



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

*file Memos & Kets
(NSTL)*

IN REPLY REFER TO

4 December 1960

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To: Flag and General Officers

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NATIONAL STRATEGIC TARGET LIST
AND
SINGLE INTEGRATED OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Secretary of Defense met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Unified Commanders in Omaha 1 - 2 December to discuss National Strategic Target List and Single Integrated Operational Plan. The Director of Strategic Target Planning, General Power, and the members of his staff gave a very comprehensive and very smooth presentation pointing out the improvement of this plan over the previous coordinated plan and explained in general how this plan was developed.

There was great pressure to approve this plan even though it was also recognized that there was much improvement that could be made in both NSTL and the Plan itself. However, all Unified Commanders agreed that this plan was better than the previous ones and the improvements that were necessary in the next plan were brought out very clearly during the discussion.

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It was also brought out very clearly that this plan was approved based upon the presentation of General Power and without study of SIOP by conferees. The NSTL, as a matter of fact, was not available and will not be available for several days. However, Navy people worked on the plan and based on this, approval of the plan was justified with the understanding that modifications in the directives and procedures for the next plan will be prepared.

The briefings were very long and complex. Nearly all of the questions that were asked at all were asked by Mr. Gates and naval officers.

The following points were brought out:

The NSTL and SIOP are good first efforts but there are quite a few things which had to be accepted without examination because of the compressed time scale for the development of the NSTL and SIOP. Further examination will be needed in quite a few areas so as to improve the next NSTL and SIOP. Many revisions and refinements will be essential.

a. Minimum NSTL.

The NSTL is probably bigger than necessary. When it is published, which we expect to take place sometime this week, the NSTL will comprise a "minimum NSTL", additional targets considered to be

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of major importance, those defense targets which must be destroyed in order for attacking forces to reach their targets, plus those targets which theater commanders must destroy in order to protect their own forces. A great deal of work will be necessary in order to make sure that the NSTL is really minimum because its size to a large extent will determine force levels in the future and also will have a great deal of impact on the types of weapons systems which will be procured.

b. Intelligence.

In general, the intelligence used for the preparation of the intelligence annexes was agreed joint intelligence but owing to the time limitations, the operational intelligence was developed by SAC. There were no significant errors of commission or omission in this intelligence insofar as could be determined in the very short time available for examination.

One of the things that the JCS will have to develop will be how to get really joint intelligence into the plan and NSTL without undue delay. We can't have long delays in arriving at an agreed intelligence solution and at the same time, neither should we permit raw intelligence to be cranked in which may affect the plan significantly without having that intelligence looked at by other people. The evaluation of intelligence data has very significant effects. We want to make sure that our

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intelligence upon which this plan is based is just as good as it possibly can be. It is for this reason we feel that there should be a joint intelligence center in Washington where all various intelligence agencies can turn to and really crank out good intelligence using all the raw data that is available to anybody.

c. Assurance.

The directive required achieving a minimum of 75% assurance of delivery at each base release line (BRL). This was properly interpreted as meaning an over-all average of 75% assurance. There was great disagreement as to what the maximum assurance should be on any one target. For example, the most important targets should have greater assurance of a weapon arriving at BRL than on lesser targets. However, when you get up into high assurance levels, the flat part of the curve is reached and it is a question of how high you should go on assurance for the most important targets. If you have got 90% assurance of knocking out a target with say ten weapons, is it worthwhile to add four more weapons in order to get 95% or would it be better to use those four weapons on other less important targets? These are things that are going to have to be studied in great detail by the staffs and the JCS will have to write new instructions regarding

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assurance in the next couple of months. There seemed to be general agreement except for the Air Force people that our assurance criteria are now probably too high or perhaps the assurance on the various types of targets is not proper now. However, this is not a fatal defect in this first plan.

d. Damage Criteria.

Damage criteria are also very high. The JCS required a 90% probability of severe damage as a general rule including that probability of destruction of 50% of industrial floor space. The damage on the facilities at Hiroshima which were incapable of any type of operation and never were repaired in peacetime would not have met this damage criteria. The JCS will also have to examine the damage criteria and the way the damage criteria are applied to various types of targets in order to ensure targets that have to be destroyed are really destroyed once instead of several times. The methods of computing damage will probably have to be reviewed too. It may be that severe and moderate is not the proper way of doing it because the photographs of what moderate damage was, looked to be pretty severe. Also, only blast was used in computation of damage and it is certain that there will be many fire storms and damage by neutrons beyond the area of blast damage. Of course, when the damage criteria are high, it requires bigger weapons

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and more of them. They also sometimes require ground bursts instead of air bursts which add to the fall-out problem. Also, if general damage criteria are used without the exercise of judgment, you can do such silly things as dropping additional weapons on a city to meet the damage criteria after 98% of the people have become direct casualties. As I stated, this is an area in which the JCS will have to lay out in greater detail the damage criteria to be used in the development of the next plan.

e. Follow-on Forces.

The SIOP as developed utilized all of the committed forces which, of course, was entirely within the ground rules which were given to the DSTPS. However, there is considerable question as to whether all of these forces are, in fact, required and whether or not it would be advisable to withhold some forces for contingency operations following the initial attack. This naturally relates back to the size of the NSTI, the assurance of delivery, damage criteria and also the survivability of launch bases.

f. Constraints.

The plan was juggled several times in preparation and weight of weapons and types of delivery were adjusted so as to bring the fallout at selected check points down within the levels prescribed

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In JCS guidance. There are two things to note here. First, that fallout effects were computed on the basis of only one weapon, the largest programmed on designated ground zero (DGZ). And, second, there are undoubtedly areas, aside from the check points, which would receive such level of lethal contamination that our own forces plus friendly and potentially friendly people would be jeopardized. In addition, no account has yet been taken of the effects of other allied weapons, Soviet nuclear weapons and the world-wide contamination problem. This whole problem is urgently in need of attention.

g. Base Survivability.

The problem of survivability of the various types of bases, both fixed and mobile, was only superficially addressed in the preparation of this plan and it is evident that we must develop adequate factors for considering this problem. Base survivability naturally has a marked effect on force levels and types of forces for the future. Base Survivability can only be determined after thorough war gaming and it is to be expected that this will be a major area in which much detailed work needs to be done by the JCS and the Services.

h. War Gaming.

It was generally agreed that the SIOP should be war gamed by a group in Washington under the direct control of the JCS. This is most important in order to come as close as possible to an unbiased

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evaluation of this new plan and to develop factors and criteria for use in the succeeding plans. The SIOP also may be war gamed by the JSTPS which, of course, smacks of their inspecting themselves.

i. Points System.

The development of the NSTL was in large measure governed by the use of the SAC ALFA and BRAVO points systems -- ALFA points being assigned to military installations and military and governmental control centers, BRAVO points to urban and industrial targets. In coming up with an optimum mix target list, the planners found that the ALFA and BRAVO points were not mathematically compatible and so they were forced to come up with a new type of points which they called OMEGA points. These OMEGA points are an arbitrary judgment based on amalgamation of the ALFA and BRAVO points and have no real mathematical validity. The SAC people are working on developing a new points system. The Navy is also trying to come up with a new points system using the talent and facilities at the David Taylor Model Basin.

j. The Staff and Organization.

The Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff has not up to this time been a truly joint staff. All key positions with the exception of the Deputy Director have been held by Air Force officers. Almost all

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of these Air Force officers have held concurrent jobs in the SAC Staff organization. We believe that the staff must become a truly joint one with equitable distribution of the key positions within the staff itself and that the officers assigned to the staff should have that as their sole assignment. It has not been possible to persuade the Army to provide as much representation on the JSTPS as we would have liked to see and I am hopeful that they will realize the importance to the Army of the organization in Omaha.

k. Reliability Factors.

The reliability factors used in various weapons systems naturally have a marked effect on assurance and thus relate back in the long run to force levels. It is worth noting that the reliability factors used for missiles results in what appears to be a very high level of programming of missiles on targets and also the backup of each missile by an aircraft-delivered weapon. The paucity of data on missiles at this time probably makes this a reasonable approach but it is obviously something that we need to correct in the future and this can only be done with more and better data. At the meeting with General Power, it was rather strongly inferred that he intends to probe into the tactics and reliability of weapons other than SAC

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are used in the SIOP. I do not know now just how he will go about this but we must be prepared for such examination of our systems.

In summary, there is a tremendous amount of work that must be done soon, primarily by the JCS, in order that the criteria and ground rules that are given to the DSTPS will result in the development of a greatly improved NSTL and SIOP for the next go-round. This SIOP will be made effective on 1 April 1961 and the next plan is due on 1 May 1962.

Arleigh Burke
ARLEIGH BURKE

P.S.
None of the above has anything to do with "Merry Christmas" which I hope you all have.

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