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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 31, 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE GEORGE P. SHULTZ
SECRETARY OF STATE

THE HONORABLE CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Risk Reduction Center Concept (U)

As you know, we have recently formulated an Administration position on the risk reduction center concept as espoused by two key Congressional supporters; Senators Nunn and Warner. In doing so it was evident that we had a great deal of uncertainty in just what the Senators have in mind when they refer to risk reduction centers. Much of the ambiguity derives from the lengthy period of time that the two of them had been promoting crisis management concepts and the evolution of their own thinking on the matter. After a short meeting with them earlier this week, on the eve of their departure for Moscow, I feel that we now have a reasonable picture of where they stand in the areas of functions, manning, communications links and the site location. This is not to say that they don't harbor an interest in evolutionary change -- they probably do -- but at this point they assert a rather modest concept of tying together a number of ideas or arrangements which have been accepted or proposed by the Administration in the past. Some examples:

- a. The confidence building measures proposed in the President's UNGA speech last September involved meetings and data exchange that could be conducted in/through the centers;
- b. Regular high-level contacts between U.S./Soviet military leaders as proposed this May in the President's speech to European Parliaments could be conducted there; and,
- c. The JMCL -- which the Senators believe was rejected by the Soviets out of aversion to creating an autonomous link between the militaries of each country -- could serve as the communications link between the centers. (S)

They propose three specific functions: "clearing house" for all required arms control/exercise notifications; meeting place for various military-to-military exchanges, e.g., INCSEA; and, meeting place for diplomatic exchanges and joint discussions.

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There is an absence of "real-time crisis management" in their current thinking; this may reflect the realization that -- at least in the early stages -- such an adjunct might cloud, rather than clear, the decision process. (S)

On manning of the centers, they have agreed that there should be no joint manning initially. They have, however, indicated that embassy liaison personnel who could be called in on a particular issue might be a feasible approach. Communications between the centers could be essentially those envisioned under our JMCL proposal. (S)

The Senators have a definite bias against co-location of the centers in the Pentagon and to some extent within the State Department. They feel strongly that to do so unnecessarily risks rejection of the concept. Finally, there appears to be a large symbolic dimension to the Senators' concept which is difficult to capture in words. By creating an edifice devoted to the art of risk reduction they hope to nurture a dialogue which could contribute to reduced tensions in time of crisis. And, more importantly, they hope to reassure the American people that we are working to improve the relationship. In view of the critical role these two individuals play in matters of national security, I'm sure you will agree that if there is merit in their concept we should be prepared to work closely with them in developing it. (S)

As a result of the August 9, Senior Arms Control Group meeting and subsequent input from SACG principals, the attached letter was provided to the Senators as background for their upcoming trip to Moscow. (S)



Robert C. McFarlane
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

Attachment:
As stated.

Copy to: Chairman Vessey (with the attachment)
Director Adelman (with the attachment)

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