(Issued to JCS, by Sec. McNamara, as Sec Def, Guidance to War Planning)

DE Draft BNSP, May, 1961
(Basic National Security Policy)
Central War section
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These are imposing objectives for the immediate future. They cannot be easily achieved. But the Free World, led as it must be by the United States, is substantially more powerful than the Communist Bloc. There is no adequate reason why the threats that confront us cannot be successfully countered and the opportunities successfully exploited.

Section E. Military Problems and Objectives

There are a number of ways in which the security interests of the United States could be jeopardized now and in the future. Among the most serious possibilities are:

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1. A deliberate major nuclear assault on the United States.

2. A major assault on an area of vital interest to the United States, in particular on that area covered by the North Atlantic Treaty.

3. A deliberate nuclear attack on the United States by a minor nuclear power, or nuclear conflict between minor nuclear powers which could involve the major nuclear powers.

4. Nuclear warfare resulting from accidents, misinterpretations of incidents or intentions, false alarms, or unauthorized actions.

5. Local aggression either in the form of invasion or subversion against an ally of the United States or against a state whose independence and integrity is considered of importance to the United States.

6. Escalation of a local conflict, especially a local conflict in which the armed forces of the United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc are directly involved.

7. An accident, unauthorized action, or sabotage involving detonation of a nuclear weapon which could lead to a degradation of readiness and alert measures, loss of base rights, weakening of alliances, or major political concessions by an ally in time of crisis.

These possibilities dictate multiple security objectives for the United States at all times. The most urgent objectives are:

1. To deter any deliberate nuclear assault upon the United States or its Allies.

2. To deter or frustrate attempts by the Sino-Soviet Bloc to extend to political, military and ideological influence by the ~~threat or~~

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use of force in local aggression, or by the threat of nuclear assault upon the United States or its Allies.

3. To reduce the likelihood of uncalculated, unpremeditated or unintended nuclear conflicts. To reduce the likelihood of accidents, misinterpretation of incidents or intentions, false alarms, or unauthorized actions within any nation (including the United States and its Allies); and to reduce the possibility that such events may trigger major nuclear war.

4. To inhibit and, if possible, to reverse the diffusion of nuclear weapons; to reduce the likelihood of nuclear attacks by minor nuclear powers, against the interests of the United States; and to reduce the possibility that such attacks may trigger major nuclear war.

5. To protect U. S. security interests in any armed conflict involving U. S. forces which might occur. In particular:

a. In local war:[1] To bring the conflict to a conclusion satisfactory to the United States, in a manner which protects the country being defended and preserves U. S. alliances, which deters further attempts by hostile nations to enhance their influence and strength by armed forces, and which minimizes the risk of escalation to major nuclear war.

b. In central war:[1]

1. To preclude, under all circumstances, U. S. military inferiority to an opponent or any potential enemies at any point during or after the war.

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1. Central war is defined as war involving deliberate nuclear attacks, instituted by government authority, upon the homelands of one or both of the two major powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Local war is defined as any other armed conflict.

2. To this end, to reduce the military capabilities of the opponent and to retain major strategic capabilities, ready, effective and controlled.

3. To minimize damage to the United States and its Allies, and in all events to limit such damage to a level consistent with national survival and independence.

4. Consistent with the above objectives, to achieve decisive military superiority over the opponent.

5. To conclude the war on terms ~~acceptable to the United States.~~ the most advantageous terms possible.

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Section F. Policy for Central War Posture and Strategy

Goals

The primaru objectives of U. S. policy with respect to central war must be to deter deliberate attack and prevent unintended outbreak. The U. S. rejects armed aggression as a means of enhancing its security; nor can major thermonuclear war be its preferred instrument in meeting armed aggression by others. It is an object of U. S. policy that there be adequate alternatives to the initiation by the U. S. of central war. Yet if central war is forced upon the United States, U. S. military strength must still serve multiple national objectives.

Central war can result from a variety of causes other than the calculated and objective view of enemy leaders that they can achieve decisive superiority over the U. S. by deliberate surprise attack. National planning cannot safely be based on the assumption that deterrence will certainly succeed, that unpremeditated nuclear attacks cannot occur, or that major aggression, undeterred, will never challenge the U. S. to fulfill its commitments to Allies and to protect its security by risking or waging central war. Neither can it regard all possible outcomes of a central war as indistinguishable. In some circumstances, even the best outcome attainable in central war may represent unprecedented catastrophe; yet outcomes very significantly worse than the best, both in civil and military aspects, may also be possible, and it will remain an urgent goal of U. S. security policy to forestall them.

Thus, central war posture and strategy must continuously be tested not only for ability to prevent deliberate or undeliberated attack but for ability to secure basic national objectives in wartime. Solutions to these separate problems can and should be chosen to reinforce each other.

The most urgent military goal in central war is to preclude the prospect of an unarmed U. S. confronting armed opponents. It is essential that no enemy be able to disarm the U. S. by surprise attack on forces or controls; it is equally important that the U. S. not disarm itself, by expending all ready forces in initial attacks that cannot guarantee to disarm the opponent. Although the Soviet Union must be left in no doubt that its military strength would be drastically reduced in any central war, there may be future cirumstances in which U. S. countermilitary action alone could not disarm it totally in initial attack; the Soviets might be able to retain sizeable forces that were initially untargetable or that could be destroyed only at a highly unfavorable rate of exchange in terms of residual capability. To the extent that conservative planning must allow for the survival of such Soviet forces, U. S. posture and strategy must permit the retention of ready and uncommitted forces in reserve, at least comparable to estimated Soviet residual forces in ability to inflict further damage or to influence further the military balance. These forces must remain, under all circumstances of enemy attack, under effective control by authorized political leadership.

A visible and indisputable capability to achieve this basic military

ck any incentive. It guarantees that even a well-designed surprise attack would be futile and costly; an assault could neither win military superiority nor reduce to acceptable proportions the nuclear retaliation that could be launched by U. S. forces.

At the same time, the capabilities required for this fundamental task serve the other wartime goals of minimizing damage to the U. S. and its Allies and forcing a conclusion to the war on advantageous terms. U. S. countermilitary action reduces enemy capability to inflict further damage or to continue the war; the survival of sizeable U. S. ready residual forces, threatening, by their very existence, enemy targets surviving or deliberately left unhit in initial attacks, can destroy the will or surviving enemy leaders to pursue unrestricted attacks or to continue the war.

The latter ability to influence enemy will might be particularly vital in circumstances when attacks upon enemy capabilities alone could not deprive enemy forces of a residual ability to inflict grave damage. Under those same circumstances, it might appear probable that attacks against high governmental and military command centers, or indiscriminate initial attacks on all major urban-industrial centers would fail to inhibit punitive retaliation by surviving enemy units, but would instead eliminate the possibility that enemy response could be controlled or terminated to U. S. advantage.

The ability of U. S. ready forces held in reserve to extend deterrence, in some degree, into the wartime period, can have important effect not only upon the later stages of hostilities but upon the damage deliberately

[illegible] assault. Whether the enemy attack is premeditated, irrational, or based on false alarm, initial enemy tactics will reflect his preattack planning, which in turn reflects his image of U. S. capabilities and options. The prospect of confronting sizeable, protected and controlled U. S. reserve forces after any attack should deter him from planning unrestricted attacks on U. S. or Allied soci under any circumstances; it should further induce him to undertake prepara for post-attack flexibility, control, and information. It thus lays the ground work, if war should occur, for deterring unrestricted enemy attacks and for deterring continuance of hostilities.

Not all objectives can be achieved with equal confidence. But a capability to preclude, with high confidence, enemy residual military superio at any stage of the conflict offers best hope not only of deterring deliberate attack but, if war occurs, of minimizing damage to the U. S. and its Allies and of stopping the war on the most advantageous terms possible.

At the same time, the posture and strategy for deterring or waging central war must be consistent with efforts to minimize the likelihood of accidents, unauthorized actions or unintended nuclear exchanges, to reduce the spread of nuclear weapons, to deter or defeat local aggression, and to enhance U. S. security by safeguarded arms control agreements and by non-military means.

Contingencies

Posture and strategy for central war must be designed to achieve these various U. S. security objectives under a spectrum of contingencies.

[illegible] direct heavy initial assault against U. S. and Allied civil society and major command centers or it might carefully avoid such targets. Central war might cluminate an escalating local war, preceded by mobilization, deployment and heightened alert on both sides; or an attack might follow a period of normal alert. Enemy posture and readiness might lack major vulnerability, assuring the survival under counterforce attack of major mobile, concealed or hardened enemy forces; or the enemy may have failed to protect parts of his system effectively.

This list of possibilities is not exhastive. Intermediate situations between the extremes cited may offer special problems; and "surprises" in the form of wholly unforeseen circumstances are likely.

Among all these contingencies, it is not exclusively the "worst" cases or even the most likely ones that deserve attention; the design of posture and strategy should provide insurance against a broad range of uncertain possibilities. It is necessary to be able to exploit even improbably favorable wartime possibilities, such as windfalls of intelligence or warning, badly executed enemy attack, or urgent desire of leaders of one or more enemy nations to surrender after early operation. A capability for flexible response under high-level, informed and experienced political leadership may be most critical, and most rewarding, in such favorable cases, or in the ambiguous and urgent circumstances presented by accident, unauthorized action, "third party" attack, enemy false alarm or escalation of local war. It is in these situations that the need for a range of options alterantive to an all-out,

must be intended to deter not only a conservative decision-maker in the absence of national or international tension, but a wishful or frightened opponent in a time of crisis, when his alternatives to attack upon the U. S. might also seem dangerous to him. Its ability to deter must be able to withstand sizeable enemy miscalculation of U. S. intentions or capabilities, and should offer hope of withstanding unforeseen technological shifts. Its ability to prevent or to contain the political and military consequences of accidents, unauthorized actions, false alarms or "third party" actions must be considered for varied situations of international tension and local war, when such incidents are both more likely and more dangerous than in periods of relative calm.

If central war should occur, despite U. S. efforts to reduce its likelihood, there could be wide variance in the circumstances of initiation, enemy posture and readiness, enemy tactics, the results of initial attacks, the attitudes and actions of Allies on both sides, and enemy wartime objectives. Ability to achieve U. S. wartime objectives would depend upon ability to adapt U. S. strategic response to these various circumstances, which might be unforeseen, ambiguous, or both. A single detonation or several might presage a major assault, or come by accident, unauthorized action to attack by a minor power. A surprise attack might be calculated and well-designed or a hasty response to false tactical warning or miscalculation of U. S. intentions. It might be well or poorly executed, providing much warning or none; retaining sizeable, protected enemy reserves or few; destroying all but the most protected U. S. forces or failing to do so. It

discriminating strategic response may be most urgent; important capabilities would include a series of well-designed alerting actions and defensive measures, communication with Allies and potential enemies, augmentation of intelligence and warning systems, and implementation of threats and discriminating counterforce attacks.

Requirements

To satisfy these demands, military posture for central war should acquire, as soon as possible and to the utmost extent practicable, the following general characteristics:

1. Survival and endurance. Strategic offensive forces, in major strength, should be capable of surviving an enemy surprise attack without essential reliance upon quick reaction to warning. A sizeable fraction of such forces should be capable of enduring in a wartime environment under prolonged reattack, as a ready reserve force responsive to flexible, centralized control.

2. Strict positive control. Control over the initiation and overall conduct of nuclear war should be exercised at all times by highest national authority. The President will determine and review procedures for such control, including any delegation of basic decisions under any circumstances of Presidential inability to control. There should be reliable physical safeguards against accident or unauthorized action involving nuclear weapons, including weapons under dual control with an Ally; in particular, weapons on high alert status, in mobile launchers, and in planes launched under

ive control. Authorized procedures and protected control capabilities should assure an opponent of an effective, properly authorized response under all circumstances of attack, without any reliance upon the possibility of unauthorized initiative.

3. Information. Reliable, unequivocal bomb alarm detectors and bomb alarm signals at key warning, communications and command points and all major offensive force bases, and detectors at all major cities, should be provided to assure any opponent that dependable notification of any surprise attack cannot be eliminated. Such a system should be protected under attack to a degree which will enable it to provide at least gross indications of the size and nature of enemy attack, the status of U. S. bases and the level of damage to U. S. society. So far as practicable, reliable information, status-reporting, intelligence, sensor, and reconnaissance systems, including protected post-attack capabilities, should be provided to furnish more discriminating knowledge of the source and nature of attack, U. S. and enemy residual capability, and damage to U. S., Allied, and enemy societies. Means should be provided for prompt, reliable and unequivocal indication of the status of higher command centers to all units, permitting orderly devolution of command in accordance with authorized procedures.

4. Force flexibility. Strategic offensive forces, both missiles and aircraft, should be capable of selective commitment against alternative targets, with capability for rapid retargeting after attack. Forces held in

reserve should have capability for continued countermilitary action, as well as retaliatory attacks against non-military targets.

5. Countermilitary capability. Offensive counterforce capabilities, active defenses and passive defenses, supported by warning and reconnaissance systems, should be able to reduce enemy residual military capability at least to levels that will ensure the strategic advantage of U. S. residual forces; they should be equipped to exploit possible vulnerabilities in Soviet posture or gross inefficiencies in Soviet planning or execution of attacks. These measures should be complemented by (a) geographic separation of U. S. strategic forces from population centers to the fullest extent consistent with other military objectives; (b) such active anti-bomber and anti-missile defenses of cities as are judged to be effective; (c) civil defense which, at a minimum, provides adequate fallout protection and recovery capability from nuclear attack directed at important U. S. military strengths.

6. Contingency planning. To permit rapid selective responses on the basis of information available at the outset of hostilities and after, contingency plans should be provided corresponding to gross differences in the circumstances and course of central war. In particular, alternative options should include counterforce operations carefully avoiding major enemy cities while retaining U. S. ready residual forces to threaten these targets; the option to exclude major control centers from counterforce attacks

ld also be available under all circumstances. Alternative plans covering central war with the USSR will provide both for the inclusion and exclusion of Communist China and other individual members of the Sino-Soviet Bloc in initial attacks, the choice to be designated by the President or highest surviving national authority at the time of hostilities. So far as consistent with military objectives: (a) all plans for military action against Bloc members other than the USSR and Communist China should minimize fallout and non-military damage and casualties; (b) all planned attacks against designated enemy nations should be designed to minimize resulting damage and casualties in all other nations, in particular neutrals and Allies of the U. S. Management, decision and planning aids should be provided to permit rapid- re-planning prior to, and, as practicable, during hostilities. While avoiding premature decisions or commitments, guidelines should be formulated and kept under review specifying acceptable terms for ending hostilities, suitable to the several circumstances under which central war might commence and proceed; these terms should provide for the satisfaction of U. S. security objectives in such circumstances, without a predetermined requirement for unconditional enemy surrender. The President and the Secretary of Defense will review all strategic plans.

7. Protected Command. The protected command, communications and information systems should permit coordinated, informed and selective overall direction of U. S. forces by the highest surviving, authorized civilian and military leaders; to the utmost extent feasible,

ection should be by highest constituted political authorities at all times. In particular, these systems should be designed and protected to minimize the loss of command capability and political leadership that could result from a small number of detonations, stemming from accident, unauthorized action, attack by a minor power, badly executed attack or attack intended to avoid U. S. command capabilities. By means of mobility, hardening, active defense, dispersal, internetting, or concealment, the protection of primary command facilities and communications serving highest national leadership should aim to raise the cost to the enemy of destroying primary centers to a level which would deter him from planning to attack them, given his inability - which must be assured with the highest confidence - to paralyze U. S. response by doing so. Plans for protection of primary command capabilities and leadership should not rely upon warning, but should be prepared to utilize available warning, either strategic or tactical.

8. Wartime control. The protected command and communications system should enable highest surviving national leaders to exploit, in pursuit of national objectives, the full capability for selective, deliberate, response provided by force flexibility and endurance, information, and countermilitary capability. It should enable them to use surviving forces efficiently, to make significant choices as to overall target objectives, scope and timing of attacks, and to modify these choices during hostilities

the basis of new information. It should allow commanders not only to select preplanned responses but to modify them or, within limits, to improvise new ones. It should support their efforts to end hostilities on the most advantageous possible terms. It must provide highly reliable means for transmitting authenticated "Stop" or "Recall" orders to offensive forces in addition to initial "Go" orders. National leaders should have swift, reliable means of communications with Allied and enemy leaders prior to and during hostilities. Plans and preparations should be made to enable U. S. national leaders effectively to threaten use of U. S. reserve forces against civil or military targets as yet unhit; to carry out demonstrations; to provide evidence of remaining capabilities or to mislead the enemy by cover and deception activities; to propose terms acceptable to the U. S. for ending hostilities, safeguarding U. S. security interests in the light of circumstances of war initiation, the conduct of the war and the results of initial operations; and to monitor and enforce conformity to agreed terms. [illegible]

A U. S. military posture with these broad capabilities permits a wide variety of strategic responses under varying conditions of central war. Its major post-attack capabilities should effectively deter deliberate attack; yet if central war occurs, they give highest national authority maximum opportunity to preserve U. S. military advantages, to limit damage to the U. S. and its Allies and to stop the war on the most advantageous possible terms. They will allow U. S. commanders to exploit any

unity in wartime to disarm the opponent or to achieve decisive military superiority in support of U. S. postwar aims, if circumstances offer hope of doing so without grave jeopardy to other national goals. If an aggressor should initiate central war, these capabilities will assure him of a decisive degradation in his relative military power position and of unprecedented damage to his society (even with a countermilitary U. S. response); they will assure him of still greater damage and further worsening of his military position if he should continue the conflict. They would warn him that direct attack upon U. S. and Allied civil society would be, under any circumstances, the worst of all possible actions.

Moreover, this posture will reduce the likelihood of unpremeditated nuclear exchanges. The protected command system, safeguarded positive control, and ability to achieve essential goals by deliberate response, without reliance upon hasty reaction under ambiguous circumstances, should reduce both the chance and enemy fear of U. S. accident, unauthorized action or false alarm. At the same time, the U. S. posture reduces the tendency of any opponent to attack hastily under similarly ambiguous circumstances, since the prospect of U. S. post-attack capabilities deprives him of incentive to do so.

In comparison to current posture, the most urgent changes demanded involve principally qualitative characteristics of force capabilities rather than major increases in force size. These characteristics complement each other; but they are important individually. Progress toward achieving

major security objectives does not demand that they all be attained simultaneously. In particular, all opportunities to improve the ability of constituted leaders to control the forces in a deliberate, discriminating fashion, and to enlarge the range of alternative options available to them, should be exploited on an immediate and continuing basis. [illegible]

[illegible]

The U. S. regards the threat of local aggression as endangering the vital interests [illegible] and its Allies must therefore be prepared to deter, if necessary, to repel local aggression wherever and however such aggression may take place. The specific goals which the local war policy [illegible] to achieve are:

1. [illegible]

2. [illegible]