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August 13, 1956



MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Subject: Meeting at the White House on Sunday, August 12, 1956

Pursuant to the request of the President and General Persons, I went to the White House Sunday to attend the 12 o'clock bipartisan Congressional Leaders meeting called by the President to discuss the Suez situation. The President had indicated that he would like to be sure that a memorandum of such meeting would be completed and become a part of the White House files.

I arrived about 11 a.m., and found that a meeting was already in session in the President's office and I went in promptly.

Present, in addition to the President, were Secretary Dulles, Allen Dulles, Gordon Gray, Admiral Radford, General Gruenther, General Persons, and Arthur Flemming.

They were discussing an exchange of letters between Chancellor Adenauer and Secretary Dulles, as to which I take it no record is necessary because the letters will speak for themselves. I ascertained that during the course of that meeting, which had been going on since about 10:15 a.m., several topics were dealt with, as to which the responsibility for preparing memoranda seemed to fall as follows:

1. The proposal for the transfer of certain military equipment, made by Gordon Gray, which had been the subject of action before I arrived, - Gordon Gray has prepared and there is attached hereto, marked Annex A, a memo of that discussion and the decision reached.
2. A proposed response to be concurred in by both Foster and Allen Dulles, to a British dispatch relating to communications intelligence. This was discussed while I was there, although I had not read it nor the proposed response, and I have asked Mr. Allen Dulles to prepare a memorandum of the decision made, and it will be turned over to Colonel Goodpaster or Mr. Minnich.

FOR MR. ANDERSON ✓

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Authority <u>NLE 2013-252#1</u>
By <u>MMY</u> NLDDE Date <u>12/5/16</u>

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3. A preliminary discussion of the substance of the statements to be made by the President, the Secretary of State, and Dr. Flemming to the Congressional Leaders at the 12 o'clock meeting. This was over before I was there, and I understand that Dr. Flemming and General Parsons will cover this decision by a separate memorandum.
4. The level of U.S. Forces in Europe, and possible reduction - a subject as to which the President asked General Gruenther's comments, and there ensued an exchange of views. I am covering that subject in this memorandum.



During the meeting with the Legislative Leaders, Mr. Minnich and I both took rather full notes, and he and I are to collaborate on the memorandum covering the meeting. I understand he is to prepare a first draft.

DISCUSSION REGARDING THE LEVEL OF U.S. FORCES IN WESTERN EUROPE:

In response to the President's request, General Gruenther opened the discussion by a statement of Chancellor Adenauer's attitude toward the recent press comments re:

1. The leak about the so-called "Radford plan" to reduce U.S. Forces by 300,000 men, and
2. The U.S. atomic concept exemplified by the report of General LeMay's testimony earlier in the summer before Congressional Committees.

General Gruenther said that though Adenauer had approved the NATO atomic strategy, nevertheless the recent stories above named coupled with rumors of withdrawal of U.S. Forces, had caused the Chancellor great concern. He said the Chancellor had almost an hysterical fear of the so-called "all atomic" concept, which he believes dominates U.S. thinking.

General Gruenther then stated that it was beyond his province in his present capacity to work out the streamlining of divisions of the U.S. Forces so as to reconstitute them along lines suitable to the greater fire-power that the U.S. tactical atomic weapons produce. He adverted to British planning in this regard, and pointed out that the

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British military authorities had come up with an increase in the size of divisions from 17,000 to 19,000 in the adaptation of forces to greater fire-power. He said he understood General Taylor was working on this subject, and that one possible composition of a division was to be of five battalions, totaling 12,000 men. General Gruenther said that though he feared that the trend in England was such that the British might be under great pressure to pull out some of their troops, nevertheless he did not see room for significant reductions where there is a 500 mile front planned to be held with thirty divisions. He pointed out that there are political objections to reduction in the level of forces, and referred to the existing directive to the NATO Commander. At this point Secretary Dulles said the joint talks with the British re reductions in forces in Western Europe had been rescheduled for early in September.

At this point the President observed that thirty divisions may not be too many divisions, but he wondered if they could not be reduced in size and overhead, and mentioned the possible figure of 9,000 men per division. The President commented that Chancellor Adenauer apparently hoped that by treaty or agreement we could in some way eliminate thermonuclear war; General Gruenther added that Adenauer had been visibly disturbed by the figures of estimated U.S. casualties in the event of thermonuclear war, running as high as 16 million people.

At this point, Mr. Foster Dulles stated his view that Chancellor Adenauer should recognize that divided countries, such as Germany, Korea, and Vietnam, were especially vulnerable; that Germany was of these three countries in a key position, and was possessed of much greater capability to defend itself than were the other two countries named. He felt that the German Republic should do at least as well as Korea. He mentioned that the paucity of German effort tends to leave the brunt of German defense squarely upon the U.S. He said he didn't think the Germans ought to be welters on us in this situation. At this point, General Gruenther said that the "Radford 800,000 reduction" leak, coupled with the British announcement about reduction of forces on the Continent, had come at an unfortunate time.

The President said that he was speaking about units reduced in size and overhead but with equivalent strength through increased fire-power as a result of tactical atomic weapons. Secretary Dulles observed that we had a job of changing the German psychology from the present feeling that if we did make any reduction whatever we are abandoning them. With this thought, the President expressed hearty agreement, and pointed out that the entire responsibility for German defense could not be construed to be our own. General Gruenther again

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observed that the LeMay testimony and the Synington pronouncements had been harmful to our interests in Germany, and the President agreed, and said that some of our military think too much of the conception of "complete destruction".

From the foregoing, I gathered that the line of decision was the President's request that there be further work on ways and means of reducing the size of our forces without reducing strength, by the use of tactical improvements in weapons, and effort should likewise be made to reduce the number of overhead or supporting elements.



DILLON ANDERSON  
Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs

Attach.



ANNEX A



Mr. Gray adverted to the very recent requests of the U.K. and France with respect to military equipment which would accompany expeditionary forces.

The first of these was a request by the U.K. to be permitted to send with such forces 18 sets of FM communications equipment. These sets are MDAP furnished and have been delivered.

The second was a request by the U.K. to purchase 36 106mm recoilless rifles, and ammunition therefor.

The third was a request from the French, received in Washington on 10 August 1956, for prompt approval in principle of U.S. willingness to support France in a forthcoming request for spares for 90 F84F aircraft, 2200 JATO units, and 4000 droppable fuel tanks (all for F84F aircraft). The details of the lists and the means of their acquisition are to be furnished later.

Mr. Gray said that it was proposed that the U.S. honor such requests in cases where the provision of equipment would not unduly deprive U.S. units to the extent of impairing their combat usefulness.

The President observed that within this limitation we should cooperate with our allies.

General Gruenther indicated that any such requests should be promptly acted upon.

Mr. Gray reported that the British request concerning communication sets had been approved on 9 August, and their request for recoilless rifles had been approved on 10 August. He further indicated that a cable would be dispatched on 12 August approving the French request in principle.

The President cautioned that there should be no publicity while agreeing with Mr. Dulles that there could be no guarantee against leaks.

Annex  
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