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October 2, 1956

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
October 2, 1956

Others present: Secretary Dulles
Mr. MacArthur
Mr. Elbrick
Secretary Robertson
Secretary Gordon Gray
Mr. McNeil
Admiral Radford
Colonel Goodpaster



The meeting was concerned with views relating to any reduction of U. S. force strength in Europe, and possible statements to NATO regarding such reduction and related matters, including questions of NATO strategy raised by the British and French.

The President opened by saying that he felt very definitely that we cannot take divisions out of Europe at this time. The effect on Adenauer would be unacceptably damaging. He could not agree with a Defense position contemplating such reductions, and statements to this effect at this time. He recalled that he had always supported the idea of reducing our forces after the initial period of crisis was over -- he had always considered that they had been sent over to add strength temporarily while European forces were developed. Referring to recent reference indicating that Senator George had implied a sixth division might be established in Europe out of manpower saved through streamlining, he indicated that these comments seemed to reflect a misunderstanding. He did not plan to go above five divisions, but he did feel that the strength should be maintained at five divisions.

The President went on to say that we must make use of every art of statecraft to bring the Europeans to an understanding of our way of thinking regarding our forces there, but for the moment we could not remove major units. He felt we should examine closely all of our other high priority programs. He mentioned the earth satellite, initially estimated to cost \$22 million, now at \$60 million, with this latter figure "only a beginning." He noted that we had not yet dropped any of the four lines of development of ballistic missiles. (Secretary

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Robertson pointed out the figure is now five.) He referred to the major programs of the Air, the Navy, ground forces, and Marines, and thought we should look them all over.

Secretary Robertson said that to get within a reasonable budgetary range, it appears we must be ready to go down to a strength of about 2.6 million. Careful studies are being made with the aim of cutting overhead. The President broke in to say he agreed strongly on cutting overhead, and particularly on cutting down the strength of the Army division. Secretary Robertson said that even if we were to cut out 4,000 men per division in Europe, and make reductions in administrative overhead and support, plus reductions in tactical air strength, and reduction in families accordingly, it will be hard to find the needed savings. He said he wants to keep digging. The President said he has felt since the first atom bomb was dropped that the infantry division should be substantially cut -- it shouldn't be over 12,000 men. He felt that support echelons could be cut down ~~by~~ ^{not} incorporating all of the units cut out of the division since it would be possible to deploy some support units in time of war.

Secretary Robertson thought we should tell our allies what we are doing. Information would, in any event, leak out during the budget hearings.

The President said he had always insisted that the Europeans should develop ground forces to replace ours. Also he had supported off-shore procurement so that they would develop an ability to produce capital equipment and not depend entirely on us. As events developed in the past, however, there was always an unwillingness to put the matter squarely to the Europeans and now it has become extremely difficult.

Admiral Radford said that the trends discussed in the Defense paper are well reflected in NATO papers going back all the way to 1950. It is apparent that Adenauer has not read these papers. Admiral Radford referred to the problem of cutting off spare parts. Each time this has been proposed, it has been necessary to postpone this action.

Secretary Dulles said that we must be fairly specific in our ideas very soon, because the NATO Council will be taking this matter up. He proceeded to a discussion of the points in Section II of his memorandum to the President dated October 1, 1956. There was general agreement on the desirability of streamlining our forces in Europe, and paragraph 3 of the Secretary's memo was revised to meet the views of the Defense representatives.

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There was next discussion of paragraph 2 which also resulted in some revision to make it acceptable to the whole group. In the discussion, Admiral Radford said the original version overstated the U K position. They were simply adopting the new look, which we had already adopted. Secretary Dulles indicated that it was one thing for us to rely on the new look, not being subject to insurrectionary or conventional attack as the Europeans are, and it is something else to propose it for the Europeans. The U K is saying in effect that there is no need for ground forces for the NATO strategy. Admiral Radford said that we have vested the authority to decide on using atomic weapons in the Commander -- there is an implication here that the countries retained the decision whether atomic weapons should be used. Secretary Dulles recalled that authority given to the commander does not extend this far. The President confirmed that we have simply said that we will proceed with plans and preparations on the basis that, if the Soviets invade, atomic weapons would be used.

The President next suggested that we should send someone to discuss these matters with Adenauer, whose understanding of the problem is apparently incomplete and possibly in error in some respects. An explanation should be given as to how we plan to use atomic weapons. Admiral Radford agreed that this would be useful and said he would like to do it himself sometime. The President thought it might be well to have the discussion before General Gruenther comes back since he has Adenauer's confidence.



Admiral Radford next pointed out the tremendous increase in the firepower of military units that has occurred over the last several years -- with one division having a strength much greater than many divisions had in the past. A good deal of cutting down could be considered. Secretary Robertson suggested that streamlining would not go far enough; further cuts would be required. The President thought that substantial savings could be found through streamlining, but that reduction in number of divisions does not look practicable at this time.

Admiral Radford referred to paragraph 10 of the Secretary's memo, and indicated he pre-judged the matter on which a position had not yet been developed in the U. S. government. The Secretary and the President pointed out that the proposal seemed to go beyond the scope of the treaty and its legislative history. Admiral Radford said the Chiefs see some merit in the proposal. It is now up for consideration in a Standing

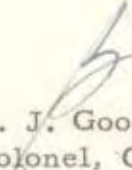
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Group paper, and the United States has reserved its position in the matter. The President indicated that the matter could be brought up for consideration, including consideration of possible treaty revision, and suggested an amendment which would leave the matter open for this purpose. No further objections were indicated to the outline of presentation set forth in the Secretary's memorandum.




A. J. Goodpaster
Colonel, CE, U S Army

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