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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D. C.

407380

13 March 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

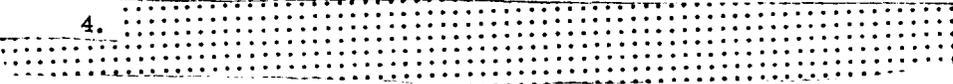
Subject: Nuclear Testing (U)

1. Reference is made to a memorandum by the Deputy Secretary of Defense, dated 27 February 1958, subject as above.

2. Under the conditions specified in the referenced memorandum the United States is ahead of the USSR numerically, both in numbers of weapons and amounts of weapons materials. If the moratorium applies only against testing, the United States can hold this position until about 1964. In any analysis of the nuclear capabilities of the two countries, the United States can only evaluate Soviet weapons against our own, since we have no specific intelligence on theirs. With this handicap, we must interject a note of caution into any evaluation, because of the possibility that the USSR may have made alternative effective designs which are unknown to us.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed referenced memorandum in light of the possible position of the USSR with respect to that of the United States, and consider that a complete cessation of nuclear testing after Operation HARDTACK would result, at the very least, in a technological parity in nuclear weapons development between the two countries. This apparent parity is reflected in the Appendix hereto. Furthermore, the quantitative advantage which the United States presently enjoys as a result of its greater stockpile may well be equalized by about 1964 by the USSR with its rapidly increasing capacity for producing nuclear materials. These factors, coupled with the ability of the USSR to assume the military initiative, could result in relative supremacy of the USSR over the United States.

4.



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For these reasons, as well as for the technological parity which is now evidenced, and the ability of the USSR to equalize our present quantitative advantage by about 1964, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe strongly that under no circumstances should the United States discuss with the USSR a test moratorium prior to the successful completion of the key shots in HARDTACK.

5. Only through continued testing and development can improvements be realized in yield-to-weight ratios for atomic warheads. Further, radical advances in weapon systems are only possible through these improvements.

Significant advancements in such weapon systems as the second generation of IRBM's, ICBM's, and FBM's and the anti-missile missile are only possible through continued warhead development and testing. In addition, vital weapon effects information can only be obtained through continued testing.

6. For the reasons above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirm their opinion of 31 December 1957 that cessation of tests should be considered only as a part of a larger disarmament proposal which will provide also for complete suspension of the production of weapons and weapons materials keyed to an effective system of inspection and verification.



For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

(Signed)  
MAXWELL D. TAYLOR  
General, United States Army,  
Chief of Staff

Enclosure:  
Appendix

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Appendix

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Collection and/or Series (e.g. OF; PPF; Mitchell Papers)	Box No.	File No. and/or Folder Title (e.g. 41-A; 62-B; Civil Rights)	Correspondents and/or Subject (e.g. Memo, Smith to Jones)	Date of Docs.	Number of Pages
NSC - Series Subject Subseries	1	Atomic Energy - The President (May 53 - Misc)	Memorandum for the President, from memo to Dir.	5/4/53	4 ✓
		"	Custody of Atomic Weapons	5/4/53	1 ✓
		"	Memo to President from Gary	4/16/53	1 ✓
	"	"	Draft memo to President	4/16/53	2 ✓
	"	"	Memo for President from Gleason	7/20/53	1 ✓
	"	"	Memo of the President	7/20/53	1 ✓
	"	"	Upshot - Knut hole approval memo	3/25/56	3 ✓
		Atomic weapons, covers & background for Pres. approval (1953-60) (2)	Memorandum for record	9/12/58	6 ✓
		"	Memorandum to conference w/ president	6/30/58	4 ✓
		Atomic Energy - Miscellaneous (1) 1953-54	Memorandum for the President (A)	7/20/53	1 ✓
		"	Memorandum for the President	7/20/53	1 ✓
		"	Memo to Secs, Sub Re: DOD participation	2/10/53	2 ✓
		Atomic Energy miscellaneous (3)	Memorandum for Chairman from letter	9/7/54	1 ✓
		"	Letter to President re: Teapot	8/30/54	2 ✓
		"	Upshot - Knut hole approval memo	5/27/53 2/10/53	14 ✓
	Atomic Energy Miscellaneous (4)	Memo to President re: Teapot	9/2/55	2 ✓	
	"	Memo to Chairman from DOE balance	2/6/54	3 ✓	
	Atomic Weapons Classified Intell. - misc	Correspondence Re: proposal for letter to President	1/5/56	10 ✓	
	"	Letter to President & related corresp Re: memorandum	7/3/56	8 ✓	