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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

January 25, 1973

NSC UNDER SECRETARIES COMMITTEE

~~TOP SECRET~~

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Annual Review of U.S. Chemical
Warfare and Biological Research
Program

Pursuant to NSDM 35, the Under Secretaries Committee has reviewed and approved the attached second annual review of the U.S. chemical warfare and biological research program, including riot control agents and herbicides.

The report covers the period from November 1, 1970 through June 30, 1972. Developments during this period include the following:

-- No procurement or production of offensive weapons was undertaken during the period under review. Within the framework of applicable environmental legislation, disposal or demilitarization of unneeded stocks of chemical weapons has continued. This will be facilitated by a transportable disposal system which is being developed. Current offensive research and development efforts include development of binary munitions (discussed further below) and improved incapacitating agents.

-- All research and development on biological weapons has been terminated. Programs for disposing of stocks of these weapons are now virtually complete. Laboratory quantities of agents (not weapons) will be retained to support defensive research. The conversion of facilities at Pine Bluff Arsenal and Fort Detrick to emphasize civil use has been accomplished. The Army is contemplating some defensive tests of prototype biological alarms to determine their efficiency. Because the results of these tests may be classified, public affairs problems could arise; a forthright approach may resolve or contain such problems.

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-- Our chemical and biological defensive posture is marginal. Only limited procurement of defensive equipment is being undertaken. Research and development looking toward improved techniques continues.

-- Procurement of riot control agents was undertaken during this period largely to replace stocks issued in Vietnam. No procurement of herbicides was undertaken for U.S. forces, and only limited use was made of herbicides by U.S. forces in Vietnam. Remaining stocks of herbicide Orange, the use of which was suspended in 1970 will be disposed of when a final environmental impact statement has been prepared.

-- Limited support in riot control agents and herbicides is being given to the Republic of Vietnam. U.S. ground and helicopter herbicide spray equipment has been turned over to the Government of Vietnam. No fixed wing capability has been provided or is contemplated. The National Academy of Sciences study of the use of herbicides in Vietnam is to be completed this year.

-- Developments in the arms control field include completion of the biological weapons convention and intensified interest on the part of a number of countries in placing additional restraints on chemical weapons.

-- The report does not provide a comprehensive estimate but summarizes available information concerning foreign chemical and biological capabilities (pages 3-7 and pages 16-17 respectively). Difficulties in obtaining intelligence are noted at pages 36-37.

In forwarding this report, the Committee notes that two major policy issues affecting this program have been the subject of separate studies:

-- The first concerns whether or not the U.S. wishes to preserve the option to initiate the use of riot control agents and chemical herbicides in war (Geneva Protocol Study). It should be noted that this issue is likely to be

introduced during Senate consideration of the Biological Weapons Convention.

-- The second concerns whether the U.S. wishes to make a proposal at the upcoming CCD session with a view to achieving additional treaty restraints on chemical weapons prohibitions.

In connection with the second of these studies, the Committee wishes, in particular, to call your attention to the following recommendations which appear at pages 42-43 of the attached report:

-- Following a decision on the NSSM 157 study on chemical weapons prohibitions, an interagency study should be initiated to examine options for a U.S. deterrent and retaliatory posture, drawing on previous studies as appropriate.

-- Also following a decision on the NSSM 157 study, guidelines for the public information program on U.S. chemical warfare and biological and toxin research should be reviewed.

You may wish to consider these recommendations in conjunction with a decision on the NSSM 157 study.

In addition, I wish to call your attention to those sections of the report concerned with binary munitions (pages 13 and 39-40). Binary artillery munitions would permit separate storage and transportation of nerve agent precursors which are no more toxic than many ordinary industrial chemicals. The components would be assembled in forward areas, and the agent would be formed in the projectile while in-flight to the target. Such a system should circumvent current technical difficulties encountered in the movement and storage of CW weapons.

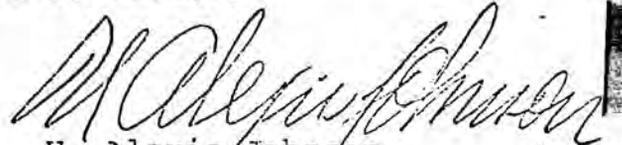
The expected study and discussion centering around the need for open-air tests of the 155 mm binary GB projectile will focus attention on current U.S. plans to move in the

direction of binary munitions. Your approval of these tests will be requested by the Department of Defense prior to presenting the plan to Congress.

Some believe that the provision of extensive information on this activity and its environmental aspects, coupled with advance public affairs planning, will reduce criticism to a minimum. Others believe that open-air testing will prove controversial and draw substantial criticism in any case. All agree that careful handling of public affairs aspects will be needed and that the chance of controversy should not be discounted. The Department of Defense will pursue public affairs aspects of these activities in cooperation with other interested agencies.

Although not included specifically in the issues or recommendations, the joint OSD/JCS position is that there is a need to maintain current priority efforts in the collection and analysis of intelligence, and to continue an adequate research and development program in chemical warfare and biological defensive measures. In addition, JCS believe that CB defensive posture should be improved.

The Under Secretaries Committee is prepared to be of assistance in connection with the foregoing or other matters covered in the attached report if you so desire.


U. Alexis Johnson
Acting Chairman

Attachment:

Annual Review of CW/BR Program

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