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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

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INFORMATION

June 11, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM: MICHAEL DONLEY/LINTON BROOKS *MD* *Linton*

SUBJECT: Hoffman Memorandum re Long-Term Strategy, Policy,
and Programs

Fred Hoffman has sent you the memorandum at Tab I, summarizing his views on those issues emerging as we enter the final years of the Reagan Presidency. His emphasis is on the strategic nuclear balance: mainly force development and employment, especially as they relate to the offense-defense issues surrounding SDI. While many of Fred's comments in this area are not directly relevant to the rewrite of NSDD-32, they will provide grist for follow-on activities related to SDI. However, he also had some useful comments on low intensity conflict which we are incorporating into a new draft of NSDD-32.

Fred's most basic message is that SDI is not likely to survive this Administration unless the program is restructured to emphasize some intermediate goal between site defense and full territorial defense. In doing so we must reopen some fundamental issues of strategic policy. We concur that we must ensure the long-term survival of the SDI program, but the timeframe and circumstances in which a restructuring could be successfully orchestrated are not self-evident. We need to give more thought to creating a political and fiscal climate receptive to the consideration of SDI transition issues, in a way that would not jeopardize the future of the program.

Fred's second broad message is that employment policy for offensive nuclear forces requires reconsideration to ensure greater flexibility and military utility. Drawing on his work for Fred Ikle's Nuclear Strategy Development Group, he advocates publicly asserting that we do not depend on launching under attack and have options other than threats of mutual suicide. He suggests a number of topics for further study. While Fred's points have merit, a White House nuclear warfighting reexamination is more than the traffic will bear right now. Thus we recommend these issues continue to be worked in DOD.

Bob Linhard, Ken deGraffenreid, Jack Matlock, Ron St. Martin, and Howard Teicher concurred by telephone.

Attachment
Tab I Memorandum from Fred Hoffman

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SYSTEM II
90419
May 28, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM: FRED S. HOFFMAN

SUBJECT: The NSDD-219 process and longer term issues of national security policies and programs

My task as I understand it is to consider the course of national security policy for the remainder of the current Administration, in the light of high priority goals for the Administration and the creation of conditions that increase the likelihood of continuing and effective efforts beyond 1989 to strengthen the U.S. in the long term competition with the Soviet Union. I have concentrated on military aspects of national security policies, but have touched on other aspects. Within the military, my heaviest emphasis has been on issues of nuclear strategy.

1. Approach

Mike Donley has proposed that the NSDD-219 effort distinguish issues that can be handled within the current schedule for NSDD-32 review and those requiring more extended treatment including studies by DOD or other agencies. As part of the current NSDD 219 effort, such issues should be identified and a Phase II of the Packard Commission implementation effort should be directed to deal with them. In this memorandum I provide some views on the longer term issues as background, propose some changes in NSDD-32 language designed to motivate their consideration, and formulate statements of the issues for possible use with the agencies.

2. General Background for Issue Identification

As President Reagan's Administration moves toward its conclusion, it becomes increasingly important, in addition to continuing the implementation of his program, to provide a point of departure that will make it likely that a successor will continue viable programs for competing with Soviet military strength. This is especially important for the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) because of its close personal identification with the President, its distant horizon and the heavy ideological burden it bears. The SDI also is the most visible symbol of the President's attempt to establish a more viable nuclear component of a strategy for our long term competition with the Soviet Union.

The major problems in creating and maintaining the military posture needed for the long term competition are:

Continuing fiscal stringency

Public desire at home and even more so among friends and allies to see movement toward reduction in the threat of nuclear destruction and the likelihood of war.

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Belief among the public that such movement depends on arms agreements and that failure to conclude such agreements will result in an "arms race" and increase the probability of war.

Soviet exploitation of the above through propoganda and divisive diplomatic tactics

Public reluctance to support the use of military power to oppose aggression by adversaries of the U.S. unless extremely strict conditions are met concerning the prospects of low-cost, quick and decisive victory, the avoidance of harm to innocent civilians and the democratic virtue of those allied with or supported by the U.S.

Inadequate U.S. effectiveness in translating technological superiority into politically viable, usable and affordable military power.

These problems clearly transcend military strategy but pose important tasks for that strategy. Several factors, some related to the above, will assist in mounting the necessary efforts.

Soviet internal problems and bureaucratic rigidity

Continuing disaffection for the Soviet Union and Soviet-supported regimes among Soviet satellite nations

Distrust of the Soviet Union among the public in the West

The magnitude of our required future defense efforts will depend not only on our effectiveness in exploiting our relative strengths and Soviet vulnerabilities but to some degree on the rate of growth in the size and effectiveness of Soviet military capabilities. The outlook for a continued Soviet military buildup is currently less clear than in the past because of mounting evidence of Soviet internal economic and social problems and strains among the satellite nations. However, in assessing the possibility that internal difficulties will limit Soviet military efforts we should take account of the failure of past predictions in this vein to materialize. Moreover, Soviet economic strains are likely to cause them to seek relief in the form of Western capital and technology, once again intensifying differences between us and our friends and allies over the control of such flows.

In addition, it is becoming clear that requirements to deal with low level conflict and state-sponsored terrorism are likely to pose increasing burdens, if not on the size, then on the qualitative capabilities of our military forces. Where they occur in the Western Hemisphere, such conflicts may also increasingly divert our attention from containing the USSR on its periphery.

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The following sections go further into the background for issues of strategic offensive forces and active defense, respectively.

3. Background for Strategic Offensive Force Issues

My comments in this area are without benefit of ESI clearance (which I have not held since something like 1968), and with access to significant compartmented information but of a degree of completeness I am, of course, unable to assess. On the basis of information available to me and discussions with those I presume to have greater access, I have reached the following conclusions.

NSDD-13 notwithstanding, the range of options and degree of flexibility in the current SIOP and the assumed range of Soviet operational options are so limited that they are believed to provide little scope for precise, discriminate systems capabilities, and selective options for their use, in affecting the outcome of strategic nuclear operations if they occur.

Our knowledge of Soviet operational planning for intercontinental operations depends on a combination of exercise data, inferences from force posture trends, doctrinal statements and some intelligence windows that allow us to understand plans and preferred operations. There remain major uncertainties about strategic operational flexibility in a real war and unanswered questions about the relationship between military planners and the political leaders who would make decisions about the use of military forces.

Considerations of Soviet self-interest and prudence, together with their doctrines subordinating military force to political objectives will create powerful incentives for them to move in the direction of greater flexibility and selectivity in strategic options, notwithstanding the relatively greater competitive advantage and political-military urgency for the U.S. in moving in this direction; however, their declaratory policy will continue to deny this possibility for political effect.

Our concerns over our ability to ensure continuing C³ together with the current and projected vulnerability of land-based elements of our strategic forces fundamentally condition our own policies and plans.

The resulting set of policies and programs will be increasingly hard to defend before the U.S. public and as a basis for maintaining credibility in U.S. alliance guarantees and for what Michael Howard has called "reassurance" of our friends and allies. This results from public perceptions (often reinforced by official statements--certainly not convincingly refuted by them) that any use of nuclear weapons would lead inevitably to uncontrolled use with catastrophic results to both sides (as well

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as noncombatants) and that postures on both sides offer intense incentives to strike before being struck in crises.

The SDI reflects the President's sense of the long term problems with simply holding the line on current strategic policy and leaving these public perceptions unchanged. For the future, new technologies of offense and defense and those available to support robust and enduring C³I offer the possibility of moving in the direction of nuclear operational capabilities (supplemented by long-range nonnuclear capabilities) that would offer greater operational flexibility in strategic operations, a more secure and stable second-strike capability, and a more politically defensible set of programs.

Specifically, we should seek a posture that will permit us to assert as soon as possible that our ability to respond to attack does not depend on irrevocably launching under attack and avoids reliance on threats of mutual suicide.. To quote from the Nuclear Strategy Development Group Report, a document approved by the JCS as providing "useful general guidance on the direction of future US strategy.":

The United States should not rely on launching its nuclear forces in an irrevocable manner upon warning that a Soviet missile attack has begun. This would increase the risk of accidental war. Continued improvements in U.S. tactical warning and attack assessment capability and enhanced C³ and forces survivability are a high priority in order to permit a more deliberate presidential decision on whether or not to commit the United States to nuclear war, and what kind of offensive nuclear strike option to choose. The future U.S. offensive forces posture should aim at having any NCA decision to retaliate with nuclear forces determined by the nature and size of the Soviet attack, not the vulnerability of forces and C³ assets. [p. 25]

Further, we should move toward a posture that supports the assertion that our plans for responding to Soviet attack including Soviet use of nuclear weapons are based on options that deny the objectives of the Soviet attack and that would serve U.S. interests if they had to be executed. In both employment policy and programs we need to give greater weight to improving our ability to respond as above under plausible contingencies of attack relative to making marginal improvements in outcomes under extreme and relatively implausible contingencies.

This would require, as part of the Phase II effort, review an amendment of NSDD-13 to:

-Change the language on maintaining Soviet uncertainty about our response to warning;

-To reflect the need to maintain the credibility of U.S. response to plausible Soviet attacks, by adding to the

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document's present emphasis on keeping Soviet assessments of war outcomes "dangerous and uncertain" an emphasis on options that would threaten Soviet interests and deny Soviet attack objectives while serving U.S. national interests under the circumstances if actually executed--rather than only when threatened in advance;

-Establish priority between "immediate options" and maintaining the integrity of pre-planned SIOP options.

We need to reassess the future roles of elements of the triad and the requirements for prompt hard target capabilities in the light of prospective changes in U.S. and Soviet postures, including the possibilities of active defense, mobility, concealment and deception. I am suggesting for Phase II of Packard Commission implementation a number of questions for further analysis by DOD to clarify these issues.

In this connection, the vulnerability of at least the first 50 Peacekeeper missiles is a troublesome issue. For this reason, I have couched suggested changes to NSDD-32 in the form of objectives for policy and programs "beyond the current Strategic Modernization program". For obvious reasons, these suggested emphases in policies and programs should not be held up until completion of that program. If a basing mode like the "carry-hard" movable hard capsule system could be viable for the second 50, it would clearly be extremely attractive in resolving the issue. At the moment, however, the only fix in view for the vulnerability of the first 50 appears to depend on some form of early defense deployment.

A hard-site defense is not the only contender here. An approach that is more consistent with the goals of the SDI might be a first-stage deployment of a country-wide defense (including elements of an exo-atmospheric area defense and endo-atmospheric terminal defense) to deny Soviet objectives in attacks against M-X and other high priority targets including precursor attacks against the NCA and possible limited attacks on objectives such as force projection facilities critical to our plans to reinforce NATO. It would not be necessary for such a defense to offer a high level of protection from the outset if it showed prospect of growth to convey that the U.S. was not committed to a vulnerable deployment for the long term. If desirable, the deployment could be approached initially as a Treaty-consistent defense with the number of interceptors and deployment area as prescribed in the Treaty. The protected area afforded by the exo-atmospheric layer would, nevertheless, be very large with the addition of adjunct sensors. In such an approach, the decision about further deployments would be left open. It would incidentally serve the NSDD-119 objective of contributing to a hedge against Soviet breakout by giving us a warm production base analogous to the one that causes our anxiety about Soviet breakout. An IOC objective of this sort illustrates one first step in the kind of

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evolutionary approach required for a successful SDI transition, discussed below.

4. Background on the future of SDI beyond President Reagan's term

The recent letter signed by 46 Senators illustrates the surfacing of some of the problems that I have believed were inherent in the Administration's posture on SDI from my earliest involvement in it in 1983. Others are clearly in evidence.

The Administration's posture on SDI has been presented and is generally perceived as a commitment to conduct a five-year program limited to research and ending after President Reagan's term of office with a decision about whether to drop the effort or to enter a systems development phase. The objective of the program is taken to be "population defense" which, in turn is understood to be the achievement of a defense effective enough to protect against a massive Soviet attack focussed on cities--precisely the kind of attack assumed by those who either favor MAD or regard it as an inevitable outcome of any use of nuclear weapons, ignoring what we know of Soviet military doctrine, forces and plans. The actual problem of population protection in the event of nuclear attack is that of protecting civilians from the collateral effects of Soviet attacks on military targets, a systems design problem with different implications from the other.

Both critics and supporters of the program have often equated lesser defense capabilities with "hard-site" defenses, an objective rejected by Secretary Weinberger as a dead end for the program. The exception to this during the past year has been a possible SDI contribution to a defense against theater ballistic missiles. The net effect has been to put success in SDI on an "all or nothing" basis, requiring achievement of the program's technical goals in many, if not all, of the extremely advanced and risky technologies pursued under the program. Success is therefore also very distant in terms of time. These factors together with the cost and high visibility of the program create several threats to SDI's future viability:

- o Expert opinion will continue to insist that "SDI is infeasible" and intolerably expensive
- o Its riskiness, cost and distant time horizon will permit critics to question the allocation of substantial resources to the program
- o The DOD will have difficulty in justifying the allocation of such large resources to a distant and risky payoff given budgetary pressures on other programs in the 6.0 to 6.3A area with similar time horizons, especially since it serves no mission explicitly identified as essential by the JCS

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- o Critics will dwell on the immediate arms control opportunities foregone by unwillingness to limit an SDI program with dubious benefits

- o Some who will not attack the program outright will nevertheless argue that interim constraints on the program are consistent with its distant time horizon and the uncertainty of success

- o Continuation of the current posture on the program will certainly provide no reason for reopening the ABM Treaty within President Reagan's term or even reinterpreting it to provide more latitude for SDI tests and demonstrations

Since President Reagan's successor is unlikely to have as close a personal identification with the program as he, to be better situated for reopening the ABM Treaty or to experience a markedly easier fiscal situation, the prospects for a useful outcome from the SDI look gloomy unless some of the foregoing conditions are changed. I believe it is crucial that a process leading to changes be initiated soon if it is to have an effect on the FY89 program guidance, the last opportunity for this Administration to affect the formulation and presentation of DOD programs.

Several conditions can be identified as necessary to changing the outlook:

- o The program requires a constituency among the services in the DOD

- o It must offer some foreseeable benefits of a degree of urgency commensurate with its funding level

- o The restrictive effects of the ABM Treaty (and our interpretation of its provisions) must be more clearly understood in relation to program activities necessary to produce early, useful results.

All of the above require a process for identifying possible missions for an initial defense deployment as a first step in an evolutionary program with foreseeable benefits within a time horizon commensurate with the resource and political costs of proceeding. Such a process requires an interaction between USD/P, the JCS and the SDIO. Ultimately, it must lead to JCS approval of initial deployment objectives as a basis for dealing with the problems identified above.

The above problems and opportunities motivate the changes suggested below in NSDD-32 language and the selection of issues for further treatment.

5. NSDD-32 Language Changes by Issue Area and by Section, with Associated Issues Identified for Study

A. Nuclear Strategy and Programs

Global Objectives §

Insert in place of "To neutralize...disinformation":

To neutralize efforts by the U.S.S.R. to increase its influence and weaken ties between the U.S. and countries allied to or friendly with this country, by exploiting anxiety over nuclear destruction and desires for arms limitations, by its use of diplomacy, arms transfers, economic pressure, political action, propaganda, and disinformation.

Insert as new global objectives:

To reduce the threat of nuclear destruction over time by increasing our ability to keep control of our forces during military operations, by basing deterrence of plausible Soviet attacks increasingly on defensive systems and on weapons that permit us to achieve our military objectives through selective means while avoiding unintended or undesired destruction, and, as consistent with these objectives, by reducing our reliance on weapons of widespread destruction and creating incentives for the USSR to do so too.

In the event of war with the Soviet Union to exploit the potential for fragmenting the Warsaw Pact through a selective policy for attacking or withholding attacks on targets within the East European countries.

Nuclear Strategic Forces §

[My amendment of John Douglass' proposed language]

Completion of the planned modernization of our strategic forces and the pursuit of research and development on the Strategic Defense Initiative shall receive the first priority.

A prudent basis for deterring Soviet attacks requires strategic offensive and defensive forces capable of responding to the full range of plausible Soviet attacks in ways that would deny Soviet confidence in achieving the objectives of the attacks and that would be in the U.S. interest in the specific circumstances. This requires the ability to destroy military targets where it serves the national interest, while restricting collateral damage to

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provide continuing incentives for the Soviets to limit their own force employment.

The United States will enhance its strategic nuclear deterrent by sustaining its five part Strategic Modernization Program, which includes the Strategic Defense Initiative, in accordance with guidance provided in NSDD-178, NSDD-13, and NSDD-172. The strategic force modernization program set forth in NSDD-178 is reaffirmed except as may be modified by new decisions in the basing mode for the second 50 Peacekeeper missiles. Special emphasis will be placed on achievement of the initial operational capability date for the new stealthy Advanced Technology Bomber set forth in NSDD-178.

Beyond these programs, we should plan to develop and acquire offensive and defensive forces and the means to direct and keep control of their use during combat operations so as to maintain a prudent deterrent posture. It is in the long term interest of the U.S. to achieve this objective at the lowest possible level of nuclear forces and offensive weapon yields consistent with responding to the threat and if possible to do so with levels that decline over time. Our plans should take account of the opportunities being provided by new technologies to maintain a high level of military effectiveness and to keep continuing control over forces during military operations while limiting damage to ourselves and our Allies and restricting unintended destruction to innocent civilians. In this context we should assess the value of non-nuclear options as a supplement to nuclear capabilities. Such plans should also take account of the utility of the strategic offensive triad of land-based ballistic missiles in complicating a surprise Soviet attack and guarding against technical surprise that might jeopardize any single leg of the triad.

Issue 1:

What characteristics of our future forces, plans for their use and declaratory policies on nuclear strategy can counter Soviet attempts to fragment our alliance relations in peacetime? What elements of our posture contribute to countering such attempts in crises?

Issue 2:

Given projected Soviet SOF trends (hardening, mobility), passive defense of critical leadership targets, improving accuracy, what should be the objectives of our future strategic offensive force programs? Specifically:

What are our specific target objectives under various contingencies of attack and how do they influence the outcome?

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What aspects of Soviet future force structure critically threaten our own strategic objectives?

What assumptions should we employ about Soviet strategic attack objectives as a basis for our force planning?

What is the difference in outcomes under various plausible future attack contingencies and over the range of uncertainties in operational factors of different levels of prompt, hard target kill capability?

What aggregate levels of damage to the U.S. and USSR result from employment of alternative postures above and what incentives are implied for each side to execute or withhold elements of the attack.

Issue 3:

What solutions can we find to the vulnerability of our land-based strategic forces or other critical strategic targets? Evaluate them in terms of their effect on Soviet attack assessments and on attack outcomes.

Issue 4:

What measures can we adopt in the future to provide continuing intelligence, attack assessment and warning capabilities, to maintain their functions under attack, and reconstitute them? Assess the cost and effectiveness of different levels of capability in term of the outcomes during protracted combat involving the use of nuclear weapons. Assess the role of SDI technologies for this purpose.

Issue 5:

Similarly identify the means and assess the effect on outcomes of capabilities to deny enemy intelligence, attack assessment and warning capabilities.

Issue 6:

Assess tradeoffs between offensive and defensive capabilities in meeting our objectives for future force structures, given projected trends in Soviet offensive and defensive posture.

Issue 7:

Assess Soviet responses to US deployment of active defenses over time, taking account of realistic Soviet strategic objectives. Specifically evaluate Soviet assessments of

their ability to achieve attack objectives by increasing offensive force levels if they are unable to negate defenses by qualitative countermeasures. Consider the effect on Soviet force planning over time. Consider the calculation of cost-effectiveness at the margin that would be made in the course of Soviet force planning, given realistic Soviet force posture objectives.

Issue 8:

Define possible initial and growth missions for alternative evolutionary SDI deployments. Establish estimated time paths for such deployments, based on current assessments of progress in the SDI research program and the estimated growth pattern of their technical capabilities. Consider as one alternative an ABM Treaty-compliant IOC and address the possible utility of such a deployment in meeting objectives of future force posture. Identify elements of the SDI that could contribute to such an IOC. Identify associated air defense requirements needed to realize the benefits. Base the assessment on realistic assumptions about Soviet attack objectives and Soviet assessment of its attack capability. Specifically, what levels of defense capability and what combinations of defense components could contribute significantly to:

- Protection of NCA, intelligence, warning and attack assessment systems, and bomber bases against precursor attacks
- Protection of missile silos
- Reducing the potential attractiveness of Soviet selective attack options against critical military facilities

Issue 9:

Assess the roles, cost and effectiveness in our future strategic force structure and operations of advanced technologies including:

Nuclear weapons with tailored effects, e.g. earth penetrator weapons

Non-nuclear weapons of extreme accuracy with tailored warheads for long range attack on selected strategic targets

Improved, high data rate communications systems with SSBNs

B. General Purpose Forces Issues

Global Objectives §

Insert new objective:

To increase our ability to deal with low-level, relatively likely conflicts requiring the use of parts of our military forces, while deterring large scale attack or maintaining readiness to protect U.S. interests in situations requiring our full military capabilities.

General Purpose Forces §

Insert at beginning of existing ¶ 3 of §:

US General Purpose Forces must provide the flexibility to deal quickly, decisively and discriminately with low-level conflict contingencies requiring US military involvement. In a conflict not involving the Soviet Union,...

Force Integration §

Insert as new ¶ between present ¶5 and ¶6.

It has become increasingly clear that our forces must provide the flexibility to respond to the need for military action in contingencies of low-level conflict. Such contingencies require flexibility, effectiveness and an ability for discriminate action not currently provided by our forces, which have been sized, deployed, equipped and trained primarily for global conflict against the Soviet Union. To provide the needed capabilities for low level conflict contingencies, our future force development should be based on an appropriate mix of special-purpose forces, general purpose forces, and appropriate elements of long-range attack forces, suitably trained, equipped and in readiness for such missions. Where special-purpose equipment, exploiting advanced technology, is appropriate and unsuitable or unaffordable as standard equipment for global conflict, it should be acquired and deployed in quantities appropriate for low-level conflict.

Issue 1:

[Adapted from Linton Brooks language on "Resource Priorities"]

Develop the implications for our general purpose forces of adopting the following order of priorities:

Equipping, maintaining and training our forces to provide, where and when required, combined arms teams suitable for dealing with contingencies of low-level conflict or state-sponsored terrorism quickly, decisively and discriminately

Applying advanced technologies as appropriate for modernizing our general purpose forces for high level or global war with the USSR

Improving our mobilization base and reserves for a global war with the USSR

Operating and maintaining our general purpose forces in a high state of readiness for global war with the USSR

Assess tradeoffs among these force objectives in terms of our ability to handle plausible contingencies of conflict, and the nature of the risks we would incur in the near term and in the more distant future, given projected levels of resources.

Issue 2.

Assess the alternatives of establishing, equipping and training specialized combined arms teams for low-level conflict situations against relying on deployed general purpose forces for such missions, provided with special equipment, if and where appropriate, in quantities required for such missions.

C. Arms Control

NSDD-32 currently has no language on arms control. The Executive Summary of NSSD 1-82 has a single sentence (page vii). The following should be included in NSDD-32:

Global Objectives §

Our policy in negotiating arms agreements, our evaluation of arms control proposals and our policies for observing existing agreements should be based on realistic assessments of our ability to ensure a level of compliance that will result in equal restraints on the parties.

Issue 1:

Assess the constraints imposed by the ABM Treaty on the SDI in relation to a baseline established by considering how the program would have been designed in the absence of Treaty constraints. Assess our ability to enforce Soviet compliance with analogous constraints in the future. Develop principles for observance of the Treaty based on equal constraints.