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

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DISTRIBUTION LIST

Subj: Adaptation of the National Military Posture to the era of Nuclear Parity; a suggested Navy Position

Ref: (a) Op06 Top Secret Memo Op06B1/nw BM00043-57 of 1 May 1957
(b) Op93 Top Secret Memo Op93/dlm Ser 0005P93 of 2 Jul 1957
(c) Op93 Top Secret Memo Op93/ejs Ser 0007P93 of 30 Oct 1957

Encl: (1) Subject draft

1. Background

Reference (a) submitted proposals for development of a "new concept for atomic operations" to serve as a basis for resolving the conflict between the agreed priority of a deterrent/retaliatory capability and the urgent requirement to increase the capability to deal with peripheral wars. The "Minimal Target Study" of Op36-Op922V was proposed as the basis for such a revision and Op93 was nominated as "action group", with the support of an ad-hoc committee from various offices in CNO.

In reference (b) Op93 proposed a modus operandi and noted that, based on the new developments in the situation and "basic requirements for national security...a general set of principles can be developed.... From the principles adopted, it should then be possible to set forth alternative military means for implementation, along with some considerations regarding how the effectiveness of the alternative systems might be measured".

2. Discussion

After considerable preliminary discussion and study of current JCS splits, it became evident that the "minimal target" concept, while a valuable contribution, failed to attack the essential issues involved. It has gradually become evident, as perhaps it should have from the start, that the basic disagreement is over objectives at that echelon where national security is defined, rather than over military means once specific tasks are assigned. This is not to say that indictment of SAC's plans and demands on specific military points is not justified, but that it is somewhat aside from the main point. It seems evident that, since deterrence of general war and maintenance of U.S. security and values are the basic objectives, preparedness to fight and win a general war must subordinate

itself to these objectives. Where the implementation of the Air Force concept makes general war more likely to occur and endangers U.S. security by alienating allies and diverting resources from conventional preparedness it is subject to challenge.

3. Progress

Reference (c) investigated the guidance defining U.S. National Security policy in an attempt to establish an official basis for the above perspective on objectives.

Enclosure (1), prepared with the assistance of the Naval Warfare Analysis Group, is a statement of the basic military principles of deterrence and the importance of conventional military posture. Recommendations for specific military implementation are made. It is envisaged that enclosure (1), if approved would serve both as a guide for Navy positions on the military posture required to support national policy and as a compendium of the essential elements of the problems associated with nuclear parity.

4. Conclusions

Enclosure (1) is forwarded to the Committee for review and criticism as a draft of a statement of Navy position on these issues. Comments on the validity of both the concept and the recommendations, as well as on the desirability and usefulness of such a statement are solicited.

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I. CONCEPT

- Preventive war, never a U.S. policy, is no longer a feasible capability for U.S.

Discussion: SAC cannot get to Russia before the Soviet SAC launches; unlike U.S. missile installations, ICBM's in the USSR have the advantage of secrecy, which gives them the capability to launch their attack before being sought out and destroyed by a preventive U.S. attack, however massive and immediate.

- Retaliation capability, the policy task largely assigned to SAC, deters general war by virtue of its punitive, or destructive impact:

Discussion: The preventive task--that of forestalling attack--while a desirable capability is of secondary importance compared with the absolutely basic requirement of ensuring USSR appreciation of our capability to retaliate.

- Assured delivery of rather few weapons is sufficient to inflict terrible punishment.

Discussion: The centralized character of the USSR regime, together with the concentrations of value in large cities makes the qualitative difference between none and very few delivered weapons large compared with that between few and many. The first 10 delivered weapons would produce a major disaster with fully a quarter as many casualties as the first hundred. For this reason the "assurance of at least some" capability is vastly more important than achievement of any arbitrarily derived "adequate" deterrent level.

- Deterrence is more effectively achieved by a small retaliatory capability secure against surprise attack than a much larger force calculated to provide the same "residual" capability.

Discussion: Fear of the weight of attack of the "residual" deters deliberate initiation of war but vulnerability encourages the "arms race" nonetheless. More important is that, when jumping the gun confers a clear advantage, a hasty decision to initiate war in periods of tension is greatly encouraged.

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- High rates of delivery are less desirable solutions to the defense against surprise attack than are low rates of potential attrition in the face of attack.

Discussion: Constraint and deliberation can decrease the magnitude of the economic and social disaster of general war, permit high assurances to be attained through reattack rather than overkilling, and afford a prospect of salvaging at least some national political objectives. SAC, or ICBM in known bases must preplan the bulk of its attack with large safety factors in the light of purely hypothetical and pessimistic military and political situations. A mobile system capable of safely withholding attack can afford to accept constraints and to apply its force with sensitive regard for the particular situation. Moreover, if an enemy does choose to counter such a system he is constrained to major search and detection efforts rather than the extravagent nuclear weapon expenditures that are called for against hardened fixed sites.

- Evolution, on both sides, of attack systems that are invulnerable to surprise and disbanding the vulnerable systems is desirable and can lead to a stable stalemate of "mutual deterrences."

Discussion: Such a development no longer places a premium on striking the first blow. There is no longer an urge either to forestall the enemy attack or to get one's own attack off before being forestalled. Fear of disaster will deter deliberate, suicidal action; and assurance that quick reaction is unnecessary will permit deliberation. Only under such conditions can a purposeful political, economic and military strategy survive occasional periods of international tension.

- Under conditions of "mutual deterrence" the U.S. and its allies can no longer rely on the threat of retaliation to deter peripheral conflicts, and must greatly reinforce their weakened conventional capabilities:

Discussion: Nuclear parity and successful ICBM developments, will comprise for the USSR a counter-deterrent to U.S. preventive war that will, probably in the near future, encourage increased aggressiveness on cold-war and limited-war fronts.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. SAC

(a) SAC must be constrained to reorient its planning and requirements in favor of maximum security against surprise attack, in the interim

before secure systems can be substituted for it. To the extent feasible this should be accomplished by ad-hoc methods sacrificing whatever weight-of-attack capability is necessary. No quantitative level of attack capability should be specified, (assured delivery of 1/10, or 1/100 of present capability would be better than the present insecure posture). The priority task should be to maximize, using available resources, the minimum weight of attack that could be launched under any conceivable USSR attack.

(b) Planning that depends for its success (as does SAC's concept) upon prior initiation by the U.S. should be prohibited except that contingency planning for use of maximum available forces in case of USSR failure to make good its blunting capabilities should be conducted.

(c) To achieve the above noted maximum weight of attack under the worst circumstances, maximum expected overall damage rather than high assurances of damage of various degrees of severity must be given due weight in weapon allocations. Under the worst assumptions population may become the only sufficiently vulnerable target system, for a seriously outclassed SAC or a secure attack system in its early build-up phases.

(d) As a general guide to preplanning for contingencies that permit more than a minimal (population) attack it is noted that destruction of urban populations much beyond 30% casualties is militarily wasteful. Once this level of casualties is expected in cities or areas designated by the political authorities (possible objective: any combination containing 2/3 of the urban population) weapons should be allocated to major military and industrial targets, with due consideration being given to the civilian casualties imposed, and the consequent freeing of even more weapons from the purely retaliatory mission.

(e) It is noted that blunting is thus deliberately given a low priority when <u>forces</u> are severly limited, even though, if blunting were to be feasible, priorities in <u>time</u> obviously would be important. The suitability of this distinction follows from the fact that blunting will be feasible only when made so by the same sort of unforeseeable Soviet blunder that would permit adequate U.S. forces to survive.

(f) It is emphasized that invulnerability to surprise, not necessarily to attrition, is the essential feature of the deterrent posture. It is accepted that manned bombers, lacking surprise, must maximize numbers in order to saturate defenses. This must be accepted as an indication of the ultimate unsuitability of manned bombers as a deterrent force, not as a justification for procuring many more of them.

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2. Future developments in Deterrent forces

(a) Future developments in IRBM and ICBM should emphasize the importance of security against surprise attack. Major installations, even hardened ones, should be avoided especially during early introductory stages, since these invite massive counterattack. Unless mobile launchers are developed, early increments of missiles must be installed with secrecy as the paramount consideration. Ability of a missile to fire within a "warning time" is not adequate security (as it is for SAC "strip alerts" and Navy carrier-based aircraft) since to grant permission to fire on the basis of a purely mechanical decision process, subject to spoofing, would be unacceptable.

(b) The use of cruise missiles (SNARK, REGULUS) and of ballistic missiles from mobile or secret bases or Q-ships should be contemplated especially as an early operational capability, capable of more rapid build-up than the submarine-launched missile capability.

(c) Submarine-launched FBM should be accelerated, and, as developments show reasonable assurance of success, major procurement should be contemplated. Unless successful measures for ensuring the secrecy of land-based attack capability are developed, the FBM is the only capability now envisioned that affords no advantage to an enemy in surprise attack, and minimizes attrition rate under attack.

3. Stockpiles

(a) The concept of limited number of high-yield weapons for maximizing the deterrent capability of an airborne or strip-alert SAC force is sound "economy", and acceptable. The limited number of targets against which such weapons are suitable, and the great destructive effects possible even with "low yield" weapons, makes it unnecessary to stress high yield in reloads or contingency weapons in the event maximum potential of SAC should be employed. In general, the concept that the preventive task, since it is difficult (impossible!) demands allocation of large percentages of available material to high-yield weapons is rejected.

(b) The requirements for flexibility and versatility, and for defensive missile warheads legislate for major emphasis on small yield warheads, and miniaturization even where this appears to be costly and "inefficient" in the use of fissionible material.

(c) Warheads for ballistic missiles and other new deterrent weapons will be required. Maximum development toward highest possible yield within the envelopes of current missile designs is required in order to increase

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the early effectiveness of small numbers of missiles. It is anticipated, however, that as soon as these missiles are available in numbers and as accuracy improves the specified yield may readily be sacrificed for economy or weight, or in order to enhance the versatility of the weapons (i.e. application to limited war situations as accuracy increases).

4. Conventional forces

The principal opportunities for conventional warfare will be those which develop from complicated political situations in which subversion and provocation of small nations lead to armed intervention on various pretexts. The ability to cope with the military requirements of such situations depends largely on the mobility of forces of adequate strength to deal decisively with armed forces, and swiftly enough that consolidation of puppet political regimes that can successfully claim sovereignty cannot develop. In addition to greatest feasible support of competent allied capabilities, specialized ground forces of high caliber, air and sea and surface transport of great versatility, improved aircraft carriers, weapons of great discrimination and localized effectiveness, and command communications appropriate to application of force with utmost constraint and control are required. Expansion and research to support airborne and merchanized Army and Marine units, the vertical envelopment concept, and air close support weapons and control precedures are required. There is no fixed limit to the force levels desired, increased forces will simply increase the assurance and scale with which U.S. policy can be implemented. It is the forces that are inadequate that an enemy will choose to challenge.

5. Military contribution to Political and Economic Policy in a nuclear stalemate

Military support to the above tasks is largely to furnish a position of strength from which they can be confidently pursued. Present weaknesses in the conventional military posture deny freedom of action in these fields. Hungary was defaulted primarily for lack of divisions in Europe. Korea and Indochina would have had much more satisfactory outcomes had we enjoyed several times the available ready and mobile forces capable of arriving at the scene with a fraction of the lead times illustrated by these campaigns.

6. Active and passive defense

Defense by means other than preventive war contributes to the deterrent mission primarily by its effect upon the morale of both aggressor and defender. A weight of attack quite adequate to be labeled disastrous can be delivered through any conceivable defense. Defense, however, as distinguished from a preventive concept can be implemented to any desired scale

without the element of provocation to surprise attack that is present in an aggressive attitude. Defensive measures can and do create doubts in the minds of planners contemplating attack who must plan conservatively and thus credit the defenses with more optimistic capabilities, than the defender can afford to plan for. The fact that defenses appear more powerful to the aggressor than the defender contributes to the deterrent situation by generally discouraging action rather than provoking it. However the infeasibility of a complete defense makes it meaningless to state specific requirement for the effort allocated. Expenditures should be limited by the degree with which defense competes for budget support with other important elements of the national posture.