PD 59 Decision

- August 24-29, 1977: PD 18 ("U.S. National Strategy") establishes general strategic targeting policy, cites need for "options for limited retaliatory response designed to control escalation and flexibly respond to aggression", also need for secure reserve force and ability to execute limited options. SecDef is directed to undertake a review of targeting policy for NSC consideration and Presidential decision. State expresses the view that the targeting review be done on an interagency basis. NSC responds that Defense will do the study and then submit for interagency review.
- Late 1977: National Targeting Policy Review (NTPR) study begun at DOD with Slocombe and Marshall as co-chairmen and Leon Sloss as director.
- May 1978: Phase I, Interim NTPR Report completed and approved by SecDef, sent to State. Gompert (State) letter to Slocombe with comments, also suggests State participation in Phase II. State receives no response.
- November 28, 1978: Final NTPR Report sent to President; SecDef cover memo notes that some items are for DOD implementation while others, including four policy objectives (targeting to impede recovery, counterforce capabilities, targeting population per se, China), are for interagency discussion. State receives copy of Report.
- January 1979: FY 80 Defense Report is circulated. It discusses need for countervailing strategy as a necessary minimum.
- February 21, 1979: Gelb (State) sends memo to NSC and DOD commenting on NTPR; suggests that several of the Report's recommendations be the subject of a PRC while proposing more study of other subjects. No reply is received either from NSC or DOD.

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April 4, 25, 26, 1979: Three SCC meetings devoted to: a review of the general propositions of the NTPR; briefings on the S.I.O.P., R.I.S.O.P. and N.C.A. connectivity; China, population, leadership, regionalization, industrial targeting, hard target capability. No formal decisions taken. DOD directed to draft more specific proposals and more detailed rationales on several key issues. Christopher suggested that SCC follow-up studies be done on an interagency basis but Chairman decided that DOD would do the work, then circulate its proposals for interagency comment before submission to the President.

May 7, 10, 30; August 8, 1979: Four PRC's devoted to MX basing.

June 4-5, 1979: Full NSC meeting.

Summer 1979: SALT Hearings before Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) and Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) disclose countervailing strategy as part of U.S. defense policy.

July 11, 1979: Brown, in prepared statement before SFRC, says "U.S. has adopted a countervailing strategy."

July 23, 1979: Brown, before SASC, testifies that the U.S. is developing a countervailing strategy.

July 26, 1979: Sen. Nunn, in response to testimony by Gen. Haig, states that in 1978 the U.S. adopted a countervailing strategy.

July 30, 1979: Vance, in testimony before SASC, states that we "should have a countervailing capacity...and we do have that capability now."

July 31, 1979: Kissinger, testifying before SFRC, voices concern that the Administration may be abandoning a countervailing strategy and returning to an assured destruction, minimum deterrence strategy.

August 1979: Presidential guidance on targeting China.

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September 5, 1979:

Full NSC meeting.

Fall 1979:

DOD continues work on SCC follow-up studies (none were ever finished or circulated); JCS/OSD briefings to Ermarth and Welch (NSC) showing what actions had been taken and discussion of need for a PD. State asks OSD and NSC staffs about SCC follow-up studies and is told that some are started and that some targeting changes are contemplated. State received no studies.

January 1980:

FY 81 Defense Report is circulated. It contains a detailed discussion of countervailing strategy. State provides comments on targeting policy contained in the Report.

January 1980:

During DOD briefings for Welch on implementation, Welch says that "Brzezinski feels strongly there should be a PD to bless implementation at the Presidential level."

February 25, 1980:

Bartholomew (State) writes Komer (DOD) suggesting mini-PRC to discuss current targeting policy and inquiries as to SCC follow-up studies; copy to Welch. No reply received.

March 5, 1980:

Bartholomew asks Slocombe and McGiffert (DOD) about status of request to Komer for mini-PRC and for follow-up work on targeting studies ordered by SCC. OSD notes inquiry. No other reply received.

March 26-May 20, 1980:

Draft PD worked out between NSC and DOD.

March 26, 1980:

Draft PD forwarded to Brown by Brzezinski for comment after staff level meetings held during March.

April-May 1980:

Drafts exchanges with DOD inserting more specific S.I.O.P. changes

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April 16, 1980: Brown to Brzezinski, comments on draft PD: Appropriate to discuss next with Cy because of obvious foreign policy implications.

May 20, 1980: Brown to Brzezinski: We are now agreed on a text, next step is to discuss it with Ed.

Late May, 1980: Brzezinski and Brown agree to propose to President that an NSC meeting should be held to show Muskie and DCI the text of the PD and to get the President's general agreement to the ideas embodied in the text.

May 22, 1980: Brzezinski forwarded draft PD to President with options: sign PD and then brief Muskie and Turner with sanitized version, or convene NSC meeting to discuss the draft PD. President decides: have Brown brief President and Vice-President. (As noted below, briefing does not occur until July 25, for extraneous scheduling reasons.)

May 29, 1980: Muskie has an initial S.I.O.P. briefing from Brown; Muskie does not understand from this briefing that a new targeting strategy is involved or that a PD is in the process of development. (Brown says that one of his people present was not cleared to know of PD.)

June 3, 1980: Brown briefs NATO Nuclear Planning Group in Norway in very general terms about targeting strategy; does not mention unapproved PD. State, represented on U.S. delegation, receives copy of briefing statement.

July 25, 1980: Brown briefs President and Vice-President on PD. President signs PD, instructs Brown to brief Congressional leaders and Muskie. Brown defers briefing Muskie pending outcome of discussions with Brzezinski and NSC staff concerning preparation of sanitized briefing version.

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July 27, 1980:

Beecher article appears in the Boston Globe, "U.S. drafts new N-war strategy v. Soviets" quoting sources on a presidential decision memorandum "still being drafted".

August 5, 1980:

At the request of the NSC, Slocombe briefs Burt (N.Y. Times) and Getler (Washington Post). Slocombe infers both of them already have the story. NSC staff also briefs Getler. That same morning, during a regular weekly meeting of Muskie, Brzezinski and Brown, Brown and Brzezinski refer to leak and to coming stories. Brown offers to brief Muskie on nuclear targeting policy following Muskie's return from California. Muskie does not understand from discussion at this meeting that a PD is involved or that it has already been signed on July 25.

August 6, 1980:

Burt and Getler stories appear. Burt story says neither State nor ACDA had been involved in formulating strategy. (Slocombe says this did not come up in his briefing.) Muskie, on plane en route to California, is questioned by reporters on this item about State's non-involvement. Answers that he had no knowledge of PD 59 until he read about it in the newspapers.

August 7, 8, 9, 1980:

After Muskie's comments appear in press, Brown calls Muskie to give him review of development of new targeting policy. Brown calls Stennis, Nunn and Moynihan. Brown calls Muskie to suggest that Slocombe go to Maine to show him PD 59 and to answer questions.

August 11, 1980:

Slocombe (DOD) briefs Muskie in Maine; Muskie reads unsanitized text of PD 59.

August 14, 1980:

Brown and Muskie discuss PD 59 in New York.