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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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National Security Council Meeting  
December 16, 1986, 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m., Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: ICBM Modernization

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

The Vice President's Office:  
Sam Watson

State:  
Secretary George P. Shultz  
Ambassador Paul Nitze  
Allen Holmes

Treasury:  
Secretary James Baker

OSD:  
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger  
Edward C. Aldridge  
Richard Godwin  
General Larry D. Welch  
General Charles A. May, Jr.  
LtCol Michael Elliott

Justice:  
Attorney General Edwin Meese

Transportation:  
Secretary Elizabeth Dole

OMB:  
Director James Miller  
Wayne Army

CIA:  
Robert Gates  
Lawrence Gershwin

JCS:  
General P.X. Kelley  
Lt. General John Moellering

ACDA:  
Director Kenneth Adelman  
Michael Mobbs

OSTP:  
William R. Graham

White House:  
Donald Regan  
Alton Keel  
William Ball  
Dan Howard  
David Chew

NSC:  
William Cockell  
Rod McDaniel  
John Douglass  
Ron Sable

Minutes

Dr. Keel introduced the subject and set the context of the meeting. He noted the long history of several Administrations' attempts to find an acceptable basing mode for the Peacekeeper missile and summarized the

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events leading to the Scowcroft Commission. He reminded the participants of the Scowcroft recommendations, to place 100 Peacekeepers in Minuteman silos, to start development of a small ICBM, to pursue arms control, and to seek a new survivable basing mode for the Peacekeeper missile. Dr. Keel noted that the Scowcroft recommendations attracted bipartisan support at first, but that the support faded and the Congress limited deployment of the Peacekeeper to 50 missiles in Minuteman silos.

He further noted that the Secretary of Defense would be reporting during the meeting on the results of the basing work to date.

Changing the tone slightly, Dr. Keel noted the great importance of the Peacekeeper and the small ICBM to our arms control negotiations. He spoke of the need to maintain and demonstrate our resolve to protect our national security absent the arms control process and the need to develop leverage as we negotiate.

Dr. Keel concluded his introduction by speaking of the need to resolve the apparent contradictions between our arms control proposals to ban mobile missiles and our plans to develop mobile missiles for our deterrent force, and cautioned that we must not stop our development programs in anticipation of an arms control agreement.

Secretary Weinberger followed with a short introduction of the Garrison Rail Mobile basing concept and a discussion of the high cost of the small ICBM in relation to the Peacekeeper garrison rail mobile system.

General Welch then presented the briefing at Tab A.

Secretary Shultz asked General Welch if garrison rail mobile basing required warning of a Soviet attack.

General Welch replied that it required about four hours of warning to be highly survivable.

Secretary Baker asked if garrison rail mobile basing was the same as the old racetrack system in the Carter Administration.

General Welch replied that it was not the same. He noted that the shallow trench system is more similar to the old racetrack system.

The President asked if there were problems in finding locations for the basing sites.

General Welch explained the Air Force's initial thinking about basing the small ICBM and noted that there had been few objections to the locations of the small ICBM bases. He also explained the garrison rail concept and further noted that these sites had not been discussed in detail or their planned locations announced.

The President noted that the small ICBM was strongly supported by members of Congress and that its continued development was essential to national security and to winning further support from the Democrats for



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the Peacekeeper garrison rail basing concept. He further remarked that he felt a low-key announcement of his decisions on ICBM Modernization was the best approach for now. He concluded his remarks by asking General Welch if the small ICBM would be deployed on the highways.

General Welch explained to the President that the small ICBM may use some local roads, but does not depend on them for survivability. General Welch also noted that we have been transporting Minuteman missiles to and from their silos over these same roads for years and have had few if any problems.

General Kelley joined the conversation by noting that the Peacekeeper basing is a political hostage to the small ICBM program on the Hill. He further noted, however, that the small ICBM has strong military value to the country and is fully supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He recommended to the President that we move forward with both the small ICBM and Peacekeeper garrison rail basing as soon as possible.

The President explained that he had approved a low-key announcement on Friday, the 19th of December.

Secretary Shultz responded to the President by noting his strong support for the Scowcroft Commission's recommendations and expressing his view that the recommended development of the small ICBM and Peacekeeper garrison rail basing was in full agreement with the Commission's recommendations. The Secretary noted that the two programs are linked and should be considered as a package. He expressed the view that some critics may try to exploit the idea that garrison basing depends on warning and noted the need to deal with that issue carefully and with tact. He explained to the President that having both programs in development would help with our objectives of getting an equitable arms control treaty. The Secretary further noted that in the past the Peacekeeper program had been plagued by less than full support from within the Department of Defense. He noted that the Chiefs did not support the plan for Closely Spaced Basing for Peacekeeper and asked for everyone to express their views on the present program so that the President would know where everyone stood. He closed by noting that we will need everyone's support this time or the program will not be approved by the Congress.

General Kelley replied that the Chiefs fully support the recommendation to proceed with development of both the small ICBM and the Peacekeeper garrison rail basing.

Secretary Weinberger noted that there were concerns within the Department of Defense over the cost of the small ICBM, but explained that the department would fully support the President's decisions.

Attorney General Meese joined in by noting that Congressional support is the real issue. The Attorney General then recommended that the President invite the Congressional leadership down to the White House to be briefed and to discuss the issue with the President. He noted

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that this would give them the feeling they are participating in this important decision and generate considerable goodwill.

Secretary Weinberger agreed that such a meeting was a good idea.

Dr. Keel explained to the President that General Welch and Dick Godwin had been prebriefing Congressional leaders and that their reaction had been favorable so far.

Director Adelman noted the need to support the small ICBM in such meetings.

Secretary Dole expressed the strong support of the Department of Transportation for garrison rail basing for the Peacekeeper missile.

Secretary Weinberger again raised the issue of whether or not we should try to have a leadership meeting before the Friday announcement.

The President asked if there was time to organize such a meeting.

Secretary Weinberger said that the DOD is ready to announce on Friday, but expressed concern that there was not enough time to organize a leadership meeting, especially since the Congress was not in session.

Dr. Keel noted the need to go ahead with the announcement on Friday and told the President that we would see what was possible with the Congress.

The President concluded the meeting with a humorous story and thanked everyone for their recommendations.



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INFORMATION

February 17, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANK C. CARLUCCI

FROM: <sup>JD</sup> JOHN W. DOUGLASS

SUBJECT: Minutes from December 16, 1986 NSC Meeting on  
ICBM Modernization

Attached at Tab I are the minutes from the December 16, 1986  
NSC meeting on ICBM Modernization.

*WC* Bill Cockell concurs.

Attachments

Tab I NSC Meeting Minutes  
A Briefing Material

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White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997  
By AS NARA, Date 1/2/05