

U.S. Denies Plan to Alter A-Strategy

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The Defense Department yesterday denied that the United States had proposed a shift in the defensive strategy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The statement, drafted by Secretary Robert S. McNamara, was a denial of a story from London by Don Cook of the Los Angeles Times appearing in The Washington Post. Cook wrote that the United States had dropped its doctrine of "nuclear pause" in favor of an automatic but limited nuclear response to any attack.

However, informed Washington sources conceded that the United States had indicated to its Allies a willingness to examine possible new employment of such defensive weapons.
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ons systems as atomic land mines, nuclear-tipped anti-aircraft and nuclear submarine weapons.

The Pentagon statement also said that "at no time and in no way did the United States propose a change in the use of nuclear weapons in defense of NATO territory." It added that McNamara, who returned yesterday from the London meeting of key Defense Ministers, had once again "emphasized . . . the belief of the United States Government that NATO must possess both non-nuclear and nuclear forces adequate to deal with the wide range of threats with the power appropriate to each."

The statement further said that at the London meeting the ministers "discussed possible modifications in organization and procedures to improve Allied participation in nuclear planning. They also discussed ways to strengthen appropriate consultation for the possible use of nuclear weapons."

Cook had written that McNamara had proposed that

plans be drawn for use of three nuclear weapons systems in case of a Soviet attack: pre-positioned nuclear demolition charges or land mines on this side of the Iron Curtain, use of nuclear-tipped anti-aircraft against air attack and use of nuclear submarine weapons in event of attack against naval forces, ports or harbors. All would be defensive.

From various sources in Washington the following picture emerged yesterday of the London talks and their background.

The three categories of defensive weapons mentioned were discussed. The Associated Press reported that Turkish representatives brought up the question of stringing atomic demolition charges along the defensive perimeter.

The land mine idea was publicly proposed by the West Germans more than a year ago.

McNamara long has sought to convince the NATO allies that a limited attack calls for a limited, rather than an all-out response. To do so he has insisted on building up NATO's conventional forces so that in case of an incident arising, say from a crisis over Berlin, nuclear weapons might not have to be used at all.

It is the suspicion that McNamara wants to totally avoid the use of nuclear weapons unless the United States itself is threatened that has worried many Allies, most notably those closest to Soviet forces,

West Germany and Turkey. Defense Ministers of both those nations attended the just-concluded London meeting.

Because of this attitude McNamara has put American tactical nuclear weapons into West Germany. But he has shied away from any formula that would call for their automatic use in case of a Soviet attack of any sort.

From sources that we know McNamara's thinking the word yesterday was that the Secretary had put the tactical nuclear weapons in position as part of his effort to sell the Allies on the need to adopt the "pause" theory, which he developed during the Kennedy Administration.

Under this theory, as McNamara

would like to have it accepted, a conventional attack would be met with only conventional forces in hopes that the attack could be stopped. This would allow a "pause" for diplomatic negotiations rather than allowing the war to escalate into a nuclear conflict.

Of course in the case of a Soviet nuclear salvo of intercontinental ballistic missiles at the United States the full force of American ICBMs and other nuclear weapons would be employed on Presidential orders.

The London meeting was called to discuss tactical nuclear weapons and their possible use. Specific possible military situations were discussed in detail.