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UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

October 29, 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF PRINCIPALS

SUBJECT: Chemical and Biological Weapons

The question has been raised as to whether the United States should enter into an arrangement with the West Germans under which we would furnish "standard" chemical munitions to the West Germans in support of a SACEUR requirement for a NATO CW retaliatory capability. Also the more basic issue has been raised as to whether we should support SACEUR's requirement for a NATO CW retaliatory capability. Serious political as well as military considerations are involved in the above issues, which raise questions concerning the desirability of such action by the U.S. These relate back to the basic question of whether the transfer of chemical weapons to West Germany is to the net advantage or to the detriment of the United States.

The U.S. would be setting a precedent with the transfer of chemical weapons to West Germany in that we would be the initial source of proliferation of weapons which have been grouped with nuclear into the "mass destruction" category. Also this country would be supplying the means for use of chemical weapons to a country which has acceded to the Paris Protocols of 1954 and declared that they "would not manufacture any atomic, biological or chemical weapons." The problems related to the proliferation of chemical weapons,

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to previous international agreements regarding chemical weapons, to possible conflict with U.S. policy regarding nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, should all be assessed prior to a decision to transfer these weapons to West Germany.

In addition to the West German question there are other problems relating to control and reduction of C/B weapons which are presently being studied, and which require the reappraisal of C/B weapons and policy. For example, The Secretary of State has asked the ACDA to study the feasibility of coupling a ban on biological weapons with a constructive international program in biology and medicine. In a Memorandum to The Secretary of State, dated Sept. 11, 1963, I reported the conclusion that a first step should be a major re-evaluation of U.S. policy regarding these weapons. It would be premature to consider this ban prior to a reappraisal of the weapons and policy. The memorandum also pointed out the political and technical difficulties in distinguishing between chemical and biological weapons, and that a reappraisal should include both classes of weapons, particularly in light of prior international agreements.

Recommendations -

I therefore recommend that:

1. The Committee of Principals take action to defer any decision regarding the transfer of chemical weapons to West Germany until a reappraisal of chemical and biological weapons has been concluded.
2. The Committee of Principals take action to initiate a reappraisal of the utility of chemical and biological weapons and the national policy which governs their use.

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3. The Committee of Principals request the reappraisal be conducted by a study panel reporting to the National Security Council and comprised of representatives from the Department of State, Department of Defense, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, Office of the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, and appropriate technical and military experts who could be brought in as consultants; and that the panel consider all the political, military, and technical aspects associated with chemical and biological weapons.



William C. Foster  
Director

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