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September 22, 1971

National Security Decision Memorandum 133

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: U. S. Strategy and Forces for NATO;  
Allied Force Improvements

The President has reaffirmed the basic principle guiding U. S. strategy and forces for NATO set forth in NSDM-95.

In view of the U. S. -Soviet strategic balance, it continues to be vital for NATO to achieve and maintain a credible conventional defense posture to deter and, if necessary, defend against a Warsaw Pact attack. In support of this objective, the President has approved in principle the program of U. S. and allied force improvements reviewed by the DPRC on August 17, 1971. Given a similar approach by our allies, the U. S. will improve its combat forces in Europe and not reduce them except in the context of a mutual and balanced force reduction with the Warsaw Pact.

1. U. S. Planning and Forces

The President has directed that U. S. planning for NATO shall be based on the following guidelines:

-- It should be assumed for planning purposes that a Warsaw Pact attack would be preceded by some degree of mobilization by both sides with NATO mobilization probably a week or more behind the Pact.

-- Our objective shall be to ensure that the size and structure of U. S. forces is consistent with a strategy of initial conventional defense for a period of 90 days during which NATO's warfighting capabilities would stop a Pact attack and stabilize the military situation without major loss of NATO territory.

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-- In specific force and resource planning, priority shall first be given to enhancing our assurance of a conventional defense in the initial period of a conflict, particularly the first 30 days. The forces and resources needed to stabilize a military situation beyond this period shall next be given priority with selected items retained on a case-by-case basis.

The end FY-71 authorized level of U. S. forces in Western Europe shall be maintained and the actual strength of these forces kept as close to this level as possible.

The Defense Department shall prepare by October 25, 1971, a detailed review of U. S. non-combat missions in Europe together with an evaluation of the manpower required to carry them out. The purpose of this review shall be to identify specific options for the elimination of some non-combat missions and reduction of personnel that could result in corresponding increases in combat capabilities within current manpower levels.

## 2. Allied Planning Force Improvements

The President has determined that continued steady improvement of our allies' conventional combat capability is a requisite for achieving and maintaining a credible conventional defense option for NATO. In this context, the President has noted and welcomed our allies' plans, as reported to NATO, to maintain their forces and undertake substantive improvements over the next five years. The President is gratified that, in addition, the European Defense Improvements Program will contribute substantially to reducing the vulnerability of our allies' tactical aircraft through an extensive shelter-building program, and to the construction of a NATO Integrated Communications System.

The President has directed that the United States Government must take every opportunity to urge its allies to carry out their current five year force plans as reported to NATO, and to fulfill the EDIP program.

The President has noted, moreover, that even if allied plans are carried out there will continue to be some conspicuous deficiencies in NATO's immediate combat capability. These include a questionable

defense against armored attack, a lack of ready combat reinforcements in the period from M-Day to M+30, shortages in selected ammunition reserves, electronic warfare capabilities, limited effectiveness of air defense and air offensive forces (including munitions), and maritime and air ASW surveillance capabilities.

Therefore, the President has decided that the United States should undertake a concerted effort to urge our allies to make a commitment to correct these deficiencies. The allies should undertake an improvement program similar to that specified in Priorities A and B of the program presented by the Department of Defense to the DPRC on August 4, 1971.

Our allies should be asked to commit a minimum of about \$2 billion over the next five years to these purposes in addition to the European Defense Improvement Program already planned.

The Department of State, in close cooperation with the Department of Defense, should prepare by October 15, 1971, a detailed plan and schedule for presenting the U. S. position and supporting analyses in the appropriate NATO forums. This will require the preparation of "sanitized" versions of the various studies which support specific force improvements, to serve as the basis for discussions with our allies.

  
Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Director, Office of Management  
and Budget  
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff