

By KW NARA, Date 7-17-03

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION  
August 15, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER:

FROM: Jeanné W. Davis *JD*

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Verification Panel Meeting held  
August 9, 1973

Attached are the minutes of the Verification Panel Meeting held  
August 9, 1973 to discuss Nuclear Policy (NSSM 169).

Attachment

cc: Mr. Eagleburger  
Mr. Odeen

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VERIFICATION PANEL MEETING

August 9, 1973

Time and Place: 3:40 p.m. - 4:31 p.m., White House Situation Room  
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Subject: Nuclear Policy (NSSM 169)

Participants:

Chairman	Henry A. Kissinger	CIA	William Colby
State	William Porter Seymour Weiss Leon Sloss	ACDA	Dr. Fred C. Ikle Sidney Graybeal
Defense	Robert Hill B/Gen. Jasper Welch D. R. Cotter	NSC	B/Gen. Brent Scowcroft Lawrence Eagleburger Philip Odeen William DeGraf Jeanne W. Davis
JCS	V/Adm. John P. Weinel		

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

... The Working Group will redraft the proposed NSDM in the light of the discussion at the meeting. Agency objections or suggestions should be provided to the WG Chairman.

... The JCS should commence operational planning based on the draft NSDM.

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Mr. Kissinger: We have been discussing this topic for four years and have come to no conclusions. This is probably by JCS design.

Adm. Weinel: You give us undue credit.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought I would see the Chairman here today.

Adm. Weinel: He is still testifying; he may get here by 4 p. m.

Mr. Kissinger: Our basic objective in this exercise was not to develop another theoretical paper. We wanted to get different options that the President could absorb before a crisis develops and he is called upon to make a decision. We want a theoretical guide, of course, but not at the price of the options. If necessary, we will adjust the options to the theory. We are in <sup>an</sup> entirely new situation where the other side has thousands of weapons. It is not unreasonable for us to desire some options. Some Europeans, I know, believe it is necessary that we guarantee our own destruction to give them the assurances they claim they need. However, to deprive ourselves of options paralyzes us. In 1914 the Belgians did not insist that the UK destroy itself. The new European doctrine, however, insists on our destruction before the Europeans will agree to defend themselves. Incidentally, I think some first class work has been done on this draft NSDM.

Let's go through the categories and, in each category, try to get a statement of what the issue is and where the paper stands. Then we might have a general discussion to see what adjustments are necessary. We have many levels of issues: What do we mean by control of escalation? The relationship to SIOP and other plans; Diplomacy -- how much should we tell our allies, the Soviet Union; what should we tell them? Those are the categories we should discuss. Could the JCS give us a briefing on the development of the papers?

Gen. Welch: There are several levels of consideration on control of escalation. Initially it was a slogan.

Mr. Kissinger: We're good at that.

Gen. Welch: One question was the character of the tactical options. They were intended to make the other fellow change his mind and to persuade him that further military action was not in the best interest. First, they should deny him gains from his ongoing military operations. Second, they should carry the spectre of further retaliation if necessary: in this regard we must be sure that the smaller options do not vitiate the larger threat. Third, we should not extend the attacks

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beyond what is necessary to accomplish the first and second objectives. We would try for negotiation, try to make him understand our objectives. The tough point is to figure out what his objectives are. We must be careful not to go so far as to confuse him as to our objectives.

The planning structure envisaged four types of employment options: major attack, selected attack, limited nuclear and regional nuclear options. The piecemeal application of forces tends to fritter them away. We have tried to approach the problem from the item by item technical level to see if we can't have our cake and eat it too. The major tactical options corresponds closely to SIOP in that the PRC and the Soviet Union are treated as separate matters. Military attacks are further broken down in the selected attack options including a candidate list which is, of course, subject to revision and review. We have tried to organize the sorties so that a given bomber will be assigned targets of a unified type. They would already have the sorties, weapons, etc. organized so that there is some chance that the thing will happen as advertised. We have also divided between East and West Russia, conventional and nuclear threats, in Europe among army, navy and air facilities, and between strategic and theatre forces alone. In China, we would strike at nuclear facilities, conventional forces and command leadership.

Mr. Kissinger: What are you talking about? Is this on paper?

Gen. Welch: The objectives and guidelines have been established. The JCS has done the analysis on how many targets, the reasonable weapons to be assigned, how well we could do, recommendations for modifications, and assessment of the risks involved and how useful the various activities would be. We have done nothing on routes, timing or operational planning.

Mr. Kissinger: So these are war games?

Gen. Welch: If you will.

Mr. Kissinger: Can they be ordered?

Adm. Weinel: This is an entirely new national policy. It has not been approved and is not in effect. Therefore, we can't really make any changes yet. But we are in the starting blocks. If this NSDM is approved we'll be off and running.

Gen. Welch: This is our proposal and we are asking if this is what you had in mind. It looks good to us.

Mr. Kissinger: This is one of the reasons for this meeting.

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Mr. Cotter: The NSDM would legitimize recasting our plans and pulling assets away from SIOP.

Mr. Odeen: Isn't the main thing to redo SIOP -- take each target and assign new bombers and a new mission?

Gen. Welch: Yes. We need more flexibility than the current laydown permits us.

Adm. Weinel: (to Mr. Kissinger) I know you have heard statements saying that this will take 18 months to 2 years. But if this NSDM is approved, in 730 days it would be 100 percent completed; but in 720 days it would be 98 percent ready, and in 50 days it would be 5 percent ready. There are lots of things going on all the time. Right now we don't know which targets would do the most damage.

Mr. Kissinger: The SIOP doesn't distinguish between retaliation and first strike, except maybe Option C. One of the purposes of the redo is so that, in a retaliatory strike, we don't hit empty holes. Now, if we take Options A or B we would be hitting empty holes.

Gen. Welch: The current SIOP calls for attacks on conventional forces. These have not been heavily targeted in the past because we had fewer warheads. As the MIRVs come on line, and we get more warheads, the targets have grown. In current policy they will grow even further. SIOP is revised every six months and the planners have done what they could within the bounds of legality to get ready for this new policy. I want to dispel any illusions anyone might have that there has been any lack of progress.

Mr. Kissinger: We are not sitting in judgment here. I want to get into the President's head some idea of what he can do. If military actions are recommended to him for decision, I want him to know what he is doing when he decides. He has had nothing on this except for a SIOP briefing. This was three or four years ago and it didn't fill him with enthusiasm.

Mr. Porter: We want a simpler NSDM. This one is too long and complex. We want to see fewer options with sufficient detail so that the President could really understand them. We aren't quarreling with the substance of the DM--we agree with the thrust.

Mr. Weiss: There are two aspects of this. First, how to get a grip on definite understood options for discussion with the President.

Mr. Kissinger: And whether or not we have the capability of carrying them out. We could be discussing plans for which we have no earmarked forces.

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Mr. Weiss: The second area is the way in which these moves are perceived during a time of peace. We have at least three audiences: the Soviet Union, our allies and the US public. I see a potential problem with the public. Some people, Weisner and Panofsky for example, may not perceive this change as all that desirable. They believe assured destruction is best.

Mr. Kissinger: That's because they want limited military budgets. They considered me a genius when I wrote about limited nuclear war because they saw this as a restraint on our defense budget.

Mr. Weiss: They would see a change as a pretext for adding major war-fighting capabilities.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, but they will do that anyhow.

Mr. Weiss: We can argue with our allies that this improves the deterrence and that it's in their interest to support it. The problem is how far you go. If you play the limited game with maximum deterrence and controlled escalation, you need some sort of commonality of views with the Soviets. In so far as it's necessary to convey something to the Soviets to achieve that commonality, you bring problems with the allies and with the public.

Dr. Ikle: Some of these problems may be reduced by using the criterion of post-attack recovery capability. But that raises a number of questions. How does that differ from Option C? What would the cost be? Would it create the impression that we are planning for World War III? We might go back to planning for US-Soviet competition after an all out nuclear exchange. The question of civil defense is not mentioned. All our objectives can be accomplished without stressing post-attack recovery.

Mr. Kissinger: Why?

Dr. Ikle: If it means attacking smaller towns, smaller targets, this affects our acquisition problems. We would need different weapons. It might create the undesirable impression of relying less on deterrence and more on post-war competition. You would lose the Congress on this.

Adm. Weinell: Now our objective is 70 percent of the floor space of war-supporting industry. A better criterion would be the post-recovery rate plus hitting the Soviet Army to prevent it from overrunning Europe. Another choice is to go for people--a goal of 70 million Russians for example.

Dr. Ikle: It's a question to what extent we distinguish between economic and military resources and make a specific effort to analyze what would be important for post-attack recovery. The departure from Option C isn't all that great. It may require only updating Option C. If it requires adjustment of resources, it may be undesirable. If it creates an impression in the Congress that we are placing less reliance on deterrence, it might be undesirable.

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Adm. Weinell: We don't brief SIOP to the Congress.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Colby) What do you think?

Mr. Colby: The Soviets want to preempt at the first indication of U. S. use of nuclear weapons. They think they will pick up such indications and they will then preempt with a large strike.

Mr. Kissinger: In Europe?

Mr. Colby: First in Europe. If we have a limited concept, we should communicate it to them. Otherwise they might react automatically to some indications through a misunderstanding of what they mean.

Mr. Weiss: It's hard to discuss this until we really see what we are talking about.

Mr. Kissinger: We don't brief Congress on SIOP or on selected options. With regard to Europe, certain catch phrases have developed: decoupling the US strategic deterrent; undermining the U. S. guarantee. We have lived with this while the Soviets have been building up to massive proportions. We are living in a completely new world. How can we deter the Soviets, and how can we stop them if we cannot deter them? One theory is that we will make war look so attractive that we undermine the deterrent. That's never, never land. What we have now would have been enough to deter Hitler. But we are talking in a different order of reality. Hitler promised his generals a quick victory. Under the minimum options, it is not easy to demonstrate how victory would be achieved or indeed, how a defense could be established. With regard to Europe they don't know now what we will be doing. We have agreed NATO doctrine for the use of ten weapons. But after that, General Goodpastor will do what he feels necessary.

Mr. Sloss: The Europeans have twice been briefed on SIOP.

Mr. Kissinger: The Europeans can't ask us not to have options. They could demand that we use Option 1 earlier than we might wish to, but they can't ask us to commit suicide.

Mr. Weiss: We are beginning to have some impact with the Europeans. We are emphasizing more conventional capability and they're not all that resistant. Their fear is that in a conventional war, the U. S. and the Soviets might sit back and wage war on European territory.

Mr. Kissinger: They may choose not to fight.

Mr. Weiss: They might choose preemptive surrender.

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Mr. Colby: If the Europeans believe the options mean that we would be prepared to help them on a limited scale, they may resent it but at least they will know they will get help. If the initial nuclear option is all-out or all-in, that makes the course difficult for them. It would be vital that the Soviets know we have limited options.

Mr. Kissinger: On the one hand we want the Soviets to think that the situation might get out of hand, while on the other hand we want to persuade them not to let it get out of hand. The Soviets might stop without a major nuclear exchange. I don't believe they have an unlimited urge to escalate. I think they will be looking for excuses not to escalate.

Mr. Colby: But they could get into it by a misunderstanding or by a mis-guessing of indications.

Mr. Kissinger: This paper will be useful if it could produce some options so that in a crisis the President will have a feeling of where he is going. Concrete options should be briefed in detail, but the President could wait for final completion if he knew what was coming. He has only heard SIOP and if that's all there is, he won't do it.

Gen. Welch: It's a shame that the President hasn't heard of the various contingency plans.

Mr. Kissinger: He should be briefed on them. I am not being critical but, as I have said before, my nightmare is that with the growth of Soviet power and with our domestic problems, someone might decide to take a run at us.

Adm. Weinert: We could put together options rather rapidly.

Gen. Welch: We were reluctant to bring something forward until we knew whether or not we were on the mark.

Mr. Kissinger: I have not said this critically. We have been so focussed on Vietnam that we simply haven't been able to get into this. On the NSDM, we'll approve anything that can get the program forward. Our principle concern is not to get an impeccable document. We need something so that the Chiefs can put together some options. The President and his Cabinet officers can then analyze the options in terms of their crisis management responsibilities. Then we can analyze them with regard to the public and the Russians.

Mr. Porter: We should also analyze the cost.

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Mr. Kissinger: Weisner and Panofsky won't be satisfied unless the budget is under \$20 billion. They believe in assured destruction because it guarantees the smallest expenditure. To have the only option that of killing 80 million people is the height of immorality.

Mr. Porter: But we should have a cost read-out with each option.

Adm. Weinel: We can do it all within our programmed 1976 forces. We have been searching for additional viable options but that doesn't involve buying billions more in forces.

Mr. Kissinger: It re-does SIOP so as to earmark forces for the options. It would mean there were not so many dual-purpose forces.

Gen. Welch: Yes, we would rework it so the beer and pretzels come out even.

Dr. Ikle: There is also the question of CQ vulnerability.

Mr. Kissinger: What is CQ?

Dr. Ikle: Command and control.

Gen. Welch: Work on improvement of CQ is going on anyway. It is badly needed.

Mr. Kissinger: How can we get the NSDM fixed?

Mr. Porter: I suggest you instruct us to redraft it with a view to simplifying it.

Mr. Kissinger: Can the Working Group do that?

Mr. Odeen: Yes.

Mr. Cotter: How simplify? The NSDM has a one-page work program.

Mr. Odeen: It is seven pages long.

Mr. Porter: Maybe it can't be done, but I think we should try.

Gen. Welch: I agree, but let me give you a rationale as to why it was done this way. (Referring to the basic study.) The only part that is needed to meet Mr. Kissinger's first priority is the first page and the pages beginning

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on 69-70 which refer to deployment. We don't want to be for employment only--we want both deterrence and employment. The big, miserable part starts on page 70 with the planning guidance for forces. This was included to stifle concerns that this is a call for huge new forces.

Mr. Kissinger: We should look at this honestly. Congress can't do much more damage to us than they already have. To this extent we're liberated to do what is right. We prefer to do this within the existing budget. But if new expenditures are needed we will ask for new expenditures. Someone else will be sitting here in the late 1970s. By that time the Soviet systems will be more mature. Our successors will be living in a nightmare if we don't do what is right. Hopefully we can keep within our present budget. If we can't, we should ask for more. If we can't get it, we will have to stay within our existing funds. But we must understand what is right.

OSD and JCS have to do the initial planning on this. Will the other agencies please let them have their substantive disagreements or objections and then we will discuss them. We already have Fred Ikle's objections.

Mr. Porter: We don't quarrel with the thrust of the draft NSDM, but we would like to undertake some further exploration of alternate options. We may have some other ideas, particularly concerning our allies.

Mr. Kissinger: The JCS should start planning as though the NSDM were approved. Whatever we come out with will be close enough to the draft that you should go ahead with it now.

Adm. Weinel: We are actually out of the starting blocks on some of these things now.

Mr. Kissinger: The plan will be approved, possibly with some State Department refinements. Then we'll get a small group of Cabinet officers and other crisis management people together. As the options are refined, the President might get a briefing in the JCS room with real time. He could get a feeling for the decisions he will have to make in an emergency. I know the President will be eager to do this. Are you all agreed that this is a workable plan?

All agreed.

Mr. Odeen: If the agencies will get their comments to me, I will get them to the JCS.