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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
Op-09/ecm
24 Jan 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR OP-00

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From: Op-09

Subj: "Dependable Striking Power" - attached

RADM MILLER has a good idea but one which, before we submit it seriously, we should thoroughly staff, - covering such things as command relations, cost effectiveness and other angles.

I would make the staff study moderate in tone, as factual as possible, and in the style of calm reason.

However we regard it, and however we cloak it, I am sure it will be regarded as an extreme position and one which every effort will be made to attach the label "parochial." Hence, the reasoning in the paper must be well balanced and compelling.

As to timeliness, a truly good study would be most useful as background for our membership in the various new Department of Defense staff committees, particularly for Captain Caldwell in the Novick group.

I would recommend that the study (if of good quality) be submitted to the JCS. As to internal arrangements, - the study belongs to, and should be made in 06, but the long range planners in 93 can certainly assist.

Very respectfully,

James S. Russell
JAMES S. RUSSELL

Handwritten notes and signatures in the lower middle section of the page.

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OP-06

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Dependable Striking Power

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1. The Navy may soon have to consider a new approach to the nuclear striking power problem, one which assumes the initiative and accepts the prospect of being a target for a deluge of brickbats from the opposition. The following paragraphs and the enclosure suggest a plan of action. The timing of the various steps, the tactics and the manner of presentation can be worked out a step at a time.

2. One step is to recognize that the present SIOP procedure takes care of the "first-strike" contingency but is not adequate for the situation with which the United States would be faced if most of our fixed bases and control centers were destroyed by surprise attack. Therefore, our Atlantic and Pacific Fleet Commanders-in-Chief should be directed to prepare strike-back plans under the assumption that fixed-base systems and command control centers have been destroyed by surprise attack. This would entail a completely independent planning operation by our Fleet Commanders-in-Chief, including the development of an optimum target list within the capacity of available Fleet striking power, and Fleet deployment, operating and maneuvering plans to minimize damage in event of surprise attack. This should be undertaken as a normal Naval planning measure to insure the security and effectiveness of the Fleets and to be prepared for any eventuality. It would be a significant departure from the fixed-base "on station" concept. The plans of the Fleet Commanders-in-Chief should be coordinated by CNO, or preferably, by a new CinC, U. S. Fleets. The latter could be created as the Naval counterpart to the Shore-based functional command concept.

3. When the planning is underway, and the timing is right, the Navy should come forward with a building program along the lines of paragraphs 5 to 9 of the enclosure with the objective of providing, in the next 5-10 years, a more dependable deterrent retaliatory posture for the United States in the ballistic missile age. In order to gain public support it will be necessary to state force objectives in specific figures. Failure to do so in the past has led to the criticism that "even the Navy doesn't know what it wants."

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4. It would be necessary, if we are to succeed, to push this program simultaneously in the following channels:

SecNav to SecDef
JCS to SecDef
Congress
Press and public media

Dependable Deterrence/RetaliationSECRET

1. Over the past twelve years the United States has been maneuvered into a position of accepting and supporting a military strategy which has become out-moded and deficient in many respects.

a. The bulk of U. S. striking power is operated from fixed installations within the United States whose locations are known to friend and enemy alike.

b. The Soviet Union now has the technical capability of targeting these fixed installations for quick destruction with ballistic missiles in event of war.

c. Concentration of the bulk of U. S. striking power within the confines of United States territory insures that the United States itself will be the primary target and will be forced to absorb the bulk of the devastation in event of war.

d. Realization on the part of the American people and government that they themselves will be the primary nuclear target will cause them to shrink, if it has not already done so, from taking a firm stand against any kind of aggression.

e. The increasing vulnerability of fixed-base systems has forced the United States to adopt a hair-trigger posture of readiness, which is expensive, unreliable in tense situations and does not have the durability to survive attack and continue to function effectively until the war's end.

f. A posture of hair-trigger readiness, the provocative type of intelligence gathering which is part of it, and the vulnerability of the system to surprise attack, cause such uneasiness among our enemies as to our real intentions that they may be led to think in terms of, and eventually even to attempt, surprise attack.

g. Vulnerability of fixed bases to surprise attack, and the necessity for hair-trigger readiness over a long period of time, may encourage some of our own people to consider a strike-first strategy, even though it can be proved that such a strategy could not prevent critical damage to the United States itself.

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2. The vulnerability of fixed bases and the exposure of the United States itself as the primary target have inhibited the actions of our government in dealing effectively with the many regional crises which are crowding in upon us. Fixed-base, hair-trigger strategy is self-defeating, since it serves to increase tensions and tends to provoke a drift toward the very type of war the world seeks to avoid.

3. It is now technologically possible for the United States, at reasonable cost, to remove its nuclear striking forces from within the United States and to deploy them in mobile bases over the far reaches of the uninhabited global seas. The Polaris missile, now fully developed and operational, and soon to have a range up to 2500 miles, is being installed aboard submarines and surface ships. Modern aircraft carriers, the only mobile air bases our Nation has, have been improved tremendously since World War II, and are capable of operating from their decks the most modern, high performance aircraft technology can provide. These tactically integrated air-missile striking forces, together with modern amphibious forces and defensive forces capable of denying use of the seas to our enemies, provide our Nation with an oceanic maneuvering and battle area over 35 times as extensive as the United States itself. With our nuclear striking forces deployed at sea the enemy will be forced to devote the bulk of his counterforce effort against them, drawing off nuclear strikes which might otherwise be directed against the United States.

4. Nuclear striking forces on the move at sea cannot be targeted in advance. Their reduced vulnerability to quick destruction discourages enemy planning for surprise attack and reduces the need on our part for hair-trigger response and provocative intelligence gathering.

5. Transfer of U. S. nuclear striking power from its present fixed-base emphasis to a more equitable mix of land-based and sea-based systems would require the procurement of the following forces over the next 5 to 10 year period:

24 Attack aircraft carriers
24 Polaris missile cruisers
45 Polaris cruisers

6. The attack carriers, the cruisers, and to some extent the submarines, would have additional capabilities such as antisubmarine, antiair, anti-

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missile, and mobile command capabilities, as well as capabilities necessary for support of limited war and protection of shipping operations. They would be organized, along with other Naval forces, into three basic Fleets -- the Atlantic Fleet, the Pacific Fleet and the Southern Fleet.

7. The Southern Fleet would eventually operate from a broad complex of logistic, operating, and even construction, bases to be developed in such areas as Australia, New Zealand, South America and South Africa -- far removed from the bases of Sino-Soviet military power.

8. Each Fleet would be commanded from a modern, mobile command ship, each of which would be capable of taking command of the other two Fleets, in event any one or both of the others, together with our fixed-base command facilities, had been knocked out.

9. The foregoing can be achieved at an additional estimated outlay of _____ billion dollars annually over a 10-year period, which constitutes about _____ percent of what is already being spent annually for fixed-base systems.