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By BJW NARA Date 2/22/96

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NSC - 5816
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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

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23 DEC 1964

Sir: This has been sent to GIPM and SIP for preparation of a recommendation for your approval.

MEMORANDUM FOR The Secretary of State
The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Chairman, Interdepartmental Intelligence Conference
The Chairman, Interdepartmental Committee on Internal Security

Attached is a copy of a proposal that the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council be discontinued.

Any comments you may have would be welcome. It is my present intention to submit the proposal to the President early in January.

Robert S. McNamara

Attachment

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Sec Def Cont Mr. X - 7233

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Elimination of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council

As part of a continuing effort to increase the efficiency and quality of various study programs, I have for some time questioned the value of continuing the work of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee (NESC) of the National Security Council (established by NSC 5816).

When the NESC was established by President Eisenhower in 1958, neither the Joint Chiefs of Staff Organization nor the Office of the Secretary of Defense included a capability for performing the type of study assigned to the NESC. The original directive charged the NESC with providing "integrated evaluations of the net capabilities of the USSR, in the event of general war, to inflict direct injury upon the Continental United States and to provide a continual watch for changes which would significantly alter those net capabilities." Subsequent directives have altered this task on an annual basis. For example, the most recently completed NESC study was an evaluation of a "war conducted in 1964 between the U. S., its Allies, and the Soviet Bloc based on current U. S. war plans." Further, the over-all purpose of the report was to "evaluate the validity and feasibility of this type analysis as a basis for providing guidance for political-military planning...."

Having studied the 1964 Report, I do not feel that a brief survey of this type qualifies as a basis for planning guidance. As a broad survey of the problem, it is not without merit; but our strategic planning today is increasingly based upon more detailed studies of specific problem areas, such as those included on the Secretary of Defense's annual "Project List" and other studies conducted by the Joint Staff and military departments.

For example, the Special Studies Group (SSG) of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has developed a broader base of expertise than that of the NESC staff. Both groups have explored similar issues, used the

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same sources of input, obtained the same computer support, and have performed the same type of analysis. Because of the close relationship of strategic studies to forces, the budget, and other on-going Defense Department studies, the usefulness of the SSG studies has been understandably greater than the annual survey of the NESC.

The economy involved in eliminating a major study group is obvious. We can, I feel, make better use of our limited study skills while simultaneously improving the product delivered to the consumer. Participation in DoD studies by other government agencies is, of course, welcomed when warranted by the subject matter. Similarly, we remain responsive to requests for study reports from other interested agencies of the government.

In summary, while the annual study program of the NESC had value and relevance in 1958, its contribution today is marginal when compared to the battery of specific studies which have become major functions of the JCS and DoD during the intervening years. It therefore appears logical to terminate the requirement for the NESC. Attached is a draft implementing directive for signature.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Effective this date, the Net Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Security Council, having served its purpose, is discontinued. This directive supersedes NSC 5816.

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