
Clinton Presidential Records Mandatory Declassification Review

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

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OPTIONAL FORM 99 (7-90)

FAX TRANSMITTAL

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NSN 7540-01-317-7388	5089-101 GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Honorable Volker Ruehe
Minister of Defense
Ministry of Defense
53125 Bonn 1
Federal Republic of Germany

Dear Colleague:

President Clinton has written to Chancellor Kohl, and has asked me to contact you again, to discuss the NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) program. Some eighteen months have passed since NATO agreed to acquire a "core" AGS system. I continue to believe that a core which includes Joint STARS is the only sensible option, given its mature, combat-proven technology and immediate availability. As we approach the November decision by NATO's Conference of National Armaments Directors on whether to pursue AGS on a fast track, I ask that you reconsider your position and join me and my staff in a dialogue to explore your remaining concerns.

The majority of smaller European nations appear supportive of the "Fast Track" approach, but are only comfortable with their positions should Germany agree. You, along with France and the United Kingdom, have expressed support for the "Ground Segment First" option. We propose that both the ground segment based on the Ground Segment First proposal and the airborne segment based on Joint STARS be approved in November, allowing the programs to begin simultaneously. European nations would see significant industrial participation, perhaps taking the lead in the development of the ground station work. German industry stands to profit handsomely, with both DASA and Dornier playing potentially significant roles in both programs. Most importantly, NATO would demonstrate its ability to continue to strengthen its integrated C3I capabilities as it adapts and modernizes.

With regard to Germany's budgetary concerns, we are exploring more flexible payment arrangements which would be sensitive to nearer term budget priorities. The United States would be willing to bear the financial burden in the early years of the program. Indeed, we have already requested authority from our Congress to do so. This forward financing by the United States, plus the contributions of the other participating nations, would permit Germany to derive immediately the political and military benefits of the system and reduces Germany's initial monetary contributions.

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I recommend that we continue this dialog by bringing high level policy and acquisition officials from both our nations together as soon as possible. My Acting Under Secretary for Acquisition and Technology, Noel Longuemare, would lead the delegation. We are ready to begin discussions at any time, either in Washington or in Bonn, at your convenience. We hope to explain more fully our staged acquisition strategy, and allay any remaining German concerns. I look forward to hearing from you soon on this important initiative.

Sincerely,