

By MW NARA Date 11/29/93

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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July 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: Colonel Robert M. Behr *RMB*

THROUGH: Colonel Alexander M. Haig *AH*

SUBJECT: WSAG Meeting of July 2, 1969

Attached are the minutes of the initial meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group held in the White House Situation Room on July 2, 1969

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WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP (WSAG) MEETING
July 2, 1969

Time and Place: 11:42 A.M. - 12:28 P.M., White House Situation Room

Subject: Military Contingency Planning for Korea

Participation:

Henry A. Kissinger, Chairman

NSC Staff - Col. Alexander M. Haig
Col. Robert M. Behr

State - U. Alexis Johnson

Defense - G. Warren Nutter

CIA - Cord Meyer

JCS - Vice Adm. Nels C. Johnson

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. The WSAG will review the NSSM 34 Contingency Study for Korea instead of the NSC Review Group.
2. The NSSM 34 Contingency Study for Korea will be the agenda item for the next WSAG meeting on July 11, 1969.
3. The areas of immediate concern to the WSAG are Korea, Berlin and the Middle East. Following WSAG review of relevant inter-departmental and military contingency plans for these areas, further requirements will be met by task forces functioning as working groups under the WSAG. The existing Berlin and Korean Task Forces will be employed, and action initiated to form a similar element for the Middle East.
4. The contingency of actual Sino-Soviet hostilities will be an additional concern of the WSAG.

TOP SECRET

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Kissinger opened the meeting stating that its purpose was primarily organizational although some time would be devoted to the "Red Books" (covering military plans for Korean contingencies) provided the Committee Members by the Joint Staff. He reviewed the President's thoughts on the need for updated and effective procedures for contingency planning, having in mind documents which would be useful for incidents similar to the EC-121 "shoot down". Kissinger said he envisioned the WSAG to have policy responsibility for the content of contingency plans but that the implementation of these plans would clearly rest with organizations such as those within the State Department that have already been structured to accept these responsibilities. Moreover he wished it to be clearly understood that actual operations during contingencies would not be run from the White House Situation Room. What has to be done now is to develop ways of interfacing military and political considerations and to answer the question "who does what"? He noted that military plans for contingencies are highly sensitive and that, for WSAG actions, only the principals should have access to the documents. They would not be reproduced and would be returned to the Joint Staff after having been worked in the WSAG. Ultimately, what will be required are contingency folders, approved by the WSAG, then kept on file in the White House Situation Room for use in possible emergencies. He then asked the group members for their comments.

Secretary Johnson immediately called to mind the comparison between the Berlin Task Force and the Korean Task Force under Ambassador Brown, which has prepared a plan for Korean contingencies in response to NSSM 34. He commended this plan to Kissinger saying that it covers much of the same ground as the "Red Books" sent to the Group by the Joint Staff. He remarked on the effectiveness of the "Live Oak" plans done by the Berlin Task Force. This is an on-going operation which has produced plans in great detail and with an underlying concept that the planning group would also be deeply involved in the emergency actions incident to Berlin contingencies. He stated that with respect to the Korean Task Force, much valuable work has already been done. What should now be done is to refine the work under the direction of the WSAG serving as a "Watch Dog" committee. Kissinger remarked that the President was not telling the WSAG how to organize, but that he desires the group to provide plans which will give him the same kind of assurance that he had during the EC-121 incident.

Secretary Johnson stated that the Korean Task Force work is now ready to be looked at by the NSC Review Group. Kissinger rejoined that the plan should not be handled by the Review Group but by the WSAG. He did not believe the Review Group could address the problems with the same precision that the President needs for decision making in contingency

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

situations. Admiral Johnson concurred, stating that the military aspects of the contingency plans are highly sensitive and that the security aspects of these plans are of paramount importance. Kissinger added that whether the plan would eventually appear on the NSC Agenda was a decision the President would have to make at a later date.

Turning to Admiral Johnson, Kissinger asked whether the military participated in the Korean contingency plan. Admiral Johnson said that they had but he was not sure to what extent. He thought the document reflected military planning in outline form but not in the detail contained in the "Red Books" before the members. He then reported an exercise internal to the Joint Staff which resulted in a "Crisis Data Book". This effort visualized hypothetical contingency situations, how they could develop, predicted the reactions of other affected countries, then postulated reasonable US actions and their consequences.

Kissinger returned to the President's objectives with respect to contingency plans. The President wants, he said, no generalized statements, but instead courses of action which would be useful in specific situations. For example, if he wants three B-52s to strike a designated objective, what else would he have to do. He is interested in knowing the possible reactions of affected people and governments. What exactly is likely to happen in a political/military sense? He wants a check list of what he has to do -- not esoteric speculation about events that could lead to a crisis. Additionally, follow-on factors have to be considered such as how to deal with reinforcement levels. Secretary Johnson opined there was a need to amplify the contingency scenarios. Kissinger reflected on his own thought processes during the EC-121 incident and remarked that his initial reactions were probably naive. The main lesson he learned from the incident was that the trick in any action taken would be to preclude a counter blow. He reported some after-thoughts the President had on the EC-121 incident to the effect that if such an occasion arose in the future and a B-52 strike was believed necessary, the price you pay really isn't much greater for a strike with twenty-five aircraft than with three. The need is to look determined and, if the object is to prevent counter-responses, the action taken should be powerful blow. If a similar situation were to arise today, he (the President) would probably either do nothing or select an option toward the extreme of the range of possibilities. Admiral Johnson said that he agreed with the President's ideas as do the Joint Chiefs. For example, if you attack an airfield but don't take out the enemy's air order of battle, you are in deep trouble.

Nutter suggested a parallel between the President's philosophy and Golda Meir's "A Seven-fold Retaliation" policy. Secretary Johnson said that the military aspects had to be balanced by an understanding of their political implications. For example, when would we expect the Soviet Union to become involved? We had the Pueblo and the E-121 incidents but the next time it might be the political assassination of a US Ambassador or the President of South Korea, or it might be the destruction of a vital industrial facility such as an oil refinery. Kissinger thought that if any of the contingencies mentioned by Secretary Johnson were to occur today the President would probably take positive action.

Kissinger then turned the attention of the group to the "Red Books" containing representative military contingency plans for Korea. He expressed an opinion that it would be non-productive for the group to review each of the 25 plans in the book. There was basically a great similarity among the plans, and that probably what should be done would be to group them within categories of response. For instance, one group would contain responses similar to the destruction of the Chanjin Reservoir while another group might contain retaliatory strikes against selected airfields.

Admiral Johnson then displayed a graphic prepared by the Joint Staff -- a map on which was marked the objectives of the 25 plans contained in the "Red Book". Secretary Johnson remarked that the Chanjin reservoir was where US forces "got clobbered" in the Korean war. Adm. Johnson said that targets similar to the reservoir were on a prohibited list until very late in the Korean war, the idea apparently being that the facilities would be useful during the recovery phase after the war had ended.

Secretary Johnson then asked how the Group proposed to work the problem at hand? He suggested that the Korean Task Force work be referred to WSAG and not to the Review Group. Additionally, he thought it advisable that members of WSAG look carefully at the Korean Task Force plan in preparation for the next meeting. Kissinger agreed with the two courses of action but suggested that the Joint Staff also work on the "Red Books" to group the contingencies by challenges and responses. He inquired whether the work could be done within a week? Admiral Johnson thought this was possible. Secretary Johnson remarked that the "Red Books" contained no treatment of the political aspects of the various courses of actions suggested in them. Admiral Johnson agreed and said it was not their purpose to address the political issues. All members agreed there was a need for expanded scenarios to include their political ramifications.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

Secretary Johnson thought there was an additional requirement to examine the steps, from a political-military standpoint, that could be taken to confine the actions to a low level. Admiral Johnson remarked that a CIA assessment of possible enemy reactions would be needed. Secretary Johnson said he wanted Ambassador Brown in on the act. (It was not clear whether he meant representation on the WSAG or whether he meant in Brown's capacity as head of the Korean Task Force.) The group agreed that, with the work in front of them, frequent meetings would be required.

Secretary Johnson stated that, of all possible contingencies, Berlin problems had been dealt with more extensively than any of the others. Admiral Johnson remarked that no plan, however detailed, is any good if it is static. All contingency plans must undergo periodic review. Secretary Johnson agreed and recommended a standing Task Force working continuously, but not necessarily on a day-to-day basis, within each of the contingency areas. Meyer asked about the membership of the Korean Task Force? Secretary Johnson then gave a rundown of the task force membership under Ambassador Brown. Kissinger said he has no objection to the task force concept provided they have access to the kind of material necessary to work the problems effectively. Under any circumstances, he considered the WSAG as the proper reviewing authority for the type of planning being considered by the group. Admiral Johnson said it would be possible for the military to provide detailed briefings, giving the necessary background information, but omitting unnecessary operational detail.

Kissinger then inquired about the level of activity of the Berlin Task Force. Secretary Johnson said that its structure and mechanics were still in existence but that its recent activities have been limited. Kissinger stated his belief that, because of the pressure of other duties, the WSAG cannot function as a planning group but only as a reviewing agency.

Secretary Johnson then said the Korean Task Force plan was on its way but he was not really certain of its status within the NSC reporting process.

Kissinger said that for the next meeting the Joint Staff should attempt to group the plans in the "Red Books" and that the WSAG should be prepared to discuss what kinds of provocations would lead to what kinds of responses.

Secretary Johnson then outlined the six general contingency areas set forth in the NSSM 34 study.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

Kissinger remarked that, if the work of the Korean Task Force fits the objectives defined by the WSAG, the work should be used and people should not have to do it over again. After the WSAG looks over the Korean Task Force plan, the Korean Task Force could then be used as a Working Group for the WSAG to make whatever revisions will be required. Similarly, when Berlin contingencies are considered in the very near future the Berlin Task Force can assume responsibility for follow-on work. Moreover, because contingency planning is underway for the Middle East there is a need for a similar Task Force to handle those problems. He noted that the military contingency plans which deal with a confrontation with the Soviet Union in the Middle East are somewhat unrelated to politics and seem to be deficient in the logistic arrangements that are called for. Admiral Johnson replied that the military plans for the Middle East are undergoing revision at the present time and that part of the problem in making sense out of logistic requirements is the lack of military bases in the area.

Kissinger then asked whether the next WSAG meeting could be held on the 11th of July. The agenda would be the Korean Task Force plan. Nutter remarked that the members should also consider that plans other than those for the Middle East, Berlin, and Korea would probably be required. Secretary Johnson agreed, but said that further NSC directives were unnecessary because the current general instructions for contingency planning are sufficiently comprehensive. Nutter stated that there are grave problems associated with Berlin planning because of the tripartite and quadripartite character of those plans. There are very difficult security problems and almost insurmountable military problems. Secretary Johnson agreed that the Berlin plans were immensely complicated and represented years of work.

Kissinger recalled his participation in a 1961 Berlin War Game. The results of that game were comforting because they indicated we could not lose. Now the situation is somewhat different. He further questioned what we would do in the event of actual hostilities between the Soviet Union and Communist China. He noted that the President had inquired about this problem earlier in the morning. Early answers to this question are needed.

Kissinger asked Secretary Johnson to see what could be done bureaucratically to set up a Middle East planning element. Secretary Johnson replied that he would look into what has been done in Middle East planning in the recent past and under the former administration. He will report his findings to the Group at their next meeting. All agreed that, subject to the President's schedule, the next meeting will be held on Friday, July 11th at 1400 hours.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 P.M.

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE