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January 18, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MISSILE AND SPACE PROGRAMS

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January 18, 1961

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
to the
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
on

CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MISSILE AND SPACE PROGRAMS

- References:
- A. NSC Actions Nos. 1433, 1484, 1615-c, 1653, 1690, 1733, 1765, 1800, 1846, 1956, NOTE following 2013, 2081, 2118, 2168, 2207, 2208, 2238-b-(9), 2300-g, 2315 and 2374.
 - B. NSC Action No. 2215-c
 - C. NSC 6021
 - D. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, subject: "Missiles and Military Space Programs", dated December 30, 1960, and January 4, 1961
 - E. NSC Action No. 2372

The enclosed codified statement of policy on the subject, prepared by the NSC Planning Board on the basis of the NSC Actions in Reference A as approved by the President and in the light of the discussion of NSC 6021 ("Missiles and Military Space Programs") by the National Security Council at its meeting on January 5, 1961, is transmitted herewith for continuing guidance and for implementation as appropriate, by the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

As a codification of approved actions, the enclosure is transmitted in accordance with NSC Action No. 2215-c, which provides that where NSC policies do not require revision except of a purely editorial nature, the NSC Planning Board should make a written report to that effect to the Council as a matter of record.

The NSC Actions in Reference A are accordingly superseded as of this date by the enclosed statement of policy.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury
The Director, Bureau of the Budget
The Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

STATEMENT OF POLICY
on
CERTAIN ASPECTS OF MISSILE AND ON SPACE PROGRAMS*

1. Urgency of ICBM Development
(See NSC Action No. 1433, approved September 13, 1955)

a. There would be the gravest repercussions on the national security and on the cohesion of the Free World, should the USSR achieve an operational capability with the ICBM substantially in advance of the United States.

b. In view of known Soviet progress in this field, the development by the United States of an operational capability with the ICBM is a matter of great urgency.

c. The Secretary of Defense will prosecute the program with maximum urgency, and all other Executive departments and agencies will assist the Department of Defense as required. The Secretary of Defense will report promptly to the National Security Council any significant developments or causes of delay in this program (including avenues not explored), and additionally will give the Council a special briefing at least once a year, normally in December, on the status of progress and major problems involved, including a statement of what could be done in the direction of setting an earlier target date for operational capability and the arguments for and against such a proposal.

* Includes: Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) Programs; Fleet Ballistic Missile (POLARIS) Program; Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) Program; Anti-Ballistic Missile Weapon System (NIKE ZEUS); Reconnaissance Satellite; and Certain Space Programs. The previous action on Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) Development (NSC Action No. 1484, approved December 20, 1955) has not been included because the objectives of that action have been achieved. For policy on Outer Space, see statement of policy adopted at the Joint Meeting of the National Security Council with the National Aeronautics and Space Council on January 12, 1960, approved by the President on January 29, 1960 and circulated by memorandum for the NSC dated January 29, 1960.

2. Reconnaissance Satellite

(See NSC Actions No. 1956, approved August 4, 1958; No. 2238-b-(9), approved May 24, 1960; Action No. 1-b, Special NSC Meeting on August 25, 1960, transmitted to the Secretary of Defense by memorandum of September 1, 1960*)

The President has approved for planning purposes the advanced reconnaissance satellite program presented by the Department of Defense, including the test vehicles which will orbit over the USSR; with the understanding that Presidential authorization with respect to the launching of the development satellites capable of reconnaissance over the USSR and the subsequent scope of the operational capability of the program, will be sought by the Department of Defense in early 1960 or prior to the launching of the first of the above satellites, whichever date is sooner.

The reconnaissance satellite program should be reviewed in connection with expediting achievement of an operational capability as soon as feasible, but no programs are to be undertaken on a crash basis until scientific analysis demonstrates real promise of success. If an issue is raised as to whether development and use of reconnaissance satellites is a provocative act, Khrushchev's statement might be quoted in which he said that he was aware of the U. S. satellite photographing the USSR, that he had not protested and that it could take as many pictures as we wanted.

3. Priority List**

(See NSC Actions No. 2081, approved May 13, 1959; No. 2118, approved August 21, 1959; No. 2208, approved April 1, 1960)

The President has established the following programs as having the highest priority above all others for research and development and for achieving operational capability; scope of the operational capability to be approved by the President:

* The President, as of September 1, 1960, authorized the first scheduled experimental launching of SAMOS to take place during September 1960.

** This priority list does not include all significant space and missile projects.

(Order of listing does not indicate priority of one program over another)

- (1) ATLAS (ICBM) Weapon System
- (2) TITAN (ICBM) Weapon System
- (3) POLARIS (FBM) Weapon System
- (4) MINUTE MAN (ICBM) Weapon System
- (5) Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) Phase I, including Project DEW DROP
- (6) NIKE-ZEUS Weapon System (research and development only)
- (7) Space programs determined by the President on advice of the National Aeronautics and Space Council to have objectives having key political, scientific, psychological or military import.

The President has designated the following projects under the category specified in (7) above:

SAMOS (satellite-borne visual and ferret reconnaissance system)
DISCOVERER (satellite guidance and recovery)
MERCURY (manned satellite)
SATURN (1,500,000 pound-thrust, clustered rocket engine)*

5. Scope of Operational Capability of Missiles
(See NSC Actions No. 2168, approved January 13, 1960; No. 2207, approved April 6, 1960; No. 2315, approved October 5, 1960)
 - a. The presently-approved ICBM program is 27 squadrons (13 ATLAS and 14 TITAN).
 - b. The approved initial operational force objective for MINUTEMAN specifies the achievement of 150 operational missiles by mid-calendar year 1963.
 - c. The approved operational force objective for MINUTEMAN specifies the achievement of 540 operational missiles by mid-calendar year 1964.
 - d. A total of 19 POLARIS submarines is authorized for construction.

* SATURN added at meeting of National Aeronautics and Space Council of January 12, 1960; minutes approved by the President on January 26, 1960.

(Order of listing does not indicate priority of one program over another)

- (1) ATLAS (ICBM) Weapon System
- (2) TITAN (ICBM) Weapon System
- (3) POLARIS (FBM) Weapon System
- (4) MINUTE MAN (ICBM) Weapon System
- (5) Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) Phase I, including Project DEW DROP
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5. Scope of Operational Capability of Missiles
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a. The presently-approved ICBM program is 27 squadrons (13 ATLAS and 14 TITAN).

b. The approved initial operational force objective for MINUTEMAN specifies the achievement of 1950 operational missiles by mid-calendar year 1963.

c. The approved operational force objective for MINUTEMAN specifies the achievement of 540 operational missiles by mid-calendar year 1964.

d. A total of 19 POLARIS submarines is authorized for construction:

* SATURN added at meeting of National Aeronautics and Space Council of January 12, 1960; minutes approved by the President on January 26, 1960.

e. Long lead time planning and procurement actions are authorized to permit construction of 5 additional POLARIS submarines.

f. Installation of eight POLARIS missiles on the nuclear-powered cruiser USS LONG BEACH is authorized as an exception to the general policy of the Department of Defense of not placing POLARIS missiles on cruisers.

6. Satellite Destruction
(See NSC Action No. 2300-g, approved September 21, 1960)

Any test which involves destroying a satellite or space vehicle shall not proceed without specific Presidential approval.