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October 25, 1957

MEMORANDUM

EYES ONLY

SUBJECT: Discussion at the 341st Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, October 24, 1957

The following were present at the 341st Council meeting: The President of the United States, presiding; the Vice President of the United States; Christian A. Herter for the Secretary of State; the Secretary of Defense; and the Director, Office of Defense Mobilization. Also present were the Secretary of the Treasury; the Director, Bureau of the Budget; the Special Assistant to the President for Atomic Energy; the Special Assistant to the President for Disarmament; the Director, U. S. Information Agency; the Director, International Cooperation Administration; Gerard C. Smith, Assistant Secretary of State; the Deputy Director, Bureau of the Budget; Frank C. Wisner, Central Intelligence Agency; the Deputy Secretary of Defense; the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army; the Chief of Naval Operations; the Acting Chief of Staff, U. S. Air Force; the Acting Commandant, U. S. Marine Corps; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Assistant to the President; the Deputy Assistant to the President; Special Assistants to the President Cutler and Dearborn; the White House Staff Secretary; the Executive Secretary, NSC; and the Deputy Executive Secretary, NSC.

There follows a summary of the discussion at the meeting and the main points taken.

1. STATUS OF NATIONAL SECURITY PROGRAMS ON JUNE 30, 1957 (NSC 5720, Part 1)

Mr. Cutler introduced General Twining, who, after making certain preliminary observations, called upon Colonel Rosson, who made the presentation on behalf of the Department of Defense. The major topics discussed by Colonel Rosson and illustrated by charts were the following:

- 1. Basic Objectives of the Military Program
a. Nuclear Retaliatory Capability
b. Continental Defense

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Oct 24, 1957

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- c. Ready Forces
- d. Control of the Sea Areas and Air Communications
- 2. Nuclear Air Retaliation
  - a. SAC
  - b. Tactical Air Forces
  - c. Naval Forces
- 3. Continental Defense System
- 4. Ready Forces
  - a. Continental U. S. and Hawaii
  - b. Europe and the Middle East
  - c. Far East-Western Pacific
- 5. Control of Sea Areas and Air Communications
  - a. Anti-Submarine Capability
  - b. Submarine Capability
  - c. Protection of Air Communications

By way of summarizing the material which he had presented, Colonel Rosson introduced an additional chart, entitled "Summary Comparison of Selected Major Forces--Army, Navy and Air Force". This chart not only made the comparison in terms of the status of the military programs as of June 30, 1957, but included two additional columns giving the estimated size of selected major forces on June 30, 1958, and June 30, 1959, based on estimated budget support to be provided in this period.

The chart indicated that while we had 18 Army divisions as of June 30, 1957, we would have 15 Army divisions as of June 30, 1958, and 14 Army divisions as of June 30, 1959. The comparable figures for Naval vessels were 967, 901 and 864. The comparable figures for combat wings in the Air Force were 137, 117 and 103.

At the conclusion of Colonel Rosson's presentation, the President inquired as to the results of tests made to determine the efficiency of our military communications systems. Colonel Rosson replied that in general our test exercises indicated that there would be a severe overloading of these communications in the initial period of general war, but that the situation would improve thereafter.

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Prompted by Mr. Cutler, the President inquired with respect to the concentration of SAC bombers on certain airfields. He had heard earlier that morning a report that all our B-52 bombers were concentrated on a single field. Colonel Rosson replied that this was not a statement of fact. Secretary Douglas added the information that there were three wings of B-52's on three bases. Our 1958 program permitted only five additional bases, although our goal for FY 1958 would have been 11.

The Vice President inquired as to the meaning of the term "nuclear capable". Colonel Rosson explained that this term defined a delivery capability for nuclear weapons. The Vice President went on to say that the reason that he had asked his question was that the term "operational capability" was now so much talked of in the press, especially in relation to Soviet missiles. Could Colonel Rosson also explain this term? Did this refer only to an initial capability? Colonel Rosson replied that the term "operational capability" was a term with progressive meaning, running all the way from an initial capability to a full capability in all units.

Governor Stassen expressed concern that the charts which had been displayed seemed to indicate that our aircraft capabilities were diminishing without indicating a concurrent increase in our missiles capability. After all, the basis on which we were cutting down on our aircraft capability was that we should have an increasing capability in missiles.

The President pointed out that no one could quarrel with the fact of the increased effectiveness of our combat wings, even though the number of these wings was fewer.

The National Security Council:

Noted and discussed an oral presentation by the Department of Defense on the status of the U. S. Military Program on June 30, 1957, based on Part 1 of NSC 5720.

2. CIA ANNUAL REPORT  
(NSC Actions Nos. 1379 and 1546)

The National Security Council:

Noted the major portion of the annual report by the Director of Central Intelligence on the actions taken by the Central Intelligence Agency under NSC 5412/2, with the understanding that the remainder of this report will be presented at the next Council meeting.

*S. Everett Gleason*

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