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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

1 2 NOV 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF, STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

SUBJECT: SIOP Planning (U)

(U) I am particularly appreciative of your recent quarterly report. The thoughts of the Commanders of our operating forces are absolutely essential in making judgements on the programs we need.

~~(S)~~ You expressed concern about appreciation of the necessity for a prompt retaliatory launch in response to a major Soviet attack. I agree that the ability of our forces to execute promptly is essential to deterrence. The Soviets must believe that our response can be swift. A prompt response would improve SIOP effectiveness against certain targets and would deny the Soviets additional time to complete an attack prior to the impact of our response. The failure to launch promptly would result in the destruction of many U.S. forces; a prompt retaliation would avoid this weakening of the U.S. response.

~~(S)~~ It is important, however, to distinguish between these advantages of a capability to launch promptly and our ability to guarantee we will be successful in launching early. We cannot, of course, make such a guarantee. Further, Presidential guidance, as expressed in NSDD-13, requires us "not to rely on launching our nuclear forces in an irrevocable manner upon warning that a Soviet missile attack has begun." Given the uncertainties sure to accompany the onset of war, it is not prudent to rely absolutely -- without any back-up -- upon perfect functioning of our warning, command and control, and communications, and it is not our policy to do so. Our nuclear planning must prudently account for -- and hedge against -- the possibility that, for whatever reason, our forces may not be executed before the Soviet attack arrives. I have asked the JCS to address this issue as expeditiously as possible.

~~(S)~~ These considerations are, of course, fully consistent with the Strategic Modernization Program and we continue to give this Program our full support. I am responsible, however, to ensure that the President has the most effective response available in any conceivable emergency.

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5 USC 552
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
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Reason: 3.3(b)(5)
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Joseph W. Keatinge

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Copy to: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

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Date: JAN 02 2018

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10 December 1985

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Collateral Damage Restraint (U)

1. ~~(S)~~ In answer to your memorandum,* we are currently preparing a change to the collateral damage restraint methodology in planning SIOP attacks.

2. ~~(S)~~ In your memorandum, you recommended that we replace the current criterion

3. ~~(S)~~ We are making every effort to implement the concept as soon as possible. An initial draft of the change to the restraint methodology will be available this month. Depending on the completion date of the formal staffing, it may be possible to implement the approach in However, we wish to avoid introducing a new targeting criterion at a stage in the planning process that would result in a delay in the implementation date of 1 October 1986 for this revision. In any case, we will implement appropriate changes in the JCS planning guidance for which will become effective on 1 October 1987. We will keep you and your staff advised on our progress.

WILLIAM J. CROWE, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Reference:

* Secretary of Defense memorandum, 12 November 1985, subject as above

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