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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Preparation of US Position for Possible
Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (U)

1. (S) The study directed by NSSM-28 on this subject was forwarded by the NSSM-28 Steering Committee to the National Security Council Review Group for discussion on 12 June 1969 and for initial consideration by the National Security Council during the week of 16 June 1969. It is considered appropriate to provide the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on this subject for possible Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) with the Soviets.

2. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that an arms control agreement, to be acceptable, must allow the actions necessary as a minimum to preserve, and desirably to improve, the security of the United States. The basic elements of a potential arms limitation must be measured against this objective without regard to negotiation implications. Such an agreement should be uncomplicated and easily understood and should be based on confident verification of compliance. Agreed onsite inspection procedures would increase the confidence of both sides that the agreement is being observed.

3. (S) There are mutual advantages to an agreement for strategic arms limitation; there also could be serious disadvantages which would unduly limit our future military flexibility, disrupt our alliances, or endanger our national security... Therefore, any agreement that is negotiated should be paralleled during the course of its existence with an active program of safeguards designed to avoid a deterioration of US security. Further, the Joint Chiefs of Staff note the disadvantages which could accrue in an agreement under which neither side felt it's

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retaliatory capability secure and which either side was later forced to abrogate. Those agreements which overly restrict the employment of survivable payload, which exceed the limits of national verification capabilities, or which are overly sensitive to normal technological advance are basically unstable and invite subsequent abrogation.

4. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted the NSSM-28 Report and its Annexes setting forth four basic options and three variants which are an illustrative range of alternatives encompassing minimal limitations on one extreme and extensive qualitative as well as quantitative restrictions at the other. They note that certain of the options and variants could be used as a basis for developing a strategic arms control proposal for discussion with the USSR. This observation is based on the understanding that these options would not impose limitations on application of technology or force modernization and would include provisions for verification, replacement criteria, safeguards, and withdrawal. The Joint Chiefs of Staff note the sensitivity of the options to levels of ballistic missile defense (BMD), and their comments are based on the assumption that additional analysis will be conducted to determine acceptable maximum and minimum levels of BMD to be included in a final US position. The analysis contained in the current Steering Committee Report provides only an indication as to the relative order of magnitude of levels of BMD which might be either desirable or acceptable for the various options considered. Appropriate levels of BMD to be considered should include those required for an anti-Chinese Peoples Republic defense. Further, the United States must give due regard to those Soviet surface-to-air missile (SAM) installations with possible BMD capability. As the range of options is narrowed, it will be necessary to conduct more detailed analysis of the BMD levels to be associated with those options still considered acceptable. The level of BMD authorized is not solely a function of the numbers of launchers allowed. It also depends upon the characteristics of the systems, including reload capabilities and the capability to base the allowed launchers in optimum locations. An acceptable position on antiballistic missile (ABM) levels must therefore account for the Soviet advantage in reload capability and the potential advantage in forward basing their land BMD systems. It should be possible to identify BMD levels which limit damage to the United States and permit defense in depth and, yet, which, when applied reciprocally, will not unduly reduce the deterrent effect of our retaliatory forces.

5. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff further note that the options and variants currently contained in the NSSM-28 Report deal principally with proposals to freeze the numbers of missiles or

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launchers but do not incorporate specific limits on size, and thus on throw weight, of missiles. Without violating an assumed prohibition against construction of new silos or enlargement of existing silos, the Soviet Union could increase their throw weight and achieve an additional destructive capability. The question of throw weight should be considered in addressing US positions on SALT. A study is currently being prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the volume and throw weight issue.

6. ~~(S)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff note that the NSSM-28 Report fails to address adequately the risks involved within each of the proposed options. These considerations would be most valuable in illuminating both the increased requirement for a balanced, multi-element nuclear retaliatory force within an arms agreement and the difficulties in constraining the growing threat to the survivability of these forces.

7. ~~(S)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the NSSM-28 Report places undue emphasis on those portions of the analysis concerned with calculated retaliatory capabilities. Although these measures of force effectiveness give valuable insight into the overall capabilities of strategic nuclear forces, those forces must be evaluated not only in terms of capabilities for massive retaliation limited to population centers but also in terms of capabilities to accomplish military objectives in more realistic war-waging scenarios.

8. ~~(S)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff also note that:

a. The relationship between strategic and general purpose forces in deterrence and war waging through a wide range of confrontations and conflict situations is not considered in the report. General purpose forces contribute prior to, during, and subsequent to strategic nuclear operations and are necessary to exploit any advantage gained in these operations to achieve US objectives. General purpose forces, to include allied forces, operate behind the shield of an effective strategic deterrent posture.

b. The analysis in this report does not address a US military posture which would deter the Soviets in other than a direct attack on the United States. The strategic capability required for deterring attacks on allies, or for coping with an attack should deterrence fail, and its relationship to general purpose force requirements must be considered in the deliberations on force options in an arms control agreement.

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9. ~~TOP SECRET~~ A prime consideration in any strategic arms limitation proposal is the relative strategic capability of the United States versus the USSR. The USSR currently has an advantage in BMD systems and in numbers and in throw weight of land-based strategic offensive ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The USSR also has a significant advantage, in the absence of a US capability, in IR/MRBMs (a serious concern to our NATO Allies) as well as in medium bombers, air defenses, and submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCMs). The United States currently possesses an advantage in manned heavy bombers, submarine ballistic missile launchers (Soviet SLCM force may offset a portion of this advantage), and antisubmarine warfare forces. The USSR is making major increases in its ICBM force and substantial additions to its submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) fleet. By contrast, the United States has no additional strategic missile launchers under construction but is undertaking deployment of a limited BMD system. A summary of current strategic offensive and defensive force levels of the United States and the USSR is contained in the Appendix hereto.

10. ~~TOP SECRET~~ The proposal to rely on unilateral intelligence for verification of compliance with the provisions of the proposed agreement options requires judgments on the US ability to detect violations in sufficient time to take such offsetting actions as may be required for national security. Our capability for collecting unilateral intelligence is very sensitive to continued operation of existing and future systems and could be significantly degraded should the Soviets elect to employ active and/or passive countermeasures. Judgments on our unilateral capability to detect violations can be derived from SNIE 11-13-69. Based upon a review of this document and in consideration of related factors, including leadtimes required for effective response, the Joint Chiefs of Staff conclude that, from the standpoint of reliability and timeliness, US unilateral capabilities are as follows:

a. If the Soviets continue to follow current practices, the number of existing fixed sites and silos (but not missiles) for land-based ICBMs and IR/MRBMs could be verified by national intelligence means, with a reasonable degree of confidence. Qualitative improvements to strategic weapon systems would be more difficult to verify. While some features of silos could be verified, others indicative of retrofit could not be determined without onsite inspection. Neither could a Soviet program for upgrading IR/MRBM silos to an ICBM capability be detected without onsite inspection.

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b. Numbers of fixed ABM launchers of known characteristics (but not missiles) could be verified by means of national intelligence. However, there is less confidence in our capability to provide competent analyses of new defensive missile systems, and there is low confidence that a limited upgrading of defensive SAM systems to a BMD capability would be detected.

c. While the construction of large radars can be detected and a judgment made that they are BMD associated, problems may arise involving possible erroneous categorization of similar radars as integral BMD elements. The site tracking and guidance radars and the control network which provide the intercept capability for the system are the more difficult elements to identify and categorize. An agreed prohibition on radars in excess of an established level would be a source of controversy. It would not provide significant verification advantages and would involve great risks considering the lead-times involved for radar deployment.

d. Verification of an agreement prohibiting the construction of additional missile-launching submarines would depend on a knowledge of Soviet submarine order of battle. If an increase involving as many as five or six units were attempted under effective concealment, we would probably become aware of a buildup in the force within a year (i.e., within 3 or 4 years after start of construction), but we would not necessarily be able to determine the total number. It would probably take somewhat longer to detect a lesser buildup of, say, two or three units.

e. Violation of a ban on the deployment of other mobile launchers for offensive systems, both land-based and sea-based, and mobile, land-based defensive systems could not be reliably verified prior to substantial deployment.

f. Even with some forms of onsite inspection, there is little likelihood of determining the extent to which qualitative improvements, including multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), have been incorporated in deployed offensive missiles.

g. Comprehensive MIRV flight testing to full ICBM range could be detected if the Soviets perform such tests using procedures thus far observed. However, there is less confidence that different approaches to MIRV flight test techniques could be monitored unilaterally, and there is little prospect of determining the extent to which MIRVs have been incorporated in deployed offensive missiles.

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11. ~~(S)~~ In their consideration of any arms control or related agreements, the Joint Chiefs of Staff adhere stringently to the basic principle of positive and assured means of verification of compliance by all parties. Deviation from a narrow interpretation of this principle, which embraces, where necessary, onsite inspection, should be accepted only after the most careful examination of alternatives leads to the judgment that deviation in a specific case is in the best interest of the United States. To aid in preserving this basic principle, each deviation should be identified clearly as such in US position papers, with reasons therefor.

12. ~~(S)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that US Government communications to the Soviet Government have committed the United States to place maximum reliance on national means of verification to insure compliance. Nevertheless, some forms and degrees of onsite inspection would contribute materially to US aims in the field of arms control and world security. Specifically, confidence in compliance would be engendered in the United States, in the USSR, and among our allies whose security depends on us. Stability of the strategic balance would be increased since there would be greater confidence that national intelligence estimates had not erred, that the agreement was based on sound assumptions, and that no evasion was taking place. Finally, a more comprehensive agreement would be possible if onsite inspections were permitted to verify compliance in those areas in which there is a low confidence of timely detection of evasion, as noted above in paragraph 10 and below in paragraphs 14-20. For these reasons, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the United States seek in its initial negotiating position to gain onsite inspection in those circumstances and for those systems where onsite inspection is necessary for positive verification of compliance with an agreement. Further, the US negotiators should be instructed to explore aggressively with the Soviets the possibility of onsite inspection in each specific circumstance as discussions proceed and should be clearly informed of those specific circumstances wherein some degree of onsite inspection is advantageous or necessary.

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13. ~~(S)~~ There is a strong interdependence of the specific terms within each of the options and variants. It is highly unlikely that any agreement negotiated with the Soviets will develop in the same manner and toward the same specific terms as any particular option. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reiterate the need for a continual assessment of the proposed terms during the complete negotiating cycle. Based upon the preceding discussion of factors bearing on strategic arms limitation proposals in general, there follows a discussion of the application of these factors to the specific options and variants contained in the NSSM-28 Report.

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14. (S) Basic Option I, Freeze of Land-Based Offensive Missile Launchers, is the simplest and most easily understood of the options under consideration. Fixed ICBM launchers could be replaced by new silos which could be hardened and increased in size to enhance survivability and provide greater offensive missile throw weight, if not otherwise restricted. With the exception of a ban on mobile land-based strategic offensive missile systems (ranges greater than 1000 KM), it could be verified by national means with confidence if it includes agreed procedures to be followed when replacing existing weapons facilities. Under this option, it is possible, although unlikely, that a Soviet attempt to build a force of 200 to 300 land-based mobile strategic launchers could go undetected for 2 to 3 years. It would, if negotiated, place a ceiling on the Soviet's expanding ICBM program but not their growing SLBM program. Such an option provides an opportunity for the Soviets to overcome the decided advantage the United States has in SLBMs by continuing to build or in fact accelerating the building of their SLBM force unless the United States does likewise.

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15. (S) Basic Option II, Freeze of Numbers of Offensive Missile Launchers, is slightly more complex than Option I, in that it would place quantitative restrictions on both land- and sea-based (surface and submarine) mobile offensive systems as of 1 July 1969 but would permit qualitative improvements to launchers and missiles and launcher relocation. It could be verified by national means but with less confidence than Option I. In the case of land mobile offensive systems, we would be able to identify the system but perhaps only when it had become operational in substantial numbers. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to make any precise determination of the number of mobile weapons in such a force. Under an effective concealment program, it is possible, although unlikely, that a Soviet attempt to build a force of 200-300 launchers could go undetected for 2 to 3 years. The missile-launching submarines could be built in small numbers (up to five-six) and might escape detection for up to a year. This option, if negotiated, would place a numerical ceiling on the Soviet's expanding ICBM program and on their ballistic missile launching submarine construction program.

16. (S) Variant II-A, Freeze of Sum of ICBM and SLBM Launchers, is identical to Basic Option II except that the total number of land- and sea-based ballistic missile launchers existing or under construction as of 1 July 1969 would be frozen, and, within the overall ceiling, each side would be permitted to vary the mix of

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land-based and sea-based offensive ballistic missile launchers. This variant is more complex than Basic Option II. Any agreement which permits a mix of sea- or land-based mobile and fixed offensive launchers within a specified ceiling would seriously complicate the verification problem, the more complicating factor being the interacting variable of land-based mobile systems. A related problem involves verifying that excess launchers, declared inactive, are in fact not operable. Otherwise, this variant offers the same possibilities as Basic Option II.

17. (S) Basic Option III, Freeze of Numbers and Certain Types of Offensive Missile Launchers with MIRVs Allowed, is more complex than Basic Option I and less so than Basic Option II. This option could be verified by national means with the same confidence as Basic Option I and more confidence than the other options and variants examined. It minimizes the difficulties of Basic Options I and II by prohibiting the replacement of fixed silos (I and II), mobile land-based offensive missile systems (II), and further construction of SLBM launchers or submarines (I). The most difficult task would be verifying the ban on land mobile strategic launchers, the uncertainties involved being the same as those in Option I. This option would place a ceiling on Soviet ICBM and SLBM launchers and submarines, which currently are very active programs in improving Soviet strategic forces.

18. (S) Variant III-A, Superhardening, is identical with Basic Option III except that hard-rock superhardening and relocation of ICBM silos would be permitted. Verification of launcher relocation is the same as that associated within Basic Options I and II. Other remarks concerning Basic Option III apply to Variant III-A.

19. (S) Variant III-B, Freeze of Sum of ICBM and SLBM Launchers, is identical with Basic Option III except that, within the overall ceiling of the frozen total number of ICBM and SLBM launchers existing or under construction as of 1 July 1969, each side would be permitted to vary the mix of land-based and sea-based offensive ballistic missile launchers as desired. The launcher mix in this variant would be easier to verify than those in Option II and Variant II-A because of the exclusion of land mobile strategic launchers. Otherwise, the remarks concerning Basic Option III apply to Variant III-B.

20. (S) Basic Option IV, Freeze of Numbers and Certain Types of Offensive Missile Launchers with MIRVs Prohibited, is identical with Basic Option III except that the deployment of MIRVs would be totally prohibited, as would further flight testing of MIRVs (including any postboost maneuvering and the testing of any multiple reentry vehicles). The extent to which MIRVs or special

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reentry systems have been deployed on offensive missiles cannot be verified by unilateral means. Therefore, this option, which is based upon the questionable assumption that sufficient flight tests have not already taken place for confident deployment and the assumption that flight testing to full ICBM range would be required, cannot depend for verification of compliance upon national means of intelligence. Because of the foregoing and the growing potential in Soviet strategic forces and the uncertainties surrounding verification of Soviet BMD capabilities, it would not be in the national security interest to foreclose the options to MIRV US strategic forces, both land- and sea-based. Increased numbers of reentry vehicles are required for the US offensive missile force, fixed in numbers, to target Soviet time-urgent nuclear threats adequately and to penetrate Soviet defenses. It is noted that a ban on MIRV and MIRV flight testing also would have the adverse effect of forestalling the development of effective missile penetration aids as a hedge. This option could lead to an agreement which would be deleterious to the United States.

21. (S) The desirability of any of the first three options or variants would vary significantly with and be dependent on the level and effectiveness of the BMD system allowed. This effectiveness is not solely a function of numerical levels of launchers and radars; it also depends upon the characteristics of the systems, including reload capabilities and optimum basing. The strategic nuclear forces of both the United States and the Soviet Union must be viewed in their entirety, assessing capabilities vis-a-vis each side under pessimistic conditions of retaliation in addition to favorable war-fighting scenarios.

22. (S) It should be noted that in the foregoing discussion only US and Soviet strategic capabilities have been considered and that the analyses do not include scenarios involving attacks on our allies. Commitments to allies impose additional requirements on US strategic forces which must be considered in assessing the adequacy of these forces. Any action from which our NATO allies would reasonably define an unfavorable strategic relationship or a lack of resolve for the United States to fulfill its commitment would be disadvantageous to the Alliance.

23. (S) Within any treaty negotiated, specific provision should be made for review and renegotiation of the treaty prior to the end of the agreement period. Rapidly advancing technology and our ability to estimate trends in the Soviet force structure should restrict the term of any treaty to not more than 6 years and should provide for renegotiation at least 1 year before the treaty terminates. In addition, an arms control agreement should have a withdrawal clause. Grounds for withdrawal are considered to include:

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a. Any hostile act which is taken to interfere with US collection systems.

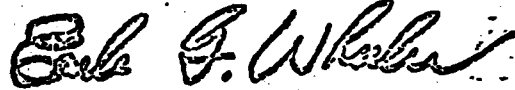
b. Evidence of deception and/or concealment.

c. A deterioration of US capability to verify compliance.

24. ~~(S)~~ In summary, the Joint Chiefs of Staff note that, with appropriate modifications as discussed above, the range of options outlined in the NSSM-28 Report, except Option IV, could provide the basis for development of a strategic arms control proposal for discussion with the USSR. The foregoing is based on the understanding that the options and variants would not impose limitations on application of technology or force modernization and would include provisions for verification, replacement criteria, safeguards, and withdrawal. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have based their comments on these options and variants as an entity and furthermore desire to examine any specific proposals which may be developed as a basis for negotiation with the Soviet Union.

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For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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