



~~TOP SECRET~~
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

Nat'l Sec (#41)
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- PD
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8 SEP 1981

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: SEP 13 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (U)

(S) We have prepared a draft Decision Document for you, setting forth US policy for the employment of nuclear weapons in the event of nuclear war, and providing basic guidelines for the acquisition of nuclear weapons systems. The draft policy incorporates the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and has been favorably reviewed by Al Haig and Bill Casey.

(S) The policy for the employment of nuclear weapons that is proposed for your approval continues, basically, the nuclear employment policy that was developed by the Nixon Administration and reaffirmed by Presidents Ford and Carter.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(S) The new features in this document, compared with the precursor document signed by President Carter and which it would replace, are:

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[REDACTED]

-- More carefully worded guidance on the delicate issue of [REDACTED]

(S)(g) S.S. SR

A-381

18 Sep 81

380-88-0148, 6x1, ↑

~~CLASSIFIED BY SecDef~~
~~Review on 1 Sep 2001~~
~~Reason: 3200.1K, Para 2-5.1.6~~

Sec Def Cont Nr. X-1598
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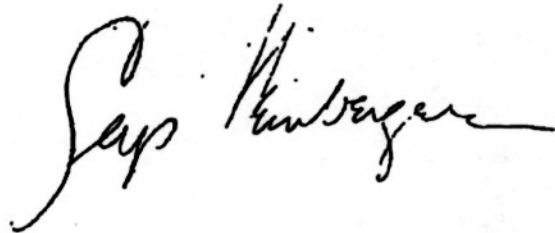
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-- More explicit treatment of the close relationship between our employment policy and our weapons acquisition policy. Also, in this document you are asking me to develop a Master Plan to ensure compatibility between these policies and to provide for consistent arrangements for the continuity of government in the event of nuclear war.

~~(S)~~ I should point out that the full implementation of this nuclear employment policy depends on actions proposed in our plan to strengthen our strategic forces (particularly the improvements in command and communications systems).

(U) I recommend that you approve this Presidential Decision Document.



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Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 13 Sep 2019 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 U.S.C. § 552
Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: X
Reason: 3.3(b)(5)
MDR: 18 -M- 1829

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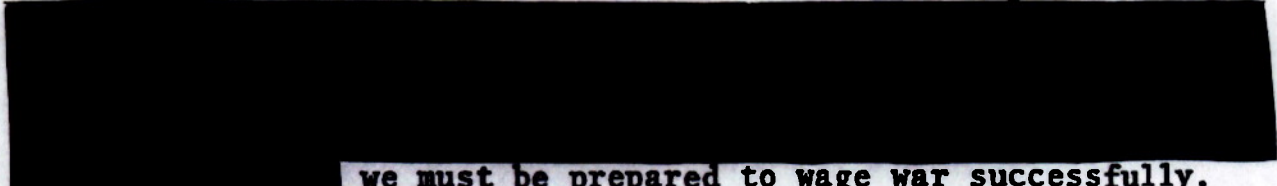
Date: SEP 13 2013

NUCLEAR WEAPONS EMPLOYMENT POLICY

The purpose of this directive is to establish policies to govern the deployment and employment of our nuclear forces and to insure that acquisition policies are in consonance therewith. ~~(S)~~

The most fundamental national security objective is to deter direct attack--particularly nuclear attack--on the United States and its Allies. Should nuclear attack nonetheless occur, the United States and its Allies must prevail. Our nuclear forces are of crucial importance both in the prevention of nuclear attack and in protecting our national interests at any level of nuclear conflict. ~~(S)~~

Deterrence can best be achieved if our defense posture



we must be prepared to wage war successfully. Our nuclear forces, (both the strategic Triad and theater forces), in conjunction with general purpose forces, must hold at risk the full range of enemy military capabilities that threaten the United States and its Allies. ~~(S)~~

If deterrence fails, the employment of nuclear forces must be effectively related to the operations of our general purpose forces. Our doctrine for the use of forces in nuclear conflict must insure that we can pursue specific objectives selected by the National Command Authority (NCA) at any given time, from general guidelines established in advance. ~~(S)~~

These imperatives constitute the basis for the development of our nuclear forces and plans for their employment. We must effect substantial improvements in our forces and their supporting command/control and intelligence systems (C3I) to insure requisite flexibility, endurance, and effectiveness in a nuclear war of indefinite duration. Our nuclear weapons employment policies and plans must evolve in parallel with the improvement of our forces. The principles and goals hereunder should guide efforts in both areas. ~~(S)~~

Basic Employment Objectives



JS 5.3(b)(5)
(S)(A) S.S. SR

[REDACTED] Plans for the employment of strategic nuclear forces must be integrated with employment planning for theater nuclear and other general purpose forces. (S)

Employment Planning

To accomplish [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

-- [REDACTED]
-- [REDACTED]
-- [REDACTED]
-- [REDACTED]
-- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (S)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (S)

[REDACTED] (S)

[REDACTED]

JS 3.3(b)(5)

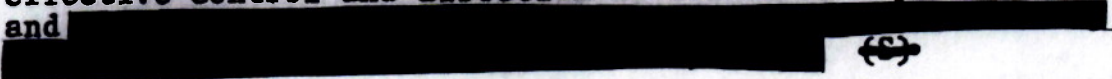
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(S)

Flexibility: US nuclear forces, supporting C³I, and plans for their use, must allow selectivity of employment to insure appropriate responses to any level of aggression. Enhanced employment flexibility is a significant objective which will be pursued aggressively to increase current capabilities and take full advantage of emerging force and supporting C³I improvements while maintaining a responsive decision-making and force execution process. (S)

Survivability and Endurance: Nuclear forces and supporting C³I systems must be sufficiently survivable and enduring to support the targeting requirements of this directive, to provide for effective control and direction of forces in a protracted conflict, and



(S)



(S)

Non-Warsaw Pact Employment Objectives: For the near term, China shall be considered as a potential adversary possessing a nuclear capability.



(S)

Relationship of Acquisition Policy to Employment Policy: Our nuclear force and C³I acquisition programs must support the employment policy established by this directive. The criteria used in evaluating acquisition of nuclear forces must recognize

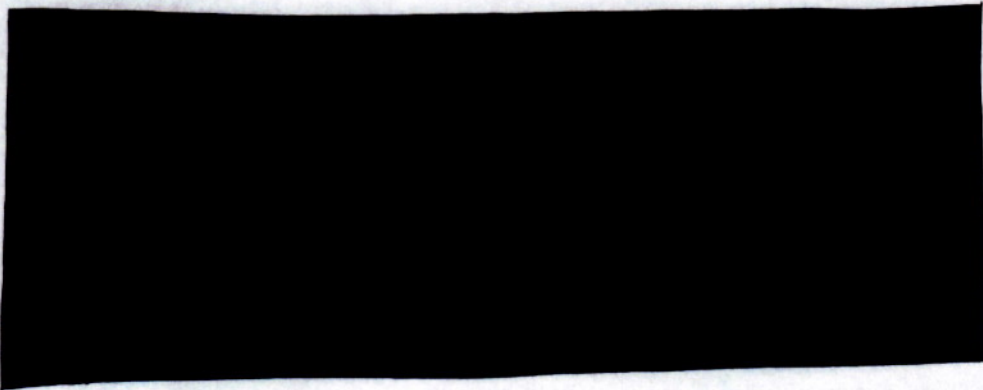
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JS 3.3(b)(5)

that each element of our force posture possesses inherent attributes that are better for some conflict situations but are of lesser importance for others. Programs will be designed to achieve:

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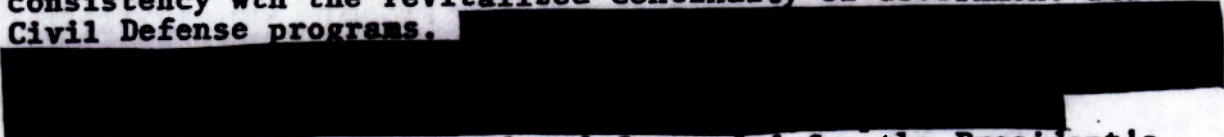
-- The capacity to assess battle damage and the disposition of remaining forces and weapon systems. (S)



JS 3.3(b)(5)

Related Defense Activities: Active and passive defenses can contribute significantly to a credible deterrent. The damage limiting capacity of an effective strategic defense reduces the likelihood of coercion and increases prospects for postwar recovery of the United States. Specific guidance for defensive measures will be provided in separate policy documents. (S)

Implementation: The policies described herein shall be implemented in accordance with a Master Plan developed by the Secretary of Defense. In addition to insuring compatibility of acquisition and employment policies, it will provide for consistency with the revitalized Continuity of Government and Civil Defense programs.



The plan shall be completed and forwarded for the President's review by July 1982. (S)

A report will be provided to the President at least annually



the status of improvement programs. (S)

PD-59 is superseded by this directive. (U)