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OSD FOR PDUSDP MILLER

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TAGS PREL, MNUC, KACT, NATO, RS

**SUBJECT: PDUSDP MILLER CONSULTS WITH ALLIES ON NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW**

REF: A. USNATO 302 B. USNATO 289

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo H. Daalder for reasons 1.4(B)&(D).

1. (SBU) This message has been cleared by PDUSDP Miller.

2. (S) Summary: On July 16, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Dr. James Miller met with Allies to consult on the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) and related topics. Permanent Representatives (PermReps) expressed appreciation for the timeliness and depth of the presentation, and asked questions on: How the NPR will affect *NATO's quest for a new Strategic Concept*; possible U.S. plans for mounting conventional warheads on strategic ballistic missiles; and deterrence and its importance to the U.S. and Russian governments. End Summary.

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BRIEFING ALLIES ON MD, START FOLLOW-UP, NOW NPR

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3. (C) In a July 16 presentation to NATO PermReps and Military Representatives (MilReps), Dr. Miller, accompanied by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Missile Defense Policy Dr. Bradley Roberts and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Verification, Compliance and Implementation Marcie Ries, filled in Allies regarding the parameters and timeline for the NPR.

4. (C) Following briefings the previous two weeks by Assistant Secretary of Defense Nacht on missile defense (MD, ref B) and by Assistant Secretaries of State Gordon and Gottemoeller on START follow-on treaty negotiations with Russia (ref A), Dr. Miller's information placed in context the four Congressionally mandated defense reviews currently under way: The NPR, the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), the Space Posture Review (SPR), and the Ballistic Missile Defense Review (BMDR). All four reviews will be presented to Congress in February 2010 along with the budget submission, and all four were receiving unusually high-level attention. The confluence of the four reviews was regarded in Washington as an opportunity for new thinking in strategic affairs, following the lead of President Obama's April 5 speech in Prague.

5. (C) Miller said that, in addition to the President's Prague call for eventual universal nuclear disarmament through a process of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons while reducing numbers, the U.S. government was also pursuing a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent. He said that an essential component to this deterrent posture was extended deterrence, for NATO

as well as for other non-NATO allies. He said that the U.S. was well aware that pursuing such deterrence would require considerable investment over time.

6. (S) Turning to the START follow-on negotiations, Dr. Miller clarified that negotiations, if successful, would follow a two-phase approach. In the current first phase, deployed strategic warheads and Strategic Delivery Vehicles (SDV) were the subject of ongoing negotiations. He said that a successful conclusion to those talks would lead at some point to further negotiations on non-deployed strategic, and on non-strategic, nuclear weapons. He then reviewed some of the first-stage negotiating numbers for warheads and delivery vehicles which have been the subject of uninformed media discussion: Strategic warhead limits proposed by the U.S. (1500) and Russia (1675), down from a current range of 1700-2200; and SDV limits of 1100 (U.S) and 500 (Russia), down from the START-mandated level of 1600. Dr. Miller expected further negotiations to narrow these ranges considerably. He added that engaging with NATO Allies on the second stage reduction talks would be at least as important as discussions on the first stage, given the importance to the Alliance of extended deterrence, nuclear sharing, and related issues. The large disparity in numbers of sub-strategic nuclear weapons -- some estimates put Russian totals at 3,000-5,000 plus -- will make this a difficult process.

7. (S) Regarding the NPR, Miller said that a separate two-phase process was under way. The first phase involved a detailed requirements analysis based on current guidance, and on the assumption that Russia would reduce its forces to similar levels as the U.S. This phase moved quickly, in support of the START follow-on negotiating team. The second phase would not be as time-constrained, and would allow for a fresh look at current strategy, policy and guidance. This phase would be of major importance to extended deterrence, and thus to NATO. The U.S. nuclear posture would be reviewed against all scenarios (including Russia and China as opponents), including limited and no warning. Multiple force structures would be examined, involving different mixtures of ICBMs, SLBMs and strategic bombers. He said that a conscious decision had been made during the first phase not to lock in a particular force structure, in order to give the START follow-on negotiating team maximum flexibility. In addition, the conclusion had been reached during the first phase that 1500-1700 warheads represented a militarily sufficient level at present, but that at or below 1300, additional risks to military sufficiency and to robustness had to be assumed. He said that future warhead reductions by the Russians would allow the U.S. to consider going lower.

8. (S) According to Miller, the U.S. currently has 1202 SDV's accountable under START, but only 881 are associated with deployable weapons (others are "phantoms", such as MX or Minuteman silos with no associated missiles). He said that if the Russians agree not to count phantoms, the U.S. will be able to lower its numbers further in the short term. SDV types and numbers have a major effect on warhead levels as well: given the current U.S. ICBM force of 450 Minuteman missiles, one of the most obvious changes we can make to effect warhead reductions will be to de-MIRV those missiles.

9. (S) Dr. Miller listed the four key questions associated with the second phase of the NPR:



- 1) What were the appropriate strategy, policy and guidance for U.S. nuclear forces?
- 2) What supporting capabilities were required?
- 3) What supporting nuclear infrastructure was required?
- 4) What kind of international engagement is called for?

President Obama's Prague speech and Secretary Gates had provided some guidance for the first question. "Lead and Hedge" was the appropriate mixture for current circumstances: Take the lead in non-proliferation and arms control negotiations (Iran, North Korea, the 2010 review conference for the NPT), while hedging our bets on our way to a nuclear weapon-free world through maintaining a safe, secure and reliable deterrent.

10. (S) Hedging was necessary to protect against both technological and geopolitical surprise -- diversity of delivery systems was an important way to maintain deterrence. SLBM's are the most secure system at present, he added, but fallbacks are required. Warhead design diversity is important for similar reasons. Dr. Miller expected that the U.S. would also retain a certain level of missile upload capability, although this would be subject to future negotiations with Russia. Hedging was also a concept NATO should bear in mind.

11. (S) Regarding the second question on supporting capabilities, Dr. Miller said that military capabilities require investment: Delivery systems will require replacing, warheads will need improvements, and finding an appropriate mix of capabilities will be an important part of the NPR. In addition, the U.S. needed to strengthen its non-nuclear capabilities, including MD and conventional weapons. A key possibility which also bore on the question of upload capacity involved placing conventional warheads on SDV's, notably the proposed Conventional Trident Modification (CTM) program.

12. (S) Miller said that the same supporting capabilities issues applied to NATO and our ability to sustain extended deterrence for the long term. Both the B-61 gravity bomb and NATO's dual-capability aircraft (DCA) would require NATO's attention in the next few years -- life-extension programs for the B-61 and DCA, and eventual replacement for the aircraft. According to Miller, Secretary of the Air Force Donley has said the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter will be dual-capable, providing an upgrade path for the U.S. and Allies. He also noted that Secretary Gates had already urged Allies at the Nuclear Planning Group meeting in June to avoid unilateral decisions on these questions which would affect Alliance options.

13. (S) On the third question regarding nuclear support infrastructure, Dr. Miller said the U.S. had underinvested in this area, as well as in nuclear expertise. These findings were supported by the recent report of the Perry-Schlesinger commission on the U.S. strategic posture. Both NATO and the U.S. needed to maintain at least modest levels of nuclear infrastructure and expertise. Finally, on the fourth question regarding international engagement, the U.S. was committed to strengthening extended deterrence and assurance, and to the indivisibility of security for NATO. Dr. Miller concluded by noting his readiness to listen to and learn from Allies.

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## ALLIED COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

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14. (C) Allied comments focused both on long-standing concerns and on some of Dr. Miller's comments. For example, several PermReps (Spain, Denmark, UK, Italy, France) took note of NATO's ongoing Strategic Concept review, and asked Dr. Miller to comment on how it would interact with the NPR. Dr. Miller noted that the question of how nuclear weapons will be handled will form an important part of NATO's next Strategic Concept. NATO's High Level Group and its ad hoc working group was the appropriate forum in which to address those questions.

15. (S) Dr. Miller's mention of the possibility of loading conventional warheads on SDV's triggered requests from Spain and Germany for further elaboration. *Dr. Miller replied that scenarios had been under review for years in which time-urgent targets were identified outside the range of deployed U.S. forces: Terrorist cells, WMD and associated launchers, etc. In order to offer U.S. Presidents options other than nuclear weapons in these situations, the option of placing conventional warheads in SDV's had been and continued to be discussed, albeit at present only in small numbers.* Given the possibility of requiring the overflight of Russia and/or China, however, these scenarios clearly needed to be thought through and options developed for preventing misunderstandings. Notification procedures might be developed specifically for such scenarios, he added. Russia had expressed interest in discussing these situations, but only if conventionally-armed SDV's were counted as having nuclear payloads.

16. (C) A number of Allies (Spain, UK, Italy, Portugal, France) focused on deterrence and its importance for both the U.S. and Russia. Dr. Miller stressed the importance both of maintaining a deterrent capability, and of consultations with Allies to maintain the ongoing credibility of extended deterrence. Maintaining even the minimum infrastructure to support deterrence would require considerable investment, he reminded Allies.

17. (S) Norway asked Dr. Miller to expand on his remarks about sub-strategic nuclear weapons. In response, Dr. Miller pointed to the difficulty of bringing Russia to the bargaining table with 180 NATO sub-strategic warheads on offer against the estimated 3-5 thousand Russian warheads in that category. However, for Russia the issue was not merely European; it had to consider China as well, and tactical nuclear weapons were an attractive proposition compared with ramping up conventional forces in the current economic climate.

18. (S) Finally, Portugal asked Dr. Miller whether areas of convergence of interests existed with Russia on nuclear issues. In response, he said converging interests did exist, but first noted the extensive areas of divergence: As noted, economics made nuclear weapons relatively more attractive to Russia at present; its core strategic forces were MIRVed ICBMs, since budget constraints prevented an expansion of Russia's strategic submarine fleet; and Russia had strong strategic and economic incentives to constrain MD, especially as reductions continue -- below certain levels, MD can threaten deterrence. We're still a long way from those levels, but much of Russia's strategic planning was (as always) based on worst-case scenarios. On points of convergence, Dr. Miller noted that both sides considered NATO of vital importance -- although perhaps for different reasons.

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