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STRATEGIC POLICY ISSUES

This memorandum provides a brief over-view of the strategic situation and then considers the single issue which requires immediate attention: should President Johnson's FY70 budget for strategic forces be amended now and if so, how? More fundamental issues will be addressed in the six month review.

I. The Strategic Situation

This section provides a brief over-view of the strategic situation as background for necessary immediate decisions.

US-Soviet Force Comparisons. The present US force plan calls for the number of ICBMs to remain constant at 1,054, the number of sea based missiles to be held at 656 (41 Polaris submarines), and the number of strategic bombers to decrease to approximately 300 in the 1970s. However, US strategic offensive forces will undergo very substantial qualitative improvements over the next five years, most importantly by MIRVs. With these deployments, the number of independently targetable US strategic missile warheads will increase from the current approximately 1,600 to about 5,800 by the mid-1970s. Similarly, our strategic bomber force will undergo substantial improvements encompassing advanced penetration aids.

The Soviets have continued their ICBM buildup and within two years may have 1,200 of these systems operationally deployed; they could have 1,500 ICBMs and a few hundred mobile ICBMs by the mid-1970s. The Soviets have a substantially smaller sea based force and bomber force than the US, but they have recently initiated a new submarine construction program which could give them a force comparable to our present Polaris fleet by the mid-1970s. They are estimated to be about four years away from initially deploying MIRVs on large ICBMs.

On the defensive side, the US Sentinel ABM designed against China, comprised of some 700 defensive missiles, will be initially operational in late 1972 and fully deployed by 1975. The Soviet ABM program has lagged, with completion of the small Moscow ABM (64 launchers) not to occur until the early 70s. The intelligence community estimates that the Soviets will probably deploy an ABM comparable to Sentinel by the mid-70s. There are no current signs of additional ABM deployments beyond Moscow, and the extensively deployed Tallin system is estimated to be for air defense purposes with no real ABM potential.

Relative Effectiveness. Comparing the numbers and types of US and Soviet strategic systems does not indicate how well the respective forces can perform strategic missions. Effectiveness is generally measured in terms of the ability of the forces to survive an enemy first strike and inflict large fatalities on an adversary's population.

Our currently programmed force can maintain the ability to inflict 40% Soviet fatalities (90 million) throughout the early to mid-1970s against the highest threat estimated by the intelligence community. If it is determined that a greater than expected Soviet offensive and defensive

threat is emerging, a very unlikely but possible occurrence, the US has many force improvement and addition options which can be implemented soon enough to maintain the ability to deter the Soviets at at least the 25% fatality level.

With estimated probable future deployments, the Soviet Union can maintain its second strike damage potential against the US at 40% US fatality levels throughout the 1970s (80 million). Although the Soviets may have to work harder and spend relatively more money than the US in maintaining their second strike capability, we can be certain that the Soviets can and will take sufficient counteractions to retain the ability to inflict unacceptably high levels of damage against the US regardless of our force procurements.

In general, if one examines the outcome of strategic exchanges between the US and the Soviet Union throughout the 1970s, both will suffer very heavy destruction regardless of who strikes first and independent of detailed differences in force level and characteristics.

Conduct of Nuclear Operations. Despite our efforts to prevent nuclear wars or major crises such events may occur. If we are to secure the most favorable possible outcome we need to be able to control forces effectively during a crisis and to employ nuclear weapons selectively. Our procurement decisions are based mainly on deterrence considerations and most of our nuclear plans assume sudden very large use of nuclear weapons. Issues requiring consideration are: (1) whether we need to pay more attention to issues of control and selective use in procuring forces and (2) whether we need more flexible plans for the use of nuclear weapons.

Political Implications. The US nuclear capability is a major component of our deterrent of large conventional attacks particularly in Europe. Europeans are concerned about US strategic forces and the US-Soviet nuclear balance for this reason and because some of them desire and some fear US-Soviet strategic arms limitation agreements.

The effect on the probability and consequences of nuclear proliferation also needs to be taken into account in designing US strategic forces.

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## II. The FY70 Budget for Strategic Forces

### A. FY70 Strategic Force Program

The existing strategic program calls for substantial improvements in our existing strategic forces over the next five years. The most important improvements are:

- (1) the introduction of MIRVs on our land and sea-based missiles beginning in mid-1970;
- (2) the deployment of the Sentinel anti-Chinese ABM system beginning in 1972;
- (3) increases in missile payloads through the replacement of Polaris submarines with Poseidon and the replacement of part of our Minuteman II force with Minuteman III; and
- (4) the modernization of our defense against bombers.

The FY70 strategic budget includes:

- (1) procurement of Poseidon missile and submarines and Minuteman III;
- (2) \$1.8 billion for production and deployment of the Sentinel ABM system with maintenance of the option to defend ICBM sites with Sprint missiles;
- (3) development of short-range air-to-surface missiles and of cruise missile decoys for deployment on our B-52 bomber;
- (4) \$85 million for competitive design and testing of a new strategic bomber; and
- (5) development of an air defense package consisting of the F-106X interceptor and full-scale development of an airborne warning and control system, including the over-the-horizon radar for improved early warning.

In addition, the budget contains development funds for a new submarine launched missile-firing system, "hard rock" silos for Minutemen, second generation improvements to the anti-Chinese Sentinel, and technology for a possible anti-Soviet ABM.

The total FY70 budget for strategic forces and related activities is about \$19 billion, including \$12.5 billion in direct costs, \$1.4 billion for research and development, and \$4.9 billion for indirect costs.

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B. In considering possible modifications of this program there are four kinds of changes which could be made:

- (1) Move ahead with new strategic systems by approving "contract definition" -- in effect make the decision to procure.
- (2) Increase research and development efforts for various strategic programs.
- (3) Add to or accelerate programs currently approved for deployment.
- (4) Delay approved strategic programs.

Following is a discussion of each possibility:

1. Move Ahead with New Strategic Systems

Immediate approval could be given for four new systems (the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recommended going forward):

- (1) New strategic bomber to replace the existing B-52s with a new bomber which could have improved penetration capability.
- (2) New ICBM to replace the Minutemen with a much larger missile which could carry many separately targeted warheads to penetrate Soviet defenses and destroy military targets.
- (3) New missile-launching submarine to replace existing submarines in order to get greater missile range and quieter operating procedures as a hedge against possible Soviet anti-submarine warfare capability.
- (4) Anti-Soviet ABM system to supplement and reorient the anti-Chinese system with a capability designed to limit damage in the event of nuclear war.

Decisions to procure new offensive systems should be influenced by such considerations as:

- (1) the confidence we wish to have in our deterrent;
- (2) the extent to which we wish to hedge against greater-than-expected Soviet threats;
- (3) the degree to which we desire to match the Soviet Union in specific strategic systems; and
- (4) whether existing systems can be replaced by new systems on economic grounds.

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Thus evaluation of the need for these new systems will be a major concern in the strategic review. The arguments for going ahead immediately are:

- (1) In light of the substantial increase in the size of the Soviet strategic offensive forces we need to show our determination to maintain an advantage.
- (2) Delays would result in increased costs and could delay initial operating dates from those which could now be scheduled in the mid-1970s.
- (3) FY70 additional expenditures would be quite small.

The arguments for not making a commitment now are:

- (1) Decisions on whether to proceed with these systems will determine the shape of our strategic posture for the next four to eight years. Such decisions should be based on a careful assessment of our strategic objectives.
- (2) If we decide in six months to proceed we probably could meet the same initial operating dates for offensive missiles that would be possible now although at greater cost. (The bomber schedule would slip six months.)
- (3) Ultimate costs would vary depending on which systems were procured and how many of each were purchased but addition to strategic budget over the next five years would be substantial.

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2. Increase Research and Development Efforts  
for Possible New Systems

Immediate decisions could be made to increase the strategic research and development budget, particularly for advanced development of major strategic offensive systems. Possibilities include:

- (1) Increasing advanced development budgets for advanced ICBM technology, a new submarine launched missile system and a new bomber by 30-50 percent from current level of \_\_\_\_\_, as proposed by the Services.
- (2) Add \$30 million for engineering development of the "hard rock" missile silo to guard against very accurate Soviet missiles.
- (3) Increase development activities for large anti-Soviet ABM.

Arguments for:

- (1) Demonstrate a willingness to pursue advanced weapons technology more rapidly.
- (2) Contribute to the confidence and understanding associated with these system and hence to our ability to decide whether to procure them.
- (3) Arguments against R&D efforts already being funded at a high level. Increased expenditures would increase our understanding only slightly.

3. Add to or Accelerate Programs Currently Approved for Deployment

As a hedge against a possible large Soviet ABM capability we could move to improve the ability of currently approved forces to penetrate defenses. Possibilities are:

- (1) Put 14 warheads on each Poseidon instead of 10 ( FY70 cost , total cost ).
- (2) Improve Poseidon accuracy and add penetration aids (FY70 cost , total cost ).
- (3) Convert all 1000 (instead of only 600) Minutemen to the new Minuteman III missile (FY70 cost , total cost ).

The argument for acting is that these relatively low cost options increase our confidence in our ability to deter possible Soviet defenses and hence improve our deterrent.

The argument against is that with the existing program we can with very high confidence penetrate current and predicted future Soviet defenses. If the Soviets move toward a big ABM system we can then take the actions listed here.

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4. Delay Approved Strategic Programs

Sentinel Anti-Chinese ABM System. The approved program calls for the deployment of a system designed to protect the US against a light Chinese ICBM attack in the 1972-75 period at a total cost now estimated at about \$8.5 billion. The system is funded at \$1.8 billion in FY70. Cancellation of Sentinel with a vigorous R&D program could reduce FY70 costs by \$1.5 billion. Keeping Sentinel alive but minimizing procurement would save \$500 million in FY70.

- (1) The arguments for proceeding on schedule are:
  - (a) The planned deployment schedule would provide protection in the early 1970s when the intelligence community estimates that the Chinese could have as many as 10 ICBMs.
  - (b) The planned deployment provides a basis for a larger anti-Soviet system.
  - (c) Moving ahead on schedule would increase Soviet incentives to engage in negotiations on Strategic Arms Limitations.
- (2) The arguments for delay are:
  - (a) Few believe that an anti-Chinese system justifies the current cost of Sentinel; currently estimated cost is double estimated cost when decision was made and costs are rising.
  - (b) The Chinese ICBM program is slipping. We now estimate that the Chinese will have 10-15 ICBMs in 1975; previous estimate was 25-75.
  - (c) Delay would permit a careful evaluation of the real issue: should we build an anti-Soviet ABM system. If we decide to proceed with such a system we could build a system specifically designed for this purpose.
  - (d) Work on the Soviet Moscow ABM system has slowed down considerably and the Soviet system is a very primitive one. Thus we have no reason to believe that the Soviets may get ahead of us in ABM capability.

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