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Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 40
February 5, 1963, 4:00 PM -- First Portion of the Meeting: Cuba

Director McCone circulated copies of the attached memorandum on the status of Soviet military forces in Cuba.

The President asked that the U.S. Intelligence Board statement of the Cuban situation be sanitized and made public tomorrow and similar statements at frequent intervals thereafter. He said it should include the latest intelligence information. In releasing it, Mr. McCone should make clear that the Board wanted to receive all information from anyone who had it. The Board would thus be in the position of welcoming information from all sources with a view to obtaining the best picture of the Soviet military posture in Cuba. The President also asked Mr. McCone to ask Congressman Bruce for the information which he has. In the President's view, if we acted promptly in putting out all our information within the next two or three days, we would be able to stem the tide of Congressional criticism, turn it to our advantage, and reduce the problem to manageable proportions. Secretary McNamara felt that the President should make a press statement at his press conference Thursday or possibly a television show should be arranged. He said the briefing on our intelligence from Cuba would be very impressive and, by the use of aerial reconnaissance pictures, we could reveal how extensive our present surveillance efforts have been and now are.

General Taylor noted that Congressional hearings on the Defense Department budget had turned into a Congressional investigation on Cuba. Most of the time Secretary McNamara has spent on the Hill was taken by Cuban questions rather than military budget problems.

The President said the way to clarify the numbers problem was to refer to the level of Soviet military forces in Cuba in July, in November, and today, rather than to compare the level from July to today. He suggested that correspondents from the Hill and the State Department be invited to join those covering the Defense Department for briefings about the situation in Cuba. He said that the 4500 Russian troops which have been withdrawn from Cuba since about November 1st is conclusive proof that there is not a Soviet military buildup in Cuba. He suggested that General Carroll's briefing on Cuba might be made public. In addition, a backgrounder could be held following Director McCone's statement to the Congressional Committee.

With regard to questions put to military officers concerning the implications of the Soviet military presence in Cuba, the President stressed the importance of speaking with one voice. He said we should neither exaggerate nor minimize

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the Soviet presence in Cuba but it was important that military and civilian officials take the same line. He acknowledged that we do not know why the Russians are keeping their troops in Cuba.....

The Attorney General expressed his concern that in all statements about Soviet military presence in Cuba we should not forget to include a caveat that we may not be seeing everything going to Cuba. He did not think we should take the risk of being accused later of not having seen something in Cuba now which turned up there in the future. He also was uneasy about the prospect of our helping the Russians by giving the public everything we know about Soviet military presence in Cuba. In response to the President's question, he suggested that release of sanitized intelligence information be done via Congressional Committees rather than directly to the public.

The President pointed out that his efforts along with those of the Departments of State and Defense had been unsuccessful in convincing many people that we knew exactly what was going on in Cuba. He said he believed a new effort should be made, namely, to use the USIB in the hope that doubting citizens would accept the testimony of our top intelligence officials. He repeated his belief that we should go as far as we possibly can in making public intelligence information in an effort to get the situation under control this week. Thereafter, we might talk to responsible Congressional Committee chairmen, proposing a procedure somewhat similar to that suggested by the Attorney General.

Cuban Reconnaissance

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The President said he felt there are two limitations on our use now of low-level reconnaissance missions; (a) negotiations to obtain the release of U.S. prisoners in Cuba, which he understood might be successfully concluded sometime in early March, and (b) possible withdrawal of Soviet military personnel. Low-level flights might influence a Soviet decision involving the removal of of their troops from Cuba. The Russians might misread low-level reconnaissance

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flights as an indication of our preparing ourselves for military action in Cuba and decide that their forces must remain to counter anticipated U.S. actions. He requested that a letter to Khrushchev be drafted raising again the question of when the Russians plan to pull back their troops.

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Shipping Order

Mr. Bundy summarized the instruction to U.S. agencies which would prohibit the shipment of U.S.-owned goods on Free World ships engaged in the Cuba trade. The President approved the directive and agreed that its release should be made from the White House.

Deputy Under Secretary Johnson reported that the proposed action had been explained to numerous Congressmen who, in general, felt it was a proper action to take. He also reported that efforts would be made to explain the directive to the International Longshoreman's Association in the hope that this Union and labor in general would not frustrate the implementation of the directive by refusing to accept it as an adequate measure to take against Cuba.

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Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meeting No. 40, February 5, 1963, 4:30 PM - Second Portion: U.S. Policy Toward Europe

The President opened the discussion of U.S. policy toward Europe by commenting on the attached draft instructions from him to Ambassador Bruce with respect to the subjects which would be discussed in the immediate future as we proceed with our reappraisal. His first question concerned our plans for a multilateral mixed manned seaborne Polaris force. He suggested that Ambassador Merchant not proceed too rapidly with his discussions with the Europeans about this force. He thought that de Gaulle would probably oppose it, that it might turn out that the proposal was not very attractive to other Europeans because it did not have enough in it to interest them.

A second question involved the relationship of our foreign economic policy to our political objectives in Europe. The President asked Secretary Acheson to look at our balance of payments problem, consulting with Treasury, Defense, State, and Governor Herter.

Parenthetically, the President asked for a recommendation as to whether we should take an initiative now, wait to see how things developed, or go on as we now plan. He asked Secretary Acheson to concern himself with this problem as well.

The President said he did not want us to appear as if we were approaching the Europeans hat in hand. Possibly it would be best for the U.S. to negotiate alone, but he also wanted the views of those present as to whether it would be best to go forward with a group consisting of the British and other Europeans except France.

Governor Herter said de Gaulle's position was not yet clear and would not be in the immediate future. The situation in Europe had not yet jelled and the views of European powers other than France were changing rapidly.

..... The Dutch were now blocking discussions with the French, but the Italians appeared to be going one way, while the Belgians were going another way. If we decide to go with the Six, that would be one thing, but if we decide to support some kind of a trade association between the U.K., the EFTA countries, and the Common Market, a different way of proceeding would be necessary.

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had been resisting larger subscriptions. The French were still putting pressure on the Germans to add to their IDA subscription.

Ambassador Bruce said that some of the questions the President had raised required immediate answers, i. e. our attitude toward the Franco-German treaty and our stance toward the USSR. Other questions were not so immediate. He said he wanted to feel free to deal with the short term questions promptly and take more time to provide replies to other questions.

The President asked how the WEU would solve any problems which arose following the veto of British membership in the Common Market. Ambassador Bruce replied that the British could get a political tie to the Continent via WEU. If the French refused to go along with such a political tie, the other members of the WEU could go forward with the British. He cautioned that no European government had yet chosen its course of action.

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The President pointed out that we cannot be in the position of keeping the British from joining some economic association with the other European powers. He asked for an estimate of the economic effect on the U.S. if the British did accept some form of association with the Common Market. If it turned out that the economic effect on us would be bad, then we would be in a most difficult position, i. e. opposing British association with the Common Market, having supported British membership in the Common Market.

Governor Herter reported that the British had flatly rejected association with the Common Market, but added that the EFTA powers favored an association and were anxious to work out economic arrangements with the Common Market.

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Ambassador Bruce felt that despite what the British had said so far, they would consider some type of association with the Common Market and that the EFTA countries would exert strong pressure on them to do so.

Governor Herter pointed out to the President that a year from this April is the earliest time when we can begin the Kennedy round of trade negotiations. He said we were in a very difficult box and could not proceed promptly. The EEC is now studying our tariff simplification proposals and we cannot move until they have completed this study. They will then ask for recompense as a result of our tariff simplifications. Following that, we must hold public hearings, make our proposals, and then table them in Congress sixty days prior to negotiations.

Following an exchange between the President and Mr. Bundy, it was agreed that we should not let the Germans make a proposal in the mistaken belief that it would please us. In effect, we must try to see that no state makes any proposal which we are not aware of in advance.

General Taylor gave a brief report of his discussions with Lord Mountbatten:

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Secretary Acheson referred back to the Bruce instructions and said he did not think we would get answers to these questions and that the effort to do so would bog down in futile discussions involving national sovereignty questions and other unrealistic issues. He asked whether the memorandum he had written on the January debacle had been read by those present. He urged that a decision be taken now to give the Germans and Italians something which, if they did not follow our leadership, we could take away from them. He urged that we initiate training of foreign officers for the NATO nuclear force now while we are discussing the longer range proposal of a multilateral force.

Ambassador Dowling noted that the multilateral force has appeal for the Germans, even if we keep the veto, as long as we set up something like the NATO Executive Committee in which they would have a role.

General Taylor asked that we talk to the German military leaders as we are now doing with the British.

Ambassador Dowling said the Germans do want to participate in the manning of the multilateral force, they want a voice in the Executive Committee, and they are quite prepared to contribute to the cost of the multilateral force.

The President said that before we undertake any discussions with the Germans we should firm up our multilateral proposal. He thought that Ambassador Merchant should work on this proposal, consult with Ambassador Bruce, and then we could discuss the proposal again. The President pointed out that Secretary Acheson had recommended that we tell everyone we will not remove our troops from Europe for at least eighteen months. He said the threat of withdrawing our troops was about the only sanction we had, and, therefore, if we made such a statement, we would give away our bargaining power.

Secretary Acheson said he had not recommended that we guarantee we would not withdraw our troops from Europe, but merely that we would let the Europeans know that we would not fiddle with this force for eighteen months for peripheral reasons, i. e. budgetary or balance of payments. Any action looking to troop withdrawal would rock the

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boat and convey to the Europeans uncertainty as to our intentions. At the end of eighteen months, we could examine the situation, and, if, during this period, the Europeans had not come around to supporting us fully, then we could consider withdrawal. He opposed conveying to the Germans the thought that unless they acted in a certain way they could not be sure of our continued support.

The President asked then how we could put any pressure on the Germans.

Ambassador Dowling said that those Germans who are our friends say we will not pull out of Europe. If by our actions we caused the Germans to doubt that we would remain in Europe, de Gaulle could take great advantage of the uncertainty created.

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Secretary Rusk pointed out that if the Germans insisted on making clear the continued existence of their pledge to NATO, de Gaulle would be influenced.

Ambassador Dowling emphasized that the Germans looked at the Franco-German treaty as the way to acquire equal partnership for Germany. At the same time, he acknowledged that the German association with the U.S. is very meaningful to them.

Secretary Acheson gave additional details of his conversation with Carstens. He said he bluntly told Carstens that Adenauer's agreeing to the Franco-German treaty and statements to the effect that this action made no real difference meant that the Germans either thought the Americans were stupid or that the Germans were admitting they were duplicitous.

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