

# Prelude to Negotiations, June 1972– November 1972

## 99. Minutes of a Joint Senior Review Group and Verification Panel Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, June 29, 1972, 3:24–3:55 p.m.

### SUBJECT

MBFR

### PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

*State*

John N. Irwin

George Springsteen

Edward Streator

Ray Garthoff

Seymour Weiss

*Defense*

Kenneth Rush

G. Warren Nutter

Lawrence Eagleburger

*JCS*

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Vice Adm. John P. Weinell

*CIA*

Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters

Bruce Clarke

*Treasury*

John McGinnis

*ACDA*

James Leonard

David Linebaugh

*NSC*

Helmut Sonnenfeldt

Philip Odeen

William Hyland

Col. Jack Merritt

James Hackett

Lt. Michael Power

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

—The JCS will war-game some of the proposals to be considered and the working group will do a systematic analysis of the options. The SRG will meet again no later than mid-August to review and refine the working group's analysis.

—The reduction of tactical nuclear weapons will be included among the options to be considered.

—Only those countries in which forces are stationed should be involved in the MBFR negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-113, SRG Meetings Minutes, Originals, 1972–73. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

—We will propose launching the talks through multiple bilateral contacts.

—The working group will do the preparatory work, but it will be phased out in favor of the negotiating team once the negotiations get underway. Backstopping will be handled here, as in the SALT talks.

—The SACEUR communications channel will be used to keep the other Allies informed of the progress of the talks.

Mr. Kissinger: Sorry I'm late, the President grabbed me for a press conference problem. What I want to do today is get ready for some preparatory MBFR work, since we may have some meetings on it this fall. I would like to discuss a few procedural questions first and then consider briefly the substance of our explorations. Procedurally, we must consider who should participate in the MBFR explorations. Our position is that only those countries in which forces are stationed should be involved. Is there any disagreement on that? (None was voiced). So the next question is how do we handle it? Should we just tell the Europeans that this is our position?

Mr. Irwin: We should take a strong position on this point. We don't want to get bogged down with the Greeks and Italians, or get involved in a long argument about it.

Mr. Rush: I agree.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the location? Personally, I don't give a damn where it is held. What do you think?

Mr. Rush: Geneva is preferable to Helsinki, and it's also much more pleasant.

Mr. Irwin: The Allies prefer Helsinki. They feel strongly about it and we may have difficulty on this point.

Mr. Kissinger: This raises a problem. How do we keep it a more restrictive group if the countries without stationed troops already have their people there? I was indifferent before, but now I realize it will be hard to exclude the people we will want to. How do we launch the talks? There are three possibilities: 1. through our bilateral channels with the Soviets, 2. through coordinated multilateral contacts or, 3. by using a small Allied team. Do you have any preferences?

Mr. Irwin: I prefer the first, but the Allies won't agree.

Mr. Rush: No, they'll never agree to that.

Mr. Kissinger: So how do we handle it?

Mr. Springsteen: We have worked out a scenario that consists of multiple bilateral contacts with the prospective participants. We would send notes to all of the Allies on our side and all of the participants on their side, too.

Mr. Kissinger: What date are you thinking of?

Mr. Springsteen: November 20th is the illustrative date we have been using in our planning for the CSCE.

Mr. Rush: Number two has the advantage of avoiding the German problem. If we make bilateral contacts, there will be pressure for us to deal with Pankow.

Gen. Walters: Would the French be included?

Mr. Kissinger: No, they're not interested.

Mr. Springsteen: We all agree that the countries involved should only be those with troops, but there is no reason why we can't keep the others informed about what is going on. That would take the edge off the complaints of the Italians and Greeks.

Mr. Irwin: The plan is that we would inform the others through the CSCE.

Mr. Kissinger: It's important that we get organized fairly quickly within NATO. We have to be sure that we are approaching MBFR on the same level intellectually, or we can get badly disorganized. Are we satisfied with the NATO consultations?

Mr. Springsteen: Well, we agree that what the Allies do is directly related to our inputs. I assume that we will set up a work program and do the initial position papers, then consult with our Allies and try to get a position coordinated first for the explorations and then for the negotiations. We would like to phase out the MBFR working group once negotiations get underway and have the negotiating team handle things from that point on.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree. I'd like to handle these negotiations in the same manner as SALT, with the negotiating team the focal point and backstopping handled here.

Adm. Moorer: I would like to point out that we have an established channel of communication through SACEUR. We can use that channel to communicate with the military commanders of the NATO countries, to keep them informed about what's going on and to gain their support for the negotiations.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Springsteen) How do you plan to handle this?

Mr. Springsteen: We can do it in a number of ways. We could use the two tier approach through NATO, we could use a completely separate channel or we could go through SACEUR.

Mr. Kissinger: Can you work that out?

Mr. Springsteen: There is no problem. We have worked through SACEUR before.

Mr. Kissinger: What we want to do now is to develop some reasonable asymmetrical options. The Soviets proposed a token cut at the

Summit and we rejected the bilateral approach they favored. We want to be sure to consider NATO security as the principal criterion of these discussions. As I recall, all of the asymmetrical proposals I have seen are not plausible. One of these would have us reduce 24 F-4's for 500 Soviet tanks. How do you compare an F-4 to a tank? For one thing, we would run out of F-4's before they ran out of tanks. That type of asymmetrical reduction is ridiculous. They would laugh at us if we proposed something like that.

Mr. Irwin: We must be realistic.

Mr. Kissinger: That's right, we must be realistic and avoid these ridiculous proposals. What we need now is a systematic analysis, as we did in SALT, of the various options open to us, of their verifiability, of how quickly we can react and how these reductions would affect our mobilization schedules. We should have this analysis done now and have a meeting in early August to review and refine it.

Mr. Irwin: We have to work quickly to get prepared for the meetings this fall. There will be a Foreign Ministers meeting in early October.

Mr. Kissinger: Tom (Moorer), can you get to work quickly and war-game some of these possibilities?

Adm. Moorer: Sure, we can set up some models right away.

Adm. Weinle: The models for most of these ideas can be set up quickly, except for the ones on planes versus tanks. They will be difficult.

Mr. Kissinger: That's not a realistic option, anyway. We want to set up some common ceiling models, but can we do that without a clear definition of the mobilization base of NATO? Do we know what the NATO mobilization is? Have we ever solved those sticky questions of European stock levels? There must be a way of reducing them to a common denominator. A lot of models have been rejected in the past because they didn't consider these factors fully.

Adm. Moorer: U.S. figures are based on the assumption that it will take ninety days to replace equipment, not on a ninety day war.

Mr. Kissinger: But if we are figuring stocks for M plus 90 while other data shows that we will be out of the war in M plus 45, we will have to refigure the M plus 90 assumption.

Adm. Moorer: The NATO countries use a high rate of expenditure in their estimates, but in a real combat situation the commander who thinks he is going to run out of supplies will limit his rate of expenditure, so I think the NATO figures are too high. There is also a pretty wide variation. You will have good estimates for the UK and Germany, and not very good ones for Italy, for example.

Mr. Kissinger: If we want to improve our position in Europe and not worsen it by these negotiations we must get some meaningful figures to work from.

Mr. Leonard: Another option that hasn't been mentioned is the possibility of including tactical nukes in the discussions. For example, we might consider an option of reduction of tanks versus nukes.

Mr. Kissinger: Nukes are not in any of these options, but I would like to know why we need 7,000 tactical nukes in Europe. I have never seen any explanation of why we need so many.

Adm. Moorer: You can't just consider the total number of weapons without breaking them down as to function. You have to consider how many are for use in AAA, tactical artillery, rockets, tactical air, etc. The problem is that we must have the right kinds of warheads in the places where they will be needed. You can't just reduce them without looking at the overall placement of the different types.

Mr. Kissinger: What about doing a model that shows some nuke cuts on our side for similar cuts on theirs?

Adm. Moorer: As I say, we would have to study the mix carefully.

Mr. Kissinger: Why don't we have the working group look at this? We can have plenty of inputs from JCS and SACEUR.

Mr. Rush: I agree that 7,000 is probably too many. The most important factor, though, is the psychological feeling of safety that the tactical nukes give the Europeans. They're going to get awfully uneasy if we start talking about reducing them.

Mr. Kissinger: Of course, that would have to be considered.

Mr. Nutter: This question was considered last fall.

Adm. Moorer: It will be important that we get SACEUR's input for any new consideration of this.

Mr. Kissinger: Well, that about covers it. Shall we plan for a meeting of this group no later than the middle of August? (There was no objection)

Adm. Moorer: We have to keep in mind that the Soviets would like to drive a wedge between us and the Europeans. That will probably be their main goal.

Mr. Kissinger: For that very reason, the more concrete and technical we can make these discussions, the better it will be for us.

Mr. Hackett: Sir, the President would like to see you right now.

**100. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, July 5, 1972.

SUBJECT

European Question on Soviet-American Principles<sup>2</sup>

Several European diplomats have raised questions about the Soviet-American statement of principles. Their main points have been (1) whether we did not undercut the Allied position in a CSCE by not mentioning freer movement of people, information and ideas; (2) whether we have not undermined Allied bargaining leverage in any CSCE on principles on non-use of force, etc., and (3) whether acceptance of "peaceful coexistence" was a wise idea, especially without some effort to refute the Brezhnev doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

Several of these inquiries have been reported: from Brussels, from The Hague,<sup>4</sup> and from London.<sup>5</sup> After some probable soul-searching,

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 262, Agency Files, NATO, Vol. 12. Secret. Sent for information. Kissinger initialed the memorandum.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 98.

<sup>3</sup> Kissinger recalled this issue in his memoirs: "For over three years, at every meeting with every European leader, they had pressed us toward negotiation with the Soviets. They had been lukewarm about linkage, far ahead of us in East-West trade, eager for the European Security Conference, increasingly impatient to start negotiations with respect to mutual and balanced force reductions. . . . Suddenly, now that we had followed their advice, the Europeans revealed their schizophrenia. We heard that some Europeans complained about the 'Basic Principles of US-Soviet Relations' because of the use of the phrase 'peaceful coexistence'—an astonishing criticism considering that the similar declaration signed by France and in the German treaties went far beyond our formulations. There was disquiet that some of our principles of restraint preempted the European Security Conference—that is, that we had agreed to what our allies wanted to give away in their own name." (*White House Years*, p. 1273)

<sup>4</sup> In telegram 2517 from USNATO, June 9, the Mission reported a statement by Ambassador de Staercke of Belgium on June 6 complaining that the Statement on Basic Principles prejudged the Allied position in a CSCE declaration of principles. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 262, Agency Files, NATO, Vol. 12)

<sup>5</sup> Telegram 6104 from London, June 30, reported: "Tickell of FCO's NATO Dept has told us that there was adverse comment about the declaration among the 10 during recent political consultations and concern that Soviets would try to apply these principles to a CSCE declaration. In fact, Tickell told us that British Embassy in Moscow reported that the Russians had suggested that the US-Soviet declaration would be useful model for CSCE declaration. Tickell singled out in particular the phrase in the first principle, 'peaceful coexistence,' as being particularly worrisome to the British. He went on to say that the British would not consider themselves bound by the US-Soviet declaration when the time came to draft a declaration of the principles governing relations between states at a CSCE." (*Ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL US-USSR)

State has replied on each of the points without clearing with the White House. On balance, it is probably just as well that State has accepted some responsibility for the summit agreements, rather than trying to pass them off as White House matters, and distancing the Department from the documents.

Attached (Tab A)<sup>6</sup> is State's outgoing: it makes several good points, though it is rather defensive in implying that "peaceful coexistence" was accepted only because other points tend to give it a favorable interpretation.

In general State argues that point 3, "non-interference," and point 11, renunciation of "special rights" limits the Brezhnev doctrine, and would also be a basis for a CSCE statement of principles. As far as freer movement is concerned, State argues that point 4, the commitment to widening the juridical basis of US-Soviet relations, embraces freer movement of peoples.

You may wish to read State's interpretation at Tab A.

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<sup>6</sup> Telegram 118634 to USNATO, June 30, is attached but not printed.

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## 101. Memorandum for the Record<sup>1</sup>

San Clemente, California, July 7, 1972.

### SUBJECT

Meeting Between French Minister of Defense Michel Debre and Dr. Kissinger, Friday, July 7, 1972, 9:50 a.m. at the Western White House. (Also present were French Ambassador Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet, Political Advisor to Minister Debre, Serge Boidevaix, and Helmut Sonnenfeldt)

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

Debre said he next wanted to share his preoccupation—MBFR. His first question was what, practically, is involved? Secondly, he has sensed for over a year the feeling among Europeans that all U.S. forces

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 678, Country Files, Europe, France, Vol. IX. Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. Sent for information. Drafted by Sonnenfeldt on July 11.

were going. He had seen Defense Ministers all over Europe. Nolens volens, this will bring reductions everywhere. Dr. Kissinger asked if this was true of the FRG. Debre said that the FRG was a special problem. In any case, defense budgets everywhere were under the pressure of personnel cuts. And there was a drop in this “spirit of defense” which MBFR merely reinforced. Debre asked Dr. Kissinger how he saw all this. The French saw it with great misgivings.

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

As regards MBFR, Dr. Kissinger asked whether it would contribute to a lowering of defense attitudes? He said that to some extent it would, although this trend was taking place anyway. But it was contributed to more by the European Security Conference than by MBFR and, with respect, the French were pushing the former more than we were. We have always been dubious about it. Dr. Kissinger said we have no illusions about the world today. We fully recognize that one possible Soviet goal is to use détente for offensive purposes and to achieve the Finlandization of Europe and, as all of us do, we also have a tough domestic situation. We have to maneuver and by participating in the process move it in a constructive direction. Dr. Kissinger asked Debre to look at the history of MBFR. The Europeans invented MBFR to stop unilateral US reductions. When we picked it up the Europeans invented the European Security Conference to kill MBFR. No one told the truth to anyone and we were stuck in a miasma.

On the practical side, we had, in this Administration, conducted many studies. We concluded that we have to go about the subject in a technically meaningful way, otherwise there would merely be a unilateral reduction, except perhaps in France. We are trying to trade something that will happen anyway for something that is technically competent and that doesn't diminish security.

Some people who are opposed to defense are now advocating “simple cuts”—10%, 20%, 30%. As in SALT, we have been doing very detailed work and concluded that a straight percentage cut is bad. A cut of less than 10% is unverifiable and one of more than 10% is disadvantageous, although of course the Europeans might drive us into it. We need the French intellectual contribution. We want to put together a package that is more complex and that will not weaken defense. Once the subject gets technical, it will become boring to the public, although it would still of course have symbolic importance. This, Dr. Kissinger said, was our strategy and after November it would become even more effective. (After November, Dr. Kissinger said we will have our cultural revolution.)

Debre said that he was struck by the point that MBFR had been invented by the Europeans to stop Mansfield. Dr. Kissinger said that



this had been right as an effort to prevent unilateral cuts, but then it took on a life of its own. Debre asked how far we were going to go on MBFR. Dr. Kissinger said that he had told many Europeans that they should be careful about what they proposed because one day we will accept it. The old luxury was gone where Europeans could make proposals and rely on the US to be tough and take the heat. How far would we go on MBFR? If McGovern were elected, of course, all would be changed. But as far as this Administration was concerned, we would go as far as we think security permits. We will not cut unilaterally or use MBFR for condominium. We want negotiations in which we can talk realistically to the Europeans.

Dr. Kissinger then referred to the utter confusion in NATO military policy. Some of it is a nightmare. There were supposed to be stocks for 90 days but in fact this was not so. No ally had the same stocking pattern and there were different expenditure rates. (Debre interjected that the French had three weeks.) The conclusion to be drawn from this was nightmarish and if Mansfield got ahold of it he would prove that we are hostages to the Europeans, or maybe could not even fight ourselves. Mansfield could kill us. We have to get a credible defense that people believe in. We will not reduce unless the threats to us are reduced. The only problem was whether the Europeans are going to be realistic. Dr. Kissinger said that he was speaking frankly and assumed Debre was reporting only to President Pompidou. Debre confirmed this, adding that the Ambassador was a close friend of Pompidou's. Dr. Kissinger said he knew this and hoped soon to have a talk with the Ambassador. Debre said the French were interested in bilateral exchanges with us on this subject. Dr. Kissinger said we were prepared to discuss it with the French bilaterally and wanted to get their opinions, but until November it was best not to get it into the bureaucracy. Debre said he understood.

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

The Ambassador said he wanted to comment about the European Conference and détente. It was true the French pushed it but not as a way to cut defenses. On the contrary, the French want strength. Dr. Kissinger said he worried about it because the Conference involved such vagueness and so many pressures. How could one measure success? But MBFR was so technical that nothing would happen for two years and people would forget about it. Debre said that the European Conference should really be thought of as appealing to the nations of the East. Dr. Kissinger said that that aspect was all right. But the danger that the French saw in MBFR, we saw in the Conference. Debre repeated that the Conference should not be seen as a pretext for diminishing defense. Dr. Kissinger referred to our experience with SALT. For

years we had published figures regarding the adverse trend in strategic weapons. The *New York Times* said we were using them to scare people. Now that the figures were enshrined in the SALT agreement and an international fact of life, people finally took them seriously. Senator Stennis was an example. We need the same thing with MBFR if the Europeans cooperate. Think for example of the impact of the fact that the Soviets have 13,000 tanks in Europe. The Ambassador said that in strategic weapons there was a balance but in Europe the Soviets already have an overwhelming superiority. How could this be handled? Dr. Kissinger said we have to make serious proposals that deal with this and have a serious defense posture, if the Europeans cooperate.

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

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## 102. Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization<sup>1</sup>

Washington, July 28, 1972, 1515Z.

136857. Joint State/Defense message. Subject: US approach to MBFR.

In anticipation of East-West MBFR discussions, US envisages active efforts over next months to develop, in common with Allies, approach to be taken in course of East-West talks. Accordingly, USNATO should circulate following text to Allies, looking toward consultation in NATO on aspects of MBFR, leading up to Deputy Foreign Ministers meeting, preferably during week of October 9:

*Begin text:*

In the Ministerial communiqué of May 31, 1972, the Allies envisaged multilateral MBFR negotiations preceded by suitable explorations, and proposed that multilateral explorations be undertaken as soon as practicable either before or in parallel with multilateral preparatory talks

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-064, Verification P/SRG Group Meeting MBFR 8/3/72. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Linebaugh and approved by the Deputy Secretary. Cleared by Springsteen, Eagleburger, Smith, McGuire, Garthoff, Crittenberger, McManaway, Hyland and Miller. Repeated to all European diplomatic posts, Athens, Ankara, USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR, USDOCOSOUTH, USLOSACLANT.

on CSCE. In order to prepare for explorations and negotiations the US believes that the Allies should initiate early consideration of the basic approach to MBFR that should be pursued in such multilateral talks. Accordingly, there follows an outline of current US thinking.

The US believes that above all MBFR should be consistent with the principle of undiminished security for all parties. We continue to subscribe to the Allied view recorded in CM(71)49<sup>2</sup> that MBFR could be envisaged as an integral program in which reductions should be phased in their scope and timing, where appropriate, and adequately verified. Any reductions should also be preceded and/or accompanied by appropriate constraints.

It is not certain that the Soviet Union and its allies are prepared to negotiate agreements that adequately meet Allied requirements. Accordingly, we believe that MBFR should be pursued cautiously and patiently.

The substantive task at this stage is to reach a consensus on the overall objectives for MBFR and the substantive basis for an Allied position which can advance these objectives.

MBFR objectives. The Allies initially could agree on the following objectives to guide their approach to the MBFR process:

- contribute to a more stable military balance at lower levels of forces while maintaining military security undiminished;

- limit military capabilities which we perceive as threatening or destabilizing;

- reduce the risk of misunderstanding through miscalculation, ambiguous military activity, and surprise attack; and

- thereby reduce East-West tension, and enhance political stability.

In order to achieve these objectives, MBFR should deal with the basic asymmetries that characterize the military balance in Europe. These are:

- disparities in the number of military personnel and certain types of equipment in the prospective reduction area;

- disparities in the potential for reinforcement;

- the offensive orientation of Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces in central Europe, at least as we perceive them; and

- the Western disadvantage in verification and warning because of the greater openness of Western society.

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<sup>2</sup> Not found.

We believe that it is essential to raise these issues with the Soviets in order to make clear our determination that an MBFR agreement take them into account to achieve undiminished security. The Soviet response can give us an important indication whether there is a possibility of reaching a mutually satisfactory agreement or not.

Illustrative reduction options. The US is currently broadening its studies of illustrative reductions to include, in addition to equal percentage reductions, options which focus on these particular asymmetries and not simply on reductions per se. In particular, we are examining a variety of common ceiling options based on:

- reductions in the 10–20 range on the NATO side;
- reductions in both stationed and indigenous forces;
- reductions which involved a thin-out of stationed forces on the NATO side, but the removal of units and equipment on the Warsaw Pact side.

A common ceiling option focuses on the positive objective of creating a more secure military balance at a lower level. It corrects the numerical disparity between NATO and the Warsaw Pact forces in the reduction area. It is simple in concept. It reflects an application of the principle agreed to by the Soviets in the Moscow communiqué of May 29 following President Nixon's visit—"the security interests of the parties based on the principle of equality."<sup>3</sup> It avoids the problem of attempting to equate in some way the disparate force structures facing each other in the central region.

The thin-out in stationed forces on the NATO side and the removal of units on the Warsaw Pact side focuses on the problem of reinforcement asymmetry between the US/UK/Canada and USSR. It also takes into account the disparity in the verification capabilities of the two sides.

We are also considering special limitations on Warsaw Pact tanks because that aspect of the Warsaw Pact force structure is most threatening and destabilizing to NATO.

The US is now in the process of drawing up and analyzing options based on these elements looking toward a presentation of the results of our studies as soon as practicable.

Collateral constraints and verification. As we go forward in this effort we are giving the fullest attention to the views of the Allies on MBFR elements and phasing. We continue to regard collateral constraints and verification provisions as essential elements to a comprehensive MBFR process.

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 98.

We should seek agreement on appropriate collateral constraints which would enhance stability and reduce the danger of either side miscalculating the intentions of the other and also reduce the risk of surprise attack. Such constraints could provide a yardstick for more confident, more timely interpretation by each side of military activities by the other. These constraints would be valuable in themselves and would also increase confidence that a reduction agreement was being observed.

With regard to verification, there should be agreement on non-interference with national technical means, as embodied in the SALT agreements. At the same time, the question of on-site inspection should be left open, making it clear that verification measures required would depend on the reduction measures agreed upon.

We are hopeful that this approach will provide the basis for an Allied position on MBFR that will meet the following considerations:

- fully protect Allied interests, including military security;
- demonstrate both to Allied domestic opinion and the Soviets that we are serious in seeking an agreement that provides undiminished security for all parties; and
- establish a strong bargaining position to protect a wide variety of possible negotiating postures.

As soon as the US thinking is further refined we would envision a phase of intense Alliance consultations. In the meantime we would welcome the views of the Allies on this preliminary outline of the direction of US thinking on MBFR.

On the specific question of the approach to be taken in the opening exploratory phase of MBFR talks, we intend to provide our views separately.<sup>4</sup> *End text.*

**Rogers**

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<sup>4</sup> In telegram 136858 to USNATO, July 28. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-064, Verification P/SRG Group Meeting MBFR/CSCE 9/20/72)

### 103. Memorandum of Conversation<sup>1</sup>

Washington, July 28, 1972, 10:20 a.m.–4:50 p.m.

#### PARTICIPANTS

Sir Burke Trend, Secretary to the Cabinet  
Lord Cromer, British Ambassador  
Brian Norbury, Private Secretary to Trend

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

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

Trend: Then on the European Security Conference, I told the President that our only anxiety is that your wise and very proper concern for getting into preparations for it first could slip imperceptibly into being the conference itself.<sup>2</sup> This is what worries the people in Whitehall. He said he would welcome very private Prime Minister to President talks between you and us on this thing.

Kissinger: Right. Very certainly.

Trend: Without the French and Germans.

Kissinger: And our bureaucracy.

Frankly, our only reason for a preparatory conference is to delay the substantive one. We frankly don't want a European Security Conference but we couldn't fight it in the face of our European allies. So we paid what had already been given.

Trend: It is very fair to point out that we had pressed for it.

Kissinger: You have.

Trend: He made two other points. One, he wants to see the Prime Minister. And second, he said, we are not going back on our European policy. We are not going back on NATO. He is not in favor of unilateral détente.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box TS 62, Memcons, Chronological Files, 1972. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. The first part of the conversation (10:20 a.m.–2:30 p.m.) took place in the British Embassy Residence, and the second part (2:30–4:50 p.m.) took place at Kissinger's office at the White House.

<sup>2</sup> Trend called on the President from 2 to 2:20 p.m., along with Kissinger and Cromer, in the Oval Office. Trend told the President that he had come to Washington to hear U.S. views on SALT, the European Security Conference, and MBFR. Trend said: "The only British anxiety on the Security Conference was that our wise and very proper concern for having preparatory discussions for it could slip imperceptibly into being the conference itself." (Memorandum for the President's File by Kissinger, July 28; *ibid.*) The full text of the memorandum is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XLI, Western Europe; NATO, 1969–1972.

Cromer: He touched on MBFR.

Kissinger: What he said on the European Conference applies to that too.<sup>3</sup>

Cromer: Also the monetary area.

Kissinger: If you're talking interest rates, then talk to Shultz. If you're talking system, then I have to know about it. There's no problem; there's no problem between Shultz and me.

Trend: What does what he said about NATO imply for the future?

Kissinger: We won't withdraw troops for the sake of withdrawing troops. I can't say the number is sacred—but we have no plans in fact to do it.

If we get reelected the authority of this government will be much greater than it is today. So many of the pressures will be lessened. But nevertheless we have to have a rational defense policy we can justify. Frankly I have to tell you if we don't do this there will be unilateral pressures to withdraw. NATO's policy is an amorphous mess. We will work with you for several years to develop something that makes sense. We have no deadline. We have every incentive to do this cooperatively.

What I have gone through just in looking at MBFR. Our work was resented as interference in NATO prerogatives. On 90 days' supplies, it turns out we don't have 90 days across the board. The Germans have 37 days' supply. The Belgians have a different number. Then they say they have different accounting methods. This is what I come up against whenever I try to get an intellectual grip on it.

Our strategy tells us that in the current strategic balance it is insanity to rely on nuclear weapons alone. We are only now looking at our targeting, after three years of pressure from this building.

Trend: What do we mean by Europe? What will it mean for the UK to have an impact? We have to know what Europe will be like. Certainly Europeans will not always do things the way you like.

Kissinger: On defense, it is easy. On the commercial side it is different.

Cromer: On the procurement side, it is somewhat competitive. Your salesmen are somewhat aggressive.

Kissinger: I wouldn't be surprised!

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<sup>3</sup> Kissinger's memorandum for the President's file reads in part: "After opening greetings and pleasantries, *the President* pledged to Sir Burke and Ambassador Cromer that the United States would not go off bilaterally with the Soviets on any issues which concerned our allies, for example a European Security Conference. That could be a dangerous gimmick, the President said. We and the British had to cooperate not only on substance but also on the propaganda."

Trend: If we can get it across to the Europeans that you have no intent to withdraw unless forced to by their inability to agree . . . .

Kissinger: That's exactly our policy.

Trend: The problem is how to get it into people's minds.

Kissinger: We have to try to work together, you and we, on MBFR. And also on the European Security Conference. I'm even more worried about MBFR.

Trend: Will the two be caught up together?

Kissinger: The Russians won't want it. I'm afraid with respect to the European Security Conference that with so many participants who don't know anything, it will be hard to take reasonable positions.

Trend: MBFR will have a smaller number of participants?

Kissinger: Hopefully with participants who know about the issues.

Trend: When will you be ready for MBFR?

Kissinger: On the general principles, where we should begin, we will be ready by next spring. For preparatory discussions.

The Russians before the Summit asked us for a bilateral understanding on an equal percentage cut. We rejected it.

Trend: You still believe a cut smaller than ten percent is unverifiable and useless, and that cuts greater than that are increasingly dangerous?

Kissinger: Yes. What we're now looking at is a percentage cut on our side and a ceiling on their side.

Trend: You would have absolute numerical equality on both sides.

Kissinger: Yes.

Cromer: It is a fairly pious hope, isn't it?

Kissinger: The main thing is to have a proposition we can believe in. I don't care if the Soviets accept it or not. If they don't, we will at least have a position we can analyze, so we know what to move off of.

Trend: You're talking of a percentage cut in your forces?

Kissinger: In NATO forces. Then we can talk about indigenous versus stationed forces. This we can talk of among ourselves.

If we took a 20 percent NATO cut, we would want a 29 percent cut in Warsaw Pact Forces to achieve symmetry.

In theory all forces would be cut.

Trend: But the balance would be affected by forces outside the covered area.

Kissinger: That's right.

Trend: You say you are ready to talk procedures by next spring. How do you want to go about discussing this with us?

Kissinger: We should have an intellectual meeting, not a policy meeting, soon.



Trend: You want to talk to us before it goes to the NATO Council?

Kissinger: We would be very happy to.

Trend: Let's set it up.

Kissinger: We would be very happy to.

Cromer: We probably should elevate it to a higher level than the talks going on already.

Kissinger: In principle we agree to it, and we want your help.

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

Kissinger: [Omitted here are unrelated comments.] Where do we stand on the MBFR studies, Phil?<sup>4</sup>

Odeen: We are just going over the main papers today. The papers are a mess. The JCS did a lousy job.

Kissinger: Then we should talk at the end of August, and discuss SALT and MBFR together.

Trend: Good.

Kissinger: We will want to go to NATO with MBFR after we talk to you. We may send the study papers earlier, which just lay out options. What we and you should do is agree on what we prefer.

We will not fall for any strategy that isolates us from the Europeans.<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Odeen of the NSC staff.

<sup>5</sup> The following day, July 29, Kissinger had a telephone conversation at 12:35 p.m. with Trend, who was still in Washington. According to a transcript, Kissinger told Trend: "On MBFR and SALT and European Security Conferences, the President—I talked to him this morning—I just read to him what you had taken as your understanding of what he had said and he confirmed that you had understood him correctly." Kissinger continued: "on MBFR, we will be in some sort of shape by the end of next week and say the week after, [if] you wanted to send somebody, you would probably get one round ahead of NATO." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Henry A. Kissinger Telephone Transcripts (Telcons), Box 15, Chronological File)

## 104. Minutes of a Joint Verification Panel and Senior Review Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, August 3, 1972, 3:14–4 p.m.

### SUBJECT

MBFR

### PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

#### *State*

U. Alexis Johnson

George Springsteen

Ralph McGuire

John P. Shaw

Seymour Weiss

#### *Defense*

Armistead Selden

Lawrence Eagleburger

Clay McManaway

#### *JCS*

Vice Adm. John Weinell

Maj. Gen. R. H. Dettre

#### *CIA*

Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters

Bruce Clarke

#### *Treasury*

John McGinnis

Edward Cohen

#### *ACDA*

Gerard Smith

David Linebaugh

#### *OST*

Dr. Edward David

#### *NSC*

Philip Odeen

William Hyland

David Aaron

Lt. Michael Power

James Hackett

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

—State will seek European approval for us to approach the Russians to see if they are ready to accept an invitation for a specific date for MBFR discussions to begin.

—The CIA will prepare a paper for submission to the Working Group within the next week on the problem of verification of force reductions.

—CIA will prepare a book for the negotiators providing information on what can and what cannot be monitored.

—The Working Group should coordinate the development of a common data base for MBFR.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-113, SRG Minutes, Originals, 1972–73. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

—The JCS will re-do an analysis of an asymmetrical cut to a common ceiling. This analysis and all others will be based on common figures and will assume that Pact forces are larger than ours.

—The CIA will do a study of the ability of the Pact forces to reinforce.

—CIA/DIA will make an effort to reduce the margin of error in their estimates of the size and readiness of Pact forces.

—The question of whether to propose reducing units or people is a key issue and should be resolved as soon as possible.

—JCS will provide a briefing before the end of August on the situation concerning stocks in NATO and the ability of the allies to re-supply themselves.

—The Verification Panel will meet before the end of August to review the various studies<sup>2</sup> to decide how to approach the NATO allies in September.

[Omitted here is the Verification Panel/Senior Review Group's discussion of MBFR.]

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<sup>2</sup> On July 30, Odeen forwarded Kissinger two analytical papers on balanced force reductions in preparation for the meeting, one from the JCS, the other from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Odeen wrote in an attached memorandum: "*For a variety of reasons, not all of which are the fault of the JCS, the JCS analysis is virtually worthless. As you know, we have been sharply critical of the JCS analysis in the past.*" Odeen continued, "Until now it has not been particularly important since we have not been serious about MBFR. Moreover, the JCS analysis tended to strengthen our hand against other elements of the bureaucracy who were pushing for a quick and easy politically-oriented reduction." Odeen commented that "the JCS, in spite of your exhortation to Tom Moorer, simply could not do a complete new set of analyses in the time allotted." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-064, Verification P/SRG Group Meeting MBFR 8/3/72)

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## 105. Editorial Note

On August 16, 1972, Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev wrote in a letter to President Nixon with regard to a European security conference and mutual and balanced force reductions: "In the European affairs the questions of preparing and convening the All-European Conference are now moving to the forefront and demand practical solution. We believe the time has come to fix a concrete date for beginning the multilateral preparatory consultations. This would give more purposefulness to the preparatory work. With due account also of the

considerations of the American side, it appears to be possible to take up such consultations in any case not later than November 1972 with a view that a meeting itself, as we have agreed with you, should be convened without undue delay. Now, a few words on the question of reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe. We together with our allies have always attached importance to this problem, have undertaken appropriate initiatives and at the present time continue to contemplate the most appropriate ways of its solution. However, the questions of reduction of armaments in Europe should in no way—and as we believe, this is the essence of the understanding reached between us in Moscow on this question—be used for delaying and complicating the multilateral consultations on preparing and carrying out the All-European Conference.” (Memorandum from Haig to Kissinger, August 17; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 495, President’s Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, Vol. 13) The full text of the letter is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XV, Soviet Union, June 1972–August 1974.

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#### 106. Telegram From the Embassy in the Soviet Union to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Moscow, August 21, 1972, 1253Z.

8334. Subj: Approach to Soviets on MBFR/CSCE parallelism. Ref: State 149897.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 214, Geopolitical Files, Soviet Union, Dobrynin, Anatoliy, Background Papers (Talkers), Jan. 1972–Feb. 1973. Confidential; Immediate. Repeated to Belgrade, Berlin, Bern, Bonn, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Copenhagen, Dublin, EC Brussels, Geneva, the Hague, Helsinki, IAEA Vienna, Lisbon, London, Luxembourg, Madrid, USNATO, OECD Paris, Oslo, Ottawa, Paris, Prague, Reykjavik, Rome, Sofia, Stockholm, Valletta, Vienna, Warsaw, Ankara, Athens, USNMR SHAPE, and USCINCEUR.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 149897 to Moscow, August 17, instructed Beam to seek an appointment with Gromyko to ask whether the Soviets were ready to accept an invitation for balanced force reduction talks. The cable reads in part: “We have therefore proposed to the Allies, and they have agreed, that we should undertake a bilateral approach to the Soviets which would clarify the Soviet attitude toward that understanding that we consider was reached in Moscow, and determine Soviet receptivity to invitations to begin exploratory talks [on force reductions] on or about November 22 at a site to be agreed.” (Ibid.)

1. *Summary.* Preliminary Soviet reaction to approach on MBFR/CSCE parallelism rejects any linkage of preparatory discussions and disputes our interpretation of parallelism. *End summary.*

2. I called on Acting FonMin Kuznetsov (Gromyko is on leave) on August 21 and made presentation on MBFR/CSCE parallelism as instructed para 5(a) and (b) reftel, giving him informal paper containing this portion of my talking points. I referred to “force reductions in Europe” rather than MBFR.

3. Although Kuznetsov promised to study the matter, his preliminary comments were entirely negative. He stated flatly that in his government’s view there must be no attempts to bind CSCE and force reductions as regards either preparatory discussions or negotiation of substance.<sup>3</sup> He disputed our interpretation of summit understanding that parallel means about the same time, and asserted that our approach can only be interpreted as making preparatory talks on CSCE conditional on beginning exploratory talks on force reductions, a linkage which Soviet side decisively rejects.

4. In course of forty minute conversation, Kuznetsov (and Chief USA Section Korniyenko who was also present), in response my attempts to draw him out, repeated his position in variety of ways which are worth summarizing in order to provide flavor and nuances. He began by stating that in discussions before, at and after summit it was understood that exploratory talks on CSCE and force reductions should not be connected. There was no mention in communiqué<sup>4</sup> that talks should start simultaneously or at same time. We agree that force reductions can contribute to ensuring security in Europe, but discussions on subject should not be advanced as condition for European conference or for preparations for conference. If we tie up several problems in one knot, it will be more difficult to solve any one of them.

5. I recalled pertinent portions of May 24 and 25 discussions of subject in Moscow.<sup>5</sup> Kuznetsov responded that communiqué recorded Soviet willingness to start talks on force reductions, but did not change firmly held Soviet position against making CSCE preparatory talks conditional on beginning exploratory talks on force reductions. We (Soviets) are against tying them in one knot. Perhaps it would be possible that exploratory talks on force reductions could take place in parallel with preparatory talks for CSCE, but they cannot be made a condition for preparatory talks. Your words seem to hide some other reasons; we know that some NATO countries have opinion that two

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 105.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 98.

<sup>5</sup> See Documents 95 and 96.

matters should be directly linked, but as Gromyko explained during his visit to Benelux countries,<sup>6</sup> we are against making parallel discussion of force reductions a condition for starting preparatory session on CSCE.

6. I acknowledged that we agree they are separate issues as far as substance is concerned, and once talks are started progress in one will not be linked to progress in the other. Our main concern is to get started as soon as possible. I read portions of the communiqué on CSCE and force reductions, noting their juxtaposition and the expressed desire of both sides to agree as soon as practicable on procedures for negotiating. He interjected that communiqué does not say they should go forward at same time or that they are linked. I said communiqué does not exclude proceeding on the two questions at same time, nor did Gromyko exclude it. He said this does not reflect interpretation of Soviet Government, which has repeatedly stressed that CSCE should not be bound to anything else, including force reductions; our leaders at summit indicated that they were worried that NATO might wish to bind the two questions. When you propose opening discussions on force reductions precisely the same day as CSCE preparatory talks, and link CSCE and force reductions in same paragraph of your presentation, it is quite clear that you are linking the two questions.

7. I noted that my presentation did not say the same day, but offered as an example “on or about” November 22. He replied that this amounts to the same thing, and said our approach should have merely proposed to start talking about force reductions and should not have mentioned CSCE in same breath. I asked whether, since they did not seem to like November 22, they might specify another date but an early one as envisaged in US-Soviet communiqué. He would not respond.

8. Once again I reiterated that we have not attempted to bind the two questions either as regards preparation or substance. There is no dispute our countries would profit by success in both. Was it not logical to agree on date to get started on both at about same time? After further repetition of positions on both sides, I pointed out that we have asked Soviets opinion on whether they would like, together with certain other Warsaw Pact countries, to receive a diplomatic note on the subject; we hope to hear from them, and still think it opportune time to get talks started. Kuznetsov closed by once more stating Soviet position: We are against making one conditional on the other.

**Beam**

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<sup>6</sup> Gromyko visited Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg from July 5 to 8.

**107. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Soviet Ambassador (Dobrynin)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, August 22, 1972, 1:13 p.m.

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

HK: Anatol, two things about our discussions this morning.<sup>2</sup> First on the MBFR Conference, we might be prepared to have just an exploratory meeting by ambassadors somewhere say in Geneva—with some experts from the Capitol so as to keep this imagery between it and the European Security Conference, but if you totally refuse anything, it will create major problems with our allies, whom we have told as a result of the summit there was a certain parallelism.

AD: What about the conference—this was a multilateral [omission in original transcript] conference.

HK: Well, frankly, you know we are not going on the conference—we are in no insane hurry about that.

AD: I understand. May I put it this way, if it is as it is now in November all right, but then you would like to have let's say January or February involved the multilateral. . . .

HK: Don't you pull any of these Brezhnev tricks on me. I didn't say a word about February.

AD: It was my words.

HK: I said January—it was a major concession.

AD: It doesn't matter—January or February really. In this case—but the question is the second conference you would like to have let's say within the next two months.

HK: Something like that.

AD: Yeah, nothing specifically. This is exactly what you meant—so what is new?

HK: Well, what is new is that we are willing to do it in a parallel way with the exploratory talks. I mean, as by the same procedures.

AD: Yeah, but this was my understanding in the one you said it will be practically the same. The one I think I mentioned to you that

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 27, Anatoli Dobrynin File. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> The memorandum of Kissinger's conversation with Dobrynin, August 22, which dealt exclusively with Vietnam, is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, volume XV, Soviet Union, June 1972–August 1974.

time that there was no agreement about a conference of troop reductions in Moscow that we discussed—or rather that the President discussed with the leadership. There was no—it was understanding parallel, yes; it was a certain kind of body, yes; but there was nothing said about a conference. So that was new when we discussed today.

HK: To us the difference between a body and a conference is not self-evident.

AD: No, but it is because it was a body used in a sense of certain kind of preliminary consultative but not really conference. When we discussed this body, it was just one impression and then to decide about a conference which was our understanding.

HK: Yeah, but that's right. That's what we want a preliminary group to do.

AD: Yes, but now you put restriction that within two months it should be conference on the troop reductions.

HK: No, no; within two months there should be a preliminary meeting to discuss about a conference on troop reductions.

AD: Just a minute—what will you want to discuss in January?

HK: No, I'm not saying that the conference will take place two months after the preliminary discussions.

AD: No. Well, you said, the preliminary discussions will be according to your plans to go there January, yes?

HK: Yes.

AD: What sort of development will be?

HK: Well, they will discuss when there should be a conference and how it should be organized.

AD: Yes, but do you already prejudge now when this conference will be.

HK: No, we will not push it.

AD: This will be happening about 2 months after?

HK: Oh, no, no; not two months after that.

AD: Yes.

HK: I would have thought maybe by the fall.

AD: By the fall, I understand.

HK: My idea is that these MBFR discussions will take 2 or 3 years.

AD: Yeah, I understand. But the conference—but if you presume on your idea the conference will be in the middle of the year so this will be in the fall.

HK: That's right.

AD: I'm roughly speaking I mean.

HK: That's right.



AD: So it will be between 3 or 4 months.

HK: Something like that.

AD: Or something like that. I don't want to *pin down* you precisely but just understand what your way of thinking is.

HK: Exactly.

AD: So it will be really exactly exercised as a [omission in original transcript] on your [omission in original transcript] but within 2 or 3 months, yes?

HK: Yes.

AD: I mean this difference of timing.

HK: Right.

AD: Otherwise it will be the same. I mean from the way of handling—

HK: That is essentially right.

AD: Essentially probably but different than some of the [omission in original transcript] and then this conference will give [omission in original transcript] will organize committee and they will discuss for several years.

HK: That would be my expectation.

AD: Yeah. No, what I mean—

HK: Of course if you unilaterally withdraw your troops, there doesn't have to be a conference.

AD: But you see I am afraid it won't be happening.

HK: No, we will accept it. Try us.

AD: But really I am afraid you will not. (laughter) You said it as a trick behind us.

HK: The Chinese will protest.

AD: This is so, they will and you will make a statement—if not you, but maybe some other person will tell it—it's a dirty trick. (laughter)

HK: Well, try us. We may fool you.

AD: I don't want to interfere in your domestic affairs.

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

**108. Editorial Note**

On September 5, 1972, at 10:35 a.m., President Nixon telephoned President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs Haig and in the course of their conversation, the President raised the issue of a European security conference:

"P[resident]: [O]ne thing on the Rogers thing—Will you speak to Haldeman before he sees him in the morning.

"H[aig]: Yes, sir.

"P: The European Security Council [*sic*] as you know I'm not a damned bit interested in. A meeting to discuss here as Haldeman pointed out that's his [Rogers's] bag; understand that and at the proper time we will talk a little about it. Purpose of this meeting is something else.

"H: I think so. Think we ought to say that he is going to have a lead role in that.

"P: That's right.

"H: Not going to get into that.

"P: The purpose of this meeting is not that. We will look it over." (Memorandum of telephone conversation, September 5; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Box 998, Haig Chron Files, Haig Telcons, 1972, 1 of 2)

The same day, President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger met with Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin for dinner at the Soviet Embassy at 8 p.m. to discuss Kissinger's forthcoming visit to Moscow. Kissinger's memorandum of the conversation reads in part: "*MBFR/CSCE*. We then turned to *MBFR* and *CSCE*. Dobrynin said he was somewhat baffled. On the same day that I had told him that the *MBFR* discussions would not have to start on the same date as the European Security Conference, Beam had come in and had made exactly the opposite point. I said that by now Dobrynin should know who represented American policy. Dobrynin said he did, but Gromyko was not yet used to Ambassadors who didn't exactly know their government's views. At any rate, if we were prepared to agree to a European Security Conference on November 22, they would be prepared for *MBFR* exploratory discussions by the end of January. And if then the European Security Conference would take place during the summer of 1973, the *MBFR* Conference could take place in the fall of 1973. I told him that this looked like a realistic procedure." (Ibid., Box 495, President's Trip Files, Dobrynin/Kissinger, Vol. 13)

**109. Transcript of Telephone Conversation Between Secretary of State Rogers and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 6, 1972, 2:42 p.m.

K: Hello.

R: Henry.

K: Yes, Bill.

R: I noticed we got a telegram from Kennedy in NATO<sup>2</sup> saying that our allies are somewhat concerned about the Ziegler briefing<sup>3</sup> saying that you are going to talk about European Security Conference . . .

K: He didn't say that. I looked at the text; we're not going to talk about the European Security Conference. There's no way it could be discussed.

R: What did he mean by European security? Just general?

K: Well he said all the topics that were covered at the summit but in a general way be covered.

R: But he also mentioned European security.

K: I thought all he said was European problems.

R: No, he said European security.

K: Well at any rate it will not be discussed.

R: What about Mutual Balanced Force Reductions?

K: Unless they raise it we're in no position to discuss it. We've just had an exchange there.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Henry A. Kissinger Telephone Transcripts (Telcons), Box 15, Chronological File. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 3570 from USNATO, September 6, Ambassador Kennedy reported: "I am seriously concerned about the impact of the Kissinger visit [to Moscow] on our European allies. We need to deal with them seriously and quickly if we are to avoid suspicions and the likelihood of unpleasant repercussions in the pre-electoral period. News reports in Europe are already widely citing White House sources to the effect that he will talk with the Russians about matters of immediate concern to the Allies, including CSCE, MBFR, and SALT." (Ibid., NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 24, Trip Files, HAK's Germany, Moscow, London and Paris Trip, Sept. 9–15, 1972, Misc. Cables and Documents)

<sup>3</sup> The *New York Times* reported on September 6: "Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, said at a briefing that Mr. Kissinger would confer with West German leaders on his way to Moscow. . . . Mr. Ziegler said that one of the primary topics on Mr. Kissinger's agenda in Moscow would be the war in Vietnam. . . . It was also assumed here that Mr. Kissinger would discuss a variety of East-West matters in both West Germany and in Moscow, including tentative plans for a conference on European security and the question of mutual and balanced force reductions." (*New York Times*, September 6, 1972, p. 3)

R: Well what I would like to just say is that it's not going to be discussed and if you could just—if the subject comes up—say we're not ready to discuss it yet, that would make it easier because then we could just tell our NATO allies that these subjects were not going to be discussed. On SALT we could say that we're going to continue to have the briefings that we've had in the past so that if you talked about SALT we could just say well anything that's discussed about SALT you'll be briefed on by Gerry Smith just the way you have been in the past.

K: Well, if they mentioned—if they had another thought for example about this approach and raised that issue with us that we've already approached them on, there will be no discussion on the substance on Mutual Balanced Force Reductions. That you can certainly tell them. We don't have a position.

R: And on the Conference on European Security we just say we're not prepared to discuss it yet, are we?

K: That's right.

R: Even if they raised it?

K: You mean the substance?

R: Yeh.

K: I don't—we don't have a substantive position.

R: No, but what they're worried about in NATO is that you'll—it's not so much who raises it as whether you'll talk about it or not. If we're in a position to tell them that this is a subject that you're not going to talk about then we wouldn't . . .

K: Hold on a second the President is calling.

(Kissinger takes the President's call.)

K: Hello. Well, why don't you send a cable over that you want to send and let me see what it says. If I have any concerns with it I'll tell you.

R: OK. I think it is important to do that because they were upset the last time on it. They claimed that you'd said that we negotiated a communiqué for three or four months<sup>4</sup> and so they felt that we had sort of misled them. When I told them we hadn't agreed on anything yet . . .<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 100.

<sup>5</sup> On May 5, Rogers briefed the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on the upcoming summit meeting in Moscow. In telegram Secto 31 from Brussels, May 5, the Mission summarized the ensuing discussion by the NAC members: "They emphasized importance of maintaining alliance solidarity and reaching as much substantive agreement as possible before summit. At close of meeting, the Secretary said that he very much appreciated receiving points of view of the Allies, and that they will be taken fully into account in making final plans for the President's visit." (National Archives, RG 59, Conference Files, 1966–72, Entry 3051B, Box 102, CF 488) The text of Rogers's statement to the NAC on Nixon's Moscow visit is in telegram 2010 from USNATO, May 5; *ibid.*

K: My briefings were on the public record and I never said three or four months.

R: Well whatever it was. All I'm saying is that they were concerned. They had a couple of meetings and talked about it and so forth and I sent them a telegram saying there was nothing for them to worry about. I just want to reassure them that's all.

K: Well, let me see the cable and I'll . . .

[Omitted here is discussion of the Olympics and Kissinger's schedule.]

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**110. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, undated.

SUBJECT

(CSCE) Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

This memorandum includes a review of CSCE, a talking paper for your use in Moscow (Tab A), and a longer analytical summary (Tab B).<sup>2</sup>

*I. Where We Stand*

The Conference will begin its preparations about November 22 in Helsinki. More than thirty nations will appear. The time, place and agenda for the actual conference will be agreed. In the Soviet scenario the Foreign Ministers will then convene the actual conference, make speeches, commission working groups, and go home. The working groups will work out some sort of agreed statement on each topic, the heads of State will then convene, make more speeches, and ratify the results. They will go home, and perhaps some hapless committee will remain in permanent session until another conference is held.

*The results are almost foreordained:*

—There will be a declaration of principles of European security and cooperation; it will be an amalgam of platitudes, but will confirm

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Office Files, Box 73, Country Files, Europe, USSR. Secret; Sensitive.

<sup>2</sup> Tabs A and B are attached but not printed.

that no European state is going to challenge the status quo. It will imply, but certainly no more than imply, that the Brezhnev doctrine is illegitimate. It will renounce force, confirm territorial integrity, promise arms control, and greater contacts among people.

—Some minimal restraints may be adopted on military movement, e.g. advance notification of maneuvers.

—The West will press for freer movement of people and information. The East will parry with a general promise not to interfere with movement of people and information. This will be hailed as an important beginning. Nothing much will change.

—Highly technical debates will occur in the economic subcommittees. All will pledge a greater effort to facilitate trade. Some practical improvements for Western businessmen may result.

—A grab bag of other issues—cultural exchange, scientific cooperation, environmental protection, will be discussed and declarations issued. Nothing much will change.

*This is by way of saying that the fact of the gathering probably far exceeds its substance.*

From the Soviet view point, a long cherished objective will finally be realized when the conference convenes.

—There will be an immediate upgrading of East Germany.

—Boundaries in Europe will be confirmed, force renounced, and the spirit of détente advanced.

*From the Western point of view some debating points may be scored; the Eastern bloc will be exposed as a closed society; the Brezhnev doctrine will be indirectly challenged, and, hopefully, a feckless exercise will be finished without serious splits in the Western camp or significant damage to real security.*

## *II. The Issues*

Some years ago a European Security Conference might have been a serious East-West debate or confrontation. Now, the key aspects of European security are being or have been handled independently through bilateral arrangements (Germany) or specialized forums (SALT, MBFR). The conference has been reduced to a symbolic act, more important for its psychological atmospherics than its content.

As a reflection of this change in the conference character, *the West has no grand strategic options—our approach is almost purely damage limiting, with some marginal positive goals in the realm of “freer movement.”* Moreover, we, the United States, do not have great tactical flexibility. The conference is of more immediate importance to our Allies than to us. In a coalition of 14, we can only lead so far, without dictating on issues that are of secondary importance to us.

*The main issue for the United States, therefore, is one of Alliance management rather than East-West bargaining or debating:*

—*We must come out of this exercise with a minimum of illusions and a maximum of Allied unity.*

—*This means being willing to defer to a European consensus in NATO.*

—*It also means carefully resisting the natural temptation to cook the results of the conference with the Soviet Union, privately behind the backs of our friends. On some matters this might be justified but certainly not the miserable European Conference.*

This perspective is justified if *we consider what the Soviets see in the conference.*

—It may be that the Soviets have lost some of their original enthusiasm for this project—since much of its substance is already subsumed in their bilateral dealing with us and with the Germans. But it is still important to their general European strategy.

—They still want an atmosphere of political relaxation in the West that will erode any collective sense of concern over the predominant Soviet power position. They want to spin a web of overlapping interests in maintaining this relaxation for their own national aims: to prevent a growth of a strong, unified Western camp that can challenge the USSR in Eastern Europe, and to gain the time and political freedom to deal with the threat of communist China.

—The European Conference, played out on a grand stage of foreign ministers conferences and meetings of heads of State will evoke images of the great 19th Century Congress of the concert of Europe, détente, and so forth. This imagery is irresistible to the Russian leaders, and if only for this reason they will pursue the conference with tenacity.

There are four main areas of substance in the conference:

- Principles Governing European States
- Military Confidence Building
- Freer Movement
- Economic Cooperation
- Post-conference Machinery

#### *A. Principles*

As the longer paper (Tab B) indicates there is considerable common ground in so far as the language of a declaration of principles is concerned.

*The real issue is one of conflicting political objectives.* At the risk of overworking an old cliché, the Soviet objective is to confirm the results of WW II—the inviolability of frontiers, the renunciation of force,

territorial integrity—in a document that has a binding legal status. Over the years, and especially in the last three years, the West has conceded most of the Soviet formula, mainly because West Germany, the potential revisionist power has adopted a strategy that builds on rather than challenges the status quo.

All that remains to be settled, and it is by no means an insignificant aspect, is the validity of the Brezhnev doctrine of limited sovereignty, which the Soviets consider part of the status quo. In other words, the West is asked to concede spheres of influence by the device of agreeing to principles that do not in specific terms challenge the limited sovereignty doctrine.

*It is the Western notion, however, that the declaration can lay some inhibitions on the practice of the doctrine. The tactical issue is how far the West can press this without jeopardizing the conference itself, which almost certainly the Western Europeans do not want to do.*

*—For the US, the issue is whether, in light of our relations with the USSR, we want to appear as the leading advocate and champion of the anti-Brezhnev doctrine thrust, or begin now to retreat from any untenable positions.*

#### *B. Confidence Building—Stabilizing Measures*

Everyone agrees that a Conference on Security ought to deal with military problems. But in practice none of the major powers want to subject their military dispositions to the whims of 30 nations. Therefore, there is a sort of tacit understanding that military issues will be given an optical polish, but will not be negotiated.

The result is a Western scheme that calls for all countries to adopt certain very limited obligations (a) to announce in advance their maneuvers, and (b) to permit some observers at the maneuvers. The theory is that if all states renounce force they should take these measures as an earnest of good intentions.

*The issue is whether the Soviet agree. Our intelligence suggest they may be willing to adopt something along the lines of confidence building measures. Certainly the East Europeans have an interest.*

*The tactical issue for the US is not to allow this slight opening to be enlarged into a full scale negotiation on MBER principles, which some Allies still want and which may appeal to neutrals as well.*

#### *C. Freer Movement*

This may be the crunch. The underlying Western philosophy which we have subscribed to and promoted is that “liberalization” of the Eastern bloc is the only road to the reconciliation of Europe and that liberalization flourishes when exposed to the nourishing influence of Western societies. There is something to this theory. But we are not



likely to trick the USSR into opening its doors to a free flow of people, in or out, or to an inundation of Western literature and broadcasts.

In fact, the Western approach is cynical. No one expects to achieve much, but in pursuing the issues the East is to be exposed as the obstacle to European "cooperation."

In sum, *this takes on the character of psychological warfare and the issue, therefore, is whether the state of East-West relations justifies such an approach.*

—Do we really want to "expose" the USSR, or one of its allies?

—Do we want to drive wedges between Romania and the USSR?

—Do we want to lay out broad schemes and ambitious projects, and then abandon them while pointing the finger of blame on the other side?

Our Allies are becoming very skeptical of this exercise and are leaning on us to scale down the terms. (We are the main supporters; through bureaucratic inertia we have not really re-examined this since 1969, when it might have been tactically justified as a measure to badger the Soviets.)

In short, we can achieve some very limited practical improvement in freer movement—which might be feasible in light of the loosening up in Eastern Europe—but not if our aim is polemics.

#### *D. Economic Cooperation*

The subject matter is too technical to develop any real basic issues but this is what is lacking—an agreed Western philosophy. At this stage no one knows what would be the outcome of the economic issues. There is a justified suspicion that the Europeans want to use the conference to "legitimize" the EC and the CEMA interlocutor and perhaps to make some concessions to the East, out of fear of new US competition in Eastern Europe and the USSR. In practice, the conference will be the first channel for some sort of dialogue (since the USSR is excluded or passive in all other European economic institutions).

Our interests are difficult to define. In NATO's preparatory work, we have taken the lead in a fairly tough position. However, we cannot oppose some cross fertilization between East and West institutions. We cannot oppose some reduction of barriers to trade. What we might oppose, should it develop, is a Europeanization of the issue that discriminates against the non-EC countries. In practice, however, we may be stimulating this trend by dealing bilaterally with Poland and Romania, and above all, by our prospective deals with the USSR.

*What is needed now is a bureaucratic scrubbing down of the economic aspects of the CSCE so that some concept of our interests will emerge; nevertheless there does seem to be little chance that CSCE will make much progress.*

*E. Permanent Machinery*

In their various European security proposals, the Soviets have always included some notion of a permanent body that would be established by the Conference and remain as a bridge to the next conference in “two or three years.” They have blown hot and cold on their interest. Gromyko told the UK that the USSR had no “special interest” in such a body but one ought to be established. Some Eastern Europeans, however, have said that it is a prime objective.

Whatever the Soviet view of what or how the machinery would function, it seems clear that we and the Western Alliance have no interest in it. Once we thought it might have some value as another inhibition on the Brezhnev doctrine—a sort of European Security Council, but this is far too ambitious. Now we hope to head off any such institution but the outlook is not at all clear—many neutrals may join the Soviets on this one.

Our main concern is that we not participate in the creation of an illusory “system” of security which would be developed through periodic European Conferences and permanent machinery. The net result would be to dilute the value of the Alliance, and tempt some of our Allies and neutrals to build up the new mechanisms as an alternative to NATO.

*Procedures*

There are two scenarios: ours and the Soviets.

—We assume “careful preparations,” and by this we mean that the substantive issues for the agenda be resolved beforehand at the preparatory level. The French and Soviets disagree and view the preparations as mostly procedural. The British are not enthusiastic about our approach on the grounds that they cannot preempt the position of their foreign minister!

—Nevertheless, we do have Soviet agreement, in the US-Soviet communiqué, that the conference should be “carefully prepared.”

—After “careful preparations,” the next step should be to convene the actual conference at the Foreign Minister level. Our concept is that this would be the last step that the Ministers would agree to the outcome of the conference. The French foresee two Ministerial level meetings, and the Soviet variation is for the last meeting to be at the heads of state level.

—We are isolated on restricting the CSCE to one Ministerial level meeting: our choice is between another foreign minister meeting, or a summit gathering.

—Finally, we have to decide, fairly soon, how to respond to the Finnish invitation for November 22, but we cannot accept the date until we have a firmer commitment to MBFR.

### 111. Editorial Note

On September 9, 1972, President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Kissinger left the United States for four days of talks in the Soviet Union from September 10 to 14. En route, he stopped in Munich for consultations with West German Chancellor Brandt and Foreign Minister Walter Scheel on September 10. Among the topics they discussed were a European Security Conference and mutual balanced force reductions. A record of Kissinger's conversation with Brandt reads in part: "In response to the Chancellor's question about US views on the relationship between CSCE and MBFR, Dr. Kissinger said he would discuss this subject in Moscow but that the American attitude would remain unchanged. The language on parallelism in the Moscow communiqué expressed our policies. MBFR is the main concrete subject pertaining to security still to be discussed, and we wanted to hold to the parallelism approach. In his Moscow talks he would not go beyond NATO-agreed positions. We were not negotiating bilaterally on this subject with the Soviets. As a matter of fact, we had not yet arrived at a final US position and our own internal planning continued. We hoped to present a paper to NATO within four to six weeks containing a preferred proposal to be made to the Soviets. Brandt said he supported the principle of parallelism but not, in the final analysis, to the point of making MBFR talks an absolute prerequisite for the opening of multilateral preparations in Helsinki. Parallelism to him meant beginning at approximately the same time, not necessarily the same date." (Telegram 1583 from Berlin, September 12; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 24, HAK European Trip, September 1972, FRG Memcons, Brandt, Strauss)

In a separate conversation, "Scheel likewise queried Dr. Kissinger about the American understanding of parallelism in connection with CSCE and MBFR, adding that while the Germans could support the concept of a link (*Verbindung*), they did not think of it as constituting an absolute prerequisite (*Junktim*). Dr. Kissinger responded that he would discuss this question with Chairman Brezhnev during his forthcoming talks in Moscow. To us, parallelism means an agreement in advance to have MBFR preparatory talks begin at about the same time as the CSCE preparatory talks. We would appreciate continuing German support for this concept of parallelism. State Secretary Frank observed that, if the inner-German talks proceeded to an agreement this fall, the FRG would be under heavy pressure to move rapidly to the multilateral preparatory talks for CSCE in Helsinki. Alluding to the difficulties being experienced in NATO in formulating the freedom of movement item for a CSCE agenda, Frank expressed the hope these

could be resolved expeditiously since the problem appeared to be essentially one of presentation. The German objective was not to lose the substance but to avoid formulation of the agenda item in such a way as to make it ipso facto unacceptable to the Eastern side." (Telegram 1584 from Berlin, September 12; *ibid.*)

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## 112. Memorandum of Conversation<sup>1</sup>

Moscow, September 12, 1972, 9–10 p.m.

### PARTICIPANTS

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU  
Andrei A. Gromyko, Foreign Minister  
Anatoli F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the USA  
Georgi M. Kornienko, Chief of USA Division, Foreign Ministry  
Viktor M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Staff  
Winston Lord, NSC Staff  
William G. Hyland, NSC Staff  
Jonathan T. Howe, NSC Staff  
John D. Negroponte, NSC Staff

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

Brezhnev: On the European Security Conference, there is a certain measure of agreement reached: Interim consultations on the timing of multilateral consultations are to start on November 22 in Helsinki. We can register general agreement in Helsinki on an understanding that we will make every effort to achieve productive results, and then continue bilateral consultations.

So, if Dr. Kissinger has no objections we will register agreement on this basis and make every effort to insure that the Conference is held in the first half of 1973. And naturally we will continue contacts through our channel. Does Dr. Kissinger agree with this?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Kissinger Office Files, Box 74, Country Files, Europe, USSR, HAK Trip to Moscow, Sept. 1972, Memcons. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting took place in the Council of Ministers Building in the Kremlin.

Dr. Kissinger: Not completely.

[Dobrynin and Gromyko begin explaining to Brezhnev that there is more involved and he should read the rest of his notes. Brezhnev understands and continues.]<sup>2</sup>

Brezhnev: So, there is a second half. We agree that about three months after the start of the consultations (for CSCE) consultations could begin on procedural matters on reducing forces and armaments in Europe. We are prepared to enter into these consultations with a view to holding a conference after the completion of the European Security Conference. But there is no linkage between the timing, the venue and participants.

Dr. Kissinger: We can agree with this in principle. Let me be specific: We do not think it a good idea that these two consultations take place in the same place. We accept, and prefer, that they not be physically together. Indeed, to prevent the issues of MBFR from being introduced into CSCE, we want the procedural meeting on MBFR before the actual CSCE. We want a preparatory meeting on force reductions before CSCE, but three months may be a little long. It would be most expedient to have them at the end of January, 1973; for the preparatory talks on MBFR, the last week in January might be appropriate. The actual conference should be after the completion of CSCE if it starts at the end of June, the MBFR Conference could be about the end of September—somewhere in September–October. If these principles are agreeable we will then agree to the November 22 starting date for CSCE preparations. We can tell you later how to manage this bureaucratically.

Brezhnev: Let us agree.

Dr. Kissinger: I will need a proposal from your side while we are here, and an unsigned proposal to take up with our allies. After consultations we could then announce our agreement at the beginning of October.

Brezhnev: I agree, that it is all on this.

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

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<sup>2</sup> Brackets are in the original.

### 113. Paper Prepared in the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 18, 1972.

#### Initial Allied Reactions to the Kissinger–Brezhnev Talks on CSCE and MBFR—September 10–14, 1972

##### *General*

In initial and highly preliminary reactions to our reports to them of Dr. Kissinger's discussions with General Secretary Brezhnev,<sup>2</sup> the Allies have characterized the talks on MBFR generally, and specifically the Soviet note given to Dr. Kissinger on September 13,<sup>3</sup> as a step forward.

Some Allies are prepared to believe that there would be sufficient parallelism in time between CSCE preparatory talks beginning November 22 and MBFR exploratory talks beginning in late January; and no strong criticism has yet been voiced of the Soviet proposal that the MBFR talks be held outside Helsinki. Questions have been raised concerning the omission of a reference to substantive MBFR discussions by the Soviets in describing MBFR talks.

Several Allies—primarily the Belgians and those on the Southern flank of NATO who have pressed for inclusion in MBFR talks (Italy, Turkey, etc.)—have stressed in particular the importance of Allied cohesion in treating MBFR and CSCE issues. Some have also indicated that they would have preferred more thorough Allied consultations before the visit enabling Dr. Kissinger to voice an Alliance position on MBFR participation.<sup>4</sup> (The Turks and Italians have not reacted in de-

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 247, Agency Files, MBFR and CSCE, 1972. Secret; Limdis. Eliot forwarded the paper to Kissinger on September 19 under a covering memorandum.

<sup>2</sup> On September 15, Kennedy and Sonnenfeldt briefed the North Atlantic Council on the results of Kissinger's visit to Moscow. Telegram 3739 from USNATO, September 15, includes an account of their briefing. (Ibid., Kissinger Office Files, Box 24, Trip Files, HAK's Germany, Moscow, London and Paris Trip, September 9–15, 1972, Misc. Cables and Documents)

<sup>3</sup> Telegram HAKto 22 from Moscow, September 13, provided the text of the Soviet note: "1. The multilateral consultations to prepare the conference on questions of security and cooperation in Europe will start in Helsinki on November 22. 2. The conference itself will begin its work in Helsinki in late June, 1973. 3. Preliminary consultations on question of procedure and organization relating to the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments first of all in Central Europe will begin in late January, 1973. The consultations will be conducted in a place other than Helsinki. The exact time and venue of such preliminary consultations as well as the subsequent negotiations (conference) on this problem will be held on a non-bloc basis. 4. A conference on the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments in Europe will start in September or October, 1973." (Ibid., HAKto 1–35)

<sup>4</sup> According to telegram 3739, Ambassador Spierenburg of the Netherlands stated: "He thought that it was now urgent that the U.S. give its reply to the Turkish compromise proposal regarding participation of flank countries in MBFR discussions.

tail to the Kissinger visit, and we can expect strong criticism from them on the issue of participation.)

None of the Allies have opposed beginning CSCE preparatory talks in Helsinki on November 22, but a number have argued against accepting a specific date for CSCE itself (the Soviet proposal is for late June 1973) on the grounds that this would deprive the preparatory talks of their significance.

There has been little reaction so far to the Soviet proposal that CSCE itself take place in Helsinki.

All the Allies look forward to detailed consultations—on the basis of instructions from capitals—in the North Atlantic Council this week.

#### *The North Atlantic Council*

Ambassador Kennedy (with Mr. Sonnenfeldt) briefed the Council on Friday, September 15. Commenting on a personal basis, other Council members

- congratulated the U.S. team on the results of the talks;
- expressed general satisfaction with the degree of parallelism laid down in the Soviet note;
- cautioned (except for the French) that any date for a CSCE itself should be regarded only as a target date, dependent on results in the preparatory talks;
- hoped that MBFR exploratory talks would include exploration of substance as well as of procedural and organizational matters;
- repeated earlier arguments that the essential next decision among the Allies is that on participation of NATO members in MBFR explorations.

The Canadian Permanent Representative thought his authorities would accept a procedure whereby the U.S. would reply to the Soviet note after Allied consultations; several others, in stressing the importance of Allied cohesion, seemed to imply that this procedural question will be important to them.

#### *Reactions in Capitals*

The text of the Soviet note was also delivered by our Embassies in Allied Capitals on September 15, and Embassies were authorized to draw on the talking points provided by the White House. Initial reactions, while appreciative of the U.S. effort in Moscow, were sketchy and very preliminary.

*UK*—Speaking personally, the Foreign Office's NATO Department head called attention to the British view that MBFR negotiations should

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He thought personally that the most important consideration in this was the maintenance of solidarity of the alliance."

only take place if exploratory talks establish that negotiations would not risk Allied security. He thought the British would not have trouble with the Soviet proposal that a CSCE itself be held in Helsinki; the British would go along with a NATO consensus.<sup>5</sup>

*FRG*—Foreign Ministry officials found the parallelism concept adequately served in the Soviet note, but opposed setting a firm CSCE date at this time. They also warned that the U.S. position on MBFR participation could cause serious strain in the Alliance. The FRG would go along with a NATO consensus favoring separate sites for MBFR and CSCE preliminaries.<sup>6</sup>

*France*—The Quai also argued against accepting a precise CSCE date, but noted with satisfaction the separation in the Soviet note of CSCE and MBFR both in time and place.

*Italy*—The Italians rehearsed their interest in participation of NATO flank countries in MBFR talks.<sup>7</sup>

*Other*—The Belgians came down particularly hard on the importance of close Allied consultations.<sup>8</sup> The Dutch, inter alia, voiced a lack of enthusiasm for holding a CSCE itself in Helsinki. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Thorn asked whether the Soviet note was solely a Soviet initiative or was requested by Dr. Kissinger.

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<sup>5</sup> As reported in telegram 8723 from London, September 15. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 729, Country Files, Europe, United Kingdom, Vol. VII)

<sup>6</sup> As reported in telegram 12637 from Bonn, September 15. (Ibid., Box 687, Country Files, Germany (Bonn), Vol. XII)

<sup>7</sup> As reported in telegram 5290 from Rome, September 15. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 6 NATO)

<sup>8</sup> As reported in telegram 3469 from Brussels, September 15. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 669, Country Files, Europe, Belgium, Vol. II)

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## 114. Minutes of a Joint Verification Panel and Senior Review Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 20, 1972, 4:10–5:13 p.m.

SUBJECT

MBFR/CSCE

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-113, SRG Meeting Minutes, Originals, 1972–73. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.



PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger	<i>CIA</i>
<i>State</i>	Richard Helms
John N. Irwin II	Ben Rutherford
Walter J. Stoessel	<i>ACDA</i>
Jonathan Dean	Gerard Smith
Raymond Garthoff	David Linebaugh
<i>Defense</i>	Thomas Hirschfeld
Kenneth Rush	<i>OST</i>
Armistead Selden	Dr. Edward David (Observer)
Lawrence Eagleburger	<i>NSC</i>
Clayton McManaway	Helmut Sonnenfeldt
<i>JCS</i>	Philip Odeen
Adm. Thomas H. Moorer	William G. Hyland
Vice Adm. John P. Weinell	Lt. J. Michael Power
	Jeanne W. Davis

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

—the State Department would consider the desirability of another approach to the French on participation in the talks and come back with a recommendation;

—the Working Group should get an agreed sanitized version of the Evaluation Report for transmission to our allies;

—CIA will do further work on the verification problems;

—the Working Group will put together some concrete packages of what each side would be asked to do under various kinds of cuts.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Irwin) I have your draft cable here<sup>2</sup> (a draft response to the Soviet note) and I'll talk to you about the details later.

Mr. Irwin: Do we want to refer to a specific date?

Mr. Kissinger: All the Soviets have asked for is the end of January.

Mr. Irwin: I mean for the actual conference.

Mr. Kissinger: The date for the conference will emerge from the preparations. Don't give them a date now.

Mr. Irwin: The NSC staff has wanted dates.

Mr. Kissinger: We don't want a date for the actual meeting of the European Security Conference. A date for the MBFR meetings would be helpful for Congressional reasons.

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<sup>2</sup> Reference is to a draft cable prepared by Shaw and Streator on September 19 for discussion at the meeting; it was forwarded to Kissinger on September 20. The draft cable, along with a covering memorandum prepared by Odeen and Sonnenfeldt, are in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box CL 27, Chronological File.

We have four basic questions today: 1) a response to the Soviet note; we will get a new draft and circulate it; 2) NATO participation in the MBFR talks; 3) how we prepare for the talks within NATO; and 4) some general substantive discussion on the directions in which we wish to go. We have plenty of time to prepare substantively for these talks. Based on my discussions in Europe, I think it is important that we get our European friends read into our thinking. We can start the education process before we have our own positions in great detail.

On the question of participation,<sup>3</sup> I think we're all agreed that we have to yield to the pressure from the flank countries in some way. Have we ever explained the facts of life to them? Have we pointed out that the Russians may want to trade Bulgarian forces for those of Greece and Turkey? The Soviets would be delighted to expand the number of countries involved but I'm not sure that would be so much in our interest. It could be messy.

Mr. Irwin: The attitude of our allies has favored flank participation or at least observer status for the flank countries. We have stuck to the "no participation" line.

Mr. Kissinger: In practical terms is there any difference between participation and observer status? Does observer mean they can't talk? I have no reason to oppose flank participation but I wonder what we would really be getting into. If we are absolutely firm in linking MBFR with CES, I think we can get the Soviets to go along with a conference on force reductions in Central Europe. But if we give them any opening, they will try to expand the number of countries, including, even the neutrals perhaps. I think we should go into the January talks with a firm, rigid position. I don't know which of the proposals is best. The Turks are proposing membership in the talks by a directly concerned state. If we leave this open to discussion we may be giving the Russians an opportunity to play around. Gerry (Smith), what do you think?

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<sup>3</sup> In a briefing memorandum to Kissinger, September 18, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt wrote: "All the agencies are prepared to cave in on the issue of participation and allow a representative of each 'flank' to attend the explorations as an advisor to delegations of directly interested Allied states. This approach may not satisfy the Turks, Italians, and others who want a flank representative to participate fully with a *right to speak* in both explorations and negotiations." Odeen and Sonnenfeldt suggested three options: "Agree to the Turkish proposal, which has near unanimous support in NATO," "allow a representative from each flank to attend explorations as a member of a delegation of a directly interested state," or "propose to the Allies that the question of participation will be taken up at the January MBFR meeting with a view to including flank participants in the negotiations if this does not cause the Soviets to expand the area of reductions." They recommended "the latter alternative with a fallback to the second alternative if necessary." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-065, Verification Panel/SRG Group Meeting, MBFR, 9/20/72, 1 of 3)

Mr. Smith: If the Russians what to play games they can. The Turkish presence won't interfere with that. I think we should just put the risks frankly to the Italians and leave it to them.

Mr. Irwin: We could still have them as observers, not participants.

Mr. Kissinger: Do you mean the Turks or the Italians?

Mr. Irwin: It has been suggested that we have one country, representing each flank on a rotating basis.

Mr. Kissinger: Then we'd get Portugal.

Mr. Stoessel: They're not that interested.

Mr. Helms: Why not have all the flank countries represented? Why only one?

Mr. Stoessel: The Turks are the most vocal. They claim that anything in Europe affects their security.

Mr. Helms: Would the Greeks represent the Turks and the Italians?

Mr. Rush: No one wants them there.

Mr. Irwin: We don't, but the Europeans are more favorably disposed. We have to decide here whether to try to get them to agree to observer status since we're prepared to agree to that much.

Mr. Kissinger: If the Soviets are hell-bent on it they will do it. But they may not be hell-bent—they may just think they owe themselves a good run at it. I think we can get the Soviets to go along with a Central European scheme but not without their exercising their mischief-making potential.

Mr. Irwin: (to Sonnenfeldt) Did you get any feeling from the NATO countries of their attitude?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: The NATO countries haven't confronted the real situation involved. Neither we nor Luns has made the case.

Mr. Irwin: We thought we could do it in the Deputy Foreign Ministers' meetings on the 11th and 12th. But now it looks as though there will be no meeting. The Europeans say there is no need for a meeting; that the Kissinger trip settled some things and that we don't need to settle others right now. They want to wait for the December Ministerial meeting.

Mr. Stoessel: They're hoping to have the participation question settled before then.

Mr. Kissinger: We'll have to yield if there is real pressure. Let's find out whether this is what the principals in Brussels are thinking or what their governments are thinking. I don't know how to get the governments focussed on this.

Mr. Garthoff: The Turkish Foreign Minister has already weighed in strongly—he sees it as a quid pro quo for letting destroyers into the Black Sea.

Mr. Kissinger: If they're determined, there's no way to keep them out, but I don't think we've made our case. Are any of them coming to the UN?

Mr. Irwin: I don't know—we'll check.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't care about the outcome, but we should make the case.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: We have to settle this before September. The Russians will be preparing for the CSCE meeting and they'll whiplash us on MBFR.

Mr. Stoessel: The allies may drag their feet on a response to the Soviet note until we come forward on the matter of participation. This may create trouble in the alliance for something that's not really that important.

Mr. Kissinger: We'll have to work quietly and quickly.

Mr. Irwin: We'll have to go to the countries through our Embassies to the Foreign Ministers.

Mr. Kissinger: Can it be done without making too many waves?

Mr. Stoessel: It can be, but we know the Turks and Italians want it. The situation won't change.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't like the idea of leaving the question of participation to the January meeting. It gives the Russians a chance to play around with the allies.

Mr. Irwin: No one wants to wait until January. It can and should be done quickly.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: If we start loading this with our friends, they will load it with theirs. We'll then have a bloc to bloc confrontation and the whole thing will sink.

Mr. Helms: Great!

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Except for the reaction in Congress.

Mr. Kissinger: What is the French reaction?

Mr. Stoessel: They are holding themselves apart from the whole exercise. They didn't speak on the question of participation.

Mr. Kissinger: What is the French reaction on the whole thing? Do they plan to stay out of the conference?

Mr. Stoessel: On MBFR, yes.

Mr. Kissinger: Is there any sense in going back to them to discuss it again?

Mr. Stoessel: They're dug in.

Mr. Rush: Debre said no.

Mr. Kissinger: When I talked to Pompidou he didn't say they would participate but he didn't say under no circumstances would they

participate. If they think we are approaching this as a security issue I'm not sure they won't participate.

Mr. Stoessel: Five-to-one they won't.

Mr. Rush: There's a difference in trying to block something and in having an on-going MBFR. They might change their minds.

Mr. Smith: It would mean a complete change in French policy.

Mr. Irwin: They might support non-participation by the flanks.

Mr. Kissinger: It would seem desirable to get them involved in the preparatory work. The French approach to the security issue is similar to ours. I've not yet given up on their participation in the conference. We should try to talk to them again.

Mr. Irwin: Let us think about the French and participation and come back to you with a recommendation. We'll see if another approach is really worth trying. What would be the purpose of having the French participate?

Mr. Kissinger: They're defense-oriented. We'll need a tough-minded analysis of what is possible and not possible, and they can be helpful in this. Also, if the French do not participate, I can see the games the Soviets will play.

(Admiral Moorer joined the meeting)

Mr. Selden: Jack Irwin can talk to the Italians and Turkish Foreign Ministers and see if they will change their attitude. He can point out all the difficulties.

Mr. Kissinger: State will come up with a recommendation on this. Some of these people may be coming down to see the President from New York.

Can we now turn to the method of proceeding with NATO. It had been my understanding that we would send a sanitized version of our Evaluation Report to NATO.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Irwin: We agree.

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<sup>4</sup> In their briefing memorandum of September 18, Odeen and Sonnenfeldt wrote: "*OSD opposes sending any version of the Evaluation Report to NATO on the grounds that all the Allies want and need is a statement of U.S. preferences, not more analysis. Privately, OSD representatives are candid enough to admit that their real concern is that sending the Report to NATO will make it more difficult to get a U.S. decision along the lines they prefer (step-by-step negotiations starting with a force ceiling plus collateral constraints and leading to small, probably symmetrical, initial reductions).*" Odeen and Sonnenfeldt added: "*OJCS has been pressured by OSD into opposing sending the Report to NATO on the grounds that it might 'confuse' the Allies. However, we have been informed privately that JCS opposition is pro forma, and if a decision is made to send it, they will say the sanitized version is a good one.*"

Mr. Rush: But it should be sanitized more than it is now. It would just confuse them. We shouldn't give the various points of view to our allies. We should wait until we have a position.

Mr. Kissinger: But we won't have a position for several months.

Mr. Irwin: We can sanitize it more, but we should get it over there quickly.

Mr. Kissinger: We should at least get them the categories. If they don't get at least that they'll be off in never-never land.

Mr. Rush: If we give them the options we'll just get them started off in different directions. We should give them a paper setting forth our objectives and needs.

Mr. Kissinger: There are not that many avenues open to us. We have three chief roads. This will force them to come to grips with the intelligence problem—the real dangers they face. If we give them only one package, they'll start nit-picking the details of the package. The Evaluation Report leads only in one direction—symmetrical cuts leading to a common ceiling appear to be the best approach, subject to massive verification problems which we want to talk about.

Mr. Irwin: There's some disagreement between the NSC staff, State and Defense on the common ceiling approach or some reductions from us and as much as we can get on the other side.

Mr. Kissinger: If we're agreed that something should go to NATO, I can't judge the degree to which it should be sanitized. Let's get the Working Group to agree on what should be sanitized.

Mr. Irwin: We think it should go. The Working Group should look at the whole report and at the degree of our support for one approach. These are two separate things. There may well be differences on the latter. Defense wants small cuts, hopes to get more in return, but would settle on the same. I prefer the common ceiling.

Mr. Kissinger: We can use the forward-based argument against them on that.

Mr. Irwin: I have one semantic suggestion. We should stop talking about asymmetry and start talking about equality. The word "asymmetrical" implies we admit it's not equal.

Mr. Kissinger: That's a good point.

Mr. Irwin: We want equality—an equal ceiling for both sides.

Mr. Smith: The largest asymmetry is that we are in Western Europe legitimately and the Soviets are in Eastern Europe on a different basis. I can see a reduction of troops on a tacit basis. But if we agree formally that it is legitimate for both sides to have an equal number of troops, we are starting down a slippery slope. The Soviets want anything that will legitimize the presence of their forces in Eastern Europe.

Mr. Kissinger: What is the alternative? To drop the negotiations?

Mr. Smith: We should continue the negotiations but keep in the back of our minds that we are not making a formal agreement.

Mr. Irwin: If we drop the geographic limitations, theoretically we could have more troops than they could because they could reinforce more quickly. But we know that's not negotiable.

Mr. Smith: This whole notional structure has borrowed too heavily from SALT where both sides have fielded legitimate forces. In Europe, NATO is positioned for defense and the Soviets for offense. We can stabilize the situation by getting equality. But do we want an agreement registering that they have as much right to be where they are as we do? I should think we would want to keep this as low key as possible.

Mr. Kissinger: What other outcome can there be of a negotiation but an agreement?

Mr. Smith: A tacit understanding.

Mr. Kissinger: Then why negotiate?

Mr. Smith: To find out where agreement is possible.

Mr. Kissinger: We won't have the problem of how to register the agreement in the near future. I agree that the trend of Soviet policy is to get their position in Europe legitimized. We've been saying what a great man Willy Brandt is for two years. It would be tough to reverse this.

Mr. Smith: I'm not suggesting that. I'm suggesting that it might be better if the issue of force withdrawals were not the subject of a solemn treaty.

Mr. Kissinger: We don't have to face that issue now. Whatever figure we settle on has the effect of producing some legitimacy—whether by asymmetrical or symmetrical cuts.

Mr. Rush: An agreement won't result in the recognition of our right to keep troops in Western Europe.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Smith) Are there some practical consequences to be considered now before the negotiations start or is this just something we should be thinking about?

Mr. Smith: We might possibly act slightly differently in the interim.

Mr. Kissinger: Nothing can happen until next fall.

Mr. Rush: Unless we have a clear outline of what we want, I'm frightened about moving out troops on the basis of a tacit understanding. The Russians may not understand the same thing tomorrow.

Mr. Kissinger: What they *sign* today they don't understand tomorrow. We are agreed, then, to get a better sanitized version of the Evaluation Report and proceed to make it available to our allies. Can

we turn now to the substance of our proposal. There are amazing uncertainties in our intelligence. Page 16 of the Evaluation Report<sup>5</sup> indicates a 20% uncertainty.

Mr. Odeen: It could be as much as 15% higher or 20% smaller. Our best guess is about in the middle.

Mr. Irwin: The indigenous forces are just as uncertain.

Mr. Kissinger: They're more uncertain. I'm trying to understand with [*what*] the uncertainty factor is. What does a 10% cut mean? If we're talking about division manning with a 20% uncertainty, a 10% cut doesn't mean a goddamned thing.

Mr. Eagleburger: We can't really say—it would be lost in the noise level.

Mr. Kissinger: We would have no base with which to compare a cut. We couldn't just clock 10% moving out. They could be moving some out and some in. How could we manage a treaty unless there was some definition of the point at which we start destroying equipment and withdrawing forces and how. I'm trying to understand it.

Mr. Garthoff: I would suggest putting it in terms of units. We know what 30% of a division is.

Mr. Kissinger: We know what a division headquarters is.

Mr. Garthoff: This would be within a reasonable range of verification.

Mr. Kissinger: We won't know about the indigenous forces.

Mr. Garthoff: There are some uncertainties on our own side. We don't know exactly how many troops we have there.

Mr. Odeen: If we operate at division levels, we have some verification means through communications. They could, of course, feed back individuals into other units which would be beyond our capabilities to detect.

Mr. Smith: This would argue for some joint committee to develop ways to demonstrate fulfillment of the agreement. The Soviets apparently acquiesced in some on-site inspection in connection with the satellites. There may be some sort of device for this.

Mr. Kissinger: We should get a more precise definition from the Working Group of what exactly we are asking them to do. Suppose we want to make our cuts by individuals and theirs by units? What argu-

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<sup>5</sup> The evaluation report, "MBFR Issues and Approaches to Reductions," September 1972, prepared by the interagency working group on MBFR, is in the Ford Library, NSC Program Analysis Staff, Steve Hadley MBFR Files, Box 58, MBFR Evaluation Report (Aug. 72). An analytical summary of the report prepared by the NSC staff is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-065, Verification Panel/SRG Group Meeting, MBFR, 9/20/72, 1 of 3.



ments would we use? The probable outcome would be symmetrical in that sense. Does anyone think that kind of agreement is obtainable?

Mr. Stoessel: We would leave the equipment for our units.

Mr. Kissinger: What if we asked for compensation in return for geography?

Mr. Odeen: If we pull out people, we can get them back in the same time as units. Also it would be more verifiable.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get the Working Group looking at what we would ask them to do if we want to move units out.

Mr. Odeen: We'll do some more work with CIA.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we do anything to improve verifiability?

Mr. Helms: It depends on how well we have penetrated the Warsaw Pact forces.

Mr. Smith: I wonder if the Soviet attitude on inspection will be the same in this kind of deal. Before they were worried about penetration of the Soviet Union proper.

Mr. Kissinger: That would be a very good thing to do.

Mr. Helms: The Military Mission in Berlin worked quite well in this area. But when you come to saying someone has violated something, secret agents make bad witnesses.

Mr. Kissinger: Is there any way we can improve our knowledge? On equipment, 20% uncertainty; on artillery, 40%; on aircraft, 20%.

Mr. Helms: We can improve on that with a little time. The major categories are a common ceiling, symmetrical reductions, very close to each other, and mixed packages. I haven't seen any package which knew how to handle air forces.

Adm. Moorer: They can move in hours.

Mr. Kissinger: The problem won't get any easier once we start talking.

Adm. Moorer: I don't know that that's the place to start.

Mr. Kissinger: I'm not saying it's the place to start, but we need to have a position by the time the talks start. Would a 10% cut include air forces? If it did, would it include planes? personnel?

Adm. Moorer: We should start with the ground forces. The basis of our approach should be as simple as possible. It will be hard enough to verify. Trade-offs can get very complicated.

Mr. Kissinger: We need some analytical basis for knowing how to respond to a Russian proposal—what it would do to us. Also whether an x% cut has the same connotation. The difference is what they would do. These could be analyzed together. Are we talking about only manpower? Equipment? What equipment? Is equipment a difficult problem for them?

Mr. Helms: It's even more difficult for us than for them. We have 3000 miles of water to get across. I think we have to decide where we stick our flag and then stay with it.

Mr. Smith: We might adjust the focus of our verification. 18,000 troops can't affect the balance in Europe. It's not the same as dealing with strategic forces which could upset world balance. The Soviets could bring in troops without our knowing it. Maybe they already have and we've been living with it. We shouldn't apply a stiffer standard under an agreement. Our intelligence limitations won't let us. We would know if it something serious were going on.

Mr. Helms: Has anyone ever determined a margin of safety?

Mr. Kissinger: We have tables of how long it would take to various river lines. If this means that we need stricter inspection than we would be willing to live with under unilateral means then we should talk about it.

Mr. Smith: If the Soviets cheated we would resume our freedom of action.

Mr. Kissinger: How can we get our own thinking further advanced? I have no sense of any dynamic purpose. We are sliding into this conference and our only chance of success depends on our knowing what we're doing. Dick (Helms), can you do some more work on the verification problems. Try to do it in categories with greater precision. The Working Group will put together some concrete packages of what we are asking them to do—who can do what under various kinds of cuts. Let's meet again in two or three weeks. Then the whole thing will go before the President in an NSC meeting.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: On the question of on-site inspection, we have a massive history of discussions with the Russians going back to May 10, 1955.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Irwin: What about CSCE? Do we want two Foreign Ministers' meetings?

Mr. Kissinger: Before or in lieu of Heads of Government meetings?

Mr. Irwin: We say one Foreign Ministers meeting. The Russians want one Foreign Ministers meeting and one Heads of Government meeting. The Europeans want two Foreign Ministers meetings.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's leave this question open until we see what happens at the first meeting.

Mr. Irwin: Is anyone pushing on this?

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<sup>6</sup> An apparent reference to President Eisenhower's "Open Skies" proposal of July 21, 1955, in which he proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union open their skies for aerial inspections by the other side. The Soviet Union rejected the proposal.

Mr. Stoessel: No one's pushing. It would be a good idea to discuss this at the Deputy Foreign Ministers meeting but we need a clearer idea of what we want.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's take a holding position.

Mr. Rush: It would be a mistake to have two Foreign Ministers meetings.

Mr. Kissinger: It would be a mistake to lock ourselves in now.

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## 115. Memorandum of Conversation<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 22, 1972, 8:15–9:15 a.m.

### PARTICIPANTS

French Foreign Minister Schumann  
French Ambassador Kosciusko-Morizet  
Henry A. Kissinger  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt

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

Kissinger: [Omitted here is an unrelated comment.] I saw a report that you had doubts about our Moscow talks on the European Conference and MBFR.<sup>2</sup>

Schumann: Well it looks like you agreed not only on preliminary talks but on the full conference. Don't you think that is a problem?

Kissinger: Well that was a Soviet note and those were target dates.<sup>3</sup> They are not agreed. In the White House we have no overwhelming

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 679, Country Files, Europe, France, Vol. X. Secret; Nodis; Exclusively Eyes Only. The meeting took place at the French Ambassador's Residence.

<sup>2</sup> Document 113.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the Soviet note, see footnote 3, Document 113. Kissinger made a similar comment in a backchannel message to Bahr: "You already know through other channels about CSCE/MBFR. The Chancellor should understand that the document the Russians gave me is open to consultation among the allies before we make a response. In particular, while on the whole the time schedule envisaged by the Russians seems all right, we will not automatically agree to the full CSCE unless the preparatory talks in Helsinki warrant it. You understand of course that we do have an interest in the Soviet commitment to talk about MBFR because this is of great help to us in dealing with the pressures for unilateral reductions." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 424, Backchannel Messages, Europe 1972)

urge to have a conference but we were driven to it by the Allies including you.

Schumann: Guilty.

Kissinger: For us the dates on MBFR are very useful with the Congress. They buy a year or even two and take us through a whole Congressional session. To get that we are willing to talk about June for the European Security Conference. But if you or others at Helsinki say that the conference is not warranted I can assure you you will not have a US-Soviet condominium. But my impression is that since the business of the agenda will not be too tough there probably will be a conference. But you won't be confronted by us with a decision.

Schumann: Abrasimov said about the dates that there was no agreement but there was an understanding.

Kissinger: That just isn't true. You recall the conversation our Ambassador Beam had with Kuznetsov.<sup>4</sup> After that conversation we faced the problem that we didn't want a European Conference without MBFR. So we wanted some parallel phrasing in the communiqué and the question was how to break the deadlock. So I told them that they should make us a proposal for what would happen next year so we could take it up with our allies and they did. We told them how we would interpret the question of the force reduction area but that this was subject to the views of the allies. If the Helsinki preparatory talks do not go well we are ready not to have a conference. But I think the Soviets won't let it fail. So we should go with the attitude of what is it we want, since the Soviets will probably meet it rather than with the idea that a US/Soviet agreement already exists. What I am afraid about is that we will end up with the European Conference but not get MBFR.

Now in regard to MBFR. I sympathize with the French views. In fact, we have assisted you to be an independent military power. And maybe we can do even more after the election. I have always been, as you know, sympathetic to you on this. I also understand your worry about MBFR being a cover for unilateral troop reductions. Of course, if McGovern is elected all bets are off anyway. But assuming the President is reelected, which is now probable, we want the conference on MBFR mainly to prevent unilateral cuts. Secondly, it is an educational device for the Europeans about the real military balance and what changes might be tolerable. I'll tell you, it has been the best educational device for us. We discovered that the threat may be a little less than we thought but also that NATO is much weaker than we thought. The idea to get at is not what's negotiable but what's best for security. For that reason we resisted on proposals for quick small cuts, for a 10%

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 106.

cut. We want painstaking work, detailed concrete work, and not the psychotherapeutic approach of the Scandinavians or the Belgians. And we want you in this because you take defense seriously—you are the only ones, and Britain. What we want is the basis for a middle term US commitment without having it challenged every year. How France associates itself with this is up to you. I told President Pompidou we will give you all our data and our thinking. So send someone over and we will give them to him and talk to him. A 10 to 15 percent cut is very dangerous but we don't want to say it publicly. But if you say "cut 10% by individuals" you are actually saying nothing because of the margins of error in the intelligence. The basic point is that we want to have detailed careful technical negotiations. Your position would be closer to ours than that of anyone else—if you took a position. We would like to see you mitigate your opposition without giving up your anti bloc-to-bloc approach. Your forces might not even be involved if the cuts turn out to be in the 10 to 15 percent area. But even if you don't associate yourself with MBFR you should not have reservations, because our whole purpose is to strengthen the alliance.

Schumann: This is very important. I must discuss it with Debre. You know, he is very anxious to improve relations with you. But he is afraid of any neutralization of a special area in Central Europe.

Sonnenfeldt: This could only happen if the reductions were drastic.

Kissinger: We should use the next four years to put our relations on a basis that cannot be shaken by a change in Administrations. The Soviets obviously want to create a mood of détente to undercut defense efforts, but we should find a solid basis for working together.

Schumann: You know I am not sure Debre is right about neutralization. That reminds me of Malraux who has always said that the Russians want to swallow Europe.

Kissinger: That is just what the Chinese say.

Schumann: Well, I am not so sure. The question is whether they want to have a secure Western Europe because of China or whether they want a neutralized Western Europe. The discussion on FBS in SALT may give some kind of a clue.

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

**116. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the  
Department of State (Eliot) to the President's Assistant for  
National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, October 25, 1972.

SUBJECT

US Reply to Soviet Note on MBFR/CSCE

Agreement has been reached within the Alliance on the attached text of the US note of reply to the Soviet note of September 12 on MBFR/CSCE and on attached oral points to be made by the US in handing over the note.<sup>2</sup> The Secretary plans to call in Ambassador Dobrynin this week to convey the US note of reply and to make the agreed oral points.

Also attached is a paper outlining the main issues involved in reaching agreement among the Allies on the US note of reply, particularly the question of participation by flank countries in MBFR talks and our proposed approach to dealing with this issue when the US note of reply is handed to the Soviets and thereafter.

**Theodore L. Eliot, Jr.**

**Attachment 1<sup>3</sup>**

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and has the honor to provide the following response to the note of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics handed to Mr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 247, Agency Files, MBFR and CSCE, 1972. Secret. On October 26, Sonnenfeldt forwarded Eliot's memorandum to Kissinger. In the covering memorandum, Sonnenfeldt wrote: "Having at long last solved the flank participation issue, we plan to answer the Soviet note given to you in Moscow." Sonnenfeldt predicted: "Delivery of our note and its content will undoubtedly leak. Since virtually the entire scenario will then have appeared in the press, a joint Soviet-American announcement strikes me as an anti-climax." Sonnenfeldt recommended that Kissinger concur in the Department of State scenario and "approve a unilateral U.S. announcement" that it was "accepting the Finnish invitation for November 22" and was planning "to attend the first MBFR talks in January." Kissinger initialed his approval of both recommendations.

<sup>2</sup> Attachment 2, the text of the Soviet note, is attached but not printed. See footnote 3, Document 113. Attachment 3, oral points to be made, is not printed.

<sup>3</sup> No classification marking.

to the President for National Security Affairs, during the latter's visit to Moscow last month:

1. The United States agrees in principle with the program of events suggested by the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup>

2. It is envisaged that the<sup>5</sup> multilateral consultations to prepare a conference on security and cooperation in Europe will start on November 22.

3. The date for convening the conference itself should be decided by all the participants, when they are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made during the multilateral consultations to justify convening a conference. On this basis, June 1973 would appear to be a reasonable date for the conference.

4. Exploratory talks on mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe will begin on January 31, 1973. In addition to matters of procedure and organization, the participants will raise matters of substance relevant to setting an agenda.<sup>6</sup>

5. The date for opening negotiations on mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe would be decided by participants in the exploratory talks when they are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made, but would be no later than September–October 1973.<sup>7</sup>

6. Upon confirmation by the Soviet Union that the foregoing is consistent with its understanding of the problem, the United States would agree to take part in the preparatory talks on a Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on November 22, and would so inform the Finnish Government.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On September 27, the Department of State sent a draft reply to the Soviet note for consultation with the NATO allies in telegram 176210 to USNATO. In the U.S. draft reply, paragraph 1 reads: "The United States agrees in principle with the sequence of events suggested by the Soviet Union." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 1 EUR)

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 2 of the U.S. draft reply does not include the phrase "it is envisaged that the."

<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 4 of the U.S. draft reply reads: "Preparatory talks on the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments in Central Europe will begin on January 31, 1973, in Geneva. In addition to matters of procedure and organization, the participants will be free to raise matters of substance relevant to setting an agenda. It is understood that the question of participation in the initial talks, as well as the subsequent negotiations on this problem, will be settled through diplomatic channels between now and January."

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 5 of the U.S. draft reply reads: "The date for opening negotiations on the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments in Central Europe would be decided by participants in the preparatory talks when they are satisfied that sufficient progress has been made, but would be no later than September–October 1973."

<sup>8</sup> The U.S. draft reply includes a seventh paragraph: "The U.S. has consulted with those of its allies concerned with these issues and understands that they concur in this sequence of events."

**Attachment 4<sup>9</sup>**

## Main Issues

*The Soviet Note.* During Dr. Kissinger's visit to Moscow last month, the Soviets handed to him on September 12 an outline of the sequence envisaged for MBFR and CSCE initial talks and subsequent discussions (Tab C). In sum, the Soviet note envisages

1972

November 22                      Multilateral preparatory talks for CSCE at Helsinki.

1973

Late January                      Preliminary consultations on questions of procedure and organization relating to the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments first of all in Central Europe.

Late June                              The CSCE conference will begin its work in Helsinki.

September or October              A conference on the problems of reducing armed forces and armaments in Europe will start.

The note marked the first Soviet acceptance of firm dates for MBFR talks, though it (a) clearly seeks to limit the extent of discussion at the first MBFR session to matters of organization and procedure and (b) proposes a firm date for the CSCE meeting at Ministerial level to begin.

*The Participation Issue.* The general Allied reaction to the Soviet note was favorable, and they are prepared to agree with the scenario outlined, as currently reflected in the US draft reply. The flank states—Turkey particularly—insisted, however, that they be represented at the talks. The Turks proposed that there be rotating participants from each flank, with advisers from the other flank states present. This conflicted with the US preference that the talks be limited to states with forces and territories involved. A US attempt to achieve consensus against flank participation failed, but the Turks accepted a US proposal entailing two rotating flank representatives present at the talks who would

- be designated, like other participants, as “representatives”;
- not sign possible agreements emerging from MBFR talks;
- not participate directly in formal decisions reached in those talks;
- have the right to speak on issues of direct concern upon the invitation of one or more participants;

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<sup>9</sup> Secret.



- have the right to circulate papers; and
- have the right to have present advisers of the same nationality.

*Handling the Flank Participation Issue with the Soviets.* While the Turks would have preferred to have the US address the flank participation issue in its reply to the Soviet note, they agreed with a strong majority, led by the US, that the issue be deferred until the Soviets reply to the US note and each of the Western participants issues similar formal notes of invitation to participate in MBFR talks to each of the prospective Eastern participants (USSR, GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary). These notes indicate the special arrangements governing the flank representatives, and would be delivered in about two weeks, following Allied agreement on the wording. We favor informing the Soviets about Western participation in this manner in order to

- avoid raising a possibly contentious issue with the Soviets that could delay a Soviet reply to the US response;
- have the Western participants signal their participation preference on a joint basis, which would (a) enhance its weight and (b) deflect from the US flank recriminations in the event the Soviets objected to expanding Western participation beyond those states with forces in the FRG, Benelux, GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, the area outlined to the Soviets by Mr. Kissinger as the US preference.

In deference to Allied wishes, we have agreed that we should state orally in delivering the US reply that Allied views would be communicated later. The Turks, nonetheless, reserved the right to press bilaterally with the Soviets their preference for having advisers of other flank countries present at the talks behind the rotating flank participants.

Particularly in light of recent stories, the Soviets may choose to make an issue of the participation question, going so far as to make confirmation of the US reply contingent on a satisfactory clarification on Western participation. However, if they should do so, they would risk forfeiting US and Allied agreement to the November 22 date for initial CSCE talks.

In the event that, after CSCE talks begin in November, the Soviets seize upon the flank participation issue as a reason to defer the January 1973 MBFR talks, we could make clear to the Soviets that our agreement to their note was based on the understanding that an overall program was envisaged, and that their refusal to proceed with MBFR talks in January could call into question the June date they proposed for the CSCE meeting at Ministerial level. In practice, the Allies will be in a position to slow the pace of multilateral preparatory talks if the Soviets prove intransigent.

In light of the tangled and sensitive history of this issue, we believe that, in presenting the US reply and in dealing with the participation issue, the US should not go beyond the statement that, following Mr.

Kissinger's discussions in Moscow, we and our Allies have consulted at length on the matter of their participation in MBFR talks, and that the resulting Allied consensus of Allied views on this subject will be communicated later. If pressed, we believe that the US should indicate only that we are not prepared to go further in dealing with this question at this time.

*Other Aspects of the US Reply and Oral Points.* The following are other salient aspects of the US reply agreed by the Allies:

—We purposely omit reference to Helsinki as the site for CSCE itself, since the venue should be agreed by all participants during preparatory talks at Helsinki.

—The Soviets proposed that the initial MBFR talks address only procedures and organization; by contrast, a majority of Allies feel strongly that it must embrace substantive questions. An Allied consensus, however, has emerged that the subsequent negotiations require some exchange of views on substantive issues relevant to setting an agenda during the initial talks. However, we believe that the Soviets will resist strongly any detailed substantive discussion, and Allied positions for the initial talks will have to be tailored carefully with this in mind.

—We use the date January 31, 1973 for initial MBFR talks, since it is the latest date in January, and thus allows us maximum time after the Inauguration to complete preparations.

—We use the phrase, "mutual and balanced force reductions," rather than the Soviet phrase, "the problem of reducing armed forces and armaments," because of MBFR's history since 1968 as the Allied description of their objective.

—The Soviet note indicated that MBFR talks would be conducted in a place other than Helsinki. The US reply does not suggest a venue, since the Allies have not yet reached agreement, though Geneva remains a majority preference. There is also general Allied agreement that the talks should not take place in Helsinki.

**117. Telegram From the Department of State to all North Atlantic Treaty Organization Capitals<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, October 28, 1972, 0004Z.

196451. Subj: Secretary–Dobrynin conversation on CSCE and MBFR preparations.

1. The Secretary called in Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin October 27 to deliver note in reply to Soviet proposal given Mr. Kissinger in Moscow September 12. (Text of note transmitted in USNATO 4339.)<sup>2</sup>

2. Dobrynin read note carefully and said it looked fine and appeared to be exactly as discussed in Moscow but commented as follows on the numbered paragraphs:

Paras 1 and 2: Dobrynin said these seem to coincide with Soviet position.

Para 3: Dobrynin said it was understood that the MPT would formally decide on the date and place for the conference, but said that Soviets would like an agreement with the U.S. in advance for Helsinki in June. He took note of the formulation that “June 1973 would appear to be a reasonable date for the conference,” and indicated that this may be acceptable to the Soviet Government.

Para 4: Dobrynin said that Soviet Government had proposed “late January” for the preparatory conference on force reductions, therefore he assumed January 31 would present no problem. He pointed out, however, that Soviet Government opposed discussion of “matters of substance” at exploratory talks. He was reminded that the phrase in the note was “matters of substance relevant to setting an agenda,” and he said that he believed the agenda could be discussed, but not matters of substance as such.

Para 5: Dobrynin said it was his view that this was consistent with the proposal to Mr. Kissinger in Moscow, and therefore should be acceptable to the Soviet Government.

Para 6: Dobrynin asked if we wished a formal reply to the note, and was told that we do. He said he would endeavor to obtain one as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 1 EUR. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Matlock, cleared by Springsteen, and approved by Eliot. Also sent to Moscow. Repeated to USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR, USCOSACLANT, and USDOCOSOUTH.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4339 from USNATO, October 24, sent the “revised text of the U.S. response to the Soviet note of September 12 on MBFR and CSCE reflecting all changes agreed in the Council.” (Ibid., DEF 6 EUR) For the revised text of the note, see Document 116.

3. The Secretary then made the following points regarding our position:

A. The venue of the CSCE itself should be agreed during the multilateral preparatory consultations at Helsinki.

B. Initial talks on MBFR should not be confined solely to procedures and organization. Preparations of subsequent negotiations require some exchange of views on substantive issues relevant to setting up an agenda.

C. Agreed allied views on participation in MBFR talks will be communicated later.

D. There is general agreement among the prospective allied participants that the talks (on MBFR) should take place at a location other than Helsinki.

4. Dobrynin said he foresaw no particular problems here, except that the Soviet attitude toward point B will depend on how far we wish to involve substantive discussions in the initial talks on force reductions. He assumed his government would agree to discuss agenda questions but would not go further into matters of substance. He made no comment on point C. In regard to point A Dobrynin indicated Soviets sought agreement on venue in advance but Secretary said this not possible now. When asked if question still open, he was told "yes."

5. It was decided to agree upon detailed press handling when the Soviet reply to our note is received. For press handling of Dobrynin call see septel.<sup>3</sup>

6. For all NATO capitals: you may inform FonOffs of foregoing.

7. For USNATO: You may inform SYG Luns and other dels of foregoing.

8. For Moscow: You may inform allied colleagues of foregoing.

9. Foregoing is uncleared and subject to revision upon review.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Not found.

<sup>4</sup> Printed from an unsigned copy.

**118. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Laird to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, November 1, 1972.

SUBJECT

MBFR

I am deeply concerned over the almost universal sense of disquiet and suspicion my counterparts at the NPG have expressed to me with regard to our MBFR motives. If these attitudes are representative of a broad allied consensus (and I believe they are), we may well be witnessing a fragmentation of the Alliance which will bode ill for us as we proceed down the MBFR road.

In my discussions with several of the Defense Ministers, they have, to one degree or another, emphasized the following points:

—bilateral US–USSR understandings on MBFR would be intolerable;  
—your most recent visit to Moscow, and the way in which the US Government has performed in NATO since then, has created an impression that bilateral agreements with the Soviets were, in fact, reached;

—a clear statement from the USG on how it views the MBFR process, and what it hopes to achieve from that process, is absolutely essential if Alliance cohesion is to be maintained;

—until the allies have some comprehensive statement of our MBFR views, distrust and suspicion will continue and grow;

—thus, relatively minor issues, such as the recent participation problem, will continue to be the focus for expressions of allied discontent, and could set the stage for long-lasting Alliance discord.

I did my best to allay these fears. I emphasized that we have no intention of negotiating MBFR bilaterally with the Soviets; I described the detailed analyses we have done and are doing on various options; and I expressed my absolute conviction that we will make no agreements

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<sup>1</sup>Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 247, Agency Files, MBFR and CSCE, 1972. Secret. Sonnenfeldt forwarded Laird's memorandum to Kissinger under a covering memorandum of November 10. Sonnenfeldt wrote: "Certainly the Secretary is reflecting some of the disquiet in Europe that undoubtedly exists and has indeed grown since the Moscow summit. It is also true that we are encountering more and more tactical problems with MBFR. There is a certain needling to this memorandum, and it is also part of the Secretary's protracted campaign to force the US to take a clear stand on MBFR, presumably along the line he has proposed for well over a year."

which would undermine NATO military security. I have, I believe, reassured most of my colleagues, but I must tell you in all candor that I very much fear that an unraveling process is beginning which, if not halted soon, could have extremely serious consequences for us.

Thus, I strongly recommend that the USG move quickly—preferably in advance of entering into explorations with the Pact—to put before the Alliance a general statement of our MBFR approach and objectives. To delay much longer will only make our ultimate task more difficult.<sup>2</sup>

**Mel Laird**

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<sup>2</sup> On November 17, Kissinger replied to Laird in a memorandum drafted by Sonnenfeldt: “You were quite right to reassure your European counterparts that there is no bilateral understanding or agreement with the USSR about MBFR. I recognize that as the initial talks draw nearer, there will be growing concerns, and whatever you can do to dispel this disquiet will be invaluable. Our Allies must understand that their problems will not be solved if we stake out a comprehensive position in Washington for their adoption. We need to go through a systematic review of the security implications with them so that the consensus that finally emerges is one they can support because it serves their interests. This is one reason that the initial talks with the Soviets should not go into issues of substance that can only reveal the differences within the Alliance.” (Ford Library, Laird Papers, Box 19, Document 466)

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## 119. Editorial Note

On November 8, 1972, the North Atlantic Council approved a common text for invitations to the Warsaw Pact states to exploratory talks on mutual and balanced force reductions, including a note of invitation from the Government of the United States to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The approved U.S. note to the Soviet Government reads in part: “Recognizing the importance of the question of mutual and balanced force reductions in Central Europe, the Government of the United States proposes that exploratory talks on this subject begin on 31st January, 1973, in a place to be agreed through diplomatic channels. Based on the fact that Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States maintain forces in Central Europe, the Government of the United States proposes that representatives of these countries participate in the exploratory talks with a view to discussing matters of procedure and organization, as well as matters of substance relevant

to setting an agenda for negotiations. The participation of these countries in talks on MBFR is without prejudice to future agreements that may be reached. Further, it is the view of the Government of the United States that representatives of Denmark, Italy, Norway, and Turkey should be present at these talks, on a rotating basis, at any given time. As distinct from representatives from states with forces or territories in Central Europe, the representatives of these states would not participate directly in formal decisions reached in the talks, but would have the right to speak on issues of direct concern to them upon the invitation of one or more participants in the talks, and would also have the right to circulate papers." (Telegram 4701 from USNATO, November 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, DEF 6 EUR)

On November 15, Ambassador to the Soviet Union Jacob Beam delivered the note of invitation to Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Firiyubin in Moscow. Telegram 11650 from Moscow, November 15, reported Firiyubin's reaction: "Firiyubin commented that date had already been agreed, but as regards participation he and his colleagues would study our note and be back in touch with us. He added that 'it is clear to us from understanding with Kissinger that these talks should be conducted on a non-bloc basis,' and that 'any attempt to discriminate against any of participants should be avoided.'" (Ibid.)