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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

Statement

1977
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1/7/61

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

In a memorandum to you on 16 August 1961, I recommended that the \$514.5 million for additional long-range bombers, the \$180 million additional for the B-70, and the \$85.8 million additional for Dynasoar, appropriated by the Congress for FY 1962 not be spent. Since that time, I have received and given careful consideration to the report of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee. I have also completed a review of U. S. requirements for long-range nuclear delivery systems, and for military space research and development, as a part of a review of the Defense program for the period 1963-1967. I remain convinced that the additional appropriations should not be spent.

Let me make clear that my reason for recommending against the procurement of an additional wing of long-range bombers is not a simple belief that bombers are becoming obsolete, either because ballistic missiles are based on more advanced technology, or because of prospective improvements in enemy air defenses. Indeed, as the Stennis Committee report pointed out, bombers can do things that missiles cannot do. As for enemy defenses, I am confident that the capability for defense suppression provided by the 1,000 air-launched missiles to be carried by alert B-52's in my recommended program will be more than enough to enable the bombers to penetrate. My main reason for recommending against more bombers is that they are soft, concentrated, and vulnerable to ICBM attack, whereas I am convinced that most of our long-range nuclear delivery forces must be either hard and dispersed or continuously mobile in peacetime, both in order to be protected from surprise missile attack and to have adequate survival potential in the wartime environment. We plan to protect the bombers by warning and alert response. Besides its "hair-trigger" aspects, this mechanism has other limitations, even if successful. First, it leaves the non-alert half of the force unprotected. Second, it leaves us no alternative but to commit essentially all of the surviving bombers to attack in the first few hours of the war or to lose their capability as they run out of fuel and as their soft bases are destroyed. Moreover, the bombers have to penetrate enemy defenses in large numbers and after "rolling back" the defenses with missiles. They cannot be used in a selective and controlled way.

5 YEAR INTERVALS;
REPEAT 12 YEARS,
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For these reasons, I believe that we should concentrate our procurement funds for long-range nuclear delivery systems on hard and dispersed and mobile missiles.

This is not to say that we should not have a bomber force. Because of the special things bombers can do, we should have a mix. But we already have a large bomber force. In mid-1965, it will include 630 B-52's, 80 B-58's, and, if we do not decide to phase them out sooner, 225 B-47's. The alert B-52's and B-58's alone will be able to carry about 1,500 gravity bombs plus 1,000 air-launched missiles. The alert B-47's will be able to carry another 200 bombs. The B-52 and B-58 force will be able to be maintained substantially intact at least until 1970. These bombers can give us more than enough capability to perform the specialized tasks for which bombers are particularly well suited.

Furthermore, an examination of the target system shows that most targets, including all those of highest priority are best attacked by missiles, for several reasons. First, the existing targets are soft, fixed, and of known location, and therefore vulnerable to missile attack (though often well defended against bomber attack). Second, in the case of military targets, the missiles get there faster than do bombers, and therefore would be more effective in catching enemy bombers and missiles on the ground. Third, in the case of attacks on Soviet cities, it is clearly desirable to have the option to delay commitment, perhaps for many hours. For example, Polaris, which can be held in reserve for days if necessary, is much better than a bomber for this task.

Moreover, bombers are expensive particularly if kept on airborne alert. The total system cost over the next five years to which we would be committing ourselves if we bought the extra B-52 wing plus supporting facilities and air-launched missiles, would be approximately \$1.3 billion (assuming ground alert only). The extra 1966 appropriation would cover only the initial procurement of the bombers themselves.

Many of the same considerations apply to the B-70. It was conceived and designed in a period in which we had no ICBM or Polaris. The design, in effect, duplicates rather than complements the ICBM force. It is predicated on the assumption that high speed is the best way to penetrate enemy defenses. This speed has made the system very expensive and quite inefficient for the special tasks for which bombers are well suited. Ironically, it now appears that prior defense suppression with missiles (e.g., B-52 with Skybolt) is a much more effective way than speed to assure penetration. The B-70 weapon system as presently designed would not really have a capability to search for targets of unknown or uncertain location,

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or to seek out and attack mobile targets. The Air Force is examining the use of the B-70 in a strike-reconnaissance role. However, even if it can be modified for this purpose, the changes in subsystems and doctrine would be so extensive that it does not appear reasonable to commit it to production at this time. Moreover, the problem of adequate pre-launch survival potential for bombers in the wartime environment has not been solved.

The B-70 funding request to the Congress totalled \$220.0 million. This is the required FY 1962 increment of a \$1.3 billion program extending through FY 1965 to provide and test three prototype aircraft, one of which will be equipped with a Bomb Navigation System. Under this program, flight tests of the first aircraft will begin in December 1962, with the other two aircraft to follow at nine month intervals. The program permits the continuation of essential technological development and retains the option to proceed with the development of a complete weapon system at a later date, should it be determined to be necessary. In view of the uncertainty about the need for additional long-range bombers and the suitability of the B-70, I believe that the scope of the B-70 program as contained in the FY 1962 budget request adequately meets our defense needs. To spend the extra money in 1962 would be to restore the B-70 to the Air Force proposed full scale weapon system development program. The extra cost of the Air Force program over the cost of the program I am recommending would be not only the \$180 million in FY 1962, but also \$3 to \$5 billion over the period 1963-1967.

In the case of Dynasocor, we added \$30 million to expedite development in the first set of FY 1962 budget amendments. I know of no justification for obligating an additional \$35.8 million in FY 1962. There is no known military requirement for Dynasocor. There is at most merely a possibility that something of this character may be required at some time in the future. Under the circumstances, it seems to me to be best to concentrate on reducing lead time against the day when such a system might be required. The best way to do this is to reorient the project to solve the difficult technical problems involved in boosting a body of high lift into orbit, sustaining man in it, and recovering the vehicle at a designated place, rather than to press on with a full system development program. It has been so oriented in the past and has tended to become a full system development program of unspecified objectives. I am studying the reorientation now, and when this study is completed, I shall be able to estimate appropriate funding requirements. Until then, I believe that we should hold the extra \$35.8 million. Indeed, it is not clear how that more money for Dynasocor would result in any advancement of the date of first successful manned flight.

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Your approval of the above recommendations is requested.

Robert S. McVane

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