

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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 SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY

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April 2, 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE:

Downgraded To: ~~SECRET~~ CONFIDENTIAL

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Authorized By: H. D. [unclear]

August 4, 1975

Subject: Policy on Use of Atomic Weapons

On March 30, 1956 General Loper called to discuss the NSC Directive of March 15, 1956 calling for recommendations on advance Presidential authorization of the use of nuclear weapons. He said that the memorandum by Admiral Radford of 15 February had been informally approved by the Secretary of Defense and had come to the attention of the President at the time NSC 5502/1 was under consideration. Thus the general question of advance authorization of use had been raised with the President at the same time that the specific matter of authorization for use of warheads for air defense had been under discussion between the Department of Defense and the Department of State. Following receipt of Mr. Hoover's letter of March 8, the Air Defense matter has gone to the White House and is now awaiting review by Dillon Anderson.

General Loper said that a letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State is now awaiting signature, which will explain the reasoning behind the proposed advance authorization. The proposed Presidential directive prepared by the JCS will be attached in slightly revised form. General Loper felt that the proper order would be for the President to approve the general authorization, which would take effect at such time as specific rules of engagement and of deployment have been worked out between the staffs of the two Departments and agreed on. Loper said that he would see that officers on the Staff of the OSD and JSC were designated to work with the Department of State on this matter.

Loper agreed to get advance copy of the letter from the Secretary of Defense sent to S/AE, in order that State Department's Staff Study of the Defense proposals might be gotten underway promptly. There is a similar letter to go from the Secretary of Defense to the Chairman AEC. Mr. Smith indicated some of the questions which appeared to require study before Presidential authorization could be agreed on.

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By [unclear] NARA, Date 1/30/97