

MBFR, September 1973–January 1977

340. Editorial Note

On July 10, 1973, Phillip Odeen and Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff sent President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger a memorandum on "data uncertainty in the U.S. position" on mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR). They wrote: "As usual when we reach a point of decision in MBFR, the data we have been using for our analysis and to construct options is turning to jelly. This has seriously fouled up our preparations to present the Verification Panel clear choices as to a preferred U.S. proposal which could be given to NATO as we have promised. The short of it is that *CIA now reports that the Soviets have 70,000* and possibly 120,000 more ground forces in the reductions area than we thought previously. This means that instead of 390,000 Soviet troops there are probably 460 thousand in the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia." The memorandum continued: "If true, an increase in this magnitude means we are going to have to rethink the problem of MBFR. While parity becomes an even more important goal from a security standpoint it is also made more difficult to attain because of the increased asymmetry of the Soviet cuts. The new data effectively wrecks both the stationed force common ceiling and the U.S.-Soviet percentage parity proposals developed in the VPWG. Under the 10 percent stationed force common ceiling, in which the U.S. would cut 34,000, the Soviet reduction, instead of being 83,000 as we had thought, will now have to be 153,000. This much asymmetry makes the common ceiling proposal for stationed forces ridiculous. The percentage/parity cut becomes too expensive for us. If we try to achieve parity with equal percentages then the equal percentage that is required increases from about 15% to 35–50%. This would represent an increase in the U.S. cut which would grow from 32,000 to 60,000–100,000. This is obviously far beyond the size cut we have contemplated in MBFR." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, MBFR/Measures Agreement Subseries, Box 26, MBFR Verification, 1975–76)

After discussing the new data from CIA, the Verification Panel reached the following conclusions at its meeting on July 18, summarized in the meeting minutes: "The Verification Panel Working Group should coordinate a briefing to NATO that: informs the Allies of our new intelligence information; presents the Options 1, 2, and 3A of the negotiating proposals under interagency discussion; stresses the potential negotiating pitfalls of a simple U.S.-Soviet percentage cut; [and] emphasizes the U.S. preference toward a common ceiling approach that

is phased with a first phase comprising a 15% U.S. reduction and a 15% Soviet reduction including the elements of a tank army or its equivalent. It was further agreed that the United States should very carefully inform key Allied personnel that we would be prepared to consider a nuclear package in addition to the 15% personnel reduction in order to achieve Soviet reductions in the form of a tank army or equivalent major tank units. Finally, it was agreed that a briefing should be given to NATO as soon as possible." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-108, Verification Panel Minutes Originals, 3/15/72 to 6/4/74)

In a meeting with Odeen, President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft, and other members of the NSC staff on July 23, Kissinger discussed the paper being prepared for NATO. The memorandum of conversation reads in part: "Mr. Odeen: On the MBFR paper to NATO. The second draft is out for comment now. We should have a final draft by the end of the week. Mr. Kissinger: I think we should throw in the mixed package. A proposal that we take out 29,000 troops without equipment for their taking out 65,000 troops with equipment. You don't need NATO to start screaming that we are abandoning them again. Mr. Eagleburger: That is my worry. Dr. Kissinger: We ought to say that is just not possible. You can't ask them to take out a whole tank army for 29,000 men. Mr. Eagleburger: We can ask. Dr. Kissinger: Yes, and we saw what happened in SALT. Mr. Odeen: There will be a meeting of the NPC on Friday. Dr. Kissinger: Are we going to explain the new intelligence? Mr. Odeen: We will tell them that in preparation for the meeting we had a review of the intelligence and we found this problem and that we will explain it to them. Dr. Kissinger: It won't do us any good. Unless it gets into Schlesinger's speech. Mr. Odeen: I don't think we can do that. I think it is too late. General Scowcroft: It will make us look like fools." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 271, Memoranda of Conversation, Chronological File)

On July 24, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt forwarded to Kissinger the draft presentation to NATO of the U.S. negotiating proposal for MBFR along with their recommendations on six undecided issues regarding the U.S. negotiating position. Kissinger approved their recommendations. On July 26, the Department of State transmitted the approved U.S. proposal for the Alliance negotiating program to Ambassador Rumsfeld in telegram 146712 to USNATO. On July 27, the Mission to NATO replied in telegram 3582: "Ambassador Rumsfeld read and circulated text of 'US views on MBFR negotiating approach' per refel in Council meeting on July 27. Initial reaction was positive." (All in National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 264, NATO, Vol. XV)

341. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 2, 1973, 3:07–4:10 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Lord Carrington, Defense Minister of the United Kingdom
Mr. Richard A. Sykes, Minister of the British Embassy

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff
Miss Kathleen Anne Ryan, NSC Staff Notetaker

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

Kissinger: Then who is holding us up on MBFR?

Carrington: To keep you on your toes. There is no suspicion on the administration but on what it might be pressured into doing.

Kissinger: Our journalists are now engaged in proving everything that is wrong with the administration, even in foreign policy—the agreement with the Russians, etc. Everytime that happens our Congress has to draw the conclusion that if the Europeans feel that we are selling them, why help them.

[to Sykes:] You see our press.

Sykes: I am perfectly certain that nobody hears it in official circles.

Kissinger: We keep hearing from the British that we are selling détente too cheaply. We should get bigger concessions, MBFR, SALT.

Carrington: We put in a paper on MBFR.² It doesn't say that at all.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of Henry Kissinger, Entry 5403, Box 25, CATC Natural, 1974, Arab-Israeli War. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The conversation took place in Kissinger's office at the White House. All brackets, with the exception of those indicating omitted and still classified material, are in the original.

² In telegram 8745 from London, July 30, the Embassy reported that "Tickell asked Embassy officer to call July 30 to receive copy of British paper on MBFR, which he said British will circulate in NATO today and leave copies at the Dept." The telegram continued: "Commenting on US MBFR paper of July 27, Tickell said his observations were tentative and preliminary; British are doing a thorough analysis of new US approach." Tickell, the Embassy reported, made several points: "A. Overall Allied reductions of ten percent are too high. US forces in the guidelines area should not be reduced by more than ten percent"; "B. US paper does not examine problem of withdrawn Soviet forces, which end up in western military districts of USSR"; "C. The US paper by its own logic commits Allies to a second stage more strongly than British think desirable, especially given their conviction that reductions of European forces should not be negotiated until the results of US-Soviet reductions and related measures have been assessed"; "D. As to second phase, British feel strongly that when and if it is reached, no US forces should be included"; and "E. Allied negotiating program should not be presented to the East even in skeleton outline at the early stages of negotiations." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 730, Country Files, United Kingdom, Vol. 8)

Kissinger: Let's not argue about that.

Carrington: I feel cautious about it.

Kissinger: I also feel cautious about it. Then there was this insane Hungarian debate. I find it too early to judge where we stand.

Carrington: All this is in the paper. We would prefer to see judgments in terms of combat effectiveness rather than in numbers.

Kissinger: We need a formula. My experience with the Russians is that they are bloody minded, petty and untrustworthy. The worst mistake is a horse trading position. Then we are caught in an endurance test where they can play on our down situation. The major thing is to find some theory which you can get them to accept. Then there are still bloody fights, but it is easier.

Percentage cuts—if we say equal percentage cuts we prefer to get down to a common ceiling. Percentage will give them a disproportionate cut, also in numbers. I got from Dobrynin that they are willing to have percentage cuts by 5%.³ But if the cut is too small, it won't do for us domestically. If it is too large, it will get us into trouble.

Carrington: The initiative should be in terms of combat effectiveness rather than in terms of numbers or tank divisions which seems . . .

Kissinger: Our position was leaked to the Russians. Dobrynin gave it to me briefly and asked if it was accurate. How many days ago did we table it?

Carrington: When?

Sonnenfeldt: A week ago.

Kissinger: Fairly accurate.

Carrington: The last paper.

Sonnenfeldt: Yes.

Carrington: My feeling is that if you start with what you want to end with, you won't get it.

Kissinger: The Soviets are not eager to make large cuts.

³ On July 16, Kissinger wrote to the President about a meeting between himself and Dobrynin on July 10: "On MBFR he [Dobrynin] asked our reaction to a comment he said Brezhnev made to you in the helicopter to El Toro—that we should begin with modest cuts and then stop for a couple of years. I said we hadn't realized it was meant as a proposal, but I would give him a reply next week. He said they were thinking of simply an informal understanding to work along those lines." On July 30, Kissinger reported in a memorandum to Nixon that during a "very cordial luncheon meeting with Dobrynin" on July 26, Dobrynin had "again urged a U.S.-Soviet agreement in principle in advance of the negotiations" on MBFR. Kissinger continued: "He [Dobrynin] suggested a simple 5 percent cut. I replied that the matter was still before NATO, but that we were thinking of 10–15 percent cuts leading to a common ceiling, and less simple formulas than they had suggested." (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 68, Dobrynin/Kissinger, Vol. 18)

Carrington: So they won't push you up to greater cuts.

Sonnenfeldt: The irony is that it won't help us here.

Kissinger: If we say 5%.

Sonnenfeldt: Especially if the margin of error is more than 5% for inspection.

Kissinger: That is right.

Sonnenfeldt: We are talking about the concept of an outcome.

Kissinger: The best would be if we get something that required a number of years to get it done. The plan is 10% of ours and 15% of theirs.

Sonnenfeldt: In the second stage the common ceiling forces are larger than ours. The difference between us is 10,000—19,000 to 29,000.

Carrington: All I am interested in is combat effectiveness.

Kissinger: He [Dobrynin] said he had heard we wanted a disproportionate percentage then in the first stage. I just had lunch with him. He didn't give me the exact figures. He is pushing 5%. I said we have to think about something higher. We have defended the theory. Dobrynin said I understand we have to cut 5% more than you in the first stage. He asked what the theory is. I said, "Why don't you ask your people who gave it to you?" He said, "They can't explain it."

Sonnenfeldt: Actually the President's report to Congress⁴ mentioned a common ceiling.

Kissinger: The 10% NATO cut and the common ceiling of the Warsaw Pact would be a 10% US cut and a 15% cut for them. And the second phase will be both sides. Take the difference between the 10% US and the 15% Soviet that can be composed of both Soviet and other forces. The second phase the Germans explained to them.

Carrington: I talked with Leber after he talked with you.⁵

Kissinger: I like him.

Carrington: He is a good man. He seemed quite happy about indigenous forces only mentioned.

Kissinger: What is your view?

Carrington: I like the idea about the security; I don't know about the figures.

Sonnenfeldt: Our military is not happy with the size.

Carrington: The military are always going to say that.

Kissinger: We sneaked a good number out during the Vietnam war and this administration has replaced them. They were not missed.

⁴ For the relevant section of the President's Fourth Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy, May 3, 1973, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1973*, pp. 498–500.

⁵ No record of Kissinger's meeting with Leber has been found.

Sonnenfeldt: This can be worked out within NATO.

Kissinger: What can we do about the leak problem if they know about it a week after our position is stated.

Sonnenfeldt: It could be a mechanical problem.

Kissinger: You think so?

Carrington: Then you start unworthy suspicions.

Kissinger: In this town you can be paranoid and have your suspicions found true. [Laughter]

Carrington: We shouldn't have a repetition of the first talks.

Kissinger: There it is, but this other thing NATO has to recognize—the Russians will not roll over and accept it. I think our position in its numerical form will prove unacceptable to the Soviets. And they have to take a 62,000 cut to 29,000 and tanks against nothing. No Soviet negotiator can sell this to the Politburo. I don't mind having this as an opening position. We have to keep in mind the elements of a nuclear package or another package. We can't have another brawl, saying that I have worked it out secretly with Brezhnev or that the United States is double crossing its allies. If we can get a Soviet tank army and tanks out, probably we will have to get something out.

Carrington: This could be said except for the problem of security.

Sonnenfeldt: We have said in NATO what it might be.

Sykes: We have looked at it and taken bits of all three parts. Parts of it was one of our ideas.

Kissinger: This is not a bilateral US/UK undertaking, but we need your help.

Sonnenfeldt: You want a common ceiling defined as "combat capacity" and we want numbers which we consider the same.

Carrington: Depending on what you are doing.

Kissinger: We have to get some work done within NATO.

Carrington: How do you want to see NATO changed to make it more realistic?

Kissinger: Now there are 7,000 nuclear weapons in Europe; [1 line not declassified]

Sykes: A little more.

Sonnenfeldt: [1 line not declassified]

Kissinger: I have every confidence that Goodpaster has ideas if a war starts.

Carrington: I hope so.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

342. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 7, 1973, noon.

PARTICIPANTS

Henry A. Kissinger
Brigadier General Brent Scowcroft
Lawrence Eagleburger
Richard Kennedy
Charles Cooper
Phillip Odeen
Richard Campbell

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

Mr. Kissinger: [Omitted here are unrelated comments.] What about MBFR?

Mr. Odeen: Well, we are moving . . .

Mr. Kissinger: What about our nuclear policy? We've got to get that nailed down and what if the Russians don't go along? We're only asking them to withdraw 62,000 troops and supplies, and their whole tank army, in return for 20,000 men with no rifles. Have we projected what happens if we throw in a rifle or two?

Mr. Eagleburger: The Brits are the toughest. No one has focused on the problem you raised. Everyone is looking at it from our side.

Mr. Odeen: The Brits certainly are a problem. They fight everything.

General Scowcroft: They don't like the problem in the second stage.

Mr. Kennedy: What they want is a flat 10% common feeling [*ceiling*].

Mr. Odeen: Yes, and our position right now is 29,000 on our side, 65,000 or 68,000 and a Russian tank army on the other side.

Mr. Kissinger: Isn't that 15% on both sides? Is 29,000 15%?

Mr. Odeen: Yes. Five division equivalents.

Mr. Kissinger: So we have an equivalent percent on both sides.

Mr. Odeen: Yes, but they may reject it out of hand.

Mr. Kissinger: That's what I have to avoid. With the Russians I found if you can get them to accept in principle what you are trying to do then you have a chance to hammer out something. My problem is that if they reject it out of hand we can't get anywhere.

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1027, MemCons—HAK & Presidential, April–November 1973, 3 of 5. No classification marking.

Mr. Odeen: The Brits want 10% flat out and then quit.

Mr. Kissinger to General Scowcroft: Did you talk to Sykes?

General Scowcroft: Yes.² He was sure Trend would tell his colleagues. I mentioned that that certainly was not our impression but that's water over the dam. I told him we would like a text of what they said so that we can at least tell our people. He said he would send a cable.

Mr. Eagleburger: Trend is a good guy.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't give a damn. I judge by action. They can't milk us for everything in the name of special channel.

Mr. Odeen: On MBFR I will check on the nuclear policy.

Mr. Kissinger: If the Russians turn it down everyone will go home.

Mr. Eagleburger: Well, I see two possible reactions. Either everyone will go home or we'll get into an argument to fold from the Danish and the Norwegians.

Mr. Kissinger: Who cares about the Danish and the Norwegians?

Mr. Eagleburger: What will the Germans do?

General Scowcroft: I think they'll go along with us.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

² No record of this conversation has been found.

343. Editorial Note

Throughout the month of August 1973, Soviet officials approached U.S. diplomats regarding mutual and balanced force reductions (MBFR), and it also became a topic of conversation between President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin. On August 1, Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council staff wrote in a memorandum to Kissinger: "A Soviet First Secretary, Bykov, has approached Jock Dean, supposedly on instructions from the Ambassador, to discuss MBFR. I have told Dean to stall. Given Allied sensitivities and state of the NATO debate—just beginning on our latest paper and substantial disagreement with the British—this is obviously a very delicate moment at which to begin any kind of substantive exchanges with Dobrynin. You could, however, make the following substantive points to feed into the Moscow machinery:

“—As they know, we have made extensive studies; our goal has been to devise possible agreements that would enhance each side’s defensive position—or reduce each side’s offensive capacity—and thus enhance stability;

“—We have found that small ‘symbolic’ cuts do not satisfy those criteria, be they in absolute figures or in percentages. Moreover, given differing political circumstances, small symbolic cuts would be to our disadvantage and thus violate the principle of undiminished security. Further, equal absolute cuts work to our disadvantage since we start with a lower base; so would straight percentage cuts;

“—For these reasons, as indicated in the President’s last annual report to Congress, we have concentrated our efforts on achieving outcomes that produce substantial equality of forces, i.e., the common ceiling approach;

“—We must also take account of geographic inequalities that favor the USSR, for this reason we have given thought to ways whereby any limitation agreement confined to a specific area in Central Europe would not be vitiated by actions taken in areas adjacent to the limitation area, i.e., the idea of non-circumvention. The Soviets should realize this is a very serious problem for us and should, in their turn, give thought to this problem.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 68, Country Files, Europe, USSR, Map Room-D)

Kissinger discussed MBFR in a luncheon meeting with Dobrynin on August 2. A memorandum of their conversation reads in part: “K[issinger]: Now, one of your First Secretaries, Bykov, has been trying to talk to Dean about MBFR. D[obrynin]: By who? Who was it? K: Jock Dean, the one who is in Vienna. D: About what? K: He wants to discuss MBFR—the force reductions. The Vienna negotiations. D: [omission in memorandum] K: Basically, Dean won’t tell you anything that I haven’t. D: [omission in memorandum] one of my First Secretaries meet someone, [omission in memorandum] specifically doesn’t come from me.” The memorandum continues: “K: Anatol, the only reason it comes to me is because all our people are under instructions when—and therefore, I just wondered whether there was any particular thing here. D: No. K: Okay. Dean won’t really tell him anything so it doesn’t make any difference.” Kissinger continued: “I am seeing Lord Carrington this afternoon—British Defense Minister—and he has just seen our paper. D: Yeah. K: I could tell you what we are thinking because sooner or later you will hear it anyway. D: Yes, but— K: Let me wait. Definitely next week we will devote half an hour to that point, and I will give you a pretty good outline of our thinking. D: Because [omission in memorandum] K: What basically we are thinking is that in that category of 10–15% for our forces and then reducing the War-

saw Pact forces to the level that will then be achieved after we cut back 10–15%— D: [omission in memorandum] first stage I understand. But what is second stage? K: Second stage is— D: Because our mutual [omission in memorandum] K: After we have both cut— D: Yes. [omission in memorandum] 10%? K: No. What we want to do is to get after the first cut the forces on both sides to be equal. D: Yeah. So you mean ours or the NATO-Warsaw? K: No. NATO-Warsaw. D: Yeah. K: But actually according to our calculations, that means we have to cut about 10–12% of our forces and you may have to cut about 14% of yours. It is not a big gap. D: Yeah. But you mean [omission in memorandum] forces or not with NATO or Warsaw? K: NATO and Warsaw, Soviet and American forces, or foreign [. . .] What I am trying to say is what we can do most—and this is why I am a little uncertain yet—it may not be a totally symmetrical cut.” The memorandum continues: “D: Is there [omission in memorandum] proposals then or is just discussed going on his side proposals [omission in memorandum] You have proposed something? K: We have not. D: You haven’t?” The memorandum continues: “K: I think what we should do, Anatol, is to work out between—is to see if you and me can come to some general figure and then conduct a negotiation— D: Yeah. K: In Vienna in a way that’s compatible with this agreement; otherwise it is going to be [omission in memorandum].” (Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger and Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, Box 29, USSR, The “D” File)

On August 4, Sonnenfeldt wrote Kissinger in another memorandum for “prompt information”: “Following an earlier approach by First Secretary Bykov, Soviet Minister Vorontsov has now asked Stoessel on instruction concerning US intentions in regard to bilateral consultations on MBFR (Tab A). He said Dobrynin was prepared to meet with the Secretary or Stoessel to discuss our respective approaches. Stoessel said we were still preparing our position and he could not comment on the Soviet suggestion.” Kissinger wrote at the bottom of the memorandum: “We want to keep MBFR in my channel. Please put in talker for D[obrynin] lunch.” (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 248, Agency Files, CSCE and MBFR)

In an undated memorandum, Kissinger informed President Nixon about his luncheon conversation with Dobrynin on August 9. Kissinger wrote with regard to MBFR: “I explained to Dobrynin conceptually how we were approaching the MBFR question, that is to say, that we were thinking of an overall percentage NATO reduction which would lead to a common ceiling for both NATO and the Warsaw Pact, perhaps to be reached at two stages, the first stage of which might be a ten–fifteen percent reduction of Soviet and U.S. forces. Dobrynin said, did I mean foreign forces? I said that it was still open whether other

countries would join us. In the second stage, then, the composition between stationed and indigenous forces would be left to the negotiation. Dobrynin said for the Soviet Union it was more important to know what the end figure would be than what the percentage would be. Dobrynin wondered what end figure we were talking about. I told him I would have to let him know. And I pointed out to him also that this was still tentative thinking not fully approved by NATO." (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 68, Dobrynin/Kissinger, Vol. 19)

Kissinger and Dobrynin also discussed MBFR in a meeting on August 16. Kissinger wrote in another undated memorandum to Nixon: "On MBFR, Dobrynin asked if there already existed an allied position. I said no, but that I was pretty sure that what I had outlined to him before would meet substantial agreement. Dobrynin asked what we really had in mind as between the first and second stages—what time should the first stage be agreed, and how much later after that the second. I said it was our idea that the first stage might be completed next year and that we might then take another year-and-a-half to two years on the second. Dobrynin indicated that this might be reasonable." (Ibid.)

On September 13, the Soviet Embassy delivered a letter to Kissinger. It reads in part: "Dr. Kissinger's considerations on some aspects of the forthcoming talks on reduction of the armed forces and armaments in Central Europe have been attentively studied in Moscow, and a confidential exchange of opinion with the US side on this problem is considered therefore as useful. On our part we would like now to express the following. We note the existence of a common understanding between us as to the importance of working out a coordinated approach towards main aspects of the forthcoming talks in Vienna." The letter stated that the Soviet Union would "proceed from the premise that the reductions should not lead to an upset of the developed balance of forces in Central Europe, but rather should ensure maintaining security in this area." The letter further stated that "in this connection Moscow shares the point of view that the reductions of equal percentage constitute a just and realistic approach" and that "we do not exclude the possibility of an initial, symbolic reduction." (Ibid.)

344. National Intelligence Estimate¹

NIE 11/12–73

Washington, October 4, 1973.

SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD MBFR

Principal Judgments

The USSR's engagement in MBFR negotiations has come as a byproduct of its broader détente policies, and the Soviet leaders view MBFR itself as a vehicle for furthering these policies. They perceive that the US Government is under various pressures to achieve fairly rapid results, and they hope this will give them a negotiating edge.

Neither in MBFR, nor in their broader détente policies for that matter, are the Soviets working for a fundamental reconciliation between East and West nor are they interested in underwriting West Europe's stability and security. They have no intention of allowing East-West relaxation to lead to an attenuation of Soviet authority or Communist Party control in Eastern Europe. The Soviets would see much greater disadvantages than potential gains in an agreement which substantially altered present force levels or combat capabilities on either the NATO or Warsaw Pact sides. A central and recurring theme in negotiations will be the claim that the Warsaw Pact does not have a significant military edge over NATO in Europe and cannot agree therefore to making unequal cuts in its forces. The Soviets will hold hard to the position that the existing relationship of forces should remain essentially unchanged.

The Soviets would have a decidedly negative first reaction to a Western proposal calling for them to withdraw one of their tank armies, with men and equipment, while the US would have flexibility as to the kinds of units to be withdrawn and the disposition of equipment. The Soviets would also refuse to accept the proposition that a common ceiling for Warsaw Pact and NATO ground forces should be the goal of follow-on negotiations. The Soviets might even question whether proposals of this kind were bona fide. And they might, in anticipation of such proposals or in response to them, attempt to alter the bargaining framework by bringing forward their own counterproposals.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, NIC Files, Job 79–R01012A. Secret. The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State and Defense, the NSA, the AEC, and the Department of the Treasury participated in the preparation of this estimate. The Director of Central Intelligence submitted this estimate with the concurrence of all members of the U.S. Intelligence Board, with the exception of the representatives of the FBI who abstained on the grounds that it was outside their jurisdiction. The estimate superseded NIE 11/20–73, which was not found.

However they play these issues, they will not want the negotiations to break down or become indefinitely stalemated. Perhaps their tactic would be to attempt to force the Western side to scale down its overall requirements and to make concessions with respect to the separate elements of its proposals. They could, for example, seek a quid pro quo in US armored forces in return for any reduction in their tank formations. They would also want to explore the possibility of trade-offs involving US tactical nuclear forces in Europe.

It will be the aim of the Soviets to have a minimum of collateral constraints attached to a reductions agreement. They would, in particular, oppose measures which could effectively restrict their ability to move forces into or within Eastern Europe. They are sure to contend that the requirements of verification should be met to the fullest extent possible by "national technical means."

Although the Soviets believe that they are in a strong bargaining position in MBFR, they will want to appear reasonable and to keep the negotiations progressing. How much or how little "give" there will be in their negotiating position will depend partly on their assessment of the urgency of the US need to achieve early agreement. The USSR is likely to recognize, at the same time, that the US and its European allies will regard its position in negotiations as a test of the genuineness of its interest in détente. And as negotiations proceed, the Soviet position will probably be influenced by "linkages" which will be set up between MBFR and other matters, such as SALT and East-West trade.

The outcome of the first phase of negotiations will, of course, be conditioned by the interaction of the positions of the two sides in the negotiating process. In the end, however, the Soviets would probably be prepared to accept an agreement based on the following ingredients:

- reductions limited to US and Soviet forces in Central Europe
- an order of magnitude of 10 to 15 percent applying to reductions of ground forces
- some asymmetry in terms of larger numerical Soviet troop reductions than US troop reductions, with compensating US withdrawal of some tactical nuclear elements
- a minimum of collateral restraints and verification provisions.

They would also see advantages in agreeing to follow-on negotiations, especially because of their desire to secure reductions in West German forces. But they would not agree to having the goals of a further phase (e.g., a common ceiling) laid out in advance.

[Omitted here is the body of the estimate.]

345. Minutes of Secretary of State Kissinger's Staff Meeting¹

Washington, November 27, 1973, 3:35 p.m.

PRESENT

The Secretary of State, Henry A. Kissinger
Kenneth Rush
William J. Porter
Curtis W. Tarr
Fred C. Ikle
Seymour Weiss
George S. Springsteen
Marshall Wright
William H. Donaldson
George C. Denney, Jr.
Carlyle E. Maw
George H. Aldrich
Winston Lord
George S. Vest
Thomas Pickering

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

Secretary Kissinger: Fred, you have some issues on MBFR.

Mr. Ikle: Yes. The question here is, briefly, how fast we should be moving in MBFR, whether we should be doing anything more before the Christmas recess, now that the two proposals have been tabled.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Transcripts of Secretary of State Kissinger's Staff Meetings, 1973–1977, Entry 5177, Box 6, Secretary's Staff Meetings. Secret. Kissinger chaired the meeting, which was attended by all the principal officers of the Department or their designated alternatives. An attached summary of decisions from the meeting, prepared by Pickering, reads in part: "That in discussing MBFR we are *stopping the compulsory reassuring of the Europeans on a nuclear guarantee*. More specifically, with regard to the questions raised by Dr. Ikle regarding the ceiling on nuclear weapons and the handling of the second stage of discussions, his instinct is that we *not introduce any of these ideas* but that we *have a verification panel* meeting soon and that we form a position and *very early after that reassemble*."

² Telegram 5612 from USNATO, November 21, transmitted the text of the agreed Allied framework proposal to be tabled at the MBFR talks in Vienna on November 22. The Allied proposal stated that with regard to Soviet reductions: "The USSR would withdraw from the area of reductions a tank army consisting of five divisions, including about 68,000 Soviet soldiers and 1,700 main battle tanks. This would be about 15 percent of the total Soviet ground forces of 460,000 soldiers in the area of reductions." It stated with regard to U.S. reductions that "the United States would also withdraw from the area of reductions about 15 per cent of its total ground force manpower of 193,000 soldiers in the area of reductions, i.e., about 29,000 soldiers." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 248, Agency Files, CSCE and MBFR) Telegram 5414 from the USNATO, November 10, transmitted the text of a draft Soviet agreement on the reduction of armed forces, tabled at Geneva on November 8. (Ibid.)

The nuclear option will be raised by the UK and FRG and we will have bilateral discussions here.

Secretary Kissinger: Here?

Mr. Ikle: Probably here. We have our view on the nuclear option.

Secretary Kissinger: Which is what?

Mr. Ikle: Roughly 20 percent reduction in F-4's and—

Secretary Kissinger: The one thing we are stopping is the compulsive reassuring of the Europeans. They cannot request us to reassure them three times a week on the validity of our nuclear guarantee. I mean I am serious. We simply refuse to answer that.

Mr. Weiss: That is not what this—

Secretary Kissinger: I know what this option is. But it will work around to it.

Mr. Ikle: The British question, which has been given to us, raises a particular question—the position we would take in the second stage regarding nuclear weapons.

Secretary Kissinger: I haven't followed those cables. George,³ will you put me on the distribution list of your cables. The Press Officer gets everything.

Mr. Ikle: We have to prepare our position we will take here in this discussion, which might take place—

Secretary Kissinger: What exactly is the nuclear problem? I know what the planning paper was.

Mr. Ikle: The problem with the allies is really answering their questions.

Secretary Kissinger: What have we proposed—the common ceiling.

Mr. Ikle: In Vienna—common ceiling, yes. We have not yet mentioned in Vienna anything about the nuclear reductions on our side. The Russians of course have raised questions about nuclear reductions.

Secretary Kissinger: So the question is whether we are now prepared to introduce—

Mr. Ikle: Introduce that in Vienna, before the recess or after; and secondly, how we want to discuss it with our allies, when they want to see us about it.

Secretary Kissinger: They were given that, weren't they, when we discussed it at NATO.

Mr. Ikle: Right.

Secretary Kissinger: So the question is tactically when do we introduce it.

³ George C. Denney, Jr.

Mr. Ikle: When do we introduce it and what further we say to our allies about how to handle Soviet pressures for nuclear reductions in the second stage.

Secretary Kissinger: Beyond the twenty percent we are proposing for the first stage?

Mr. Ikle: The nuclear element that we discussed with our allies in Brussels is connected with the tank matter, which would be in the first stage in our proposal.

Secretary Kissinger: And then the question is what do we propose in the second stage.

Mr. Ikle: That is the British question—if indeed the negotiations move in the direction of this first stage and second stage.

Mr. Weiss: Can I comment briefly on this in that respect. There really is a further question here, and that is when precisely in response to what Soviet initiative, or what point in the negotiations do you want to toss this in. As you know, what we have always described as the sweetener, i.e., to presumably induce the Soviets to accept an asymmetrical numerical reduction which favored us—now, our own feeling—

Secretary Kissinger: I forget what the nuclear option is.

Mr. Weiss: A thousand warheads, fifty-four—

Secretary Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Weiss: And our sort of feeling is that this is just very early on in the negotiations. You know, at some point it will be necessary to do that. But I think myself that if you did it this early, you would be sort of frittering away some leverage.

Secretary Kissinger: What is your view?

Mr. Ikle: The broader judgment is that by holding out to spring and summer we improve the outlook for an agreement of the kind we like.

Mr. Rush: If we in essence agree on what we will do in the second stage before we agree on the first stage—and we have only one stage—we have a timing problem.

Secretary Kissinger: What is the British question—what we will do with nuclear weapons in the second stage?

Mr. Ikle: That is one of the questions—how it might relate to FBS, whether it would impose a ceiling on nuclear weapons.

Secretary Kissinger: Of course it imposes a ceiling on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Ikle: Right.

Secretary Kissinger: It is an idiotic question. If you reduce your weapons by twenty percent, you obviously reduce it to a ceiling. But why do we have to commit ourselves now?

Mr. Ikle: We do not. The question is whether we should or not.

Secretary Kissinger: We have two questions. One is when to introduce the nuclear part of it. And I am clear that we shouldn't do it before the NATO meeting. We are going to have trouble enough there as it is. The next question is what do we answer to the Europeans. And I am trying to understand the purport of their questions. Why should we be in a position to answer now what the second stage of our reductions would be on nuclear weapons before we have even formulated an overall package for the second stage. Can't we answer that this cannot be—

Mr. Weiss: I think we are unintentionally slightly misleading you because only part of the British questions—and we have a short cable from them here⁴—direct themselves to the second stage. Some of them direct themselves to the present. For example, just to take one here that they raise. "The relationship of nuclear reductions in MBFR to FBS and SALT. We wonder whether the Russians will accept that for technical reasons that nuclear systems in the NATO guidelines area cannot be regarded as FBS. In any case, by indicating that they intend to raise the question of F-4s, they have already given us notice that we will have to discuss dual capable aircraft, including the F-4s whose range enables them to strike the Soviet Union on a one-way mission." They are simply raising a complexity which we ourselves have not yet totally grappled with and thought through, and they are simply saying we ought to air this more and try to come to grips with it. So it is not all second stage from their point of view.

Secretary Kissinger: What the purpose of this question is, is to get us to put all of the nuclear discussions into the MBFR and therefore not commit ourselves not to raise it as part of the FBS.

Mr. Weiss: Whatever their motives are, ours would be not to get hit on this twice by the Russians, once in SALT under FBS—

Secretary Kissinger: That is clear.

Mr. Weiss: That is why we need to have some discussion.

Mr. Ikle: First we want to have our own position that we want to take with the British.

Secretary Kissinger: Are you going to share your position with others? Are we going to get a clue of what our position is?

Mr. Ikle: We are putting it into the back-stopping committee discussions, and have other agencies come in and have a review.

A related question is whether we want to say anything about a second stage fairly soon or want to wait until January when we discuss the linkage between the first and the second stage.

Secretary Kissinger: When is the recess?

⁴ Not further identified.

Mr. Ikle: Probably mid-December.

Mr. Weiss: Here again, we would caution that if you get into the second stage you are going to do a number of things, including deflecting attention from the first stage, which is after all the one that we are primarily interested in, because we are trying to get those forces out. Moreover, we are sort of using the second stage and holding it open in order to tell the allies whenever they raise a question that we find we don't really want to handle now—"Well, that is something we can talk about in the second stage." If we begin to get too specific and focus on that now, you have a real problem. For example, it brings up the question of indigenous force reduction versus U.S. force reduction. As you know, you still have a problem within the Alliance with the British saying "We prefer not to have indigenous" which is the position that we ourselves have essentially adhered to, the Germans and others saying they prefer to have some indigenous in.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. But the Germans say in order to get a handle on the pressures in their country for unilateral—

Mr. Weiss: I understand that very well. We have of course agreed that in the second stage there would be some indigenous. But now the question comes—do you want at this time to be overly specific on the second stage, when you begin to—

Secretary Kissinger: Fred, what is your view?

Mr. Ikle: It really amounts to making a forecast when we can get the best outcome on MBFR—either early next spring or later during the coming year—as to the speed with which you want to proceed.

Secretary Kissinger: What is your view about the second stage?

Mr. Ikle: The second stage has precisely this danger that Sy mentioned. Given the Soviet pressure for German reductions,⁵ they will be exploited for that. And the question is can we get an agreement on U.S.-Soviet reductions alone in the first stage.

Secretary Kissinger: As I understood it, unless there have been some refinements since I last addressed this issue—as I understood it,

⁵ Telegram 5414 from USNATO, November 10, transmitted the Soviet proposal of November 8. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 248, Agency Files, CSCE and MBFR) In a memorandum to Schlesinger dated November 20, Hill wrote that the Soviet proposal "would result in numerically asymmetric cuts through equal percentage reductions." Two features, he wrote, stood out in the Soviet proposal. "It hits hard at the Bundeswehr not only numerically, but also because for that force (which contains nearly half of all of NATO's manpower and tanks in the NGA), 'reduction' means disbanding units and destroying equipment," and "more than that, two-thirds of all reduced allied forces (about 100,000) would be disbanded." Hill continued: "Taken by itself, the effects of the Soviet proposal would be (1) to withdraw (but not disband) a large amount of Soviet stationed forces in Eastern Europe, and (2) disband a large amount (75,000) of the FRG armed forces strength." (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files: FRC 330-78-0001, Box 74, NATO 320.2)

we were proposing a common ceiling to be achieved in effect in two stages—a first stage reduction of more or less equal percentage of U.S. and Soviet forces, into which we were willing to throw in the nuclear package, as a sweetener, because our proposal was too one-sided, in terms of numbers, and also probably in terms of—and certainly in terms of equipment. Therefore, the second stage is inherent in our proposal already.

Now, the second issue is that as I understand Leber, the reason he wants some specificity about the second stage is not in order to accelerate reduction of German forces, but precisely to prevent a reduction of German forces, by creating an obligation for a reduction that would enable him to say that since it is internationally agreed that this can only happen by consensus, a unilateral German reduction would be a violation of their agreements. This is as Leber has explained it to me—and he is one of the few German cabinet ministers I trust. And that is not a trivial argument. And it is an argument that actually might carry weight in Germany.

Well—they are going to adjourn about the middle of December?

Mr. Ikle: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: My instinct is that we not introduce any of these ideas, but that we have a verification panel meeting soon, and that we form a position, and that very early after that reassemble, and we make our position clear.

My own preference for negotiating styles is to take a position very close to where you want to come out and stick with it rather than get into an endless haggle, which confuses everybody.

Aldrich was with the negotiation when neither side moved for months.

Mr. Aldrich: Years.

Secretary Kissinger: It only seemed like years.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

346. National Security Decision Memorandum 241¹

Washington, January 10, 1974.

TO

The Secretary of Defense
The Deputy Secretary of State
The Chairman, U.S. MBFR Delegation

SUBJECT

Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions

The President has approved the following instructions for the U.S. Delegation² in the next phase of MBFR:

1. The U.S. Delegation, in coordination with the Allies, is authorized to begin discussion of U.S.-Soviet ground force reductions with the Soviet and Warsaw Pact Delegations in accordance with Phase I of the agreed Allied proposal.

2. In this connection, the Delegation, together with the Allies, may inform the Soviets that:

—At a suitable time in negotiating the first phase of our proposal, we would be willing to discuss the specific language of a provision in a first phase agreement which would cover the linkage between the two phases.

—We could agree that the second phase negotiations could start within a fixed period of time after conclusion of the Phase I agreement; the precise period would be agreed later in the Phase I negotiations.

3. As for Soviet desire for assurance that the second phase would include the forces of the Federal Republic of Germany,³ the Delegation

¹ Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-017, Verification Panel Meeting, 3/14/74, MBFR. Secret. Copies were sent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

² Telegram 5679 to Vienna, January 10, communicated the relevant portions of NSDM 241 to the MBFR delegation in Vienna. (Ibid, Box 668, Country Files, Austria, Vol. 1)

³ A memorandum to Walters on "Warsaw Pact Views of the West German Army in the Context of MBFR," December 14, 1973, reads in part: "On 8 November the Soviet MBFR delegation at Vienna proposed a draft agreement specifying equal percentage reductions of both stationed and indigenous forces. One of the effects of this agreement would be that the largest NATO reductions, approximately 47 percent of the total, would be taken by West German forces. The Soviet proposal, therefore, runs counter to NATO's belief that a first phase agreement should be limited to the withdrawal of US and Soviet ground forces from the reduction area. Acceptance of the Pact proposal could result in a reduction for the West German Army of over 50,000 men in addition to other reductions in air force manpower. This could result in a ceiling being placed on the West German Army at approximately 270,000 men." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence Files, Job 82-M00587R)

should emphasize that the common ceiling reduction which should result from Phase II would, on the Allied side, focus on the other direct participants in the area of reductions. The Delegation may informally tell the Soviets that it is our assumption that the Bundeswehr would be included under the common ceiling reduction,⁴ but that any advance commitment to FRG reductions in the second phase would require an equivalent Soviet commitment to the common ceiling as the outcome of Phase II.

4. The Delegation should, as appropriate, make clear to the Allies and the Soviets that the only sub-ceilings to result from MBFR, in either phase, should solely apply to Soviet and American forces.

5. As discussed in the Verification Panel Meeting, January 7, 1974,⁵ the Delegation should continue to oppose the inclusion of air and nuclear forces and make clear to the Soviets that we are not prepared to address them.

Discussion of nuclear issues with UK and FRG should be postponed until February. A paper with recommended guidance for use in response to the UK/FRG questions, together with an analysis of the underlying issues, should be prepared by the Working Group for the consideration of the Verification Panel by January 28, 1974.

Henry A. Kissinger

⁴ At a December 28 meeting, Lodal explained to Kissinger a disagreement between the U.S. delegation at the MBFR talks and Sonnenfeldt regarding German reductions: "As I understand it, the Delegation proposed promising a second phase which would include German forces in return for a first phase concentration in U.S./Soviet forces. Since the Soviets want very much to have German forces included, this is a significant concession on our part. The common ceiling would be pushed to the background and, therefore, might be lost in the process. The real issue is one of emphasis—the degree to which the common ceiling is emphasized now. There is also the issue of whether the Germans are still interested in being included in a common ceiling." (Memorandum of conversation; Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 66, Memcons and Summaries of Discussion) Kissinger also discussed the issue with Resor the same day; a memorandum of their conversation is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 1027, MemCons—HAK & Presidential.

⁵ The minutes of the Verification Panel meeting on MBFR, January 7, included in its "summary of conclusions": "there will be no sub-ceilings in MBFR except on U.S. and Soviet forces; a decision on adding a 'nuclear sweetener' to the MBFR negotiations would be postponed pending further study; the trilateral meeting with the Allies scheduled for January 21 would be postponed until February." During the meeting, Kissinger said: "Personally, I don't think there is a snowball's chance in hell of getting an agreement without the nuclear package—no chance whatsoever." At this point, Ikle pointed out that there was a planned trilateral meeting in Washington on January 21 with German and U.K. representatives to discuss MBFR; he suggested that it be postponed until February so that a U.S. proposal for a nuclear package could be discussed. Kissinger said: "I think that once we get our SALT position defined, we ought to talk to them [the Soviets] then about the nuclear package in MBFR. If the Soviets have no interest, well, then, we have at least found out." (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-108, Verification Panel Minutes, Originals, 3/15/72 to 6/4/74)

347. Editorial Note

At the Verification Panel meeting on March 14, 1974, the Panel agreed that the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) would prepare a paper listing outstanding issues in the mutual and balanced force reduction (MBFR) talks and recommend positions on those talks. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-107, Verification Panel Mtg. MBFR 3-14-74) ACDA Director Fred Ikle sent Kissinger the paper on March 16. Counselor Sonnenfeldt and Jan Lodal of the NSC staff forwarded the paper to Kissinger on March 19 along with their own analysis of its contents in a covering memorandum. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 49, Kissinger Trip Files, March 25–28, 1974, Miscellaneous Papers)

Kissinger discussed the March 14 Verification Panel meeting in a telephone conversation with Secretary of Defense Schlesinger on March 23 at 3:40 p.m. The transcript of their conversation reads in part: "S[chlesinger]: Incidentally, Henry, I heard that the MBFR meeting was not a thing of joy and enlightenment. K[issinger]: No. S: I wanted to— K: It was a sorta disaster. S: I wanted to remind you that the discrepancy cut between US and Soviet Union forces is just based on 15% cut on both sides. K: Oh, no, that I did not object to. What I objected to was you know if you take out the Soviet tank army with equipment for 29,000 Americans without equipment it is a little hard to sell. S: Well, I think you are going to have to sweeten it up with tragment (?). K: Exactly. As long as that is understood. And what we may have to do is— S: See we have those 7,000 weapons in Europe some of which we don't know what the hell we would do with. K: Another problem, Jim, we ought to consider is that when you begin analyzing these equipment ceilings you don't really know whom they work for because if you take out their men, they probably have to take some of their equipment with them, and if you put a ceiling on theirs and a ceiling on ours you breed another disparity. S: I think the best. It sounds right, I'd have to look at it more closely. K: I don't expect to get into that in any detail in Moscow. The only thing that may come up in Moscow, but this is simply a guess, I have no knowledge of this, is they may resurrect again the idea of a five to eight percent cut which would work out to about 12 for us and 29 for them. S: That's all right. K: And in a way since we are not held to taking forces out. S: Listen, I think we can get that kind of stuff out of our headquarters and what not. K: Exactly. It might even be a better way of doing it. S: Yeah. We have positioned ourselves in negotiations far better than the Russians have in that regard, we've got more fat. K: Jim, one final thing. S: Maybe that's a disadvantage, being so combat heavy." (Department of State, Electronic Reading Room, <http://foia.state.gov/documents/kissinger/0000C584.pdf>)

Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin had mentioned the possibility of a five to eight percent cut of U.S. and Soviet forces in MBFR in a meeting with Kissinger on February 1. A memorandum of the conversation reads in part: "Dobrynin then asked whether it might be possible at the summit to agree to a percentage cut of Soviet and U.S. forces in MBFR. I said that I remembered that Brezhnev in June 1973 had recommended only five percent; we thought ten percent would be the minimum. Dobrynin said, 'Well, maybe we'll compromise on eight percent.' I told him it seemed to us that ten percent was the genuine minimum, but in any event the problem was how to relate it to the position of our Allies. Dobrynin said we should both think further about that. I said it would help to do this if we could get a basic plan accepted in the MBFR negotiations as a goal, within which this first stage could be negotiated." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 69, Country Files, Europe, U.S.S.R., Dobrynin/Kissinger, Vol. 22)

348. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 29, 1974, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting Between SecDef and US MBFR Ambassador Resor

PARTICIPANTS

Visitors

US MBFR Representative—Stanley R. Resor

US MBFR Deputy Representative—Jonathan Dean

Department of Defense

Secretary of Defense—James R. Schlesinger

Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)—Robert Ellsworth

SecDef MBFR Representative—Bruce C. Clarke, Jr.

Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Atomic Energy)—Donald R. Cotter

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)—Amos A. Jordan

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA), European Region—

Harry E. Bergold, Jr.

Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense—MGEN John Wickham

Director, DOD MBFR Task Force—Col. Louis G. Michael

¹ Source: Washington National Records Center, OSD Files: FRC 330–78–0011, NATO 091.112. Secret. Drafted by Michael and approved by Ellsworth on August 8. The meeting took place in the office of the Secretary of Defense.

1. (C) *US MBFR Objective*

SecDef stated that the major US objective should be to acquire symmetry between Pact and NATO forces in Central Europe. Since the Soviets have asymmetrical deployments, they should take asymmetrical cuts. Asymmetrical reductions are needed not because of diplomatic pressure, but to redress the aggressive deployment of Soviet forces. The outcome of reductions must be equitable, and we want to obtain balanced Pact/NATO ground force dispositions in the end.

2. (S) *Overview/Comparison of US and Soviet Positions*

SecDef stated that the Soviets always argue from the same position. He said the Soviets historically build up a preponderance of force and then offer to scale down by taking out elements one for one which leaves a "correlation of forces" in their favor. SecDef observed that currently there are 500,000 Soviet troops deployed in Eastern Europe and that the Soviets have built up their total armed forces from 3 million to 4 million men and improved their ICBM and submarine launched ballistic missile position. He stated that the Soviets are in fact seeking a shift in the overall correlation of forces. SecDef further stated that we should not accept the Soviet MBFR argument which is to maintain the correlation of forces; we can interpret the correlation of forces as we wish. SecDef suggested that when the Soviets raise the issue of correlation of forces we throw back at them the SALT issue. They have increased their military force levels, and they are the ones who have been attempting to alter the correlation of forces in their favor. We do not want the force relationship to change to our disadvantage. The only time the Soviets object is in some specific context, but correlation of forces cannot be looked at in any specific area. He suggested the Soviets be told that the correlation of forces cannot be looked at in isolated areas but must be viewed in an overall context. SecDef observed further that the Soviets have built up their conventional forces as a compensatory measure for strategic inferiority. He stated that the US has not increased its strategic force, and thus as strategic forces come into balance, we should expect reductions in their conventional forces.

SecDef challenged any characterization of our proposal for 15% US/Soviet Phase 1 reductions (including 68,000 Soviet men and 1700 tanks)² as being "lopsided" in our favor. He did not rule out a reduction of 15% stationed forces on each side, and PDASD Jordan theoretically discussed a 13.5% reduction of Soviet, Canadian, UK, and US forces which would net the tank army while giving up 34,000 on the Western side.

² See footnote 2, Document 345.

3. (S) *Next Steps*

Ambassador Resor outlined his proposals for moving forward in MBFR. He reviewed the requirements for obtaining concrete results in MBFR by the spring of 1975, pointing out the parliamentary demands both within the US and Western Europe and the advantages of our taking the initiative in the negotiations. He expressed the view that the West could not stand on its current position when negotiations resumed this fall, and that we must be prepared to modify our position if we are to take the initiative. He outlined two alternative courses of action that the US could propose to our Allies. The first was to indicate to the East our willingness to include nuclear capability in US Phase 1 withdrawals. The second course of action would be to scale back our objectives and propose an abbreviated Phase 1 focussed on only manpower reductions on both sides (no Soviet tank army) and smaller reductions than envisaged in our current Phase I proposal. Ambassador Resor stated that we need to test the Soviet bona fides by offsetting their perception of our current proposals as being inequitable. He further stated that we need to get them to address equal packages by our offering to include nuclear capability if the Soviets are willing to accept the principle of asymmetrical ground force reductions.

SecDef said he assumed Ambassador Resor wanted to move on the nuclear point because negotiations were “frozen.” He accepted a less pessimistic characterization of the state of play elaborated by Ambassador Resor. With reference to Ambassador Resor’s explanation why Congressional pressures and Allied imperatives indicated a need to show movement by next spring, SecDef asked why it was counterproductive to delay with respect to the Allies. Ambassador Resor responded by an assessment of the implications on Dutch and UK planning for unilateral cuts.

ASD Ellsworth asked Ambassador Resor if he would move to include nuclear capability in reductions this fall regardless of the overall situation at the time with respect to détente and other factors. Ambassador Resor responded affirmatively; however, he said he would not lay down the content of a nuclear package—rather only a signal that we were willing to include nuclear capability in reductions if the East would agree to the principle of asymmetrical ground force reductions.

4. (S) *Use of Nuclear Elements in MBFR*

SecDef stated that he had no hesitation about including the Option III nuclear package.³ He directed that the NSC staff chief be informed that we are agreeable to this. He indicated willingness to include ele-

³ See footnote 4, Document 135.

ments necessary to obtain our objectives and emphasized the need to move ahead.

ASD Ellsworth said our plan of action for proceeding should include high level exchanges in NATO capitals and in Washington to make clear our intent, our plan, and our purpose.

5. (S) *Quid Pro Quo for US Nuclear Elements*

SecDef expressed the view that we should not push too far in urging an exchange of nuclear elements for the principle of asymmetrical ground force reductions. Nuclears should be applied against the gross preponderance of Soviet tank forces in the area; tactically, the focus should be on the tank army. But there are ultimate limitations to a trade. We should keep driving toward obtaining balanced Pact/NATO ground dispositions in the end.

6. (S) *Content of the US Nuclear Package*

SecDef said he would be inclined to beef-up our negotiating package with air force reductions rather than ground force reductions. He suggested Ambassador Resor ask General Brown what the Services' preferences were. He observed that we can move our air forces back to Central Europe within 48 hours while moving Army forces back is more difficult. SecDef expressed some reservations about Pershing reductions in the first instance. However, he indicated that in going forward to the Allies we can include Pershings. SecDef said we should implore the Russians to keep asking for nuclears. Throwing in Option III permits us to remove an albatross from our necks—and gets the tank army. SecDef posed no objection to ATSD(AE) Cotter's proposal that we denuclearize Nike in the area as part of our proposal.

SecDef approved going to Allies in the first instance with the current Option III.

7. (S) *Approach to Soviets*

Ambassador Resor expressed the view that we should not degrade our nuclear capability by taking actions to reduce unilaterally. SecDef agreed forcefully that we should not make public our plans to remove nuclear elements from the NGA for efficiency purposes. SecDef stated that we should tell the Soviets in the presence of their allies (so there would be no ambiguity) that we are not going to move a single weapon in the NGA. We are retaining plenty of weapons to use against forces in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR. Privately, we should tell them we are planning to upgrade through modernization. We are taking some weapons out but we are replacing them with better weapons with longer range. Soviet obstinacy in negotiations is the best incentive for us to make these adjustments. We can meet with them privately and ask how they would like another 1,000 Lance in the NGA and Pershing II.

SecDef stated that we could send the Soviets a personal message from him to the effect that if they delay for a year they will regret it. Unless they get on with it we are going to move a division into the NGA. The Nunn amendment⁴ gives us license to increase combat strength, and we are in fact in the process of doing it. Soviet obstinacy is the best incentive the US can have for getting on with the job, that is, making improvements in the US conventional force posture.

8. (S) *Other Specific Decisions*

In response to questions from Ambassador Resor, SecDef agreed to including air manpower in MBFR so that the common ceiling would cover both air and ground forces. SecDef most unambiguously stated that we are prepared to announce US and Soviet forces are to be included in Phase II reductions. SecDef had no objection to saying that the US reduction package will include units.

9. (U) *Congressional Factors*

There was a general discussion of the various factors bearing on Congressional decisions with respect to force deployments in Europe.

SecDef said that we should stress with Senator McClellan and others that: the Europeans are making a substantial contribution; the Europeans are not all bad; the French are moving back into the defense picture; 1.2 million FRG troops in the field is a substantial contribution.

⁴The Nunn Amendment to Public Law 93–365, proposed by Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA), provided that “the total number of United States tactical nuclear warheads located in Europe” would not be “increased until after June 30, 1975, except in the event of imminent hostilities in Europe” and called on the Secretary of Defense to study “reductions in the number and type of nuclear warheads which are not essential for the defense structure for Western Europe.” (88 Stat. 402)

349. Minutes of a Verification Panel Meeting¹

Washington, August 1, 1974, 3:03–3:59 p.m.

SUBJECT

MBFR

PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger	<i>JCS</i>
<i>State</i>	Gen. George S. Brown
Joseph Sisco	M/Gen. W. D. Crittenger
Helmut Sonnenfeldt	<i>CIA</i>
George Vest	LTG Vernon A. Walters
Amb. Stanley Resor	Benjamin Rutherford
Jonathan Dean	<i>ACDA</i>
<i>Defense</i>	Dr. Fred Ikle
Robert Ellsworth	David Linebaugh
Bruce Clarke	<i>NSC</i>
Col. Louis Michael	M/Gen. Brent Scowcroft
	Jan Lodal
	Michael Higgins
	James Barnum

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

—the Verification Panel Working Group would put together a negotiation package that would link SALT, MBFR and CSCE.

—the Verification Panel Working Group would refine the “nuclear option.”

Secretary Kissinger: (to Gen. Walters) You look poised for a briefing, but you also look like you don’t have anything to brief about.

Gen. Walters: You’re right. Unless you ask me to, I’ll forget the briefing. I’ll be happy to be silent for a change. The only significant thing I have to report is some recent military developments.

Secretary Kissinger: Does anybody want to hear from Walters? We can wait and read it in the *Post* tomorrow. Go ahead.

Gen. Walters briefed from the attached text.²

¹ Source: Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Verification Panel Meeting Sub-series, Box 6, VP (MBFR), August 1, 1974 (1). Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² Not found.

Secretary Kissinger: Perhaps the best way to proceed would be to get an assessment of the last round of talks from Stan (Amb. Resor), what decisions he thinks we need to discuss, and then go from there.

Amb. Resor: Thank you. As you know, we have been at it for the last nine months, and to be truthful, we have made little progress. There has been some movement, but not much.

Secretary Kissinger: I don't know why not. Maybe we need a better negotiator.

Amb. Resor: If we stick with our present position you'll need one.

Secretary Kissinger: I don't know why you weren't able to sell them on that—what was it, 29,000 “cooks” for all those tanks? I can't understand why they didn't snap it up, especially if we throw in REFORGER (laughter).

Amb. Resor: I think REFORGER was scaled down to 25,000 troops. Anyway, we do have indications that the Soviets are interested in making some progress.

Secretary Kissinger: What progress?

Amb. Resor: Well, there are indications that they will go for two separate successive phases which would lead to two separate agreements. That is, the Soviets would take the largest share of reductions in the first phase. And possibly, agreement to the deferral of non-stationed forces to the second agreement if U.K. and Canadian reductions are included in Phase I.

Secretary Kissinger: Do any other countries have stationed forces other than the Soviets?

Amb. Resor: No. What they argue is that they want equal treatment for all. They have made it clear that what they want in the first phase is reductions in equal numbers. There are indications that they may be willing to give in the asymmetrical area. During this round, we have tried to keep the talks focused on phasing and not on reductions. It is hard to talk reductions with the numbers we have used. So, the first thing I think we need a decision on—what we should consider here—is an overall time frame—that we should get the talks moving. I spent 1½ hours with McClellan yesterday. Our feeling, based on my appearances on the Hill and talking with others, is that we should show some movement in the talks, at least by Spring.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, I was up there with him (McClellan) the day before, and I sensed the same thing.

Amb. Resor: He was patient, but he wants to know when he will see some movement, if only to forestall congressional reductions. Moreover, I also think that if the talks are still deadlocked by next Spring, after 1½ years of talks, it could become counterproductive. The Western European governments are also under pressure to reduce unilat-

erally, as you know. The Dutch are thinking of making their own cuts. The plan is now deferred for MBFR, but that won't last forever. If the Dutch reduce, the Belgians will follow. The United Kingdom has its defense review going. They will probably want their share of the Phase II reductions, maybe even Phase I.

Secretary Kissinger: Didn't I see a cable today about German willingness to take cuts in the first phase?³

Amb. Resor: There are some indications of that. They have made it clear that they are under no pressure, and their defense budget has already passed. We are thinking of a program that we could introduce by next Spring that would have two courses: (1) add the nuclear capability to the negotiating position, or (2) cut back on our objective of asymmetrical reductions. Regarding number one, we suggest that in the Fall we add. . . .

Secretary Kissinger: Option III?

Amb. Resor: No, what we want to give them is a nuclear signal. Not present the whole package at first. The Soviets have shown no sign of departing from the concept of equality of reductions. Our object has been to reduce the asymmetries of ground forces. We want to achieve a balance by adding something to our side. We want to test their willingness to reduce. We think the nuclear signal would be the only thing that would do it. We think this would lay the groundwork for movement on their side. CSCE will probably prevent them from doing anything right away.

Secretary Kissinger: We have not explicitly linked the two, have we? I think we should do more of that. We must get a sensible European position on Basket III. If we want to push this thing, we have to have some leverage. Right now we have none. The trouble is that the Allies don't want CSCE and they don't want MBFR. They want peace and détente and reductions and everything else, but they don't want to take the responsibility. It's the heroic period of Western leadership. Don't misunderstand me, I understand what you are saying. I do think we made a mistake by not linking CSCE and MBFR more explicitly in the first place, however.

Amb. Resor: The Russians may be sensitive to that, but what would we give them?

Secretary Kissinger: We could promise them progress in CSCE, which they want, for progress in MBFR.

Amb. Resor: A big problem is the lead time we have to give the Allies. I think that we ought to get a U.S. decision on the nuclear

³ Not found.

package first and then do the consulting with the Allies. I think we ought to get it started, because that forces the Soviets to face up to the problem. One of our big problems over there is that we don't know what the Soviets are thinking. We have no test of their true emotions on MBFR. If we get something on the table, they will have to bear the responsibility for lack of movement. We test them. They have been sitting back enjoying the atmosphere in Vienna—no pressure.

Secretary Kissinger: Is that all, Stan, what about the 2nd alternative?

Amb. Resor: Regarding the second option, we would cut back on our objectives to, say, a 7½ percent cut in Soviet and US groundpower. No equipment would be included, just troops. We would defer reductions in tanks and equipment until Phase II. Our view is that it is illogical to cut back on manpower objectives before we have even tried out our full position.

Secretary Kissinger: Who is, "our"?

Amb. Resor: The delegation; also the Issue Paper.⁴ We also think that it would be hard to get a 2 to 1 asymmetrical cutback in Phase II unless we start it in Phase I. The Europeans insist on the common ceiling; if we defer the concept, that makes it difficult to get them to agree to Phase I. Also, tanks are relatively easy to verify, manpower less so. Also, we do not want to defer treatment of the level of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. They are a wasting asset. Defense would like to restructure tactical nuclear weapons in Europe; Warnke,⁵ Enthoven⁶ and Sam Nunn and others are testifying that we should cut back. The Delegation recommends that we reach a Washington decision on the nuclear signal soon and then approach the Allies with it.

Secretary Kissinger: What is your definition of soon?

Amb. Resor: Well, so that we could get a trilateral meeting scheduled by early September.

Secretary Kissinger: We can take a week or two on the nuclear package. We don't need a decision right away. I would like to have the President focus on several issues at the same time. I'll tell you about them later. Your schedule is to have the Trilaterals in early September and to the Soviets by what, November? Of course, that means the Soviets will already know about it because once it's introduced into NATO, the Soviets will know.

⁴ Not found.

⁵ Paul C. Warnke, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, 1967–1969.

⁶ Alain C. Enthoven, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis, 1965–1969.

Amb. Resor: That is a consideration.

Secretary Kissinger: One of my considerations is this: It is inescapable that the Soviets are convinced that Forward Based Systems (FBS) can reach the Soviet Union, and there is something in the Soviet claim. We have to recognize this belief, although we know it will be a problem with NATO. As we develop our SALT positions, we can't simply say we cannot consider it. We must recognize that an agreement is impossible without inclusion of FBS. The question is the relationship of the nuclear option to SALT. We should think in terms of linking FBS with MBFR. I think this is tolerable to the Allies and to the Soviets as well. Ideally, I would like to see an agreement that would link MBFR, SALT, and CSCE in order to give the Soviets something comprehensive. Otherwise, we will just be diddled to death. I would like for the Verification Panel to put together a total package linking SALT, MBFR and CSCE. I accept the nuclear package as a concept, but it does leave me a bit worried. Without linkage; giving the Soviets a say over NATO nuclear systems. If we can link MBFR to SALT, the whole thing might work.

Amb. Resor: The problem is that it would weaken its use in MBFR.

Secretary Kissinger: No, we would just tell them that we will handle FBS in MBFR. We cannot justify the fact that there is no accounting for FBS in SALT.

Amb. Resor: Would we tell them right off about the F-4s and the Pershings?

Secretary Kissinger: We don't have to make that decision now, but I wanted you to consider this item. Are you finished?

Amb. Resor: There is one other thing—have we decided to confirm Option III as it presently is? It's simpler with the Allies if we stick with it.

Secretary Kissinger: Is anyone questioning it?

Amb. Resor: Defense wants a battalion vice a specific number. They want to reorganize and would prefer that the reduction of Pershings be 27 instead of 36.

Secretary Kissinger: What do they want, three launchers per battalion? We haven't formally put that forward, have we?

Amb. Resor: Yes, four instead of three.

Secretary Kissinger: That's what I thought. Increase to four, then withdraw one, we still have three. What's the game, they want more battalions?

Amb. Resor: No. The figures are confusing. A battalion has always been unwieldy.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, that's a question of negotiating strategy. If we put forward a nuclear package, it ought to be one that has a chance.

Dr. Ikle: It should be about the same percentage as manpower.

Amb. Resor: There are 108 Pershing Launchers. A cut to [of] 27 would be a 25% reduction. We got at the number initially to match up with the tank reductions.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I'm not going to fret the numbers. That can be worked out. We don't need a decision on that now.

Amb. Ellsworth: Except that this option needs to be refined. We wanted a decision in principle at this meeting in order to ready ourselves for the Allies. Can we get agreement to study it seriously?

Secretary Kissinger: That, certainly, so long as it does not require consulting with the Allies.

Amb. Ellsworth: Our view is that we should agree to use the contents of Option III. We should not scale down until we have tried it. There has been no history of nuclear elements in MBFR talks, and we need to show some concrete movement. We need to refine the outline of the nuclear component. Then consult with our Allies in full. We need the nuclear package.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I have one suggestion, from someone with a long history of dealing with the Soviets. It has been my experience that the worst way to deal with the Soviets is to show a sense of urgency, and the absolute worst way is to show that you are under domestic pressure. In my experience all they will do is outlast you. You cannot show a sense of urgency. In this regard, I suggest we keep our public relations people in firm check on this, that we not talk about these things. Also, I would suggest we not brief Congress that much. I'm trying to do that. In my appearances up there, I've taken a hard line. I am telling them no troop reductions. I understand what you all are saying, and I agree, but you'll never get an agreement if you show a sense of urgency. An eagerness to conclude an agreement does not help. I've had a lot of experience at this. It is important to keep our briefings under firm control. Now, I favor refining the nuclear package for our own purposes but not for use outside. Then link the two (MBFR and SALT) together. I agree that we need a refined nuclear package. But it shouldn't go too far away from what the Allies have already seen.

Amb. Resor: Secretary Schlesinger sees no need to move quickly.

Secretary Kissinger: I think we should. I agree that there is some urgency, but you all should sense it, don't show it.

Amb. Resor: Our point is that we don't want to be under the gun in the Spring. We don't want to have to push it in a matter of a few weeks. We do have this problem with the Allies. They tell us in Vienna that MBFR is not on the front burner in the US yet. We keep pushing them to get some kind of movement.

Secretary Kissinger: They are not getting that out of State!

Amb. Resor: Well, in one instance they were.

Secretary Kissinger: Did you screw up again, Joe (Sisco)?

Mr. Sisco: On some things I am very modest. I know nothing. I'm very modest on MBFR.

Secretary Kissinger: As far as the State Department is concerned, once we have a strategy. . . .

Amb. Resor: It would help if at your level you could talk to the Germans and others.

Secretary Kissinger: Good idea.

Amb. Resor: I'm worried about the Allies not understanding.

Amb. Ellsworth: Then you think the July 1973 option⁷ should be shown to them?

Amb. Resor: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: Then we'll refine the package and meet again in two weeks. We should be able to get a decision then.

(to Mr. Ellsworth) You are in favor of alternative 1⁸ and a refinement of the nuclear package?

Amb. Ellsworth: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Dr. Ikle) And you?

Dr. Ikle: Yes, we agree to the first Alternative. And I think we do buy something in SALT with Option III.

Secretary Kissinger: I've talked enough to Brezhnev to know that we cannot have a SALT agreement without something done about FBS. This is not just a bargaining position on their part. They have a military concept of what FBS would do. They have charts and so forth on which they have calculated what US weapons will hit the Soviet Union. I, too, can think of a thousand ploys to keep FBS out, but it won't work. I'm content to have the nuclear option in MBFR. And, when you are refining the package you must address several other questions. I would like you to consider ceilings and how do you define ceilings. If

⁷ Apparent reference to Option III; see footnote 4, Document 135.

⁸ The Verification Panel Working Group prepared a paper, not found, on options for the next round of MBFR. Lodal and Sonnenfeldt summarized Alternative 1 in an unsigned memorandum to Kissinger, July 27: "*Alternative 1: Introduce the 'Option III' Air and Nuclear Elements*—The Option III package consists of 1,000 nuclear warheads, 36 Pershing missiles and 54 nuclear capable F-4 aircraft. It comprises approximately 20 percent of the nuclear elements in the NATO Guidelines area (NGA). It would be offered as an offset to our demand that the Soviets remove 20 percent of their tanks from the NGA. The main issue raised by this alternative is the potential damage done by the ceilings on nuclear forces and aircraft which would result from withdrawal of these elements." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Verification Panel Meeting Sub-series, Box 7, VP (MBFR), August 1, 1974, [1])

only F-4s are to be reduced, then the capability of evasion would be enormous. I'd like recommendations of how to define the ceilings if we withdraw F-4s.

Amb. Ellsworth: And would you like us to speculate on Soviet attitudes as to what effect the ceilings would have on the tanks?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, that brings me to my next question. I consider the nuclear package a swap for tanks and a common ceiling. Obviously one has to speculate on ceilings on Soviet tanks and reciprocal ceilings on the other side. My feeling is we should probably not have reciprocal ceilings, but I'm open on this. I have no fixed-views. This raises the question of warheads. But I don't want to give the answers. Those are the questions, the principal questions that need answers.

Does the second Alternative⁹ need further work?

Amb. Resor: No, I don't think so.

Secretary Kissinger: You feel that if the President wanted to go to a 7½% option this panel does not need to address it further? Do we know how it would be worked out with the Allies?

Amb. Resor: The Canadians and the British would just take out token numbers.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Lodal) Could we get a working group together on that?

Mr. Lodal: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: Okay. Any other actions we need to take today?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Should we add in a percentage of air manpower?

Secretary Kissinger: Do it as a separate piece?

Amb. Resor: They are pushing for air manpower reductions. It would be an element of either alternative. We could consider it separately.

Gen. Walters: Verification of manpower poses some real problems.

Secretary Kissinger: If our intelligence estimates are correct, air manpower may be roughly equal. They shouldn't be too excited about it. I see no particular reason not to include it except for the impact of ceilings on air forces. But since the nuclear option leads to that anyway, then it's no problem.

⁹ Lodal and Sonnenfeldt summarized Alternative 2 in their July 27 memorandum: "Alternative 2: Drop the demand for a tank army and reduce the number of US and Soviet forces to be withdrawn in Phase I—This would lead to a position quite similar to the 5 percent (10,000/20,000) US/Soviet reduction Brezhnev has raised and you discussed in Moscow." A third alternative was also put forward: "Alternative 3: *Stonewall*—Make no major moves in Vienna at this time."

Amb. Resor: Air manpower will be covered anyway, either explicitly or through non-circumvention measures. We have to prevent things like the Herman Goering Division.¹⁰

Secretary Kissinger: That is guaranteed here by interservice rivalry. The Working Group will look into it. From a foreign policy standpoint I see no reason not to include it.

Amb. Resor: One last thing. If we decided to go with the nuclear package, we'll need to establish a target. Rumsfeld wants to play it for the whole Allied objectives package. I suggest as the target, the tank army for Phase I. I don't want to overload at the start. I think the best way to get a common ceiling is on the basis of a tank army.

Amb. Ellsworth: As long as we don't lose sight of the common ceiling.

Amb. Resor: No, we won't. The Allies won't allow it!

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Sonnenfeldt) I need to have a paper on where we stand on CSCE. The Dutch Ambassador told me. . . . (to Lodal) Include air manpower in the Working Group report. We'll meet again in a couple of weeks; that will still give us time to get to the Allies in September.

¹⁰ Reference is to the elite tank division created and placed under the German Air Force by Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering during World War II.

350. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 14, 1974, 12:52–1:20 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Ford
Stanley Resor, Chief of US Delegation to MBFR Negotiations in Vienna
Dr. Henry A Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Memoranda of Conversation, Box 5. Secret. The conversation took place in the Oval Office.

President: It's nice to see you. How do you like the job?

Resor: I enjoy it, except that I am unable to be with my family. The work is significant; if we can get agreement it would be important. It would give us a rational basis for NATO forces.

The Soviets seem businesslike in their approach. We can't really get into the ratio problem—to the common ceiling—until we offer the nuclear package. We told the Allies a year ago we would raise it at the appropriate time. Secretary Kissinger properly wants to use it in SALT first.

Kissinger: Would it really unlock the door to offer it?

Resor: We can't be sure, but it would help on their two basic points: that reductions must be equitable and that the overall balance must be maintained. Whether this will do it is hard to say, but we think there is a chance. The non-circumvention clause would give the Soviet Union a handle on West German forces.

Kissinger: But not French forces.

The reductions would result in a ceiling, which is really the significant aspect. That does matter to them.

President: How would we verify manpower reductions?

Resor: We are requesting that there be inspectors at some entry points. They may grant this because they wouldn't be in the Soviet Union. But we have photography which shows the units.

Kissinger: [*less than 1 line not declassified*] photography [*less than 1 line not declassified*] we can tell about units, not individuals.

President: Do we have a preference on where they would withdraw them?

Resor: We have recommended that they withdraw a tank army. They said that would leave a hole, but we have said they could take the forces from anywhere.

Kissinger: Our first proposal was absurd, and Stan needs this package.

President: If things go ahead, when would we get equivalency?

Resor: In the US-Soviet Union phase, we would hope for agreement in principle by spring. It would take six months to implement. They would want the second phase right away to get at the German forces.

President: What is the West German attitude?

Resor: They aren't right now under pressure to reduce. Their restructuring comes in several years.

Kissinger: But I think it will be a problem in the second phase, because the Soviet Union wants to match the West German against satellite forces.

President: Do the East Germans have rapport with the West Germans?

Kissinger: Yes, in a way. There is this attraction and rapport. I have a friend who says when he wants to go to the “old Germany” of the Twenties, he goes to East Germany. Then, German history is composed of periods of anarchy and discipline. German history is anarchy, and the discipline comes from East Germany. What I fear is a reunified Germany under nationalism. Brandt was too lazy, but that was what Bahr was after. The Soviet Union fears that—and France.

President: Is there that much nationalism left?

Kissinger: The Germans are romantic, and given to excesses. Brandt was lazy but he could have started down that path. The spark would have to come from East Germany, but West Germany would respond.

President: I think MBFR is politically important here, but substantively SALT is more important. If we can combine the two, we could get the best of both worlds.

Kissinger: We haven’t pushed MBFR in the Presidential channel. If the President wanted to move directly with Brezhnev, how would the Allies react?

Resor: It depends on what kind of movement it is. We talk regularly with the British and Germans. The others know that but we keep it quiet. If you told them at a high level, it would probably be okay. The Europeans fear an agreement which would give the Soviet Union the right to meddle in their defense structures.

President: Where would the common ceiling be?

Resor: The end result would be at 700,000.

Kissinger: The tricky part is that any reductions must be accompanied by a ceiling to avoid circumvention.

Resor: The Soviet Union wants ceilings by country.

Kissinger: I predict that if there are reductions, the result one way or another will be a ceiling on German forces. If that is so, together with the nuclear package, the Soviet Union would be getting something.

President: I haven’t gotten into this yet, so I need time.

Kissinger: Stan has enough to talk about for a while. We prefer to wait to tell the Germans and British on the nuclear package until we get the SALT package ready.

President: Yes. Just keep it in the family until we get to you.

351. National Security Decision Memorandum 269¹

Washington, September 21, 1974.

TO

The Secretary of Defense
The Deputy Secretary of State
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
The Chairman, U.S. MBFR Delegation

SUBJECT

Instructions for the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks, Vienna,
September 16, 1974

The President has approved the following instructions for the U.S. MBFR Delegation. These instructions supplement those contained in NSDM 241.²

1. After agreement has been reached with the NATO Allies, the Delegation is authorized to begin a discussion with the Soviet and other Warsaw Pact delegations on the definition of force categories and exchange of data, subject to the following considerations:

—A single package of redefinition measures should not be proposed; rather, individual anomalies and possible solutions should be discussed.

—Numerical data may be given to the Pact delegations only on a reciprocal basis, except that Alliance agreed revisions to data already released may be given without exchange.

—The Delegation shall not agree to any final definition of force categories without prior agreement on related data. The Delegation should seek guidance from Washington before committing the U.S. to any specific redefinition proposals.

2. The Delegation is authorized to begin discussion of the role of air manpower in the negotiations. In this connection, after agreement

¹ Source: Ford Library, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-040, NSDM/NSSM Originals, NSDMs 251–306. Secret. Copies were sent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of Central Intelligence. Lodal and Sonnenfeldt forwarded a draft of the NSDM to Kissinger on September 6 as an attachment to a memorandum about an upcoming Verification Panel meeting on September 7; both *ibid.*, Verification Panel Meeting, 9–7–74, MBFR. No minutes of the meeting have been found. Lodal forwarded a revised version of the NSDM to Kissinger on September 19. In a covering memorandum, he wrote: “I have attached a revised MBFR NSDM (Tab A), reflecting your comments on the earlier draft—i.e., that the NSDM should approve the option III air and nuclear reductions in principle, but defer use of the package until further notice.” (*Ibid.*, NSDM 269) Telegram 211141 to USNATO, September 25, transmitted the instructions to the U.S. delegation to the MBFR talks in Vienna. (*Ibid.*, Presidential Agency Files, Box 15, NATO, NATO from S/S, Exdis)

² Document 346.

has been reached with the NATO Allies, the Delegation is authorized to inform the Pact delegations that the U.S. and its Allies are prepared to take the following actions:

- Exchange data on air manpower.
- Discuss inclusion of air manpower in the data base for computing U.S. and Soviet Phase I ground force reductions.
- Consider inclusion of air manpower in the proposed “no increase” agreement which would limit Alliance and Warsaw Pact manpower between phases.
- Discuss the possibility of withdrawing up to 15% of U.S. and Soviet air manpower in Phase I.
- Consider inclusion of air manpower within a manpower common ceiling, provided the Pact delegations agree to the common ceiling concept.

The President has approved these additional elements of the U.S. MBFR position:

1. U.S. Phase I reductions may be in the form of units, designated in advance.
2. No U.S. forces in Berlin will be included in the U.S. reduction package.
3. Both U.S. and Soviet forces should participate in Phase II reductions.
4. Phase I post-reduction manpower levels may be exceeded for military exercises by up to 20,000 men for up to sixty days once each year.

The President has approved in principle the introduction into the negotiations of a nuclear proposal along the lines of that included in Option III described in the paper titled “U.S. Approach to MBFR,” approved by NSDM 211³ and presented to NATO in May 1973. The proposed reduction package should include 1000 nuclear warheads, 48 F-4 nuclear capable aircraft, and 27 Pershing surface-to-surface missile launchers. While approving the use of this package in principle, the President has decided to defer its introduction for the present time. Therefore, Option III and the use of nuclear elements in MBFR should not be discussed with either the Allies or the Soviet and Warsaw Pact delegations without further guidance.

Henry A. Kissinger

³ Document 137.

352. Letter From Secretary of Defense Schlesinger to Secretary of State Kissinger¹

Washington, December 3, 1974.

Dear Henry

It has been evident that we could not move on MBFR until the SALT stage had been set. However, now I believe it important that we move without delay into NATO with a proposal to advance MBFR by giving the nuclear signal to the East in Vienna before the end of this round of negotiations. The following factors bear on such a decision:

—We see a need to make progress in MBFR soon—as long as we do not damage our basic security interests in the process. We do not know what kind of pressure the new Congress will put on us, but it could be significant.

—The Soviets are making “new” non-substantive MBFR proposals to put the East in a better public position.

—The SALT FBS issue has been set aside for the mid-term future.

—We are planning on drawing down a good number of nuclear warheads. We would want to get MBFR credit for warheads coming out of Central Europe.

—We and our Allies have identified some complexities associated with aircraft and missile reductions. These are not insurmountable, but warhead reductions are less complex, and NATO should be able to agree to them right away.

Equipment constraints can be worked out satisfactorily in connection with the introduction of nuclear elements. The act of agreeing to equipment reductions should establish an obligation on the US and the Soviet Union not to exceed the residual level of armaments specified in the agreement for reduction except for normal rotation and training purposes. Some reciprocal limitations on elements similar to those reduced by the other side should be imposed on each side by some form of non-circumvention provisions. These would be designed not

¹ Source: Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Steve Hadley MBFR Files, Box 6, Ikle/Lehman Reciprocity Initiative (2). Secret. On November 29, Michael forwarded the text of the draft letter to Clarke in DOD telegram 1751 to the U.S. Delegation to the MBFR talks. Michael wrote that “Mr. Ellsworth hand carried the following draft to JRS this afternoon and subsequently sent word back that it was quote OK unquote.” Michael continued: “Sonnenfeldt told Joe Jordan today that they will look at the foregoing carefully but that nucs won’t work. They don’t leave us enough flexibility.” Sonnenfeldt, he wrote, had said “the best next step” would be “to make concessions in the manpower area. No comment.” Michael concluded the telegram: “Scowcroft now has an advance copy of the foregoing letter.” (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files: FRC 330-78-0011, Box 68, NATO 320.2)

to leave NATO at any real or apparent relative disadvantage. Non-circumvention formulations could be as general or as specific as the negotiating circumstances demand, and possibilities cover a spectrum of varying constraint. In any case appropriate constraints are feasible and should not hold back play of Option III elements.

We want to reduce Soviet capability in the Warsaw Pact area through the removal of tank forces; and we want to retain a strong US capability. If we judiciously play out our negotiating hand in MBFR and hold firm to our basic position, the Soviets may accommodate us. Advancing the signal before the break (December 12) would give the Allies a leg on the East and would permit the Allies and the East to use the December-January recess to prepare for serious discussion in the next session.

We might pursue a scenario along the following lines to achieve this end:

—Introduce into the NAC the first week of December a proposal to inform the East in Vienna before the December break that the Allies would be prepared to consider including substantial US nuclear capability in the form of 1,000 warheads in US Phase I reduction provided the East is willing to consider accepting our Phase I objectives, including reduction of a Soviet tank army.

—We would inform the Allies we would not rule out the possibility of following later with other Option III elements (27 PERSHING and 48 F-4), depending on the situation, and this would require further consultation with NATO.

If we are to make this new proposal before the end of this negotiating round we will have to move forward immediately in the Alliance. Assuming we do that in the next several days, you and I then could put the capstone on Alliance agreement at the Ministerials. Because the last plenary session in Vienna is scheduled for 12 December it might be necessary to hold some delegation members in Vienna a few days longer.

James Schlesinger

353. Editorial Note

In December 1974 and January 1975, the Ford administration discussed at the highest levels when and whether to introduce a nuclear option at the mutual and balanced force reduction (MBFR) talks in Vienna. At the beginning of December 1974, in response to Secretary

of Defense Schlesinger's letter of December 3 (Document 352), Secretary of State Kissinger discussed with Schlesinger the timing for introducing a nuclear option. At a meeting on December 7 with President Ford, President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft, and Schlesinger, Kissinger said: "At NATO, I would hold the nuclear package for now. About March would be best. I think Brezhnev might be ready to move on MBFR in preparation for the summit." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 431, Subject File, Schlesinger, James R., Memoranda of Conversation) Jan Lodal of the NSC staff wrote in his log on December 7: "Schlesinger and Kissinger met this morning. Kissinger talked Schlesinger out of telling the rump NPG session that we were considering reducing nuclear weapons. He also talked him out of moving on MBFR until March." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 70, Daily Log)

On December 10, Lodal sent a White House telegram (Tohak 2) to Kissinger, who was en route to the December 12–13 NATO Ministerial meeting in Brussels. The telegram reads in part: "Two items concerning nuclear elements in MBFR showed up in the press today from Brussels. You should be aware of them. Upon arrival in Brussels on December 9, Schlesinger had the following exchange with newsmen, in part: 'Q: Mr. Secretary, what do you see as the focus of the ministerial meetings at this time? A: The focus of the ministerial meetings will be to achieve a long range strategy for NATO. [omission in the original] I might mention the result of the Vladivostok conference. I think from the standpoint of Western Europe that the results are interesting not only in terms of the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to have equality in terms of the number of central strategic systems, but perhaps more significant is the willingness of the Soviet Union to abandon a position that it has maintained for some years that would require forward based systems to be included in considerations with regard to central strategic systems. Forward based systems were dropped from any discussion with relation to the central strategic systems, and to the extent that there will be any discussion of forward based systems, it would take place within the discussions going on [regarding] mutual and balanced force reductions. This has been a matter of concern to our European allies for some years, and therefore it is particularly noteworthy that the results of the Vladivostok conference have given them cause to rejoice on this particular issue. In addition, I might say that the decision to establish a common ceiling with regard to strategic delivery vehicles would be a harbinger of a decision to accept a common ceiling with regard to forces in Central Europe.'" Lodal commented: "Schlesinger may have been trying to reassure the Europeans that no FBS deal was made with the Soviets as per your conversation on December 6. However, his remarks are certain to be interpreted by some

as an admission that we agreed with the Soviets to discuss FBS in MBFR. As you may know, there has been a good bit of speculation on this point in the European press for the past week or so. In addition to Schlesinger's comments, the Netherlands' Defense Minister Vredeling told the Eurogroup that the Dutch would propose to the NATO ministerial meeting Thursday that 'the alliance's tactical nuclear weapons be considered a bargaining counter' in the MBFR talks. West German Defense Minister Leber objected to this proposal, calling it 'bad and unwise.' He commented that 'if the East wants to bring up such a point, it should say what it is willing to reduce.' All of this has been reported in the press." On December 11, Scowcroft wrote to Kissinger in telegram Tohak 11: "I mentioned the Schlesinger comments about MBFR to the President (Hakto 1). The President agrees completely with you that such talk should stop, and I am so informing Schlesinger." (Both in the Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Presidential Trip Files, Box 7, December 14–16, 1974, Martinique, Tohak 12/10–13/74)

Telegram 492 from the United States delegation to the MBFR talks, December 10, recommended "that the US decide to introduce Option 3 into the MBFR negotiations in the near future and begin specific consultations with the Allies on it by the beginning of January with a view to introducing Option 3 in Vienna early in the next round." Telegram 271497 to the U.S. delegation to the MBFR talks, December 11, responded: "The Secretary has read reftel. He will consider arguments presented therein further and review the matter in Washington. Meanwhile, he wants no discussion of Option III with foreign representatives. The Secretary has noted speculation that dropping of the FBS in SALT by Soviets in Vladivostok involved some deal on use of Option III or even understanding on unilateral US nuclear cuts in Europe. This is of course totally false. It also makes timing of any use of Option III that much more sensitive." (Both *ibid.*, Presidential Country Files for Europe and Canada, Box 1, Austria, from SecState–Nodis)

On December 20, Kissinger gave a deep background briefing at a luncheon with foreign correspondents. The memorandum of the conversation reads in part: "Question: How about introducing the nuclear option into the MBFR negotiations? Secretary: I have told my associates never to discuss this in the negotiations. One should not make compromises on matters of national interest until thirty seconds before midnight. The Nunn amendment was not a wise move. If the Soviets know we are being forced to withdraw our nuclear weapons, they will not give in." The memorandum continues: "Question: When do you expect an MBFR agreement? In the spring? Secretary: I gave no April one deadline to our NATO colleagues in Brussels. The timing is bad as it is too soon after Vladivostok to see a conclusion of the negotiations." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, P-7425337)

On January 16, 1975, the Verification Panel met to discuss Option III. Schlesinger also attended. Lodal described the meeting in his daily log: "We had an MBFR VP meeting in the afternoon. I met briefly with Kissinger before the meeting (Scowcroft and then Sonnenfeldt joined later). Kissinger started off by saying, 'Can you tell me what this meeting is all about?' He wanted to know what the political situation was—why was Schlesinger all of a sudden getting excited about MBFR. Brent and I explained that he wanted to take out warheads from Europe. Kissinger snidely remarked, 'Take the nucs out of Europe—he's really the tough guy.' Sonnenfeldt then came in and digressed about what Ikle would talk about. Kissinger said that if Ikle had suggested it, the one thing we would be sure about is that the idea was no good. He then asked a couple of questions about what the Nunn Amendment issue was, and I explained. Sonnenfeldt told him he had to make a decision. Schlesinger came to the meeting itself, which went very well. Kissinger went through the major options. Schlesinger indicated his willingness to go along with Option III. Resor and Dean did not know what our air manpower position was when asked directly by Kissinger—extremely embarrassing. We came out of the meeting with a fairly clear consensus that we would play Option III and try to get the tank army for it, but not agreement to the common ceiling. Everyone agreed we would have to pitch in [*to?*] Europeans to get agreement to the common ceiling." Lodal's log continues: "Kissinger was quite humorous at the VP meeting—joking with Schlesinger by saying that 'if people who know something about the issues start coming to these meetings, it will disrupt the entire process.' Schlesinger also did well—after pointing out that Leber is the German peacetime commander-in-chief, he said this was an idea which 'would receive some support in this country.' Kissinger said he thought we were already there. It was quite a humorous exchange." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 70, Daily Log)

The minutes of the Verification Panel meeting included the following "summary of conclusions": "It was agreed that: Defense will prepare a new Option III package; an NSC Meeting will be scheduled the week of January 20, 1975; [and] the options to be decided by the President are: play Option III for a Soviet tank army and agreement on a common ceiling for Phase II; [or] play Option III for both a Soviet tank army and a common ceiling in Phase II, but the Europeans must agree to take token Phase I reductions." (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-110, Verification Panel Meeting Minutes, Originals)

354. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 23, 1975, 9:35–10:18 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Ford

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than the European security conference or MBFR.]

Kissinger: On the NSC meeting on MBFR, the only issue is when to play the nuclear option—all at once or piddling it out.

The President: Timewise, when should we move?

Kissinger: I wouldn't decide it at the meeting—just to preserve some flexibility. I would tell Resor he could give it to NATO in February and present it at Geneva in March.

The President: Is there a chance we could have something by the summit?

Kissinger: If there is, it won't happen at Geneva. If we were willing to agree to equal cuts, we could get one.

The President: It would help with the Congress.

Kissinger: Our original proposal was ridiculous. The problem with cuts is that it indirectly introduces a ceiling. That is significant to the Soviets.

If we get serious about MBFR, we should do it like SALT—give them proposals through your channel before surfacing them.

The President: Schlesinger isn't a problem on this, is he?

Kissinger: Not at all. [2 lines not declassified]

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Memoranda of Conversation, Box 8. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Oval Office.

355. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, January 23, 1975, 10:37–11:35 a.m.

SUBJECT

MBFR

PRINCIPALS

The President
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger
Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. George S. Brown
Director of Arms Control and Disarmament Agency Fred Ikle
Director of Central Intelligence William Colby

OTHER ATTENDEES

State:

Deputy Secretary Robert Ingersoll
Ambassador Stanley Resor

CIA:

Benjamin Rutherford

White House:

Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, Assistant to the President
Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft

NSC:

Jan M. Lodal

President Ford: Thank you all very much for coming. As you know, this meeting is on the topic of MBFR. I would like to be updated on where we stand. I'm familiar with our offer and the Soviets' counter-offer, and when I was Vice President, I had an in depth briefing by Bruce Clarke. But I've not had anything since then, except that I talked briefly to Stan last September.² Stan, you go back Sunday?

Ambassador Resor: Yes. Our first meeting with the other side will be on January 30.

President Ford: Bill, do you have a briefing for us?

Mr. Colby: Mr. President, MBFR focuses on Central Europe, where the largest and most critical elements of military strength on both sides are located. However, the discussions exclude substantial military

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, NSC Meetings Files, Box 1. Top Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Lodal. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Attached but not printed are a series of charts that Colby used in making his presentation.

² See Document 350.

forces in the flank states of both sides, even though they are important to the overall military balance in Europe. Further, reinforcements from France, Britain, and the Soviet Union are close enough to Central Europe to alter the balance there if time permits. But the reductions area would be the decisive battleground. Should conflict erupt there suddenly, the forces shown on this next board—expanded, of course, by local mobilization—would be the principal combat elements immediately available to both sides. These numbers are based on our most recent intelligence. There are minor disagreements between these numbers and the agreed NATO numbers. It is in Central Europe that the Pact has the greatest preponderance of ground forces, and it is this imbalance that we are addressing in the MBFR negotiations.

The national forces of both sides in Central Europe are approximately the same size. The major disparity between NATO and the Pact strengths stems from the Soviet forces stationed in the reductions area. These constitute approximately half of the forces available to the Pact, and the major part of the Pact's offensive power. Furthermore, Soviet forces in the reduction area have been increased by about 100,000 men in the past 8 years—and have significant strength in tanks—while NATO forces have not grown appreciably.

The withdrawal of a Soviet Army from Central Europe would reduce Soviet offensive capability significantly. Just as importantly, it would probably force the Soviets to change their plan of attack. I can illustrate this briefly. We have good evidence that the Soviet generals believe their forces in the reduction area are capable of undertaking major offensive operations against NATO's center region without prior reinforcement from the USSR. Although they clearly expect reinforcement after a week or so, exercises as far back as 1969 consistently indicate that they intend to exploit their initial numerical superiority by a high-speed offensive once hostilities begin. I would like to add, Mr. President, that [3 lines not declassified]

President Ford: Are you still getting that stuff?

Mr. Colby: Yes. There are some very delicate operations involved.

The preferred Pact organization for operations against NATO consists of the three "fronts"—a Soviet term for an army group charged with taking the main strategic objectives of the attack. In this scenario, the Central Front would make the main Pact effort, using the bulk of the Pact forces—five Soviet and two East German armies. The objectives of this force would be to overrun central Germany and Belgium, up to the French border. The Northern Front—a Polish expeditionary force of three armies—would have the mission of seizing the Jutland Peninsula and the Danish Islands.

Secretary Kissinger: Is that just your theory, or based on some information?

Mr. Colby: They have carried out a series of exercises along these lines, although there have been some variations.

Secretary Kissinger: Mr. President, that is essentially the German Schlieffen Plan³ of 40 years ago. It's the same theory—they swing around the sides and come through Belgium.

Mr. Colby: It's more like a punch through the middle, and then a swing around.

Secretary Schlesinger: Von Schlieffen would never have thought of the Poles as his strong right flank. (laughter)

President Ford: It's better than the Italians!

Mr. Colby: Part of the force would attempt to drive across the northern part of Germany into the Netherlands. The Southwest Front would operate against NATO forces in southern Germany. Two Czech armies and a Soviet army would be committed, with the goal of breaking through to the borders of France and Switzerland.

The objectives of these operations would be to overwhelm the NATO forward defenses, disrupt mobilization, and hinder the movement of NATO reserve forces into their wartime positions. To make these objectives attainable, the Soviets would hope to carry out their attack with great speed, concentrating an overwhelming force, primarily armor and artillery, against narrow sectors of NATO's front. Their attack would have large-scale air support from tactical aircraft and medium bombers targeted against NATO airfields and nuclear depots.

Secretary Schlesinger: Mr. President, the quality of U.S. tactical air vastly exceeds the quality of Soviet air. On the overall balance, taking quality into account, the air situation looks quite good. Looking only at the numbers would lead you to be unduly pessimistic. This same analysis does not apply to the tanks—

President Ford: The 2 to 1 aircraft advantage looks awesome.

Secretary Schlesinger: That also leaves out our reinforcement capability. We could have an additional 1,500 aircraft in Europe very quickly.

President Ford: From where?

Secretary Schlesinger: From the U.S. We can't reinforce quickly with tanks, but we can with aircraft.

President Ford: But you say the quality of their tanks is different?

³ Reference is to the plan drawn up by German Army Chief of Staff, Alfred von Schlieffen, in 1905. It proposed that in a future war against France and Russia, Germany should concentrate 90 percent of its force on the French front and, before Russia could mobilize, knock France out of the war by means of a massive flanking maneuver through neutral Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg.

Secretary Schlesinger: Their tanks essentially match our capabilities.

President Ford: Incidentally, how are you coming with the expedited MC-60 program?

Secretary Schlesinger: Very well. We will be up to 600 in June and up to 1,000 by 1976.

President Ford: Per year?

Secretary Schlesinger: Yes sir.

Mr. Colby: They would also hope to achieve surprise to prevent NATO from concentrating its own forces against these attacks. The withdrawal of one of the Soviet armies from the central area would jeopardize Pact chances for a successful campaign.

Pact planners expect NATO defensive operations to involve tactical nuclear weapons at an early stage. They would respond, and are developing command and control capabilities to deliver either limited or massive nuclear strikes. Therefore, I will now turn to the tactical nuclear balance in the reduction area.

The aircraft figures shown on this chart represent the total number assigned to units which have nuclear missions. This comparison exaggerates the Soviet capability, however, as recent information indicates that only some 300 of the pilots in their units are—according to Soviet standards—qualified to fly nuclear strikes. All of the NATO aircraft included are manned by nuclear qualified pilots. There are additional aircraft on both sides capable of nuclear missions, but not assigned to them. The total warhead figure for the Pact is based on estimated storage capacities at known nuclear depots.

The Soviet tactical nuclear force has grown considerably since the late 1960s. The introduction of new aircraft has more than doubled the nuclear delivery capability, and they have longer ranges and improved characteristics at low altitude. The tactical missile force on the other hand, has expanded only gradually.

President Ford: Are those IRBMs?

Mr. Colby: No—Scuds and Frogs.

Secretary Schlesinger: This is only in the NATO guidelines area.

Mr. Colby: It is now less important than air delivery systems. However, it certainly cannot be ignored.

Pact forces used to rely heavily on strategic missiles from the USSR to support theater operations. These figures, however, show that their force modifications over the past several years have brought them to where they could fight to high levels of intensity with the systems located in Central Europe. This growing ability to withhold USSR-based missiles may eventually provide the Soviets a means of isolating a European conflict, and decoupling Soviet territory from it. In any case,

the continuing improvement in Pact nuclear capable systems will be a trend to reckon with in these negotiations.

The chart does not show chemical weapons. The Soviets, however, are probably better prepared than the West for chemical warfare in Europe. Their doctrine treats chemicals as “weapons of mass destruction,” to be used only after nuclear war has begun. They have put heavy emphasis on preparing their forces to defend against chemicals.

Some mention should be made of our Allies and their attitudes toward MBFR. Britain, West Germany, Canada, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg are directly participating in the negotiations—the other Allies are observers. The West European Allies entered into MBFR reluctantly. They did not want to see the US military presence in Europe reduced, and feared that the negotiations themselves would be divisive. Now, because of economic and political pressures, the British, Dutch, and Belgians would like to cut their own forces. The West Germans are of course not feeling the economic pinch so much; but would expect to be a part of any Western reductions.

Finally, the Soviets have an interest in some progress in MBFR, since they probably see the negotiations as contributing to their overall objectives in East-West détente. They need, at a minimum, to keep the talks going in order to help maintain movement in the Conference on European Security. But they also have real security interests in the MBFR outcome—especially their hope of at least constraining the growth of, or, ideally, reducing West German military strength. With respect to the US, they would like to see a reduction in our nuclear capability in Europe—but not at the expense of an increased West German capability. In regard to their own forces, the Soviets can be expected to drive a hard bargain. They will stress equality of reduction rather than equality of remaining forces. In particular, they will focus on US nuclear strength and the German military potential.

President Ford: Thank you very much Bill. Henry, would you like to bring us up to date on where we stand—

Secretary Kissinger: I would like to sum up the history of the negotiations, following on to what Bill Colby has said, and review the modifications which might be made to the Alliance position now.

MBFR originated in the 1950s with Soviet proposals for both a European security conference and for withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany. During the 1960s, the Soviets lost interest in European force reductions, lest they appear to release forces for service in Vietnam. But during the late '60s, their interest seemed renewed for a variety of reasons. In the end, we went along with MBFR for basically two reasons: First, as a response to Soviet CSCE initiatives and second, for Congressional reasons, as a counter to Mansfield Resolu-

tion pressures. The Europeans went along for essentially the same reasons.

As the talks started, we developed an interest in seeing if we could use MBFR for rationalizing the analysis of NATO strategic issues. In NATO, a serious discussion of these issues had not taken place, and we thought MBFR might be helpful in getting one started.

So we went into MBFR with a mix of motives. It has to be seen in that context.

The US developed essentially three concepts for the reductions. The first was a common ceiling on ground force manpower to be reached in two phases—10 percent withdrawals of stationed forces followed by 10 percent cuts of indigenous forces.

The second was an equal percentage in US and Soviet forces which would lead to a common ceiling on ground force manpower.

The third was a reduction of dissimilar threatening elements, including 1,000 nuclear warheads, 36 Pershings, and 54 F-4s. This led to a discussion with George Brown where he's been able to change the size of the squadrons to get the reduction he wants! (laughter) This is the so-called nuclear option.

The Allies agreed on an approach combining all three of these options. We would seek a common ceiling on ground force manpower to be achieved in two phases of negotiation.

There would be a first phase, in which the US and USSR would reduce equal percentages of the ground force manpower, with the Soviet cut being in the form of the tank army. We would take out manpower only, 29,000 troops, while the Soviets would take out 68,000 troops and an additional 1,700 tanks.

President Ford: 68,000 would be included in the tank army?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes—the 68,000 represents the tank army.

Secretary Schlesinger: In addition, each side would take out 15% of its manpower.

Secretary Kissinger: The percentage cut would be the same. We figured out that the tank army would be 68,000, and took the same percentage cut for the US.

We have had trouble figuring out why Stan Resor has not been able to convince the Soviets to accept this approach. It must be because he is a Yale man (laughter).

We also proposed a second phase, in which both sides would reduce further to a common ceiling of about 700,000. Again, this would require a three to one ratio of Pact to NATO cuts in the second phase.

Predictably, the Soviets did not accept our proposal. They put forth a proposal with several differences. Where we have stressed equal

percentage reductions, they stressed equal numbers. We said the US and Soviets should reduce first, and the Soviets were more interested in NATO and Warsaw Pact allied reductions. This is because the larger the German slice they could get, the more they were able to trade good German divisions for lousy East European divisions.

It is important to realize that the significance of cuts is two-fold: the cut itself, but also that a cut establishes a ceiling. 54 F-4 aircraft is not a large number but it does establish a ceiling on this type of aircraft. This is why the Soviets were anxious on German reductions since even a small cut would have the great advantage of establishing a ceiling on all German forces.

The Soviets have shown some flexibility in their proposal. They have proposed an initial reduction of 20,000, made up largely of US and Soviet forces. But even a reduction of 1,000 Germans would have the additional effect of putting a ceiling on the Germans. They have hinted that their nuclear reductions might be deferred to the second phase, but they have remained adamant that the size of the reductions for the two sides must be equal.

Initially, the Allies were content to let the US and the Soviets reduce only their forces. They saw putting off their reductions to the second phase as a device to keep their forces up. Leber and others stated that if the reductions were in the second phase, they could go to their parliaments and tell them that reductions were eventually coming, but after some time. But the domestic pressures have increased in Europe, and the tendency now is for the Europeans to want to be included in the first phase.

Secretary Schlesinger: Except the Germans who have tended to move in the opposite direction.

President Ford: To keep their forces up?

Secretary Schlesinger: Schmidt has moved in the opposite direction as opposed to Brandt, who wanted to reduce.

Secretary Kissinger: They also don't want to give up a tremendous bargaining chip, namely a ceiling on their forces.

President Ford: Does their changed attitude follow through to US reductions?

Secretary Schlesinger: No, they are prepared to see us reduce.

Secretary Kissinger: They view our reductions largely as a reaction to Mansfield. The Europeans believe that reductions we take in MBFR would be less than what we would take unilaterally.

NATO and the Pact still disagree on three fundamental issues. First, whose forces should be reduced and when. We believe that the US and the USSR should reduce first, but the Pact insists that all participants reduce from the outset.

Second, what should be the reduction ratio? Our position is that reductions should be asymmetrical and lead to a common ceiling. Our position is equal percentages, but they believe the reduction should be equal numbers, a position not supported by our figures.

Finally, what forces should be reduced. Our position calls for reductions in ground forces only, but we have proposed a freeze on air manpower, and possible US reductions of air manpower. The Pact has insisted from the outset that all types of forces—ground, air, and nuclear—should be reduced in units with their armaments.

These disagreements are why we need to take another look at our objectives in MBFR and in developments that might cause us to reconsider them.

The SALT negotiations at Vladivostok established the principal of equality and gave us a good argument for equality in MBFR. Vladivostok also adds urgency, since the movement to a balance in strategic forces adds urgency on the conventional front. Once strategic equality is accepted around the world as a fact of life, conventional imbalances will be even more important. So, as Bill Colby said, we have taken an approach which attempts to enhance the defense and reduce the offensive capability.

So far, the Soviets have shown no major interest in MBFR. Nothing they have said to you, Mr. President, or to me in our negotiations shows any great interest. They simply repeat to you or to me what they say to Stan in Vienna. This means the Politburo has not yet engaged the issue. We will have to see whether or not in the next six months the Soviets will put this on the front burner. If they have a desire to keep détente going, they will do so.

Secretary Schlesinger: There is an embassy cable in indicating that there might be some growth in their interest in MBFR.⁴

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. If that is true, some change in our position is imperative if we are to make progress. No Soviet leader can go to the Politburo and say he has traded 29,000 Americans for a tank army including 68,000 Soviets.

President Ford: The tank army withdrawal would reduce tanks by how many?

Secretary Schlesinger: 1,700.

Secretary Kissinger: Intellectually, we have several ways of going:

—We could change what's asked from the other side. We could bring the numbers closer together. This might make the first phase more salable, but in the second phase, we will have to get even greater

⁴ Not further identified.

asymmetries in the Pact cuts. This could push the common ceiling indefinitely into the future.

—Secondly, we could add elements to the current Alliance position. For example, we could move up indigenous reductions, something of great interest to the Soviets because of their concerns for Germany, or we could add nuclear elements—a thousand warheads, 54 F-4s, and 36 Pershing launchers. And finally, we could combine these approaches with a slight reduction in the Pact withdrawals we propose and introduce some nuclear forces.

I believe there was a consensus within the Verification Panel that we should go no further at this time than to introduce the nuclear package—a thousand warheads, 54 F-4s, and 36 Pershing launchers.

Secretary Schlesinger: We would like to increase that to 2,000 warheads.

Secretary Kissinger: The nuclear package our Allies know about is a thousand warheads, 54 aircraft, and 36 Pershings. Perhaps in June, after telling them we have been restudying this, we could go to 2,000.

President Ford: Out of 9,000?

Secretary Kissinger: Seven thousand.

Secretary Schlesinger: Out of 5,000 in the NATO guidelines area.

Director Ikle: Forty percent of those in the area.

Secretary Kissinger: In addition, we have to look at the tactical question. The only thing the Allies know about is 1,000 warheads. We could either stick with the present package, or give up the 1,000 additional immediately. The worst thing would be to tell the Allies we want to reduce 2,000, but only put forth a reduction of 1,000. The Russians will know we have something else to offer and wait for it. If we want to hold back, we don't want to brief the Allies on the additional 1,000.

I believe there is a consensus that it is time to introduce the nuclear package. Some modifications may be necessary as time goes on, but I believe it would be premature to handle these now. We need to get the Soviet reaction to the introduction of the nuclear package first.

There has also been consideration given to introducing the nuclear package piecemeal—

President Ford: Pershings, and then F-4s?—

Secretary Kissinger: Right. There is a consensus that we should introduce it all at once. On the question of whether we should add a thousand warheads, we have not had a full discussion. Jim just worked out the agreement that we could get up to 2,000.

Stan will need approval of some kind of approach, Mr. President, before he leaves on Sunday.

President Ford: Jim, do you have anything to add?

Secretary Schlesinger: Mr. President, I have two comments. I recommend that we stick with our objective of getting the tank army because our ability to verify manpower reductions is minimal. The intelligence community has increased the estimates by 70,000 in the last year. Verifying the movement of manpower is difficult without a series of collateral constraints which will be almost impossible to negotiate. We have to have something that we can verify.

Second, the Chiefs have recommended reduction of 1,600 warheads as part of the readjustment of US tactical nuclear forces. In addition, we have to give Congress a report on the Nunn Amendment. Personally, I believe it is more likely that Congress will move on warhead reductions than on the Mansfield approach.

President Ford: More likely than on manpower?

Secretary Schlesinger: Yes. Also, we can move warheads back in rapidly in an emergency. Therefore, I would recommend the package the Chiefs recommend, but add to the package enough to bring it up to 2,000 warheads.

Henry referred to deficiencies in NATO's strategic discussions. But in the last year, I think there has been much increased understanding in NATO. They've accepted our flexible response strategy based on three legs of the Triad. They are coming to understand the importance of conventional defense. That is why it is important for us to emphasize our agreement with the importance of conventional defense.

The Soviets moved in 100,000 men during the Czechoslovakian coup. But the US had made many improvements. For example, the Seventh Army was in poor shape during the Vietnam War, but is now back in good condition.

President Ford: Our Seventh Army?

Secretary Schlesinger: Yes. And we have added two brigades by converting support forces to combat forces. The Germans can field 1.2 million men in 48 hours. So the balance has probably improved slightly to the advantage of the West in the last year. Over the last six or seven years NATO has been retreating, but last year, it improved.

Our objectives on MBFR have been two. First, to improve security in Western Europe. This had led us to concentrate on getting out the tank army. And we have agreed not to be stampeded into movement that does not serve our ultimate objective of improved security.

Second, we want to get the Allies to do more. If we place limits on Western forces, we cannot get them to increase their manpower and budgetary support.

It is important not to undermine these basic objectives by accepting some short term possible deal held out by the Soviets.

The Soviet objectives are first to thwart movement toward European unity.

Second, their other objective is to get control of the Bundeswehr—the German Army. This, of course, conflicts directly with our own objective of getting the Germans to do more.

We should keep in mind these two objectives. I think so far that the negotiations have gone well.

Finally, I think the Congressional situation on the Mansfield resolution has improved.

President Ford: Even with the new Congress?

Secretary Schlesinger: Yes—I have sat down with some of the new Democrats. They are not Bella Abzug;⁵ they want to make a serious appraisal of defense needs, and not only react to Vietnam. I believe we can hold the House, and the climate in the Senate is better than it was a few months ago.

President Ford: I hope you are right, but my visceral reaction leads me to the opposite conclusion.

Secretary Kissinger: I can't judge votes, but in meetings with them, the new members seem somewhat less ideological, but I don't know how they will vote.

Secretary Schlesinger: Brock Adams⁶ just gave a long speech on security to the New York Delegation which was well received. Getting their ideological mindset out of Vietnam is very important.

President Ford: My analysis is predicated on two events. First, Eddie Hebert⁷ was the leader of the anti-Mansfield forces. His being thrown out will lead to less anti-Mansfield sentiment. Second, Phil Burton⁸ has become to a considerable extent a force. His voting record, I suspect, has been consistently in favor of Mansfield. I believe the Speaker is on our side, although O'Neill⁹ is on the other side. Mel Price¹⁰ has consistently supported Hebert's view, but he's not the hard tough speaker and debater that Hebert has been. He will stand up—he's a good man, but he's not the tough leader Hebert was.

Secretary Schlesinger: Hebert's ouster had more to do with personality than policy—

President Ford: I hope you're right.

⁵ Representative Bella Abzug (D-NY).

⁶ Representative Brock Adams (D-WA).

⁷ Representative Eddie Hebert (D-LA).

⁸ Representative Philip Burton (D-CA).

⁹ Representative Thomas P. O'Neill (D-MA).

¹⁰ Representative Charles Melvin Price (D-IL).

Secretary Schlesinger: Even in the press, the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* and other publications are now coming out in favor of NATO.

Secretary Kissinger: They all wanted out of Vietnam, and now they will work on getting out of NATO.

Secretary Schlesinger: I believe they are changing on NATO.

President Ford: This Congressional situation argues for two things—first, a stronger positive public support for national defense. Second, a more realistic appraisal of our MBFR position.

George, do you have any comments?

General Brown: The Chiefs recommended 1,600 warheads. But with some arm twisting, I got them to agree to accept 2,000. They had recently reviewed our deployment plans and concluded that we could take out a total in NATO of 2,200. If we took all these out of the NATO guidelines area, this would bring the total to 2,800. But I have been working for some time to get our number down to a more defensible level. The basis on which our requirements have been stated have been indefensible. For example, a lot of it is based on target lists which include things like each command post. Some of these are mobile, and we don't have the intelligence to know where they are to hit them.

Secretary Kissinger: I think we should avoid loading the nuclear reduction up too much. First, the Allies will think you made some secret agreement in Vladivostok. Second, we have to look at this not only in terms of the inherent capability of the forces, but from broader political considerations. Third, I remember when Secretary McNamara¹¹ would present detailed analyses telling them how they should change their forces. While he might have been right, although I disagreed with him on many issues of substance, the issue with the Allies was the volatility of the American position.

For example, withdrawal of nuclear [*less than 1 line not declassified*] would have an effect quite apart from the direct military implications. There would be significant foreign policy consequences.

I don't mind these withdrawals in the context of MBFR, but I'm worried about any unilateral reductions. The timing would have to be very careful.

I would lean toward presenting only what the Allies heard before Vladivostok, and saving the 600 to 1,000 additional warheads for later.

President Ford: These negotiations as I understand them [*less than 1 line not declassified*] are totally related to the Western front.

Ambassador Resor: That is correct.

¹¹ Robert McNamara, Secretary of Defense in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, 1961–1968.

Secretary Kissinger: It's somewhat the reverse of what I said in the Verification Panel when I argued against bleeding out elements one at a time, but I am worried that if we throw in the additional thousand warheads, given the mentality of the Europeans, they will say "what the hell has happened?" So I recommend presenting the existing package first, and then do some missionary work on them before adding the others.

President Ford: The thousand warheads, 36 Pershings, and 54 F-4's—

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, which they have heard before Vladivostok and cannot say you made up only because of Vladivostok.

Ambassador Resor: This is the package Don presented to them in July of 1973.

Secretary Kissinger: This is not an insignificant package, especially when you consider that the Soviets also get ceilings on nuclear forces, F-4's and Pershings. They cannot slough this off. If we have an additional thousand warheads, we can throw them in later.

Secretary Schlesinger: To some extent I believe I disagree with you. Not with respect to diplomatic tactics, and this [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. But in the NATO guidelines area, the British support substantial US reductions. In Germany, the SPD supports reductions and the CDU has said in its conference that it is prepared to see a reduction from 7,000 warheads to 5,000 warheads, although this is throughout Europe as a whole. With this kind of change, even in the CDU, we can move forward, so long as the US improves its nuclear capabilities.

President Ford: You mean our tactical nuclear capabilities?

Secretary Schlesinger: Yes. And we would not touch the weapons given to Germany [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and others under our program of cooperation. Also, I am not sure we can hold onto these warheads with Congress. I would leave the tactics to Henry, but I believe the Allies are ready for the introductions.

Dr. Ikle: I think we can gain a great deal by adding 600 or a 1,000 warheads. This will make the Russians see that we are really in business. On the other hand, it will be sensitive with the Allies. But if we sit on these nuclear reductions, we may get blamed for holding up change for reasons of MBFR.

President Ford: Stan, have you gotten any reaction on these nuclear forces from the Soviets—have you talked to them about these, or have they negotiated only with our NATO Allies?

Ambassador Resor: Not even that really. In July of 1973, Don told the Allies of our recommendation to put in Option III. NATO then got General Goodpaster as SACEUR to do an estimate of the military im-

plications,¹² and SACEUR found it reasonable. We had trilateral discussions with the UK and FRG last spring,¹³ and the UK gave us a paper this fall that had been coordinated with the Germans on the nuclear package.¹⁴ It took the line that we couldn't move in MBFR without using it, that we would have to put it in. But we have not had active discussions with the Allies since last spring, and that was purely academic.

Mr. Rumsfeld: Although, it leaked into the newspapers so the Warsaw Pact countries are not unaware of the proposal.

Ambassador Resor: Yes. The Pact must be wondering why we haven't used it yet. Their recent tactic has been to propose a very small initial step.

President Ford: A small number of ground force reductions?

Ambassador Resor: Yes, or a freeze on manpower.

Dr. Ikle: Given their knowledge of Option III, perhaps adding the extra thousand warheads would be something new.

Secretary Kissinger: They haven't seen the package yet, so that must indicate to them that there has been some problem with it. We've never had any reaction from them on it. To sweeten it right away might give them the wrong idea, particularly since they are in a state of flux themselves.

President Ford: How long will it take them to react to a proposal such as this?

Ambassador Resor: It is hard to say. It will probably be March 15 before we can get something through the Alliance and therefore March 27 before we can have it on the table. They will have to send it to Moscow, and Henry has a better feel than I on how long it would take to react, but it would be several weeks.

¹² Not found.

¹³ Ikle wrote to Kissinger in a memorandum on March 21, 1974: "Day-long trilaterals with the British and Germans on the MBFR nuclear package took place on March 18. I outline below my assessment of the talks: While neither the British nor the FRG representatives said they could speak for their Governments, they appeared by the conclusion of the meeting to accept the principle of an offer of selected nuclear elements in MBFR. At the conclusion of the talks, the British and Germans made a procedural proposal: another trilateral meeting and then the US should table a proposal in the NAC in the form of draft guidance to the ad hoc group in Vienna." Ikle also noted the existence of "two major unresolved issues": "the role of aircraft in the package" and "the question of limitations on Soviet nuclear arms." (Ford Library, NSC Institutional Files, Box 15, MBFR Issues) Kissinger also discussed the trilateral talks in a meeting with NSC Deputies on March 19, 1974; a memorandum of the conversation is in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 272, Chronological File.

¹⁴ The text of the British proposed language for introducing Option III in Vienna, attached to an undated letter from Thomson to Sonnenfeldt, is in the National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 11, POL 3 MBFR # 2.

Secretary Kissinger: I believe it depends, Mr. President, on how they want to gear it to Brezhnev's meeting with you. If they want to gear it to the meeting, you will hear in your channels about it. That is why I would hold the additional warheads until we get a response. It would probably be a month at least.

This will be the first approach to FBS reductions we will have ever made. In that sense it should be seen as a major breakthrough. I don't think they will accept the proposal but they can't ignore it.

President Ford: Anyone else? Before you go back Sunday, Stan, we will give you some guidelines. I do think we ought to find some solution. I think your analysis in DOD has been very helpful. But I would tend toward the lower figure. This is no final answer now, but I believe it would be a better strategic approach. I will let you know by Sunday morning.¹⁵

Ambassador Resor: One final point—I have seen several Congressmen recently, and they always ask if we have a realistic position which may initially succeed. I believe that if we can get this down, we will be in a better position to convince them that we do.

President Ford: Thank you all once again.

¹⁵ January 26.

356. Editorial Note

Jan Lodal of the National Security Council staff recorded his impressions of the NSC meeting on January 23, 1975, in his log: "I worked on the MBFR NSDM before the NSC meeting. We had the NSC on MBFR from 11:30 to 12:30. It went quite smoothly. Everyone was in favor of introducing Option III into the negotiations. The only question is whether or not we should increase the warheads from 1,000 to 2,000. Kissinger argued strongly against doing it at this time. He prevailed with the President.

"After the meeting I talked to Resor and Ikle and tried to calm them down. Resor wants to move full speed ahead. He had a group get together in the afternoon to look over a cable to NATO. I sent Higgins to turn this off.

"Sonnenfeldt and I have talked several times trying to figure out what Kissinger seems to be up to. As Sonnenfeldt says, maybe it is just the old agenda (Soviet policy, détente, etc.) versus his new agenda (en-

ergy, interdependence, a new world order, etc.). Maybe he just no longer takes an active interest in the old agenda. In any event, Sonnenfeldt and I agreed that turning over such a major item (Soviet control over Allied nuclear forces) to people like Resor and Dean is putting fire in the hands of children. Maybe Kissinger thinks that the Soviets will reject it, but that it will buy him some time with Congress by having it on the table. Maybe he just doesn't want to fight Schlesinger on the issue.

"After the NSC, I walked down the stairs with Schlesinger. He said, 'I didn't realize you felt as though we're such fans of tac nucs.' I told him that I wasn't, but I wasn't a diplomat. We discussed how obvious it was that we should get rid of some of the tac nucs. He referred to them as 'junk.' I explained to him that I thought Kissinger was somewhat uptight at present because of the various problems associated with our Soviet relations. Therefore, he was going quite slowly on every issue related to the Soviets."

On January 30, Lodal wrote in his daily log: "I spent the evening trying to clear out my inbox. Kissinger has not yet acted on the MBFR NSDM, being his usual irresponsible self. I have no idea when we will get out a SALT NSDM. The British are here, and they will want to know about MBFR. I don't know whether he will tell Wilson or not." On February 1, Lodal wrote: "Sonnenfeldt and I discussed how frustrating Kissinger's present mode of operation was. There was really [not] any serious intellectual discussion of issues and all decisions seemed to be made by the seat of the pants. [. . .] Furthermore, the failure to get the SALT and MBFR NSDM's out on schedule could have major consequences." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 70, Daily Log)

On January 30, Secretary of State Kissinger discussed the MBFR NSDM with President Ford and Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft. A memorandum of their conversation reads in part: "President: Did we give Resor some guidance? Kissinger: I am worried about the impact of the withdrawal of 40% of our nuclear weapons. Ford: I agree." (Ibid., National Security Adviser, Memoranda of Conversation, Box 9)

357. National Security Decision Memorandum 284¹

Washington, February 4, 1975.

TO

The Secretary of Defense
The Deputy Secretary of State
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
The Chairman, U.S. MBFR Delegation

SUBJECT

U.S. Position on the Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions Talks (MBFR),
Vienna, January 30, 1975

The President has decided that the U.S. position on MBFR as reflected in NSDM 269² should be modified as follows:

1. As part of a Phase I agreement, the U.S. would be willing to withdraw the following U.S. nuclear forces from the NATO Guidelines Area:

- 1,000 nuclear warheads;
- 54 nuclear-capable F-4 aircraft;
- 36 Pershing surface-to-surface missile launchers.

The three elements of this proposal should be presented to the Warsaw Pact at one time as an addition to the current NATO Phase I proposal. The objectives of the current Phase I proposal should remain unchanged.

2. The President has directed that full consultation concerning this decision be undertaken with the British and German governments before this proposal is presented to NATO. Until these consultations are completed, the proposal should not be discussed with any of the other NATO Allies.

3. When presented to NATO, the proposal should be accompanied by an explanation of the reasoning leading up to this decision and an analysis of the issues associated with the introduction of nuclear elements.

¹ Source: Ford Library, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-131, NSDM/NSSM Originals, NSDM 284. Secret; Sensitive. Copies were sent to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of Central Intelligence. Lodal drafted the NSDM, forwarded it to Kissinger on January 27, and Kissinger sent it to Ford for his approval on February 1. According to an attached routing memorandum, Ford approved it on February 4. The text was then sent as telegram 26621 to the delegation to the MBFR talks in Vienna, February 5. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 221, Geopolitical File, Soviet Union, Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, 1973–75)

² Document 351.

4. The U.S. air manpower proposals authorized in NSDM 269 do not require Allied air manpower reductions in Phase II and no such reductions should be proposed by the U.S. While the U.S. would be willing to include air manpower in its Phase I reductions, no commitment to the specific size of the U.S. air manpower reduction should be made at this time.

5. Combined air/ground manpower totals for U.S., Soviet, NATO, and Pact forces may be presented in support of an Alliance proposal to include air manpower in the common ceiling. However, additional force strength data should be provided to the Warsaw Pact only on a reciprocal basis, where the Pact has agreed to present comparable figures.

6. In light of the modifications in the U.S. position concerning inclusion of air manpower in the common ceiling, no further proposals should be made at this time concerning the redefinition of ground force categories.

7. No proposal concerning exceptions to post-reduction ground manpower levels, other than that authorized by NSDM 269, should be made at this time. While normal Pact rotations could be permitted under the final agreement, the terms of an exception for these rotations should be negotiated only after the Pact has explicitly proposed the exceptions it desires.

8. Until full consultations have been completed with the NATO Allies, all negotiations and discussions should be conducted within the guidance contained in NSDM 269, as modified by paragraphs 4 through 7 above.

Henry A. Kissinger

358. Editorial Note

During the winter and spring of 1975, Jan Lodal of the NSC staff wrote several entries in his daily log relating to mutual and balanced force reductions.

On February 4, 1975, he wrote: "I arranged to see Wilberforce tomorrow and tell him about MBFR. Hal [Sonnenfeldt] and I still think Henry should discuss this privately with the Soviets first, but he apparently doesn't intend to, or perhaps already has. Brent [Scowcroft] feels strongly he is playing the MBFR thing perfectly straight." On February 5, he noted: "I met with Makins and Wilberforce this morning. I

went over Option III with them as to what we plan to do. Wilberforce had a fair number of questions—the expected British ones. I suspect we'll have some trouble."

His subsequent log entries read in part: "*Thursday, February 27, 1975.* The Trilaterals with the British and Germans on MBFR started this morning. Ikle ran them, and as usual, didn't know what he was talking about. Tickell gave his pitch, concentrating on the need for a strong common ceiling agreement at the end of Phase I. Ikle danced around with it, and I finally hit Tickell hard by asking him what the difference was between his approach and the 'conflation' approach which does away with the two phases. He said, 'You have stripped the clothes right off my back.'" The entry for February 27 continued: "I went to lunch at Wilberforce's house with the MBFR people. I ate with Fred Ruth, the German Foreign Ministry man on MBFR, and with Tickell. We continued our discussions. Ruth is a charming and very bright man. Generally, I think we made progress. Lou Michael also sat at our table and was very helpful. He also thanked me for my comments at the morning meeting, saying he thought they brought the issue to the fore."

On March 31, Lodal wrote: "I returned to prepare for an MBFR Working Group in the afternoon. The argument about how to handle ceilings issues continues. I am not surprised—I always thought we had failed to come to grips with the ceilings issues. At the Working Group, we reached a tentative agreement that we would proceed according to the 'Ruth' plan—vague reciprocal ceilings on warheads, and our original approach on everything else."

On April 4, he wrote: "We had an MBFR Working Group meeting in the afternoon to go over the now reconstituted Option III ceilings issues. Hopefully, it is all put together." Lodal's entry on April 11 reads in part: "I talked to Ikle about MBFR—he's gotten cold feet on Option III. He has completely lost his mind—as to the extent he ever had one."

On April 22, Lodal wrote: "We had an MBFR Working Group meeting to get a rundown from Resor on the last round, which just ended Friday. Of course, nothing happened. I feel sorry for Resor's having to put up with that job." Lodal's entry continues: "I gave Lou Michael a note telling him that I am pretty well convinced that Sonnenfeldt and Lehman are in cahoots to get Ikle to undercut our MBFR Option III approach. Sonnenfeldt hates Option III (in my view irrationally) and Lehman hates all arms control, so it is a convenient alliance. I told him that as far as I can tell, HAK sincerely wants to proceed with Option III. I suggested that JRS [Schlesinger] talk to Ikle. Michael answered the note by saying he agreed that Sonnenfeldt and Lehman were working together. He said further they had high-level help in OSD, but not from Schlesinger. He said he would try to get Schlesinger to talk to Ikle."

On April 23, Lodal wrote: "Haig was in town today and apparently told Kissinger that we have to stop Schlesinger on trying to get the nuclear weapons out of Europe. I made a fairly strong pitch to Sonnenfeldt that we should try to keep Kissinger from taking knee-jerk reaction on every item, such as this. I understand how Kissinger wants to avoid any impression of US pullbacks at this time—but that doesn't mean he should stop the entire Government and stop all efforts to do reasonable analysis." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 70, Daily Log)

On May 1, Lodal sent a memorandum to Kissinger in which he wrote that "we are having serious difficulties with Fred Ikle." The memorandum continued: "He is making major out-of-channel efforts to undo our MBFR position. For some reason, he has decided we should not proceed with Option III. There is significant evidence that he is influencing both the British and the Germans in their questioning of Option III, and he is now preparing a memo for the Verification Panel primarily suggesting major changes in our approach. He has continued to work outside the interagency process, rather than using the Working Group." A notation at the top indicated that Kissinger saw the memorandum. (Ibid., Box 65, Memos and Background Papers)

In May, Lodal wrote additional entries in his log regarding MBFR. On May 5, he wrote: "I had lunch with Chris Makins. He told me Wilberforce will leave in August. He also plans to leave in August to go to New York—the Trilateral Commission. He said the British were not opposed in principle to Option III. We should get their comments in a couple of days. Their main concerns are with the common ceiling (they want it specified numerically in the first phase), equipment ceilings (they say they haven't worked it out yet), and having the US make a bilateral approach to the Soviets before we table it." On May 9, he wrote: "Resor had talked to Brent briefly today to see if we are still interested in MBFR. Brent said he reassured him. I feel sorry for Resor—it's a bad job."

On May 29, Lodal wrote: "We had a meeting of the MBFR Working Group in the afternoon and made final changes to the next steps paper. I will send it out to Sonnenfeldt and HAK, and we should be able to introduce it in the next week or two in the NAC." (Ibid., Box 70, Daily Log)

359. Memorandum From the Counselor of the Department of State (Sonnenfeldt) to Secretary of State Kissinger¹

Washington, June 2, 1975.

SUBJECT

Introduction of MBFR Option III in NATO

In your talk with Resor in Vienna² you agreed in principle to introducing Option III into NATO for consultations. You also discussed this with Schmidt and Genscher in Bonn³ and they said the Germans, in NATO, would not make an issue of Option III as long as the FRG was not singled out for special treatment. I have since confirmed this with Genscher in Brussels⁴ who promised to keep a personal eye on the NATO consultations to prevent his technicians from staging a divisive debate. You also indicated to Schmidt that in all probability we would not table Option III in Vienna until after CSCE is finished—the NATO consultations will take at least two months anyway. (There may, in fact, be pressure for us to raise the option bilaterally with the Soviets, possibly at the Brezhnev Summit.)

The question now is, therefore, whether to proceed this week in NATO. It was previously felt that the presence of Portugal might be a problem, but at one point you indicated that you felt the Soviets know the Option pretty well in any event. (It is not substantially changed from two years ago.) There is no other NATO forum that can be utilized; any forum excluding Portugal would have to be ad hoc, probably be opposed by several allies and, in any case, become known to the Portuguese. Consequently, in present circumstances, I see no alternative but to proceed in the NAC (with Portugal present) with the Option III consultations.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 3, HS Official, Chronological. Secret. Sent for "Prompt Attention."

² Kissinger met with Resor at the latter's request in Vienna on May 20; handwritten notes of their conversation are in the Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Jan Lodal Convenience Files, Box 6, Memcons and Summaries of Discussion, May 1975, 1. Kissinger was in Vienna from May 18 to 20 to discuss the Middle East and CSCE with Gromyko; see Documents 284–287.

³ See Document 289.

⁴ No record of this conversation has been found.

Recommendation

That you approve proceeding with Option III consultations in the NAC this week (of June 2).⁵

HS

⁵ Kissinger initialed his approval. Telegram 132089 to USNATO, June 6, contained the final draft of the paper, "US Views on Next Steps in MBFR," for distribution to the NAC "in connection with introduction of US proposal on Option III." Telegram 3230 from USNATO, June 11, reported that in the course of the day, Ambassador Bruce introduced the U.S. proposal on Option III to a session of the North Atlantic Council. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

360. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 18, 1975, 4:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

USSR

Andrey A. Gromyko, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Kornienko, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Sukhodrev

US

The President

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counsellor, State Dept.

Walter Stoessel, U.S. Ambassador to the USSR

SUBJECT

Foreign Minister Gromyko's Call on The President

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

Gromyko: First, under the general heading of European affairs, I wish to express the satisfaction of our leadership and of Leonid

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger and Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, Box 32, USSR, Gromyko File (30). Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Oval Office. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place from 3:45 to 7:12 p.m. (Ibid., President's Daily Diary) In an attached memorandum to Scowcroft, Sonnenfeldt wrote: "Attached is the memcon on the President's meeting with Gromyko. We have made no distribution here." The full text of the memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976.

Brezhnev personally that a significant step was taken in Europe with the holding of the European Security Conference. The General Secretary said this to you directly, but I too want to express my appreciation for the cooperation between the US and the Soviet Union in preparing for the conference and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Now, about the Vienna talks on force reductions. No substantive progress has been made as yet. I don't want to go into the details and maybe Dr. Kissinger will talk about this. However, no cracks have yet appeared in the sky because of the lack of progress. We will do our part, but one side cannot guarantee success. We hope that both sides will make efforts to achieve success.

The President: I appreciate your kind words about our position concerning the Security Conference. I fully supported the agreement and defended it in the US. I feel the spirit in which we entered it—if fulfilled—can bring fruits in the coming years.

I am glad you mentioned the Vienna talks. There has not been enough progress there. You feel, and we do also, that we can bring this to a point where there can be an agreement on a reduction. I hope the negotiators in Vienna on both sides will take actions toward this end. I assure you the US will do so.

Gromyko: I appreciate your words, Mr. President.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

The President: Mr. Foreign Minister, the world would be safer if the arms race could be discontinued on a world-wide basis. Perhaps the best way to lead in this direction would be for us to conclude a SALT agreement and MBFR. This would show the good faith of both of us and would show the way toward ending the arms race. It would be an example and would lend credibility to what we want to see in the world as a whole.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

361. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 19, 1975, 8:15–10:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Andrey A. Gromyko, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee, CPSU,
and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.
Georgiy M. Korniyenko, Member of the Collegium and Chief, USA Division,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vasiliy G. Makarov, Chef de Cabinet to the Minister
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Counsellor, Second European Department, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
Yuliy M. Vorontsov, Minister-Counselor, Soviet Embassy
Yuriy E. Fokin, Special Assistant to the Minister
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs
Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., American Ambassador to the USSR
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the Department of State
Arthur A. Hartman, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs
William G. Hyland, Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Peter W. Rodman, National Security Council Staff

SUBJECTS

Cyprus; CTB and Ban on New Systems; Korea; MBFR; Middle East

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

MBFR

[Kissinger:] Before we turn to our main subject, do you have any ideas on the direction we might take in Vienna? Or is the present framework. . . .?

Gromyko: First, some time ago you will recall you intimated to me, in Vienna or in Geneva, that you were considering discussing in the framework of the Vienna talks new types of arms. Notice I don't say "new systems"! But since then we have seen nothing new in the Western positions. So we come to the conclusion there is no new Western view.

That is my first point. My second point is: we feel now that what is being demanded of us by the Western side is completely unjust. All

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 7, Soviet Union, August to September 1975. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Rodman. The dinner meeting took place in the Monroe–Madison Room at the Department of State. The full text of the memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976.

these bargaining points—and that’s what they are—are impossible. We are told we have too many tanks. And we should just take them out—just for a thank you. And all this is called a mutually advantageous agreement. Maybe I’m exaggerating a little bit, but all this really conveys the spirit of what is happening in Vienna.

Now my third point is: It may well be that soon we may have the urge to discuss this again, maybe on a bilateral basis with the United States, before we decide on what further steps we may take in Vienna. I don’t want to be ahead of myself, but this may happen.

Kissinger: It is not excluded.

Gromyko: Not excluded.

Kissinger: Its rejection is not guaranteed. I’m practicing double negatives. But I’m a minor leaguer!

Can I interpret your beginning remarks about nuclear weapons to mean that if this were included, our proposals might look less unequal?

Gromyko: We said in Vienna that it would certainly facilitate matters if there could be a broader approach, both with the number of states involved and the types of arms. But it seems not to have been developed further.

Kissinger: We are studying it, and the possibility of including it is not excluded.

Regarding your third point, we would be interested in bilateral exchanges on that before major steps are taken in Vienna, because it might facilitate matters.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

362. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, September 24, 1975, 7–11:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

United Kingdom

James Callaghan, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Alan Campbell, Deputy Under Secretary

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of Henry Kissinger, Entry 5403, Box 20, External Classified Memcons, May–December 1975, Folder 4. Secret; Sensitive. The conversation took place in Secretary Kissinger’s Suite (35A) at the Waldorf Towers.

France

Jean Sauvagnargues, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Francois de Laboulaye, Political Director

Mr. Constantin Andronikof

Federal Republic of Germany

Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Deputy Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Guenther van Well, Political Director

Dr. Heinz Weber

United States

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the Department of State

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

Mr. Callaghan raised the topic of MBFR. He had seen a report that there would be no new Western proposal. Mr. Sonnenfeldt said it was true that the West would not open with a new proposal, but the Western allies were already discussing Option 3. Mr. Callaghan and Dr. Kissinger both agreed that by the quadripartite dinner in December we should decide. Dr. Kissinger remarked that the present U.S. position had no chance of being accepted. Mr. Callaghan had discussed it with Gromyko. Gromyko had wanted equal proportional cuts and would not agree to a ceiling. Dr. Kissinger agreed that that was unacceptable. The Soviets could not accept strategic parity in SALT and yet not in MBFR. Mr. Callaghan reported that Gromyko had told him of Brezhnev's strong interest in reaching an MBFR agreement. Perhaps it was possible after SALT II.

Dr. Kissinger denied reports that the U.S. was impatient with the pace of Option 3. Option 3 represented the U.S.'s best thinking, but the U.S. was open minded. We should find another proposal, or agree on Option 3, or else drop the negotiation. Mr. Callaghan hoped that Dr. Kissinger was not serious about the last. The MBFR negotiation was very valuable in Britain because it enabled HMG to counter the advocates of unilateral disarmament. Dr. Kissinger agreed. The U.S. had also discovered in its experience of the SALT negotiations that with agreed ceilings the USG had a better chance in Congress of building up to that level than without a ceiling. Mr. Sonnenfeldt believed that the Four would reach agreement on Option 3 by December.

Dr. Kissinger observed that the U.S. had the advantage at the moment of having a corner on the grain market. The Soviet Union had nowhere else to go. Therefore the U.S. had considerable leverage between now and December. Mr. Sonnenfeldt added that the drop in the gold market also cut the Soviet foreign exchange reserves. Dr. Kissinger felt it was not good, however, to have our whole position depend on a Russian economic crisis.

He returned to his point about Gromyko. He still had an uneasy feeling, even though he could honestly report that things went fairly well with Gromyko. Mr. van Well saw some disappointment on the Soviet side. Some young Soviets had told him they were unhappy with the lack of stamina of their seniors, for example in “caving in” on Basket III at Helsinki. Mr. Sauvagnargues agreed. Mr. van Well said a Soviet diplomat had told him in New York: “The best thing to do is return to the Cold War so the West appreciates the advantages of détente.” Dr. Kissinger reported a similar comment to him by Ambassador Dobrynin: “In the Cold War, there was an important group in America defending a rapprochement; we could legally get credits and the only obstacles were administrative; and we never heard about human rights. Now there is no one defending it, our credits are cut off, and we keep hearing all about human rights.” Dr. Kissinger said this was true!

Mr. van Well said that the FRG meeting with Gromyko had been all right. Gromyko had assured the FRG of the Soviet commitment to détente. Dr. Kissinger had been told the same thing. But he felt it was no longer said with the same conviction.

Mr. Callaghan observed that Brezhnev should be happy with the CSCE document. Dr. Kissinger said that we vastly exaggerated the benefits to them of Helsinki. All the frontiers in Europe had already been recognized by the peace treaties and bilateral agreements that all of us had signed. There was nothing new in CSCE except Basket III—and peaceful change of frontiers. Mr. Callaghan agreed, and said that this answered Dr. Kissinger’s question. They didn’t know where to go, Mr. de Laboulaye added. They were deeply humiliated by what happened in America with the trade bill, and by what the U.S. had done to them in the Middle East, Dr. Kissinger added. They may have no choice. If they went back to the Cold War, they would lose even the credits they were now getting. Plus the China problem, Mr. Sonnenfeldt added. Dr. Kissinger noted that Gromyko seemed convinced that the U.S. was going to make some major pronouncement in China—which was not true.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

363. Memorandum From William Shinn of the Office of the Counselor of the Department of State to the Counselor (Sonnenfeldt)¹

Washington, October 21, 1975.

SUBJECT

Current Status of MBFR

A series of events in recent weeks has conspired to bog down the MBFR process. Three key issues in Brussels have as yet proved unyielding of resolution. Meanwhile, the EC meeting of October 6 produced added complications which threaten to hamstring the NATO clearance process. The Europeans suspect that we are in the midst of a reappraisal—a feeling which was abetted in large part by Lehman's conversations in Europe.² Schlesinger's talks with Leber³ further fanned speculation that we were cooling on MBFR and the DPQ leak has added to European apprehensions over the entire exercise. Finally, the talks themselves which resumed September 26 are largely in a holding pattern with the Soviets waiting for our long-expected move.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 3, HS Official, Chronological. Secret.

² Lodal and Sonnenfeldt wrote in a memorandum to Kissinger, October 3: "John Lehman has made a trip to Europe during which he discussed privately with Haig and several officials in the FRG and UK the idea of dropping reciprocal constraints from our Option III proposal. (These discussions could prove troublesome later.) Lehman claims that SACEUR, UK, and FRG would follow our lead immediately if we propose that the language in the draft guidance on reciprocal restraints be dropped. Ikle would like to change the US position before NATO clears it and asks that the VP address the matter." (Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Steve Hadley MBFR Files, Box 61, Ikle/Lehman Reciprocity Initiative, Sept. 1975 (2)) On October 11, Higgins and Richard T. Boverie of the NSC staff also wrote in a memorandum to Scowcroft that "John Lehman convinced Ikle that the US position on reciprocity should be changed and Ikle signed out a memo to HAK on September 4 requesting a VP to reassess the issue" and that on "the following Monday (September 8) we held a VPWG on the subject at which each agency representative stated a willingness to reopen the issue in the USG, but all agreed that we should not change the US position now since that would serve to delay the NATO process of clearing Option II." They continued: "Lehman then went to Europe where he talked 'unofficially' with Haig and with several UK and FRG officials about changing the US position. Upon his return he informed us that Haig and the Europeans would go along if we changed our position and that he no longer wanted to try to clear the current US language." (Ibid., Sept. 1975 (4))

³ Schlesinger met with Leber in Bonn on September 28. According to a memorandum of their conversation, October 16, Schlesinger told Leber: "No one can guarantee that MBFR is riskless; if the negotiations continue for a lengthy period, it may not be bad. With respect to Option III, some elements are not costly to give up and others we'd give up with considerable reluctance. But we have to be careful because we should just be prepared to say 'no' to some of the Soviet offers." (Washington National Records Center, OSD Files: FRC 330-78-0058, Germany 333)

German Attitudes

Van Well told Hillenbrand on October 9 that opposition was building in the FRG against MBFR.⁴ He also said that he was now the chief German policymaker on this subject. The British have told us that Van Well argued at the October 6 meeting for greater EC activity in preserving European interests and called for a study to be made.⁵ He reportedly voiced special concern over:

- Military limitation in a partial region of Europe, and
- The possible foreclosure of future European defense options.

Although he subsequently assured Hillenbrand that the EC had no intention of producing a common position on MBFR, he admitted that the goal of the discussions was to formulate criteria which could be used in NATO. The danger is that a CSCE type caucus could emerge and that this would produce the very kind of restrictive guidelines which you cautioned Van Well against in your conversation of September 17.⁶ Luns, of course, is acutely aware of this danger and fearful that NATO's role in the MBFR process will be diluted.

The principal substantive issue at Brussels which bothers the Germans is the problem of Alliance equipment. Our position all along has been to avoid reductions and limits on Alliance equipment, but we have been reluctant to make binding pledges regarding Phase II. (We have likewise resisted a hard and fast prohibition against any future possibility of supplementing our nuclear offer with additional US elements.) In your talk with Van Well on September 17, he seemed to assume that we wanted a noncircumvention provision on both non-Soviet Warsaw Pact and non-US NATO equipment. *This is not our position.* We continue to hold that limits on allies' equipment are not acceptable. Nevertheless, the FRG anticipates that the Soviets will call for such limits and they have put forward a scheme of seeking to reassure the East against non-US NATO equipment increases by arguing that the manpower ceilings would preclude this. We have pointed out that this argument simply doesn't work when applied to systems such as aircraft and missiles which require relatively little manpower (3,000 men for our entire Option III package), and that it is a de facto agreement that some kind of limit is required. To resolve the impasse on this entire issue, we have submitted compromise wording which continues to state that limits on allies' equipment are unacceptable in Phase I. We

⁴ Telegram 16657 from Bonn, October 10, provided a summary of Van Well's conversation with Hillenbrand. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

⁵ Telegram 15692 from London, October 10, provided a British report on the EC-9 meeting and Van Well's comments. (Ibid.)

⁶ A memorandum of Sonnenfeldt's conversation with Van Well is *ibid.*, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 5, Germany, 1975.

have also agreed to an inter-allied assurance to the FRG that there should be no reduction in non-US allied equipment in Phase II, but on the condition that this *not* be conveyed to the other side. To introduce Phase II issues such as this into the talks would make phasing impossible, but we are prepared to reassure the Germans that we will not allow the destruction of their equipment in either phase.

The UK and the Common Ceiling

The British have been cool to the use of the EC forum, but at Brussels they have remained firm on the issue which Hattersley raised with you last summer.⁷ In brief, the UK continues to argue that there should be a numerically agreed definition of the common ceiling in exchange for our Option 3 proposal in Phase I. This of course reflects the continued British interest in “conflation” of the two phases and this is why we object to it. It would open up a Pandora’s box of Phase II issues. Our most recent compromise proposal which the British currently have under consideration is as follows:

The Allies should insist that a Phase I agreement should contain a clear understanding as to the levels of all US and Soviet military personnel in the area of reductions, except for Naval personnel. They should *seek* a common understanding with the East on the aggregate level(s) of ground and (air) force personnel of both sides in the area of reductions following the Phase I reductions. *If the course of Phase I negotiations makes this feasible, the Allies could in addition seek a common understanding with the East as to the numerical level of the common collective ceiling to be reached following the Phase II reductions.*

Their initial reaction has been to note that we are still hedging in our language which is of course true. However, they have told us they consider it an acceptable basis for Alliance discussion and compromise.

France

At the October 6 EC meeting, DeRose listed five French concerns over Option III.⁸ They are as follows along with a suggested rebuttal.

1. The Soviets will press for inclusion of European Tac Nukes.

⁷ On June 18, Sonnenfeldt wrote in a memorandum to Kissinger about a conversation with Hattersley: “In the subsequent discussion of MBFR, Hattersley reiterated UK fears that we are weakening on the common ceiling. I stressed that this remained our firm objective and that we would insist on the concept being accepted in some manner in a stage one agreement. The British seem to want a very precise agreement on the substance of the common ceiling in a stage one agreement, but I could not establish whether there is in fact a real difference between us. We agreed that NAC’s eventual guidance to the Vienna negotiators should put Option III in the context of our total negotiating position, including the common ceiling. Hattersley also left a paper on ceilings and constraints which reiterates UK proposals for avoiding common ceilings on US and Western tanks. We will staff this through the VPWG and respond to the UK later.” (Ibid., Box 12, Daily Activities Reports) A memorandum of Sonnenfeldt’s conversation with Hattersley is *ibid.*, Box 4, Britain, 1975.

⁸ Telegram 15692 from London, October 10, reported on De Rose’s expressed concerns at the EC–9 meeting. (Ibid., Central Foreign Policy Files)

—Our position is to resist such demands.

2. A ceiling on non-Soviet Warsaw Pact tanks will be necessary and will lead to a ceiling on European and US tanks.

—We can't have this both ways. If we are concerned over Pact circumvention of tank reductions, we would indeed have to face similar Soviet demands on European tanks. However, our position has been that the danger of Soviet circumvention through its Pact allies is not sufficient to warrant raising the issue with its invariable consequences. If non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries increase their tanks, the West Europeans would be free to do likewise.

3. The non-verifiability of warhead reduction would set a dangerous precedent.

—As you recall, DeRose raised the verification argument in your exchanges with him last spring. Your reply then still holds. We believe the Soviets have means of monitoring reductions of our nuclear warheads as well as the withdrawal and remaining levels of aircraft and launchers. In any case, we doubt they would denigrate their own verification ability by arguing later that they had signed an agreement which could not be verified.

4. Inclusion of nuclear capable F-4's is inconsistent with the principle of reduced asymmetries.

—We actually have a superior nuclear-capable aircraft force in Europe; the reductions we are contemplating in Option III will have little effect on the nuclear balance and are well worth the improvements in the conventional balance which they are designed to facilitate.

5. Option III could be the first step for denuclearization of Europe.

—We have no intention to denuclearize Europe. Our rationale for Option III is to use an asset which we have in surplus to reduce Soviet armor which is a destabilizing element.

The Reciprocity Issue

As a result of Lehman's trip, the Europeans are aware that we are reviewing our position on reciprocity. That position states that the Soviets "would not increase their armaments analogous to those withdrawn by the US in such a manner as to undermine the basis of the agreement." At Brussels, only the FRG has failed to clear this wording and the FRG has asked only for clarification. This we could easily provide as OSD has carefully examined possible formulations ranging from a freeze on equipment to a broad noncircumvention pledge.

On October 20, John Thomson told Lodal that the British saw both sides of this issue.⁹ On the one hand it could be argued as more impor-

⁹ No record of this conversation has been found.

tant to retain Western flexibility on tanks than to tie down the East on nuclear arms. On the other hand, it would be difficult to limit the West but not the East in the politically sensitive area of nuclear arms. Thomson said the British did not feel strongly but would be willing to drop reciprocity if we made it doubly clear that there would be no limits on allies' equipment. He said that they would be extremely upset if we dropped reciprocity and then later started asking for limits on alliance equipment.

Despite what John Lehman was told in Europe, chances are that we could clear our current position on reciprocity at NATO. However, the issue has now been mooted in the USG and will probably require VP consideration later this month. To bring you up-to-date on the bureaucratic infighting, on October 16 Schlesinger cleared the OSD position personally,¹⁰ calling for retention of the current US position and deferral of any reassessment until after the "pause," following our initial presentation of Option 3 at Vienna.

Recent intelligence findings indicate the Soviets are building up and modernizing their nuclear forces in the guidelines area. This not only creates a military rationale for reciprocity, but strengthens the political case as well. When this information becomes known, it will be difficult to defend an agreement which failed to take it into account.

Themes to Stress in the Discussion

—As the President has said, we are anxious to move forward in MBFR and to table Option 3. We are not undertaking a major review of our position. There is nothing up our sleeve. Our position is what we have described it to be at Brussels.

—We have said all along that we have no objection to discussion by the Europeans of European issues in MBFR, but NATO should remain the primary focus.

—We remain aware of the pitfalls of the MBFR process and of Option 3; in particular, we have long recognized the possibility that MBFR might be seen as leading to a special zone of military limitations in Central Europe; however, there is little danger of this given the modest dimension of the measures being proposed. Our objective has always been to reduce the instabilities and hazards of the current balance of forces in this region and hence enhance its security as well as the security of all NATO partners committed to the common defense.

—Option 3 is a logical move to further this objective by bargaining forces we don't need against the Pact superiority in men and armor which is threatening and dangerous.

¹⁰ A letter from Michael, October 16, to the Chairman of the Verification Panel Working Group citing Schlesinger's endorsement is in the Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Presidential Subject Files, Box 13, MBFR (21).

—This move will be complemented by the planned modernization of our forces, both nuclear and conventional, to make them more effective and credible.

—It is possible that the Soviets may elect to defer a response to Option 3 until SALT is wrapped up. However, we see no reason to delay putting Option 3 on the table at the current session in Vienna.

364. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, undated.

Occasion

Meeting in Hal Sonnenfeldt's office on October 31, 1975, to discuss constraints on Soviet nuclear systems and US tanks in MBFR (reciprocity). Sonnenfeldt called the meeting.

Attendees: Sonnenfeldt, Hyland, Goodby, Shinn and Baraz from State; Lehman from ACDA; Wade from Defense; and Higgins from NSC.

Summary of Discussion

Sonnenfeldt stated that someone had told the British that we were going to change our position on Option III and that he had a call from the Ambassador. He asked who had spoken to the British² and what was he to tell them. No one answered.

After some discussion of the issue of whether and how we should address Soviet nuke systems in MBFR, the discussion boiled down to Bartholomew and Lehman arguing that we should say nothing about Soviet nuke systems or US tanks in MBFR, and Wade arguing that Defense could not foreswear all discussion of Soviet nuclear systems but was willing to defer it. He agreed with Bartholomew that we should drop all references to our willingness to accept limits on US tanks.

Hyland and Shinn pointed out that at the end of the day we had to say something about Soviet nuclear systems in the NGA if ours are to have hard and fast ceilings, and we had better not indicate to our allies that we oppose such discussions only to bring it up later. Higgins reminded the group that John Thomson had made it clear that UK

¹ Source: Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Steve Hadley MBFR Files, Box 61. Secret. Presumably drafted by Higgins.

² Not further identified, but possibly a reference to Lehman's talks in Europe; see footnote 2, Document 363.

willingness to go along on no reciprocity was conditioned on our committing ourselves to not bringing up constraints for alliance systems later in another context,³ and that the Defense position of calling for a general discussion on nuclear systems in the area later was just what the UK feared. All agreed that we had to make our intentions clear to the allies.

Sonnenfeldt pointed out that we could not “sell the same horse twice”; that is, give the Soviets Option III in exchange for tanks and then try to sell ceilings on Option III elements for something else; Option III reductions imply ceilings on reduced elements. Higgins pointed out that the willingness to accept limits on US tanks was the price for Soviet nuclear restraint and that we probably couldn’t have it both ways as Defense was now asking, i.e., eventual limits on Soviet nukes but no limits on US tanks.

Lehman suggested that we might be able to devise an internal allied understanding that we would address Soviet nukes later but say nothing to the Soviets in our Option III ceilings presentation about Soviet nukes or our tanks. Hyland pointed out that we would still have to have something to say when asked.

There was agreement that the problem is not yet resolved and all parties except Lehman and Sonnenfeldt seemed to think a VP would probably be the best way to resolve it. Sonnenfeldt thought that we needed a VP soon to discuss broader MBFR issues but that the reciprocity question was still not ready for addressal by principals. He asked the group to try again to resolve the issue before the VP meeting. If the solution involved a policy change, we could circulate a cable to principals. He said that the problem would probably come up during the NSC on NATO nuclear issues anyway.

After the meeting I asked him if he thought we should continue to try to arrange a meeting for Saturday, November 8. He said we should take another shot at solving reciprocity⁴ and if we can get something settled, then put off the meeting until a little later.

³ See Document 363.

⁴ On November 13, Ikle wrote Resor in telegram 268683 to the delegation to the MBFR talks: “I want to make sure that you are accurately apprised of the situation in Washington with respect to the reciprocal limits issue. The situation is as follows: Three weeks ago, we obtained complete agreement at senior levels in Washington regarding the change to the US position on this issue. Subsequently, State raised an objection regarding one point in the draft cable. State offered several alternative formulations, any one of which is acceptable to ACDA. In subsequent discussions between State and Defense, Defense has refused to compromise on one sentence in the cable. The process is now stalled on this point. I would hope in your conversations with Defense representatives in Vienna that you could have them urge OSD to try harder to reach a common position with State and get on to the NPC with this issue. Because of recent developments the prospect of a VP meeting in the near future is remote.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

365. Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Hartman) and the Director of the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (Vest) to Secretary of State Kissinger¹

Washington, November 28, 1975.

MBFR—A Status Report

Summary

The MBFR negotiations in Vienna are essentially stalemated. In an effort to stimulate some progress in the negotiations, the U.S. has proposed to the Allies that NATO offer to reduce a package of U.S. nuclear elements. Since June, the Alliance has engaged in prolonged debate over several facets of this offer. Last week, in an effort to conclude the debate, the U.S. offered a series of proposals designed to meet the remaining Allied concerns over:

- reciprocal limits on Soviet nuclear systems;²
- limitations/reductions of non-U.S. Allied equipment; and
- the form of Phase II reduction commitments.

We also gave an indication of our views on timing.³ Preliminary Allied reactions have been encouraging. However, we cannot say with certainty whether or not the Alliance will be in a position to table the offer in Vienna before the Christmas break.⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 3, HS Official, Chronological. Secret. Sent through Sonnenfeldt. Vest initialed for Hartman. Drafted by John W. Salmon (PM/DCA); cleared by Vincent Baker (PM/DCA), Goodby, Gerald Helman (EUR/RPM), and Philip S. Kaplan (S/P). In an attached note to Kissinger, November 28, Sonnenfeldt wrote in part: "I have made clear to David Bruce and Resor that we are not to press for a deadline, although our various suggestions on how to resolve the remaining issues may well speed up the NATO work on Option III in the next week. If it turns out that the Alliance does indeed complete its work—finally, after months—next week, I will send you a message to give you a further opportunity to review this issue."

² Telegram 276242 to USNATO, November 21, contained the guidance. (Ibid., Central Foreign Policy Files)

³ Telegram 277369 to USNATO, November 22, contained the U.S. proposal on timing equipment reductions and Phase II reduction commitments. (Ibid.)

⁴ Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger discussed the timing of the tabling of Option III in a telephone conversation on November 21. A transcript of their conversation reads in part: "S[onnenfeldt]: On the Callaghan thing about the MBFR timing. We are making major effort in NATO to get some of these issues resolved. I wanted to check with you that you still agree that if we can get this done before this session of the MBFR that we should get Option 3 on the table before recess for Christmas. K[issinger]: What do we gain by that? S: I would not kill myself to get it done, but you recall Callaghan says they would like to do it before the defense estimates in February. K: Could we not do it before the beginning of next session? S: We could, but I am not exactly sure of the timing of it. The theory

The Option III Deliberations in Brussels

Last week the US proposed to the Allies a series of compromises designed to resolve differences on major outstanding issues and permit prompt completion of work on the Option III Guidance and Position Paper.⁵ If the US proposals are accepted, the Allies at the technical level will have completed all the work necessary for tabling Option III in Vienna. The next question, then, will be one of policy—whether and when to table. Some of the Allies want to make the proposal to the Soviets prior to December 18, the end of the current MBFR round. In any event, the policy question promises to be a prominent item for discussion at the forthcoming NAC Ministerials.

On timing, the US has stated that we would like to have the option to table the offer during this round. However, a clear US statement that we wish to proceed promptly would be very helpful if we do indeed wish to table the offer before the Christmas break. In general, the FRG seems prepared to go ahead this round while the UK has not yet given a clear response. The British have asserted, for example, that the US would probably not wish to proceed with Option III because of the difficulties in SALT. Moreover, some Allies may have developed the impression that the US is not very anxious to pursue MBFR. They may have based this impression in part on their reading of high level attitudes in the USG. In addition, the reservations long harbored by many Allies over MBFR's implications have begun to manifest themselves in a variety of ways—most notably through the FRG-inspired inauguration of EC-9 consultations on MBFR.⁶ Since the Allies recognize that tabling Option III in Vienna could propel the talks into a far more active stage, we expect them to approach the decision to table with caution.

The principal outstanding issues, on which the U.S. offered compromises last week, include:

—whether or not to seek reciprocal limits on Soviet nuclear systems analogous to the U.S. systems being reduced under Option III;

is the Soviets would have time to mull it over during the recess, and we would not have to answer so quickly so many questions which might not be easy to answer. K: My instinct is to do it at the beginning of the next session though I am open-minded about it. They must know pretty well what we are going to do. S: The issue is how to deal with the questions the British are raising. K: I would not want us to be driving too hard. S: We are going to make suggestions that supposedly take care of what the British and Germans want." (Department of State, Electronic Reading Room, Kissinger Transcripts of Telephone Conversations, <http://foia.state.gov/documents/kissinger/0000BCFA.pdf>)

⁵ For texts of Guidance and Position Paper, See Tabs 1 and 2. For texts of US compromise proposal, see Tabs 3 and 4. [Footnote in the original. Tabs 1–7 are not attached.]

⁶ See Document 363.

- the acceptability of limitations and/or reductions for non-U.S. Allied equipment and the tactics for handling the question; and
- whether the Phase II manpower reduction commitments of the Western direct participants would be collective or national.

Reciprocity

This issue has been vigorously disputed internally within the USG. The initial U.S. position, currently in the Option III Draft Guidance, was a bureaucratic compromise which called for preventing increases of Soviet nuclear systems of such a magnitude as to “undermine the basis of the agreement.” The FRG challenged this language as dangerously vague, and asked us to clarify it.

Subsequently, ACDA, JCS, and State (with the Deputy Secretary’s approval) reopened the issue within the USG with a view to dropping our demand for reciprocity. These agencies argued that seeking such limits would lead to limits on U.S. tanks and buttress WP demands for limits on non-U.S. Allied equipment. Other elements of the government resisted such a change, basing their case on the “presentational” difficulties a total lack of restraint could have in Western parliaments.

Ultimately, the issue was resolved through another compromise. As a result, the U.S. told the UK and FRG⁷ that:

- the U.S. was opposed to limits on U.S. tanks (a logical concomitant of reciprocity); and
- the U.S. would defer a decision on whether or not to seek reciprocal limits on Soviet nuclear systems pending a Soviet response on Option III. Such a position would require removing the demand for reciprocity from the guidance.

This U.S. position on reciprocity has thus far only been discussed with the FRG and UK. The Germans stated they could accept the position at the working level⁸ and anticipated no difficulties with their senior officials. The UK has accepted the position at the ministerial level.⁹

Limitations/Reductions of Non-U.S. Equipment

Avoiding the limitation or reduction of non-U.S. NATO equipment has been a prime Allied desideratum throughout the Option III debate. The U.S. has agreed to meet the Allies’ demands substantively but has attempted to secure Allied agreement that the WP need not be informed of the unacceptability of such limits or reductions, particularly with re-

⁷ The proposal was transmitted in telegram 276242 to USNATO, November 21. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

⁸ Telegram 19212 from Bonn, November 25, reported the West German reaction. (Ibid.)

⁹ Telegram 18074 from London, November 24, reported Thomson’s acceptance. (Ibid.)

gard to Phase II, at an early point in the Option III negotiations. The Allies, by contrast, have wanted to inform the East that limitations on non-U.S. equipment are non-negotiable from virtually the outset.

The U.S. recently proposed a compromise¹⁰ which would:

—codify internal Allied agreement that the reduction on non-U.S. Allied equipment is unacceptable to NATO in either phase;

—instruct NATO negotiators to “firmly resist” Eastern attempts to secure such reductions;

—require the negotiators to parry questions regarding Phase II with the statement that Phase II issues will be addressed only in Phase II; and

—authorize the negotiators to state at a fairly early point in the Option III negotiations that limitations on non-U.S. Allied equipment are unacceptable to the West, while leaving ambiguous whether this phrase refers to both phases.

Phase II Reduction Commitments

A central FRG concern in MBFR has been to avoid the establishment of so-called national sub-ceilings (i.e., a specific, codified limitation on the size of the Bundeswehr). The Alliance has adopted such a position and has repeatedly told the East that national sub-ceilings are unacceptable.

However, the FRG fears that should the Western direct participants formally accept commitments to reduce by specified amounts in Phase II, this could act as a backdoor to national sub-ceilings. Thus, in the course of the Option III debate, the FRG has sought to secure adoption of a NATO position under which the Alliance would *collectively* undertake an obligation to reduce by X amount in Phase II. The East would be informed of the national breakdown of these reductions *only after the Phase II agreement is signed*.

The U.S. has now offered to accept the FRG proposed language on this issue (it skirts the issue of when the WP will be informed of the national breakdown of the NATO reductions). In contrast to the German position, however, the U.S. proposal would preclude revealing to the East during the Phase I negotiations that NATO’s Phase II reduction commitment must be collective in nature.¹¹

Allied Reactions

The Alliance as a whole has only addressed the Phase II reduction commitments issue and the reductions portion of the reductions/limitations question. They have basically accepted the explicitly

¹⁰ Not found.

¹¹ A note in the margin next to this paragraph, written in an unknown hand, reads: “inaccurate.”

substantive aspects of our proposals. However, they, with the exception of the UK, are balking at our desire to preclude Allied negotiators from exposing these NATO positions to the East with respect to Phase II. (Bonn's preliminary reaction is at Tab 5 and the SPC discussion is reported at Tab 6.)¹²

The UK and FRG have welcomed our proposals on limitations. With respect to timing, the UK is manifesting some reluctance to table the offer this round, but other Allies seem more anxious to proceed (Tab 7–USNATO 6476 and 6512).¹³

State of the Negotiations in Vienna

The Vienna talks have made very little progress since their inception in October 1973. Both sides tabled proposals at the outset and with modest exceptions have generally been content to rest on those positions. NATO has offered the East a series of assurances designed to increase the attractiveness of our proposals on phasing and to meet their concerns that air force manpower will be totally unrestrained. The Pact, on the other hand, has proposed a series of cosmetic rearrangements of the basic elements in their opening position but has made effectively no substantive moves in our direction.

During the current round of talks, which began in September, the East has made it quite clear that they are content to await the West's forthcoming nuclear offer. Recently, the Soviet representative told our representatives in Vienna that it would be very useful if the West could make its proposal before the Christmas recess.¹⁴ A considered response to a Western initiative, he stated, would take several weeks to develop and would require the presence of the Soviet Delegation in Moscow.

¹² Telegram 19212 from Bonn, November 25, and telegram 6514 from USNATO, November 28, are in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files.

¹³ Telegram 6476, November 26, and telegram 6512, November 28, from USNATO are *ibid.*

¹⁴ No record of this conversation has been found.

366. Editorial Note

On December 5, 1975, Counselor of the Department of State Sonnenfeldt sent an action memorandum to Secretary of State Kissinger, who was departing China, in telegram Tosec 230225. Sonnenfeldt wrote: "While I realize your preference was to wait until January before tabling our nuclear offer at Vienna, the completion of consultations at NATO

has created a situation propitious for going ahead before Christmas.” The telegram continued: “Final NAC approval is expected prior to the NATO ministerial and all the Allies expect timing to be discussed there. At Vienna we have proposed to end the current round on December 18. This would give us just enough time to table our proposal before the break. The guidance provides for a pause after our initial presentation, and this would coincide with the period between sessions. The Soviets have told our delegation at Vienna that they will need to return to Moscow in any case to consider the proposal they have so long been anticipating. They said they would need 4–6 weeks to give us a response.” (National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 11, POL 3 MBFR Cables)

On December 8, Kissinger met with Sonnenfeldt, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs James G. Lowenstein, and other officials from the Bureau of European Affairs to discuss arrangements for his trip to Europe for the NATO Ministerial meeting from December 11 to 12. In the course of their conversation, Sonnenfeldt raised the issue of Option III. A memorandum of the conversation reads in part: “Sonnenfeldt: We also need a decision on MBFR. The issue is whether to table now or later. The Secretary: Since it will leak anyway, you may as well table now. Sonnenfeldt: I agree. The British slightly prefer waiting until January to table. A Soviet rejection before that could mean trouble when they publish their defense estimates. The Secretary: Well, I don’t think the Soviets will reject it right away. Sonnenfeldt: Also, if you prefer, I recommend that we flag our preference to the British and the Germans in advance. The Secretary: Don’t flag it. Let’s wait. Otherwise, the Germans and British will leak it. We can deal with it when we get to the Ministerial. What do you think? Lowenstein: We agree it should be tabled now in Vienna. Sonnenfeldt: Also, the Germans are worried. They have asked us to let them know in advance. If our judgment on balance is that we table, we should let Allies know. The Secretary: OK, go ahead and tell the Germans and British.” (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 275, Memoranda of Conversation, Chronological File)

On December 9 and 10, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld participated in a meeting of the Defense Planning Committee of NATO in Brussels. Kissinger subsequently attended the NATO Ministerial meeting, December 11–12, also in Brussels. For communiqués of both meetings, which referred obliquely to the introduction of Option III at the MBFR talks, see the *NATO Online Library* (<http://www.nato.int/docu/comm.htm>).

On December 11, journalist Drew Middleton wrote from Brussels in an article in the *New York Times*, “NATO Group Cool to Kissinger Plan”: “Western defense ministers ended a two-day meeting here today on a note that appeared to presage difficulties for a key proposal

of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. This proposal, which will be on the agenda when 15 foreign ministers of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization meet tomorrow, calls for the withdrawal of 1,000 United States tactical nuclear weapons from Western Europe in return for the retirement from Central Europe of a Soviet tank army, normally 1,700 tanks and 65,000 men. Ten days ago, according to NATO military and civilian sources, the proposal had an excellent chance for approval by the foreign ministers. It was seen as a means of reviving the moribund East–West talks in Vienna on mutual and balanced force reductions in Europe. [. . .] Several factors have promoted opposition to the proposal among even those NATO delegations, such as that of West Germany, that supported it at the outset. [. . .] One is the detailed description of Soviet military strength provided the defense ministers by NATO intelligence. The ministers, according to the communiqué, ‘expressed their grave concern at current trends altering the relative military strengths of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.’ Donald H. Rumsfeld, the new United States Secretary of Defense, warned about the ‘expanding Warsaw Pact military capability’ and stressed the need for the provision of adequate military resources for NATO. [. . .] A second, less generally understood factor arguing against acceptance of the Kissinger proposal is that the modernization of the United States Air Force in Europe will inevitably lead to a reduction of its tactical nuclear potential. Defense Department spokesmen believe the Secretary of State was unaware of this when he outlined his proposal last summer. The Air Force will introduce the F–15, a sophisticated fighter designed to win air superiority over the battlefield, within the next 18 months. The F–15’s do not have a nuclear capability. The F–4’s they will replace do.” (*New York Times*, December 11, 1975, page 9)

On December 11, President Ford met with Rumsfeld and President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs Scowcroft in the Oval Office. A memorandum of their conversation reads in part (brackets are in the original): “Rumsfeld: I had good bilateral meetings with the Defense Ministers. The sessions went well—with pluses and minuses. [He gave the President a Leber memo.] MBFR was discussed almost not at all. Scowcroft: Did you see Drew Middleton’s article in the *New York Times*? It discussed Option III and the DPQ. Rumsfeld: No. President: I did. It is very interesting. It talks about all these things. Rumsfeld: [discussed nuclear modernization, etc., and the dangers of giving the impression of denuclearizing Europe.] I have felt for years that we needed to get our own tactical nuclear strategy put together here and presented to the Europeans on an orderly basis. Haig has the same fears as Henry, Brent, and I are having. The Europeans are gaining the impression of denuclearization. We planned a paper for the NPC which should be revised—maybe into a paper for improving nuclear strategy. If we can agree on what we want to do and then start talking to NATO,

we could defuse the Congress (Pastore, Nunn, etc.) over nuclear weapons in Europe. We could present it to NATO bilaterally, through Haig, or by me in June in Hamburg. President: What would this do to MBFR? Rumsfeld: We would have to handle it in a way that it would have no adverse impact on MBFR. President: If we tabled Option III, and the Soviet Union accepted, what would be the reaction in NATO countries? Rumsfeld: I have stayed out of the tactics. That is Henry's turf. Defense is involved in developing the US position, but it is up to Henry and you to decide on the negotiations. President: We talked MBFR at Rambouillet and Wilson brought up the point about reducing German forces in the first or second phase. Scowcroft: [Discussed the play on manpower reductions and phases]." Scowcroft summarized the conversation in telegram Tohak 12 to Kissinger in Brussels, December 12. (Ibid., Box CL 221, Geopolitical File, Rumsfeld, Donald, 1975–76)

On December 11, Scowcroft signed a message to be sent to Kissinger in Brussels as Tohak 13. It reads in part: "I also talked to Rumsfeld about the Drew Middleton article. He claimed not to have seen the article nor to be familiar with Drew Middleton. He said he did not know him and had not talked to him or any other member of the press. He agreed readily that Option 3 was not your proposal; in fact, he says he thinks he was first to think of it a couple of years ago. He had no answer at all with regard to the reference to a Defense spokesman and said that he had taken along only a press technician—not a press spokesman. He said that he did not know what you were or were not aware of with regard to nuclear modernization, but that Option 3 was floated long before last summer as claimed in the article. He maintained absolutely there could be no malicious intent, at least within his knowledge. I also discussed the matter with Wickham, who confirmed the essentials above and said with respect to the Defense spokesman reference in the article that Ellsworth had given a backgrounder. He called back later to say he had gone over the transcript of the Ellsworth backgrounder and there was nothing in it which could remotely be construed into what Middleton wrote." Scowcroft's message continued: "I see no reason why you should not set the record straight in your press conference tomorrow if you wish to do so, though I do not think association with Option 3, even when inaccurate, is anything one should shun, and I would not discuss the issue in a way which would bring into prominence an obscure article in the *Times* and give the impression that there may be more there than meets the eye. While there is no way of knowing without doubt, both Don and Wickham addressed the issue with an earnestness which lent credence to their statements." (Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger Trip Files, Box 16, 12/10–17/75, Europe [Brussels, London, Paris, Nuremberg], Tohak [1])

Kissinger did not discuss MBFR or Option III in his news conference after the North Atlantic Council meeting. However, the issue of withdrawing tactical nuclear forces did come up in his interview with German television on December 12. The transcript of the interview reads in part: "Q.: The NATO states will make the offer in Vienna also to withdraw nuclear weapons from Western Europe. Isn't this a dangerous concession? Secretary Kissinger: Let me explain it in English. I do not believe that it goes too far, because we will be offering a category of weapons of which, due to modernization, some have become dispensable, in return for withdrawal of substantial Soviet ground forces. But the United States remains firmly committed to a strong local defense in Europe, and the United States will under no circumstances participate in anything that will lead to the denuclearization either of Europe or of any part of Europe." (Department of State *Bulletin*, January 12, 1976, pages 53–54)

On December 12, Executive Assistant to the Secretary of State Eagleburger wrote to Kissinger in telegram Tosec 240119: "Vorontsov just called to say that Dobrynin has noticed in press reports that NATO has adopted new MBFR proposals which will be presented to the Warsaw Pact next Tuesday. Dobrynin asked that I flag for you that it was the Soviet understanding that you had indicated to Gromyko that before any further MBFR proposals were adopted by NATO you would consult with Gromyko. 'Now,' said Vorontsov, 'this seems to have slipped.' Vorontsov went on to say that they could report from the newspaper articles today on the MBFR proposals, although they would 'lack substance,' but that perhaps I could ask if you had any detailed information that you wished Dobrynin to transmit to Gromyko. This, Vorontsov hoped, could be done before the proposals are officially put to the Warsaw Pact on Tuesday. Vorontsov closed by saying the Soviets were anxious that there be no break in the 'continuity' of consultations begun between you and Gromyko on MBFR and this was the purpose for his request for any information you might wish to pass on." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 218, Geopolitical File, Soviet Union, Dobrynin, Anatoliy, Chronological File) Sonnenfeldt wrote to Kissinger in a memorandum on December 18: "MBFR. We made our presentation in Vienna. Hyland did a preview with Vorontsov here." (National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 7, Soviet Union)

367. Telegram From the Delegation to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks to the Department of State¹

Vienna, December 19, 1975, 1040Z.

633. From US rep MBFR. Subject: MBFR negotiations: Summary report for period Dec 15–19, 1975.

1. *Begin summary.* The final week of the seventh round of the Vienna force reduction negotiations witnessed the formal introduction of the Allied nuclear reduction proposal (Option III). US rep made the offer in a Dec 16 plenary statement² in accordance with NAC-approved guidance which NATO Ministers authorized Dec 12³ for use prior to the winter recess. At the Dec 18 plenary meeting, Soviet rep Khlestov provided the first official Eastern reaction to the new Western move. Khlestov said that the East would study the proposal. Soviet rep noted that the West had emphasized the one-time nature of the proposal and that it had been preceded by extensive Western press play, involved only US tactical weapons, was conditioned on Eastern acceptance of the Western reduction program, and would not preclude increases in air forces and nuclear delivery systems by non-US Western direct participants. Eastern comments on the offer to the press and in bilateral exchanges with Western reps generally echoed Khlestov's plenary remarks. *End summary.*

2. Following months of speculation by Eastern reps here and in the Western press, the Allies this week officially added an offer of US nuclear reduction to their negotiating position in the Vienna force reduction talks. US rep formally made the offer to the East in a special Dec 16 plenary meeting. His presentation followed the NAC-approved guidance which NATO Ministers had authorized Dec 12 for use prior to the end of the current round. US rep emphasized that the possible withdrawal of 1,000 nuclear warheads, 54 nuclear capable F-4 aircraft and 36 Pershing ballistic missile launchers from the US inventory in the reductions area was a unique offer dependent upon Eastern acceptance of previous Western proposals, all of which remained unchanged, that it was not a step toward further reductions and that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files. Secret. Also sent to the Department of Defense. Repeated to all MBFR Missions, Athens, Belgrade, Berlin, Lisbon, Luxembourg, Prague, Sofia, Stockholm, Warsaw, the delegation to SALT II, and Ankara.

² Telegram 623 from the delegation to MBFR, December 16, contained the statement. (Ibid.)

³ Telegram Secto 24038, December 12, reported on the NATO Ministers' authorization. (Ibid., D750432–0414)

reduction of non-US Western equipment was not included in it, nor would limitations on such equipment be acceptable to the West. In connection with this initiative, US rep stated that the West now proposed a combined common collective ceiling on ground and air manpower which might be set at approximately 900,000 men on each side. US rep stressed that West was taking this initiative because of the need for decisive action to break the impasse in the negotiations and move them toward the successful conclusion of a first phase agreement. His statement ended with an appeal for a considered and positive Eastern response when the talks resume following the winter recess.

3. As agreed by the ad hoc group, US rep met Dec 15 with Soviet rep Khlestov to brief him on the contents of the Western nuclear initiative. While maintaining a noncommittal attitude on the substance of the matter, Khlestov was considerably more relaxed than had been the case during a Dec 13 session in which US rep had discussed with him arrangements for the formal introduction of the new Allied proposal.⁴ We would speculate that in the interim Khlestov had received some reassurance that, as he had repeatedly warned might be the case, Moscow would not instruct him to reject the offer out of hand as a Western propaganda ploy.

4. Soviet rep Khlestov made the only presentation at the Dec 18 concluding plenary meeting of the seventh round. A few paragraphs near the end of his statement provided the first official Eastern reaction to the Allied nuclear initiative. He stated that the East, as was customary in such cases, would examine the contents of the proposal. Khlestov observed, however, that the proposal included only US tactical nuclear weapons and that it was conditioned on acceptance of the Western reduction program to which Eastern objections were well known. He noted Western emphasis on the one-time character of the offer and that it would not limit actual increases in air forces and nuclear delivery systems. Further, Soviet rep wondered what conclusions should be reached from the prolonged, detailed and propagandist treatment accorded the move in the Western press given the practice of confidentiality in the negotiations.

5. The balance of Soviet rep's statement contained a measured criticism of the Western position along standard lines and summed up developments during the latest round. Under the latter heading, Khlestov dwelt on the question of force definitions. He termed resolution of this issue essential and faulted the West for continuing to resist agreement to the principle that similar force types should be allocated to the same armed service.

⁴ No record of this meeting has been found.

6. After the Dec 18 plenary, the East, with Czechoslovak rep Lahoda as spokesman, held a press conference. His prepared statement consisted mainly of a low-key synopsis of Khlestov's earlier comments on the Allied nuclear proposal, including the fact that it would receive Eastern study. The meeting quickly broke up once newsmen discovered that they could not get Czechoslovak rep to expand on the topic.

7. East-West bilateral exchanges during the week were similarly guarded. Eastern reps generally confined themselves to a ritual expression of disappointment with the contents of the new Western offer, particularly its US-only and one-time aspects. They also tended to play upon the press-leaks-equals-propaganda-ploy theme. By Dec 18, Eastern reps were, nevertheless, adding that the initiative would receive thorough examination.

8. The Vienna talks are scheduled to reconvene the week of January 26.

Resor

368. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, January 22, 1976, 6:04–9:42 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

USSR

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU
Andrei A. Gromyko, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR
Georgiy M. Korniyenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.
Andrei M. Aleksandrov-Agentov, Assistant to the General Secretary
Vasilii G. Makarov, Chef de Cabinet to the Foreign Minister
V.G. Komplektov, Acting Chief of USA Dept, MFA
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Counselor, Second European Department, MFA
(interpreter)

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger Reports on USSR, China, and Middle East, Box 1, USSR, January 21–23, 1976, Kissinger Moscow Trip (2). Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Rodman. The meeting took place in Brezhnev's office at the Kremlin. All brackets, with the exception of those indicating omitted material, are in the original. Kissinger was in Moscow from January 21 to 23 to discuss further limits on strategic armaments. The full text of the memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976.

Maj. Gen. Mikhail Kozlov, Deputy Chief of General Staff
Nikolai N. Detinov, CPSU Secretariat

U.S.

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Amb. Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., Ambassador to the USSR
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the Department
Winston Lord, Director, Policy Planning Staff
William G. Hyland, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security
Affairs
Arthur A. Hartman, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs
James P. Wade, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Plans and
NSC Affairs; Director of DOD SALT Task Force
Roger Molander, Program Analysis Staff, NSC Staff
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

SALT; Angola; MBFR

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

MBFR

Brezhnev: Dr. Kissinger, the talks on force and arms reduction in Europe have been going on for two years now. And I have spoken on this subject whenever I possibly could—in meetings and abroad, on many occasions. We have been consistently emphasizing that both sides should achieve these reductions without harming the security of either.

We have carefully studied the proposal of the West.² The positive element in them is the fact that it recognizes the need for reduction of nuclear weapons, as well. This is something the USSR has favored from the very outset. However, the implementation of that is made contingent on acceptance by us of the entire Western scheme of reduction, which we have repeatedly made clear cannot be the basis for agreement. We have given much thought to a way we could move these negotiations off dead center.

Meeting the wishes of the Western side, we would agree that in the first stage, that is, in 1976, this year, there be a reduction in Central Europe of the armed forces of only the USSR and the United States by an equal percent, let's say 2 or 3 percent of the total strength of the armed forces of countries of the Warsaw Pact and NATO in that area. We would be showing an example to all the others. Their forces would be frozen—not increased. We would be setting an example. It goes without saying that an agreement on such a reduction of Soviet and American forces should include the clearcut obligation of all other countries having forces in Central Europe on freezing their forces at the present level, and subsequent reduction in a later phase.

² See Document 367.

To implement this proposal, as well as to achieve agreement on subsequent reductions, it would be necessary to reach agreement on what forces would be subject to this agreement and an understanding on the strength of forces in Central Europe.

I should like to hope our new proposals aimed at achieving progress at Vienna will meet a positive response on the part of the United States and other states. We believe they are a step toward reaching a mutually acceptable agreement. So I think we do have important things to consider, and a possibility here of moving the thing off dead center.

Kissinger: May I ask the General Secretary a few questions?

Brezhnev: Please.

Kissinger: By 2–3 percent, you mean of U.S. and Soviet forces or of all forces?

Brezhnev: No, of all forces. The forces reduced would be Soviet and American, but the percent would be a percent of all forces, NATO and Warsaw Pact.

Kissinger: By a fixed percent of the total forces. Of all forces or of ground forces?

Dobrynin/Gromyko: Of all.

Gromyko: Further specification will be done at the talks. Our delegation will receive appropriate instructions.

Kissinger: So will our delegation. That doesn't mean they'll agree!

Brezhnev: The next time we meet we'll speak English. Because Gromyko and Sukhodrev keep confusing me.

Kissinger: I'm convinced the General Secretary understands perfect English.

Brezhnev: Maybe 90 percent.

Kissinger: So he has an advantage. And I speak in German.

Brezhnev: Auf Wiedersehen. Sehr gut. [Laughter] I have two English-speaking people in my house. My daughter, who is a teacher of English, and my son-in-law is studying English in the Foreign Trade Association.

Kissinger: They all speak English when they don't want you to understand.

Brezhnev: That's right! What can I do about it?

Kissinger: Well, I don't think this proposal will be rapidly accepted.

Gromyko: Well, accept it slowly. [Laughter]

Brezhnev: Take two to three weeks and accept it!

Gromyko: For friendship's sake, take a month!

Kissinger: We'll do it in the spirit of our special relationship.

Brezhnev: As I said at the outset, we do value the fact that in spite of differences and nuances, and while it is easier in our country than in yours, both are pursuing the line of détente, and we appreciate that.

Kissinger: Does this mean we'll get a formal response to our proposal in Vienna?

Gromyko: There is now a recess. When it resumes, our delegation will give the formal reply to the Western proposal—which will be negative. Our delegation will then be instructed to set out in greater detail the proposal that was set out in general terms by the General Secretary.

Hyland: They're meeting next week.

Brezhnev: What time will you be leaving town?

Kissinger: I think at 12:30.

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

369. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Moscow, January 23, 1976, 9:34–11:45 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

USSR

Andrei A. Gromyko, Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU; Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR

Vasiliy V. Kuznetsov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Georgiy M. Korniyenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Anatoliy F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.

Vasiliy G. Makarov, Chef de Cabinet to the Foreign Minister

V.G. Komplektov, Acting Chief of USA Dept., MFA

Valerian V. Mikhailov, Deputy Chief of USA Dept., MFA

Oleg Grinevskiy, Deputy Chief of Middle East Dept., MFA

Oleg M. Sokolov, Chief of International Affairs, USA Dept., MFA

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Counselor, Second European Dept., MFA (Interpreter)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Records of the Office of the Counselor, Entry 5339, Box 7, Soviet Union. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Foreign Ministry in the Tolstoy House. The full text of the memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XVI, Soviet Union, August 1974–December 1976.

U.S.

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State

Amb. Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., Ambassador to the USSR

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the Department

William G. Hyland, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Arthur A. Hartman, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs

Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Edward F. Fugit, Country Officer, Angola

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

SUBJECTS

Middle East; Angola; Japan; China; Limitation of New Weapons of Mass Destruction; PNE Negotiation; MBFR

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

MBFR

Kissinger: On the proposal last night with respect to Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions,² do you have the number from which the two-to-three percent is to be calculated?

Gromyko: The General Secretary set out our view of principle, and they give you the line along which we are thinking and which will be set out in detail. And when we submit the specific proposals after discussions resume in Vienna, we will have specific considerations to set forth, and we are now giving deliberation to that aspect.

Kissinger: Because we can't give a reply until we know what your number is.

Gromyko: We are now giving thought to that aspect and we feel in the very near future we will be able to give a definite reply. It certainly would be a good thing to give a new lease on life to the work in Vienna.

Kissinger: We will study it carefully. I'm not too optimistic, as I told the General Secretary.

Gromyko: So you are not taking away optimism on this?

Kissinger: I'll have to see your concrete proposal before I make a final judgment.

Gromyko: All right. As long as you don't carry away pessimism from Moscow on this question.

Kissinger: I think we should make progress this year on mutual force reductions.

Gromyko: That would be good. China will certainly have a lot to blame us for. If there is success. Mostly us.

² See Document 368.

Kissinger: China will certainly be very angry. China will certainly be very angry if there is success in SALT.³

[Omitted here is discussion of matters other than MBFR.]

³ On January 25, Kissinger reported to President Ford on his visit to Moscow in a conversation at the Oval Office. A memorandum of their conversation reads in part: "President: Anything on MBFR? Kissinger: Yes. They rejected Option III. They proposed a 3% cut in overall forces, taken from U.S. and Soviet forces." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 283, Memoranda of Conversation, Presidential File)

370. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Scowcroft) to President Ford¹

Washington, February 19, 1976.

SUBJECT

Soviet Response to Our MBFR Nuclear Proposal (Option III)

At the regularly scheduled informal meeting between Eastern and Western MBFR negotiators on February 17 in Vienna, the Soviets presented a counterproposal to our Option III nuclear offer.² This new proposal combines certain elements of our Option III offer with the basic Warsaw Pact equal reduction approach laid out in earlier sessions.

We had earlier proposed a two-phased approach in which the USSR would withdraw a tank army consisting of 68,000 men and 1,700 tanks and the U.S. would withdraw a proportionate number of soldiers, about 29,000, in the first phase. In the second phase, both sides would make further reductions of about 180,000 Pact soldiers and 60,000 NATO soldiers to reach a ground force common ceiling of about 700,000 men. Our Option III offer of 1,000 nuclear warheads, 54 Pershing missile launchers, and 36 F-4s was intended as a make-weight to offset the unequal manpower and tank reductions we were asking of the other side.

¹ Source: Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Presidential Subject Files, Box 13, MBFR (4). Secret. Ford initialed the memorandum. Boverie drafted the memorandum and forwarded it to Scowcroft on February 18. (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files, Box 33, 7600946, Soviet Response to Our Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions Nuclear Proposal, Option III)

² Telegram 51 from the delegation to MBFR, February 17, reported on the meeting. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

The Soviet proposal corresponds closely to the position which Brezhnev forecast to Henry last month:³

—Reduction during 1976 of from two to three percent of total NATO and Pact forces, to be taken in U.S. and Soviet forces only. (At two percent, the reduction would be about 20,000 U.S. and 23,000 Soviet men; at three percent, about 30,000 U.S. and 35,000 Soviet men.)

—Withdrawal of equal numbers of specified U.S. and Soviet equipment items, including 300 tanks, 54 nuclear-capable aircraft, an unspecified number of ballistic missile launchers, and 36 air defense missile launchers for each side. Warheads associated with these systems would also be withdrawn.

—A freeze on remaining NATO and Pact manpower, and a commitment, by all other participants in the negotiations, to reductions in 1977–78 such that at the end all parties will have reduced their manpower and equipment by an equal percentage.

The Soviets' proposal has some positive elements. They appear to have accepted the Alliance two-phased approach calling for withdrawal in the first phase by U.S. and Soviet forces followed by reductions by all participants in a subsequent phase. They have also accepted the Alliance position that only selected equipment should be specified for reduction and limitation rather than limiting all equipment items as they had indicated in their earlier proposals. Finally, this new position accepts the Alliance proposal that Allied forces on each side should be frozen during the period between the two phases. However, the new Soviet position indicates little flexibility on the central issue of whether reductions in MBFR should be essentially equal or should lead to an essentially equal outcome in Central Europe.

Before responding to the Soviet counterproposal, we will have to carefully examine several of its implications:

—Withdrawal and limitation of Soviet nuclear systems similar to those in our Option III offer would strip Option III of its value as a trade-off against the larger Soviet reductions of manpower and tanks which we sought in Phase I, and would undermine the central element of the Alliance position, the common ceiling on manpower.

—The proposal would only take out about one Soviet division plus some other units in the first phase rather than the three to five divisions of a Soviet tank army which we had sought as a first phase Soviet withdrawal.

—The proposal would reduce and limit U.S. tanks which are now at very low levels and would prevent us from ever approaching Soviet tank levels.

³ See Document 368.

—The reductions proposed would in effect codify in the Warsaw Pact's favor the present disparities in manpower, tanks, and nuclear-capable aircraft in Central Europe.

—The proposed commitment by Allies to essentially equal percentage reductions in a subsequent phase would very likely lead to national subceilings on individual alliance members, an outcome which the Germans, in particular, strenuously oppose.

The Soviets have told us they intend to table this proposal formally at the plenary session in Vienna on February 19.⁴ They have also indicated they will respond more fully to our Option III proposal in subsequent sessions in Vienna.

We will be examining the Soviet proposal and working out our response options in the Verification Panel and its Working Group and will provide further details and analysis later.

⁴ Telegram 60 from the delegation to MBFR, February 19, reported the tabling of the Soviet proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

371. Editorial Note

During the spring and summer of 1976, the issue of data on military manpower for the Warsaw Pact and North Atlantic Treaty Organization became a key point of discussion in the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks in Vienna. A member of the NSC staff wrote in an undated memorandum to Secretary of State Kissinger in May 1976: "Potentially a more interesting development [in the MBFR talks] than either the Soviet response to Option III or their counterproposal is the continued strong interest by the Soviets in resolving the question of what forces should be covered by an MBFR agreement and how these forces should be divided between ground and air. Since last summer, this has been the Soviets' primary preoccupation and they keep returning to it at every opportunity. In the process they've given us many indications that when these discussions reach the right stage, they will be prepared to put some specific numbers on the table. Earlier in these discussions, Pact negotiators seemed to agree with ours that MBFR should cover all active duty military manpower and should exclude reservists, para-military forces, and civilians, as well as naval forces. The principal point of contention was how to divide the active military between ground and air forces." During the last round of negotiations, the memorandum noted, "the Soviets withdrew their 'draft

definition' and argued: that Pact units are not fully manned; that only combat and combat-related forces should be covered by MBFR; that Pact active military forces performing functions performed by civilians for NATO should be excluded; that military personnel in schools, clubs, institutes, etc., should be excluded; and that the FRG Standby Readiness Reserve is actually an active military force and should either be covered by MBFR or the Pact should be compensated by excluding a force of similar size."

The memorandum continued: "These developments indicate that the Soviets are maneuvering to reduce or eliminate the disparity perceived by the West in the manpower of the two sides. From their remarks in Vienna and intelligence reports, we expected them to follow up at the end of the last session by tabling data, based on their new 'counting rules,' which would show a markedly different picture of the force relationship than does ours. However, they did not do this and in the discussions near the end of the session Pact negotiators exhibited a good deal of confusion and uncertainty about the whole process." (Ford Library, National Security Adviser, NSC Staff for Europe, Canada and Ocean Affairs, Convenience Files, Box 52, Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions, 1976)

According to a history of the MBFR talks prepared by the Department of State, on June 10, 1976, "the Warsaw Pact tabled figures claiming that it had 987,300 troops in the [MBFR] reductions area—805,000 ground forces and 182,300 air force personnel. These figures were only a few thousand more than what the West had declared as NATO force totals in the reductions area, but some 174,700 fewer than NATO estimates of Warsaw Pact strength. The Pact military manpower in the reductions area became the central unresolved issue in the negotiations." (Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Talks, 1973–1989*, Research Project No. 1553, May 1989, page 10)

The delegation to the MBFR talks reported in telegram 351, July 3: "At the June 29 informal session of the Vienna force reductions negotiations, Soviet rep Khlestov refused to answer questions posed by Western reps concerning data tabled by the East June 10, stating that the East was unwilling to discuss these data until the West had tabled comparable figures for NATO forces in Central Europe." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files)

On September 29, Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko discussed the MBFR data issue at a bilateral meeting in New York during the session of the UN General Assembly. A memorandum of their conversation reads in part: "Gromyko: We did not receive a reaction to our latest proposals [in Vienna]. Kissinger: Not to your proposals but to your giving the numbers. Gromyko: You [We?] suspect probably the

United States is holding it. Maybe your brotherly ministry. Kissinger: Sometimes we have problems relating to brother ministries, sometimes problems regarding allies. We have two problems. One is our [*your?*] figures with respect to your forces differ from our figures on your forces. We have to at some point discuss what is included. The second problem is France refuses to be included in the numbers. We are looking for a way to exclude France but still give you a meaningful number. The numbers we have aren't significantly different from what we had in 1974, so you can use those. Your intelligence can tell you. The basic problem is the French. We can give you a figure that leaves out France but allows you to compensate for French forces so we can't use French forces to evade the overall obligation. Gromyko: When can we get an answer? Hyland: October. It would be helpful if we could discuss theirs. Kissinger: Could we begin discussing the basis of your figures? Korniyenko: Not before your figures. Kissinger: That's what I thought. Hyland: Our figures haven't changed much. Sonnenfeldt: We are using different criteria to make the count. Kissinger: The problem the Foreign Minister is making is they won't discuss their criteria until they get our figures. Korniyenko's pithy remark [*sic*]. Sonnenfeldt: I understand. Kissinger: We will give you the figures during October. Gromyko: All right. All right." (Memorandum of conversation, September 29; Ford Library, National Security Adviser, Kissinger and Scowcroft West Wing Office Files, Box 33, USSR, Gromyko File (33), 9/29/76)

On December 15, the U.S. representative to the MBFR talks, Stanley Resor, tabled Western data in Vienna and, on December 16, he made a statement on behalf of the Western participants at the plenary session of the talks: "The Western figures are as follows: (a) The total number of uniformed active duty military ground force personnel of Western direct participants in the area of reductions was 731,000 as of January 1, 1976. This represents an increase of approximately 14,000 in the total figure for these participants owing to more precise compilation since the negotiations began. (b) The combined total number of uniformed active duty military ground and air force personnel of the Western direct participants in the area of reductions was 921,000 men as of January 1, 1976. I would now like to make clear the basis on which these figures have been computed. All active duty military personnel in the ground and air forces of the Western direct participants in the area of reductions have been counted. Only active duty military personnel are included. Naval personnel, as well as reservists, civilians, and the personnel of other uniformed organizations equipped with weapons are excluded from these figures.

"As regards Warsaw Pact forces, Eastern participants will recollect that, in November 1973, the West tabled its figure of 925,000 men for

Warsaw Pact ground forces. The West now confirms that, on the basis of revised computations, the Western estimate of Warsaw Pact ground force manpower in the area shows an increase. This increase is somewhat larger than the 14,000 man increase in Western manpower of which I have just referred. The current Western estimate to the disparity between Western and Eastern ground force manpower is more than 150,000 men in favor of the East. The West has also told the East that the total of Warsaw Pact air force manpower was somewhat larger than the total of Western air manpower.

“As noted, on June 10, the Soviet Representative presented a different set of figures on Eastern military personnel in the area, based on counting rules whose details the East has not yet elaborated. The fact that there is a large discrepancy between the totals which the East has tabled and Western estimates of Warsaw Pact military manpower in the area leads the West to believe that the two sets of figures now on the table—the figures presented by the East and those presented by the West—were not formulated according to the same counting rules. Western participants believe that there is some rational explanation for this discrepancy and that it is in the interest of both sides to enter on a cooperative effort to identify the sources of this discrepancy. I have just made clear the counting rules the West used in compiling its data. Western participants now need to be fully clear about what counting rules the East has used for compiling Eastern data.” (Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Talks, 1973–1989*, Research Project No. 1553, May 1989, pages 40–43)

After Resor tabled the data, Khlestov raised the issue of the exclusion of French forces in Germany from the Western manpower figures. He told Resor that “Eastern representatives were not prepared to discuss data and counting rules until after they had had an opportunity to analyze this data. But at first sight, this data on Western forces did not conform to Eastern estimates of these forces. Soviet rep said that when the West had previously tabled its figures on ground force manpower, it had not limited these figures only to the forces of the Western direct participants. He asked why US rep had emphasized that Western data was for the forces of Western direct participants only. US rep confirmed that data consisted only of the forces in the reduction area of the Western direct participants in the Vienna negotiations.” (Telegram 621 from the delegation to MBFR, December 15; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files) The discussion of data on manpower, including how to organize it, continued at the MBFR talks well into the summer of 1977. (Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) Talks, 1973–1989*, Research Project No. 1553, May 1989, pages 10, 44–48)