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ENCLOSURE

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

JCSM-193-77  
9 May 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Nuclear Weapons Employment Doctrine (U)

1. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff are pleased to provide their views on the subjects raised in the memorandum by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, 31 March 1977. A more detailed discussion of each issue is contained in the Appendix. The questions in the aforementioned memorandum are repeated below for clarity.

a. "A succinct statement of our present nuclear war doctrine. In so doing, you should comment on the advisability of retaining or cancelling NSDM 242 and limited nuclear options."

The fundamental objective of current US doctrine for the employment of nuclear weapons is deterrence of conventional or nuclear attacks and attempts at coercion by nuclear powers against the United States and its allies. If deterrence fails, the objective seeks to limit damage to the United States and its allies through control of escalation by employing first conventional and then, if necessary, limited nuclear options (LNOs) designed to limit the conflict and reestablish deterrence. If escalation cannot be controlled, the objective seeks to maximize US power relative to an enemy in the postwar era. This doctrine is responsive to the realities of current technology and the relative military power balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Its adoption has placed greater emphasis on planning for limited options, thereby improving the capability for deterrence across the entire spectrum of conflict and providing the NCA with a realistic, flexible response capability. It also complements and supports NATO's strategy of flexible response. For these reasons, NSDM 242 and LNOs should be retained.

Classified by Director, J-5  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY (3)  
DECLASSIFY ON DECEMBER 31, 2007

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b. "A brief statement of the procedures for actually conducting a nuclear war, limited or total, beyond the initial phase. This should include an indication of the command procedures for the conduct of such a war, including such operational aspects as the (b)(7)

(b)(7)  
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The key element in US nuclear war procedures is the direct involvement of the NCA in not only the initial stages but the execution of a nuclear war. The effectiveness of this participation is almost totally dependent on the survivability of command centers and reliable communications.

(b)(7)  
[REDACTED]

c. "A short statement of the basic objectives to be achieved through our various LNO options and some indication of the assumptions, both political and military, regarding the specific LNOs."

LNOs have been developed to support generalized military campaigns within a theater of operations, complementing rather than substituting for conventional forces. Real and declared capability to employ LNOs has enhanced deterrence, especially in the face of Soviet force improvement. These options support the principal means to limit damage; i.e., through control of escalation. Their existence provides implicit recognition that the purpose of

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military power is not only to deter but also to prosecute military conflict. Political and military assumptions regarding specific LNOs are contained in the Annex. A non-SIOP nuclear options briefing, which you heard on 11 April 1977, is available for presentation to the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

2. ~~(S)~~ The current doctrine for the employment of nuclear weapons, as embodied in NSDM 242, should be retained. Actions should continue to refine its implementation and support its execution, including the development of a capability for comparative postwar recovery analysis; improvement of CINC ad hoc planning capabilities; additional intelligence support; and an enhancement of command and control survivability, reliability, and flexibility. To enhance implementation of nuclear weapons employment doctrine, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have instituted an annual review process, the initial results of which were forwarded to you by JCSM-81-77, 15 March 1977, "Nuclear Weapons Employment Guidance (U)."

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Signed

GEORGE S. BROWN  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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JCS 2430/306-1

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Enclosure

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APPENDIX AND ANNEX

(18 pages)

APPENDIX 1

NUCLEAR WEAPONS EMPLOYMENT DOCTRINE (U) 2

1. (U) Submitted below for your consideration are the views of the 3  
Joint Chiefs of Staff on several aspects of current US nuclear 4  
employment policy. 5

2. ~~(TS)~~ Evolution of US Nuclear Policy 6

a. For the most part, the United States has in the past 7  
emphasized the concept of massive retaliation against 8  
cities, commonly referred to as assured destruction. The 9  
basic simplicity of such a concept provided many advantages 10  
from a force sizing viewpoint by providing measurable levels 11  
of attack effectiveness in terms of damage to population and 12  
industry which could then be translated to force requirements. 13  
In the late 1960's, US policymakers considered that 14  
deterrence could be assured by threatening to destroy in 15  
retaliation about a third of the population and 70 percent 16  
of the war-supporting economic base (containing less than 17  
one-third of the value of the output of the industrial 18  
sectors in the USSR, but sometimes erroneously referred 19  
to as 70 percent of its industrial capacity). Forces to 20  
carry out the assured destruction policy were well hedged 21  
to cover a worst-case condition. This approach made 22  
weapons available for targeting a comprehensive military 23  
target system. 24

b. The concept of major damage limitation through counterforce 25  
attacks, which was promoted during the era of US superi- 26  
ority, eventually became too costly as Soviet capability 27  
improved and became infeasible with the advent of the 28  
sea-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), silo hardening, 29  
and ratification of the antiballistic missile (ABM) Treaty. 30

c. With expanded Soviet capabilities, many (including NATO Allies) questioned the wisdom and credibility of solely relying on assured destruction to provide deterrence. The lack of credibility of the massive retaliation doctrine to provide deterrence led to NATO's flexible response strategy, MC 14/3.

d. The need for a policy which would provide the United States with greater flexibility was recognized at the national level through several successive administrations and was highlighted in several Presidential Foreign Policy Reports to Congress. Generally, it was believed that a simple "assured destruction" doctrine did not meet the apparent requirements for a flexible range of strategic options. National leaders believed that no President should be left with only one course of strategic action, particularly one that included ordering the mass destruction of enemy civilians and facilities. Given the range of possible political/military situations which could conceivably confront the United States, strategic policy could not be based solely on a capability of inflicting urban and industrial damage and casualties presumed to be beyond the level an adversary would accept. Rather, the United States should be able to respond at levels appropriate to the situation.

e. Several years of study by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, interagency groups, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff culminated in the following conclusions:

(1) Massive retaliation against cities in response to less than an all-out attack on US cities is not a credible policy.

(2) There is a need for a series of measured responses 1  
to aggression which bear a relationship to the level of 2  
provocation and have some prospects of terminating 3  
hostilities on acceptable terms and reestablishing 4  
deterrence. This continuum of military options is 5  
required to provide deterrence. A gap in capabilities 6  
cannot be presented to an enemy. Rather, the United States 7  
should be capable of preventing potential enemies from 8  
perceiving success at any level of conflict. 9

(3) The assured destruction concept does not provide a 10  
capability to continue warfare after deterrence fails, to 11  
terminate a conflict short of a massive nuclear exchange, 12  
nor to restore deterrence. Consequently, it drives force 13  
mix and capabilities away from realistic requirements 14  
and does not provide rationale for a response to enemy 15  
force buildup. 16

(4) Major damage limitation through counterforce attacks 17  
became infeasible with the advent of current capabilities, 18  
suggesting that some means should be adopted to limit 19  
damage through control of escalation if deterrence failed. 20  
The success of controlling escalation depends heavily on 21  
the enemy's objectives; the price he is willing to pay to 22  
reach his objective; and his perception of US objectives, 23  
capabilities, and responses. There is no hard evidence to 24  
support or deny the assumption that Soviet doctrine includes 25  
or would adapt to limited or selective use of nuclear 26  
weapons. Despite uncertainties, however, efforts to 27  
control escalation provide the most promising means of 28  
limiting damage to the United States and its allies. 29

(5) Deterrence established by assured retaliation must 30  
be complemented by limited options in order to provide 31  
deterrence against intermediate levels of aggression. 32

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(6) Targeting population, per se, is not an economical application of weapons, due to the demography of the USSR and the potential impact of Soviet population protection measures which are not yet fully understood.

(7) During the time that targeting of the war-supporting economic base was considered adequate for the assured destruction objective, it was not realized that it only encompassed about 25 percent of the Soviet industrial sectors and that attacking this base would not cripple the Soviet economy.

f. These same study efforts recommended a change in nuclear weapon employment doctrine that would increase flexibility in the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) by providing for a broad range of strategic options and a Strategic Reserve Force and introducing the concept of escalation control. Emphasis was shifted from destruction of the enemy's war-supporting urban-industrial base and population to his postwar recovery capability and, as practicable, national leadership and military capabilities. Deterrence was to be enhanced by development of limited and regional options which support the concept of escalation control; i.e., attaining the objective of early war termination on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies, at the lowest level of conflict feasible. Enemy realization of the enormous destructive power available to be used after a limited exchange should serve to convince political leaders to stop and negotiate. These concepts were promulgated as Presidential guidance in NSDM 242. The implementing guidance was further developed and promulgated by the Department of Defense, as Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP), on 4 April 1974.

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3. ~~7.5~~ Current Guidance. Present US Nuclear Weapon Employment Doctrine can be stated as follows: 1

a. The fundamental objective of the current US doctrine of "Flexible Nuclear Response" is deterrence of conventional and nuclear attacks and of attempts at coercion by nuclear powers against the US and its allies. This condition is established by an assured and evident US nuclear retaliatory capability effective across a wide spectrum of possible conflict situations and by declaratory policy. Should conflict occur, the strategy seeks to limit damage to the United States and its allies through the control of escalation. This is to be accomplished by providing a wide range of employment options to the National Command Authorities (NCA) for response to varying levels of provocation. These options, developed to enhance deterrence, are to be employed, in conjunction with other supporting measures, to limit conflict to the lowest level feasible and coerce an enemy into negotiating a termination of the war on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies. This is to be done while holding vital enemy targets hostage and threatening their destruction. To the extent that escalation cannot be controlled, the strategy seeks to maximize US power relative to an enemy by destroying those resources critical to the enemy's postwar recovery, limiting damage to the United States to the degree practical, and by maintaining a strategic force in reserve for protection and coercion during and after a major nuclear exchange. 2  
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b. This policy recognizes that extension of a counter-  
value retaliation nuclear umbrella to contain Soviet  
expansionism is no longer feasible in the current  
power balance era, and it provides options which are  
highly credible deterrents because they are clearly  
in the best interests of the United States to carry  
out should deterrence fail.

c. Present policy concepts emphasize preplanning to:  
enhance force efficiency and effectiveness, provide  
for rapid execution, and provide a solid basis for  
estimating consequences of execution. The full range  
of politico/military conditions cannot be anticipated.  
Past experience has shown that national decisionmakers  
desire a full range of options to consider in determining  
appropriate solutions to a crisis. It is therefore  
prudent and necessary to maintain the capability for  
responding to a wide range of hostile actions. Therefore,  
nuclear employment plans have been designed to allow for  
flexible adaptation as events unfold prior to execution.  
Where only general plans can be formulated in advance,  
appropriate organizations and procedures have been  
established for the rapid development, assessment, and  
execution of specific options. It is assumed that there  
will be a high degree of control and direction by the  
NCA which will require close interaction between political,  
diplomatic, and military actions in the face of rapidly,  
often obscurely unfolding events.

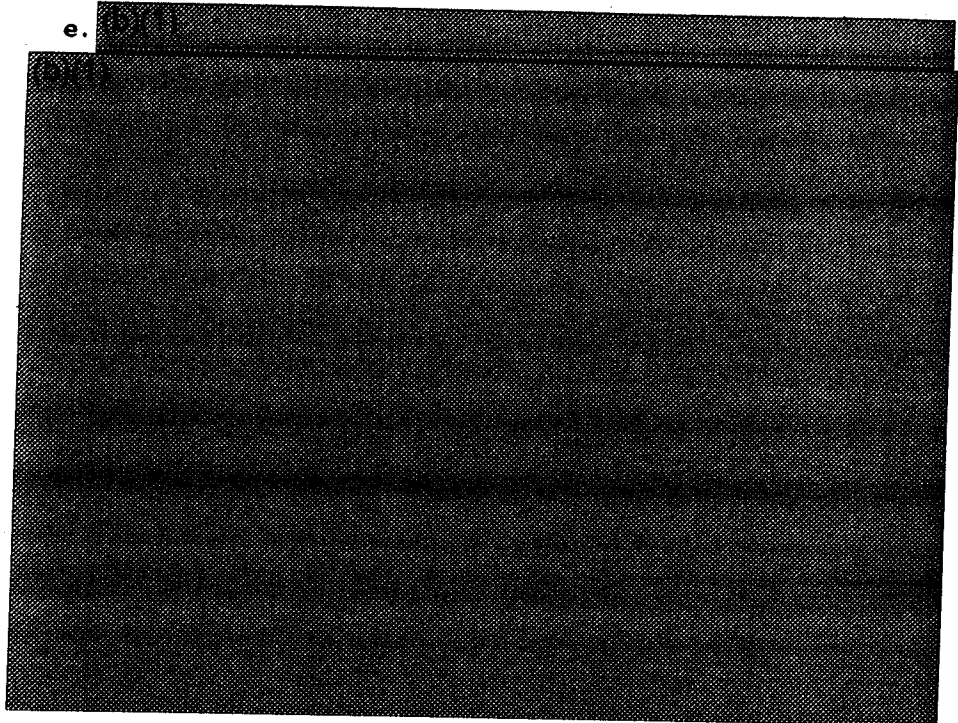
d. When aspects of current policy became known publicly,  
greater flexibility was often misinterpreted as advo-  
cating a counterforce strategy, a silo-busting policy,

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or a disarming first strike capability. On the contrary, NSDM 242 provided greater flexibility to the NCA by providing a wide spectrum of options from which to choose an appropriate response to varied levels of aggression. US nuclear war plans have always included options for attacking both urban/industrial facilities and military (hard and soft) targets which heretofore involved the expenditure of several thousand nuclear weapons.

e.



f. Contingency plans are separate from the SIOP and are developed by the commanders of the unified and specified commands, providing an alternative to massive retaliation. These plans provide limited and regional nuclear options (LNOs and RNOs). LNOs are generally small-scale preplanned attacks by nuclear-capable forces against fixed targets

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and provide for controlling escalation or seeking limited objectives. RNOs are attacks, normally by nuclear-capable theater forces, designed to counter deployed attacking enemy forces and resources. In planning for the LNOs and RNOs, it is assumed that such limited options would only be executed under a generated force posture to enhance deterrence against, and assure a maximum capability to respond to, escalatory response by the enemy. However, it is recognized that the capability exists to execute limited options from a day-to-day posture. It is also assumed that the enemy's national command and control and attack assessment capabilities would not be attacked in order to assure his capability to perceive and maintain the limited nature of the conflict.

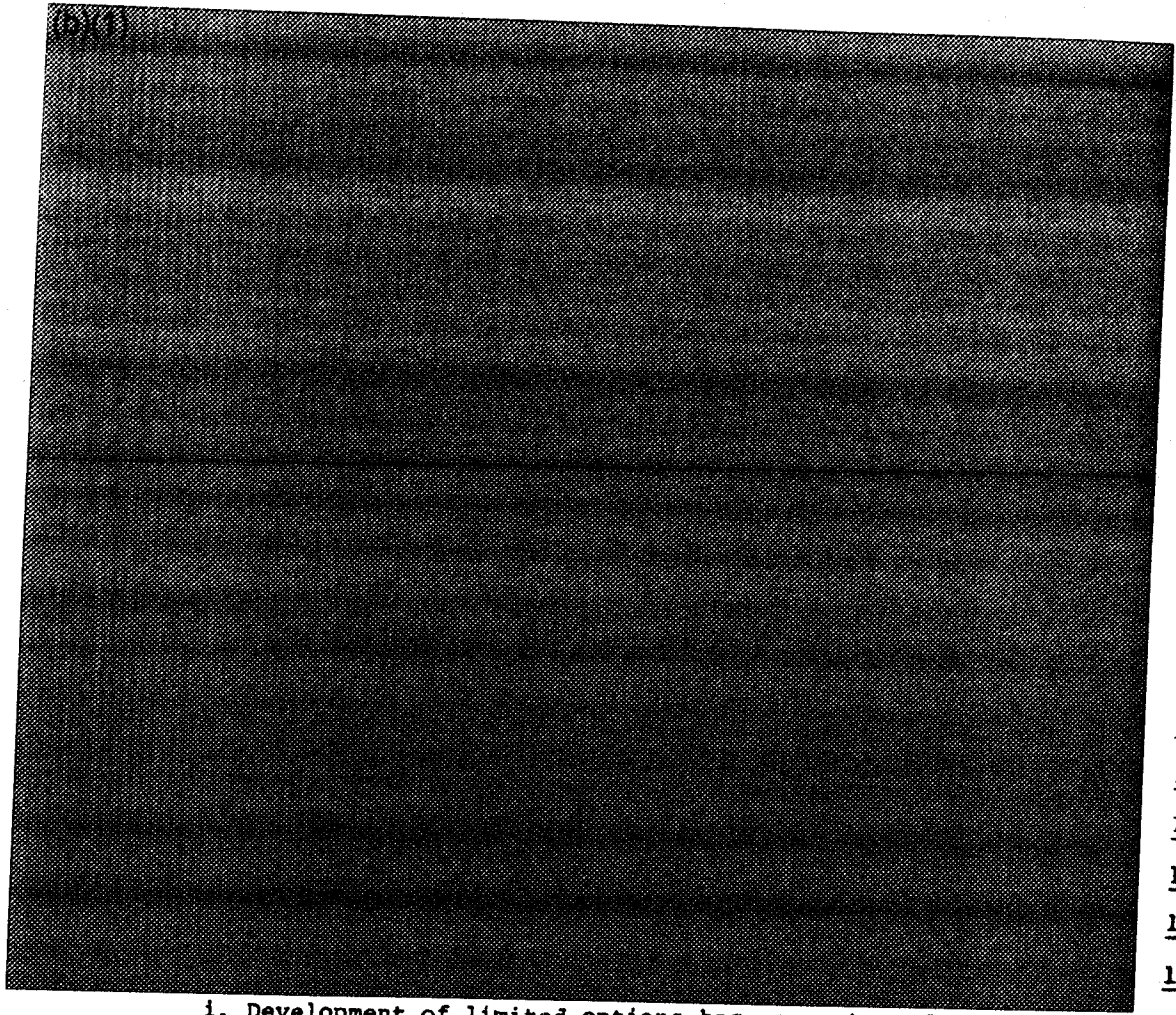
g. The concept of limited nuclear warfare involves the need to provide for a militarily effective but measured use of force in order to seek early war termination on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies, at the lowest level of conflict feasible by:

- (1) Denying an aggressor his immediate military objectives.
- (2) Setting limits to the level, scope, and duration of violence.
- (3) Holding hostage targets that the enemy is believed to value highly.

The existence of LNOs provides implicit recognition that military power should not only deter but should also provide options which are militarily useful in the event conflict cannot be deterred.

h. In assessing the utility of an LNO or RNO, the following factors are considered, as appropriate, in the planning/ approval process and prior to employment.

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i. Development of limited options has concentrated on plans to support a generalized military campaign in a theater of operations. Progress should continue towards development of options designed to achieve national "politico/military" objectives. Some military options have been developed which could be considered for possible political application.

In this regard, an initiative towards (b)(1) (b)(1)

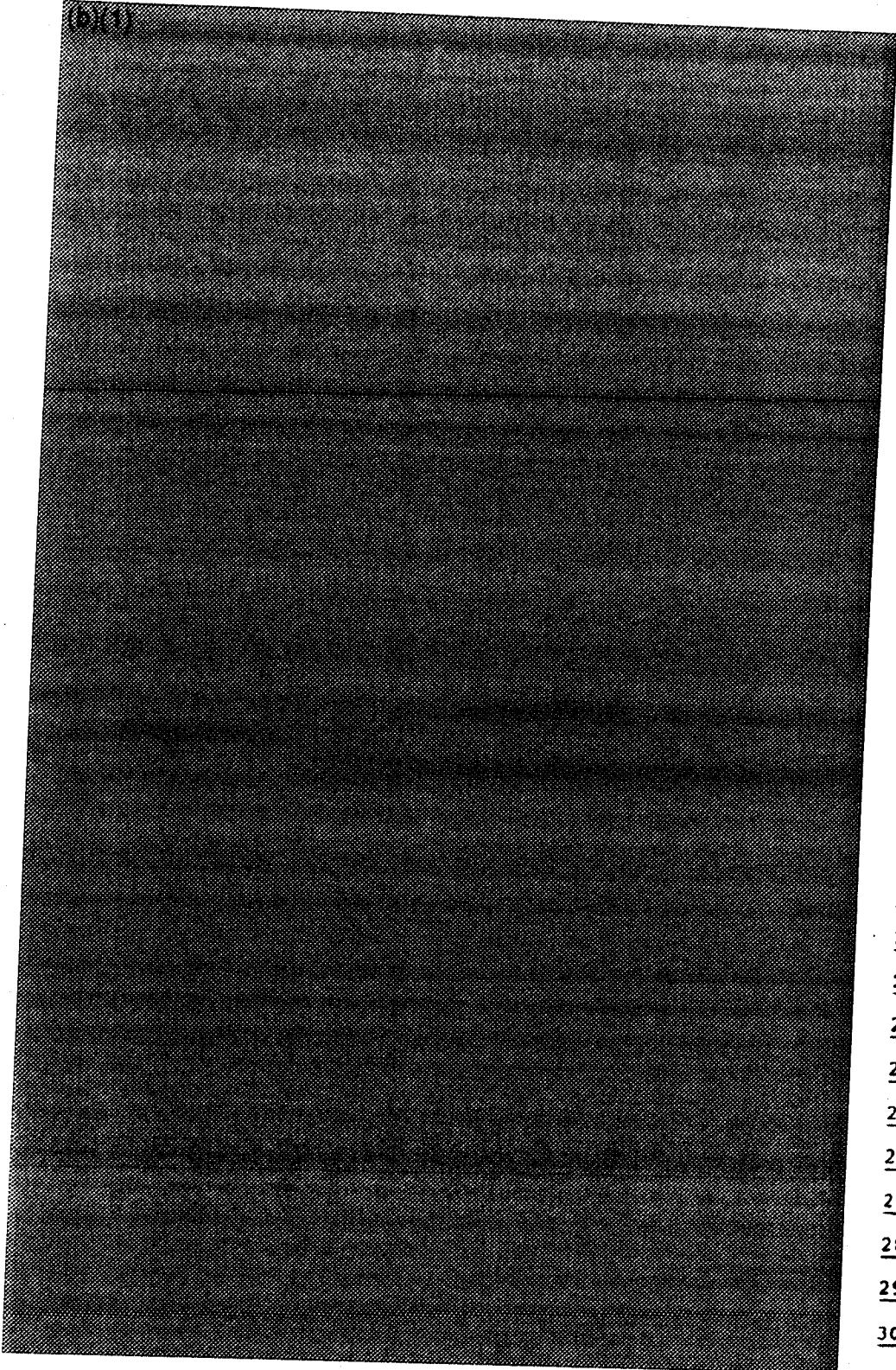
(b)(1) This approach should continue and should include representatives from the National Security Council (NSC) and the Department of State.

4. ~~(TOP SECRET)~~ Advisability of Retaining Current Policy. The Joint 1  
Chiefs of Staff believe that the current nuclear employment 2  
policy, as described in NSDM 242, should be retained. The 3  
previously discussed rationale used in developing current 4  
policy over the past several years appears to be valid for 5  
the immediate future. The following additional factors 6  
would support this position: 7

a. Deterrence remains the principal objective of national 8  
policy. Intelligence analyses of current Soviet capabilities 9  
and the projected threats indicate that it is rapidly 10  
closing the technology gap which will allow it to enhance 11  
its capability to wage nuclear conflict at various levels 12  
of intensity. Therefore, it is prudent to maintain US 13  
deterrent capability over a wide spectrum of possible con- 14  
flict through a concept that embraces both strategic and 15  
theater nuclear weapons. This close coupling of US 16  
strategic capabilities to theater forces and the extension 17  
of the nuclear umbrella to theaters without stalwart US 18  
conventional defenses are believed to have enhanced 19  
deterrence of nuclear and conventional coercion and attack, 20  
especially in the face of Soviet force improvement. 21

b. Targeting for an assured retaliation capability should 22  
remain focused on the postwar recovery resources and, as 23  
practical, national leadership and primary military threats. 24  
This is particularly true in light of evident Soviet 25  
hardening efforts (storage facilities, work force shelters, 26  
political/military centers, etc.,) and civil defense 27  
programs. Targeting of national leadership (includes 28  
political/military C<sup>3</sup>) and military nuclear/conventional 29  
capabilities enhances deterrence, helps limit damage to 30  
the extent practical, and denies the Soviets the capability 31

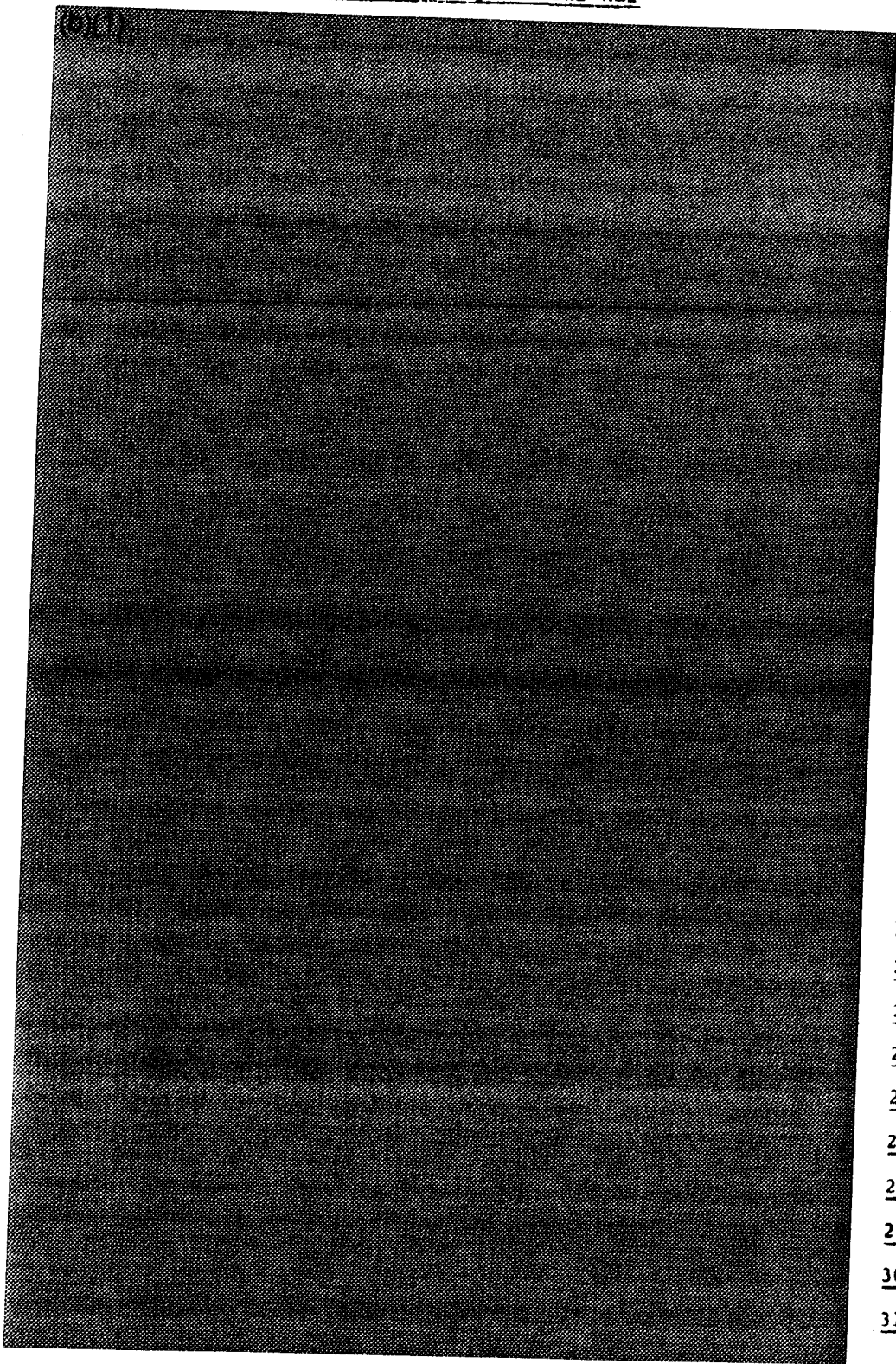
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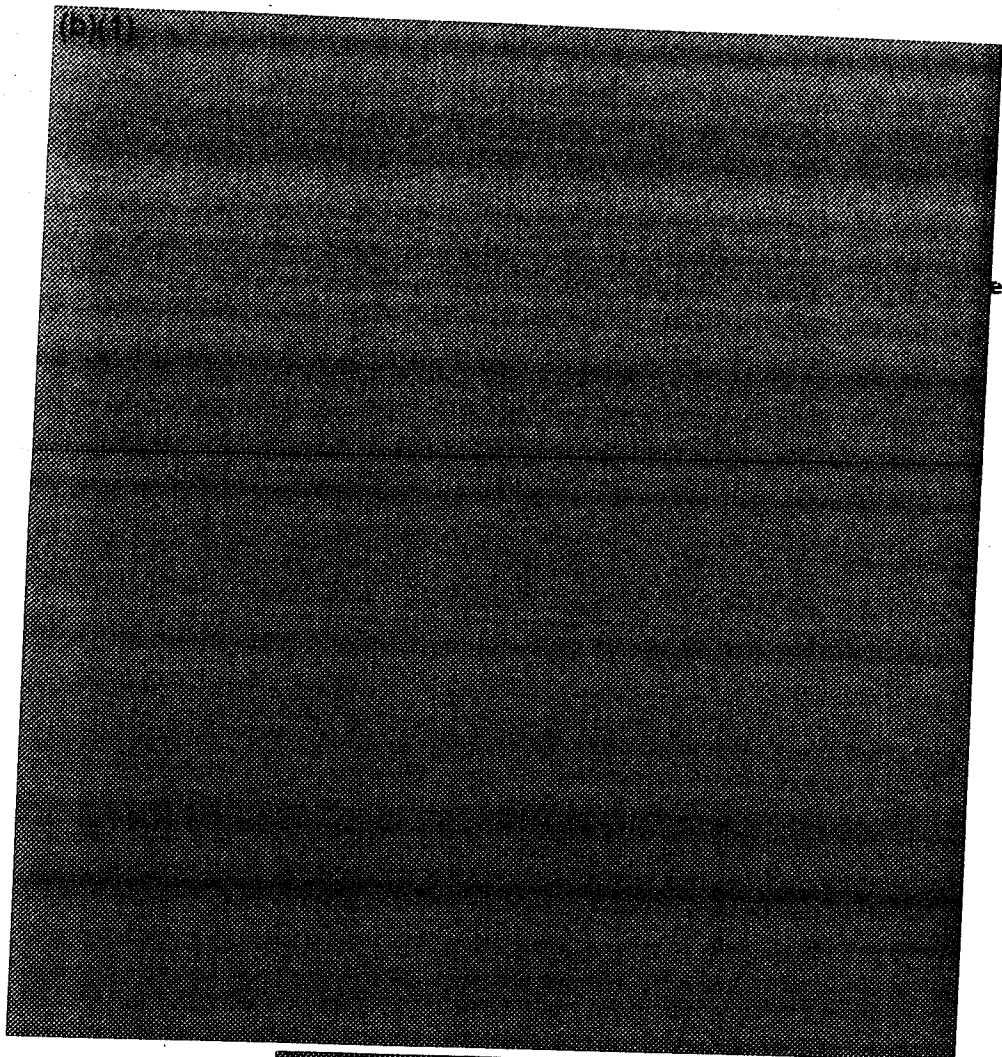
5. ~~(S)~~ Procedures for Conducting Nuclear War



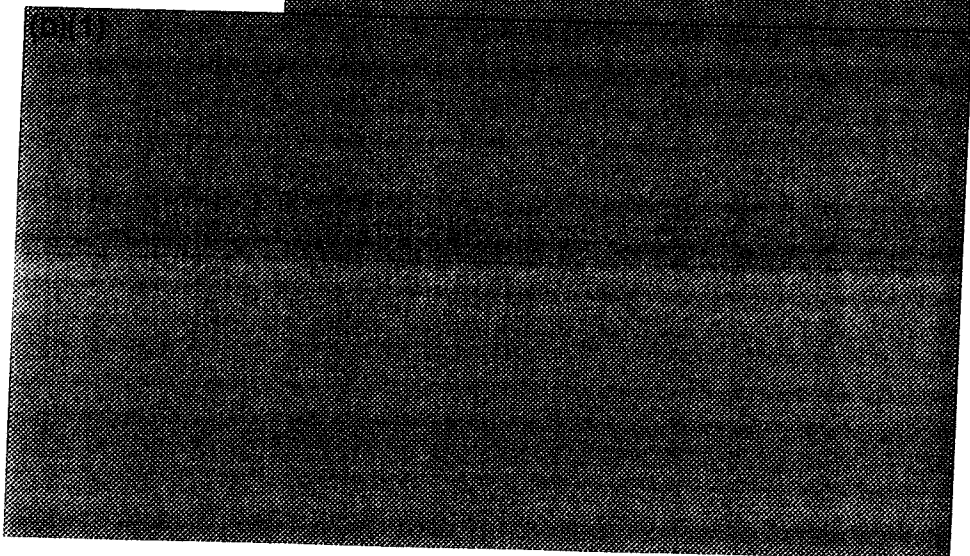
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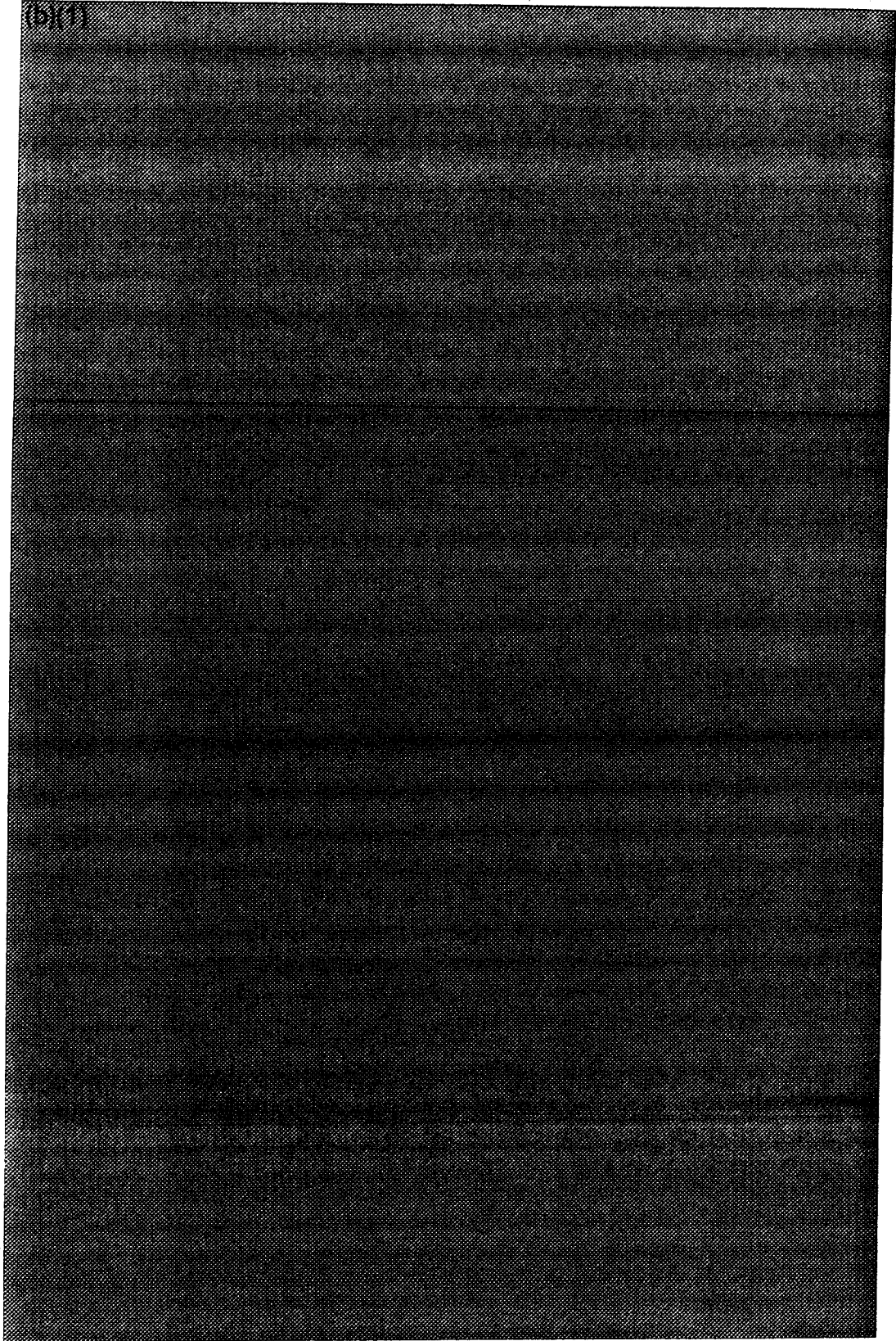


b. General War.

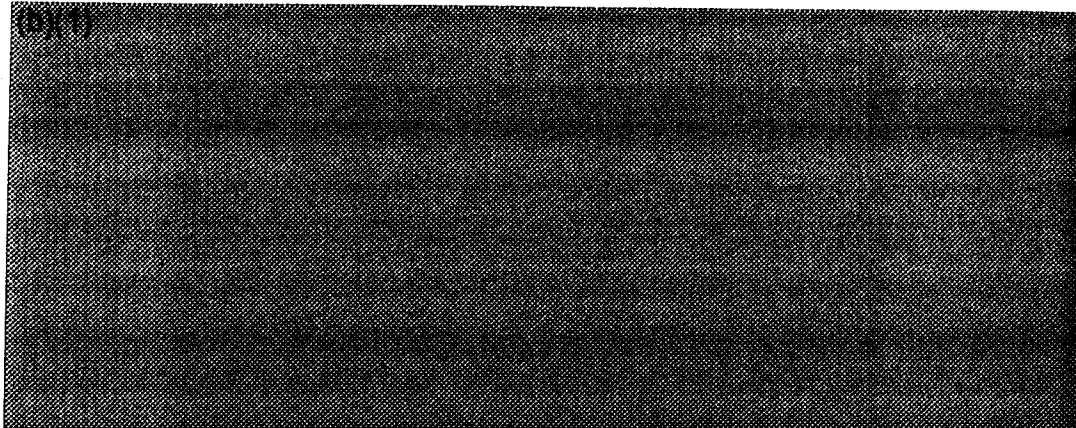


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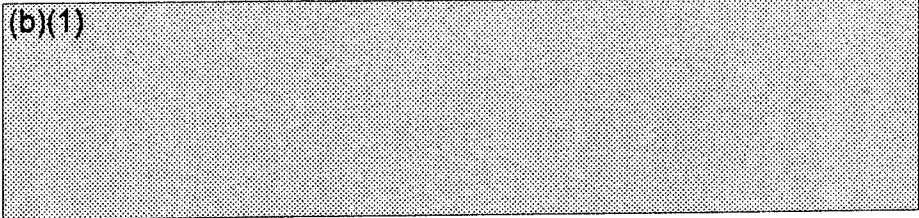
7. ~~(TS)~~ LNO and RNO Objectives and Assumptions

a. The basic objective for which non-SIOP nuclear options (LNOs and RNOs) are designed is early war termination on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies, at the lowest level of conflict feasible. It is intended that execution of these options create a state of affairs permitting the continuation or resumption of political arrangements to terminate the conflict. In accordance with this objective, LNOs and RNOs have been developed for a number of contingencies. These options are available for consideration by the NCA during a crisis and for use in conjunction with political and other military measures such as employment of conventional forces. Specific objectives of current LNOs and RNOs are contained in the Annex.

b. The basic political assumption underlying the development of non-SIOP nuclear options is that escalation control can be achieved. The fundamental assumption of escalation control is that there are limits on the risks or losses the enemy is willing to accept. Militarily, a key assumption is that the controlled, restrained use of nuclear force provides the capability to demonstrate resolve, to reverse locally a disadvantageous force balance, or to destroy

specific, valued targets. When political and military efforts are combined, the assumption is that escalation can be controlled by enhancing or guiding enemy perceptions.

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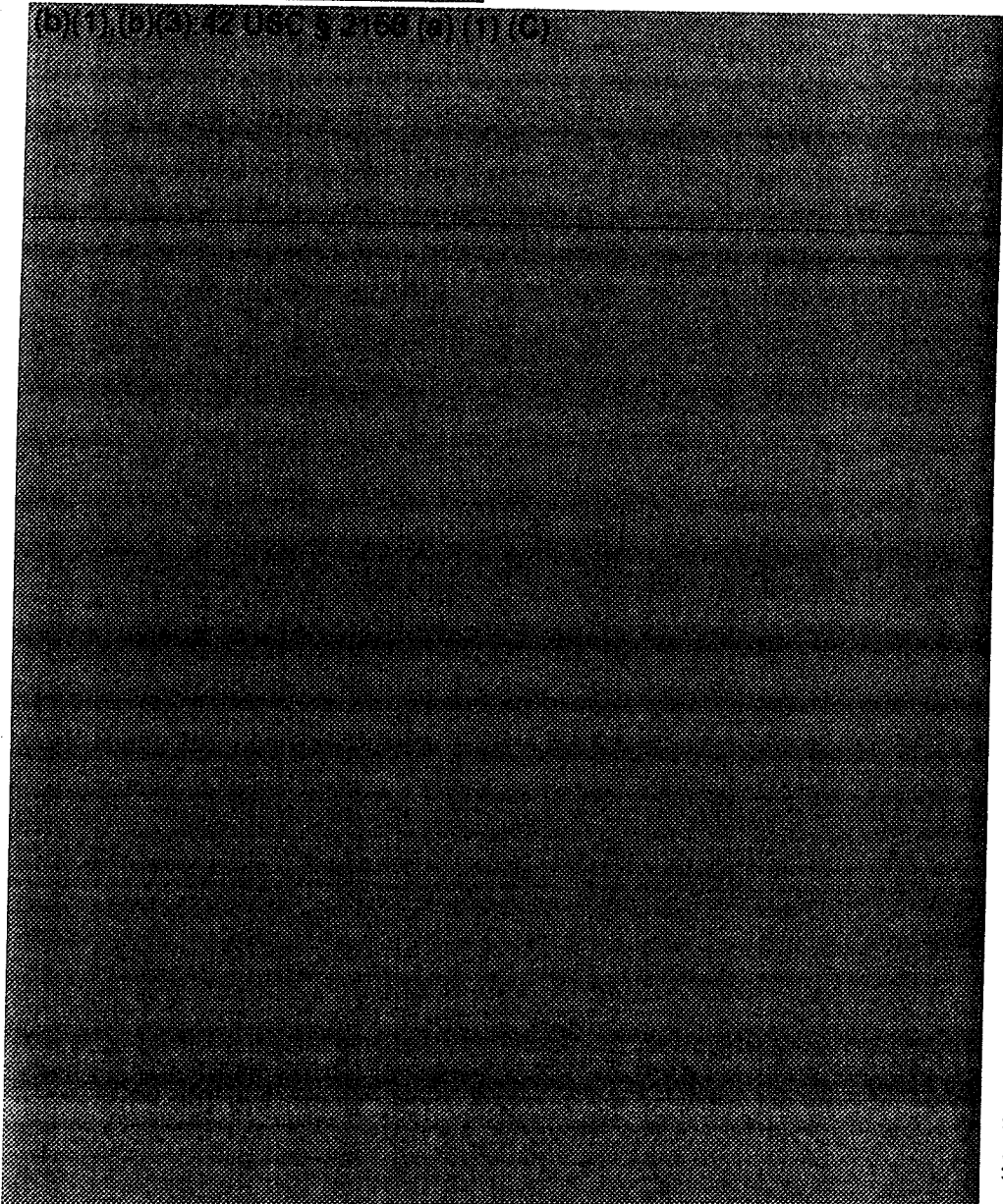


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ANNEX

LIMITED NUCLEAR OPTIONS (LNOs) AND REGIONAL  
NUCLEAR OPTIONS (RNOs) OBJECTIVES (U)

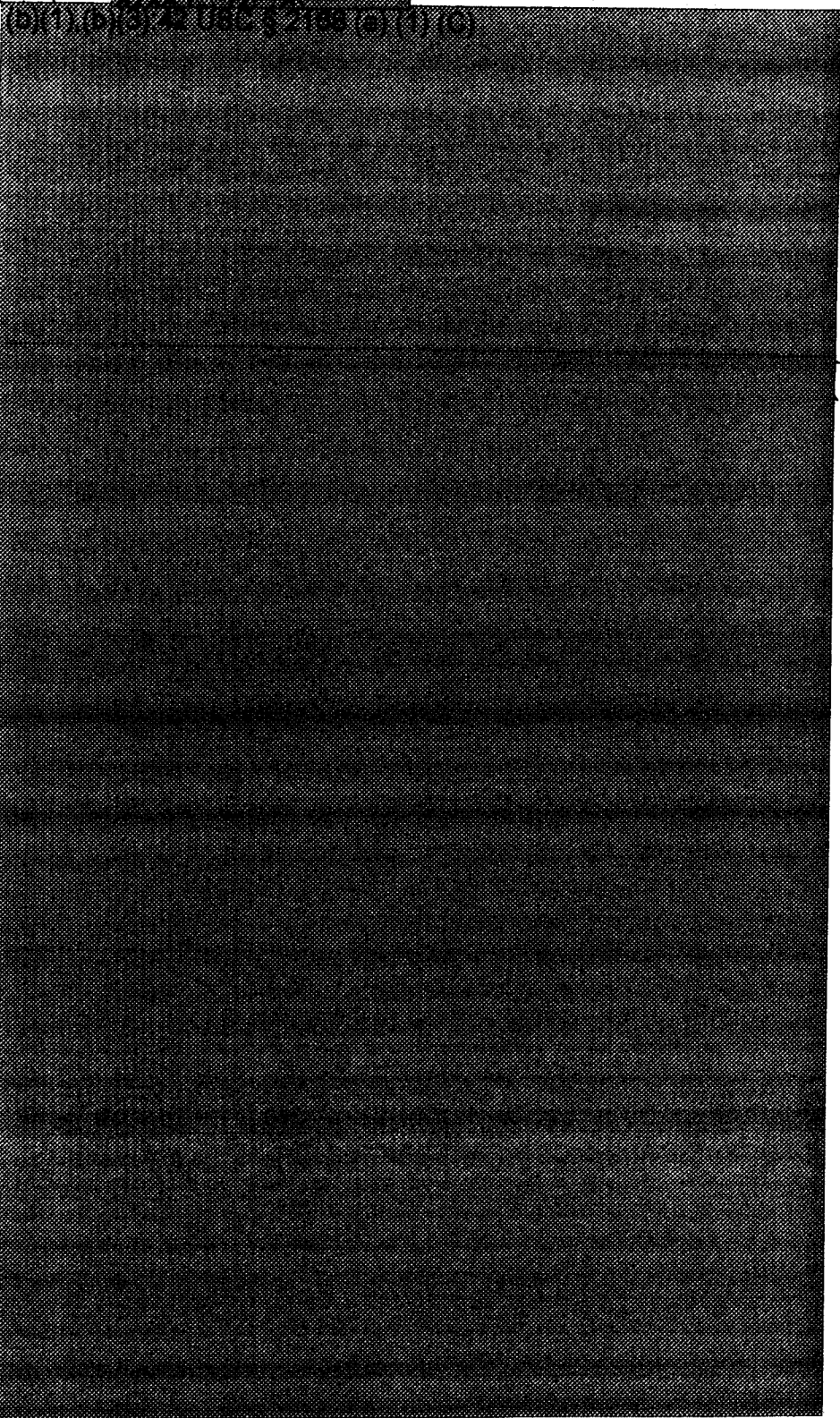
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Classified by Director, J-5  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO  
YEAR INTERVALS  
DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, 1987

2. ~~(S)~~ (U) (D) (C) (A) USC §



(U) (D) (C) (A) USC § 2105 (a) (1) (G)

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19 AUG 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY  
AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: US Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (U)

(U) Reference is made to your memorandum\* of July 29, which returned my report\*\* to the President of June 3 on US Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy so that it could be modified to accommodate my views on the results of PRM-10.\*\*\*

(15) The report has been appropriately revised and is being submitted this date for the President's review. I agree the report should be considered at the same time as the final results of PRM-10, and solicit your assistance in assuring the report receives the President's attention.

(15) It is apparent that consensus has not yet been achieved with respect to some elements of the general war targeting criteria described in NSDM-242. Follow-on work will be required in this area. I intend to continue such study, and will make further recommendation on the disposition of NSDM-242 after I complete a review of deterrent concepts and alternative strategic targeting criteria.

(15) I appreciate the importance of the issues that underlie your suggestion to amplify the report to describe more explicitly the President's role and physical location while conducting nuclear war. However, I have not attempted to do so in the report. While the capability to support the President in an emergency exists

[REDACTED]

(b)(1)

Wherever he may be, however he will remain Commander-in-Chief, retaining ultimate authority for authorizing nuclear weapons employment. Because the answer to this question is subject to any number of scenarios, I believe it can be more effectively addressed during discussion rather than by further lengthening the report to cover the broad range of possibilities.

(15) With respect to your request for comments on the mechanisms by which detailed and highly classified adjustments in our nuclear weapons employment policy alter the degree to which we deter the Soviets, our national declaratory policy provides the basic mechanism through which we attempt to influence Soviet perceptions and thus, deter on the basis of our targeting practices. Official but generalized statements of our targeting objectives

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652, EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3  
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SEC DEF CONTR NO. X-2403

- \* Attachment to JCS 2430/306-4
- \*\* Attachment to JCS 2410/306-3
- \*\*\* Attachment to JCS 2101/605

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and our confidence in achieving those objectives can serve this purpose without revealing the highly classified targeting details. In my memorandum to the President I mention declaratory policy as one of the areas needing reemphasis regardless of the eventual judgments made on NSOM-242.

*Harold Brown*

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

19 AUG 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: US Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (U)

(S) Several months ago, you directed Zbigniew Brzezinski to ask me several questions concerning our current nuclear weapons employment policy (NSDM-242), and the appropriateness of retaining that policy. My response to your questions was initially forwarded to the White House on June 3. At that time, however, it was anticipated that PRM-10 would likely provide additional insight with respect to nuclear weapons employment questions. As a consequence, the report was held within the NSC awaiting completion of PRM-10. The report was returned to me on July 29 to permit whatever modifications necessary to accommodate my views on the results of PRM-10.

(S) I have reviewed my previously developed responses to your questions, and am enclosing the report, slightly altered to the above end, for your information and consideration. In addition to responding to your specific questions, the report provides additional background to help in understanding our existing policy and the complexity of issues involving deterrence and the possible employment or threat of employment of nuclear weapons.

(S) Clearly, the question of whether existing nuclear employment policy should be continued or modified, and if so, in what respects, is of greatest importance. In providing their comments to assist in preparing the report, the Joint Chiefs of Staff judged that the rationale used in developing current nuclear doctrine appears valid for the immediate future. They recommend that current nuclear policy as described in NSDM-242 be retained.

(S) The analyses and discussions of PRM-10 suggest that there is still no consensus with respect to some elements of the general war targeting criteria described in NSDM-242. It is apparent that follow-on work will be required in this area, and I intend to continue such study. I am not, therefore, prepared to make a final recommendation on the ultimate disposition of NSDM-242 at this time. The attached report therefore does not present that issue for decision by you.

(S) Nevertheless, whatever judgments may ultimately be made on its details, NSDM-242 represented a major step in nuclear employment policy. It promulgated for the first time a single national policy for employment of both

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strategic and theater nuclear forces -- i.e., for planning how our existing forces would be used if necessary. It is a major advance in providing an opportunity for greater participation by the (civilian) National Command Authorities in nuclear planning, and for rationalizing the planning process. Moreover, in addition to establishing objectives and policy for nuclear weapons employment planning, NSDM-242 also specified several tasks to be undertaken in the areas of crisis management, declaratory policy, political-military interface in the planning process, and Presidential review of the resulting operational plans. For a variety of reasons, these requirements for implementing the overall policy have never all been completely satisfied. I believe that reemphasis on these areas will now be needed regardless of the eventual judgments made on NSDM-242.

(75) With respect to the status of current guidance, I endorse the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the policy stated in NSDM-242 appears valid for the immediate future, and I recommend that NSDM-242 be retained for employment planning purposes. I do this because even if (as is quite possible) further analysis indicates that significant policy modifications should be directed at some future point, adequate lead time will be necessary to transition to a new employment policy. Indeed, because of the complexity of the planning process, while some limited modifications might be introduced more rapidly, two or more years would be needed to develop new planning guidance and fully translate it into a new general war plan (SIOP). It would be essential that a comprehensive policy statement be in effect in the interim to provide focus and guidance for nuclear employment planning.

(8) I further recommend that action continue under the leadership of the Secretary of Defense to refine and support implementation of NSDM-242, especially in those areas unlikely to be affected by possible future policy adjustments. Such action should include:

- Continued action to familiarize you and your senior advisors with the content, capabilities, limitations and risks of the nuclear operational plans developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in support of the national nuclear employment policy, and to familiarize decision makers with the critical factors to be considered during the nuclear decision process.
- Initiation of actions needed to enhance the definition by you, with the advice of the National Security Council, of political objectives and criteria to assist the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their preparation of military plans for limited nuclear employment options when required by the President during a crisis. We also need to assure in peacetime that in crisis and war there will be adequate interaction and coordination of political, diplomatic, and military measures (including both operations and intelligence) in any attempt to control escalation through the limited employment of nuclear weapons

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-- Initiation of a comprehensive review of deterrent concepts, to include alternative strategic targeting criteria which could serve as a basis for refinement of nuclear employment planning guidance (NUWEP) issued by the Secretary of Defense.

(5) The Joint Chiefs of Staff have developed and I have reviewed a briefing on non-SIOP (i.e., relatively small) nuclear options. This briefing on limited nuclear employment options and the status of their planning was prepared as a follow-on to briefings you have received on the SIOP. I recommend that after you have reviewed the attached report, we schedule the Joint Chiefs of Staff briefing for you.

(5) I also recommend that you and I visit the Strategic Air Command and the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff within the next two months -- perhaps in late September or early in October.

(5) I will make a further recommendation on the disposition of NSDM-242 and the appropriate policy on the issues it presents after I have completed a review of deterrent concepts and alternative strategic targeting criteria as a follow-on to PRM-10.

*Harold Brown*

Attachment 1  
Revised Report on Current Nuclear  
Weapons Employment Policy

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REPORT  
BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
ON  
CURRENT NUCLEAR WEAPONS EMPLOYMENT POLICY (U)

1 June 1977

(Revised 12 Aug 1977)

Classified by SecDef  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3  
DECLASSIFY ON 31 Dec 2007

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REPORT  
BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
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CURRENT NUCLEAR WEAPONS EMPLOYMENT POLICY (U)

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- C. Limited Nuclear Employment Options (LNO/RNO)  
Objectives and Assumptions
- D. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum\*  
dtd 9 May 1977 (w/o attachment)

\* Enclosure to JCS 2430/306-1

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REPORT  
BY THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
ON

CURRENT US NUCLEAR EMPLOYMENT POLICY (U)

1. Introduction

(TS) The following report responds to the President's request for information and comments on the US nuclear employment policy established by NSDM-242.

(S) It is appropriate to note that NSDM-242 provides policy for planning the employment of all available US strategic and theater nuclear weapons (except anti-submarine and anti-air defense weapons), and should be regarded as quite distinct from acquisition and deployment policies which appear in other documents and about which determinations are made separately. The operational employment plans (SIOP and other contingency plans) developed in support of NSDM-242 are capabilities plans designed to achieve NSDM-242 objectives to the extent practicable with currently available nuclear forces.

(TS) The main body of the report (Sections II-V) focuses on our present nuclear war doctrine, and the underlying observations, assumptions and rationale that led to adoption of the policy represented by NSDM-242, and discusses the advisability of retaining NSDM-242. Discussions of the more specific questions relative to: (1) procedures for conducting nuclear war, (2) command and control survivability, and (3) objectives and assumptions of our current limited nuclear options are contained in appropriate annexes to the basic report.

(S) The report draws on the current views and recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In its explanation of the current policy stated in NSDM-242, the report also draws heavily on the record of the NSSM-169 inter-agency study group on nuclear weapons employment policy whose analyses and recommendations resulted in the specific policy stated in NSDM-242. The NSSM-169 group's rationale is presented to permit a better understanding of the current doctrine and why it was adopted. A critical analysis of this rationale has not been attempted. Such an analysis is appropriate as part of PRM-10 follow-on activities.

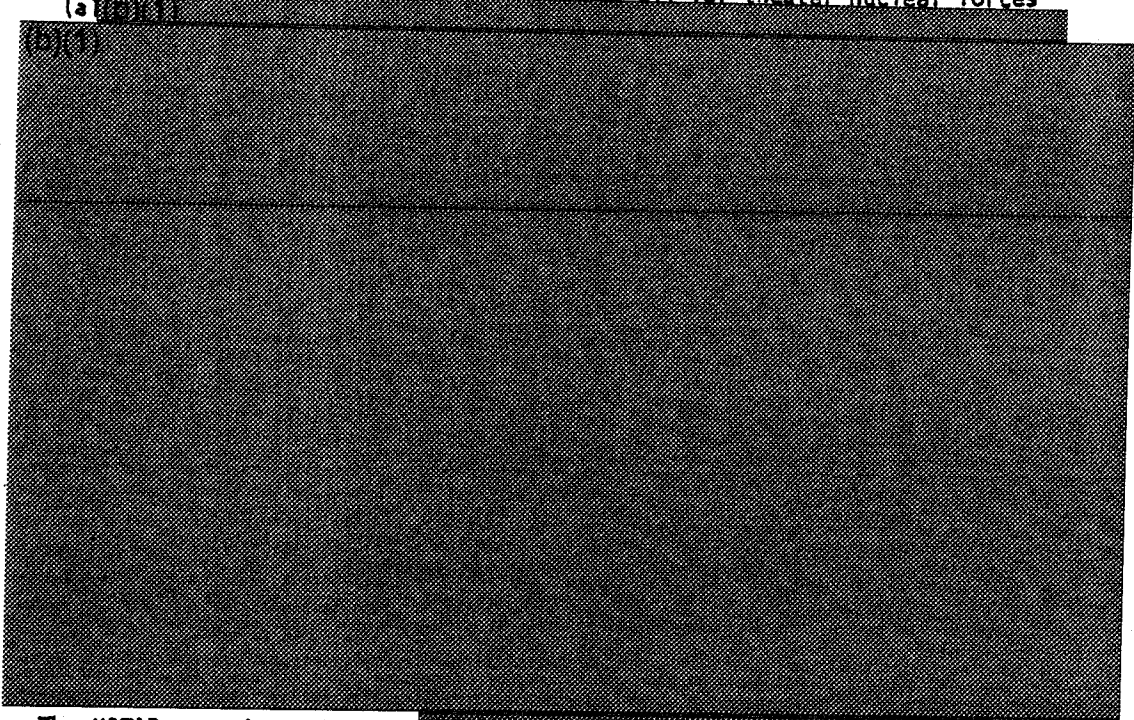
11. US Nuclear War Planning - Background (1962-74)

(S) Since 1962, employment planning for virtually all US strategic nuclear forces has been contained in the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP).

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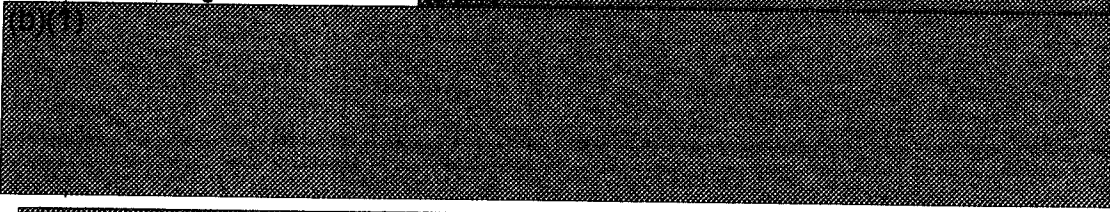
Until 1976, the SIOP was prepared in accordance with the National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy (NSTAP), developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The NSTAP was a JCS guidance document for military planners. There was, however, no single coherent statement or document that could be regarded as a national strategic nuclear employment policy. There was essentially no publicly stated US employment policy at all for theater nuclear forces (a) (b) (1)

(b) (1)

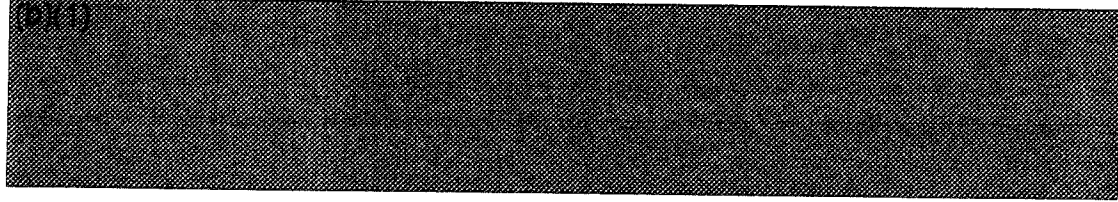


The NSTAP organized the SIOP (b) (1)

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(b)(1)

III. Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy Reassessment (1969-74)

(U) Overwhelming US nuclear superiority and the threat of large-scale nuclear retaliation provided a credible deterrent not only to deliberate nuclear attack throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s but also a reasonably plausible threat for response to conventional attacks. US nuclear capability continued to increase during this period with significant qualitative and quantitative improvements in US nuclear forces. Although concerns for the survivability of the US forces date back to discussion of the vulnerability of bomber bases in the late 1950s, the deployment of submarine-launched ballistic missiles, silo-based ICBMs on constant alert, as well as an alert posture for SAC bombers greatly enhanced the survivability of the US retaliatory capability. An effective US second-strike retaliatory capability appeared secure even after having sustained a major surprise attack by the Soviet Union, and some US capability existed to neutralize Soviet nuclear forces. Nevertheless, while by most measures, the US retained strategic nuclear superiority, the Soviets were rapidly narrowing this lead. In particular, the USSR was likewise achieving a secure strategic retaliatory capability themselves by rapid deployments of ICBMs protected in hardened silos, and SLBMs under the sea.

~~(S)~~ In the minds of many analysts, these changing strategic realities raised serious questions as to the continued effectiveness of our nuclear deterrent. While virtually all believed our strategic forces and plans adequate to deter a major nuclear attack on the US, they were uncertain that the threat of large-scale nuclear retaliation provided the best deterrent to lesser attacks or threats to the US and its allies. Moreover, the changing strategic balance appeared to erode US allies' confidence in the strength and credibility of the US nuclear deterrent. The diminished credibility of the assured destruction doctrine to deter attacks against Europe led Secretary McNamara to press for a flexible response strategy in NATO, eventually realized in MC 14/3 in 1967.

~~(S)~~ Escalation Control. Pursuant to the widely expressed doubts concerning the continued effectiveness of the US nuclear deterrent, Secretary Laird initiated a study in 1970. The study initially included participants from

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the Department of Defense under the chairmanship of Dr. John Foster. Later, in 1973, it became the NSSM-169 study, and representatives from the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the staff of the National Security Council were added (though they had been consulted informally earlier). The NSSM-169 study group concluded: (1) the threat of a massive retaliatory response is credible as a deterrent only at the upper levels of potential strategic nuclear conflict, and (2) if deterrence fails by accident or miscalculation, counterforce attacks against Soviet nuclear threats offer little confidence of holding damage to the US to a low level.

(U) The study group recommended that the US introduce limited nuclear employment options into its nuclear planning to enhance deterrence and to limit damage by controlling escalation. The National Command Authorities (NCA) would have greater flexibility in responding to a wider range of threats against the US and its allies and thereby increase the overall credibility of our deterrent and the possibility of limiting damage, if deterrence failed.

(U) The study group noted that under the previous nuclear employment policy (NSTAP), the means of limiting damage was viewed in military terms -- counterforce attacks against nuclear threats. The group concluded that in a major nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union, counterforce strikes would not significantly reduce urban damage to the US and its allies. The US did not have the capabilities to effectively target the increasingly survivable Soviet nuclear forces, either preemptively or in retaliation. In addition, US strategic defense capabilities were limited. Air defense forces had been steadily declining and ballistic missile defense -- not feasible for area defense in any event -- was constrained by the ABM Treaty. Consequently, the group introduced the concept of limiting damage through the control of escalation. If deterrence failed, the objective would be to confine the conflict to the lowest level possible while attempting to coerce the enemy to terminate the war on terms acceptable to the US. Efforts to control escalation through the employment of limited nuclear options would show restraint. They would provide opportunities for the enemy to reconsider and to negotiate for an acceptable settlement (although not necessarily a settlement that achieves all of the objectives or goals desired by either side).

(U) Options to control escalation are intended to work on the will and determination of the opposing political leadership. They are not intended to fulfill a total set of military objectives but rather to:

- Reverse or stalemate the situation, at least temporarily.
- Diminish the enemy's expectation of success.
- Convince him that his limits will be exceeded.
- Present the enemy with a set of response alternatives which make it difficult for him to respond militarily in kind, and disadvantageous to escalate.

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-- Convince him that early termination is his most attractive alternative.

Key questions, perhaps unanswerable, are the degree to which such an approach can influence Soviet actions during a nuclear war, the means for conveying such messages (explicitly or implicitly), and the potential effectiveness of the whole approach. Even if the likely effectiveness is low, the stake is so high that in the absence of clearly better approaches, some pursuit of this one is justified.

(U) The concept of escalation control requires establishing boundaries limiting the scope, level, and duration of the violence. Planning emphasis is shifted from the traditional approach which places specific military targeting requirements (designed to secure military advantage) foremost to an approach in which political-military objectives established by the NCA (designed to terminate conflict as quickly as possible) are paramount. Special emphasis is placed on mutually supporting military (conventional and nuclear) and political measures. A high degree of interaction would be required among the NCA, the JCS, and the commanders of the unified and specified commands in selecting the details of the attack.

(U) Behind the concept of escalation control is the assumption that statesmen define some limits as to the losses (costs) they are willing to suffer to achieve their objectives. In theory, if the Soviets realize they cannot achieve their objectives quickly or easily, they will be deterred from further escalation. The options involved would be clearly below the level of a massive attack, and they would seek to coerce the enemy into negotiation for early war termination by striking relatively small numbers of selected targets and providing a deterrent to further escalation by holding forth the prospect of subsequent massive attacks on targets he values highly. If, however, there are virtually no limits on the enemy's objectives or the costs he is willing to incur, then control of escalation through limited nuclear options may not be possible, and the conflict could only be stopped by destroying his capability to achieve his objective. If deterrence fails, the essential first step would be to assess the enemy's ultimate objectives and determine whether and where he would likely consider his costs disproportionate to any gain. Also required would be a clear understanding of our own objectives with respect to the issue at hand, and our willingness to risk a Soviet counter-limited strike in return.

(U) The NSSM 169 study group recognized that there can be no guarantee that the limited nuclear options will in fact control escalation. They believed, however, that the capability to employ limited nuclear options provides the NCA with the only means to try to control the level of violence.

#### General War

(S) A second focus of concern to the NSSM-169 study group was how best to deter a major attack on the US. Recognizing, however, that there was no way deterrence of a major nuclear war could be categorically assured, the group

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also developed targeting criteria that would contribute to the most favorable outcome possible for the US in the event deterrence failed. They concluded that the ability to deny the enemy his postwar objectives in terms of over-all power and influence would be a better deterrent to a major nuclear attack than destroying what was defined in advance to be "unacceptable cost" in terms of fatalities and damage to the enemy's war-supporting and urban industrial base.

(b)(1)

(s) In place of a general war-targeting objective threatening to kill millions of people (b)(1)

(b)(1)

(s) The group rejected the targeting alternative which emphasized indiscriminate destruction of population for the following reasons:

- The US was limited in its ability to insure approximately equal Soviet deaths to those suffered by the US given the demographic asymmetry (i.e., the US is more concentrated in cities than Soviet population) and the smaller yields of US warheads. (SIOP analyses in 1972 estimated 123 million US fatalities compared to 82 million Soviet fatalities in a maximum level nuclear exchange between the US and USSR, i.e., both sides fully generated with the USSR striking first.)
- The Soviets might be able to reduce the US ability to destroy Soviet population by massive civil defense programs. Although the extent and effectiveness of these programs were unknown, their existence created uncertainty in the estimates of Soviet civilian fatalities we would be able to achieve.
- The Soviet and PRC leadership might have a higher tolerance for casualties than perceived by the US, and might not be deterred

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by the threat to destroy the percentage of the population and industry defined by the US. Historically, the Soviets have accepted enormous human costs to secure the objectives of the communist regime. Millions of deaths are estimated to have occurred (though over years, not days) during the agricultural collectivization and Stalinist purges preceding World War II in which twenty million Soviets are estimated to have died.

-- The US deterrent strategy, out of moral concern, should not emphasize the killing of non-combatants.

(TS) The NSSM-169 study group was not unanimous in believing that a threat to post-attack recovery targets would be more effective than some other targeting objective in terms of enhancing deterrence. Whether a criterion of comparable fatalities and damage was required was open to debate, and some held that the revised targeting criteria would not result in significant differences from the then currently declared threat of major retaliation against population. (This in fact, appeared to be the case when analysis of the first SIOP developed under NSDM-242 criteria showed - without considering possible Soviet civil defense - a decrease of only about two per cent in expected Soviet fatalities. The political, economic, and military institutions are, in the large, where the population is). All of the NSSM-169 study group agreed, however, that the new criteria would not decrease deterrence of a major nuclear attack.

#### IV. Current Nuclear Employment Policy and Planning Guidance

(TS) The concepts developed by the NSSM-169 study group were incorporated in NSDM-242 issued by the President on January 24, 1974. NSDM-242 defined general employment planning objectives and broad targeting policy for US nuclear forces including for the first time, provisions for a strategic reserve force. It also established procedures for the development of further guidance and Presidential review of employment plans, as well as certain objectives and tasks for command, control and crisis management. The broad policies directed by NSDM-242 have been more definitively elaborated by the Secretary of Defense as Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (NUWEP), and by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their detailed planning guidance to the CINCs and the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff.

(TS) Briefly stated, NSDM-242 and NUWEP establish that the fundamental objective of the current US doctrine of "Flexible Nuclear Response" is deterrence of conventional and nuclear attacks and attempts at coercion by nuclear powers against the US and its allies. This condition is established by an assured and evident US nuclear retaliatory capability effective across a wide spectrum of possible conflict situations. Should conflict occur, the strategy seeks to limit damage to the US and its allies through the control of escalation. This is to be accomplished by providing a wide range of employment options to the NCA for response to varying levels of provocation. These options are to be employed, in conjunction with other supporting diplomatic and military measures, to limit conflict to the lowest level feasible

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and coerce an enemy into negotiating a termination of the war on terms acceptable to the US and its allies. This is to be done while holding vital enemy targets hostage and threatening their subsequent destruction if the enemy fails to negotiate. The availability of such options is meant to enhance deterrence in the first place. To the extent that escalation cannot be controlled and an all-out war occurs, the strategy seeks to maximize US power relative to an enemy by destroying the political, economic and military structures supporting the enemy's status as a major power and those resources critical to his early post-war recovery, limiting damage to the US to the degree practical, and by maintaining a strategic force in reserve for protection and coercion during and after a major nuclear exchange.

(U) Present policy concepts emphasize preplanning to: enhance force efficiency and effectiveness, provide for rapid execution, and provide a solid basis for estimating consequences (expected damage levels, fatalities, risks, etc.). The full range of politico-military conditions cannot be anticipated. Past experience has shown that national decision-makers desire a full range of options to consider in determining appropriate solutions to a crisis. It is therefore prudent and necessary to maintain the capability for responding to a wide range of hostile actions. Therefore, nuclear employment plans have been designed to allow for flexible adaptation as events unfold prior to execution. Where only general plans can be formulated in advance, dedicated organizations and specialized planning procedures have been established within the military structure of the Joint Staff and unified and specified commands for the rapid development, assessment and execution of specific limited nuclear employment options. It is assumed that there will be a high degree of control and direction by the NCA which will require close interaction between political, diplomatic, and military actions in the face of rapidly, often obscurely unfolding events. An acceptable concept has not yet evolved of how this interaction between the NCA and other involved organizations might occur.

(U) The announcement by Secretary Schlesinger of the new US employment policy was widely interpreted as indicating that the US was shifting its nuclear targeting to a silo-busting, counterforce strategy which would require acquisition of new strategic weapon systems and capabilities. In fact, the changes in the targeting, and the additional flexibility incorporated in the employment plans have not as far carried out entailed purchase of new systems. Schlesinger did acknowledge, however, that the doctrine would be improved if certain qualitative improvements were funded for the forces and command and control systems. The contemporaneous discussion of better US hard target capability related to a distinct issue -- avoiding the perceptions that he believed would result if the USSR were thought to have a great edge over the US in any particular category of strategic capability. Neither did the doctrine represent a radical shift in targeting emphasis. On the contrary prepared US nuclear war plans had always included options for attacking both urban-industrial and military (hard and soft) targets,

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but heretofore they always involved the expenditure of several thousand nuclear weapons. The concepts of NSDM-242 were meant to provide greater flexibility to the NCA by providing a wide spectrum of variously sized options from which to choose an appropriate response at any level of aggression.

(b) (1), (b) (3), 42 USC § 2160 (a) (1) (C)



(U) For the most part, LNO-RNO development has produced options that emphasize their military utility (rather than political utility) in the defense of an area or interest believed vital to the US. While criteria for assessing military effectiveness are well developed and widely understood, and thus can be used to guide preplanning of options, definition of useful criteria for evaluating the potential political utility of LNOs and RNOs has been found to be very complex. Factors relevant to a determination of political utility are extremely subjective, and may not be adequately understood until an actual crisis begins to unfold. Thus, it has been easier to conceptualize and pre-plan limited options on the basis of their potential military utility rather than potential political contribution in the contingency situations that have been postulated. Progress is needed toward the development and statement of political objectives and criteria to enhance the military planners' capability to pre-plan, and more importantly, to translate national political objectives into limited options useful to the NCA in a nuclear crisis. In this regard, the Joint Chiefs of Staff in collaboration with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, have

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Initiated a series of politico-military war simulations designed to raise the level of familiarization and understanding of nuclear war considerations among senior civilian and military officials. Two separate series of simulations have examined limited nuclear option concepts in crisis scenarios focused on the Mid-East and northeast Asia. The simulations have been considered very informative and useful by most participants, and should be continued. Better insight, however, still remains to be developed in the area of interfacing political objectives, requirements and criteria with military plans and capabilities. This will be particularly important in the management of an actual crisis when it will be necessary to integrate political and diplomatic measures with military activities if an attempt is being made to control escalation through the limited employment of nuclear weapons.

#### V. Advisability of Retaining NSDM-242

(6) The NSDM-242 nuclear weapons employment policy provided, for the first time, a nationally promulgated common policy framework for both strategic and theater forces. It remains for this Administration to determine whether or not NSDM-242 should be retained, modified or replaced.

(7) It would be inadvisable merely to cancel NSDM-242 in the absence of an equally comprehensive national nuclear weapons employment policy statement. Nuclear weapons employment planning is an immensely complex and time consuming activity. Significant modifications to nuclear weapons employment doctrine generate literally vast adjustments not only in the targeting plans themselves, but in command and control procedures, emergency action procedures, training, intelligence requirements, as well as many other areas. Two years of intense activity elapsed between the signing of NSDM-242 and the effective date of the first SLOP developed accordingly. Consequently, transition to any new or significantly revised doctrine would require an adequate lead time.

(8) Even though no one can say with confidence that the existence of limited nuclear options will either deter a potential aggressor in every case, or that escalation can be controlled through the employment of limited nuclear options, there is no doubt that we would wish to consider alternative options in a serious crisis. Agreement exists that the US should continue to plan for the flexible use of its nuclear weapons.

(9) With respect to general war, we can never be absolutely certain of precisely what or how much will deter the Soviet leadership. Consequently, we cannot be confident that a massive nuclear war will not occur by either design or miscalculation. The concept of focusing our general war targeting objectives on the enemy power structure itself, and on its regenerative capacity, enables the doctrine to be related not only to deterrence, but also to US interests and objectives in a postwar world, should a general war occur. It is believed that the NSDM-242 targeting objectives currently incorporated in the SLOP are adequate for the immediate future. We intend, however, to examine alternative targeting concepts in PRM-10 follow-on analyses. It is possible that these analyses may result in recommendations for future modifications to strategic targeting objectives and priorities.

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(TS) The Joint Chiefs of Staff were asked to provide their views with respect to NSDM-242. After review of the doctrine, they concluded that the rationale used in developing current nuclear employment policy over the past several years appears to be valid for the immediate future. They believe the doctrine expressed in NSDM-242 is responsive to the realities of current technology and the relative military power balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. In that its adoption has placed greater emphasis on planning for limited options, they believe it improves the capability for deterrence across the entire spectrum of conflict and provides the NCA with a realistic flexible response capability. For these reasons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe current doctrine for the employment of nuclear weapons, as embodied in NSDM-242 should be retained. They believe the following additional factors would support this position:

- Deterrence remains the principal objective of national policy. Intelligence analyses of current capabilities of the Soviet Union and the projected threats indicate that the Soviet Union is rapidly closing the technology gap which will allow it to enhance its capability to wage nuclear conflict at various levels of intensity. Therefore, it is prudent to maintain US deterrent capability over a wide spectrum of possible conflict through a concept that embraces both strategic and theater nuclear weapons. This close coupling of US strategic capabilities to theater forces and the extension of the nuclear umbrella to theaters without stalwart US conventional defenses are believed to have enhanced deterrence of nuclear and conventional coercion and attack, especially in the face of Soviet force improvement.
- Targeting for an assured retaliation capability should remain focused on the postwar recovery resources and, as practical, national leadership and primary military threats. This is particularly true in light of evident Soviet hardening efforts (storage facilities, work force shelters, political/military centers, etc.) and other civil defense programs. Targeting of national leadership (includes political/military C<sup>3</sup>) and military nuclear/conventional capabilities enhances deterrence, helps limit damage to the extent practical, and denies the Soviets the capability to seize industrial resources in Europe as a basis for their recovery. Additional intelligence support is needed to provide an adequate data base which will enable recovery forecasting and improve the capability for targeting post-attack recovery resources.
- A survivable strategic reserve force is considered even more necessary as a means for the United States to deter further attack (following a major nuclear exchange from either the USSR/PRC or other world powers, or to achieve objectives which were not fully accomplished by the initial SIOP laydown.

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- Escalation control appears to be an increasingly viable concept in view of the extensive Soviet ICBM hardening efforts, the SLBM threat, and ABM Treaty agreements. Counterforce (as a damage limiting capability) has limited effectiveness, making escalation control one of the few means of limiting damage to the United States, particularly in the absence of improved US civil defense measures.
- US NATO Allies' confidence in deterrence is strengthened if they believe the United States has options that are usable and effective to defend NATO. NATO's Nuclear Operations (NOP) provide for general nuclear war attacks on the Warsaw Pact which can be simultaneously executed with the US SIOP. Included in the NOP are Selected Employment Plans (SEPs) developed by NATO which are similar in concept to US LNOs and RNOs. Any US limited nuclear capability strengthens Allied confidence in the US willingness and capability to defend NATO. Consideration of current policy must include its impact on Allied solidarity.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

(78) I endorse the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the policy stated in NSDM-242 appears valid for the immediate future, and I recommend that NSDM-242 be retained for employment planning purposes. I do this because even if further analysis indicates that significant policy modifications should be directed at some future point, adequate lead time will be necessary to transition to a new employment policy. Indeed, because of the complexity of the planning process, while some limited modifications might be introduced more rapidly, two or more years would be needed to develop new planning guidance and fully translate it into a new general war plan (SIOP). It would be essential that a comprehensive policy statement be in effect in the interim to provide focus and guidance for nuclear employment planning.

(79) I further recommend that action continue under the leadership of the Secretary of Defense to refine and support implementation of NSDM-242, especially in those areas unlikely to be affected by possible future policy adjustments. Such action should include:

- Continued action to familiarize you and your senior advisors with the content, capabilities, limitations and risks of the nuclear operational plans developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in support of the national nuclear employment policy, and to familiarize decision makers with the critical factors to be considered during the nuclear decision process.
- Initiation of actions needed to enhance the definition by you, with the advice of the National Security Council, of political

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objectives and criteria to assist the Joint Chiefs of Staff in their preparation of military plans for limited nuclear employment options when required by the President during a crisis. We also need to assure in peacetime that in crisis and war there will be adequate interaction and coordination of political, diplomatic, and military measures (including both operations and intelligence) in any attempt to control escalation through the limited employment of nuclear weapons.

- Initiation of a comprehensive review of deterrent concepts to include alternative strategic targeting criteria which could serve as a basis for refinement of nuclear employment planning guidance (NUWEP) issued by the Secretary of Defense.

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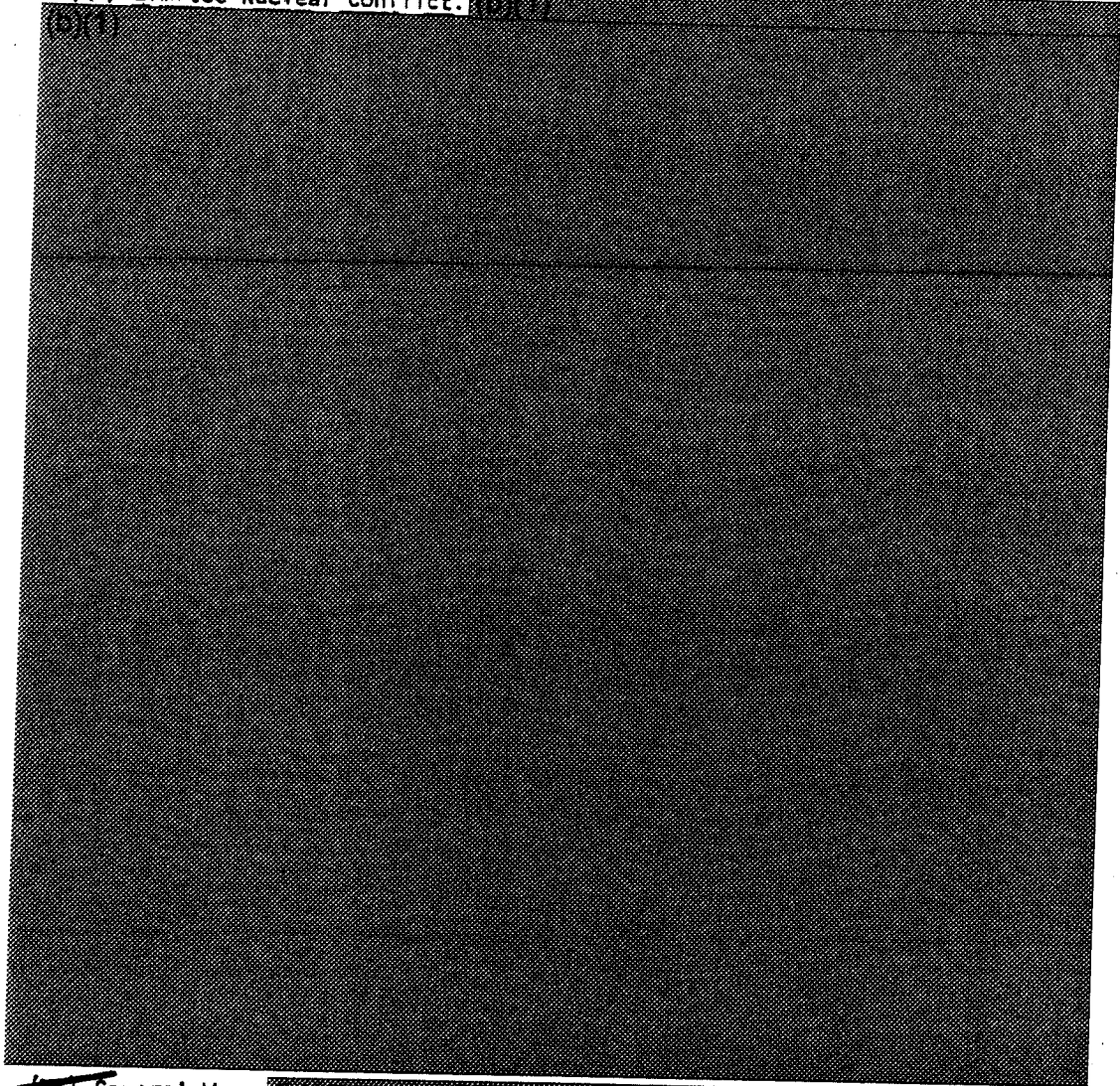
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ANNEX A

PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING NUCLEAR WAR

~~(S)~~ Limited Nuclear Conflict. (b)(1)

(b)(1)

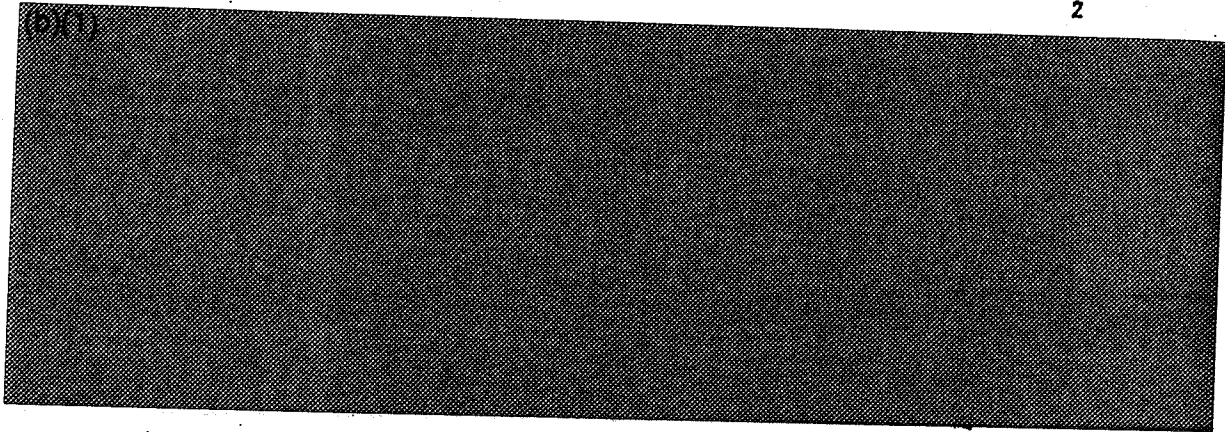


~~(S)~~ General War. (b)(1)

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ANNEX B

(b)(1) [Redacted]

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ANNEX C

LIMITED NUCLEAR EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS (LNO/RNO)  
OBJECTIVES AND ASSUMPTIONS

(U) The basic objective of non-SIOP limited nuclear employment options (LNOs and RNOs) is to strengthen deterrence across a broader range of possible conflicts by providing a series of preplanned, measured and discrete nuclear response options more applicable to situations where the deterrent threat of the large-scale options in the SIOP would be inappropriate or incredible. In the event that deterrence fails, the principal objective of non-SIOP options is to secure early war termination on terms acceptable to the US and its allies at the lowest level of conflict feasible, thereby limiting the level of overall damage. In accordance with this objective, LNOs and RNOs have been developed for a number of contingencies. These options are available for consideration by the NCA during a crisis and for use in conjunction with political and other military measures such as employment of conventional forces. Specific objectives of current LNOs and RNOs are contained in the Appendix.

(U) The basic political assumption underlying the development of non-SIOP nuclear options is that escalation control can be achieved. The fundamental assumption of escalation control is that there are limits on the risks or losses the enemy is willing to accept. Militarily, a key assumption is that the controlled, restrained use of nuclear force provides the capability to demonstrate resolve, to reverse locally a disadvantageous force balance, or to destroy specific, valued targets. When political and military efforts are combined, the assumption is that escalation can be controlled by enhancing or guiding enemy perceptions. This is done by communicating with him (communicating NATO's intentions, MOLINK, etc.) and by limiting the level, scope and duration of nuclear strikes, while achieving military effectiveness.

Appendix  
LNOs and RNOs Objectives

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UNCLASSIFIED WHEN ATTACHMENTS  
ARE DETACHED

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APPENDIX  
TO ANNEX C

LIMITED NUCLEAR OPTIONS (LNOs) AND REGIONAL  
NUCLEAR OPTIONS (RNOs) OBJECTIVES (U)

(b)(1), (b)(3) 42 USC § 216B (a) (1) (C)



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(b) (1) (b) (3) 42 USC § 2168 (a) (1) (C)



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APPENDIX  
TO ANNEX C



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SECTION III

STRATEGIC CONCEPTS (U)

12. (U) Purpose. To present the military objectives, strategic concepts, and national military strategy that provide the basis for the tasking in Section V of this plan.
13. (U) Basic Military Objectives
- a. (~~S~~) Maintain reliable, responsive, and efficient armed forces capable of attaining US national security objectives.
  - b. (~~S~~) Deter armed conflict, but, if deterrence fails, conduct military operations designed to achieve national objectives.
  - c. (~~S~~) Provide the capability for the United States to influence international affairs from a position of recognized military strength.
  - d. (~~S~~) Maintain freedom of space and of international seas and airspace.
  - e. (~~S~~) Assist self-defense efforts of selected nations to counter subversion, insurgency, and aggression.
  - f. (~~S~~) Promote peaceful settlements of regional disputes and discourage undue military influence of nations whose interests are inimical to the United States.
14. (U) Specific Military Objectives. Specific military objectives stemming from the basic military objectives are:
- a. (~~S~~) Maintenance of a clearly perceived essential equivalence in strategic forces with the USSR.

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(2) ~~(TS)~~ Theater Nuclear Conflict. Theater nuclear forces will be considered for employment with conventional or strategic forces in the event of enemy first use of nuclear weapons, in response to enemy use of chemical weapons should US chemical retaliatory capability be inadequate, or to prevent failure of the conventional defense. Authorization for the use of theater nuclear weapons will be retained by the President as provided by law. Planning should recognize that release will be neither immediate nor automatic and would be intended to achieve a significant improvement in the US position. 1  
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(3) ~~(S)~~ Conventional Conflict. US conventional forces, either unilaterally or in conjunction with US allies, will be used to counter conventional force challenges. US conventional forces will be maintained at a high state of readiness to assure their ability to respond rapidly to conventional crises worldwide. The United States may mobilize Reserve forces to enhance the conventional warfighting capability. 13  
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(4) ~~(S)~~ Conflicts Involving Chemical Warfare and Biological Defense. US policy renounces first use of chemical weapons and any use of biological weapons. However, the United States will maintain the capability to retaliate against enemy first use of these weapons. US Forces will be prepared to use chemical weapons in retaliation to achieve CW termination at the lowest level of intensity. Chemical and biological protection will assure the capability of US Forces to operate in a chemical/biological environment. 21  
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2. ~~(S)~~ In the event of an attack which threatens the integrity of the forces and the territory attacked and which cannot be successfully held with conventional forces, deliberate escalation will be considered.

3. ~~(TS)~~ In all cases, the ultimate decision on the use of US nuclear weapons will lie with the President. However, it is essential that there be the greatest possible degree of North Atlantic Alliance consultation within the time available, considering the relevant circumstances, before any decision to employ nuclear weapons is reached.

(f) ~~(S)~~ Provide a credible deterrent to CW by establishing and maintaining a capability to defend against CW attack, operate within a toxic environment, and retaliate with chemical weapons.

(2) (U) European (Non-NATO), Mediterranean, and North Africa Strategy

(a) ~~(S)~~ Honor bilateral commitments to non-NATO European countries and cooperate with non-NATO non-Communist Western European nations on military matters. In the event of a major Warsaw Pact attack, selected countries will be considered as an integral part of the Western European defense system.

(b) ~~(S)~~ Assist in countering external Communist interventions in intra-area conflicts.

(c) ~~(S)~~ Counter regional threats in North Africa:

1. ~~(S)~~ Rely primarily on forces indigenous to the region.

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d. ~~(C)~~ Plans for the employment of lethal or incapacitating chemical agents or munitions must consider the requirement for Presidential approval for all wartime use of these agents and munitions, as well as the national policy of "no first use."

(1) ~~(S)~~ Presidential approval must be obtained during wartime for all use of chemical agents or munitions. The use of riot control agents (RCAs) and herbicides on US bases and installations in situations short of war is authorized.

(2) ~~(S)~~ The "no first use" policy means that the United States will not initiate use of chemical agents or munitions during wartime although chemical agents or munitions may be used in retaliation with Presidential approval. An exception to the "no first use" rule is the employment of RCAs which may be used in a defensive role, with Presidential approval, to save lives.

22. ~~(C)~~ Execution Package Planning. To reduce the volume of detail, complete time-phased force deployment data (TPFDD) will be developed for only the first 90 days of the operational planning period. Transportation feasibility assessment of the OPLAN will be based on this 90-day period. To enhance the flexibility and utility of major OPLANS during crisis situations, approximately the first 15 days of each plan will be constructed so as to be readily converted to an operation order (OPORD). Each execution planning package will consist of combat, combat support, or combat service support forces linked together or uniquely identified so that they may be extracted or adjusted as an entity. The number and type of execution planning packages will be at the discretion of the supported commanders. Further, to

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reduce the time required to update OPLANS and detailed 1  
supporting plans during crisis situations, the execution 2  
planning package portion of the OPLAN TPFDD and supporting 3  
plans (e.g., movement tables) will be prepared to be capable 4  
of immediate conversion to OPORDs. This includes the 5  
identification of specific type units, actual origin, and 6  
the preparation of detailed movement plans by the transpor- 7  
tation operating authorities. Updates to the TPFDD will be 8  
provided to the Joint Chiefs of Staff quarterly following 9  
Type Unit Characteristics update or as required. 10

23. (U) Logistics 11

a. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be advised promptly 12  
by the Chiefs of the Services and/or commanders of 13  
unified and specified commands when logistic deficiencies 14  
develop that would restrict or delay the execution of 15  
approved plans. 16

b. ~~(S)~~ Logistic support for operations in central Europe 17  
will be based upon initial use of the US/BENELUX/FRG 18  
LOCs with the exception of fuel, which will be transported 19  
in US and NATO pipelines through France. Alternate plans 20  
will be prepared for other commodities to utilize a LOC 21  
through France in the event France enters the conflict or 22  
permits use of French territory. 23

c. ~~(S)~~ The adequacy of PWRMS to meet pre-positioned war 24  
reserve materiel requirements should be thoroughly 25  
examined during assessment of logistic supportability of 26  
new concepts and operation plans to insure logistic 27  
sustainability until establishment of resupply LOC. 28

APPENDIX

Selective Release of Nuclear Weapons (U)

1. ~~(TS)~~ Purpose. To prescribe procedures for requesting, justifying, and monitoring the selective expenditure of nuclear weapons.

2. ~~(TS)~~ Circumstances for Requesting Selective Release.  
Under certain conditions, it may become necessary to employ nuclear weapons in the defense of US and allied forces even prior to their use by the enemy. Commanders of unified and specified commands will, therefore, be prepared to use nuclear weapons when authorized by the President under conditions short of a strategic nuclear war. Employment of these weapons may be requested on a selective basis when friendly forces are subjected to an attack with which they cannot cope using non-nuclear weapons and forces, and which, unless nuclear weapons are employed, could result in:

a. A significant decrease in combat effectiveness of a command's forces or nuclear capability or,

b. The loss of any areas which are essential to the overall defense of a theater or,

c. The progressive and continuing attrition of forces, weapons, equipment, and supplies at a rate which exceeds replacement capability.

3. ~~(TS)~~ Other Possible Considerations. The selective use of nuclear weapons also may be considered necessary under circumstances such as:

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a. If the timely use of a limited number of nuclear weapons would give evidence of US determination and lead the enemy to the decision that the risks involved in continuing a course of action were too great.

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b. In case of hostile actions at sea when the use of nuclear weapons would be necessary for the local self-defense of air or naval units vital to the defense of the United States and its allies.

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c. In certain areas where the use of atomic demolition munitions and other nuclear weapons would be the only means of preventing serious penetration of US and allied defenses by enemy forces.

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d. In air defense situations not provided for in JCS 9431/182009Z August 1966, wherein it is considered necessary to use nuclear weapons to defend US and allied forces against air attack.

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4. ~~(TS)~~ Conditional Authority. The rapidity with which tactical situations develop could result in severe loss of forces during the time period required to obtain Presidential authorization to employ nuclear weapons. Therefore, in a deteriorating situation which could lead to circumstances such as those described in paragraph 3 above, a commander may request conditional authority for selective release of nuclear weapons for use against the enemy when and if the situation described occurs. If obtained from the President, this authority would be extended no lower than the commander of a unified or specified command and would be related to an appropriate high level of crisis or hostilities with clearly defined constraints regarding geographic limitations, types and yields of weapons, timing, and other appropriate factors.

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5. ~~(TS)~~ Planning. In accordance with Annex C, JSCP, contingency plans of commanders of unified and specified commands will include plans for the employment of selectively released nuclear weapons. These plans will be in sufficient detail to insure understanding of the situations at the highest level.

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6. ~~(TS)~~ Essential Elements of Justification. Request for selective release or conditional authority for release must provide sufficient information to insure that a decision can be reached promptly at the highest level. In those cases where the request is used to gain authorization to execute a nuclear contingency plan prepared by a commander of a unified or specified command, reference should be made to such plan as well as to any warning message previously submitted which is pertinent to the request. As a minimum, the message will answer the following questions:

a. How many weapons are required by type and yield?  
Antisubmarine warfare and air defense nuclear weapons may be requested by category and need not be requested by number.

b. What changes, if any, to the published constraints of the commanders of the unified or specified commands will be imposed? What collateral damage might be expected? Include information necessary to describe limits which releasing commanders will impose on the use of weapons such as maximum range, height of burst, timing, geographical boundaries, and types of targets.

c. Justification:

(1) What is the objective or mission?

(2) What are the enemy capabilities and probable course of action?

(3) What is the situation of friendly forces? When appropriate, include disposition, strength, morale, logistics, and combat efficiency.

(4) When appropriate, what is the situation in immediately adjacent areas?

(5) What are the risks and the probable consequences of a decision not to employ nuclear weapons?

(6) What evaluation is placed on the reliability of the source and the intelligence information?

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7. ~~(15)~~ Results of Employment.

a. The employment of selectively released nuclear weapons will be reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the fastest means available immediately after weapon commitment and not later than four hours following each detonation. As a minimum, the following information will be provided:

- (1) Reference to release authorization message.
- (2) Time of detonation.
- (3) Target and location.
- (4) Type weapon, yield, height of burst, and delivery mode.
- (5) Results (if known).

b. The employment of tactical nuclear weapons after a general release will be reported in a summary report at twenty-four-hour intervals to include as a minimum the information noted in subparagraph 7a. above.

8. ~~(16)~~ Communications. Message traffic between the commanders of the unified and specified commands and the Joint Chiefs of Staff concerning the selective release of nuclear weapons and reports of results will be transmitted with a FLASH precedence using Emergency Message Automatic Transmission System (EMATS). These messages will be processed as emergency actions at all levels of command.

a. Warning message on selective release. In a developing crisis, a warning message will be submitted by the commander of a unified or specified command at the first indication of a possible requirement for the use of selectively released nuclear weapons. This message is necessary to insure maximum lead time at the national level and will contain as much of the information listed in paragraph 6 as is available. Circumstances may dictate that the warning message include a request for conditional authority as described in

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paragraph 4. In the absence of an affirmative response from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to a request for conditional authority, a selective release request must be submitted to gain authority to employ a nuclear weapon. In some instances, time may preclude providing a warning message.

b. Selective release request. A selective release request will be submitted only in an emergency and when available forces are incapable of coping with the situation using only non-nuclear weapons. Requests to the Joint Chiefs of Staff will emanate from the commanders of unified and specified commands. As an exception, an information copy of selective release requests from major subordinate commands of SACEUR/USCINCEUR will be forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff by the fastest means available so as to arrive within two hours of the time of origin of the original request. The request will include as a minimum the information required in paragraph 6. Additional information will be provided if available. Reference will be made to a warning message or plan, if appropriate.

c. Selective release approval. The selective release approval message will provide authorization for release of weapons.

d. Reporting. The results of the employment of approved selective release weapons will be reported in accordance with paragraph 7 above.

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