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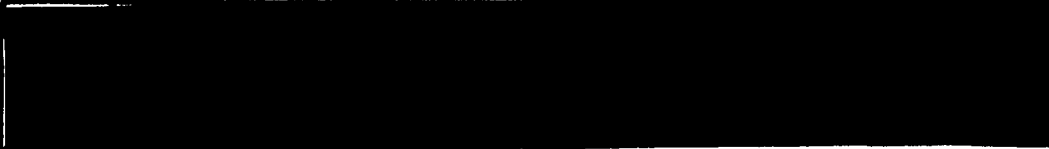
JCS and National Policy

Handwritten notes: "C & S", "the Navy"

rested on two considerations: first, that the Carter administration considered the Navy's shipbuilding program to be grossly over budget and out of control; and second, that it put less priority on naval power projection than on strengthening NATO.²² Looking ahead, the Secretary's Five-Year Defense Program called for curbing growth all around, especially in Navy ship construction, which would be scaled back drastically. Instead of building more new ships, the Navy would have to make do by refurbishing older ones under the Service Life Extension Program (SLEP). All in all, by FY 1983, the Navy could wind up with over 100 fewer surface combatants and attack submarines, and at least two fewer carriers than its plans called for.²³

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(S) As part of the assessment in the Joint Force Memorandum, forwarded to the Secretary in May, the Joint Chiefs expressed their lack of confidence that "programmed US General Purpose Forces, even in concert with the forces of the NATO and other allies, are sufficient to execute the national military strategy."²⁴ The most serious risk, the Chiefs believed, was that of becoming involved in two wars at the same time—a major conflict in Europe, say, and a lesser one in Korea. The Chiefs warned that under the programmed force structure US and allied forces would have limited capacity for mounting conventional operations, thereby "significantly increasing" the prospects of escalation to nuclear weapons.²⁵ Indeed, as the Chiefs saw it, tactical and theater nuclear weapons were assuming an ever-growing role in US strategy, and in the nuclear annex to JFM 79-86 they recommended



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(S) The Chiefs were also dubious of projected trends in strategic forces, but saw fewer grounds for challenging the Secretary's proposed spending and force levels. By the time the JFM appeared, it was apparent that the administration's deep cuts arms control initiative had foundered, thus reopening the whole question of a SALT II agreement. Needing a benchmark for planning purposes, the Joint Chiefs assumed that the Vlad-

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Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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²² For a fuller discussion, see Richard L. Kugler, *Commitment to Purpose: How Alliance Partnership Won the Cold War* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1993), 323-41.

²³ PPG memo, 11 Mar 77, S, JCS 2458/988, 551 (11 Mar 77).

²⁴ Joint Force Memorandum (JFM) FY 1979-1986, p. 20, TS, enclosure to JCSM-224-77 to SecDef, 19 May 77, TS, JCS 2458/993, 557 (26 Apr 77).

²⁵ JFM 79-86, TS, pp. 17-20 and passim.

²⁶ JCSM-121-77 to SecDef, 1 Aug 77, TS/RD, enclosure A to JFM 79-86, Nuclear Annex, TS/RD, JCS 2458/993-1, 557 (26 Apr 77). For the neutron bomb episode, see Chapter VIII.

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