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ENCLOSURE "B"

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Subject: Target Coordination and Associated Problems

Reference: (a) CM 380-59* of 17 August 1959

1. Reference (a)* is a comprehensive coverage of controversial issues related to atomic strike plans, targeting, force adequacy, and the operational control of strike forces. These issues are basic. I agree that their resolution calls for command decisions. The decisions reached will have a profound effect upon our national security and economic welfare. The issues, therefore, deserve the most careful analysis, and with the nation's interests always paramount. Individual Service capabilities, both current and potential, must of course receive due consideration, but only to the extent that they can best contribute to national interests.

Recent and imminent improvements in weapons and their delivery means, and other scientific developments, may well dictate radical departures from some of the concepts, and their implementing measures, that were evolved when the relative combat power of the U.S. and the USSR was of a different order of magnitude. Continued rapid progress in weapon technology is probable. Changes in international relations are inevitable, and may be of a nature that will influence our military posture. Accordingly, it would appear unwise to commit ourselves, unnecessarily, to any course of action that would be too costly or difficult to alter should such progress and changes so dictate. Freedom of maneuver in our military policy and strategy must be assured.

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2. It is within the broad context of paragraph 1 above that I have formulated the views set forth below on the following items that were covered, directly or indirectly, in the referenced memorandum.

Targeting philosophy.

The development of atomic strike plans.

Targeting coordination.

Force adequacy (i.e., nuclear striking forces).

The operational control of strike forces.

3. Targeting philosophy.

In paragraphs 17 and 18 of reference (a)* the Chairman outlines two extremes of targeting philosophy. First, a target system of [redacted] designed under the assumption that we would never strike the first blow. Second, a target system consisting primarily of all Soviet [redacted] Apparently, this latter system would be designed on the assumption that we would know the location of [redacted] I do not believe that we are restricted to the choice of either of these two extremes. The rationale for this conclusion is set forth below.

Today the primary Soviet [redacted] against the U.S., our European allies, and our overseas bases is the [redacted] As long as we are faced with the [redacted] threat, I believe we should target [redacted] against the United States or our overseas bases. These should constitute the primary element of our target lists should we be concerned that the USSR is [redacted] Our primary objective here is to destroy the enemy's known

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[redacted] in order to minimize damage to the United States. But even under these conditions our target lists should include [redacted] They must be destroyed too, and we have the capacity to do it under these circumstances.

On the other hand, we might receive a surprise nuclear attack. We must plan for this too. In this case we could expect heavy damage to our fixed bases, and the loss of a major portion of our land based bombers. The probability of such losses becomes greater as the threat shifts to the ballistic missile launched from unknown positions. The Soviets will know where our airbases and land missile sites are. The tactical warning time will be much shorter. In a surprise attack it is not inevitable that enemy missiles will land before our weapons are launched, but the chances are great that they will. Under these conditions, it would be injudicious to launch the remainder of our greatly depleted forces against a primary target system of empty bases and missile sites, even though we should know their locations, which we probably won't. On the contrary, the primary target list then should consist of [redacted]

As the major delivery means shift to missiles the counter-force targeting concept will be less valid than now, even in a pre-emptive attack, if the location of a substantial portion of [redacted] are some practical means of degrading our intelligence.

4. The development of atomic strike plans.

As I interpret the first sentence of paragraph 22 of the referenced memorandum,* it is apparently assumed that a single commander will be responsible for "the strategic mission". Presumably, this refers to a single all-inclusive national strategic mission. I cannot agree that such a mission should be isolated as a separate entity within the national strategy and executed by a single commander. The military strategy of the United States covers the world, and its direct application to the Sino-Soviet Bloc will be applied throughout the entire perimeter of the bloc. In addition to CINCSAC forces those of CINCLANT, CINCEUR and CINCPAC will participate extensively in the application of United States power. The simultaneous application of this power from a diversity of sources, directions, ranges, delivery means, and commands adds greatly to the threat facing the Soviets. It is my view that we should retain this diversified threat.

Accordingly, I believe that the Unified Commanders in a position to do so should participate in the nuclear strikes on strategic targets on a pre-planned national list. The optimum procedure is for each to develop his own strike plan, but in close coordination with the other Unified and Specified Commanders.

I agree with the Chairman that improvements in our nuclear strike planning procedures must be made. The requisite improvements are feasible. They require more detailed and earlier planning coordination under more positive control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The discussion that follows gives the reasons for this thesis.

Basic to sound atomic strike planning is the development of target lists. The target lists adopted, and the damage criteria to be applied, are of such major import and are so fundamental to the execution of our military strategy that the Joint Chiefs

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of Staff cannot divorce themselves from their formulation. Broad policy guidance is necessary but is not, by itself, sufficient. After target nominations are made by the Unified and Specified Commanders concerned, the Joint Chiefs of Staff should subject the combined list to the required analysis by any appropriate agency, such as DASA. The final result would be a target list developed in a logical, systematic and analytical manner, and finally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Because of the importance of the target list in its relation to national policy I do not see how the Joint Chiefs of Staff can divorce themselves from its development, in view of their responsibility for the strategic direction of the armed forces.

Following the development of a national strategic target list the commanders concerned would then be assigned targets for their respective nuclear strikes. Their detailed plans would be developed and coordinated with the other commanders concerned.

By this procedure the Joint Chiefs of Staff retain in their hands an authority and responsibility that I do not believe can be delegated to others, without abrogating the JCS responsibilities.

It should be noted that after the initial target list is developed, future modification to it would be comparatively simple.

In several places in his memorandum* the Chairman mentions the complexity that stems from the fact that various commands have operational plans for nuclear strikes. He points out the difficulty of war gaming several plans, and concludes from this that we should have a single integrated operational plan for the "strategic attack", and that CINCSAC should develop this plan.

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I would strongly emphasize that our objective in war planning is not simplicity but effectiveness. A single integrated operational plan for the nuclear strikes, drawn up by a single commander, would facilitate war gaming. However, we must ensure that the enemy is faced with a diversity of threats from many directions and many sources. To place the total responsibility for destruction of all pre-planned targets in the hands of a single commander carries with it a danger that we should not, and need not accept. We do not know how much of that commander's force will be left if we are hit first, and we do not know what the status of his communications and control will be. This would be placing an undue reliance upon a single strategic concept that may be successful only if executed according to a pre-conceived plan. (Seldom is such a plan so executed). We would forfeit the flexibility that is inherent in the decentralized execution of strike plans by several unified commanders. The military logic of retaining this flexibility is overwhelming. In preparation for World War II France had a single pre-conceived plan that she thought was foolproof, but it was virtually worthless.

I agree in general with the Chairman's discussion of damage criteria outlined in paragraph 23 of his memorandum. I also agree that we should subject the target lists and damage criteria to analysis by machine and mathematical techniques. A major objective of this analysis would be to arrive at an estimate of "how much is enough". This is an item that requires much more attention by the JCS. Decisions thereon have far-reaching effects upon types and yields of weapons, the national stockpile, and delivery force types and levels. Decisions thereon are fundamental to the JCS responsibility for strategic direction of the Armed Forces. An example of why this responsibility should not be delegated is pertinent here. There is a great difference between various commanders' conclusions as to weapons necessary

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for destruction of a target. For example, on [redacted] important targets planned for attack by both CINCSAC and Unified Commanders, the latter are programming approximately [redacted] for target destruction. CINCSAC is programming approximately [redacted] as much yield. The conclusions were reached from the same basic damage criteria of 90% structural collapse. Comparable differences between estimated yields required exist throughout the full spectrum of the plans for attack of the strategic targets system.

Without expressing an opinion as to which commander is right, it is obvious that the differences between the conclusions reached are so great as to indicate a gross miscalculation on the part of some. The JCS should not accept either estimate without close analysis. This should be followed by positive decisions and guidance, and positive follow-through to ensure that their guidance is followed. We can accept neither a gross under-estimate nor over-estimate of the effort required. In the one case we would run the great risk that the enemy could continue the war effectively. Accepting the other would result in a needlessly high number of weapons and delivery forces; with the attendant high cost, and at the expense of desperately needed forces for other types of war. Instead of further delegating responsibility for such major decisions the JCS should repossess some of their prerogatives that have gone by default, with the resultant greatly differing conclusions reflected in current strike plans.

The factors discussed above are some of the reasons why I think that each Unified and Specified Commander with the requisite forces should develop a nuclear strike plan for general war. As a less desirable alternative I could agree to the development of a single integrated strike plan provided:

The JCS provide the terms of reference and approve the final plan.

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Its development is participated in by all Unified and Specified Commanders concerned.

That all Unified and Specified Commanders with nuclear capable strategic delivery forces participate in its execution.

5. Targeting coordination.

One serious error that we can make is to permit the complexity of target coordination to govern our planning procedure. I would emphasize here that, while simplicity is commendable, it is not an end in itself, but should influence plans only as it contributes to their effectiveness. Instead of considering target coordination first, we should start at the other end of the spectrum by determining the objectives of our nuclear strikes, and then design the most effective plans to attain those objectives. Target coordination would then be tailored to those plans. We have not lost our repeatedly demonstrated ability to plan for and execute highly complex military operations.

I do not attach to the coordinating procedure the degree of complexity that the Chairman does. I agree that what is involved here is the pre-planning for targets to be struck at H-hour. This will have to be done regardless of what forces strike the targets, whether the forces come from several commands or only one. This pre-planning and coordination are relatively simple when compared to the post-strike coordination that will be required by the commanders in subsequent operations of many categories. I am sure we can do it. What is needed is more positive control and direction by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have the necessary agencies and facilities available.

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6. Force adequacy.

It is imperative that our nuclear delivery forces be of a size and type to cause unacceptable damage to the enemy even though he should strike first. With such a residual capability the capacity for a pre-emptive attack will be more than enough if we know the location of the enemy's missile sites. If we don't, a further increase in the size of our nuclear strike forces will not compensate for this deficiency.

I agree with the Chairman that the necessity for prevailing in general war is of such vital importance that any error in judgment as to the size of our nuclear strike forces should be on the safe side. The Chairman states that the Soviet's military doctrine is based on the principle of "mass". Our nuclear delivery forces have been based upon the same principle. As we move into the missile age we cannot depend to the same extent upon this principle. Because of the vulnerability of our fixed bases to a surprise attack we must ensure inevitable concentration of firepower by shifting to dispersed, concealed, mobile and far less vulnerable delivery systems. We can no longer place major reliance upon planes operating from fixed bases. The warning time is too short. Likewise, fixed missile sites, even though hardened, will be vulnerable to ballistic missiles of the small CEP that we can expect the Soviets and ourselves to have within the next decade.

For the missile era the criteria for determining the size of our nuclear strike force will change. In the past this size has been determined largely by the anticipated size of the Soviet's intercontinental bomber force. This has resulted in numbers of United States nuclear delivery vehicles of such magnitude that we could lose a substantial portion and still have enough left to devastate the U.S.S.R. The basic thesis of

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having enough left after being hit was sound, but the result has been progressively increasing numbers to offset a growing vulnerability of our own forces, together with an estimate of Soviet capability that has continuously turned out to be much too high. This process cannot be continued indefinitely without either imposing an unacceptable economic burden upon the United States, or by degrading our limited war capabilities to an unacceptable degree, or both. Fortunately, it is not necessary to continue the process.

The nature or characteristics of the forces, rather than size alone, will assume more importance in determining future force levels. Here are some of the reasons why:

1. We will have an increasingly diverse delivery means, e.g., land based bombers, carrier based bombers, land based ICBM and IRBM, and sea based FBM.

2. The ballistic missile threat to aircraft carriers at sea, and to sea based missiles is so small that it can be disregarded.

3. There are no means now foreseen by which the Soviets can eliminate the threat of the submarine ballistic missile.

4. It may be feasible to make some land based missiles movable by barge, road, or rail.

5. No way is now foreseen for determining the number of Soviet missiles ready for launching. Among other means dummy sites could be used freely.

6. It is unlikely that we will know the location of most of their missile sites. Therefore, a pre-emptive attack would not eliminate the threat of unacceptable damage to the United States.

7. With an open ended ICBM missile race it is probable that large numbers would be based in the United States, which will draw additional enemy missiles to our soil.

The security of our nuclear striking forces against a surprise attack by any enemy having the privilege of striking first is a primary consideration. Unless a retaliatroy force stays alive it is useless. In the Polaris submarine we have a missile system now nearing fruition that can, above all others, stay alive. We must not sacrifice the lead that we now hold in this field by failing to exploit the many advantages of using the sea as a base for launching nuclear attacks.

If the Soviets are to be deterred from initiating general war the diversity of the threat that resides in a combination of the above systems, with decentralized control of those systems, provides the requisite deterrent. If they are not to be deterred, then this diversity of weapon systems, without astronomical force levels, will ensure the enemy's destruction.

7. Operational control of strike forces.

The philosophy that I have outlined throughout this paper, including targeting, world-wide operations, flexibility, decentralized execution, and other related factors, dictates that [redacted] who are in a position to strike the strategic targets on the national list. It is impossible to disassociate these targets from so called tactical targets of immediate interest to the forces of the [redacted] The two are frequently collocated, and economy of force should dictate that targets of both categories be destroyed by the forces of [redacted] Furthermore, many of the H-hour targets could be hit quicker by [redacted]

With respect to the Polaris submarine force I agree with the Chairman that this force should remain under Naval control

until the weapon system has been developed and proven. Inclusion of this last phrase is not intended to imply that the system should ultimately be removed from Naval control.

I agree with the Chairman that an appropriate nucleus of Naval officers be assigned to CINCSAC's operational planning staff, provided that Air Force officers intimately familiar with CINCSAC's operational plans and planning procedures be attached to the staffs of Unified Commanders having nuclear delivery forces. Officers of both Services so assigned should participate actively in all phases of planning by the staff of which they are a part. I concur in this procedure in the interest of improved planning, and not for the purpose of preparing for an eventual Unified Strategic Command.

The question of assigning H-hour targets to be hit by carrier aircraft will be answered briefly. The nation has in these carriers an alert force on station, with movable airfields. Today, and even more in the future, these are precious characteristics that cannot be realized by any other force, regardless of cost. The Navy has proved repeatedly its ability to exploit these characteristics in many types of operations. When the chips are down the Naval forces are in position and ready. These Naval forces will hit their assigned targets, usually before other forces can hit their targets. It is recognized that the percentage of strike planes in our carrier forces is small when compared to the total number of delivery vehicles in the nation's inventory. This percentage, however, may well rise to substantial proportions if we receive a surprise attack. A pre-emptive attack would be pre-planned, with even an increased number of carriers on station. It is inconceivable that the nation, under either condition, would deny itself the use of this striking power by failing to assign it H-hour targets.

The Chairman, in paragraph 32 of his memorandum, states that if the series of decisions which he had outlined were taken, the question of operational control of the various strike forces and problem of mutual interference would be greatly simplified because mutual interference resulting from two or more commands targeting the same objective for H-hour attack would be largely eliminated. He would degrade [redacted] of the Sino-Soviet Bloc. [redacted] I have pointed out the undesirability of assigning to a single commander the responsibility for planning and executing a single national nuclear strike plan. It would appear safer and far more logical to achieve the sought for simplicity and interference reduction by assigning all overseas strategic strike forces to the Unified Commanders in whose areas they are based, and within whose areas they would conduct their strikes. If we are seeking simplicity in planning, with safety in execution, this would be a major step forward.

8. There are other factors that are pertinent to these discussions, and which were not covered specifically in the Chairman's memorandum.* One of these relates to changes in military strategy to keep pace with changes in related fields. Change is one of the constants of warfare. Historically, weapon characteristics and the nature of the enemy have heavily

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influenced strategy. Some wars have been fought almost entirely on land, others predominately on the sea, and still others in a combination of the two. In recent history the air has become the third medium of combat, and air power has played a role of tremendous importance. We are now witnessing the emergence of the missile age which will probably result in a decreased emphasis on some categories of air power, particularly the long range bomber and tactical aircraft for troop support. In essence, we are returning to an artillery concept wherein the explosive is launched from the earth's surface or sub-surface. However, there is one very important difference. The artillery battleground will be expanded to include the homeland of the belligerents. This means that, if we use United Stated soil as the artillery base, we will receive on United States soil large numbers of enemy missiles aimed at eliminating our own missile launching sites. If there were no alternatives we should pursue this strategy. Fortunately, there are alternatives, and good ones. Technology provides us with the means for using the oceans as the artillery base. Regardless of any ultimate decision as to the control of forces, the development of strategic plans, or the detailed tactics used, this nation should exploit every possible means of using the oceans as a base for the delivery of nuclear weapons, because of the relative invulnerability and greater effectiveness assured thereby, as well as the significant economies possible to achieve.

Major evolutions such as the above must be recognized and appropriately reflected in all phases of our planning. Where necessary, we must be willing to break away from procedures and systems conceived and implemented in an era of nuclear deficiency on our part and no nuclear capability of the part of the U.S.S.R. Progress has provided the Soviets with a

substantial capability that is growing in size and versatility. Likewise, our nuclear power has grown many-fold. We have made some notable adjustments to these developments. Among other things we have placed diversified delivery means in the hands of Unified Commanders immediately adjacent to Communist Bloc territory. This has broadened greatly the base of our military posture. To withdraw from these commanders this capability that has been developed so assiduously over the years, and centralize it in the hands of a single commander would narrow that base. We would thereby forfeit strength that comes from versatile forces and a decentralized control that is so well adapted to our force structure and the strategic positions that we hold around the major portion of the Communist Bloc perimeter.

Another factor that should be fully recognized is that the military strategy and force structure suitable for an aggressor nation will normally be unsuitable for the non-aggressor. The aggressor can be more specific in his planning, both as to timing and as to types of attacks. We may be sure that he will explore every possible indication of our weakness in any area, and will exploit that weakness in his aggressive moves. We, on the other hand, must be more flexible to be able to meet a variety of thrusts. Consequently, our force and command structure must be such that we can withstand reverses in some areas without danger of the whole structure toppling.

9. I appreciate the Chairman's providing the Joint Chiefs of Staff copies of his memorandum.* I agree with him that we should resolve the issues discussed.

10. In paralleling the distribution of reference (a)* I am providing copies of this memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

/s/ ARLEIGH BURKE

* Enclosure to J.C.S. 2056/131