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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET GDS

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Thursday, April 22, 1976

9:00 a. m. (60 minutes)

The Cabinet Room

From: Brent Scowcroft

I. PURPOSE

To review the first part of the Defense/NSC Study on our future naval force requirements and shipbuilding plans.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

- A. Background: The Defense/NSC Study on naval force requirements and shipbuilding plans arose out of the FY 77 budget review last January and a recognition of the need to take a closer look at the adequacy of the Navy's Five-Year Shipbuilding Program. The study has gained new urgency in view of the House Armed Services Committee action significantly expanding the FY 77 shipbuilding budget and restructuring the program in favor of larger nuclear-powered ships. A decision will have to be made soon whether to go along with the House Committee action or stand by the program in your FY 77 budget. If you choose the latter option, there is the added issue of whether to request a budget supplemental adding funds to the shipbuilding program to signal our intention to maintain a strong navy but in a way which does not concentrate so heavily on larger, nuclear-powered ships.

Secretary Rumsfeld will brief you on the first part of the study at the NSC meeting. It reviews the growth of Soviet military and particularly maritime forces over the last decade, and describes the politico-military environment we can anticipate in the 1980s and 1990s. It argues that in view of the present rough equivalence in strategic forces,

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and the Soviet advantage in ground combat capability, the U. S. must possess clearly superior maritime capabilities if it is to maintain the overall military balance with the Soviet Union.

The briefing will also provide a first look at a general strategy to maintain maritime superiority over the long term. This strategy will rely on:

-- Recognition of the contribution of the naval forces of our allies;

-- Utilization of the assets of other military services for the maritime mission (such as land-based aircraft);

-- Emphasis on developing a mixed fleet with a core force of highly capable ships combined with a larger number of less sophisticated ships;

-- Greater concentration on the development of sensor and weapon systems.

With this briefing to set the stage, Secretary Rumsfeld hopes to have a second NSC meeting in the next week or so to brief the rest of the naval requirements study and review the decisions that have to be made on the FY 77 shipbuilding program.

B. Participants: (List at Tab A)

C. Press Arrangements: The meeting will be announced. White House photographer only.

III. TALKING POINTS

1. The purpose of this meeting today is to review the progress of our study on naval force requirements and our future shipbuilding program. This is a subject of great personal interest to me and of great importance to the future security of this nation. I would like to ask Don Rumsfeld to begin by briefing us on the status of the study.
2. I understand that this is just the first part of a longer study. I will want to have an NSC meeting to review the whole study effort once it has been completed.



- Are you looking at the future vulnerability of aircraft carriers and other surface ships in light of technological advances?
- To what extent are you considering non-carrier alternatives such as greater reliance on surface ships with surface-to-air missiles and use of land-based aircraft?
- To what extent are you considering the naval capabilities of our allies?

3. We have a good start in dealing with this very difficult problem. I want to reaffirm my own firm conviction that the United States Navy should continue to be second to none among the fleets of the world.

