

~~TOP SECRET~~

P A  
S I  
HIO V

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

May 15, 1969

MEMO FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

**DEP SEC. HAS SEEN**

Attached is a memorandum to Henry

Kissinger which points out that the NSSM 3 Study indicates a major U.S. damage limiting program is not feasible, in view of likely Soviet reactions.

Recommend signature. No coordination required.



Enclosure

DECLASSIFIED APR 10 2009  
Authority: EO 12958 as amended  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

~~TOP SECRET~~

Upon removal of attachments  
this document becomes

Downgraded to Secret  
Date: 13 NOV 2008  
Chief, Declassification Division, WHS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2579

Sec Def Cont Nr. X-

A-M-0243 R-2

15/2 411



~~TOP SECRET~~

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

16 MAY 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: National Security Study Memorandum 3 (Strategic Part) (U)

On May 12, 1969, I forwarded a review of alternative nuclear strategies, force postures and budgets to you in response to NSSM 3. There is one conclusion of this review that is particularly important and which I wish to call to your attention. This concerns the effects of Soviet reactions to major U.S. damage limiting programs.

The analysis of alternative nuclear strategies examined two major categories of U.S. strategic forces with increased capability over our programmed forces. Forces in both of these categories (Categories I and II) had more offensive missiles and Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) than the present program in order to limit damage to the United States to low levels, provided we made a first strike against the Soviet Union. The forces in Category I also had sufficiently high levels of BMD to significantly reduce damage to the United States if the Soviets made a first strike against our cities. The following table shows the capabilities of these forces and of our programmed force against the high-NIPP Soviet threat in 1978. Their capabilities prior to 1978 are about the same or greater.

APR 10 2009  
DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: EO 12958 as amended  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

U.S. FORCE EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST  
HIGH-NIPP SOVIET THREAT (1978)

|   | <u>FORCE<br/>CATEGORY<br/>I</u> | <u>FORCE<br/>CATEGORY<br/>II</u> | <u>PROGRAMMED<br/>FORCE</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <u>Retaliatory Capability</u>                               |                                 |                                  |                             |
| Soviet Deaths   | 50%                             | 45-50%                           | 40%                         |
| Soviet Industry Destroyed                                   | Over 70%                        | Over 70%                         | 65%                         |
| <u>Damage Limiting Capability<sup>a/</sup></u>              |                                 |                                  |                             |
| U.S. Deaths (Millions)<br>if U.S. Strikes First             | Less than<br>10                 | Less than<br>30                  | 90                          |
| U.S. Deaths (Millions)<br>if Soviets Strike First           | 55-75                           | 80-140                           | 140                         |
| <u>Average Annual Cost of U.S.<br/>Forces (\$ Billions)</u> | \$18-21B                        | \$15-19B                         | \$15B                       |

a/ Determined in war-fighting calculations. The U.S. first strike used all our missiles in a counterforce strike; the Soviet first strike maximized the difference between U.S. and Soviet deaths.

~~GROUP-1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification~~

Downgraded to Secret  
Date: 13 NOV 2008  
Chief, Declassification Division, WHS

EXEMPT PER EO 12958, Sec. 1.4(b)(1)  
OSD FS 212 Date 15 November 2002  
Review/Declassify On: 31 Dec 2027  
Other Agency Equiv: TBD

~~TOP SECRET~~

These results show that forces in Categories I and II have some increased retaliatory capability over the already high capability possessed by our programmed force. Moreover, they significantly reduce damage to the United States, provided there is no Soviet response to offset this reduction. The annual cost of achieving this increased capability could be as much as \$6 billion more than the present strategic budget, depending on the mix of land-based missiles, sea-based missiles, and bombers.

Because significant U.S. damage limiting reduces the Soviet retaliatory capability, the report of the Foreign Political and Military Reactions Working Group identified possible Soviet responses, including the addition of more land-based and sea-based offensive missiles with increased numbers of MIRVs and better accuracies than projected in the high-NIPP and the addition of more bombers, air defenses, and BMD. The following table summarizes the capabilities of the U.S. forces in 1978 if the Soviets did respond:

U.S. FORCE EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST  
SOVIET RESPONSE THREATS (1978)

|   | <u>U.S. FORCE<br/>CATEGORY I<br/>VS. SOVIET<br/>RESPONSE 5</u> | <u>U.S. FORCE<br/>CATEGORY II<br/>VS. SOVIET<br/>RESPONSE 5</u> | <u>U.S. PROGRAMMED<br/>FORCE VS. HIGH-<br/>NIPP SOVIET<br/>FORCE</u> |
|---|--|---|--|
| <u>Retaliatory Capability</u>                     |  |   |  |
| Soviet Deaths                                     | 40-50%   | 40-45%  | 40%  |
| Soviet Industry Destroyed                         | Over 65%   | Over 65%  | 65%  |
| <u>Damage Limiting Capability a/</u>              |  |   |  |
| U.S. Deaths (Millions)<br>if U.S. Strikes First   | 60-130   | 105-145   | 90   |
| U.S. Deaths (Millions)<br>if Soviets Strike First | 145  | 140-145   | 140  |

a/ Determined in war-fighting calculations. The U.S. first strike used all our missiles in a counterforce strike; the Soviet first strike maximized the difference between U.S. and Soviet deaths.

APR 10 2009

DECLASSIFIED  
Authority: EO 12958 as amended  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

The Soviet responses reduce the effectiveness of larger U.S. force postures to about that of the presently programmed force and, in fact, could result in less damage limiting capability than we now have. In order to achieve the damage limiting goals of Force Categories I and II, we would then have to respond to the Soviet actions. Such response could, for example, include further increases to our BMD and air defenses at an additional annual cost of \$1 billion to \$6 billion. This would result in average annual strategic budgets of \$19 billion to \$23 billion, depending on the amount of confidence we program by redundancy in the force mix.

The Foreign Political and Military Reactions Working Group concluded that the Soviet Union would view the forces in Categories I or II as representing a U.S. determination to threaten their strategic position and possibly to gain a first-strike capability. Their analysis showed that the Soviets have the technological and economic capability to offset a major U.S. damage limiting effort. Not only could they make this response, but it is highly likely that they would in fact react to what they would undoubtedly view as a severe threat to their deterrent. Not only would this lead to increased Soviet strategic force levels, but would also result in increased East-West political tensions.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ann D. ...". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

AFR 1 0 2009

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: EO 12958 as amended  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

~~TOP SECRET~~

**NATIONAL  
SECURITY  
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)