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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: JCS Study of Strategic Nuclear Targeting of Communist China (U)

Attached to a memorandum of December 21, 1967, subject as above, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a study by the JCS Special Studies Group on strategic nuclear targeting of China which we requested they perform. In a memorandum of January 19, 1968, subject as above, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted the results of the study.

The targeting options in the SIOP are not consistent with a number of the lower intensity attack options we would like to have for China. We asked the JCS to perform the study of China targeting to obtain a wide variety of targeting options for China upon which operational plans could be based. The study gives a large amount of data about civilian fatalities and the percentages of different types of industry which could be destroyed in attacks of varying intensity. It does not, however, develop specific target lists and methods of attack which are related to specific attack strategies of interest. I believe, therefore, that we should suggest to the JCS that they develop these target lists for different options and begin considering the details of the attacks.

The enclosed memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff covers the above issue and I recommend that you sign it. Mr. Warnke concurs.

Enclosure

Alain Enthoven

Alain Enthoven
Assistant Secretary of Defense

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

25 OCT 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Study of Strategic Nuclear Targeting of Communist China (U)

I appreciate your efforts in performing the study on strategic nuclear targeting of China, which was forwarded with your memorandum of 21 December 1967 and reviewed in your memorandum of 19 January 1968. My staff has discussed this study at length with the Joint Staff during the last year. I believe that consideration of the questions addressed by the study represents a significant first step towards our having a wide range of options for targeting China. I also believe that the conclusions: (1) that it is not practical to target for a large percentage of fatalities in China; and (2) that high levels of damage can be achieved on military and industrial targets with very low levels of fatalities - are both important.

The study suggests further work in two areas. The first is determining specific target lists (and the general method of attacking targets on each list) which would be consistent with attack strategies for China, ranging from selective attacks on government, military, or industrial targets to large-scale counter-military and counter-value attacks.

In obtaining the particular target lists, criteria for assigning values to military and civilian targets would be needed. The criteria for the civilian targets should be based on an analysis of the Chinese economy. The level of detail in the target planning would depend on our data base on China; I understand the Defense Intelligence Agency is now improving the data base on Chinese population and industry.

The second area for further work is consideration of the details of placing weapons on the specific targets under the various attack options. These details would include the particular weapons carrier to attack the target, the route the carrier should take, the defense suppression needed, etc. This consideration would lead to a set of operational plans for implementing the various attack options for China.

I would appreciate your informing me by November 15, 1968, of your plans for further effort in the two areas mentioned above.

Paul H. Nitze

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