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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

13 JUL 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

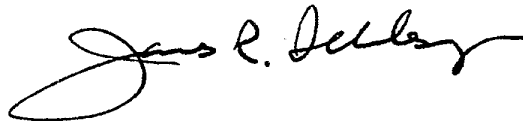
SUBJECT: Response to NSSM 169

(TS) Forwarded herewith is the Summary Report of the Inter-Agency Working Group on NSSM 169 - - U. S. Nuclear Policy. Page 1 of the report contains a substantive summary of the recommendations. Pages 67-74 contain draft language for a National Security Decision Memorandum to implement these recommendations. In my judgment this report represents an excellent basis for further consideration by the National Security Council.

(TS) I do not say further consideration because of any divergence from the substance of the report. Rather, it is because I believe U. S. Nuclear Policy cannot be established by a document. The proposed concepts and objectives, to be viable, must become a process of government. For nuclear policy this means that each member of the National Security Council must take the time and effort to assimilate the proposals, consider the implications, and formulate his own judgments. The Working Group report is well written to serve this need, with lengthy sections that seek to lay out the issues and the inter-relationships among the elements of nuclear policy. The Working Group is, of course, prepared to discuss these considerations further and I understand you have already indicated a desire to meet with them.

(TS) The draft NSDM is lengthy. This reflects a judgment by the Working Group that all aspects of nuclear policy should be embraced in a common policy document. The NSDM also contains implementing instructions that are designed to infuse the concepts and objectives into the process of government.

(U) I request that a preliminary discussion of this subject by the National Security Council be scheduled at an early date.



Attachment
Summary Report (TS-S)

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EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3
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NSSM 169

SUMMARY REPORT

8 June 1973

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NSSM 169 SUMMARY REPORT

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NSSM 169 -- US Nuclear Policy
Summary Report

NSSM 169 directed a review of existing US nuclear policy, to embrace all nuclear forces, and an evaluation of possible changes to current nuclear policy. This report summarizes the analysis and recommendations of the NSSM 169 Working Group.

The Working Group concluded that a new policy for employment of strategic and theater nuclear forces based on the following concepts is both desirable and feasible:

-- Development of objectives and guidelines for a greater range of nuclear attack options to provide greater flexibility to the National Command Authorities (NCA), i.e., the President and the Secretary of Defense or their duly deputized alternates or successors.

-- With regard to these options, establishing control of escalation as a means of terminating conflict while protecting U.S. vital interests should deterrence and diplomacy fail.

-- Targeting in large-scale retaliation those political, economic, and military targets critical to the enemy's post-war power and recovery. This is intended to serve as a more direct coercive threat to the main power blocs in the USSR and PRC, as a deterrent to major nuclear attacks and, if control of escalation becomes impossible, to be more directly in the US interest by denying any substantive gain to an opponent through such a retaliatory attack.

-- Providing a relatively small, specified reserve force, even after major US retaliation, in order to deter post-war coercion of the United States and its allies.

The Working Group also concluded that it is desirable to promulgate an integrated nuclear policy which would enable nuclear force acquisition, deployment, and employment plans, together with arms control efforts and declaratory statements, to mutually support basic US objectives. The effects of the proposed changes in employment policy on these other elements of nuclear policy are discussed in this report.

The Working Group has put together a number of Background Papers and they are referenced at appropriate places in the summary report as Paper A, Paper B, etc. The repeated references to these papers is indicative of the fact that the Working Group feels they contain some of the more important material taken into account in this review. However, the Working Group has made no attempt to develop agreed texts of these papers and some may wish to dissociate themselves from particular sections. A listing of the papers with a brief summary description and their origin is found at Appendix II.

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A. Introduction

The NSSM directed evaluation of possible changes to current nuclear policy on the basis of:

- the desirability of these changes as related to basic national policy;
- the validity of the supporting assumptions;
- the impact on relations with allies (particularly NATO) and potential adversaries;
- the implications for SALT planning;
- The relationship and effect on US weapons acquisition policy; and
- the question of declaratory statements of policy and implementing procedures should these changes be adopted.

The NSSM 169 review was prepared by an ad hoc interagency Working Group chaired by the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, with representatives from OSD and JCS, the Department of State, CIA and the NSC staff.

As directed, this review takes into account the proposed employment policy and supporting analyses provided to the President by the Secretary of Defense. The proposed changes considered in this report are derived in large measure from that material, which in turn was based on earlier studies, including the DPRC Strategic Objectives Study.

This report covers the following major topics; the analysis is amplified in referenced Background Papers.

- The elements and objectives of US nuclear policy.
- The reasons US nuclear policy needs careful review.
- The primary findings of the NSSM 169 Working Group on employment policy.
- Other related considerations, including the relationship to acquisition policy, SALT implications, and declaratory policy.
- Recommendations and implementation proposals.
- Key issues that need to be considered in order to evaluate the recommendations of the NSSM 169 Working Group.

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The goal of this review of US nuclear policy is to identify problems in current policy and to propose a consistent policy structure for approval. This must necessarily be the beginning of a long term process of change, rather than a complete, one-time revision.

B. The Elements and Objectives of US Nuclear Policy

US nuclear policy should provide both broad and specific guidelines for planning of strategic and theater nuclear force programs, budgets, and operations by the Department of Defense and for the planning of related activities by other agencies of the US Government, including US relations with other countries and the negotiation of arms control agreements.

In addressing nuclear policy, it is important to recognize that there are multiple aspects to this policy. The major elements are:

-- Employment policy -- how the weapons available today are targeted and would be used during nuclear conflict.

-- Deployment policy -- how we deploy nuclear forces and warheads, especially overseas.

-- Acquisition policy -- the planning criteria used to develop and procure nuclear weapon systems for the future.

-- Declaratory statements on policy -- how we describe our policy to the public, allies, and adversaries.

It is also necessary to consider US arms control objectives and ongoing arms control efforts. The primary US arms control objective is to enhance US security by preserving US strategic sufficiency through negotiations rather than unconstrained competition, by reducing the likelihood of nuclear war, and by enhancing the stability of the arms competition. Arms control efforts support US nuclear policy -- primarily acquisition policy -- by seeking to limit the forces of enemies. This does not mean that we plan US forces on the assumption that our arms control goals will necessarily be achieved. In fact, our acquisition policy should provide hedges against the failure of negotiations, but at the same time should provide added incentive for our adversaries to reach agreement. But arms control factors must be considered when framing nuclear policy.

The elements of nuclear policy should mutually support the broad national objectives for nuclear forces. These objectives provide a point of departure for evaluating current policy and proposing changes thereto. They are:^{1/}

1. To deter, first and foremost, any use of nuclear force against the United States.

2. To contribute to deterrence of:

a. Conflict which involves allies or other nations considered vital to US security which are threatened by nuclear powers.

b. Conventional attacks on the United States, its allies, or its forces overseas.

3. As a corollary, to inhibit threats of use of nuclear weapons that might be posed by an enemy for coercion of the United States, its allies, or other nations considered vital to US security.

4. If deterrence fails, to stop conflict at the lowest possible level with minimum loss to the United States and its allies, and to deny to an enemy the objective he seeks when vital U.S. interests are involved.

5. To encourage nuclear postures that contribute to stability in two senses:

a. By reducing incentives to use nuclear weapons, particularly in crisis situations.

b. By reducing potential pressures for unproductive or counter-productive arms competition.

^{1/} These objectives are stated with various degrees of explicitness in the President's Foreign Policy Reports, and are equally applicable, with appropriate minor modifications, to all military forces as instruments of national policy.

C. Current Nuclear Policy and the Need for Change^{2/}

1. Current National Nuclear Policy Documents

Except for SALT NSDMs, NSDM 16, dated June 24, 1969, is the only formal Presidential guidance regarding nuclear policy. It addresses acquisition policy and states that, pending further study, US strategic forces will be planned to meet four criteria. In brief, they are:

- Maintain an assured retaliatory capability.
- US forces should not encourage a Soviet first strike.
- The Soviets should not be able to cause significantly greater urban/industrial damage to the United States than they themselves would suffer.
- Provide a light area ABM defense of the United States.

This formal guidance has been amplified in the President's Foreign Policy Reports and in the Defense Policy and Planning Guidance (DPPG).

The current National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy (NSTAP) provides guidance for the employment of strategic forces and some theater nuclear forces. ^{3/} This policy, established in the early 1960s, states that the US objective in general nuclear war is to defeat the Soviet Union and its allies and end the war under terms favorable to the United States. The NSTAP emphasizes large damage-limiting attacks against Soviet nuclear forces and the destruction of the enemy war-supporting industry. Five Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) attack options are provided; the smallest of these in recent SIOP revisions uses 2500 warheads.

^{2/} Paper A ("Review of U.S. Policy for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons," and Paper C ("U.S. Nuclear Policy," pages 9-19) expand on this discussion.

^{3/} For purposes of this paper, the term "strategic forces" means ICBMs, SLBMs, and intercontinental bombers. All other US nuclear forces will be considered "theater nuclear forces".

In addition to the SIOP, theater commanders have contingency plans for limited use of nuclear weapons. In addition, SACEUR's General Strike Plan (GSP) provides for employment of NATO nuclear forces. The existing nuclear planning system has an inherent capability for generating new limited attack options for strategic or theater forces, but there is no national policy document providing objectives and guidelines for such planning.

2. The Need for Change^{4/}

The NSDM 16 criteria are inadequate or dated in a number of ways. They are vague and subject to varying interpretations; the area defense criterion is no longer meaningful in light of the ABM treaty; and they fail to provide guidance for weapons employment and for acquisition and deployment of theater nuclear forces.

There are other, more fundamental, reasons why current nuclear policy needs revision.

-- In the 1950s and into the 1960s, when the United States had a preponderance of nuclear strength, the threat of large-scale retaliation against either military or population/industrial targets could be considered a credible deterrent to Soviet nuclear or conventional attacks anywhere in the world, but times have changed. The Soviets now have a highly capable deterrent to strategic attack and this has been codified by the SALT I agreements. As a consequence, the credibility of large-scale retaliation as a deterrent to anything but a massive attack on the United States may have become seriously eroded.

-- As a result of the changed strategic balance and other factors, there has been a changed perception by US allies, perhaps especially in NATO, of the strength and credibility of the US deterrent as it applies to them. This has given rise to concerns about US security guarantees.

-- There are discrepancies among the "popular" view of the US nuclear deterrent threat, current declaratory statements, and the actual employment policy. Current nuclear policy emphasizes the threat

^{4/} See Paper A ("Review of U.S. Policy for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons") and Paper C ("U.S. Nuclear Policy") for a more detailed critique of NSDM 16 and other elements of current nuclear policy.

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of large-scale retaliation to deter nuclear attacks. The popular view continues to regard population and industry as the targets for this threat; Administration statements do not identify the targets, and the current employment policy results in the major weight of effort being on the enemy's military forces.

-- No national policy guidance for acquisition and deployment of theater nuclear weapon systems has been promulgated.

-- Despite several Presidential statements indicating a desire for a flexible range of nuclear employment options "to respond at levels appropriate to the provocation", neither these options nor the required planning mechanism exist in a form likely to be adequately responsive to the crisis needs of the NCA. The creation of a system of plans and procedures for limited nuclear attacks is feasible, but national-level policy for such planning has not been provided.

-- Because of the inadequacies in current US nuclear policy, US SALT and MBFR positions do not necessarily reflect coherent, consistent policy goals. Recent arms control analyses have, however, sought to reflect a broader range of considerations, including some of those discussed in this report.

In sum, today not all the decisions embodied in NSDM 16 can be implemented effectively and the programs based on the NSDM 16 policy guidance may not deter less than all-out nuclear war. No steps at the national level have been taken to implement the declared policy of flexible nuclear options. There are gaps (e.g., the absence of a policy for theater nuclear forces) and inconsistencies (e.g., declared versus actual employment policy) in U.S. nuclear policy, and the world political-military environment has changed drastically since US nuclear policy was last subject to a comprehensive review.

D. Proposed Employment Policy

The NSSM 169 Working Group focused on employment policy. Other aspects, including acquisition policy, were considered, but the most detailed study was given to planning the use of available weapons, and rather less analysis was devoted to how new weapons should be bought. The work of necessity also touched on arms control and declaratory policy. Acquisition policy, arms control considerations, and declaratory statements of policy are discussed in Section E.

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In this section key aspects of the proposed employment policy are examined:

- Major changes from current policy.
- Planning considerations.
- Conclusions of the NSSM 169 Working Group.

1. Employment Policy Changes

The proposed employment policy contains the following important provisions:^{2/}

- The guidance applies to all theater nuclear offensive forces, as well as strategic offensive forces.
- If deterrence fails, the objectives are to control escalation and terminate the war with minimum damage, while protecting vital US interests and preserving the capability to escalate further if necessary.
- To the extent that escalation cannot be controlled, the objective is to destroy those political, economic, and military targets critical to the enemy's post-war power and recovery.
- Targeting and attack concepts for controlling escalation are identified, including options to conduct nuclear war within clearly defined boundaries, deterrence of further enemy escalation, trans-attack stability,^{5/} and avoidance of the enemy's national command and control.
- Targeting and attack concepts for major nuclear conflict are identified, including destruction of enemy political controls, the resources most necessary for enemy post-attack recovery, and enemy

^{5/} Paper B contains the proposed new employment policy forwarded to the President by the Secretary of Defense. Paper A contains supporting rationale and a comparison with the current NSTAP. The proposed employment policy does not provide guidance for planning the employment of nuclear air defense, anti-ballistic missile and anti-submarine warfare forces nor does it explicitly cover related and ancillary activities such as reconnaissance and non-nuclear forces whose coherent application would be anticipated. These matters will be the subject of further work by the Department of Defense.

^{6/} Attack options most likely to be withheld for the purpose of deterring further enemy escalation should involve forces and C³ systems with sufficient enduring survivability that they can be withheld over an extended period of conflict and then executed in a timely, effective manner.

military forces (especially conventional forces) which could otherwise exercise internal control, secure external resources, and threaten the United States and its allies.

-- There is a flexible structure of preplanned and pre-planable attack options embodying these concepts.

-- Relative priorities for allocating weapons to targets in nuclear war plans are specified, with some priorities varying, depending on whether the US attack initiates nuclear conflict or responds to the enemy's initiation. For example, in a US second-strike, Soviet ICBMs would have lowest priority, in a US first-strike they would have higher priority.

-- There is to be a specified reserve force which will be withheld from all attacks unless specifically executed by the NCA. This force is intended for deterring post-war coercion, but could also be used in part to augment attacks at the discretion of the NCA.

-- There is provision for NCA review of employment plans during peacetime and for NCA involvement during a crisis in adapting employment options to immediate political-military requirements.

-- The proposed guidance contained in Paper B is formulated in two parts, broad policy guidance and more detailed planning guidance (including objectives and guidelines for specific attack options), to facilitate evolution of the latter.

Of these changes, three are key to the proposed employment policy and merit more detailed discussion: the attack option structure, control of escalation, and targeting concepts for major nuclear conflict.

a. Structure of Attack Options

There would be four types of employment options: Major Attack Options, Selected Attack Options, Limited Nuclear Options, and Regional Nuclear Options. This contrasts with the NSTAP, which provides (in the proposed nomenclature) for the Major Attack Options and a lesser number of Selected Attack Options. The principal characteristics of these classes are displayed in Figure 1.^{7/}

^{7/} There is a more detailed description of the attack option structure in Paper B ("Revised Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons," pages 4-11). Paper B also contains objectives and guidelines for specific Major Attack Options and Selected Attack Options (pages 18-24).

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STRUCTURE OF ATTACK OPTIONS

MAJOR ATTACK OPTIONS

- Large Scale, Preplanned
- Separation of Soviet, PRC Options
- Counter-Military Options Have Nuclear and Conventional Targets
- Counter-Value Options Have Political, Economic, Military Targets
- NCA Choice of Options, Withholds

LIMITED NUCLEAR OPTIONS

- Generally Small Scale
- Preplanned or Preplannable in Crisis or Conflict
- Strategic and Theater Forces
- Purpose:
 - Signaling, Response in Kind, Local Advantage
- NCA Specification of Objectives, Approval and Choice of Options

SELECTED ATTACK OPTIONS

- Moderate Scale, Preplanned
- Counter - Military
- Subsets of Major Attack Options
- Escalation Boundaries:
 - Regions, Target Classes, U.S. Forces
- NCA Choice of Options, Withholds, Augmentation

REGIONAL NUCLEAR OPTIONS

- Attack Size and Forces Keyed to Local Conflict
- General Plans Approved in Advance
- Purpose:
 - Counter Enemy Forces
 - Inhibit Opportunity for Further Aggression
 - Facilitate Political Settlement
- NCA Direction Through Objectives And Rules of Engagement

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The motivation for this formal structure is to obtain the benefits of advance planning where that is possible but also to provide for flexible, responsive planning where that is necessary. Each class of options is designed to support the concepts of escalation control discussed in the next section. The boundaries between the classes of options are not altogether distinct and no particular purpose is served by drawing rigid distinctions.

Major Attack Options provide for massive attacks on the Soviet Union and its allies or the PRC and its allies. Attacks on the Soviet Union and the PRC are separated totally allowing attacks on either country or both. Attacks on some of or all allies of each nation may be withheld.

Selected Attack Options provide for moderate scale, pre-planned attacks on selected regions or target classes, designed for an added measure of flexibility in attempting to control escalation. Each Selected Attack Option is a subset of the military portion of a Major Attack Option and is constructed so that it may be executed separately, in conjunction with other Selected Attack Options, or as part of its Major Attack Option.

Limited Nuclear Options are intended to meet currently unforeseen circumstances in which the Major and Selected Attack Options would be inappropriate for the political-military objectives that may be desired. These options, generally of lower intensity, may be developed during the normal planning process in anticipation of crisis situations, during the course of crises, or during hostilities. The rapid development of effective Limited Nuclear Options would be facilitated by the advanced planning for Major and Selected Attack Options, even to the point of using some of their weapon-target combinations.

Regional Nuclear Options are intended for circumstances in which the interests of the United States and its allies can best be served by responding against an enemy attack with nuclear forces and resources immediately available within the theater of operations and clearly committed for the defense of that area.^{8/} The objective for

^{8/} This definition is not intended to exclude the use of Poseidon RVs committed to NATO or other "strategic" systems deployed in the theater.

Regional Nuclear Options is to counter, in concert with conventional forces, the enemy military forces engaged in aggressive actions while seeking to create a state of affairs permitting political arrangements to end the conflict. Because of the nature of Regional Nuclear Options, detailed planning may only be possible shortly prior to execution and will ordinarily be carried out by military commanders responsible for military operations within the local conflict area. However, to insure that the overall objectives of the United States will be taken into account, as well as the local tactical military situation, the proposed policy provides that general plans, covering likely contingencies, should be prepared well ahead of time and examined for effectiveness and conformance to the employment policy. It also states that during hostilities there will be a high degree of control by the NCA exercised by means of detailed rules of engagement, review and possible modification of proposed nuclear strike operations, or some combination of these.

b. The Concept of Control of Escalation

Under the current employment policy, limitation of damage is regarded in the purely military sense of counterforce attacks on nuclear threats and, at least against the Soviet Union, offers little confidence of holding damage to a low level. The political-military concept of limiting damage through the control of escalation, on the other hand, appears to be a promising approach that would both provide meaningful options to the NCA in a crisis and enhance attainment of national objectives.^{9/}

This is a major departure from current US employment policy. It rests on a key assumption and a key reservation:

-- It assumes the participants have limits in terms of their objectives and the losses they are willing to suffer to achieve them. US efforts to control escalation would show restraint in using nuclear force while seeking to convince the opponent that his limits would be exceeded if he persists. This would permit opportunities for him to reconsider.

-- It recognizes that, to the extent the enemy either is willing to suffer any losses or lacks the means to pause and reconsider, such a concept may not work. Consequently, the policy affords the NCA the

^{9/} See Paper A ("Review of US Policy for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons"), for further discussion of these points.

opportunity to attempt escalation control by setting up the requisite machinery, but it does not commit the NCA to this course and does not compromise the US capability for major nuclear conflict.

The prospects for escalation control are examined in Section G (Issue 1), as are the possible effects of these employment policy changes on deterrence (Issue 2). The possible perceptions and reactions of adversaries are also discussed in Issue 3 and in Paper H.

The following are considered appropriate for this part of the employment policy:

-- A capability to conduct discrete limited attacks on enemy forces in an immediate area to deny a local objective while holding some vital enemy targets hostage, thereby seeking to influence the enemy's assessment of potential gains and losses while giving him time to reconsider.

-- A structure of nuclear attack options which permits application of nuclear force to achieve specific objectives within clearly defined boundaries at levels well below those of massive attacks on an opponent.

-- Withholding for possible subsequent use a capability for massive attack on targets highly valued by the enemy leadership as a deterrent to further escalation.

-- Withholding of attacks on the enemy's national level command, control, communication, and surveillance systems, to allow enemy leaders to discern the nature of US attacks, restrain their forces, and negotiate with the United States.

Control of escalation would be introduced into employment plans by specifying detailed objectives for preplanned and preplannable military attacks at various levels of intensity against selected targets, within geographic limits. There would also be provisions for modifying these objectives and the supporting plans in response to a developing crisis. Thus, planning for limited nuclear conflict would be shifted from an approach which places specific targets foremost to an approach with specific crisis-related political-military objectives established by the NCA as paramount.

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c. Major Nuclear Conflict

If escalation cannot be controlled and the United States becomes engaged in a major nuclear conflict, the U.S. objective in the proposed employment policy is to secure the best possible post-war position of power relative to other powers. In contrast the fundamental concept of the current NSTAP is to terminate the war on terms favorable to the United States and its allies. This has been frequently measured in terms of the number of strategic forces remaining to each side.

The current NSTAP concept of an ultimate threat of large-scale retaliation is retained, but there is a revised basis for targeting which threatens the destruction of the following targets critical to the enemy postwar power and recovery:

- The enemy regime and its control apparatus.
- Those urban, industrial, and economic resources critical to the enemy's national and military recovery.
- Those enemy forces (particularly conventional forces) which could otherwise play a major role in exercising internal control over the post-attack recovery, securing external resources for the enemy's post-attack recovery, and continuing to threaten the United States and its allies.

The threatened destruction of the enemy political, economic, and military targets critical to post-attack recovery is also an important element in controlling escalation, because large-scale attacks on these targets would be withheld in a limited conflict to deter further escalation. By logical extension, the threatened destruction of these targets should be part of the deterrent to any nuclear conflict. Consequently, it appears that the ultimate sanction of large-scale retaliation against targets critical to post-war power of the enemy's regime should become a part of US declaratory policy, in place of the more general threat of destruction of the population and industry of an opponent.

No one is certain -- or even highly confident -- that he understands what will deter the Soviet Union or the PRC from nuclear threats or attacks. The Working Group believes, however, that the proposed policy supported by appropriate declaratory statements would have at least as much deterrent effect as the current popular view of threatening population and industry, or the official view of not specifying the targets. Further, it sees the following benefits to the proposed policy:

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-- These revised criteria for targeting are coercive in that they establish a direct threat to each of the three main power blocs within the Soviet Union and the PRC, namely, the political regime, the technocrats, and the military.

-- More importantly, they emphasize the denial of any substantive gain to an opponent from making a nuclear attack.

-- There would be close alignment between the declared deterrent threat and the actions which would be in the best interests of the United States in a major nuclear conflict. This change would establish a common theme for deterrence that would provide a consistent framework for the declaratory and employment elements of policy. The deterrent threat and the targeting would coincide.

The proposed change in targeting objectives is judged by the NSSM 169 Working Group to be preferable to the threat of indiscriminate destruction of population or other targets, both for declaratory purposes and to bring the deterrent threat and actual targeting into close alignment.

Some believe that this change will enhance deterrence of general nuclear war and, if general nuclear war nevertheless occurs, will improve the outcome for the United States and its allies.

However, questions have been raised as to whether such a change would, in fact, result in any real distinctions, in terms of results, if the Major Attack Options were executed. Because of the nature of nuclear weapon effects and the co-location and co-mingling of Soviet and PRC urban population with the specific political, economic, and military targets described above, attacks on these targets will unavoidably result in substantial fatalities. It is also not clear how the proposed change would be perceived by others. These questions are treated in greater detail in Issue 2 in Section G.

d. Reserve Force

The proposed employment policy specifies a "swing force" in the reserve in addition to forces withheld from execution and that portion of our strategic forces which can be generated to alert status

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or reconstituted from previous missions. The purpose of the swing force is twofold: First, to provide, in addition to any forces which may be withheld, a reserve with high trans-attack stability (see Page 8, especially Footnote 6) to prevent post-attack nuclear coercion, even after major U.S. retaliation. Second, to provide a flexible capability for use in Limited Nuclear Options and a capability to augment Selected Attack Options, if, in attempting to control escalation, additional weight of effort on a Selected Attack Option is desired at the time of execution.

The swing force will be withheld unless explicitly authorized for execution by the NCA for these purposes. In order to provide diversity in weapon system characteristics, the swing force will be composed of some of each of the strategic force components. Because of the requirements that may be placed on it by the National Command Authorities, planning for swing force employment will provide for flexible retargeting procedures as well as prepositioned target data.

2. Planning Considerations

The NSSM 169 Working Group takes note of the DOD judgment that the proposed employment policy changes can be implemented to a useful degree with the U.S. nuclear forces programmed for Fiscal Year 1974, and finds no reason to dispute this judgment. The actual operational planning which marries U.S. force capabilities to objectives is a detailed process currently estimated at twenty-four months. Refer to Paper F for a description of what is involved. The Working Group does not take the position that the Fiscal Year 1974 forces are necessarily optimal for implementing the employment policy^{10/} but rather they are confident that this policy with programmed forces will better support U.S. objectives than will the current NSTAP with programmed forces. Some of the reasons for this conclusion have already been discussed, but certain points of feasibility need further elaboration:

-- Are there situations in which limited nuclear attack options would be in the U.S. interests?

-- How does the proposed employment policy relate to regional considerations, especially U.S. commitments in NATO?

-- What changes in the nuclear planning system would be required?

^{10/} Weapon acquisition implications and issues are discussed in Section E and in Paper G ("Weapon Systems Acquisition Policy Issues").

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a. The Utility of Limited Attack Options

While current U.S. nuclear capabilities permit the use of nuclear weapons under many circumstances, it is not immediately clear that the United States would ever use these weapons in other than large-scale retaliation for a major nuclear attack on CONUS. Can specific purposes be identified for which a limited use would be a credible response?

One situation in which the United States would want to have options for limited nuclear war is Soviet initiation of nuclear conflict on a limited scale. Soviet doctrine calls for theater-wide nuclear attacks in Europe if the Soviets believe NATO is about to launch a nuclear attack. Their doctrine is silent as to whether attacks on CONUS would accompany the strikes on NATO Europe. More limited Soviet nuclear attacks within the European or Asian theaters cannot be ruled out either, although they are disavowed in the formal doctrine.

There may also be situations in which bold U.S. action, including the first, limited use of nuclear weapons, may be the best course in the face of grim alternatives.

It is proposed that the employment of nuclear weapons in such situations would follow the concept of control of escalation set forth in Section D.1.b. on pages 12 and 13. There is, of course, no guarantee that escalation can be controlled. Issue 1 starting on page 42 discusses the prospects for control of escalation. These prospects depend upon many factors and each situation must be judged in terms of the full military and political context. In general, however, the risks and uncertainties associated with attempts to control escalation appear higher if the level and scope of violence is large, if the attacks involve targets within super power homelands, and if the attacks involve targeting of strategic forces.

In devising the attack option structure and the guidelines and objectives for attack options set forth in Paper B there was an effort to visualize specific political-military situations which might call for

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limited nuclear attacks, rather than to develop an undirected menu of options. It is recognized that further analysis may result in specific modifications of the proposed structure and guidelines.

To check the validity of the structure and guidelines initially developed, a series of case studies was developed which examined possible conflicts in which the use of nuclear weapons might be considered, including first use by the United States. From this work, which is described in Paper D, it appears that:

-- potential situations do exist where nuclear weapons could be the most appropriate military force to use in limited conflict;

-- feasible nuclear options could be created for several levels of potential conflict;

-- such options could and should include both strategic and theater nuclear weapons;

-- establishment of such options could enhance the attainment of national objectives in limited conflict without in themselves increasing the incentives of either side for large-scale nuclear attacks.

b. Regional Considerations

The NSSM 169 Working Group examined current policy for theater employment of nuclear weapons and found a need to define this policy more clearly. Theater commanders have numerous nuclear contingency plans, but there is no overall national policy related to these plans. Present procedures for obtaining selective release of theater nuclear weapons are cumbersome and time-consuming, and these procedures have not been practiced by senior officials at the NCA level. As a result, the prospects for timely NCA approval to utilize nuclear weapons in an overseas theater are not good.

An additional consideration is that the use of theater nuclear forces must take into account the views of friendly and allied states, especially those on whose territory such operations might be undertaken. In NATO's Allied Command Europe, plans for use of theater nuclear forces are approved by SACEUR and are based on MC 14/3 and the agreed NATO political guidelines for such use. SACEUR's present procedures for requesting selective release of theater nuclear weapons by NATO forces in Europe are well defined but, under certain agreed

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circumstances, decisions on these requests involve political consultations among the NATO nations in connection with the nuclear power(s) decision on release requests. Senior allied officials involved in these consultations seldom practice implementation of the procedures prescribed by the Athens Guidelines. As a result, under some consultative circumstances, timely decisions on theater requests for use of nuclear weapons in NATO Europe might not be effected.

Because there is no national policy for theater nuclear force employment, existing plans do not necessarily reflect NCA crisis management perspectives. The concept of escalation control requires that theater nuclear force planning have a political-military orientation.

(1) Roles for Theater Nuclear Forces in the Proposed Employment Policy.

There are two major roles for theater nuclear forces in the proposed employment policy. First, theater forces would be targeted in Major Attack Options to help achieve U.S. objectives in general nuclear war. Because of their limited range, theater forces presumably would be primarily targeted against forward echelons of enemy military forces. In NATO's Allied Command Europe, these forces are currently targeted against enemy military forces in the forward (battlefield) areas as well as in depth against military targets in the non-Soviet Warsaw Pact countries and in the western part of the USSR.

Second, theater forces would be targeted in Selected Attack Options, Limited Nuclear Options, and Regional Nuclear Options. It is the view of the Working Group that in these options the use of theater weapons should signal to the enemy that US objectives are limited, but should also be of sufficient force to check the enemy long enough for our political process to effect war termination. While political measures and conventional military operations may in some cases dissuade the enemy from exploiting his advantage, military action by nuclear forces might be required in order to convince the enemy that his potential losses are not worth his potential gains. However, extension of such attacks in area, destruction, and duration beyond what is necessary to accomplish the above could well increase the incentives of the enemy to prolong and enlarge the conflict, if only to establish a tolerable basis for negotiation from his viewpoint. Thus, restraint would be an important element if escalation is to be controlled.

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Currently the nuclear options of the NCA in such circumstances are basically of two types:

-- selective release of theater nuclear weapons in response to ad hoc requests during conflict by local commanders of direction from the NCA;

-- execution of theater-wide preplanned nuclear strikes such as SACEUR's General Strike Plan (GSP),^{11/} or execution of strategic strikes using the SIOP.

Between these extremes there could be planning for nuclear options that use theater and strategic nuclear forces as necessary to counter enemy forces. The purpose of these options would be to make the political process leading to termination of the conflict on terms acceptable to both sides the only rational action open to the enemy. It is just this sort of planning that is called for in the proposed employment policy.

(2) Regional Nuclear Options

Of particular importance in this approach to theater nuclear conflict are the Regional Nuclear Options. The proposed employment policy sets forth the following guidelines for developing plans in support of Regional Nuclear Options:

-- These plans will include attacks on deployed forces, their local support, and fixed support bases in the rear, subject to rules of engagement promulgated by the National Command Authorities.

-- The JCS should provide a capability for rapid development, assessment, and execution of Regional Nuclear Options in response to NCA requirements. This capability should include provisions for informing the NCA of the military effects, uncertainties, and risks of proposed nuclear attacks and include provisions for coordination with the Allies.

^{11/} While the GSP can in theory be executed independently of the SIOP, its effectiveness is dependent on simultaneous SIOP execution.

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-- These plans should seek to minimize collateral damage to civilians and to allied military forces through appropriate selection of yields, delivery vehicles, and targets.

-- Control of the enemy national leadership over its theater nuclear forces should be left intact to facilitate control of escalation.

-- Military commanders should be prepared to use nuclear weapons under any of the following circumstances: in response to enemy nuclear attacks, initially after prolonged conventional conflict, or initially during the early phases of a conventional conflict.

The effect of the foregoing would be to provide, prior to or during hostilities, a range of options based on the above criteria and reviewed by the NCA. New plans could be developed or preplanned options modified by the NCA as appropriate to meet the specific needs of the crisis. In the event of hostilities the appropriate military commander could request the authority to apply one or a combination of these options consistent with the political and military circumstances applicable at that time. Alternatively, the NCA might initiate execution of one or several options.

(3) Special NATO and Asian Considerations

The provisions of the proposed employment policy for theater nuclear forces apply generally worldwide, but they are particularly applicable for NATO. The NATO strategy of flexible response set forth in MC 14/3 and amplified in other nuclear planning documents was a major consideration in formulating these provisions. The Working Group believes the theater nuclear guidance and indeed the entire employment policy are consistent with MC 14/3, although it may not be so interpreted by some Europeans. This policy may highlight issues which are inherent in the ambiguities of MC 14/3 -- for example, some Europeans may perceive too great an emphasis on nuclear forces, others may fear the decoupling of U.S. strategic forces. These questions are discussed in Issue 4 of Section G.

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There are some distinct differences between the European and Asian theaters. First, there is not the degree of joint planning with our allies in Asia that there is in Europe. Indeed we do not have nuclear cooperation agreements with any Asian allies and thus no legal authority for meaningful joint nuclear planning. Second, for the foreseeable future, the risks of escalation from limited nuclear employment are far less with the PRC than they would be with the Soviet Union. Third, we have not developed the sort of arrangements for crisis consultation with the PRC (e.g., the hot line) that we have with the Soviets. Fourth, in the absence of an alliance structure in Asia it is by no means clear that we could use nuclear weapons based in the territory of one nation to defend against an attack on another nation, or that third parties would permit transit of nuclear weapons or delivery systems in times of crisis if the threat of nuclear conflict were apparent to them. Finally, while our Asian allies seek the general protection of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, they might strongly object to the actual use of nuclear weapons by non-Asians against Asians, particularly if their own territory is not directly threatened. The cumulative impact of these differences in Asia does not detract from the value of this policy for Asia but serves to underscore the different strategic problems we have in Asia compared to Europe.

While the Working Group agrees that the United States should have available a range of options which will permit limited use of theater forces without also using strategic forces, it notes that there may be serious political problems vis-a-vis our NATO allies in having options for extensive use of theater weapons without engaging U.S. strategic forces. Consequently, there are differing views as to whether there should be a separate category of Regional Nuclear Options since allied knowledge of the existence of such a category could raise their concerns about the decoupling of U.S. strategic forces. This question is examined in Issue 4 in Section G.

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c. Concurrent Changes in the Planning Systems

The proposed changes in existing employment policy guidelines, and the resulting attack plans and procedures, would require greater responsiveness by the nuclear war planning system to the NCA.

The JCS would require the capability for rapid development, assessment, and execution of Limited and Regional Nuclear Options in response to the requests of the NCA. There should be a high degree of interaction, both in peacetime planning and during a crisis, among the NCA, the JCS, and those Unified and Specified Commanders with nuclear forces in selecting attack details. In addition, there should be adequate political staff support for nuclear planning in crisis management and coordination with allies. During a crisis, the JCS would have to keep the NCA informed of pertinent details about the tactical situation generally and the status of limited nuclear attacks in particular. This would be necessary to ensure that the NCA can coordinate political and diplomatic actions with military actions, can modify rules of engagement to suit changing circumstances, and can direct additional military actions when necessary.

The JCS planning system already provides the structure for developing Major Attack Options. This capability also provides the basis for planning Selected Attack Options, since they are subsets of Major Attack Options.

To be fully effective, this planning system would necessarily have to conduct peacetime exercises, involving participation by all U.S. elements including the NCA and their advisory staffs. These exercises would be designed to test and evaluate the interaction among the NCA, the supporting political staffs, the JCS, and appropriate Unified and Specified Commanders in order to familiarize all participants with their critical roles in the decision-making process. They would also be designed to examine the validity and responsiveness of the plans, procedures, and facilities to be used in wartime. These exercises would provide the means in peacetime for the NCA to thoroughly understand and be able to choose thoughtfully among the options during a crisis.

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3. Conclusions

It is the view of the NSSM 169 Working Group that the concepts embodied in the Revised Tentative Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons,^{12/} if adopted, would bring about major improvements in current nuclear employment policy and in its responsiveness to the NCA. There are, of course, other major aspects of nuclear policy which must be considered in relation to the proposed employment policy. These are addressed in Section E.

It is not the purpose of this review to prescribe guidelines for actual US actions in any given conflict or crisis. Rather, emphasis has been given to deriving a realistic and feasible structure of options that could be used by the NCA in such situations, and to defining the machinery necessary to develop, select and execute such options. The process of implementation is lengthy (estimated to be about twenty-four months once the President has approved the basic concepts of the proposed policy). Moreover, there are procedural and technical deficiencies (such as command and control capabilities) that must be examined in further detail. These matters are discussed in Section F and in Paper G.

E. Major Policy Considerations Related to the Proposed Employment Policy

The NSSM 169 Working Group considers that a more integrated approach to the elements of nuclear policy is desirable. To this end, this section examines possible effects of the proposed employment policy changes on acquisition policy, SALT, and declaratory statements of policy.

The Working Group did not consider changes to nuclear force deployments that might serve to enhance the effectiveness of the proposed changes in employment policy. However, it took note of the work being conducted in NSSM 168 and NSSM 171 as much more keyed to the specific questions associated with force deployment.

1. Weapon Systems Acquisition Policy

When considering the proposed employment policy changes, the question of the implications for US strategic and theater nuclear weapon programs naturally arises. Would major increases in the strategic budget

^{12/} Contained in Paper B.

be required? Would strategic or theater nuclear force programs be required which could have a destabilizing effect on the balance of US and Soviet nuclear forces, adversely affect US relations with its NATO allies, or encounter strong Congressional opposition?

As stated earlier, significant features of the proposed employment policy are feasible with FY 74 forces. By this is meant that there are generally enough warheads, enough flexibility inherent in the nuclear forces, and enough C³ hardware capability to make it possible to implement to a significant degree the concepts of the policy in the near term. This does not mean, however, that US nuclear forces necessarily are optimal for carrying out the proposed employment policy.

The Working Group did not examine specific weapon systems programs in light of the employment policy changes. Nor did it study acquisition policy in the same depth as the employment policy. It has, however, considered the general relation between employment and acquisition policy and examined some acquisition policy issues.

a. Relation Between Employment and Acquisition Policies

Employment policy and acquisition policy have a common purpose -- to support basic US security objectives -- but they also have important differences. Employment policy provides guidance for targeting and using the nuclear weapons available today. Acquisition policy provides guidance for developing and procuring weapon systems for the future. *which*

Formulation of acquisition policy must take into account the employment policy, since the capability to carry out the employment policy in the future is determined by the forces provided by the acquisition policy. But there are broader political, arms control, and fiscal considerations which indicate that acquisition policy cannot be formulated solely on the basis of employment policy objectives.

The major factors affecting the formulation of acquisition policy are:

-- The capability to fulfill the objectives of the employment policy.

-- The need to hedge against the uncertainties of future threats and the future performance of US weapons.

-- The effects that weapon acquisition programs could have upon allied perceptions of the US commitment to their defense and the US capabilities to carry out that commitment.

-- The interaction between weapon acquisition policy and programs and our objectives and negotiating positions for arms control.

-- Stability goals with the Soviet Union (stable nuclear arms balance, crisis stability, and trans-attack stability).

-- Economic constraints.

These factors result in conflicting pressures which must be resolved in the formulation of acquisition policy. As a result, it may be decided not to provide forces for all employment policy objectives and to accept the consequent risks in the event of nuclear conflict. It may also be decided to provide forces for purposes other than the objectives of employment policy.

b. Effects of the Proposed Employment Policy on Acquisition Policy

For many years employment policy has had little influence on acquisition policy. The NSTAP calls for a well-hedged attack capability against a large target system that includes war supporting industry (Task C), the enemy nuclear threat (Task A), and other military targets (Task B). It includes options for a large effort against all the military targets including the nuclear threat, or against the nuclear threat only. The fundamental concept of the NSTAP is to terminate the war on terms favorable to the United States and its allies. This has frequently been measured in terms of the number of surviving strategic offensive forces.

The acquisition policy has provided for well-hedged force planning to provide an assured retaliatory capability against urban/ industrial targets, frequently measured in terms of prompt deaths. However, it has specified that strategic forces should not be procured specifically for attacks on military targets. The "well-hedged planning" for the retaliatory capability has provided forces and warheads well in excess of those required for Task C; these forces are targeted in the SIOP against military targets.

The more integrated approach to nuclear policy proposed by the Working Group would bring employment and acquisition policies into greater consistency in two ways, while taking full cognizance of the political, arms control, and economic factors affecting acquisition policy.

First, the major gap between deterrence and warfighting objectives in nuclear planning would be eliminated. Under the current policy, a major shift in mental attitude is required in passing between employment planning and acquisition planning, with one focusing on winning an all-out nuclear war and the other on deterring all-out nuclear war. As a result, until recently the problems of crisis control and limited nuclear war have received insufficient attention in both employment and acquisition planning for strategic forces. The proposed changes in employment policy help eliminate this gap.

Second, if deterrence fails, the immediate objective of the employment policy would be to deter further escalation. This requires that acquisition policy provide forces for this purpose as well as well-hedged forces for large scale retaliation.

A related step would be to reorient the acquisition policy for well-hedged forces toward the objective of destroying Soviet and PRC political, economic, and military targets critical to their post-attack recovery.^{13/} This would result in the following measure of continuity between employment policy and acquisition policy. The threatened destruction of the political, economic, and military targets critical to post-attack recovery would be the basis of the U.S. deterrent to nuclear war. If deterrence failed, the threatened destruction of these targets, coupled with limited use of nuclear force, would be the basis for controlling escalation. If escalation could not be controlled, the actual destruction of these targets would be the means of achieving as much postwar U.S. power as possible.

Having some common objectives between the acquisition and employment policies and, more generally, giving explicit consideration to employment objectives as well as to other national objectives in formulating acquisition policy provides a more systematic framework for the Secretary of Defense and the DPRC to evaluate specific program and budget tradeoffs among these objectives.

c. Effects of the Proposed Employment Policy on Weapon Systems Programs and Budgets

There are many factors which determine whether a new weapon program is initiated, the pace of the program, the characteristics of the weapon, and the procurement level. These factors are listed in Table 1 on the following page.

^{13/} There are a number of major unresolved issues associated with acquiring nuclear forces for attacking Soviet military targets critical to post-attack recovery. These are discussed in Paper G.

TABLE 1

Factors Affecting Strategic and Theater Nuclear
Weapon System Acquisition Programs

1. Assumptions about future Soviet and PRC threats.
2. Confidence requirements (e.g., to hedge against unexpected technological breakthroughs or against unexpected system-wide failures in U.S. nuclear forces).
3. The need to replace aging weapon systems.
4. The system capabilities of both new and old systems
5. Planned basing or deployment of systems.
6. Expected combat conditions in which the weapon would be used.
7. The type and number of targets against which it is planned to use the weapon and its effectiveness against these targets.
8. Means of acquiring the targets against which the system will be used.
9. Command and control requirements associated with the weapon.
10. Crisis stability and trans-attack stability requirements.
11. Arms control considerations (e.g., set example of restraint, provide bargaining leverage).
12. Political pressures to match Soviet forces.
13. Requirements to minimize collateral damage.
14. Development and procurement costs.
15. O&M costs, including those of systems being replaced.

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Most of these factors are not affected by the proposed changes in employment policy. Thus, on-going major programs such as the B-1 and TRIDENT are generally consistent with both the current NSTAP or the proposed employment policy. The major factors affecting the initiation, pace, and characteristics of these programs to date have been assumptions about future Soviet threats; the desire to have highly survivable deterrent forces, even against unexpected technological advances by the Soviets; the desire to hedge against Soviet deployment of a nationwide ABM defense; the feeling that politically it is necessary to match the pace of Soviet nuclear weapons development activity; and the desire to increase U.S. bargaining leverage in SALT.

Of course, current programs will require detailed review in light of the proposed changes. Such a review is recommended in Section F. One aspect of this examination should be the characteristics of US nuclear forces and their command, control, and communications for limited nuclear conflict. Another aspect is the adequacy of force levels and characteristics for the full range of flexible attack options called for in the employment policy, including capabilities for attacking the post-war recovery target structure.

There is the possibility that adoption of the proposed employment policy will result in a major upswing in demand for increased nuclear forces and counterforce capabilities on the grounds that Soviet nuclear and conventional forces would play a significant role in post-attack recovery. Some argue that this ought not to be a major concern -- if a policy and the weapon systems required to support that policy are clearly in the national interests, then they might well be approved, even if large expenditures are required.

The problem, however, is that statements of national objectives are so general that a list of weapon system requirements cannot be directly and rigorously deduced therefrom. Without specific weapon acquisition policy guidelines, adoption of the proposed employment policy could be used by advocates of various special interests to lobby within the DoD, elsewhere within the Administration, and probably within the Congress for their programs. This could create strong pressures for programs which are of marginal importance for national security. Without specific acquisition guidelines to channel the efforts of DoD planners, it will be difficult to systematically carry out debates and analyses in such a way as to allow the Secretary of Defense and the DPRC to consider all US objectives -- not just those of employment policy -- in making program and budget decisions. Furthermore, unless we are precise about our acquisition policies there is a possibility that our declaratory statements may imply acquisition policies we do not intend to pursue. In this case the Soviets might react with new and additional acquisition policies of their own.

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Adoption of the proposed employment policy does not necessarily imply the need for any changes in current programs. Some changes may, however, be desirable. These must be judged on their specific merits. The following are some issues which must be considered:^{14/}

- Acquisition of forces to cover military targets^{15/} critical to post-attack recovery.
- Hard-target counterforce capabilities.
- First strike capabilities against PRC nuclear forces.
- Theater nuclear force posture.
- Characteristics of U.S. nuclear forces and associated CS for limited and controlled attacks (e.g., enduring survival).

As noted elsewhere, revised operational plans for current and near term forces will result in a substantial capability to meet the objectives of the employment policy. As the degree of any shortfalls become apparent, programs to correct these shortfalls will have to be dealt with on a case by case basis in terms of cost, benefits, and implications for overall nuclear policy objectives including arms control.

d. Considerations for Defensive Forces

This policy review has focused on offensive forces and thus has not given extensive attention to the contribution which defensive forces could make to U.S. security. This fact notwithstanding there are four considerations which bear importantly on the issue:

-- First, we do have, and under any conceivable circumstances are likely to continue to maintain some missile and bomber defense. These (a) would serve to provide some degree of protection against limited enemy attacks; (b) can help to police U.S. air space; and (c) complicate enemy strategic planning and programming.

^{14/} A detailed discussion of these issues in in Paper C ("US Nuclear Policy") and in Paper G ("Weapon Systems Acquisition Policy Issues").

^{15/} Coverage of a class of targets means having enough independently targetable warheads on surviving US bombers and missiles to penetrate enemy defenses and detonate, suitably distributed, so as to destroy the bulk of targets of that class. See Paper B, Part II on Targeting and Damage Criteria.

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-- Second, at present the ABM Treaty limits U.S. ballistic missile defense to 200 launchers at two sites. Current policy orients the CONUS air defense posture towards defending against a small bomber attack and limits the forces to those needed for this objective.

-- Third, the U.S. is continuing major programs of R&D to provide for improved missile defense in the event added reliance on such defense in the future is deemed in the U.S. interest.

-- Fourth, defensive forces with nuclear capabilities are deployed in the theater. Such forces should be taken into consideration in developing limited and regional options.

For the foregoing reasons, it is proposed that the Secretary of Defense, in reviewing the acquisition implications of the proposed nuclear policy, present an assessment of the role, nature, and potential utility of existing levels of defense as well as possible future alternative levels which may be in the U.S. interest, including the fiscal and arms control implications of such future levels.

2. Nuclear Policy and Arms Control

The basic objective of the proposed nuclear policy is to provide for a more effective and stable deterrent to war, and to make the outcome less catastrophic should nuclear weapons, for some reason, come to be used. As such it is supportive of U.S. arms control policy. The principal concern that may affect arms control is how the new policy is perceived by the public, our allies, and the Soviet Union.

The Working Group believes there should be little direct effect of the employment policy on current US arms control positions in SALT and MBFR, but that the employment policy changes, if they result in certain changes in acquisition policy, would have an indirect effect on these positions.

There is the risk that the new policy will be interpreted as a sharp departure from past policies with a greater emphasis on nuclear "war fighting" as opposed to deterrence through assured destruction. This could be seen as requiring new strategic capabilities to which the Soviet Union would have to respond, thereby intensifying strategic arms competition and impairing the prospects for further arms control negotiations. However, it also can be argued that the prospect of new US strategic programs which could be implied by the revised employment policy might encourage the Soviets to negotiate more seriously in order to forestall such programs.

Emphasis on the theme that the new policy is not a radical departure and does not imply any large procurement or development programs would mitigate (but perhaps not wholly eliminate) any possible impact on SALT. In this regard, budget requests and other actions could

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demonstrate that the policy will not increase the U.S. Defense budget, or stimulate an arms race.^{16/}

a. Impact of the Proposed Employment Policy on Arms Control

There should be no major impact of the proposed employment policy as such on arms control.

It is possible in the future that the United States will have to consider SALT limits on the operations of nuclear forces -- for example, restrictions on the operating areas of SSBNs or aircraft carriers. In general, such proposals would have to be evaluated with respect to overall U.S. policy, including nuclear employment policy. Although the Soviets have made such proposals, the United States has made none and in fact has argued that operational practices are not within the purview of SALT.

SALT potentially could result in limits on the basing of U.S. nuclear forces. The Soviets have argued that U.S. forward-basing of SSBNs and other systems (e.g., dual-capable tactical aircraft) should be dealt with in SALT. Similar proposals are likely to arise in MBFR. Again, such proposals should be evaluated with respect to overall U.S. policy, including employment policy. The United States has, however, repeatedly rejected efforts in SALT to limit its forward-based systems and has made clear that it would not consider any SALT limits which would undermine the security of its allies or its ability to fulfill its NATO obligations.

b. Acquisition Policy and Arms Control

U.S. arms control efforts should support overall nuclear policy in two ways. First, they should protect the policy through agreements which allow the objectives of this policy to be fulfilled and, second, they should enhance the policy through reduction or stabilization of the current or future threat opposing U.S. and allied forces.

If acquisition policy is properly formulated, it should reflect the considered judgments of the President and the Secretary of Defense about the essential objectives, roles, and characteristics of U.S. nuclear forces. As discussed above, these judgments should consider employment policy requirements, but should also consider the other factors which bear on weapon acquisition (e.g., stability, budgets, and allied perceptions). Thus, the Working Group believes that arms control should interact primarily with acquisition policy.

The following are examples of acquisition policy issues related to the employment policy changes which could, depending on how they are resolved, affect U.S. positions in SALT:

^{16/} Refer to Section E3.d.

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- An increased emphasis in acquisition policy on covering military targets would affect the evaluation of proposals which reduce the total U.S. nuclear payload or which constrain U.S. offensive capabilities such as MIRV.
- An emphasis in acquisition policy on high reliability in those forces needed for limited attacks would affect evaluation of proposals for limiting missile flight tests.
- Consideration about the respective roles of various elements of the strategic offensive forces--a facet of acquisition policy--could affect U.S. SALT positions on qualitative limits on U.S. strategic systems. We might, for example, look to use of land-based missiles only for certain options in a limited nuclear war and, therefore, be less concerned about an attack on them by hard target capable Soviet ICBMs. Alternatively, while maintaining TRIAD capabilities, we might want to negotiate mutual reductions in systems perceived to require major improvements in the face of prospective threats or we might choose to negotiate other measures permitting a "freedom to mix" within an overall fixed force level.
- The proposed nuclear policy assumes a continuing need to support vital interests outside CONUS. Objectives in this area could be satisfied through the use of bomber aircraft to deliver conventional or nuclear warheads. Thus, proposals to trade U.S. strategic bombers for Soviet ICBMs should be considered in terms of the dual role of bomber aircraft.
- The U.S. position on forward-based systems in SALT and on possible MBFR limits for theater nuclear forces could be influenced by refinements to the current acquisition policy for theater nuclear forces. For example, current theater nuclear acquisition policy calls for essentially a "status quo" posture with minor modernization. Initiation of major modernization programs for these forces could serve as "leverage" or could create negotiating problems.

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Some possible changes in the acquisition policy that appear to have little direct impact on arms control positions are:

- Greater emphasis on trans-attack survivability in C3 and nuclear forces, in the sense that survivability of forces over time is already a key consideration in SALT, and C3 programs have not been the subject of negotiations (and probably will not be).
- Greater emphasis on retargeting capability.

Thus, the revised employment policy could have some effect on U.S. arms control positions, primarily through acquisition policy implications, but at this point the effect can be considered as minor. The way employment policy is explained may, however, have greater effect on the SALT negotiations themselves.

3. Declaratory Statements of Policy

If the proposed employment policy changes are implemented, there are at least four reasons why some disclosure to our allies, potential enemies, and the public at large will be called for:

- The U.S. commitment to NATO for consultation on nuclear strategy and plans through the Nuclear Planning Group and for coordination of certain aspects of nuclear planning through combined NATO military staffs.
- The desire to create an environment in which the leaders of countries with nuclear weapons give consideration to controlling escalation in a nuclear war, rather than making automatic, preplanned responses.
- The continued public interest in a fuller explanation of what is meant by Presidential statements of a requirement for flexible options.
- The responsibility and the necessity to provide an explanation for our policy to the Congress and the public at large as the rationale for specific defense programs.

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Depending upon the extent to which policy changes are made now, rather than after further studies have been completed, it may be possible to say relatively little about any changes, at least for a while. This would permit further insight into acquisition policy questions, and enable the Administration to respond to questions from the Congress and allies from a more extensive base of firm policy. However, even if acquisition policy decisions are delayed, it is necessary to get started now on a detailed plan for declaratory statements because of the necessity to respond to any unauthorized disclosure of the policy changes or the ongoing studies, and to deal with questions that may arise from limited disclosures already made.

Any public statements about nuclear policy will have a multiple audience: the U.S. public and Congress; allies and other friends; the Soviet Union, the PRC and their allies. Declaratory statements of policy must adequately address all of these potential listeners.

Reactions by all audiences to changes in U.S. nuclear policy will depend on how the new policy is presented and how they perceive it affects them. There are elements of the proposed changes in employment policy that could create foreign policy issues with both allies and adversaries and could cause domestic problems. These are discussed below and in Issues 3 and 4 of Section G.^{17/} Careful presentation can minimize such possibilities, both through a plan for phased explanation of the main features of the new policy, thereby avoiding dramatic statements, and by stress on the theme that changes envisioned are procedural and evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

Nuclear weapons are generally an emotional subject, and the reactions to any proposals that suggest something new in the way of U.S. nuclear policy are not fully predictable. The Working Group believes, however, that the following will be the likely reactions or major concerns with respect to proposed changes.

^{17/} Paper E provides an expanded discussion of these potential problems and a plan for alleviating them through declaratory statements of policy.

a. Congress and Public

They will be primarily concerned about whether the new policy involves increases in defense spending. They also may be concerned about reopening arms competition. In addition, those who have in the past heavily emphasized the "assured destruction only" theme will probably be vocal critics of any changes which imply a policy other than this. On the other hand, there are vocal critics of "assured destruction only" who would be receptive to the changes.

b. Potential Adversaries

There are two different perspectives which must be considered:

- The new policy, with its stress on restrained use of nuclear weapons, could be interpreted as a weakening of U.S. will and, therefore, of deterrence, thereby increasing the risk of aggressive acts by adversaries.
- The new policy, if fully revealed to potential adversaries, may be seen as a more pragmatic approach in contending with the Soviet and PRC strategic buildup than past policy statements emphasizing massive retaliation. If so perceived, it could increase respect for U.S. interests and commitments. There is, of course, the risk that the threat of coercive use of nuclear weapons could ultimately increase tensions, stimulate arms competition and impair arms control negotiations. Alternatively, it could correspond to Soviet perceptions of what U.S. nuclear policy actually has been and thus may have little effect.

c. Allies and Friends

There are distinct advantages to the proposed policy in terms of relations with our allies. These ought to be stressed in any declaratory statements.

- The emergence of a secure Soviet retaliatory capability has tended to erode allied confidence that the

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United States would be prepared to use large numbers of strategic nuclear forces in their defense. The development of selected and limited options would make use of nuclear forces in defense of our allies more credible.

- The integration within the proposed policy of theater and strategic forces is likely to be attractive to our allies if it is demonstrated to them that there is, in fact, effective linkage between theater and strategic forces and that it will operate to couple U.S. strategic forces more closely to the defense of Europe rather than to decouple them.

The potential major concerns of our allies could be:

(Refer also to Issue 4 and Paper E for amplified discussion of these points.)

- In spite of the strategic-theater force integration, the existence of Regional Nuclear Options as a separate attack category could imply the possible decoupling of U.S. strategic forces from the defense of Western Europe and Asia.
- Possible conflict of the new concepts with UK and French strategies which rely on minimum deterrence. They may be apprehensive about changes in U.S. policy if they perceive that such changes tend to denigrate their deterrent.
- The possibility that these policy changes would lead to a weakening of the allied role in nuclear decision making.
- The possibility that the new policy implies greater emphasis in U.S. strategy on nuclear weapons, and thus could lead to increasing tensions with the Soviets and impair current prospects for detente. Should this be the allied perception, they could diminish their efforts to provide conventional force improvements.

In particular, there is a potential risk of a divisive strategic debate in NATO if the proposed changes in nuclear policy are perceived as major changes adversely affecting NATO. On the other hand, the proposed policy offers the opportunity for a more realistic approach by the United States and its NATO allies to the role of nuclear weapons in NATO defense planning.

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d. Approach

The Working Group has considered how to describe and explain the proposed changes in nuclear policy to each of the above audiences so as to reduce the potential risks. The recommended approach emphasizes relations with allies, since the concept of control of escalation will no doubt be the change most difficult for them to accept, as discussed in Issue 4 in Section G and amplified in Paper E. This approach involves a time-phased, progressively more detailed exposition of the new policy, emphasizing that it is consistent with past policy and that it will enhance attainment of U.S. objectives and, in the case of allies, the objectives they share with the United States.

The proposed approach is both substantive and procedural. Substantively it would involve:

- (1) Demonstrating that this policy is consistent with past U.S. policy in that its principal objective is deterrence and that it threatens no adversary who is not intent on aggression.
- (2) Emphasizing and describing how the policy changes will enhance deterrence at all levels of conflict (especially important for allies), while also showing that it enhances the coupling of all U.S. forces to the defense of Europe and Asia.
- (3) Emphasizing the more humane and moral aspects of the policy as compared to "assured destruction."
- (4) Demonstrating by budget requests and other actions that the policy will not increase the U.S. Defense budget, proliferate U.S. nuclear weapons, or stimulate an arms race.
- (5) Emphasizing that the policy is a pragmatic approach to contending with potential threats in today's world.

Procedurally, this approach to declaratory statements would involve:

- (1) Describing the policy as a natural, evolutionary change.
- (2) Briefing key members of Congress in a series of frank, detailed discussions.
- (3) Conducting extensive consultations in NATO (primarily in the NPG) and bilaterally, based on well prepared prior positions.
- (4) Identifying in detail the probable sources of objection and developing cogent responses to each.

Paper E contains a more detailed description of this approach to declaratory statements.

F. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES

The Working Group believes that the integrated approach to nuclear policy proposed in this report will foster greater consistency among the various elements of nuclear policy and will enable nuclear force acquisition, deployment, and employment plans together with arms control efforts and declaratory statements to mutually support basic U.S. objectives. In addition it will serve to sharpen the analysis of many unresolved nuclear issues.

The Working Group suggests that if the proposed policy changes are accepted, the implementing process be evolutionary in nature for two reasons:

- First, the actual production of the operational plans which marry U.S. force capabilities to objectives (e.g., revision to the SIOP and other nuclear operational plans) is a detailed, time-consuming process (estimated at 24 months) that cannot officially begin until revisions to current employment policy are approved. A summary description of this process and what is involved is contained in Paper F. As noted therein, many of the preliminary steps of this process are underway, but full implementation of proposed policy changes must be an iterative process to ensure the existence of viable operations plans throughout the process of change.
- The second is because changes, if any, in weapon systems acquisition policy and programs will depend upon further analysis which will consider factors in addition to employment objectives, including fiscal resources. This is discussed above in Section E.1 and also in Paper G.

However, based on preliminary analysis by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Working Group has concluded that the proposed employment policy can be implemented to a useful degree with forces programmed for Fiscal Year 1974. That is, the resulting plans will constitute a significant improvement over current employment plans. These improvements are in terms of (i) plans for large scale attacks more directly in the national interest should such attacks be necessary, and (ii) plans for moderate and small scale attacks that provide greater flexibility and more cogent options for use of nuclear weapons in local conflict should that be necessary.

Thus, adoption of the proposed employment policy does not require changes in programmed forces at this time. However, the proposed policy does sharpen the need for eliminating deficiencies in surveillance, warning, and C³ that are known today.

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The recommended course of action is to direct implementation of the proposed revisions to U.S. nuclear policy and then proceed, with a clear understanding that policy revisions may be necessary in specific areas as problems are identified.

The Working Group believes that the broad policy guidelines which have been formulated in this effort are needed to clarify existing policy. It also believes that steps can be initiated to revise employment policy without prejudging acquisition decisions, which must be subjected to further study before a satisfactory basis can be established for a Presidential decision. It, therefore, recommends the following approach to implementation of the recommendations contained in this report ^{18/}

1. Approval of the overall nuclear policy objectives and supporting framework developed in this report. These objectives would be subject to further review and possible revision after additional efforts outlined below.

2. Approval of the proposed changes in nuclear weapons employment policy as the basis for evolutionary revision in U.S. nuclear policy. This would be accomplished by directing the Secretary of Defense to issue policy guidance for the employment of nuclear weapons as the basis for nuclear weapons employment planning. ^{19/}

Pursuant to this guidance, the planning system of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would then: (a) develop operational plans, assess them in terms of the objectives and guidelines set forth in the guidance, and at significant phase points advise the NCA as to their findings; (b) establish procedures for crisis management to respond to further guidance from the NCA as to which situations and toward which objectives plans for local conflict should be developed; and (c) prepare for and conduct peacetime exercises to test and evaluate the interaction between the NCA and its advisory staffs, the NMCC, supporting military and political staffs in Washington, the JSTPS, and appropriate unified and specified commands. The previously discussed need for iteration in this planning process may necessitate further adjustment to the guidance.

The employment guidance places special emphasis on mutually supporting military and political measures that seek to control escalation. Accordingly, to support the flexibility inherent in the options under this policy guidance, the need for rapid response and the importance to the NCA and their immediate policy advisors of having political and military

^{18/} This approach has been incorporated in a proposed NSDM contained in Appendix I.

^{19/} That is, the draft language in Paper B would be appropriately modified to reflect Presidential decisions.

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advice in relation to possible nuclear usage, a senior staff level mechanism for providing such rapid reaction advice is necessary. The staff involved must be colocated, must have full access to all relevant information, and must have full capability to communicate to their respective superiors. The current emergency operations procedures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the current program to expand the NMCC should be reviewed and modified as appropriate to meet this requirement.

3. Direction by the Department of State of further development of a detailed plan of declaratory policy, based on the initial plan presented in Paper E, for communicating the policy changes, including appropriate statements for use with U.S. allies, and for explanation (either public or private) to potential adversaries. The plan would take into account the existing channels within the NATO military structure as well as the normal diplomatic channels. In support of this effort, the Central Intelligence Agency should prepare a special assessment of likely Soviet and PRC reactions to the new policies, based on the initial work in Paper H, and how these reactions might be influenced by U.S. statements and actions. Detailed planning of the aspects of declaratory policy could serve to alleviate possible problems noted earlier.

4. Direction of an overall analysis by the Department of State of the impact that pursual of the basic objectives will have on current U.S. positions with respect to MBFR and SALT II. The report of this review should recommend changes in the current negotiating approach in support of the basic objectives and also should recommend any necessary changes to the objectives to support arms control positions. The Working Group is fully cognizant that acquisition decisions can influence arms control negotiations, but did not examine the current considerations in SALT II. As a consequence the planning objectives for acquisition do not contain any explicit provisions for the sole purpose of facilitating arms control.

5. Continuing review by the Department of Defense of the implications for the development, acquisition, and deployment of nuclear forces (both strategic and theater) appropriate to support the changes proposed herein. The initial results of this review would be reported to the President prior to final decisions on the Fiscal Year 1975 Budget. This review must consider a range of policies and programs in terms of fiscal resources, arms control considerations, and the degree to which they would meet the deterrent, employment, and planning objectives previously set forth. This effort has been directed already by the Secretary of Defense, with work to commence after review and decisions on the policy changes discussed in this report. This work should be done within the framework suggested in Paper G.

G. Key Issues

Among those issues considered by the Working Group, there are five of sufficient importance to be reviewed by higher authority, along with the recommendations of the Working Group.

- Prospects for control of escalation.
- Effect of the proposed policy changes on deterrence.
- Possible Soviet and PRC reactions to the proposed policy changes.
- Allied perceptions of the proposed policy changes.
- Feasibility of the proposed policy.

1. Issue: What are the prospects for the control of escalation?

The ability of the United States to control the escalation of a nuclear war will depend upon several factors which are unpredictable in advance of a conflict and which may not be clear to the NCA at the time of a conflict. Yet, in those situations in which the United States may find it necessary to use nuclear weapons, efforts to control escalation are a promising means to limit damage to the United States and its allies. Since the introduction of escalation control concepts into employment policy is a major departure from current policy, the Working Group believes that careful consideration must be given to the prospects and risks through a discussion of:

- the current environment conditioning use of nuclear weapons;
- key variables affecting control of escalation;
- possible disadvantages of the escalation control concepts.

a. Current Environment

In a major nuclear conflict with the Soviet Union, counterforce strikes cannot provide high confidence of significantly reducing the urban damage the United States and its allies would suffer. This is because:

- The Soviets now have a secure second-strike force.

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-- The United States has agreed not to deploy ABM defenses beyond the constraints of the ABM Treaty and thus cannot look to technological advances in ABM systems for limiting damage to U.S. cities.

-- There is the possibility that the Soviets might launch their ICBMs and IR/MRBMs on tactical warning of an attack.

This conclusion indicates that US nuclear weapons employment plans should provide options for limiting the level and extent of a nuclear war as a primary means of limiting damage to the United States and its allies.

b. Key Variables Affecting Control of Escalation

(1) Perceptions of Objectives and Risks. Our ability to control escalation will depend strongly on the real objectives of the enemy, the risks and losses that the enemy is prepared to take, and the ability of the enemy leadership to discern U.S. objectives, commitments, capabilities and willingness to limit the conflict. The following discussion highlights some of the critical uncertainties about such matters which may affect judgments as to the utility of the proposed policy.

For any given objective or set of objectives, presumably an enemy will have associated limits on the risks and losses he is willing to accept. To the extent this is true, then in principle control of escalation can be used to achieve U.S. objectives by capitalizing on those limits. However, in the event that the enemy has virtually no limits on risk or loss, then the conflict can only be stopped by (a) acquiescing to the enemy achieving his objectives, or (b) destroying his capability to achieve his objectives.

Our understanding of enemy objectives and propensity for risks depends on whether the United States is faced with a decision (i) to respond to a limited nuclear attack or (ii) to initiate a U.S. limited nuclear attack. In the first case, the nature of the enemy attack will provide us with some relevant information. In the second case, there is much more uncertainty.

Our willingness to accept the risks of the policy will depend upon: (i) Our confidence at the moment of decision that the U.S. objective to limit the conflict is matched by a similar objective on the part of the enemy; (ii) our willingness to accept the risk of a limited nuclear strike on the U.S. or Allied territory and forces; (iii) the extent to which the enemy threatens to deny our objectives or to exceed our perception of acceptable loss.

Any military escalation, including U.S. first use of nuclear weapons, may alter the enemy's perception of his risks sufficiently that he will cease his hostile actions and negotiate. On the other hand, U.S. escalation may also change the enemy's perception of his objectives

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in such a way that he is willing to accept higher risks and will continue or even further escalate the conflict. For example, he may perceive his vital interests to be threatened or may feel that national honor precludes backing down.

The limited use of nuclear weapons would not change these dynamics of escalation, but could either:

- pose an increased threat of major nuclear war, thus improving prospects for a negotiated solution;
- or cause the adversary to believe his vital national interests are at stake, reducing the prospects for control over further escalation.

(2) Escalation Boundaries. From the perspective of the United States and the Soviet Union, there is a natural hierarchy of escalation boundaries on nuclear conflict:

- battlefield or subtheater conflict;
- theater-wide conflict not involving attacks on US or Soviet territory;
- limited attacks on general purpose military targets in the United States or the Soviet Union;
- limited attacks on US or Soviet strategic forces;
- major attacks on US or Soviet territory.

At progressively higher levels on this scale, the vital interests of the superpowers are increasingly threatened. Consequently, the Working Group is more optimistic about prospects for control of escalation at the lower levels (e.g., battlefield or sub-theater nuclear conflict) than at the higher levels.

(3) Soviet Doctrine and Capabilities. Soviet military doctrine has traditionally rejected the notion of the limited use of nuclear weapons. Soviet commentaries on past proposals by Western writers for the demonstrative use of nuclear weapons have characterized such use as adventurous and dangerous, with significant danger of escalation. Soviet declarations stress that acceptance of a policy of limited nuclear options in Europe would make nuclear war more likely. The theme that deterrence of nuclear war would be weakened, if rules and limitations were established beforehand, has been evident over the past decade in Soviet commentary on U.S. discussions of "limited war" and NATO's strategy of flexible response. Further, there is nothing in available Soviet strategic writings reflecting military planning which anticipates limited or multistage nuclear attacks on the United States. There is virtually no indication that the Soviets accept the notion that

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limited strategic war is feasible or that nuclear weapons could be used in some escalatory manner to create circumstances for negotiations or bargaining; the Soviets apparently reject the possibility that the US and the USSR could exercise restraint, once nuclear weapons had been employed against their respective homelands.

On the other hand, there are situations in which it would be in the best interests of the Soviet Union to keep a nuclear war limited, their military doctrine notwithstanding.^{20/} This, together with the past propensity of the Soviet leadership to avoid unnecessary risks in crisis situations, suggests that the Soviets may elect to keep a nuclear conflict limited.

The nuclear forces currently available to the Warsaw Pact provide a limited capability to wage nuclear war on a scale short of the theater level. Moreover, Soviet policy with regard to nuclear warfare in Europe appears to be moving away from the earlier position that any war directly engaging the United States and USSR would inevitably escalate to general nuclear war. The recognition of the possibility of fighting a limited war in Europe has been evident in recent Pact exercises and planning documents. The nuclear forces and command and control systems available to the Soviets have a degree of flexibility and redundancy that could support a strategy of controlled nuclear attacks. Procedures have been tested and developed through frequent command, communications, and combined force exercises which raise the possibility that a limited-use, contingency strategy does exist -- or could be included -- in Soviet targeting and attack planning.

c. What is Lost by Trying?

The above discussion indicates that, while there are substantial uncertainties about the prospects for controlling escalation and risks attendant to any actual use of nuclear weapons, there are also substantial benefits that could result. Thus, it appears that employment planning should provide the NCA with the means to attempt escalation control. Before coming to this conclusion, however, it is necessary to examine the possible disadvantages of making such provisions in employment planning.

(1) Military Considerations. Options for limited nuclear strikes which involve incremental execution of forces against Soviet territory can reduce the effectiveness of US nuclear forces for subsequent major attacks through:

^{20/} See, for example, Paper D ("Employment of Nuclear Weapons in Local Conflict")

- inefficient force application in limited attacks due to MIRV or bomber footprint constraints;
- inability to take advantage of mutually supporting nuclear forces for penetrating defenses in limited attacks;
- withholding of attacks on enemy defenses and C³ which could reduce attack effectiveness on the one hand and facilitate enemy retaliation on the other.
- destruction of withheld US forces and their command, control, and communications;

To minimize these problems, the Department of Defense, when formulating the proposed "Revised Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons" (Paper B) specified objectives for limited attack options in some detail. These options, in the judgment of the Department of Defense, represent a reasonable balance between efforts to control escalation and military requirements if these efforts are not successful. It is recognized, however, that an evolutionary process of implementing the employment policy, probably with modification, addition, or deletion of specific attack option objectives, will be needed before there can be assurance that the best balance has in fact been achieved.

(2) Effects on Deterrence. The possible adverse effects of an announced doctrine for limited nuclear conflict on deterrence are discussed in Issue 2 below.

(3) Effects on Allied Perceptions of the US Commitment to Their Defense. The possible adverse effects vis-a-vis US allies of a US doctrine for limited nuclear conflict are discussed below in Issue 4.

(4) Uncertainties as to whether a Soviet response to a limited US nuclear retaliation on Soviet territory would be massive and uncertainty as to whether the net outcome would be substantially worse for the US.

d. Conclusions

After considering the above uncertainties and considerations, the Working Group concluded that, within the current strategic environment, the most promising means of reducing damage to the United States and its allies in a nuclear conflict, while also protecting US interests, would be to seek to control escalation and induce an early termination to the war. Accordingly, objectives for attack options for this purpose were provided in the proposed employment policy.

2. Issue: Would the proposed changes in employment policy, either taken together or in part, enhance, weaken, or have little effect on deterrence of nuclear warfare?

In essence, the proposed employment policy makes two changes: it explicitly provides for options to conduct limited nuclear operations at levels below a major nuclear conflict and it provides a revised basis for targeting in the event of a major nuclear conflict.

a. Limited Nuclear Operations

With regard to the first proposed change in employment policy, there are two views:

(1) The threat of massive retaliation is sufficient to deter any enemy action against vital US interests, and in fact the expectation that the US would not resort to massive retaliation would encourage aggression not involving an attack on the US itself.

(2) The threat of massive retaliation plus the threat of limited use of nuclear weapons to deny successful local aggression will deter a wider range of actions than the threat of massive retaliation alone. Those holding this view believe the threat to make limited use of nuclear weapons in local conflict is an essential element of deterrence, since the possession of a secure second strike capability by the Soviets (and perhaps one day the PRC) makes less viable a massive US strike except in retaliation for a major attack on the United States itself.

The first view given above holds that the Soviet Union is deterred from nuclear attack or coercion only by the threat of prompt, massive, and assured retaliation by the United States. Proponents believe that an announced US policy for conducting limited nuclear warfare would not deter local aggression and could increase its likelihood, because of the implication that the United States will not employ its central strategic systems in a major attack in response to local aggression. This view also implies that the Soviet Union would not be interested in, or not have capabilities for, limiting nuclear conflict. An amplified discussion of this point is contained in Paper H.

The second view assumes that enemies will understand the purpose of an announced US policy of restraint in the event of nuclear conflict, that they may come to share this purpose, and that the political leadership of the adversary will be able to control their forces and thereby limit such a conflict. Proponents hold that the Soviet Union is concerned about nuclear conflict occurring from other than a large-scale attack. (There is some support for this view derived from Soviet comments in SALT regarding accidental or unauthorized attacks.) They believe that articulation of a policy of restraint and control of escalation could move the Soviets further in this direction.

There is general agreement that, if efforts to control escalation are to be successful, it is essential to be able to communicate our intentions to the adversary during a crisis. An issue arises, however, as to the degree and means of communicating such intentions during peacetime. This issue is discussed in Section G.3 (Issue 3). Paper E discusses possible means of communicating US intentions to potential enemies during peacetime.

Some advocate a rather extensive effort to communicate the concepts of escalation control to the Soviet Union and to develop communication mechanisms to permit rapid exchanges of views in the event of a crisis or conflict. Others believe that such preconditioning might be useful, but that it is not essential for implementation of the proposed employment policy.

Given the current strategic balance, the Working Group concluded that we should seek some positive means of convincing enemies that they cannot hope to gain from nuclear adventurism or military coercion at the local level and, therefore, favors attempts to limit conflict through control of escalation. It is important that ways be found to permit both sides flexibility well before an initial failure of deterrence became total catastrophe. Since there can never be a guarantee that deterrence will not fail -- through miscalculation or otherwise -- the provision of opportunities to reestablish deterrence through control of escalation is essential.

b. Revised Basis for Targeting in the Event of a Major Nuclear Conflict

Some members of the Working Group believe the revised targeting criteria will enhance deterrence, but they are not categorical on this point. Others believe these revisions will have little or no effect on deterrence.

Conceptually, there appear to be advantages in basing deterrence of major nuclear attacks on the threatened destruction of those political, military and economic resources necessary for the opponent's post-war power and influence, rather than on some level of deaths presumed to be unacceptable to him. The ability to deny the enemy his post-war objectives should be a better deterrent than an imperfect assessment of what the enemy considers an unacceptable cost to achieve those objectives.

Some believe, however, that the practical effects of the revised targeting criteria on deterrence would be small or nonexistent. They do not argue against the proposed changes in the employment policy, but do assert that the threat to Soviet post-attack recovery should not become a major theme in U.S. statements about deterrence.

Those holding this view note that it has not been determined whether in practice, at the highest levels of attack, the revised targeting

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criteria will result in major differences in damage from the current declared threat of major retaliation against population.

-- National leadership is not in general targetable without also damaging large population centers.

-- Economic resources critical to post-attack recovery may be quite similar to the current "war-supporting industry", and are likely to be co-located with large population centers.

-- Much of the Red Army may be in Western Europe by the time a major attack is authorized and these targets may be impossible to attack without major collateral damage to allies.

Consequently, it is argued, this aspect of the new policy may appear to many to be little different than "assured destruction". Indeed, it may be seen as a cynical attempt to rationalize what we would actually do in a massive attack, or simply not taken very seriously. Thus, it is argued, the Soviet Union may continue to be deterred more by what we do (i.e., our acquisition policy for nuclear weapons) and what they think we would do, rather than by what we say.

Others believe that the revised targeting criteria can enhance deterrence of major nuclear attacks for the following reasons:

-- These revised criteria for targeting are coercive in that they establish a direct threat to each of the three main power blocs within the Soviet Union and the PRC, namely, the political regime, the technocrats, and the military.

-- More importantly, they emphasize the denial of any substantive gain to an opponent from making a nuclear attack.

-- There would be close alignment between the declared deterrent threat and the actions which would be in the best interests of the United States in a major nuclear conflict. This change would establish a common theme for deterrence that would provide a consistent framework for the declaratory and employment elements of policy. The deterrent threat and the targeting would coincide.

c. Conclusions

The Working Group cannot guarantee that the proposed changes in employment policy will enhance deterrence of nuclear attacks. It does believe, however, that the increased flexibility to attack targets directly related to an aggressor's post-war objectives, while not necessarily resorting to massive use of nuclear weapons, will extend deterrence to a wider range of contingencies. There is disagreement about whether the revised targeting criteria will also enhance deterrence of major nuclear attacks, but all are agreed that this revision will not decrease deterrence of such attacks.

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Beyond the foregoing the Soviet reaction is likely to reflect a dilemma for them. Insofar as the new policy appears to open up new opportunities to the President for confronting and frustrating possible Soviet pressures they are hardly likely to welcome the new policy. The targeting priorities in the new policy are quite similar to those the Soviets have discussed in the past which should, at least in logic, inhibit their reacting negatively to this aspect of the new policy.

On balance we would expect some negative reaction in public channels emphasizing the "aggressive" aspects and suggesting to our allies that the new policy implies a decoupling of US strategic forces from their defense. At the same time we expect that they would not want to jeopardize their detente policy vis a vis the United States by strenuous official reaction.

In the area of their defense policy planning, however, the Soviets would probably be more receptive to the importance of an announced change in US policy. They would, at a minimum, analyze carefully the implications of the new policy for their own contingency plans. The Soviets could seriously consider developing further the physical capabilities of their own nuclear forces and command and control systems to acquire the range of options becoming available to the US.

This then leads to the question of to what degree and in what manner we convey the nature of our new policy to the USSR.

Conveying the New Policy to the Soviets

There are two issues regarding declaratory policy. One has to do with whether we make any specific and direct effort, beyond the general statements in the President's Foreign Policy Report to communicate our concepts to the Soviets. The other has to do with how we communicate. We also need to differentiate between the two major elements in the new policy (a) the concept of escalation control, and (b) the concept of targeting to impede post-attack recovery.

On the one hand it can be argued that we should make no special effort to communicate our ideas to the Soviets. This is based on the assumption that ambiguity enhances deterrence, and that if the Soviets do not have flexibility and we do, this will improve our chances of controlling escalation to our advantage.

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On the other hand it can be argued that if the new targeting objectives and flexibility are intended to enhance deterrence they must be known to the Soviets and thus we must make them explicit. Furthermore, unless the Soviets can respond flexibly the prospects for escalation control will be poor, and the risks of a massive Soviet response to a limited use by the US unacceptable. Even those who advocate a more explicit explanation of the new policies differ as to whether the approach should be direct or indirect. Some favor an indirect approach through more explicit public statements in major messages or Congressional testimony. Others favor a direct approach which would promote an exchange of views and reduce the risk of ambiguity.

The Working Group agrees that we should not volunteer anything by way of direct comment to the Soviets. However, if the Soviets query us in private channels (e.g. SALT) we should have no hesitancy in making clear the purpose of our new policy. All agree that some form of communication (political messages) will be required during a crisis, especially if nuclear weapons are used. Indeed it will be mandatory that such messages accompany the use of nuclear weapons, if there is an expectation that escalation can be controlled and the conflict terminated. Such messages will need to emphasize both determination and restraint: sufficient determination to deter further escalation; sufficient restraint to convey a willingness to terminate hostilities.

PRC Reaction to and the US Response to the New Policy

Will They React?

The degree of sophistication with which Peking views the nature and problems of nuclear strategy cannot be accurately gauged. In the decade since Chinese nuclear testing began Peking's nuclear thinking has had a chance to mature both as China's capabilities have increased and as more information on the subject has become available, particularly from open sources in the west. Nevertheless, given the magnitude and sophistication of the threat from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and China's limited nuclear capability, it is unlikely that Peking's nuclear strategy need be very complex. It seems fair to assume that they see their nuclear force as two dimensional: (1) as a countervalue deterrent threat against attack, particularly nuclear attack, on China and (2) as a political symbol of major power status.

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In any event, assuming that Chinese leaders understand the nature of the Soviet-American interaction and strategic balance, they might logically conclude that the new strategy was directed principally against the Soviet Union, not themselves, since their own vulnerabilities to a U.S. first (damage limiting) or second strike would be the same under the new policy as under the old, e.g., the United States did not need a new nuclear policy to deal with the PRC because nothing has changed in that strategic relationship. If for whatever reason the PRC concluded the new strategy was directed against the Soviet Union, then it would be even more unlikely they would react or react negatively.

The Nature of the Reaction

If the Chinese do react publicly they are likely to do so in very general terms. They could give some stress to traditional propaganda such as: the aggressive intent of the United States and its willingness to use nuclear weapons in a conflict (thus rationalizing their own program). They could also hint at the vulnerability of America's Asian allies to the PRC nuclear capability if they allow the United States to use their soil for attacks on the PRC. They might also denigrate the SALT agreements as nothing more than a facade to legitimize America's aggressive policies. In addition, they might choose to see the new policy as directed against the Soviet Union and so say publicly hoping to sow some doubt and dissension among the PRC's two enemies. In a more subtle way, the PRC might see this policy as the U.S. response to the present objective reality of the Soviet-American nuclear balance. In the event of a crisis or the failure of deterrence they would see this policy as a means of dealing with the Soviets but also as keeping the Soviet Union relatively intact as a buffer and counterweight to growing Chinese power.

Lastly, they might view the policy as a loss of America's will or reluctance to use its retaliatory force. On the other hand, they could view the policy as a pragmatic means for the United States to assist them in dealing with Soviet coercion or attack.

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The U.S. Counterresponse

As in the case of the Soviet Union, it would be in the best U.S. interest not to volunteer any information to the PRC concerning the new policy. Should the Chinese raise questions in diplomatic settings, however, it would seem appropriate to respond that the new policy applies to any situation in which the United States might have to consider the use of nuclear weapons. In Asia, the nuclear weapons of both the Soviet Union and the PRC are of concern to the United States. The point should be made that the President of the United States must have flexibility to deal with crises in Asia as well as in Europe and that the United States has certain obligations to its allies in Asia which it intends to respect. The basic objective of the new policy is to enhance international stability.

Conclusion

The Working Group concludes that it is difficult to predict the nature of the Soviet and/or PRC response, if any, to the new policy. There is agreement, however, that particularly in the case of the Soviet Union there is a risk of misinterpretation and that a special effort may be needed to clarify our intentions. In the case of the PRC, the Working Group believes that under the present US-PRC nuclear relationship there is little opportunity for and no benefit to be gained by a direct discussion of these issues now. The new U.S. policy is judged not to have great substantive meaning for the PRC, at least for the present, and the near-term future.

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3. Issue: How are the Soviets and the PRC Likely to React to the New Nuclear Policy, and How Should We Communicate it to Them?

How the Soviets react will be dependent primarily on two factors: (a) how the new policy is portrayed not only in official statements but also in press, congressional and public reactions to and interpretations of official statements of the policy, and (b) by what they deem to be its substantive impact on our strategic force characteristics. In reaction, the declarations may not coincide with actual changes in Soviet defense planning caused by new US initiatives.

It is assumed that the official US position will emphasize: (a) the evolutionary nature of the policy, (b) the increased choices for Presidential action in the event of crisis, (c) that it can be accomplished without major changes in programmed forces, (d) that it is consistent with further arms control agreements, and (e) the more humane aspects of this policy as compared to deliberate targeting of population and cities under an assured destruction policy. However, large parts of the US press and public may well describe the policy in other terms. They can be expected to highlight its "war fighting" emphasis, the motive power it will provide for increased weapons acquisition and the consequent negative incentives for future arms control agreements, particularly those involving reductions. The Soviets can be expected to examine not only the official US policy statements but these public reactions as well.

The Soviet declaratory response would probably emphasize several major themes present in recent years in Soviet writings on US nuclear policy. One such theme would probably be that US efforts should be directed toward categorically prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons, instead of trying to find new ways to use them. A US declaration of flexible response options using intercontinental weapons as well as theater weapons would probably be construed publicly as yet another effort by the US to find some means to support a policy of coercive diplomacy. The Soviets would probably also stress that a policy of limited nuclear options would make nuclear war more likely. The charge that war becomes more likely if rules and limitations concerning its conduct are established beforehand has been a standard Soviet line since the Sixties. The Soviets have tried to project a public image of the USSR striving to prevent a global nuclear war, promote world peace and disarmament, and deter the US and its allies from aggression. In contrast, the US is portrayed as seeking to find new ways to employ its nuclear weapons, directly or indirectly, to achieve its political goals without damage to the US.

4. Issue: Would the existence of a planned structure of flexible options, in addition to the option for massive response, enhance or weaken the perceptions of our allies that the United States would come to their aid in the event of military aggression?

Most allies are ambivalent on nuclear weapons. They want the protection of the U.S. nuclear shield, but they do not want nuclear weapons used in their territories nor do they want a policy that places greater emphasis on the threat of using nuclear weapons. They take comfort in the deterrent value of "massive response" but worry about its credibility. They seek effective nuclear arms control, but worry about bilateral agreements degrading their security.

Further, most allies are naturally sensitive to any changes to U.S. policy which may affect their security. Many are convinced that the Nixon Doctrine implies some erosion in U.S. support for them, and are more interested in U.S. actions (e.g., U.S. force deployments) than verbal assurances; they are worried about U.S.-Soviet or U.S.-PRC "collusion" or bilateral efforts to negotiate political and economic spheres of influence at the expense of alliances.

a. Reactions of Asian Allies

It is important to address separately the question of reactions of our Asian allies. As previously noted the depth of understanding of nuclear strategy is significantly less in Asia than it is in Europe. With the exception of the Japanese (and perhaps the PRC) very few Asian Governments (or publics) have much interest in or detailed knowledge of nuclear strategy since for most of them it is irrelevant to their security problems. Therefore, except for these two countries, the new concepts are unlikely to have much impact. Reactions in Japan are uncertain. However, it appears those few in and outside the Government who understand the issues would probably find merit in the development of broader range of options in that it would appear to them to make deterrence more credible. Japanese experts have expressed concern in the past that U.S. interests in Asia were less firm and clear-cut than those in Europe; thus the U.S. commitment to Asian allies would diminish as the U.S. became vulnerable even to limited nuclear attacks from China. Moreover, the Japanese see the Soviets as a greater threat than the Chinese. The development of options specifically directed toward the Soviet threat should have some appeal to Japanese strategists. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that opinion with respect to nuclear

strategy in Japan is characterized not only by its diversity but to some degree by its unsophistication and ignorance. There will be some Japanese analysts like those in Europe who will be concerned that these strategic changes will make for a negative effect on arms control. The net reaction to the new concepts in the government and on the public, therefore, is not fully predictable. It can only be predicted that there will be an official expression of interest and a wish to be briefed on our views in as great detail as we brief our European allies.

b. Reactions of NATO Allies

Basically, our allies in Europe have been reluctant to face up to the prospect of fighting any major war in Europe, conventional or nuclear. They accordingly have devoted their attention to the maintenance of a credible deterrent and have generally equated their goal of absolute deterrence with what in their view is the absolute deterrent -- prompt use of U.S. strategic forces as a massive threat to the Soviet Union. The Europeans want to maintain a role in nuclear weapons planning, but recognize that their role is necessarily limited. NATO Europe is concerned about pressures for troop cuts, and might view the proposed changes in nuclear policy as designed to either compensate for, or else pave the way for a reduced U.S. presence in Western Europe. For these reasons, both the timing of the proposed changes and their existence could serve to weaken allied confidence in the U.S. commitment.

c. Basis for NATO Acceptance

Most of the political and military leaders of these nations are realists. While they are not privy to U.S. nuclear contingency plans, they know that such plans exist. Most European allies have been exposed to the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) work, and have endorsed in principle (both in basic NATO strategy and in NPG deliberations) the need for limited use of nuclear weapons. They have not, however, endorsed the desirability of extensive use of nuclear weapons on their territory.

A key advantage that the new policy should have in enhancing its acceptability to our NATO allies is that it provides for employment against a greater number of targets which might be a direct military threat to them. They have always paid explicit attention to the degree to which the U.S. SIOP and SACEUR's General Strike Plan (GSP) covered military threats to NATO. This target coverage with strategic forces is improving as our MIRVs come on line and would improve even more under the priorities for weapon allocation under the proposed employment

policy. The proposed employment policy provides for combined nuclear and conventional defense in limited nuclear conflicts. The policy places Soviet conventional forces high in its targeting priorities, and contains an explicit objective of minimizing the ability of Soviet forces to seize Western Europe, even after a major exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. Such provisions would be seen as a distinct advantage even if it would not prevent extensive damage to their territory.

Another advantage is the improved credibility of the nuclear deterrent created through the possibility that more limited nuclear employment might actually be undertaken. Establishment of rationale for these plans, consultation within the NATO Nuclear Planning Group, communication of salient segments to other allies, and explanation of our deterrent and employment objectives could all enhance the NATO allies confidence that the nuclear shield of the Nixon Doctrine was backed up by actual plans and capabilities, and thus serve to enhance the credibility of the U.S. deterrent. So long as we do not imply that this leads logically to extensive theater use or decoupling of U.S. strategic weapons, the problem of gaining allied support for the proposed policy should be manageable. We would warn, however, that we cannot give complete assurance that allied suspicions will not result in grave political concern on their part.

Since the NATO strategy of flexible response, promulgated in MC 14/3, was largely "made in U.S.A." and adopted at our behest, any proposals to change MC 14/3 must be considered with great care. However, the Working Group has concluded that there is no fundamental inconsistency between the strategy of flexible response in MC 14/3 and the proposed employment policy. If anything, the proposed policy should be viewed as enhancing that strategy, due to the increased flexibility it will provide. Furthermore, it is not anticipated that extensive major revisions to the GSP will be required -- at least revisions of a nature which should cause serious political problems within the Alliance. Accordingly, the Working Group believes that the proposed employment policy can be introduced as U.S. implementation of Alliance strategy.

Of course, there are risks that the allies may not view these changes as improvements to present strategy, but rather a new strategy designed for the United States to increasingly "go it alone" in the future. Although this possibility cannot be eliminated, it

undoubtedly can be minimized by a careful explanation of rationale and details on a gradual basis. A proposed approach to accomplish this objective is presented in Paper E.

d. Potential Problems

To the extent there are political problems which result from the proposed employment policy, they are likely to arise at a more detailed level.

(1) Escalation Boundaries

The first potential problem stems from the explicit use of the term "escalation boundaries," and the possible interpretation by the Europeans of a U.S. preference to confine the battleground to Europe or portions thereof. Although the NATO concept in MC 14/3 of "direct defense" implicitly subscribes to a rather limited escalation boundary, many Europeans would have difficulties accepting a more explicit statement.

(2) Decoupling

A second potential problem area is the existence of objectives for Selected Attack Options (see Chart, page 10, and Paper B, pages 20-21) in which the targets would be limited to military threats to NATO Europe and which use only theater based forces. This could imply "decoupling" of U.S. strategic forces from the defense of NATO. Those attack options that involve the use of CONUS based strategic forces or which involve attacks on the Soviet Union would be more acceptable than the Selected Attack Option which calls for the use of non-CONUS based forces. This latter Selected Attack Option is, of course, just the provision for the General Strike plan currently prepared by SACEUR and approved by the Alliance. The problem is that NATO strategy has never endorsed the suggestion that the General Strike Plan should be executed separately from a major attack on the Soviet Union with U.S. strategic forces.

(3) Regional Nuclear Options

The third problem relates to the two types of implementing options for local conflict, Limited and Regional, as described in Section D.l.a., above. Limited Nuclear Options are pre-planned or preplannable, and involve use of both strategic and theater nuclear forces. Forces for Regional Nuclear Options are keyed to local

conflict only. In NATO they would involve U.S. strategic forces only to the extent they were committed to SACEUR's operational control.^{21/} Regional Nuclear Options describe, in essence, today's nuclear contingency plans prepared by theater commanders (today Washington participation in development, review, or approval of such plans is normally performed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff).

One view holds that provision for Regional Nuclear Options is a logical outgrowth of the current situation (where such options do in fact exist even if not so named), and that it is both necessary and desirable to establish both the existence of, and policy guidance for such options. The policy guidance should be sufficiently broad to cover any region where nuclear weapons could be employed, and it is in the best interest of the United States to have plans (and NCA involvement in such plans) for use of only theater nuclear weapons.

A second view holds that while Regional Options may be desirable in general, the nature of the nuclear arrangements in NATO requires special provisions. The problem has two roots:

- Given the high degree of allied participation in NATO nuclear planning, the basic concepts and structure of approved U.S. employment policy documents would be known to our NATO allies.
- The concept of "escalation boundaries" and the provision of Regional Nuclear Options using "forces immediately available within a theater of operation and clearly committed for the defense of that area."^{22/}

Thus, in this view, the language of Paper B would unnecessarily raise NATO concern that the United States seeks in some degree to decouple its strategic forces from NATO's defense. Those holding this view find the risks of allied misunderstanding of Regional Nuclear Options as outweighing the proposed advantages. Some advocates of this view would amend the language in Paper B to incorporate Limited and Regional Options into one set of limited options which permitted use of either theater or strategic U.S. forces (or both), and such allied forces as were available and allocated to common targeting (e.g., UK nuclear forces). They point out that such a plan would be consistent with current NATO military policy (MC 14/3), that no decision or a prior commitment to a course of action in the event of conflict would be necessary, and that "fuzzing the line" between theater and strategic forces will mitigate allied concerns about flexible options. The essential point is that under this alternative the

^{21/} Today, 150 POSEIDON warheads are so committed. The priorities for targeting and the objectives of attack options under the proposed U.S. employment policy would support a larger commitment should that be useful.

^{22/} Paper B, pages 3 and 9 respectively.

U.S. would have the option for using only theater forces without relying on U.S. strategic forces but we would not be advertising this option to our allies; an option they would not buy and which we may never have a requirement for actually employing.

A third view also holds that the NATO problem requires revision of the language in Paper B but prefers to keep the Regional Nuclear Option category. To deal with the NATO problem advocates of this view would add language to accomplish the following:

- Explicitly acknowledge the special allied involvement in nuclear planning and operations in NATO.
- Explicitly interpret the definition of forces available for Regional Nuclear Options in NATO to include allied forces and U.S. SLBM warheads committed to SACEUR.
- Explicitly recognize that the prompt use of U.S. strategic forces may well be necessary should Regional Nuclear Options fail to control escalation.

Advocates of this view believe that this course would better meet allied concerns by offering positive assurances. At the same time it would provide a common structure for U.S. planning in all theaters of operation.

e. Conclusion

In point of fact the proposed changes in nuclear policy are driven to a large degree by the following factors:

- Our perceived need to preserve and strengthen means to underwrite our commitment to our allies, particularly NATO and Japan, in light of the emerging Soviet and PRC strategic postures.
- Our growing opportunities to devote a larger number of "strategic" warheads in defense of our allies in light of our MIRV programs and the ABM Treaty, and
- A clear need to obtain greater political and military utility from our existing theater nuclear capabilities.

Because of these factors, the Working Group believes there is a solid basis from which to mitigate allied concerns (although not necessarily eliminate them) through a carefully developed and phased plan of communicating the nature and purpose of these changes to our friends and allies.

5. Issue: Is the proposed employment policy feasible and can it be implemented successfully?

The proposed employment policy would, if approved, establish national guidance for developing a "capabilities plan" -- that is, doing the best with whatever U.S. and allied forces are available in terms of stated objectives, guidelines, and priorities. Strictly speaking, therefore, any employment policy is definitionally feasible. In this regard, the real question then is the degree to which such capabilities plans would achieve these stated objectives with current and near-term nuclear force postures, and if there were shortfalls, would they be of such a degree so as to vitiate important aspects of the policy.

A corollary but related feasibility concern with regard to the concept of control of escalation involves forces of other nations. For example,

- British and French forces might be employed under national plans in a way that would undermine controlled use by the United States or the Alliance as a whole. For example, U.K. or French SLBMs might attack Soviet territory when attacks on Soviet territory were being avoided by other NATO forces.
- Certain allied delivery vehicles might not be made available to implement the desired attack option. This might be aggravated by the geographical division of areas of operational responsibility within the NATO Theater.

a. U.S. Force Capabilities and Planning Procedures

A discussion of procedural matters associated with development of actual operations plans to implement the proposed policy is contained in Paper F. As noted therein, a lengthy iterative process is involved, which the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimate will take twenty-four months after receipt of formal direction to proceed with revisions. They further point out that shortfalls, ambiguities, and inconsistencies may be uncovered in this process, and that they will recommend alternatives to ensure that the best military options practicable are available.

There are several factors which impact on the degree to which capabilities permit attainment of the objectives of the employment policy:

- The revised planning procedures and organizational relationships that must be established.

- Numbers and types of warheads available.
- Footprint constraints in targeting multiple weapons delivered by a common carrier.
- Target acquisition capabilities.
- Collateral damage considerations.
- Execution and release procedures.

(1) Planning Procedures

Since the revised employment policy retains all of the basic attack objectives and withholds in the current NSTAP (and the derived SIOP), each of the factors above can be considered moot with respect to this portion of capabilities plans. In short, to the extent that the capability exists today to carry out the attack options in the SIOP, the corresponding attack options could be carried out in essentially the same fashion under the revised policy. However, with respect to capabilities to execute options in control of escalation, there is no such direct carryover. This is so primarily because national objectives have not previously been specified by the NCA in these areas, and there has thus been no appropriate point of reference for the assessment of capabilities. Therefore, attack options for control of escalation may (and undoubtedly will) diverge considerably from current nuclear contingency plans. As a consequence, considerable iterative effort must be undertaken (and has been started) to address each of the above factors in relation to current and near term capabilities to fulfill these segments of the employment policy.

(2) Availability of Warheads

The principal concern is over the increased emphasis placed in the proposed policy on targeting selected elements of enemy conventional forces -- by both theater and strategic forces. Theater force warhead levels have been essentially static for some years and concern over their adequacy has centered primarily on questions of survivability and modernization programs to reduce collateral damage. The growing number of strategic nuclear warheads and the reduced need for these warheads to overcome potential enemy ABM defenses, leads to a substantial increase in current and near term ability to cover a wide array of targets. We do not, however, have a clear understanding of the particular conventional force targets that would be most critical to post-attack recovery, nor a quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the numbers of currently available warheads against such targets. Effort is underway to address this issue.

(3) Target Acquisition

We have an adequate capability to locate and identify fixed targets. For mobile, surface targets we have fairly limited capability at night and in adverse weather, even to support conventional operations. Further, our good weather, daylight capability is keyed to the firepower available from conventional forces. Thus, in many circumstances we would not be able to fully exploit the increased firepower associated with nuclear weapons. It should be noted that we currently have sufficient target acquisition capabilities to support the nuclear operations described in the exemplary case studies of Paper D.

(4) Execution Procedures and C³

No general statement regarding adequacy is appropriate. The execution procedures needed for the Major, Selected, and Limited options can probably be handled by procedures similar to those currently used in the SIOP. There is concern even in these cases today with regard to survivability of the communication links under direct attacks.

In the theaters the problems of execution, command and control, and information flow are obviously more acute with respect to the execution of flexible attack options. Our current capabilities differ from region to region. However, there are provisions in the proposed employment policy that attempt to minimize this additional strain on the C³ system by providing for the maximum amount of military preplanning, encouraging an improved NCA familiarity with the resultant plans, and thus relying more heavily on NCA initiative in directing nuclear operations, than is the case today.

Nevertheless, no assurance can be given that current C³ can meet NCA needs in all cases. More study is being conducted in the entire C³ issue, but especially as it relates to its adequacy for conducting the more discriminate types of attacks proposed by this policy.

(5) Collateral Damage

It should be recognized that plans implementing the proposed policy, especially at the higher levels of escalation, would, if executed, produce substantial amounts of collateral damage. On the other hand, the policy provides specific guidelines that explicitly constrain the military effectiveness of limited attacks in favor of reduced collateral damage. In particular, the more limited the option the more constraint is called for.

(6) Summary Statement on U.S. Force Capabilities and Procedures

In summary, it is the view of the Working Group that:

- Those Major and Selected Attack Options of the revised employment policy corresponding to the current attack options of the SIOP should be at least as feasible in the near term as they are today.

-- The establishment of objectives for other attack options and revised criteria for all-out attack will provide a basis for measuring capabilities, for these purposes. While no assurance can be given that appropriate attack options can be implemented in all cases, the iterative implementing process of measurement, modification, and adaptation can and should go forward to provide a distinct improvement over today's situation. As the Joint Chiefs of Staff noted in their comments on the proposed employment policy, they "...are confident that the problems associated with implementation and execution of the proposed employment policy that remain to be defined and resolved can be overcome, and they will continue to press for solutions in the coming months."

b. Problems with Other National Forces

It must be clearly recognized that two of our allies -- the UK and France -- have indigenous nuclear forces which are adequate to provide a moderate retaliation against Warsaw Pact targets and a national employment policy. Although British forces are currently targeted within SACEUR's General Strike Plan and are coordinated with the U.S. SIOP, they presumably are responsive to national plans as well. The French have been quite explicit in that their forces are responsive to French national policies and are targeted by plans, primarily in an "assured destruction" mode. There is little chance today that the French will choose to re-integrate their nuclear planning into NATO's.

There are no immediate solutions to this problem. We can and are working with the UK and French to engender some belief that we support their forces and wish to continue a dialogue on strategic objectives. Beyond this we can:

- Use the existence of their independent force as a virtue in the sense of noting that this clearly places limits on how far we could or would try to keep nuclear wars limited to Europe.
- Strongly resist efforts to limit US support for UK and French forces by SALT agreements (i.e., non-transfer proposals).
- Try, over time, to gain a greater meeting of the minds on coordinated NATO strategy and on targeting of US, UK and French forces.

An additional problem is that many nuclear weapons within NATO are US-owned but intended for delivery by forces of other nations under formal programs of cooperation. These delivery vehicles might not be made available to SACEUR by the respective nations.

It should be noted that there is no necessary inconsistency between the proposed U.S. employment policy and the currently approved NATO nuclear strategy, but this is true because the latter is intentionally ambiguous so as to accommodate certain differences of opinion within the Alliance with respect to nuclear weapons. Implementation of the proposed employment policy does imply a substantial increase in detailed planning in peacetime for nuclear operations in order to provide high assurance that nuclear weapons could be, in fact, used in a manner fully responsive to U.S. and Alliance political-military objectives in wartime.

Although the Working Group feels that such additional preparations would enhance the deterrent effectiveness of nuclear weapons in NATO, the actual development of plans and procedures in support of the proposed employment policy could force members of the Alliance to face squarely issues that they have heretofore preferred to leave ambiguous and thus could perhaps generate both feasibility problems (in terms of cooperation in plan development) and political problems. A basis for resolving potential political problems was outlined in Issue 4 above. The fact remains, however, that the United States could never be certain that a policy of escalation would not be undercut by unilateral allied actions. However, what can be done is to make an concerted effort, through combined policy planning, to convince NATO allies of the benefits to them of the proposed employment policy and to seek understanding and acceptance of the principles embodied therein as a better overall deterrent to conflict.

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APPENDIX I

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PROPOSED NSDM ON BROAD NATIONAL STRATEGIC
AND THEATER NUCLEAR POLICY
(Intended to Replace NSDM 16)

1. General

a. The President has approved the concepts and objectives set forth in Sections 2, 3, and 4 as a basis for changes in nuclear employment policy and for further implementing studies specified in Section 5 of this NSDM.

b. The Secretary of Defense is authorized to issue policy guidance for the employment of nuclear weapons consistent with Sections 2 and 3 to serve as the basis for the evolutionary revision of operational plans and procedures for current and near term forces by the planning system of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

c. To support the flexibility inherent in the options under this policy guidance, the need for rapid response and the importance to the National Command Authorities and their immediate policy advisors of having political and military advice in relation to possible nuclear usage, a senior staff level mechanism for providing such rapid reaction advice is necessary. The staffs involved must be colocated, must have full access to all relevant information, and must have full capacity to communicate to their respective superiors. The current emergency operations procedures of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the current program to expand the National Military Command Center should be reviewed and modified as appropriate to meet this requirement.

d. Taking into account this policy guidance, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Director of Central Intelligence, in coordination, shall refine their respective crisis management procedures to provide timely political-military assessments and recommendations to the National Command Authorities for both military and diplomatic actions to support potential nuclear employment decisions.

e. Additional implementing actions shall be undertaken as specified in Section 5 and will be subject to further Presidential review. Based on the results of these actions, further policy changes may be recommended.

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f. The U.S. nuclear policy shall be based on two fundamental, inter-related roles for U.S. nuclear forces: for deterrence of aggression at all levels and, if necessary, for appropriate employment if conflict occurs involving the vital interests of the United States.

2. Specific Objectives for Deterrence

a. In their deterrent role, strategic and theater nuclear forces shall support the following objectives:

- (i) To deter nuclear attacks against the United States, its forces, and its bases overseas.
- (ii) In conjunction with other U.S. and allied forces, to help deter attacks -- conventional and nuclear -- by nuclear powers against U.S. allies and those other nations whose security is deemed important to U.S. interests.
- (iii) To inhibit coercion of the United States by nuclear powers, and in conjunction with other U.S. and allied forces help inhibit coercion of U.S. allies by such powers.

b. It is the policy of the United States to rely primarily on U.S. and allied conventional forces to deter conventional aggression by both nuclear and non-nuclear powers; it is recognized that nuclear forces that deter nuclear powers will also serve to deter non-nuclear powers.

c. These deterrent objectives require, to the extent practical, the maintenance of a nuclear posture by the United States which in the aggregate has the following basic characteristics:

- (i) High survivability and penetration capability.
- (ii) Sufficient warning, surveillance and attack assessment capability to support survivability of aircraft forces and the National Command Authorities and to support decision-making by the National Command Authorities during and after nuclear attacks.

- (iii) Adequate command, control, and communications to ensure responsiveness of nuclear forces to the National Command Authorities.
- (iv) A clear capability to execute an extensive range of attacks in response to potential threats or actions by an enemy.
- (v) Conformance with the provisions of arms control agreements.
- (vi) No significant imbalance in overall nuclear strength favoring any potential opponent.

Planning for a nuclear force posture with these basic characteristics will be guided by the specific planning objectives set forth in Section 4 below.

3. Specific Objectives for Employment of Nuclear Forces

In support of these deterrent objectives, and to permit appropriate employment of nuclear forces if necessary, operational plans for U.S. strategic and theater nuclear forces shall be developed to achieve the following employment objectives:

a. In the event of conflict, the objective is to seek early war termination on terms acceptable to the United States and its allies at the lowest level of conflict feasible. This objective is to be accomplished through mutually supporting political and military measures that seek to control escalation:

- (i) By communicating to the enemy both a determination to resist aggression and a desire to exercise restraint.
- (ii) By conducting selected nuclear operations, in concert, with conventional forces, to protect vital U.S. interests and to limit enemy opportunities for further aggression.
- (iii) By setting limits to the level, scope, and duration of violence and communicating these limits to the enemy.
- (iv) By holding some vital enemy targets hostage and threatening their subsequent destruction.

- (v) By being prepared to provide the enemy opportunities to reconsider.

These measures shall be undertaken in a concerted effort to convince the enemy to change his mind because: he will be unsuccessful in achieving his objective; the price to him of continued aggression is too high; and negotiating a war termination is in his interests. All of these measures imply the need for plans that permit flexible employment of nuclear weapons under the control of the National Command Authorities.

b. To the extent that escalation cannot be controlled, then the objective for employment of nuclear forces in a major nuclear exchange is to obtain the best possible outcome for the United States and its allies. This objective is to be accomplished through the following measures:

- (i) Destruction of those enemy political, economic, and military resources critical to the enemy's post-war power and influence, and critical to the enemy's national and military recovery in the post-war period.
- (ii) Seeking to limit damage to those political, economic, and military resources critical to the continued power and influence of the United States and its allies, to the degree practicable with available forces.
- (iii) Maintenance of a strategic force in reserve for protection and coercion during and after major nuclear conflict.

4. Specific Objectives for Planning the Nuclear Force Posture

In planning nuclear forces with the basic characteristics noted earlier, the specific planning objectives set forth in this section will be pursued to the extent practical. In pursuing these objectives, we should seek to promote nuclear stability by reducing incentives to use nuclear weapons, particularly in a crisis situation, and by reducing potential pressures for unproductive or counterproductive arms competition. In particular, we should deny an opponent a significant military advantage which could result from a preemptive or "first strike" nuclear attack; maintain the clear capability to counterbalance, with appropriate measures, potential force increases or improvements by adversaries that could alter the military balance; and structure United States forces so that they cannot reasonably be interpreted by the Soviet Union as threatening a disarming attack.

a. To ensure a well-hedged offensive capability with strategic and theater nuclear forces sufficient to achieve a decisive reduction of the enemy's power and influence and to prolong markedly the duration of the enemy's post-attack recovery. There should be a capability to destroy, under all circumstances of conflict, those political, economic, and military targets which subsequent analysis shows to be critical to the enemy's post-attack power, influence, and recovery. This criterion should apply to both the Soviet Union and the PRC. However, with regard to providing for a capability to attack the PRC after a large nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union, it will be assumed, for planning purposes, that U.S. forces would be on generated alert prior to the Soviet attack.

b. To provide, under likely assumptions about threat, conditions of use, and U.S. operational capabilities, appropriate strategic and theater nuclear forces:

- (i) To permit carrying out a range of attack options consistent with the employment objectives for control of escalation set forth above.
- (ii) To permit attacks on other military targets important for, but not critical to the enemy's post-attack power, influence, and recovery capability.
- (iii) To retain a survivable reserve force after a large nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union.

c. Theater nuclear forces should be planned, in conjunction with other forces, to fulfill their deterrent objectives set forth in Section 2 above and to contribute to the planning objectives in Sections 4a and 4b above. In particular, these forces will be a major source of options for defending vital U.S. and allied interests while seeking to control escalation in limited nuclear war. They should be planned for this objective (i.e., Section 3a) while recognizing that the range of options for use of theater nuclear forces must take into account the views of friendly or allied states, especially those on whose territory such operations might be undertaken. The following additional guidance applies to NATO and Asia respectively:*

* The final wording of this section should be made consistent with decisions resulting from NSSM 168 (U.S. NATO Policies and Programs) and NSSM 171 (U.S. Strategy for Asia).

- (i) Theater nuclear force posture planning for NATO should support the NATO policy of flexible response, but this planning should not attempt to force allied acceptance of concepts that involve extensive use of theater based weapons without the employment of strategic forces.
- (ii) Theater nuclear force posture planning for Asia should provide for a combined nuclear and conventional defense against nuclear powers as a hedge in the event that a U.S. and allied initial conventional defense proves inadequate and should take into account the priority of the U.S. conventional commitment to NATO in the event of a simultaneous aggression in Europe and Asia.

d. Strategic defense force planning shall conform with the ABM Treaty. This planning should provide for an ABM deployment in defense of retaliatory forces, continued ABM research and development, and planning for the application of the latest ABM technology for the defense of the National Capital. [In addition, a CONUS air defense posture should be maintained that provides for a defense of the United States against a small bomber attack given strategic warning, peacetime surveillance and identification functions, and, as a minimum, a surface-to-air missile defense of the National Capital.]

e. To ensure that nuclear forces are responsive to and under the control of the National Command Authorities, planning for command, control, and communications systems should support decision-making and force execution consistent with the planning objectives and the survivability of the forces themselves. This planning should take cognizance of the degree of employment flexibility appropriate to the overall politico-military situation, the degree of strategic warning and the possibility of direct attacks on the command, control, and communications systems. At a minimum, this planning should provide for:

- (i) Essential support to decision-making and execution of retaliatory strikes in the event of large attacks on the United States.
- (ii) Adequate support for decision-making and flexible use of nuclear forces in attempts to control escalation in local conflict, assuming that the national level C³ systems and associated sensors supporting the National Command Authorities are not subject to direct attack.

5. Additional Implementing Actions

In addition to the actions directed in Section 1 above to incorporate the objectives into revisions to U.S. nuclear policy, the following studies are prescribed:

a. The Secretary of State shall direct the preparation of a plan for informing other nations, including the Soviet Union and the PRC, of changes in U.S. nuclear policy. In general, the changes should be described as evolutionary and modest in scope. In support of this effort, the Director of Central Intelligence should prepare a special assessment of likely Soviet and PRC reactions to the new policies, and how these might be influenced by U.S. statements and actions. The results of these efforts should be submitted within two months.

b. The Joint Chiefs of Staff shall prepare, in conjunction with their evolutionary revision of operational plans and procedures directed in Section 1.b. above, an evaluation of the capabilities, limitations, and risks associated with the resultant operational plans and procedures. Results of this evaluation shall be reported as significant phase points in the process of revision are reached. Actions taken to refine nuclear planning procedures to serve the National Command Authorities' needs in crisis management shall receive special emphasis. In any event, a summary of findings and actions should be presented semiannually to the Secretary of Defense.

c. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, shall conduct a continuing evaluation of national level crisis management procedures taking into account Sections 1.c. and 1.d. above. An initial report, to include special emphasis on the adequacy of present inter-agency organizational arrangements, shall be made within six months. Future periodic reports shall contain evaluations of appropriate tests and exercises of these procedures.

d. The Secretary of Defense shall undertake a continuing review of the implications of the decisions promulgated herein for the development acquisition, and deployment of nuclear forces and associated systems. This review shall evaluate a range of policies and programs in terms of fiscal resources, arms control considerations, and the degree to which they would meet the deterrent, employment, and planning objectives set forth in Sections 2, 3, and 4 above. An initial report, highlighting proposed changes from present policies and programs, should be presented to the President prior to final decisions on the Fiscal Year 1975 budget. This initial report will include special analyses of the political,

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economic, and military target structure critical to enemy post-attack recovery, alternative programs for active defense of the United States, and alternative programs to improve command, control, and communications systems. Thereafter, an annual report will be prepared and submitted for review and decision as part of the normal Planning, Programming, and Budget System.

e. The Secretary of State shall direct an overall analysis of the impact that pursual of the objectives set forth in Sections 2, 3, and 4 above will have on current U.S. positions with respect to MBFR and SALT II. The report of this review should recommend appropriate changes to the current U.S. negotiating approach in order to support these objectives, and in addition, should recommend appropriate changes to the objectives and concepts outlined herein in order to support arms control positions. The results of this analysis will be a regular input timed to decision points for guidance on these negotiations.

APPENDIX II

Appendix II

Throughout the summary report there are numerous references to Background Papers. This Appendix is intended to provide a brief summary description and the origin of each of these papers. The repeated references to the Background Papers are indicative of the fact that the Working Group feels these papers contain some of the more important material taken into account in this review. Two of the papers, Paper B and Paper C, have been previously forwarded to the President by the Secretary of Defense.

Background Papers

A. Review of U.S. Policy for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons

This paper was originally written by DOD in May of 1972 and has been revised in the current 26 April 1973 version. The subject material covers the environment conditioning employment of nuclear weapons, the current NSTAP, and a discussion of the underlying issues in the proposed employment policy. In addition there is a tabular comparison of the current NSTAP and the proposed employment policy.

B. Revised Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons

This paper was written by DOD in October 1972 and is essentially the heart of the proposed employment policy. It consists of two parts - Policy Guidance which relates objectives for employment to overall national objectives and Planning Guidance which provides guidelines for the itemized options.

C. U.S. Nuclear Policy

This paper was written by DOD in October of 1972. It contains a broad review of structure and elements of overall nuclear policy. Paper C has been stripped of its original appendices and Annex I as they are now covered in other Papers and Appendix I of the Summary Report.

D. Employment of Nuclear Weapons in Local Conflict

These case studies were prepared by an OSD study group in January of 1973. The complete package contains one introductory section in three parts and four separate studies. In March 1973 an additional case study, "North Korean/Soviet Invasion Into South Korea," was added.

E. Impact on Relations with Allies and Adversaries
(With Declaratory Statements)

This paper is an expanded and revised version of the Department of State submission to NSSM 169. It discusses the impact of the proposed policy on relations with allies and adversaries, and includes a suggested outline of declaratory policy.

F. Action to Develop Operational Plans to Implement the Employment Policy

This 5-page paper of 5 April 1973 is a DOD submission to NSSM 169 and discusses implementing actions in proposed steps.

G. Weapon System Acquisition Policy Issues

This paper is a DOD submission to NSSM 169 and was last revised on 5 June 1973. An earlier OSD paper titled "Counterforce Capabilities of U.S. Nuclear Forces, Weapon Systems Acquisition Policy Issues" becomes Tab A of this paper.

H. Perceptions and Reactions of Adversaries

This paper is a CIA submission to NSSM 169 and discusses the perceptions and possible reactions of adversaries to the proposed policy. The classification of this paper requires handling through separate administrative channels.