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Meeting, Tuesday, October 16th
Present:

Secretary McNamara
DASD Rowen
William Tyler, State

Gerhard Schroeder, Foreign Minister
Henrich Knappstein, Ambassador
Albert Reinkemeyer, Chief Soviet Affairs Section, Foreign Office
MajGen Steinhoff, German Representative Military Committee
Herman Kusterer, Interpreter

Minister Schroeder began by asking Mr. McNamara's impressions on his recent visit to Germany.

Secretary McNamara said the trip was very brief. He went to lower units to check on alertness, training, logistics, and their ability to use conventional or nuclear weapons. He had found state of readiness of U.S. and FRG units excellent. However, he felt that they seemed far too dependent on nuclears. There is a need for greater emphasis on non-nuclear conflict without depreciating nuclears. The focus on nuclear weapons stems from focus on massive Soviet aggression. If such an attack occurred, we must use them early and massively. But it is a weakness in our planning to focus on this case. We should give attention to other contingencies. Lower echelons are of course not responsible. They get this attitude from their seniors.

The security procedures at FRG wing were impressive. Both U.S. and FRG units are at a high state of effectiveness.

Minister Schroeder expressed pleasure at the impression of high alertness. On the basic attitude toward nuclears, if Khrushchev sees this, he would get impression that these people are ready for a nuclear war and this would make him more cautious than he otherwise might be. Certainly sufficient conventional preparations are required. Minister Schroeder then said that the main purpose of his visit was to determine that all Berlin contingencies have been anticipated.

Would like to discuss a possibility that has been discussed with Mr. Rusk.

Assume, for example, that on 1 November a visa required for civilian travel to Berlin. People must apply for visas. These might be issued at check points. What should be done?

a. Simply accept visas and do nothing. Worst thing to do. He rejects this choice.

b. Don't accept visas. Regard this as blockage of civilian traffic. Implement contingency plans, which relate civilian to military traffic.

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c. Give warning on interzonal trade. If visa requirement is not canceled FRG will take economic countermeasures. Also there will be action on a NATO level.

Assume that 1 November approaches. There is an appeal to people not to travel unless essential. Surface traffic is down, air travel up.

November passes by, but visa requirement left on.

Alternatively, assume Khrushchev signs peace treaty on 1 December to be in force on 1 January. This ends allied rights to Berlin and no rights to traffic except by dealing with Pankow. Pankow might say no immediate changes. You can stay in Berlin for six months. But we are issuing new documents available at checkpoints.

Minister Schroeder then drew this conclusion: The more we give in on civilian traffic, the worse off we will be on military traffic once having accepted a change of procedure on civilian traffic. And what would world opinion require in case II (military traffic), the West having acquiesced in case I (civilian traffic).

Secretary McNamara said he would defer to Mr. Rusk's opinion on these matters. However, speaking personally, he feels we cannot allow salami slice on civilian access without conditioning Khrushchev on military access. However, for Khrushchev to think that we might respond with nuclear weapons to this provocation is simply incredible.

Minister Schroeder said he wanted to suggest deficiencies in our contingency planning.

Secretary McNamara said that in this case we would be in Phase I of contingency planning and that contingency plans would apply.

Minister Schroeder said that these are difficult questions: It is hard to know just how to react. If concession is accepted on vital requirement and we try to offset with other countermeasures there would be a major setback. But can one for psychological, military, and political reasons declare this action a blockage of access. It will appear to be a small change in procedure. It is possible for the other side to play the game so that instead of a stamp on an identity card, a driver would have to get a visa.

An evaluation of this contingency is needed, including an estimate of the state of world opinion.

Minister Schroeder has learned that even some Congressmen have traveled on the surface and accepted visas.

Secretary McNamara replied that this was mostly a political question. We have the military capability to move the present volume of traffic by air. This presents Soviets with an interesting problem. He said that he, personally, would favor going to air movement at this stage.

Minister Schroeder replied that then all traffic is by air. There are now 120,000 people a month; this would call for 600,000 more.

Secretary McNamara said that this could be managed.

Minister Schroeder argued that goods supplies make air delivery more difficult. And to some extent this step involves blocking oneself.

Secretary McNamara said take it step by step. 600,000 people is 20,000 a day. 1000 people per hour and 150 people can be carried per plane. This means only 6 more planes an hour. This would be difficult to manage but we could rearrange aircraft. From his point of view, this is not an insurmountable problem. If we are willing to pay political price of this alternative we have means. As to goods, these also can be handled.

Minister Schroeder said that we would be blocking ourselves and economic measures may not bring about change.

Secretary McNamara replied that he assumed that we would be in Phase I and have a range of political and military measures to adopt at this stage.

Mr. Rowen said that the air movement possibility gives us the choice of immediate or delayed action on other measures.

Minister Schroeder said that this is a possibility for civilian traffic. But it is not easy for normal goods, including raw materiel. The air transport portion of goods traffic is now a small part of surface goods traffic. Berlin could not have normal life in this circumstance.

Secretary McNamara said he agreed. But how would visa requirements affect goods traffic?

Ambassador Knappstein - it affects mostly trucks and barges.

Minister Schroeder replied that the GDR says that this is our sovereign territory and it issues licenses on goods.

Secretary McNamara said we could move to rail shipment. It was his understanding that the FRG already gets permission to move by rail.

Minister Schroeder said this was quite true. But the number of good trains is quite limited.

Secretary McNamara said that at least we could keep goods moving by train.

Minister Schroeder said that he only wanted to show that one needs a clear view and to take a clear decision on when land access should be kept open by force.

Secretary McNamara said he had firm views on this, but that he was not speaking for his government. What were Minister Schroeder's views?

Minister Schroeder replied that he couldn't commit the FRG. These are hard questions and people don't like to face them. Speaking personally, he indicated he is rather inclined to take a strict view. Because we either accept a defeat or have freedom of action restricted. The Berliners seem to feel that not too much importance should be placed on the paper requirements. There is a difference in outlook here as compared with the FRG. There is little inclination in having to go to the air. He said that when he returned home he would raise this matter for a free and frank discussion at government level. It is useful to get American attitudes.

Secretary McNamara agreed that we must remain firm to avoid slow erosion. The acceptance of slow erosion is most dangerous because it lays foundation for serious miscalculation by the Soviet Union. This is most dangerous possibility.

Minister Schroeder expressed gratitude for Secretary McNamara's comments. This is not a matter on how to fight but rather dealing correctly with situations that arise beforehand. To return to contingency planning in general. What are the deficiencies? And what is the possibility and the conditions for FRG participation.

Secretary McNamara said that he personally feels that contingency planning has been unrealistic. It should be more detailed. Each country should assume that the events in question are much more likely to occur. If so, there would be more detailed planning. There should be less on the likelihood of these contingencies and more on what to do if they come. Assume, e.g., imposition of visa requirements. We should have responses written down. To go back to a point of Minister Schroeder's, the question is not will the West fight. Of course it will in certain circumstances. But it must be able to deal with situations that will probably arise.

Secretary McNamara then turned to the FRG defense budget which he described as part of the scene. The FRG defense budget is too low in relation to needs. This leads to an interpretation by Khrushchev that the West is weak. This is only one factor. The U.S. has its problems as does France.

Minister Schroeder said that one should look at military expenditures over time. The FRG is the only country that has increased its defense budget by 1/3 since 1960. Khrushchev is impressed by this. Khrushchev doesn't think that the FRG contribution is a small one. This doesn't mean, however, that it

shouldn't be increased. International comparison: 4.9% for FRG vs 7% for France and Britain are misleading. The latter include R&D expenditures that benefit civilian economy. All FRG spending is for NATO and all forces are assigned to NATO.

However, civil infrastructure and civil defense planning has not reached the stage that it should have. The weakness in the civilian side.

Secretary McNamara agreed that part of difference is R&D in France and UK. But this shouldn't be exaggerated. The U.S. regards R&D as a diversion from the private economy.

On manpower, the FRG has .74% of population in defense; U.S. is double this. He added that there should be no misunderstanding. The FRG contribution has been great. But when FRG has only 1/2 the percent of men as U.S. or France, Khrushchev can interpret this as weakness. Especially since NATO goals of FRG are not met. He said that he can understand FRG economic problems and civilian demands. But if examined from outside, FRG contribution doesn't look too good.

Minister Schroeder replied that the FRG is very close to UK in manpower percentage and the FRG has national service and UK does not. As for France and U.S., France has large part of its army still in Algeria. FRG has a small area and especially needs a healthy economy. There is a shortage of training areas. It differs from other countries that also have world-wide commitments.

Minister Schroeder returned to contingency plans. He agreed that Secretary McNamara's judgment was severe and probably right. Yesterday he had the impression that this planning might be done under a general staff - operational staff procedure. And that there should be gaming of possibilities.

Mr. Tyler said that a war game is now planned.

Secretary McNamara said that the U.S. does most of our planning on the basis of operational planning.

Minister Schroeder said that there was no problem for FRG in doing this type of planning on the military and political side. But it lagged in civil defense and emergency planning.

Secretary McNamara then asked Minister Schroeder how he felt we should proceed on MRBM's?

Minister Schroeder replied that the FRG's attitude was unchanged and had been positive for some time. Mr. McNamara's Athens speech was very much to the point and he agreed. He expressed doubt about attacking only military targets, but said that this was a minor point.

He added that it would be best if only U.S. had nuclears, but that unlikely to happen again. Next best, only U.S. and Soviet Union. Fact that France and UK have nuclears makes it cumbersome and awkward and disturbing. This was his opinion. But France and UK have some nuclear capability. This is a problem. This also an obstacle to an MRBM force. The FRG is prepared to cooperate in the MRBM project. It regrets that France and UK are so negative - for obvious reasons.

In Europe there is some speculation that after UK has entered the Common Market there will be a better chance to deal with the nuclear problem. This prospect is vague, but he wouldn't exclude it.

Secretary McNamara said that the MRBM is under development and not being delayed by these discussions. However, if NATO wants to proceed it should recognize the costs of the force and its relation to the costs of other needed forces.

Minister Schroeder said that this is a long term problem and the point is a political and psychological one rather than a military. That's why the FRG favors the force.