

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 14, 1977

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PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/NSC-25

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Secretary of Energy  
The Secretary of the Interior  
The Secretary of Agriculture  
The Secretary of Commerce  
The Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare  
The Secretary of Transportation  
The Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget  
The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
The Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality  
The Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy  
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
The Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency  
The Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
The Director, National Science Foundation  
The Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission

SUBJECT: Scientific or Technological Experiments with Possible Large-Scale Adverse Environmental Effects and Launch of Nuclear Systems into Space

Two earlier Presidential memoranda dealt with the conduct of scientific or technological experiments that might have large-scale or protracted effects on the physical or biological environment (NSAM 235 of April 17, 1963) and the launching into space of systems involving nuclear power (NSAM 50 (revised) of April 10, 1965). These two NSAMs are hereby rescinded. The general purpose, however, behind these two directives--to give the President the opportunity to consider all factors before any such experiment is carried out--remains valid. The President has approved the policy and procedures below to accomplish that purpose.

It should be understood that experiments which by their nature could reasonably be expected to result in domestic or foreign allegations that they might have major and protracted effects on the physical or biological environment,

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or other areas of public or private interest, are to be included under this policy even though the sponsoring agency feels confident that such allegations would in fact prove to be unfounded.

Where such experiments constitute major action either licensed or funded by Federal Agencies that significantly affect the quality of the human environment, an environmental impact statement will be prepared. The data from such statement may be used in complying with the following procedures which do not affect the requirement to comply with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act:

1. The head of any agency that proposes to undertake a large-scale scientific or technological experiment that might have major and protracted effects on the physical or biological environment, or on other areas of public or private interest, will call such proposals to the attention of the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (hereafter the Director). The Director will consult with the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality (hereafter, the Chairman). Notification of such experiments will be given sufficiently in advance that they may be modified, postponed, or cancelled, if such action is judged necessary in the national interest.

2. In support of proposals for such experiments, the sponsoring agency will prepare for the Director a detailed evaluation of the importance of the particular experiment and the possible direct or indirect environmental effects that might be associated with it. The data from an environmental impact statement may be used in complying with this procedure.

3. The Director in consultation with the Chairman will review the proposals and supporting materials presented by the sponsoring agency in order to assure that the need for the experiment has been properly weighed against possible adverse effects.

4. On the basis of this review, the Director in consultation with the Chairman will recommend to the President what action should be taken on the proposed experiment. If the Director, in consultation with the Chairman, judges that inadequate information is available on which to make a judgment, the Director may request that additional studies be undertaken by the sponsoring agency or may undertake an independent study of the problem. Agencies will be notified if an extended delay is anticipated in approval.

5. In the case of experiments that have major national security implications, the head of the sponsoring agency will notify me so that I may determine on an individual basis the procedure to be followed in reviewing these experiments.

6. While the final decision to conduct such experiments must continue to reside with the government, the National Academy of Sciences and, where appropriate, international scientific bodies or intergovernmental organizations may be consulted in the case of those experiments that might have adverse effects beyond the US. When experiments are expected to have such impacts in foreign countries the Secretary of State will be notified. In arriving at decisions on specific projects foreign policy considerations should be taken into account. Recommendation on the advisability of the courses of action will be made by the Director in consultation with the Chairman and with the sponsoring agency and the State Department as appropriate.

7. Any large scale scientific or technological experiment that may involve particularly serious or protracted adverse effects will not be conducted without the President's approval. Any experiment that may involve serious or protracted adverse effects will not be conducted without the approval of the head of the department or agency involved, with, in appropriate cases the advice of other concerned agencies.

8. To the extent that it is consistent with national security, and subsequent to approval of the experiment, there should be early and widespread dissemination of public information explaining the purpose, benefits, and assessments of impact.

9. A separate procedure will be followed for launching space nuclear systems. An environmental impact statement or a nuclear safety evaluation report, as appropriate, will be prepared. In addition, the President's approval is required for launches of spacecraft utilizing radioactive sources containing more than 20 curies of material in Radiotoxicity Groups I and II and for more than 200 curies of material in Radiotoxicity Groups III and IV (as given in Table I of the NASC report of June 16, 1970 on "Nuclear Safety Review and Approval Procedures"). An ad hoc Interagency Nuclear Safety Review Panel consisting of members from the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration will evaluate the risks associated with the mission and prepare a Nuclear Safety Evaluation Report. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should be requested to participate as an observer when appropriate. The head of the sponsoring agency will request the President's approval for the flight through the Office of Science and

Technology Policy. The Director is authorized to render approval for such launchings, unless he considers it advisable to forward the matter to the President for decision.



Zbigniew Brzezinski