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NUCLEAR WAR

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BY: CIA RESERVE PANEL

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FOREWORD

In this report the Special Reserve Panel has sought to analyze the likely impact of global nuclear warfare on CIA's wartime role. Principal emphasis has been placed on the period through 1960, during which U.S. military planning is based on a concept of unlimited nuclear warfare, implying the use of nuclear weapons in both strategic and tactical roles in all areas of the world in which suitable targets are located.

The Panel is cognizant of and has given much attention to the alternatives to all-out nuclear war. However, because the official U.S. concept of the character of a general war resulting from a Soviet attack through 1960 is based upon massive retaliation utilizing nuclear weapons and because realistic war planning must in any case be based upon the most adverse circumstances in which CIA initial wartime activities would be carried out, the Panel has considered only CIA's role in a war involving all-out use of nuclear weapons by both sides.

The Panel has placed primary emphasis on an analysis of CIA's overseas role. The impact of an attack on Washington is likely to be such that the field may have to operate with little Headquarters direction and support for an indefinite period of time.

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In preparing this report, the Panel has taken into consideration: (1) U.S. policies, insofar as available, governing the conduct of a future general war; (2) CIA war plans; and (3) NIEs and other intelligence on the wartime capabilities and intentions of the Soviet Union, the Soviet Satellite nations, and neutral countries and our Allies.

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CONCLUSIONS

1. Major war up to 1960 would be an all-out nuclear war.

2. At least the first phase would be one of all-out and possibly very brief unrestricted exchange of nuclear attacks.

3. There may be a subsequent phase or phases of what has been termed "broken back" war.

4. The initial phase of all-out nuclear warfare would take place in limited areas of highest strategic importance while large areas, either neutral countries or "strategic islands," would be left relatively untouched, even by fall-out. Even small areas within the major combat zones, i.e., "tactical islands" would be more or less free of nuclear damage.

5. Since nuclear war would almost certainly begin with a surprise attack, which Soviet advances in nuclear weapons and delivery systems make increasingly feasible, early warning becomes ever more vital but increasingly difficult to achieve.

6. CIA's ability to function during the first phase in areas of intensive nuclear exchange would be severly limited. A large proportion of existing CIA assets and facilities in areas of nuclear destruction would be neutralized if not destroyed.

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(a) Great difficulties would arise in the redeployment and reorganization of CIA field stations.

(b) Agent resources in particular would be highly vulnerable to the effects of nuclear weapons.

(c) Extensive disruption of communications would occur. Under these circumstances CIA would be capable of only the most limited first phase operations in combat theaters. CIA's primary task would be to cope with the problems of survival and redeployment for subsequent phases of operations and the establishment of satisfactory relationships with the military commanders.

7. In contrast to the severe limitations on CIA's first phase role in areas of extensive nuclear exchange, greatly expanded opportunities for useful CIA operations would occur in the subsequent phase of "broken back" warfare. In this phase extensive requirements for intelligence on the chaotic post attack situation in key areas and numerous possibilities for stimulating resistance activities and guerrilla warfare will exist.

8. Moreover, from the very outset of a war CIA could play a major role in those areas which, bacause they remain neutral or are of secondary military importance, would not come under intensive nuclear attack. Indeed CIA operations in these areas could probably make a

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greater contribution to the over-all national effort than could the limited activities which would be feasible in nuclear combat zones. In many cases CIA staff personnel and assets might be the only major U.S. resources available to carry out U.S. policy.

9. The employment of nuclear weapons by the U.S. and its Allies in satellite areas could decisively affect CIA operations in these areas, but to date these problems have not been adequately explored.

10. The terms, timing and circumstances of surrender negotiations which might occur after an extremely short period of nuclear exchange would critically affect planning for CIA's wartime role as well as for the key role CIA might have in the immediate post hostilities period. Here, too, however, there does not appear to be any adequate national planning.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Early warning operations must be given a clear-cut priority over wartime requirements including those placed by the military upon CIA.

2. CIA should accept only the most limited requirements in anticipated areas of major nuclear exchange during the first phase of a war.

3. Instead, CIA war planning for areas of likely nuclear exchange should emphasize survival, reorganization and the establishment of proper relationships with military commanders, in order to ensure adequate CIA support of the military in these areas in the subsequent phase of the war.

4. CIA war planning for areas likely to remain neutral or the large "strategic islands" likely to escape nuclear damage should be premised on the concept that CIA can make a major and perhaps its most important contribution to the national war effort in and from such areas.

5. An emergency communications system adaptable to the situation of a nuclear war should be developed. It should include:

(a) Alternate facilities to those presently in use;

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(b) Facilities independent of existing military and civilian systems;

(c) Equipment which can be operated by untrained CIA personnel;

(d) Stored, protected and available equipment in both the "tactical islands" within the combat areas and in the "strategic islands" and neutral areas.

6. CIA should undertake a study to determine where strategic and tactical islands would be likely to exist in a nuclear war and should undertake war planning on the basis of this study; and

7. CIA should attempt to influence U.S. national planners to consider the pros and cons of employing nuclear weapons in Satellite areas.

8. CIA should examine the problem of the terms, timing, and circumstances of possible surrender negotiation to determine the impact these would have on CIA's wartime and post-hostilities roles.

9. Finally, we recommend that the above principles be adopted as the guidelines for future CIA war planning.

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