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Declassified Authority: 20792  
By: Pam Jahnke Date: 10-21-2013

22 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TAYLOR

SUBJECT: Analysis of USSR Fatality Figures from Various US Nuclear Attacks

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11 Nov 62 (22 Oct 62)

1. Dr. Johnson, Mr. McNamara's Assistant for Atomic Energy, has, over the past years, shown particular interest in two subjects: (1) small yield, and (2) clean, weapons. On 19 September, he sent the Secretary of Defense a preliminary analysis of the USSR fatality figures resulting from various forms and levels of US strategic nuclear attacks. His analysis is limited to fatality figures, with no estimate of the non-fatality casualties, but it is useful within its limits.

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2. Dr. Johnson's analysis provides tentative quantitative estimates for several qualitative statements which seem reasonable.

a. Clean surface burst weapons as opposed to "normal" weapons, can reduce fatalities against the [redacted]

[redacted]

b. Air bursts produce far less fatalities even than clean surface burst weapons [redacted]

[redacted]

c. Attacks against [redacted]

[redacted]

3. Dr. Johnson recognizes the limitations of his study, and the tentative nature of his conclusions, but he believes it demonstrates clean weapons can serve a useful purpose in furthering our national objective of reducing casualties in any war. His wrap-up conclusion demonstrates that he recognizes that weapons and strategy, interact to influence casualties:

"The targeting philosophy is as important as weapon type in affecting [redacted] Attacks

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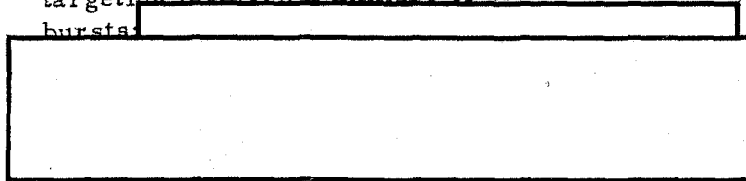
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employing all clean or all normal weapons, as well as attacks employing all air bursts or all surface bursts, are not the most efficient and are thus not realistic. Optimum targeting involves a mixture of air and surface bursts.

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