

**November 9, 1962**

**Memorandum from William R. Tyler to the Secretary [Dean Rusk] through U. Alexis Johnson, 'Turkish and Italian IRBM's'**

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**Summary:**

Seymour Weiss would push back against any efforts to remove the Jupiters, but he and others realized that President Kennedy had a "keen interest" in the matter and that Secretary of Defense McNamara had ordered that action be taken (assigning his General Counsel John McNaughton to take the lead). Nevertheless Weiss and Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler presented Secretary of State Rusk with a memorandum making the case against action on the Jupiters or at least postponing their removal until a "later time." Paralleling arguments made during the crisis by Ambassadors Hare and Reinhardt, Tyler pointed to the "symbolic and psychological importance" of the Jupiter deployments. While Tyler noted parenthetically that the Italians had "given indications of a disposition to work toward the eventual removal of the Jupiters," the U.S. could not phase them out "without general Alliance agreement," including Italy and Turkey's consent, "unless we are prepared to lay ourselves open to the charge of abrogation of specific or implied agreements." Rusk was in the know on the secret deal, but his reference to a "later time" was consistent with it and signing the memo would have placated Tyler and Weiss.

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November 9, 1962

MEMORANDUM

TO: S - The Secretary

THROUGH: G - U. Alexis Johnson

S/S

FROM: EUR - William R. Tyler

SUBJECT: Turkish and Italian IRBM's

1. Stimulated by your expressions regarding the limited military utility and the uncertain political value of the Turkish and Italian IRBM's, I have had this matter subjected to a fresh review.

2. The conclusion may be summarized as follows:

a. From a military point of view, though the missiles are obsolescing and in certain respects vulnerable, they remain a significant military asset of NATO (in fact you may be surprised to learn, as I was, that contrary to previous reports, 80% of those missiles stand at a 15 minute alert and could be fired at Soviet targets within that period); and

b. Regardless of their military importance, from a political point of view, it would be highly inadvisable for the US to associate itself with a movement for removal of these missiles at any time within the near future. When the time is ripe for an approach we must be able to offer the Turks and Italians immediate participation in a force in being.

3. This matter takes on a particular urgency in the light of information just received from Defense to the effect that Mr. McNamara has directed that the missiles should be removed from Italy and Turkey by no later than May, 1963. DOD tells us this would require that initial approaches be made to NATO and preparatory steps be taken steps be taken with the Italians and Turks almost immediately. Paul Nitze is vigorously opposed to this approach but feels he is under direct orders from Mr. McNamara. For the preceding reason as well as the keen interest of the President in this matter, I suggest we send the President a memorandum containing detailed analysis of this subject. Such a memorandum is at Attachment A.

Recommendation: That you sign the attached Memorandum to the President.

Attachment

Clearances: G/PM - Mr. Kitchen EUR - Mr. Schaetzel S/P - Mr. Owen

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November 9, 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Political and Military Considerations Bearing on Turkish and Italian IRBM's  
Though I share your concern about maintaining the Turkish and Italian Jupiter IRBM missiles, I have concluded that, in balance, it would be undesirable to undertake action leading to their being phased out in the near future. The political and military reasons which have led me to this conclusion are set forth in the attachment to this memorandum.

Dean Rusk

Attachment

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ATTACHMENT

Significance to the US of Turkish and Italian IRBM's

I. Purpose.

In this paper we explore the significance of Turkish and Italian IRBM's from the point of view of US policy interests.

II. Military Considerations Bearing on the Problem.

The Jupiter IRBM's deployed in Turkey (one squadron of 15 missiles) and Italy (two squadrons totaling 30 missiles), though technically obsolescent and vulnerable, remain a military asset. Although these missiles are highly vulnerable to a Soviet first strike, due to their "soft" configuration, they would be effective in a NATO initial nuclear strike. They are capable of delivering a 1.45 megaton warhead approximately 1,500 miles. Moreover, 80% of these missiles are normally maintained in a state ready for employment on a 15 minute warning. In the event that tactical warning (of an impending Soviet attack) was available, these missiles could be launched. Since they are targeted on 45 of the 129 Soviet MRBM's, and consequently divert Soviet missiles which could otherwise be aimed at other targets in Western Europe.

Unquestionably, a more modern ballistic missile, particularly one with more rapid reaction time and Superior survivability would be militarily preferable. However, from a military point of view, until such a missile is available, the removal of the MRBM's would materially weaken NATO approved nuclear strike plans. (Those NATO plans are, of course, fully coordinated with US SIOP. Were the Turkish and Italian MRBM's not available, the targets which they cover presumably could be embraced by US external forces, but this would represent a diversion of available us forces.)

III. Political Implications in Europe.

Free world political implications of proposals for the early attrition of these missiles are more important than the implications arising from their military utility the IRBM requirement has a considerable degree of NATO sanctification. The Council in 1957 "decided that intermediate range ballistic missiles will have to be put at the disposal of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe." SACUER was to determine siting requirements. This was a euphemism to cover SACUER's finding someone who would accept them. He found Turkey and Italy and asked the US to negotiate appropriate arrangements. Arrangements for actual deployment were bilateral. Therefore, if Italy and Turkey were agreeable, it would be technically possible for SACUER to now determine that the requirements no longer existed or that another siting, e.g., at sea, was desirable. In practical political terms it would hardly be feasible for this matter to be negotiated without laying the entire subject before all of the Alliance for its consideration. The fact that the Jupiter missile is not only of US origin, but indeed represented the culmination of an effort on the part of the US to persuade its NATO Allies to accept such missiles at a time when there was considerable reluctance within the Alliance to take on this additional burden, is pertinent. Despite this reluctance, despite (in Italy) considerable internal political resistance, and (in Turkey) Soviet external political pressure, our NATO Allies were persuaded to accept these missiles.

The Turkish and Italian IRBM's have since taken on symbolic and psychological importance. They represent a capability for striking back in kind at the Soviet MRBM threat. It is this threat which accounts for much of the political pressure for a larger and more effective European-based nuclear force under an increased degree of European control.

Had the Cuban crisis not occurred, it is nonetheless likely that over a fairly short period of time NATO would have accepted the phasing out of these missiles. (The Italians had already given indications of disposition to work toward the eventual removal of the Jupiters, provided the internal political problems this would create could be surmounted.) There would, however, have been very strong pressure for replacement with a militarily effective alternative (and clearly this would have meant something based in Europe and under an increased degree of European control). With the Cuban crisis, NATO and especially host country reluctance to accept a phasing out of these missiles within the near future can be expected to reach serious

proportions. Clearly, no matter how vigorous the US denials, such a proposal would give rise to suspicion of existence of a secret US-Soviet deal. It would, in a broader context, raise the specter of the willingness of the US to trade off European Alliance assets when under Soviet pressure. It could, for example, logically raise the question of whether other Alliance assets might not similarly be subjected to trading off at a later point in time.

Finally, the IRBM's in question do not belong to the US. Ownership resides with the host country. Indeed, though the major costs of installation were borne by the US, these countries have made a financial contribution to the establishment of the missile complexes. Also, while the warheads are retained in US custody, the US has assured the Italians adequate warheads will be maintained to support weapon systems and they will be informed of any proposed removal. A similar, though more implicit, agreement exists with the Turks. In practical political terms we cannot therefore phase out the missiles without (a) general Alliance agreement which of course must include (b) specific Turkish and Italian agreement unless (c) we are prepared to lay ourselves open to the charge of abrogation of implied or specific commitments.

#### IV. Soviet Reactions.

Though the Soviets argue that the Turkish and Italian missiles are provocative, this is a posture which the Soviets have assumed in regard to all NATO military preparations. In fact, once having conceded - even by implication - the need to meet Soviet concerns on this score, it might be difficult to draw a distinction in terms of the military threat to Soviet interests of these missiles as against other military preparedness measures, including later generation missiles. It has long been a favorite Soviet tactic to seek a Western concession on one ostensibly limited problem area permitting subsequent use of the precedent. This has considerable relevance in the Turkish and Italian IRBM case.

#### V. Implications for Other US Security Commitments.

Quite aside from the NATO area, the US disposition to deal off Turkish and Italian IRBM's, (or at least to permit such an interpretation) however much this might be justified on purely military obsolescence grounds, would be viewed with alarm by other Allies of the US. In almost all instances indigenous forces allied to the US are in themselves incapable of withstanding Soviet aggression, despite military assistance provided by the US. The security of such countries as Iran, Korea, Taiwan, etc., is dependent upon the explicit or presumed willingness of the US to stand with these nations if subjected to Communist threat. While the US may resent any inference that we had not fulfilled our commitments or were apparently willing to comply with Soviet pressure for removal of the Turkish and Italian missiles, such an inference is likely to be drawn and may well call into question US fortitude. For example, if we argue that Turkish missiles are not militarily vital and so can be sacrificed this may raise a question as to whether other installations or territory elsewhere in the world, which may be of admittedly limited military value, may not be sacrificed under Soviet pressure. From a strategic-military point of view Korea is a liability and so is Berlin. In these and other instances which could be cited the US position is not based upon a high priority military justification. While the analogies are by no means exact this will not preclude doubts from being raised in the minds of our Allies in such circumstances as those identified. We can not lose sight of the fact that almost all of our Allies, the Turks and Italians included, have been blatantly threatened by the USSR for harboring US aggressive bases - threats which in every case have been turned aside. We could not expect such staunchness in the future if the US presses for removal of the Jupiters soon after a Soviet threat directed against the US. Also, we cannot expect future base concessions of security installations if they are required (e.g., from Spain) if our position seems equivocal.

#### Conclusion.

The foregoing considerations suggest that for political and psychological reasons, supported by less significant but real military reasons as well, it would not be in the US interest to propose the removal of Turkish and Italian IRBM's in the immediate future. As more modern and effective weapons systems come into being, and particularly if some sort of a European multilateral or other missile force is brought into existence, and as the Cuban missile crisis recedes, the phasing out of the Turkish and Italian missiles would at a later time be entirely feasible.

G/PM/Weiss/v1

11/9/62

RLGarthoff