

MESSAGE

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Cleared for J-5 by:
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 Colonel, USA
 Executive, J-5

TOP SECRET **JCS XX** 995685 From JCS. Director Joint Staff sends. Personal for General Power, General Armstrong, Admiral Dennison, General Norstad, Admiral Felt and Admiral Smith.

1. Following message is in two parts relating to requirement for an assessment of capabilities for employment of nuclear delivery forces. Part I is a quotation of a memorandum for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Subject: Policy Guidance on Plans for Central War, prepared by Deputy Secretary of Defense. Part II is quote

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 Authority NND 921124
 By *ft* NARA, Date 4/12/96

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of a draft section of proposed new Basic National Security Policy prepared in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. This Policy has not been approved. Request replies in response to requirements outlined in Part I be submitted to Joint Chiefs of Staff not later than 6 June. Reproduction of Parts I and II authorized only in sufficient quantity to comply with requirements.

PART I

2. Our plans and programs should provide a significant range of alternative response options appropriate to the various foreseeable forms of a thermonuclear war emergency. The ability of the President to select a response suited to the specific circumstances prevailing at the time of hostilities should enhance deterrence and could permit the United States and its Allies, if central war occurred, to secure military, civil and political outcomes markedly more advantageous than might otherwise be expected.

3. The attached draft of a section of the proposed new Basic National Security Policy reflects current thinking on the goals, criteria, and the nature of required capabilities for a posture permitting controlled, discriminating response. To the degree made feasible by progress toward the requisite capabilities, it should be possible

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concurrently to reflect in basic policies and war plans provisions for increased latitude in response options to thermonuclear war emergency. Such recent or currently programmed innovations as integrated operational planning for strategic offensive forces, mobile alternate command posts at national level and below, the extension of the bomb alarm system and the introduction of the Polaris system all lend themselves to immediate exploitation in the interests of greater strategic flexibility. We should be interested, therefore, not only the long-run improvements of posture in this direction, but in pursuing opportunities for partial and progressive development on a continuous basis, beginning as soon as possible.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are requested to cause the Director of Strategic Target Planning to scrutinize the current SIOP-62 and forces committed to its execution, and that appropriate unified and specified commanders similarly scrutinize their current war plans covering atomic capable offensive forces not committed to the SIOP. Recognizing that these plans already permit a variety of options keyed to duration of warning, geographic discretion, constraints, and specifics of weather and visability, the objective of this scrutiny will be to provide answers to the following questions:

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a. In light of considerations in the attached paper and of such new capabilities as those mentioned above, to what specific extent might it be feasible in the near term to provide a wider latitude of options for response to thermonuclear war emergency, assuming that any impediments to this action embodied in the current National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy were removed?

b. What would be a realistic time schedule for the earliest integration of such feasible additions to current response options into operational plans?

c. If further desirable options would depend on capabilities not currently programmed, would changes in our capabilities be feasible at reasonable cost and effort in the near term, and what specific actions would be necessary?

d. What capabilities not presently programmed would be the principal requirements for a future posture permitting a still wider variety of response options calculated to derive maximum advantage from any of the foreseeable circumstances under which central war might occur?

e. Are any other major problems or difficulties foreseen, in light of the recognized necessity to avoid

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any disruption or reduction of current capabilities?

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6. If possible, the Director of Strategic Target Planning should respond to this inquiry by 15 June 1961.

PART II

7. Major National Security Objectives

The security interests of the United States determine, at all times, multiple national security objectives. Each provides a distinct criterion by which to judge the

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adequacy of an overall military posture and the strategy for its use. The most urgent objectives are:

- a. To deter any deliberate major nuclear assault upon the United States or its Allies.
- b. To deter and counter attempts by the Sino-Soviet Bloc to extend its political, military and ideological influence by direct or indirect, overt or covert threat or use of force.
- c. To reduce the likelihood of uncalculated, unpremeditated or inadvertent nuclear attacks. 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.
- d. 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 U.S.; and to reduce the possibility that such attacks may trigger major nuclear war.
- e. To protect US security interests in any armed conflict involving US forces which might occur. In particular:

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(1) In local war: (Central War is defined as a war between the US and the USSR in which either nation deliberately attacks the homeland of the other. Local War is defined as any other armed conflict in which significant elements of military forces are engaged.) To bring the conflict to a conclusion satisfactory to the US, in a manner which protects US Allies and preserves US alliances, which deters further attempts by hostile nations to enhance their influence and strength by armed force, and which minimizes the risk of escalation to major nuclear war.

(2) In central war:

(a) To preclude, under all circumstances, US military inferiority to an opponent or any potential enemies during or after the war.

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

(c) To limit damage to the US and its Allies, at a minimum to a level consistent with national survival and independence.

(d) Consistent with above objectives, to achieve decisive military superiority to the opponent.

(e) To bring the war to a conclusion on the most advantageous terms possible.

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POLICY FOR CENTRAL WAR POSTURE AND STRATEGY

8. Goals

a. The primary objectives of US policy with respect to central war must be to deter deliberate attack and prevent unintended outbreak. The US 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 US policy that there be adequate alternatives to the initiation by the US of central war. Yet if central war is forced upon the United States, US military strength must still serve multiple national objectives.

b. 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 US 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 US 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

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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 US security policy to forestall them.

c. 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.

d. The most urgent military goal in central war is to preclude the prospect of an unarmed US confronting armed opponents. It is essential that no enemy be able to disarm the US by surprise attack on forces or controls;

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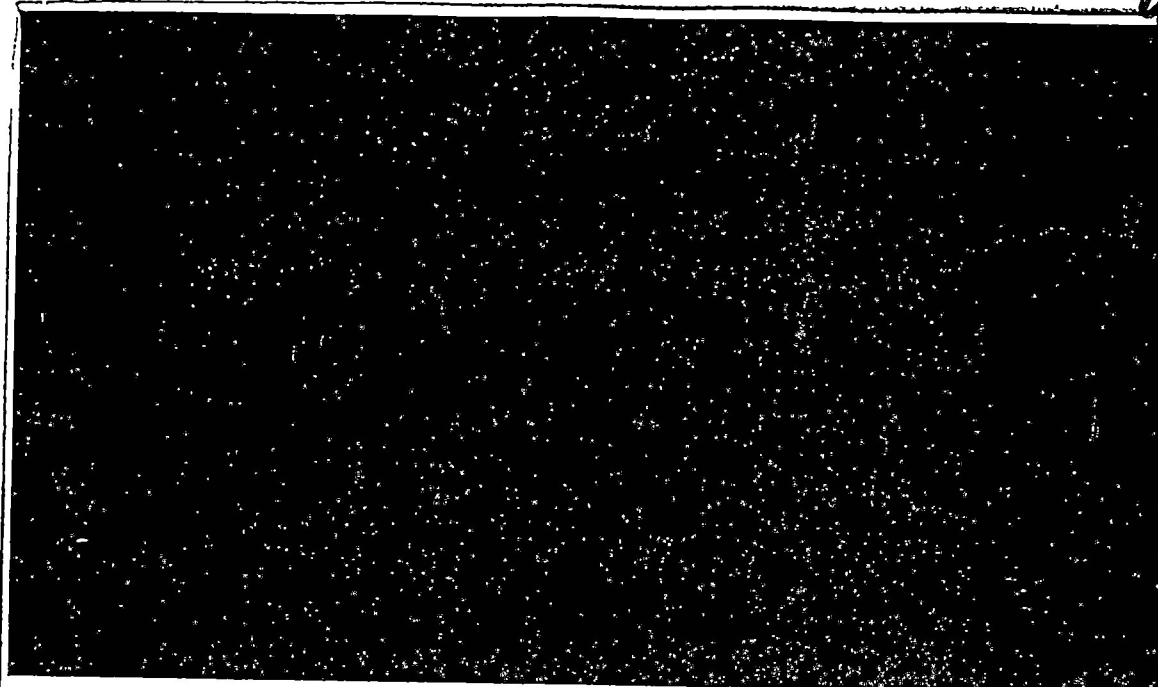
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e. A visible and indisputable capability to achieve this basic military requirement is vital to deter deliberate attack on the US. It denies such attack any incentive. It guarantees that even a well-designed surprise attack would be futile and costly; an assault could neither win military superiority nor reduce to acceptable proportions the nuclear retaliation that could be launched by US forces.

f. At the same time, the capabilities required for this fundamental task serve the other wartime goals of minimizing damage to the US and its Allies and forcing a conclusion to the war on advantageous terms. US countermilitary action reduces enemy capability to inflict further damage or to continue the war; the

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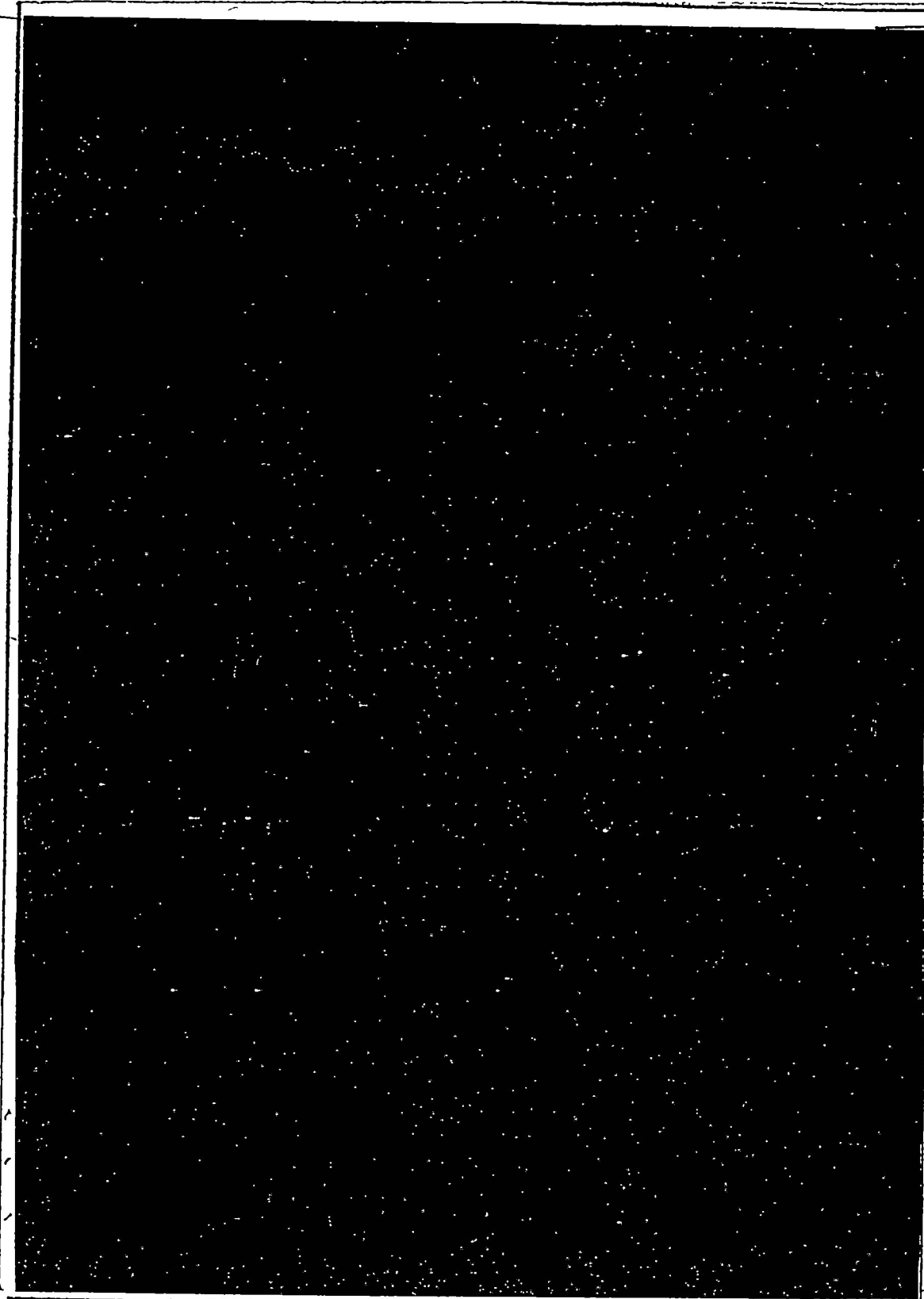
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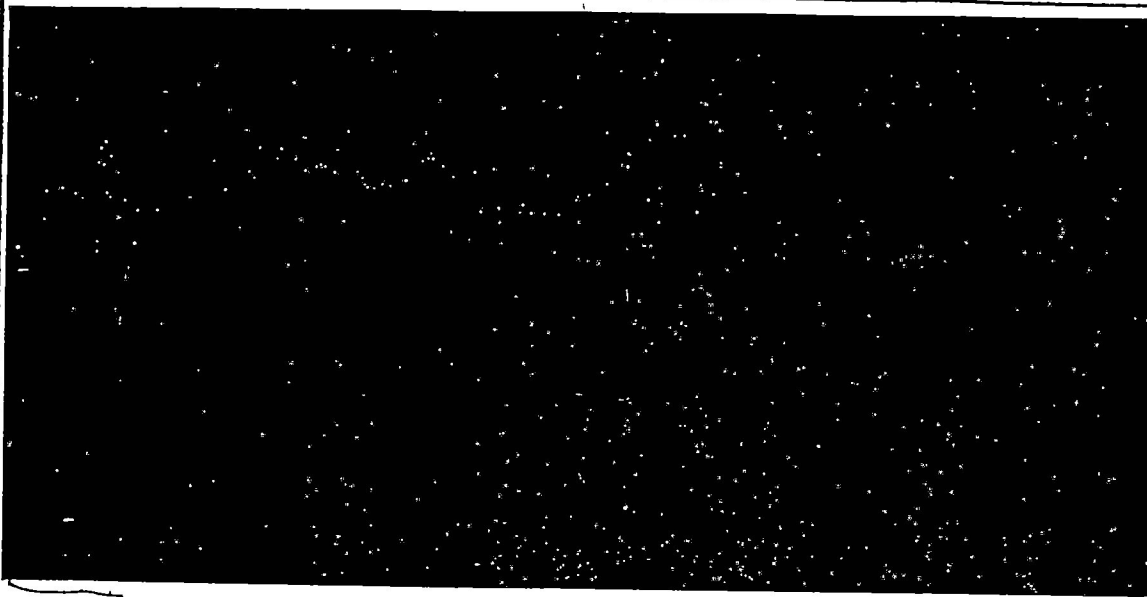
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i. Not all objectives can be achieved with equal confidence. But a capability to preclude, with high confidence, enemy residual military superiority at any stage of the conflict offers best hope not only of deterring deliberate attack but, if war occurs,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

j. 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 US security by safeguarded arms control agreements and by non-military means.

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9. Contingencies

a. Posture and strategy for central war must be designed to achieve these various US security objectives under a spectrum of contingencies. It 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 US might also seem dangerous. Its ability to deter must be able to withstand sizeable enemy miscalculation of US 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.

b. If central war should occur, despite US 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 US wartime

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objectives would depend upon ability to adapt US 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 or 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 US 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 US forces or failing to do so. It might direct heavy initial assault against US and Allied civil society and major command centers or it might carefully avoid such targets. Central war might culminate 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 vulnerabilities, 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.

c. This list of possibilities is not exhaustive. Intermediate situations between the extremes cited may

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offer special problems; and "surprises" in the form of wholly unforeseen circumstances are likely.

d. 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 alternative to an all-out, indiscriminating 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.

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10. Requirements

a. 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.

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(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 US bases and the level of damage to US 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, US and enemy residual capability, and damage to US, 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.

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(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 US 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 US 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 US military strengths.

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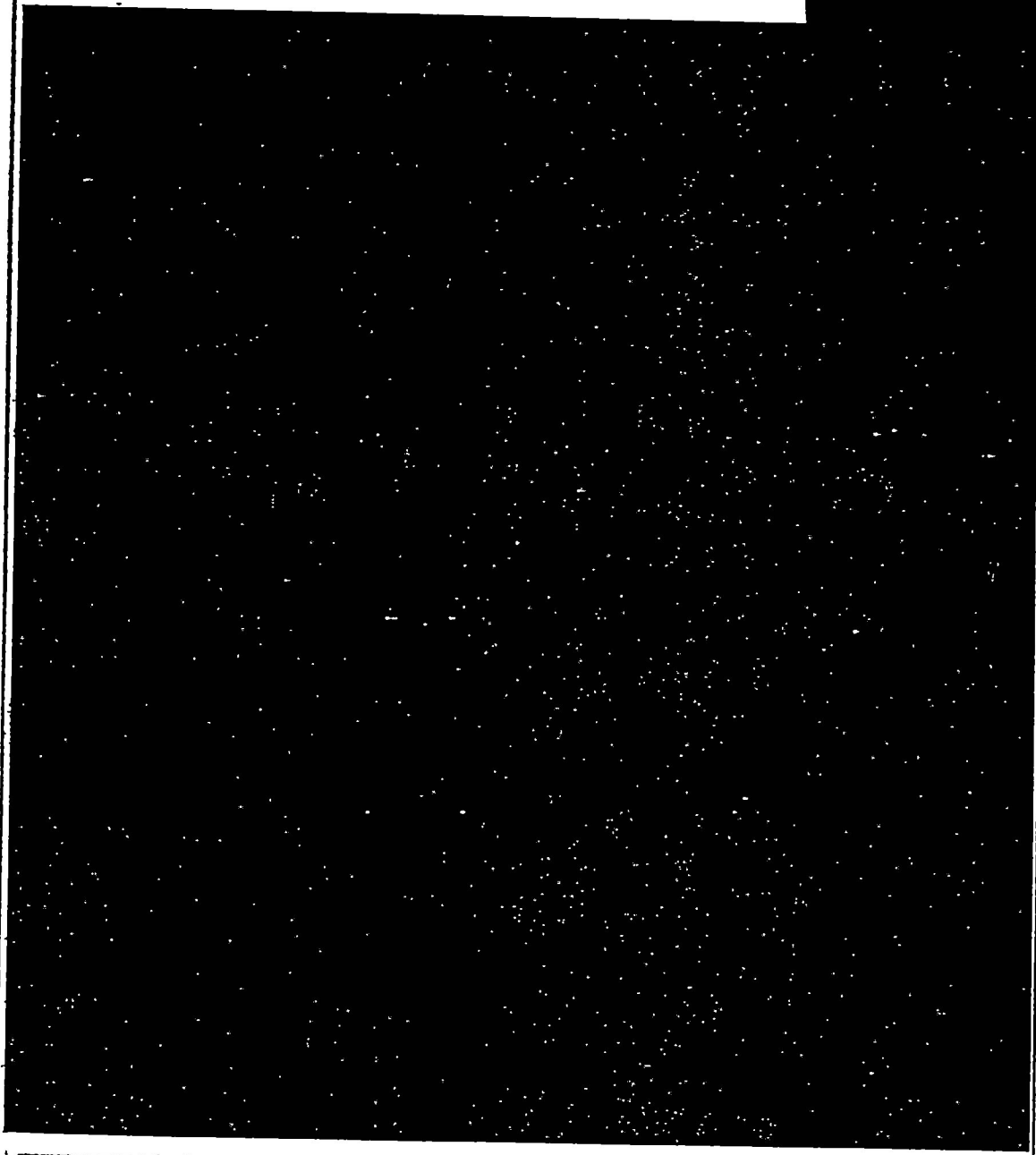
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(6) Contingency planning. To permit rapid selective responses on the basis of information available at the outset of hostilities and after, contingency plans should be provided corresponding to gross differences in the circumstances and course of central war.

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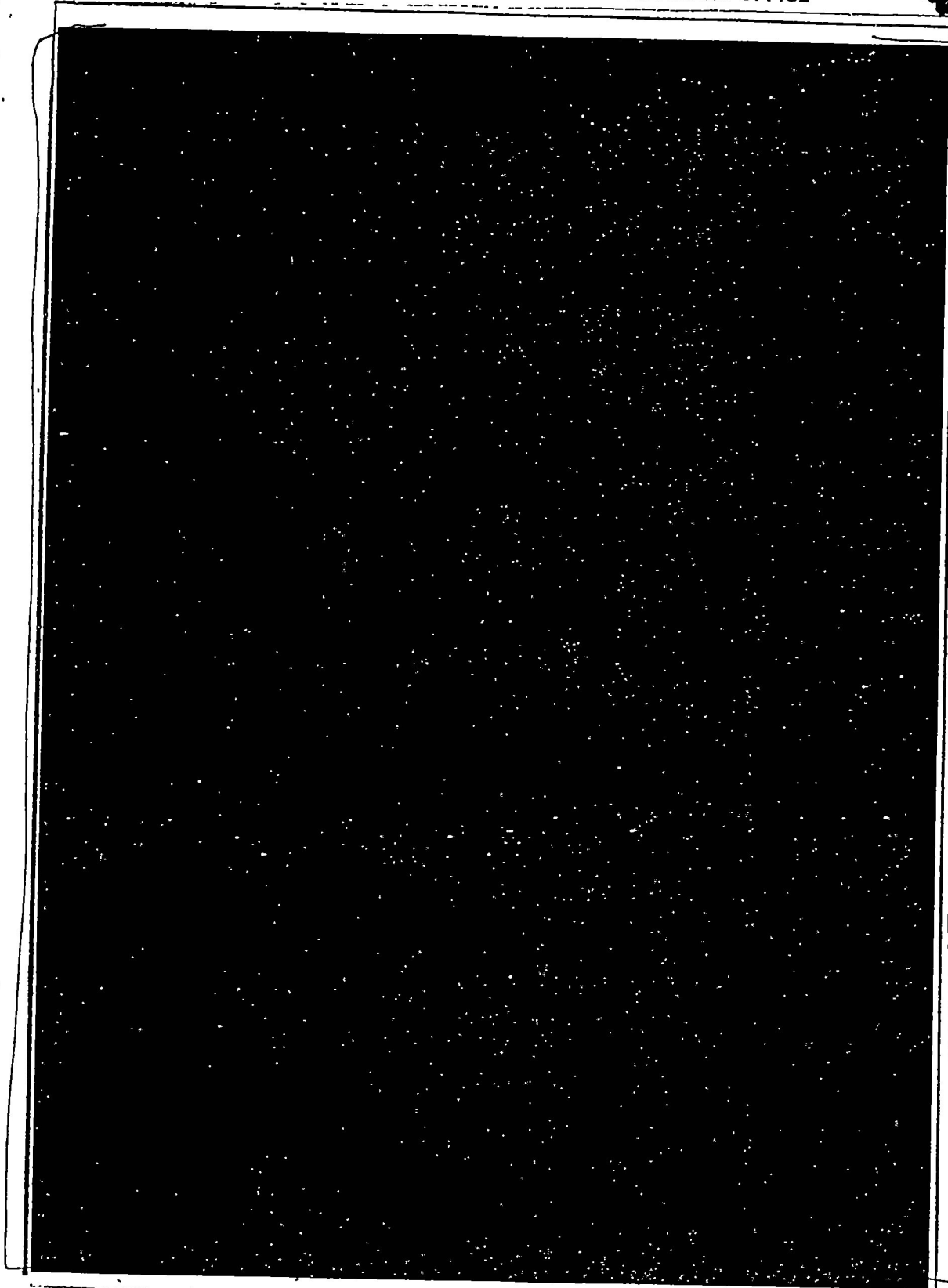
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b. A US military posture with these broad capabilities permits a wide variety of strategic responses under varying conditions of central war. Its major post-attack capabilities should effectively deter deliberate attack; yet if central war occurs, they give highest national authority maximum opportunity to preserve US military advantages, to limit damage to the US and its Allies and

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to stop the war on the most advantageous possible terms. They will allow US commanders to exploit any opportunity in wartime to disarm the opponent or to achieve decisive military superiority in support of US 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 counter-military US 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 US and Allied civil society would be, under any circumstances, the worst of all possible actions.

c. 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 US accident, unauthorized action or false alarm. At the same time, the US posture reduces the tendency of any opponent to attack hastily under similarly ambiguous

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circumstances, since the prospect of US post-attack capabilities deprives him of incentive to do so.

d. 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.

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