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CM-500-60

19 February 1960

BY: NSC
GJCS 381 (Net Evaluation)
(19 Feb 60)

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF

SUBJECT: Appraisal of Relative Merits, from the Point of View of Effective Deterrence, of Alternative Retaliatory Efforts

1. Reference is made to NSC Action 2009 and the study, subject as above, which was prepared by the NESCS staff.

2. I have been directed by higher authority to exercise the utmost care in processing and utilizing subject study in order to guard against leaks or security violations. Accordingly, this memorandum provides administrative instructions for handling the study.

3. This memorandum (CM-500-60) will be accompanied "in the green" by two attachments:

a. Attachment number 1, Memorandum for the President from the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, subject as above, dated 12 February 1960, is the statement which I made to the National Security Council at the special meeting held on 12 February 1960. This statement was made immediately following the oral presentation of the study to the National Security Council.

b. Attachment number 2, Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff from the Executive Secretary, National Security Council, subject as above, dated 17 February 1960, constitutes the decision on the subject matter.

4. This memorandum (CM-500-60) and its two attachments will be reproduced "in the green" in 15 copies only. Three copies will be provided to each Service and 3 copies will be provided to the Director, Joint Staff. Service Chiefs and the Director, Joint Staff will determine circulation on the basis of "need to know."

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5. One copy of the study itself will be provided to each Service and to the Chairman's office. No other copies are available from General Hickey's office. Accordingly, Service Chiefs and the Director, Joint Staff are authorized to reproduce not more than two copies of the study for use by planning agencies. The Joint Staff will have access to the two copies reproduced by the Director and to the Chairman's copy as required. Access to the study will be determined by Service Chiefs and the Director, Joint Staff on a "need to know" basis.

6. Each Service and the Chairman's office were previously provided with one copy of the presentation which was given orally by the Director, NESC Staff. Reproduction and dissemination of the "oral presentation" will be handled in the same manner as the study itself.

7. The mass of cards and documents which comprise the detailed technical backup to the study will not be reproduced. These records will be kept in General Hickey's office and are available to personnel properly designated by Service Chiefs and the Director, Joint Staff.

8. Hereafter this study will not be referred to or identified by use of the name of any individual. If a short title is required, it will be referred to as "Study No. 2009."

9. It is requested that you arrange, as necessary; with the Secretary, JCS for handling of the study in consonance with the above guidance.

(Sgd) N. F. Twining
N. F. TWINING
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments (2)

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Sec. Gates

CM-449-60
12 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Appraisal of Relative Merits, from the Point of View of Effective Deterrence, of Alternative Retaliatory Efforts

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the Hickey study and have discussed it with the Secretary of Defense on several occasions.
2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are in agreement that the concept of the "optimum mix" target system is sound, and that the order of magnitude of the target system appears to be reasonable, within the scope and time frame of the study.
3. However, the Service Chiefs have requested that I briefly mention certain observations which they have on the conclusions of the study.
4. General Lemnitzer has made the following major observations:
 - a. The conclusions of the study are predicated on the assumption that our defenses will be capable of containing a Soviet attack on the Continental United States to the extent that we will survive as a viable nation. An adequate air and missile defense, both active and passive, is therefore absolutely essential in order that we may have the residual relative superiority necessary to prevail if the deterrent fails.
 - b. The problem of locating and destroying enemy ICBM sites is a major factor bearing on the conclusions. This problem requires further study.
 - c. The relatively small number of bomb release line high-yield weapons required to attack "optimum mix" target system indicates that we have reached, if not surpassed, the leveling off point for these weapons in our stockpile.

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5. Admiral Burke has made the following major observations:

a. The study indicates that our current stockpile of high-yield weapons is adequate or even excessive if less vulnerable delivery systems were to be used.

b. For destruction of the basic target systems by bomber delivery, the percentage of aircraft in the national inventory that arrives on target is apparently only about 15%. This is of such concern as to suggest acceleration of programs for less vulnerable delivery systems.

c. The deterrent effect of forces required only for attack of the urban-industrial system is underrated.

d. The study concerned itself with a mix of targets but did not explore extensively a mix of weapons on targets. This requires further study.

e. With the exception of the POLARIS, the nuclear capable theater forces of CINCEUR, CINCPAC and CINCLANT were not employed in the wargaming attack of the "optimum mix" strategic target system. Employment of these forces would change the retaliatory force level required. Further studies on this aspect of the problem are required.

6. General White has made the following major observations:

a. The potential benefits of this valuable appraisal could be forfeited unless the term "optimum mix" is given the same meaning in our planning as it was given in the study. The study developed a target system consisting of a mix of vital military and important urban-industrial targets, including all vital strategic elements of the enemy's known nuclear offensive capability.

b. While General White has also expressed certain reservations regarding the specifics of the study, and does not share the reservations noted by General Lemnitzer and Admiral Burke, he has requested that they not be outlined here, since, in his opinion, none of these reservations has significant effect upon the major conclusions of the report, or upon the agreed Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendations with which I shall conclude my remarks.

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7. Having summarized the major reservations and observations on this report, I would like to present my own views. It is my opinion that the appraisal is a commendably thorough and objective study. It was prepared by a qualified joint group which expended much time and effort to insure the accuracy or reasonableness of the factors which were used and the methodology which was employed. The study constitutes the best objective joint appraisal of strategic targeting and force requirements available at this time. I am confident that we can make significant progress in our planning if we use General Hickey's study until something better is developed. We have in this study a sound point of departure and we should accept its conclusions as a guide for present planning until it is superseded by an equally thorough and objective effort.

8. The most significant conclusions to be drawn from the study, in my judgment, are as follows:

One: A retaliatory force structure based on the destruction of an urban target system would not provide an adequate military posture.

Two: The strategic force level which we have developed is in the right ball park and does not appear excessive. Naturally, the composition of this force must change as the enemy's military target system changes and as our own technology provides improved methods of delivery. The appraisal reveals that strategic forces now programmed for 1963 will be more than adequate to attack an "optimum mix" target system of minimum size with a 75% assurance of one weapon arriving at each ground zero, but will be inadequate to provide a 90% assurance of one weapon on each ground zero.

Three: The present and planned composition of the atomic stockpile, particularly with respect to high-yield weapons, is also about right; and

Four: The study was reassuring to me in that this independent analysis generally substantiates current national planning with respect to targeting, the nuclear stockpile composition, and the level of strategic offensive forces required.

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9. Taking note of the views of all concerned, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reached agreement on certain recommendations. You will recall, Mr. President, that in NSC Action 2009 you directed Mr. Gray, the Secretary of Defense, and myself to arrange for the conduct of this study. We concur in the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which are as follows:

a. That the concept of the "optimum mix" target system be approved.

b. That the study be referred to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a basis for planning.

c. That they be authorized to release a limited number of copies of the study to the Joint Staff and to the Service Planners.

N. F. TWINING
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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EYES ONLY

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON

February 17, 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of Defense
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Appraisal of Relative Merits, from the Point of View of
Effective Deterrence, of Alternative Retaliatory Efforts

REFERENCES: A. NSC Action No. 2009
B. Study by the Net Evaluation Subcommittee Staff,
same subject, dated November 6, 1959
C. Memorandum for the President from the Chairman,
JCS, same subject, dated February 12, 1960

The National Security Council, at a Special Meeting held on Friday, February 12, 1960:

* * * * *

3. Noted the President's approval of the concept of the "optimum mix" target system for a minimum of 75% assurance of delivering a weapon at each bomb release line, as described in the reference Study.
4. Noted the President's referral of the reference Study to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a basis for planning.
5. Noted the President's authorization to the Joint Chiefs of Staff to release a limited number of copies of the reference Study to the Joint Staff and to the Service Planners under strict security controls.
6. Noted that the further studies suggested in the reference Study and in the comments by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (transmitted by the reference memorandum of February 12) would, as appropriate, be undertaken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

* * * * *

The above actions, as approved this date by the President, are transmitted herewith to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for appropriate action.

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This memorandum is being transmitted on an "EYES ONLY" basis for handling in accordance with the President's directive that information relating to the reference Study should be handled with special security precautions and restricted to those having a valid need to know.

/s/ James S. Lay, Jr.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.
Executive Secretary

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1951 07/11/51

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