

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

By 04 NARA Date 9/24/10



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 2, 1980

SECRET

TO : The Secretary
FROM : S/MS - Marshall Shulman *Marshall*
SUBJECT: PD-59

Ed:

My concerns about PD-59 fall into two categories, procedural and substantive.

Procedurally, this was a case study in how not to make national security policy:

-- The decision-making process was neither orderly nor reasonable;

-- Your and your Department's exclusion meant that the effects of the new targetting policy on the Allies and the Soviets were not properly factored in, especially in making the policy change public;

-- Leaks were employed by the NSC hurriedly to get various versions of the new strategy to the public. This gave the appearance of a rushed political response to the Republican platform.

The net effect of this episode was very negative, irrespective of the substance of the issue. We projected an image of a decision-making process dominated by public relations image building.

Substantively, I find it more difficult to comment because I, like my colleagues, have still not seen the Presidential Directives involved (PDs-59, 53, and 58).

SECRET

RDS-3, 9/2/00, SHULMAN, Marshall D.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

By 04 NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET

-2-

I do not want to give the impression that I underestimate the problems posed by increasing Soviet capabilities to strike at our strategic forces. These capabilities are real. But it seems to me that the scenarios for a Soviet preemptive attack (à la Paul Nitze) are unrealistic and assume a Soviet leadership gone mad. The likelihood of escalation to all-out war and destruction of the two societies is too great.

Further, much of our belief that the Soviets have already developed limited war options in their targetting policy, that they believe nuclear war is winnable, is based on our reading of Soviet military literature. A perusal of our military literature by the Soviet military would easily convince them that we have such options and such beliefs. We may be placing more weight on the Soviet literature than is warranted.

Finally, the question arises whether, even if the Soviets have such options in their nuclear warfighting strategy, an imitative response on our part is sensible, whether it may not make the problem worse.

For example, one element of our new policy as portrayed by the leakers is the emphasis given to targetting of the Soviet political leadership and Soviet command, control, and communications networks. This can only increase Soviet perceptions of vulnerability to a preemptive US strike. This will introduce further instability into the strategic balance by increasing Soviet incentives to preempt our "first-strike" capability.

I understand that we currently recognize that the vulnerability of our command, control, and communications (C³) networks is our greatest strategic weakness. We are working to correct this vulnerability as PD-53 and PD-58 testify. Presumably C³ is also where the Soviets are most vulnerable. If we are trying to "win" a nuclear war, then a "surgical" strike at those Soviet facilities may be the best way to limit damage to the US, since it might cripple the ability of the remainder of the Soviet forces to respond. But it is at least equally likely ~~to~~ ~~me~~ that such a strike at the Soviet political leadership and their control and communications systems could result in a reflexive all-out Soviet response and destruction of both societies. If a nuclear war can be limited at all, we probably need the capability of maintaining communications between the two countries' leaders.

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 48608

By 04 NARA Date 9/24/10

SECRET

-3-

The Soviets undoubtedly now believe that the US has or soon will have options for preemptive attacks built into our targetting strategy. We believe that they have such options. The key question is whether mutual possession of such capabilities to launch "limited" attacks will in fact deter the two sides from ever engaging in them, as Harold appears to believe, or whether it makes nuclear war more "acceptable" and thus more likely. As you can see, I lean to the latter view.

h DC

SECRET