

NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION CENTERS

MAY 3 (legislative day, APRIL 30), 1984.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. PERCY, from the Committee on Foreign Relations,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. Res. 329]

The Committee on Foreign Relations, to which was referred the resolution (S. Res. 329) expressing the support of the Senate for the expansion of confidence building measures between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including the establishment of nuclear risk reduction centers, in Washington and in Moscow, with modern communications linking the centers, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the resolution as amended do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE RESOLUTION

The purpose of the resolution is to express the support of the Senate for the expansion of confidence building measures between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, including the establishment of nuclear risk reduction centers, in Washington and Moscow, with modern communications linking the centers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Senate Resolution 329 was introduced on February 1, 1984, by Senator Nunn, with Senators Warner, Bradley, Hollings, and Sasser as original cosponsors, and was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. Committee members who have cosponsored Senate Resolution 329 include Senators Percy, Lugar, Kassebaum, and Pressler. On April 4, Senator Percy chaired a committee hearing on the resolution. Testimony was received from Senators Nunn and Warner, and from Dr. William Hyland, editor of "Foreign Affairs," and Dr. Barry Blechman, of the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies.

On April 10, the committee met for the purpose of marking up Senate Resolution 329. The committee approved without objection an amendment by Senator Pell stating that the centers should be operated under the direction of appropriate diplomatic and defense authorities. The committee then approved Senate Resolution 329 as amended without objection by voice vote.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

In 1982, Senators Nunn, Warner, and Jackson introduced an amendment to the fiscal year 1983 defense authorization bill requiring the Defense Department to evaluate several proposals aimed at reducing the risk of nuclear confrontations. On April 11, 1983, Secretary Weinberger submitted a report to the Congress in response to this amendment. The report, titled "Direct Communications Links and Other Measures to Enhance Stability," announced that the Secretary had decided to propose four specific risk reduction proposals to the President:

The addition of a high-speed facsimile capability to the Hotline;
The creation of a Joint Military Communication Link between the United States and U.S.S.R.;

The establishment by the United States and Soviet Governments of high rate data links with their embassies in the capital of the other; and

Agreement among the world's nations to consult in the event of a nuclear incident involving a terrorist group.

On May 24, 1983, President Reagan announced that he had accepted all four recommendations and urged the Soviet to examine them carefully. Several rounds of talks on these proposals have been conducted, and on January 16, Secretary Weinberger announced that "significant progress" had been achieved toward an agreement on upgrading the Hotline. The Soviets have, however, been cool to the idea of establishing direct military communications links or improving embassy communications systems.

One possible initiative cited in the 1982 amendment, but not acted on by the administration, was that of establishing "crisis control centers." In its April 1983 report, the Defense Department concluded that the idea of a multilateral crisis control center located in a neutral nation was infeasible and that it was premature to propose bilateral United States/Soviet centers. The Defense Department did not, however, completely rule out the creation of United States/Soviet crisis control centers, noting that: "Over time, our experience with operating a JMCL (Joint Military Communications Link) might allow us to pursue the idea of a crisis control center, by indicating ways in which we could reduce the risks involved in it to an acceptable level." Some of the risks identified by the Pentagon include the opportunities for Soviet espionage and disinformation activities and the creation of a "cumbersome, extra layer in the national and international decision processes, retarding action just when speed was most imperative." The DOD report also expressed concern that a United States/Soviet crisis control center would "provide a clear and legitimate channel for automatic consideration of any crisis—including those in which Soviet participation would serve to heighten, rather than reduce, tensions."

On November 23, 1983, a Working Group on Nuclear Risk Reduction, which Senators Nunn and Warner had established a year earlier, released its report and recommendations. Members of the Working Group included Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft (USAF, retired), Dr. James Schlesinger, Dr. William Hyland, Dr. Barry Blechman, Rear Adm. Bobby Inman (USN, retired), Dr. William Perry, Dr. Donald Rice, and Gen. Richard Ellis (USAF, retired). In its report, the panel commended the administration for proposing the four specific confidence building measures. Nevertheless, the group faulted the administration for not embracing the concept of a United States/Soviet crisis control center, declaring that there are "crucial political aspects" to controlling crises which can only be addressed through "more comprehensive arrangements involving the designation of particular representatives and facilities in both nations that would be assigned specific responsibilities for preventing nuclear crisis."

As a first step, the group called for the establishment of 24-hour-a-day nuclear risk reduction centers in Washington and Moscow. The centers would be directly linked to the appropriate political and military authorities in each nation, with direct communications links between the two centers. The group suggested that as a first step toward jointly manned centers, liaison officers be assigned to the counterpart center in each capital.

Senate Resolution 329 formally endorses this proposal and outlines five possible functions which the centers could perform:

Discussing procedures to be followed in the event of possible incidents involving the use of nuclear weapons by third parties;

Maintaining close contact during nuclear threats or incidents precipitated by third parties;

Exchanging information on a voluntary basis concerning events that might lead to the acquisition of nuclear weapons, materials, or equipment by subnational groups;

Exchanging information about United States/Soviet military activities which might be misunderstood during a crisis;

Establishing a dialogue about nuclear doctrines, forces, and activities.

In a letter to Chairman Percy dated April 3, the State Department took note of the four confidence building measures already proposed by the administration which, in its view, would, taken together, "contribute significantly to the fulfillment of the functions of a nuclear risk reduction center as described in Senate Resolution 329." In general, the letter took the position that the administration would prefer to defer adding a nuclear risk reduction center proposal to the current United States/Soviet negotiating agenda on confidence building measures until these other "first steps" had been more fully explored.

While the committee fully appreciates that negotiations with the Soviets in this important area must be carefully and prudently developed, it agrees with the view expressed by Senator Nunn during the April 4 hearing that there are compelling reasons for concern about the ability of the two superpowers to avoid nuclear crises in the future. In light of the growing number of regional conflicts around the world, each with the potential to draw the superpowers into direct confrontation, time may well be running out if the United States and U.S.S.R. are to act in advance to put in place an effective crisis avoidance system. The urgency which the committee attaches to acting on the nu-

clear risk reduction center proposal is heightened by the increasing occurrence of state-sponsored terrorism and, particularly, by current strains in the United States/Soviet relationship. In summary, the committee believes that the establishment of nuclear risk reduction centers could make a very positive contribution toward lessening the dangers of nuclear war, and it urges the administration to develop, in full consultation with Congress, specific proposals toward this end.

During consideration of the resolution on April 10, Senator Pell proposed an amendment which added language stating that the centers should be operated under the direction of appropriate diplomatic and defense authorities. In introducing his amendment, Senator Pell stated that since the highest diplomatic skills could be involved in the operation of the center, it is important that both diplomatic and defense officials be involved in the operation of the center. In addition, Senator Pell said that he hoped the committee report on the resolution would reflect the committee's view that, since very sensitive discussions and, even, negotiations could be the responsibility of the centers, the U.S. center should be under the direct authority of the Secretary of State and that the State and Defense Departments, as well as other agencies, should assign their most qualified personnel to operate the center.

Senator Percy agreed that the amendment made it clear that the State Department would be fully involved in the operation of any nuclear risk reduction center established pursuant to this resolution and praised the amendment as a constructive addition to the resolution. The chairman also noted that Senators Nunn and Warner had no objection to the amendment. In his April 4 testimony, Senator Nunn emphasized that the Working Group had purposely avoided the question of which government agency would have jurisdiction over the center, believing that this decision would have to evolve in the course of negotiations both in the Government and with the Soviets. However, he also said it was obvious that "you would have to have both the diplomatic elements of our governments as well as the military elements represented in some fashion." The committee respects the views expressed by Senators Nunn and Warner on this issue and certainly does not want to embroil the resolution in bureaucratic infighting that could complicate or delay implementation of the proposal. Nevertheless, the committee believes that were the centers assigned the range of responsibilities outlined in Senate Resolution 329, the U.S. center should be operated under the authority of the Secretary of State.

COST ESTIMATE

In accordance with rule XXVI, paragraph 11(a) of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee finds that there will be no budgetary impact from the passage of this resolution.

REGULATORY IMPACT AND CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In accordance with rule XXVI, paragraphs 11(b) and 12 of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the committee concludes that there will be no regulatory impact from the passage of this joint resolution. There will also be no repeal or amendment of existing law.