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Authority AWD 92118  
By MK/lt NARA Date 11/1/85

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
on

CLASSIFICATION EXTENDED BEYOND  
20 YEARS BY Sec. 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4  
DECLASSIFY ON: 28 Jan 1978  
REVIEW ON: 28 Jan 1978

TARGET COORDINATION AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS (U)

- References: a. J.C.S. 1620/257-4700 (6 Jan 59)
- b. J.C.S. 2056/131
- c. J.C.S. 2056/134
- d. J.C.S. 2056/137

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*Note: Originals of the enclosed are being retained to documents section.*

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1. Pursuant to agreement at the meeting on 1 December 1959, Enclosure "A" hereto, containing the views of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army;\* the Chief of Naval Operations;\*\* the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force;\*\*\* and the Commandant of the Marine Corps,\*\*\*\* on the questions posed by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the Enclosure to J.C.S. 2056/134, is circulated for consideration by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. The memorandum by the Chief of Naval Operations for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Op60B/1s, serial 000 362P60, subject: "Target Coordination and Associated Problems", dated 30 September 1959, is appended, as Enclosure "B" hereto, at the request\*\* of the Chief of Naval Operations.

H. L. HILLYARD,  
J. O. COBB,  
Joint Secretariat.

*5205 (17 Aug 54)  
\* w/2056/134*

- \* CSAM-401-59, dated 15 December 1959; on file in Joint Secretariat.
- \*\* Memorandum by the Chief of Naval Operations, Op-604E/br, serial 000467P60, dated 20 December 1959; on file in Joint Secretariat.
- \*\*\* CSAFM-565-59, dated 15 December 1959; on file in Joint Secretariat.
- \*\*\*\* Memorandum by the Commandant of the Marine Corps, A03B(6)-dw/0003A34859, dated 17 December 1959, subject: "Target Coordination and Associated Problems (U)"; on file in Joint Secretariat.

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2. QUESTION: What agency should apply our strategic targeting policy, develop the national strategic target system, and keep it up-to-date?

ANSWER:

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

(NOTE: This question is considered based upon the interpretation as follows: "What agency should apply our strategic targeting policy in developing the national strategic target system and in keeping it up-to-date?")  
The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the support of any agency, or agencies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which may be required.

Chief of Naval Operations

(NOTE: This question is considered based upon the interpretation as follows: "What agency should apply our strategic targeting policy in developing the national strategic target system and in keeping it up-to-date?")  
The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the support of any agency, or agencies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which may be required.

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

As the commander functionally responsible under the Joint Chiefs of Staff for conduct of the strategic offensive on a world wide basis, CINCUSAC is uniquely qualified and equipped to develop and maintain the national strategic target list. Since its designation as a specified command under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Strategic Air Command has, as a matter of necessity, compiled and collated data from targeting references and other sources which, for all practical purposes, constitute the basis for a national strategic target list.

Atomic war planning by the Joint Chiefs of Staff is promulgated in the form of strategic guidance through the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. That plan is a mission type directive embodying guidance to commanders on all aspects of atomic employment, including targeting policy, weapon programming, damage criteria and constraints. Within the parameters of this guidance, each commander develops plans designed to accomplish the missions and tasks assigned to him by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a prerequisite to such plans, each commander develops a target list which will permit accomplishment of his specific missions and tasks. Based upon priorities of tasks within his mission, force availability and operational considerations, each commander then selects targets from his total list which he programs for attack in the Atomic Annex to his war plan.

Just as authority for development of a theatre target list upon which to base theatre war plans with atomic annex strike programs is essential to the theatre commander for accomplishment of his mission, the authority for development of a national strategic target list as a basis for his war plan is essential to the commander functionally responsible to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the strategic offensive mission.

Commandant of the Marine Corps

(NOTE: This question is considered based upon the interpretation as follows: "What agency should apply our strategic targeting policy in developing the national strategic target system and in keeping it up-to-date?")  
The Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the support of any agency, or agencies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which may be required.

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Definition of such a target list is a product of careful relating of intelligence and operational knowledge and experience, evaluated on the basis of mission and task assignments as well as other conceptual guidance provided in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. In keeping with these considerations, it is appropriate that CINCSAC be assigned responsibility for development of the National Strategic Target List on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for review and approval by them, and without prejudice as to the forces to be employed to accomplish attacks against these targets.

d. QUESTION: What agency should review the national strategic target system for consistency with policy and approve it as a basis for further analysis?

ANSWER:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

2. Integrated Operational Plan:

a. QUESTION: Do we need a single integrated operational plan for attack of the national strategic target system?

b. QUESTION: If we do need a single integrated operational plan for strategic attack, what agency should develop this plan? What agencies should review it and approve it?

ANSWER:

The first question is not susceptible to a categorical yes or no answer, since the answer would depend on whether or not there is a single commander charged with the operational responsibility of executing the attack on the entire national strategic target system, as well as on the interpretation given to the phrase "a single integrated operational plan." For the reasons stated in my answer to question 3a, I do not believe a single operational commander should be charged with the responsibility of executing this mission.

A single operational command authority is implicit in a single operational plan. With this interpretation it is therefore considered neither necessary nor desirable to have a single interpretation it is therefore considered

Yes, we need a single integrated operational plan. The Joint Chiefs of Staff currently produce a single strategic plan which constitutes the basis for the preparation of implementing operational plans by the commanders of the unified and specified commands, as appropriate to their assigned tasks. A single operational plan, implementing the single strategic plan, is required specifically to direct attack of the targets included on the national strategic target lists because:

a. Successful attack of these targets is of crucial importance in general war and demands positive control of planning and assured unity in execution;

The first question is not susceptible to a categorical yes or no answer, since the answer would depend on whether or not there is a single commander charged with the operational responsibility of executing the attack on the entire national strategic target system, as well as on the interpretation given to the phrase "a single integrated operational plan." For the reasons stated in my answer to question 3a, I do not believe a single operational commander should be charged with the responsibility of executing this mission.

A single operational command authority is implicit in a single operational plan. With this interpretation it is therefore considered neither necessary nor desirable to have a single interpretation it is therefore considered

QUESTION 2 a & b Continued

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

integrated operational plan. However, improvements are required in the present method of coordination of the operational plans of commanders participating in the attack of targets included in the strategic target system. Recommendations concerning the improvements which should be made are contained in the answer to question 3c.

Chief of Naval Operations

neither necessary nor desirable to have a single integrated operational plan. However, improvements are required in the present method of coordination of the operational plans of commanders participating in the attack of targets included in the strategic target system. Recommendations concerning the improvements which should be made are contained in the answer to question 3c.

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

b. These operations are necessarily global in nature, not restricted by physical or defined boundaries limiting the concern of area commanders;

c. The forces of more than one commander may participate in the attack of these targets; and finally,

d. Through a single operational plan, we can best assure maximum flexibility in employment of forces and concentration of effort as required by operational considerations without introducing undesirable duplication or conflict of operational effort.

The preparation of any operational plan - as differentiated from a strategic plan - demands planning which is specific in nature and is developed in detail on the basis of operating experience and the operational capabilities and limitations of the delivery forces. The Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was not conceived or designed to accomplish such detailed planning which is properly the responsibility of field commanders.

As the field commander with the fundamental responsibility as well as the fundamental competence in respect to the primary capability, CINCSAC should, accordingly, be charged with the development of the single integrated operational plan for strategic attack, subject to the regular review and approval by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Commandant of the Marine Corps

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5. QUESTION: Should any force without an all-weather capability be allocated strategic targets? If so, under what conditions?

ANSWER:

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Since the USSR has the capability to launch a nuclear attack against us without warning at any time of their choosing, our nuclear retaliatory forces should be composed of weapons systems which have a reasonable assurance of surviving a surprise Soviet attack, rapidly launching their own attack, penetrating Soviet defenses and delivering their nuclear warheads accurately. For this reason, only all-weather capable delivery means should be assigned to pre-planned attacks against targets, on the approved national strategic target list, which must be destroyed in the immediate reaction to the hostile attack. Other nuclear capable delivery forces should be employed primarily in backup, re-strike or follow-up attacks as required and feasible in light of their capabilities and their other missions.

Chief of Naval Operations

Since the USSR at all times has the option of launching a nuclear attack against us without warning, it is desirable that the retaliatory weapon systems of the United States possess these characteristics: (a) Invulnerability to such enemy attack; (b) A capability to penetrate the enemy defense system; (c) Speed of reaction; (d) An all-weather capability; (e) Permit the selection of diversified attack patterns. No force should be categorically disqualified from any mission because it does not possess to the optimum degree, one or more of these desirable characteristics. It would be inappropriate for the Joint Chiefs of Staff to circumscribe the prerogatives of the commanders in the field by imposing tactical limitations to the extent of saying "no" to this question. Conditions within the areas of forces available, geography, weather, targets, etc. The commanders should be permitted freedom of action in the tactical employment of their forces to carry out their assigned mission.

In substance, this is a question of tactical detail that we can depend upon the operational commanders for a proper decision that will apply to their respective areas of operations.

2.d QUESTION: Should our aircraft carrier forces be relieved of responsibility for H-hour coverage of targets on the national strategic target list?

ANSWER:

Unless the capabilities of carriers permit their remaining on station and launching an immediate strike in any weather 24 hours a day, carrier aircraft should not have responsibility for H-hour coverage of targets on the national strategic target list.

No. The commanders of unified commands are assigned missions to be accomplished throughout the full spectrum of war -- cold, limited and general. They are assigned a variety of forces to accomplish these missions. In order to effect maximum economy of force, and to face target list.

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Commandant of the Marine Corps

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Enclosure

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Chief of Naval Operations

economy of force, and to face the enemy with a diversity of threats, the commanders of unified commands should be permitted maximum freedom of action in the use of their forces. They should not only be permitted, but encouraged to exploit the multiple characteristics (possessed in varying degrees) of these forces. Unless these multiple characteristics are exploited, the force level of single purpose forces would have to be increased to cover this omission.

The theaters of three commanders' unified commands (CINCEUR, CINCLANT and CINCPAC) contain large ocean areas from which Soviet General war targets can be hit by carrier based aircraft. In two of the ocean areas, the Mediterranean and the Western Pacific, we keep carrier task forces deployed. In view of their effectiveness in conditions short of general war, they would be so deployed even if they possessed no general war nuclear delivery capability. But they do have such a capability that has progressively increased over the years. Their normal operational areas are within range of enemy targets, and are frequently between the bases of our land based bombers and enemy targets.

Carrier task forces provide the nation with a potent dispersed and alert force of nuclear capable bombers operating from movable airfields within the prospective theatre of operations. These are valuable characteristics that will become increasingly important in the missile age.

In the interest of economy of force and military effectiveness, we should exploit the full potential of carrier striking power by pre-planned strikes against targets on the national strategic target list. If this requires revision of current operating procedures the revisions should be made.

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Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

Commandant of the Marine Corps

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2. e. QUESTION: If the attack carrier forces were to be relieved of this responsibility, how should their nuclear attack mission be stated?

ANSWER:  
CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY

The nuclear attack mission of aircraft carrier forces should be stated as: "In general war, attack carrier forces should be responsible for attack of those targets allocated to them in the emergency plan of the commanders of the unified or specified command to whom they are assigned, with emphasis, within their capabilities, on their anti-submarine warfare role. They should constitute a reserve striking force to execute restrike and follow-on nuclear strikes against strategic targets as feasible and as required".

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

Not applicable in view of answer to 2 d above.

CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE

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Commandant of the Marine Corps

Not applicable in view of the answer to 2 d above.

f. QUESTION: Is there an immediate need for the establishment of a Unified Strategic Command?

g. QUESTION: If the answer to the above question is negative, is a Unified Strategic Command viewed as desirable for the more distant future?

h. QUESTION: If a Unified Strategic Command is not established in the proximate future, is there a requirement for the integration of operational plans for the employment of POLARIS submarines with CINCSAC's operational plan?

i. QUESTION: If so, how should this be accomplished?

ANSWER:

For the reasons stated in the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army view in JCSM-171-59\* there is no immediate need for the establishment of a Unified Strategic Command. As also stated in that memorandum, the ultimate command structure should be determined after POLARIS has been tried and proven.

POLARIS submarines initially assigned to commanders of unified and specified commands exercising operational command of major naval forces can be readily employed in accordance with the concepts for coordination presented in the answers to questions 2 a and b, and 3 a and c.

There will be a need for a Unified Strategic Command which is operationally capable and functioning by the time that the first POLARIS-equipped vessel is available for operational deployment. Accordingly, preparatory steps leading to activation of such a command should be taken at an early date.

If the Unified Strategic Command is not established in the proximate future, there remains a requirement for integration of operational efforts. A single operational plan for attack of strategic targets would seem to be the essential basis for such integration in any case.

1. There is no immediate need for the establishment of a Unified Strategic Command, nor is there any indication that such a command will be desirable in the more distant future. The assigning of full responsibility for the attack of the entire national strategic target system to a single commander, is subject to the following overriding objections:

- a. It would, in effect, establish a single superior commander over all other commanders of unified commands.
- b. It would, therefore, interfere with the carrying out of the other primary responsibilities of the commanders of unified commands.
- c. It would subjugate the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the strategic direction of the war.

d. It would not provide for the necessary flexibility in weapon systems employment inherent in decentralized control to meet the exigencies of the fluid and unpredictable situation which would follow a massive nuclear attack.

2. The specific integration of operational

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Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Chief of Naval Operations

2. The POLARIS submarine weapons system will be one of several weapon systems assigned to the commanders of unified and specified commands. There will be a requirement for coordination of the operational plans for POLARIS as for other systems. Such coordination, to be effective, does not require integration of operational plans into a single operational plan. The answer to questions 2 a and b above set forth the reasons why integration of operational plans is neither necessary nor desirable. The measures which should be taken to improve present coordination of planning are:

a. There is a need for a clear delineation of the areas in which commanders have primary responsibility for coordination of planning for the attack of the strategic target system. Otherwise, the present unsatisfactory coordination will continue to exist with the consequent necessity for what amounts to detailed operational planning at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

b. A single "strategic" as opposed to "operational" plan should be prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This plan, which in effect would be a mission type directive, should make more specific the targeting and damage criteria guidance now contained in the Atomic Annex to JSCP and add the national strategic target list, and the assignment of geographic areas to the commanders of unified and specified commands within which they will be responsible for the coordination of both planning and the execution of the attack on the national strategic target list. This JCS plan should be furnished annually as an annex to the JSCP at least six months prior to its effective date.

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Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

Commandant of the Marine Corps

with CINCSAC's operational plan is not a matter for consideration in isolation. I do not believe a single operational commander should be charged with the responsibility of executing the attack on the national strategic target system. I consider that coordination of the plans of the commanders of unified and specified commands for the employment of all weapons will be greatly improved through implementation of the Marine Corps Proposal in reply to question 3 g.

Enclosure

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Chief of Naval Operations

Procedures at the level of the commanders of the unified and specified commands should provide for development of operational strike plans currently and in the closest of coordination with respect to atomic as well as other operations in the areas in which targets of the strategic target systems are located.

2. J. QUESTION: Does the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization need policy control of an agency capable of operational analysis and war gaming of operational plans?

ANSWER:

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

K. QUESTION: If so, what agency should perform this function for the Joint Chiefs of Staff?

ANSWER:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff need a joint operational analysis capability responsive to their requirements in order to fulfill their responsibilities as the senior operational command echelon in the military establishment. Either DASA or a new Joint Agency could perform this function for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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The Joint Chiefs of Staff should exercise direction and policy control of operational analysis and war gaming by furnishing terms of reference, including applicable assumptions, for each analysis or game. To assist the Joint Chiefs of Staff and insure continuity of their control in these functions, a new position should be established on the Joint Staff, as a Special Assistant to the Director of the Joint Staff. This officer of General or flag rank would be immediately responsible to the Director of the Joint Staff, and in addition to being charged with the conduct of war gaming, would also be designated as the Executive Director of the DOD Damage Assessment Center.

The new Special Assistant should be advised and assisted in monitoring the conduct of war games and damage assessment studies by a Joint Steering Committee, drawn from the Joint Staff and the Services.

For technical execution of war gaming, operational analyses and damage assessment studies, it would be neither necessary nor economical to divert DASAs attention to this function, which is completely foreign to its primary responsibility to provide technical, training, testing and stockpile management coordination in support of the atomic weapons field.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff need a joint operational analysis capability responsive to their requirements in order to fulfill their responsibilities as the senior operational command echelon in the military establishment. Either DASA or a new Joint Agency could perform this function for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

Commandant of the Marine Corps

Enclosure "A"

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A Joint Analysis Group composed of detachments representing existing Service capabilities in the field of war gaming and damage assessment should be established. In view of the desirability of early achievement of a DOD damage assessment capability, this group could begin operation immediately, and would function within existing facilities until such time as it became possible to move into the AJCC.

War games and operational analyses, as planning tools, are the direct responsibility of the Joint Staff with personnel from J-2, J-3, J-4, J-5, and the Services participating. The organization proposed above allows for immediate and effective participation by personnel from those organizations, under close and continued policy direction and control by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, without the highly undesirable division of responsibility which would result from an attempt to separate war gaming from its inherent and associated function of damage assessment.

Commanders of unified commands having an area responsibility should be responsible for pre-planned attacks of targets on the national strategic target list as feasible in light of their capabilities and other missions.

There is a need for a clear delineation of the areas in which commanders have primary responsibility for coordination of planning for the attack of the strategic target system. Otherwise, the present unsatisfactory coordination will continue

Generally speaking, no, because the forces assigned to the commanders of unified commands having an area responsibility are provided for the primary mission of accomplishing theatre objectives as opposed to accomplishing destruction of strategic targets on the national strategic target list. Recognizing, however, that certain targets constituting a direct threat to the theatre may be included on the national strategic target list, available theatre forces capable of providing

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3. Operational Control of Atomic Strike Forces:

2. QUESTION: As a general policy, should unified commanders having an area responsibility be responsible for H-hour attack of targets on the national strategic target list?

ANSWER:

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QUESTION 3 a Continued

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

to exist with the consequent necessity for what amounts to detailed operational planning at the level of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Assignment of areas of primary responsibility to the commanders of unified and specified commands would not preclude the striking of strategic targets by one commander in the area of another commander; rather, it would involve assigning primary responsibility for operational coordination of the strike forces entering each area. Areas of coordination responsibility should be based on such factors as the availability and capability of the forces assigned to the commanders of the unified and specified commands, assigned missions, security of their forces, and the characteristics of the area. The assigning of full responsibility for the attack of the entire national strategic target system to a single commander, is subject to the following overriding objections:

It would, in effect, establish a single superior commander over all other commanders of unified commands.

It would therefore interfere with the carrying out of the other primary responsibilities of the commanders of unified commands.

It would subjugate the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the strategic direction of the war.

It would not provide for the necessary flexibility in weapon systems employment inherent in decentralized control to meet the exigencies of the fluid and unpredictable situation which would follow a massive nuclear attack.

Chief of Naval Operations

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It would, in effect, establish a single superior commander over all other commanders of unified commands.

It would therefore interfere with the carrying out of the other primary responsibilities of the commanders of unified commands.

It would subjugate the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the strategic direction of the war.

It would not provide for the necessary flexibility in weapon systems employment inherent in decentralized control to meet the exigencies of the fluid and unpredictable situation which would follow a massive nuclear attack.

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

acceptable all-weather assurance of effectiveness against such targets on a pre-planned basis, may be assigned to attack them. This assignment would be reflected in both the strategic operational plan and in the appropriate theatre operational plan.

Commandant of the Marine Corps

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It would therefore interfere with the carrying out of the other primary responsibilities of the commanders of unified commands.

It would subjugate the role of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the strategic direction of the war.

It would not provide for the necessary flexibility in weapon systems employment inherent in decentralized control to meet the exigencies of the fluid and unpredictable situation which would follow a massive nuclear attack.

3. b. QUESTION: Should the operation of the Joint War Room Annexes and the Joint Coordination Centers be continued?

ANSWER:

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

Yes

Chief of Naval Operations

Yes

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

Yes

Commandant of the Marine Corps

Yes

ANSWER: Should any additional measures be taken to improve the coordination of forces operating under the operational control of the various commanders?

There are additional measures which should be taken to improve the coordination of forces involved in the attack of the strategic target system.

(1) A single "strategic" as opposed to "operational" plan should be prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This plan, which in effect would be a mission type directive, should make more specific the targeting and damage criteria guidance now contained in the Atomic Annex to JSCP and add the national strategic target list, and the assignment of geographic areas to the commanders of unified and specified commands within which they will be responsible for the coordination of both planning and the execution of the attack on the national strategic target list. This JCS plan should be furnished annually as an annex to the JSCP at least six months prior to its effective date.

Procedures at the level of the commanders of the unified and specified commands should provide for development of operational strike plans concurrently and in the closest of coordination with respect to atomic as well as other operations in the areas in which targets of the strategic target systems are located.

There are additional measures which should be taken to improve the coordination of forces involved in the attack of the strategic target system.

A single "strategic" as opposed to "operational" plan should be prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This plan, which in effect would be a mission type directive, should make more specific the targeting and damage criteria guidance now contained in the Atomic Annex to JSCP and add the national strategic target list, and the assignment of geographic areas to the commanders of unified and specified commands within which they will be responsible for the coordination of both planning and the execution of the attack on the national strategic target list. This JCS plan should be furnished annually as an annex to the JSCP at least six months prior to its effective date.

Procedures at the level of the commanders of the unified and specified commands should provide for development of operational strike plans concurrently and in the closest of coordination with respect to atomic as well as other operations in the areas in which targets of the strategic target systems are located.

There are measures in addition to those discussed above which would improve coordination between commands. Since a number of such measures are already being addressed in other joint and inter-command actions, and since the measures discussed in the responses to the foregoing questions are clearly of priority importance, it is not deemed advisable to further enlarge the scope or detail of the present action.

There are additional measures which should be taken to improve the coordination of forces involved in the attack of the strategic target system.

A single "strategic" as opposed to "operational" plan should be prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This plan, which in effect would be a mission type directive, should make more specific the targeting and damage criteria guidance now contained in the Atomic Annex to JSCP and add the national strategic target list, and the assignment of geographic areas to the commanders of unified and specified commands within which they will be responsible for the coordination of both planning and the execution of the attack on the national strategic target list. This JCS plan should be furnished annually as an annex to the JSCP at least six months prior to its effective date.

Procedures at the level of the commanders of the unified and specified commands should provide for development of operational strike plans concurrently and in the closest of coordination with respect to atomic as well as other operations in the areas in which targets of the strategic target systems are located.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

Op-60B/1s  
Ser 000362P60

30 September 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subject: Target Coordination and Associated Problems

Reference: (a) CM 380-59\* of 17 August 1959

1. Reference (a)\* is a comprehensive coverage of controversial issues related to atomic strike plans, targeting, force adequacy, and the operational control of strike forces. These issues are basic. I agree that their resolution calls for command decisions. The decisions reached will have a profound effect upon our national security and economic welfare. The issues, therefore, deserve the most careful analysis, and with the nation's interests always paramount. Individual Service capabilities, both current and potential, must of course receive due consideration, but only to the extent that they can best contribute to national interests.

Recent and imminent improvements in weapons and their delivery means, and other scientific developments, may well dictate radical departures from some of the concepts, and their implementing measures, that were evolved when the relative combat power of the U.S. and the USSR was of a different order of magnitude. Continued rapid progress in weapon technology is probable. Changes in international relations are inevitable, and may be of a nature that will influence our military posture. Accordingly, it would appear unwise to commit ourselves, unnecessarily, to any course of action that would be too costly or difficult to alter should such progress and changes so dictate. Freedom of maneuver in our military policy and strategy must be assured.

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2. It is within the broad context of paragraph 1 above that I have formulated the views set forth below on the following items that were covered, directly or indirectly, in the referenced memorandum.

Targeting philosophy.

The development of atomic strike plans.

Targeting coordination.

Force adequacy (i.e., nuclear striking forces).

The operational control of strike forces.

3. Targeting philosophy.

In paragraphs 17 and 18 of reference (a)\* the Chairman outlines two extremes of targeting philosophy.

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The rationale for this conclusion is set forth below.

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4. The development of atomic strike plans.

As I interpret the first sentence of paragraph 22 of the referenced memorandum,\* it is apparently assumed that a single commander will be responsible for "the strategic mission". Presumably, this refers to a single all-inclusive national strategic mission. I cannot agree that such a mission should be isolated as a separate entity within the national strategy and executed by a single commander. The military strategy of the United States covers the world, and its direct application to the

will be applied throughout the entire perimeter of the bloc. In addition to CINCSAC forces those of CINCLANT, CINCEUR and CINCPAC will participate extensively in the application of United States power. The simultaneous application of this power from a diversity of sources, directions, ranges, delivery means, and commands adds greatly to the threat facing the Soviets. It is my view that we should retain this diversified threat.

Accordingly, I believe that the Unified Commanders in a position to do so should participate in the nuclear strikes on strategic targets on a pre-planned national list. The optimum procedure is for each to develop his own strike plan, but in close coordination with the other Unified and Specified Commanders.

I agree with the Chairman that improvements in our nuclear strike planning procedures must be made. The requisite improvements are feasible. They require more detailed and earlier planning coordination under more positive control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The discussion that follows gives the reasons for this thesis.

Basic to sound atomic strike planning is the development of target lists. The target lists adopted, and the damage criteria to be applied, are of such major import and are so fundamental to the execution of our military strategy that the Joint Chiefs

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of Staff cannot divorce themselves from their formulation. Broad policy guidance is necessary but is not, by itself, sufficient. After target nominations are made by the Unified and Specified Commanders concerned, the Joint Chiefs of Staff should subject the combined list to the required analysis by any appropriate agency, such as DASA. The final result would be a target list developed in a logical, systematic and analytical manner, and finally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Because of the importance of the target list in its relation to national policy I do not see how the Joint Chiefs of Staff can divorce themselves from its development, in view of their responsibility for the strategic direction of the armed forces.

Following the development of a national strategic target list the commanders concerned would then be assigned targets for their respective nuclear strikes. Their detailed plans would be developed and coordinated with the other commanders concerned.

By this procedure the Joint Chiefs of Staff retain in their hands an authority and responsibility that I do not believe can be delegated to others, without abrogating the JCS responsibilities.

It should be noted that after the initial target list is developed, future modification to it would be comparatively simple.

In several places in his memorandum\* the Chairman mentions the complexity that stems from the fact that various commands have operational plans for nuclear strikes. He points out the difficulty of war gaming several plans, and concludes from this that we should have a single integrated operational plan for the "strategic attack", and that CINCSAC should develop this plan.

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I would strongly emphasize that our objective in war planning is not simplicity but effectiveness. A single integrated operational plan for the nuclear strikes, drawn up by a single commander, would facilitate war gaming. However, we must ensure that the enemy is faced with a diversity of threats from many directions and many sources. To place the total responsibility for destruction of all pre-planned targets in the hands of a single commander carries with it a danger that we should not, and need not accept. We do not know how much of that commander's force will be left if we are hit first, and we do not know what the status of his communications and control will be. This would be placing an undue reliance upon a single strategic concept that may be successful only if executed according to a pre-conceived plan. (Seldom is such a plan so executed). We would forfeit the flexibility that is inherent in the decentralized execution of strike plans by several unified commanders. The military logic of retaining this flexibility is overwhelming. In preparation for World War II France had a single pre-conceived plan that she thought was foolproof, but it was virtually worthless.

I agree in general with the Chairman's discussion of damage criteria outlined in paragraph 23 of his memorandum. I also agree that we should subject the target lists and damage criteria to analysis by machine and mathematical techniques. A major objective of this analysis would be to arrive at an estimate of "how much is enough". This is an item that requires much more attention by the JCS. Decisions thereon . . . far-reaching effects upon types and yields of weapons, the national stockpile, and delivery force types and levels. Decisions thereon are fundamental to the JCS responsibility for strategic direction of the Armed Forces. An example of why this responsibility should not be delegated is pertinent here. There is a great difference between various commanders' conclusions as to weapons necessary

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for destruction of a target. For example, on

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Without expressing an opinion as to which commander is right, it is obvious that the differences between the conclusions reached are so great as to indicate a gross miscalculation on the part of some. The JCS should not accept either estimate without close analysis. This should be followed by positive decisions and guidance, and positive follow-through to ensure that their guidance is followed. We can accept neither a gross under-estimate nor over-estimate of the effort required. In the one case we would run the great risk that the enemy could continue the war effectively. Accepting the other would result in a needlessly high number of weapons and delivery forces; with the attendant high cost, and at the expense of desperately needed forces for other types of war. Instead of further delegating responsibility for such major decisions the JCS should repossess some of their prerogatives that have gone by default, with the resultant greatly differing conclusions reflected in current strike plans.

The factors discussed above are some of the reasons why I think that each Unified and Specified Commander with the requisite forces should develop a nuclear strike plan for general war. As a less desirable alternative I could agree to the development of a single integrated strike plan provided:

The JCS provide the terms of reference and approve the final plan.

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Its development is participated in by all Unified and Specified Commanders concerned.

That all Unified and Specified Commanders with nuclear capable strategic delivery forces participate in its execution.

5. Targeting coordination.

One serious error that we can make is to permit the complexity of target coordination to govern our planning procedure. I would emphasize here that, while simplicity is commendable, it is not an end in itself, but should influence plans only as it contributes to their effectiveness. Instead of considering target coordination first, we should start at the other end of the spectrum by determining the objectives of our nuclear strikes, and then design the most effective plans to attain those objectives. Target coordination would then be tailored to those plans. We have not lost our repeatedly demonstrated ability to plan for and execute highly complex military operations.

I do not attach to the coordinating procedure the degree of complexity that the Chairman does. I agree that what is involved here is the

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I am sure we can do it. What is needed is more positive control and direction by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have the necessary agencies and facilities available.

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6. Force adequacy.

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It is imperative that our nuclear delivery forces be of a size and type to cause

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we don't, a further increase in the size of our nuclear strike forces will not compensate for this deficiency.

I agree with the Chairman that the necessity for prevailing in general war is of such vital importance that any error in judgment as to the size of our nuclear strike forces should be on the safe side. The Chairman states that the Soviet's military doctrine is based on the principle of "mass". Our nuclear delivery forces have been based upon the same principle. As we move into the missile age we cannot depend to the same extent upon this principle. Because of the vulnerability of our fixed bases to a surprise attack we must ensure inevitable concentration of firepower by shifting to dispersed, concealed, mobile and far less vulnerable delivery systems. We can no longer place major reliance upon planes operating from fixed bases. The warning time is too short. Likewise, fixed missile sites, even though hardened, will be vulnerable to ballistic missiles of the small CEP that we can expect the Soviets and ourselves to have within the next decade.

For the missile era the criteria for determining the size of our nuclear strike force will change. In the past this size has been determined largely by the anticipated size of the Soviet's intercontinental bomber force. This has resulted in numbers of United States nuclear delivery vehicles of such magnitude that we could lose a substantial portion and still have enough left to devastate the U.S.S.R. The basic thesis of

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having enough left after being hit was sound, but the result has been progressively increasing numbers to offset a growing vulnerability of our own forces, together with an estimate of Soviet capability that has continuously turned out to be much too high. This process cannot be continued indefinitely without either imposing an unacceptable economic burden upon the United States, or by degrading our limited war capabilities to an unacceptable degree, or both. Fortunately, it is not necessary to continue the process.

The nature or characteristics of the forces, rather than size alone, will assume more importance in determining future force levels. Here are some of the reasons why:

1. We will have an increasingly diverse delivery means, e.g., land based bombers, carrier based bombers, land based ICBM and IRBM, and sea based FBM.

2. The ballistic missile threat to aircraft carriers at sea, and to sea based missiles is so small that it can be disregarded.

3. There are no means now foreseen by which the Soviets can eliminate the threat of the submarine ballistic missile.

4. It may be feasible to make some land based missiles movable by barge, road, or rail.

5. No way is now foreseen for determining the number of Soviet missiles ready for launching. Among other means dummy sites could be used freely.

6. It is unlikely that we will know the location of most of their missile sites. Therefore

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7. With an open ended ICBM missile race it is probable that large numbers would be based in the United States, which will draw additional enemy missiles to our soil.

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The security of our nuclear striking forces against a surprise attack by any enemy having the privilege of striking first is a primary consideration. Unless a retaliatory force stays alive it is useless. In the Polaris submarine we have a missile system now nearing fruition that can, above all others, stay alive. We must not sacrifice the lead that we now hold in this field by failing to exploit the many advantages of using the sea as a base for launching nuclear attacks.

If the Soviets are to be deterred from initiating general war the diversity of the threat that resides in a combination of the above systems, with decentralized control of those systems, provides the requisite deterrent. If they are not to be deterred, then this diversity of weapon systems, without astronomical force levels, will ensure the enemy's destruction.

7. Operational control of strike forces.

The philosophy that I have outlined throughout this paper, including targeting, world-wide operations, flexibility, decentralized execution, and other related factors, dictates that:

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With respect to the Polaris submarine force I agree with the Chairman that this force should remain under Naval control

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until the weapon system has been developed and proven. Inclusion of this last phrase is not intended to imply that the system should ultimately be removed from Naval control.

I agree with the Chairman that an appropriate nucleus of Naval officers be assigned to CINCSAC's operational planning staff, provided that Air Force officers intimately familiar with CINCSAC's operational plans and planning procedures be attached to the staffs of Unified Commanders having nuclear delivery forces. Officers of both Services so assigned should participate actively in all phases of planning by the staff of which they are a part. I concur in this procedure in the interest of improved planning, and not for the purpose of preparing for an eventual Unified Strategic Command.

The question of assigning

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The Chairman, in paragraph 32 of his memorandum, states that if the series of decisions which he had outlined were taken, the question of operational control of the various strike forces and problem of mutual interference would be greatly simplified because mutual interference

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I have pointed out the undesirability of assigning to a single commander the responsibility for planning and executing a single national nuclear strike plan. It would appear safer and far more logical to achieve the sought for simplicity and interference reduction by assigning all overseas strategic strike forces to the Unified Commanders in whose areas they are based, and within whose areas they would conduct their strikes. If we are seeking simplicity in planning, with safety in execution, this would be a major step forward.

8. There are other factors that are pertinent to these discussions, and which were not covered specifically in the Chairman's memorandum.\* One of these relates to changes in military strategy to keep pace with changes in related fields. Change is one of the constants of warfare. Historically, weapon characteristics and the nature of the enemy have heavily

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influenced strategy. Some wars have been fought almost entirely on land, others predominately on the sea, and still others in a combination of the two. In recent history the air has become the third medium of combat, and air power has played a role of tremendous importance. We are now witnessing the emergence of the missile age which will probably result in a decreased emphasis on some categories of air power, particularly the long range bomber and tactical aircraft for troop support. In essence, we are returning to an artillery concept wherein the explosive is launched from the earth's surface or sub-surface. However, there is one very important difference. The artillery battleground will be expanded to include the homeland of the belligerents. This means that, if we use United States soil as the artillery base, we will receive on United States soil large numbers of enemy missiles aimed at eliminating our own missile launching sites. If there were no alternatives we should pursue this strategy. Fortunately, there are alternatives, and good ones. Technology provides us with the means for using the oceans as the artillery base. Regardless of any ultimate decision as to the control of forces, the development of strategic plans, or the detailed tactics used, this nation should exploit every possible means of using the oceans as a base for the delivery of nuclear weapons, because of the relative invulnerability and greater effectiveness assured thereby, as well as the significant economies possible to achieve.

Major evolutions such as the above must be recognized and appropriately reflected in all phases of our planning. Where necessary, we must be willing to break away from procedures and systems conceived and implemented in an era of nuclear deficiency on our part and no nuclear capability of the part of the U.S.S.R. Progress has provided the Soviets with a

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substantial capability that is growing in size and versatility. Likewise, our nuclear power has grown many-fold. We have made some notable adjustments to these developments. Among other things we have placed diversified delivery means in the hands of Unified Commanders immediately adjacent to Communist Bloc territory. This has broadened greatly the base of our military posture. To withdraw from these commanders this capability that has been developed so assiduously over the years, and centralize it in the hands of a single commander would narrow that base. We would thereby forfeit strength that comes from versatile forces and a decentralized control that is so well adapted to our force structure and the strategic positions that we hold around the major portion of the Communist Bloc perimeter.

Another factor that should be fully recognized is that the military strategy and force structure suitable for an aggressor nation will normally be unsuitable for the non-aggressor. The aggressor can be more specific in his planning, both as to timing and as to types of attacks. We may be sure that he will explore every possible indication of our weakness in any area, and will exploit that weakness in his aggressive moves. We, on the other hand, must be more flexible to be able to meet a variety of thrusts. Consequently, our force and command structure must be such that we can withstand reverses in some areas without danger of the whole structure toppling.

9. I appreciate the Chairman's providing the Joint Chiefs of Staff copies of his memorandum.\* I agree with him that we should resolve the issues discussed.

10. In paralleling the distribution of reference (a)\* I am providing copies of this memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

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/s/ ARLEIGH BURKE

\* Enclosure to J.C.S. 2056/131

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