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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

November 24, 1989

DECLASSIFIED  
PER E.O. 12958,  
AS AMENDED  
2008-0633-MR  
JL 5/13/09

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

*me* ARNOLD KANTER/*RB* ROBERT D. BLACKWILL

SUBJECT: Possible Initiatives in the Context of Malta

Following on your Wednesday breakfast discussion with Secretaries Baker and Cheney, we met this morning with Reg Bartholomew, Paul Wolfowitz, and Howard Graves in a principals-only "little five" meeting. We described our task as identifying and assessing various ways to get something from the Soviets for the defense budget cuts we probably will be making in any event. We stressed the obvious sensitivity of the enterprise, that there would be zero tolerance for leaks, and that the information had to be strictly limited to the people in room and their bosses. In that spirit, no papers were circulated in advance or carried away from the meeting.

The session was confined to talking through various possibilities, with the two of us undertaking to write an issues paper based on the discussion. That paper is attached. It has not been shared with anyone. We plan to reconvene the group tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon to go over it--after Wolfowitz and Graves return from Camp David--making whatever changes are necessary or desirable. After that, we will give you the revised version to work with your counterparts and the President in the run up to Malta.

One complication is that Cheney and Powell are scheduled to leave for Europe Saturday evening, returning next Thursday. Wolfowitz and Graves may be designated as their stand-ins, but you should confirm this on the margins of your Camp David meeting tomorrow morning.

Reading between the lines in today's meeting, it appears as though Cheney and Powell may resist all efforts to advance any concrete ideas or initiatives at Malta. They are inately suspicious of any such approach, worry about the appearance or reality of "Reykjavik II," and argue that we are running serious risks of allowing Malta to force decisions about the defense program and budget that have yet to be made. Based on a report to him about our meeting this morning, Cheney is said to believe that our effort to assess possible initiatives is a "bad idea."

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Their preferred approach is suggested by the Wolfowitz memo distributed at the Wednesday breakfast: take a broad, philosophical approach that tells the Soviets what we expect of them, and drops hints about what we would be prepared to do if and as they actually meet our expectations. The problems with this approach are that the Soviets might well not understand what we are talking about, and might well not take us seriously if they did. Given our defense budget realities, however, we will have to start reshaping our forces immediately, whether or not the Soviets live up to the standards we set for them.

Reg seems much more willing to contemplate various ways in which to accelerate a CFE agreement in order to get some benefit from our looming defense cuts. He is very concerned (and we think appropriately) about the impact on our Allies of anything that smacks of a superpower deal on CFE.

None of the agency principals appeared to have considered possible initiatives other than those related to CFE. We briefly discussed ideas related to START, CW, defense spending, naval arms control, and ASAT, and these are included in the paper.

We would appreciate getting any reactions to the paper or other guidance you may have before you leave for Camp David Saturday morning. As noted above, we are scheduled to meet with the three others at 2:30 on Saturday to go over the paper again.

Attachment  
Issues Paper

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