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Office of the Secretary of Defense 5048 335 Z
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 25 FEB 2013 Authority: EO 13526
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Reason: 3.3(b)(5)
MDR: 12-M-2599-A1

US POLICY FOR EMPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In January, 1972, a DoD panel, chaired by Dr. Foster, was established to review US nuclear weapon employment policy. In May, 1972, this panel forwarded to the Secretary of Defense the initial results of this review, including a draft of "Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons". The major features of this Tentative Policy Guidance are summarized below and compared with the current policy; issues and actions for consideration by the Secretary of Defense are then highlighted. A more detailed discussion is contained in the panel's report, "Review of US Policy for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons."

It should be noted that the panel addressed the employment of current and near-term US nuclear forces, not the design and posture of these forces.

I. Current Employment Policy

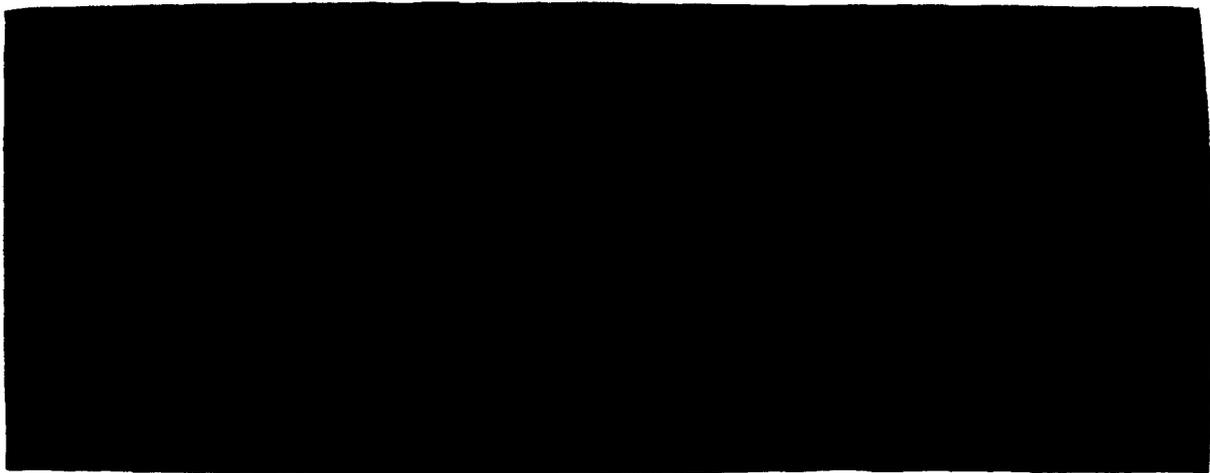
The Panel reviewed US and NATO documents and found that the National Strategic Targeting and Attack Policy (NSTAP), prepared by the JCS, is the only source of definitive policy for the employment of US nuclear weapons. The currently effective NSTAP and a revision prepared by the JCS for consideration by the Foster Panel are summarized in this section.

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A. Current NSTAP

The fundamental concept of the current NSTAP is to maximize U.S. power so as to attain and maintain a strategic superiority which will lead to an early termination of a nuclear war on terms favorable to the United States and its allies. To implement this concept, the NSTAP calls for employment of forces in the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) to meet the following objectives:

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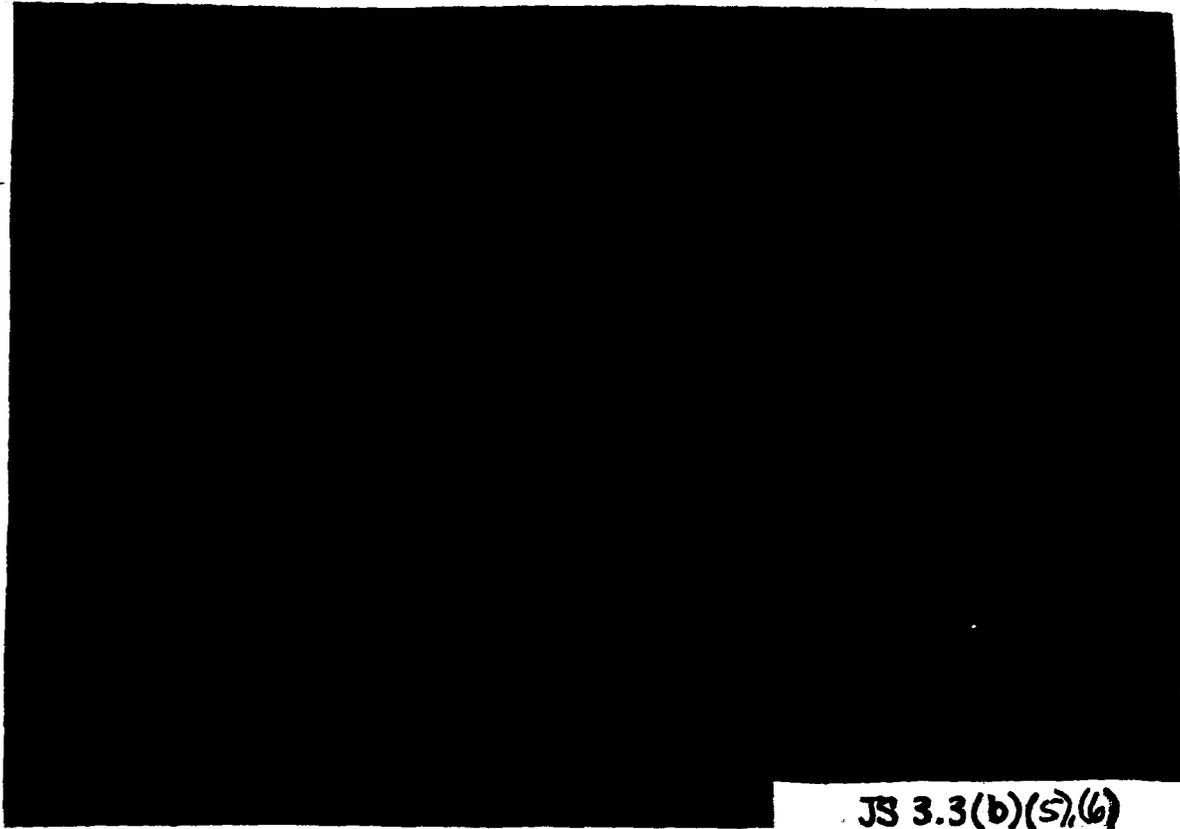
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B. Revised NSTAP The JCS prepared a revision of the NSTAP for consideration by the Foster Panel. It has the same objectives as the current NSTAF, but there are several major changes:

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2. Greater flexibility is called for to provide the NCA with attack options appropriate to the nature and level of the provocation, [redacted]

The revised NSTAP provides general guidance that the SIOP will be structured for various levels of attack and should provide maximum flexibility consistent with military considerations, but does not define specific attack options.

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* The third NSDM 16 criterion states that the United States "should maintain the capability to deny to the Soviet Union the ability to cause significantly more deaths and industrial damage in the United States in a nuclear war than they themselves would suffer."

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II. The Tentative Policy Guidance

The current NSTAP is intended to provide guidance to subordinate US commanders in preparing the SIOP and does not provide full and explicit coverage of all aspects of national policy for the employment of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the policy on which the current NSTAP is based was established in the early 1960's and does not adequately reflect present conditions.

The Foster Panel considered the revised NSTAP to be a major step forward, but identified additional issues of importance which were not within the intended scope of the revised NSTAP and which were not addressed by other policy documents. Accordingly, the Panel prepared a new document entitled "Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons," which incorporates most of the new features of the revised NSTAP and is consistent with the limited employment policy guidance that exists elsewhere (e.g., in the President's Foreign Policy Reports). This "Tentative Guidance" takes a different perspective than the NSTAP, broadens the scope of the policy guidance, and introduces some new strategic concepts. Its major features are discussed below; Figure 2 is a parallel summary of the current NSTAP, the revised NSTAP, and the Tentative Guidance.

A. Perspectives of the Secretary of Defense. The Panel, in drafting the Tentative Guidance, sought to incorporate the perspectives of the Secretary of Defense -- and only those perspectives -- in a manner analogous to the Defense Policy and Planning Guidance.



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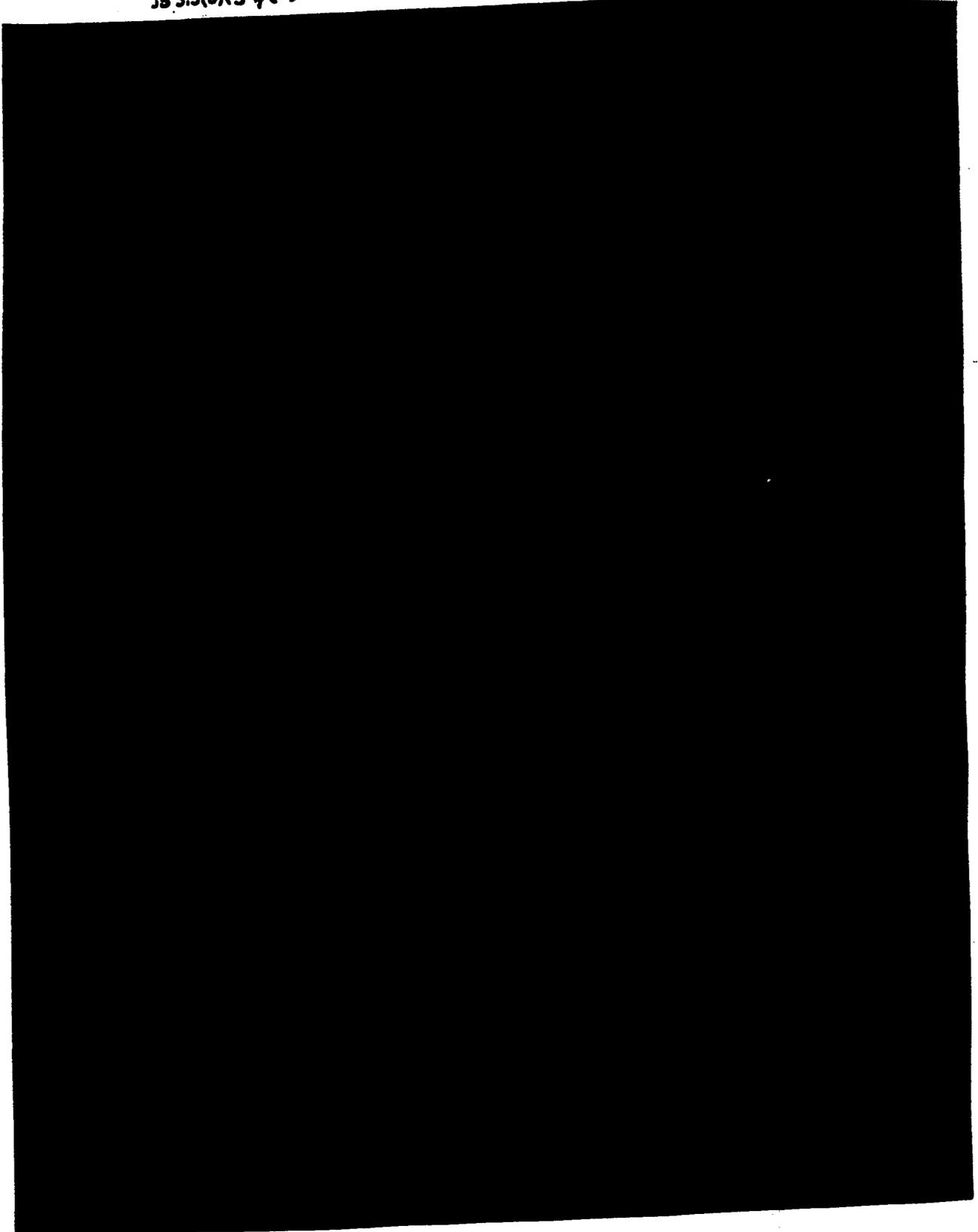
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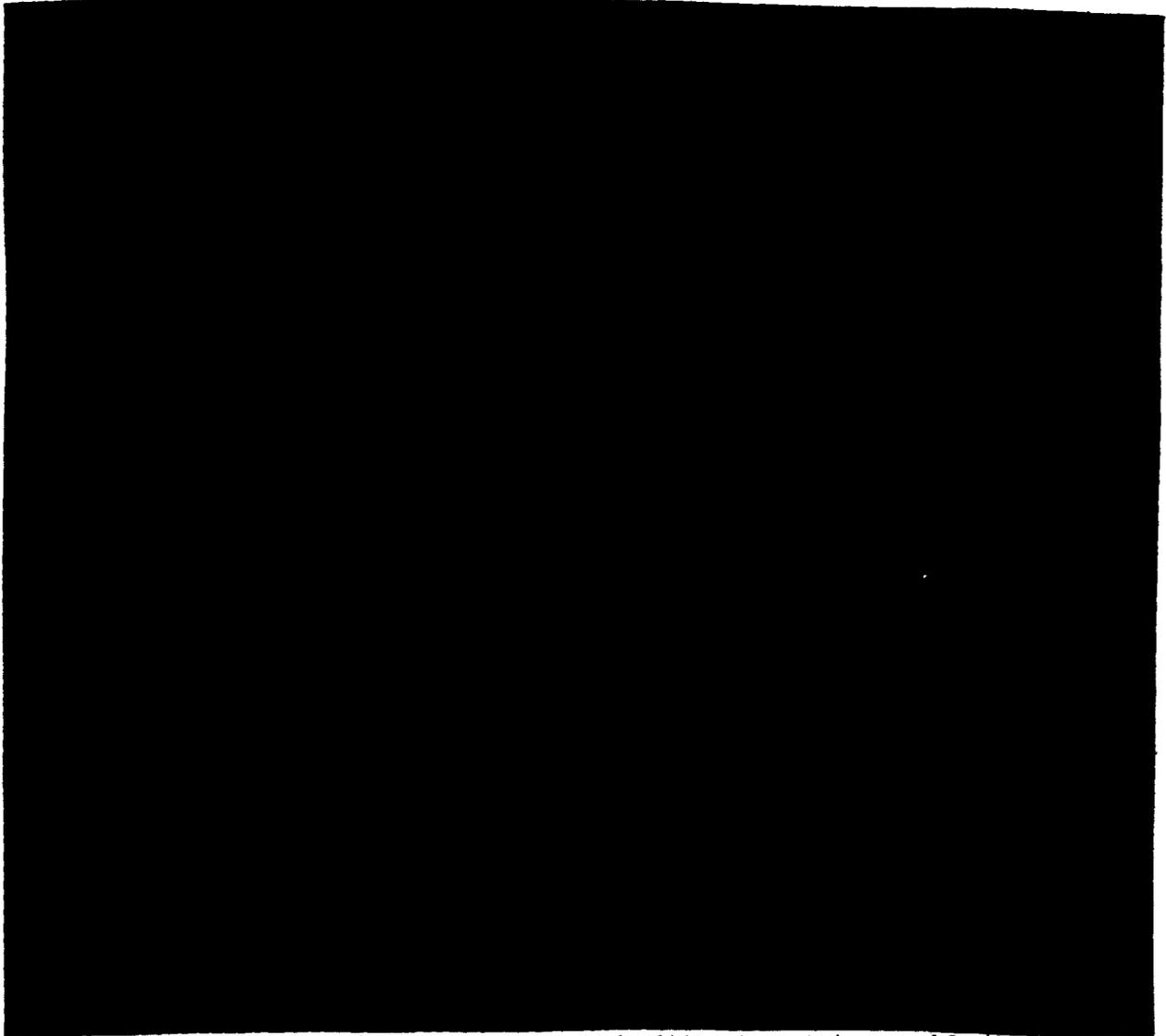
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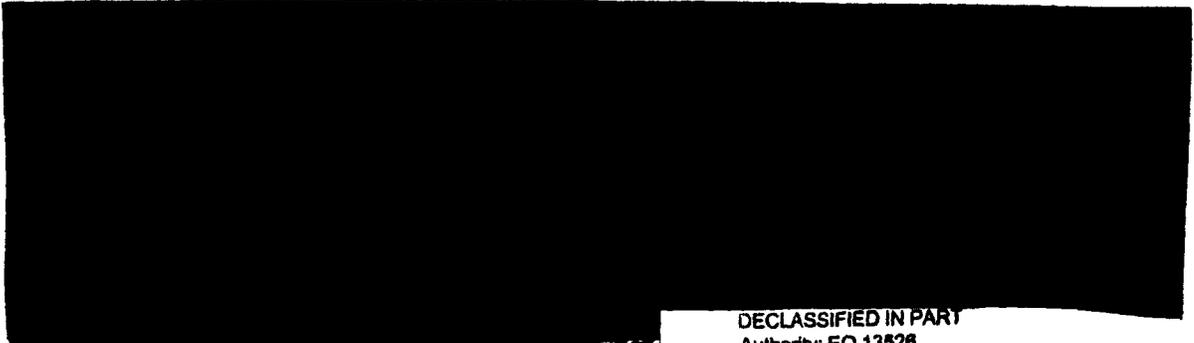
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The purpose of assigning the above priorities is not to specify the order in which targets would actually be attacked, but rather to provide guidance in assigning weapons to attack options so that the pre-planned weapon-target combinations are most likely to meet the objectives of the NCA at the time they are being considered for use.

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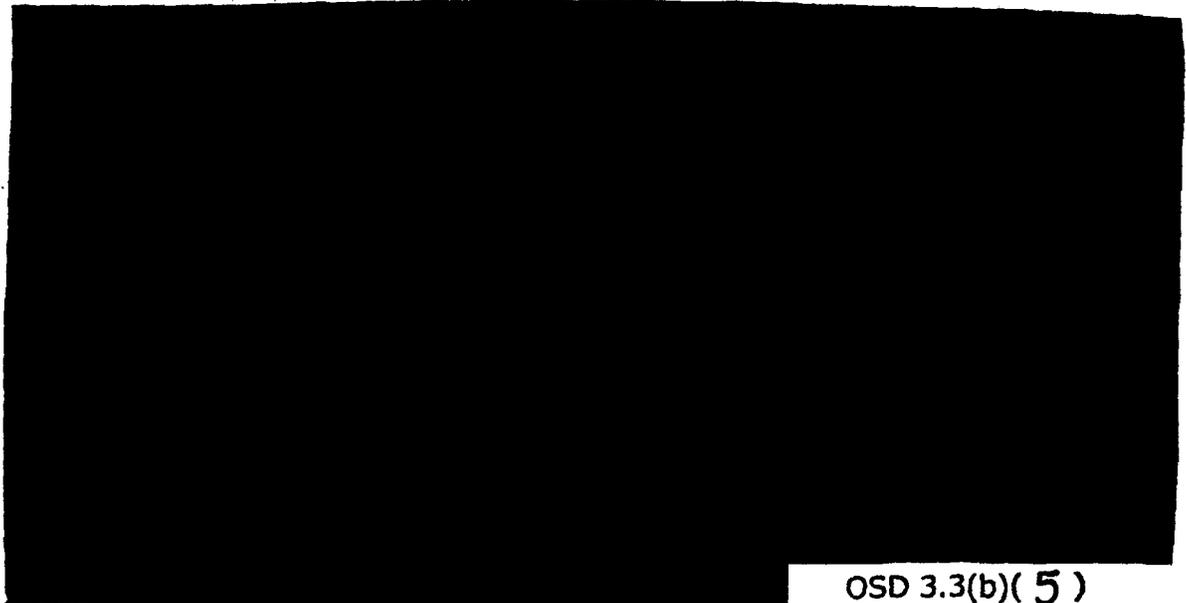
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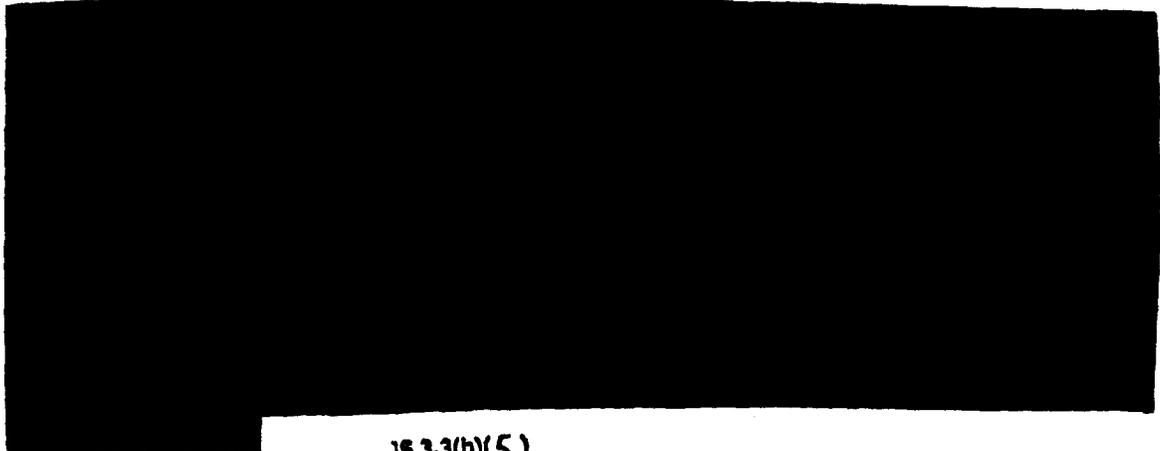
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To the extent that the panel was able to examine the technical issues of force application, it concluded that the attack options represent a reasonable balance between efforts to control escalation and US requirements if these efforts are not successful. It was recognized, however, that an iterative process, probably with modification, addition, or deletion of specific options, will be needed before there can be assurance that the best balance has in fact been achieved.

The Tentative Guidance specifies that there should be three classes of attack options. Targets for Major Attack Options and Selected Attack Options are listed in Appendix A. Figure 3 illustrates the concepts underlying the attack options in the Tentative Guidance.



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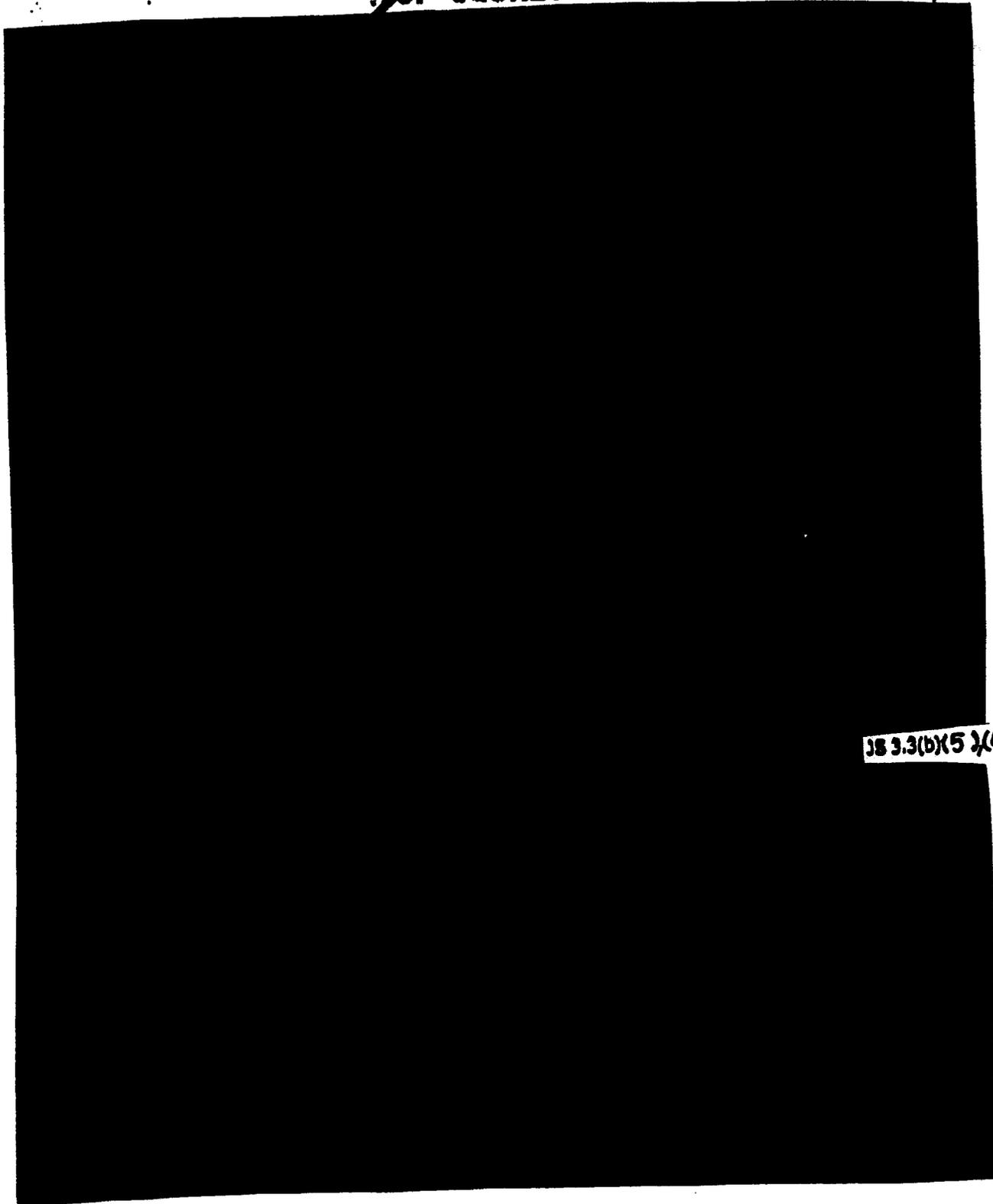


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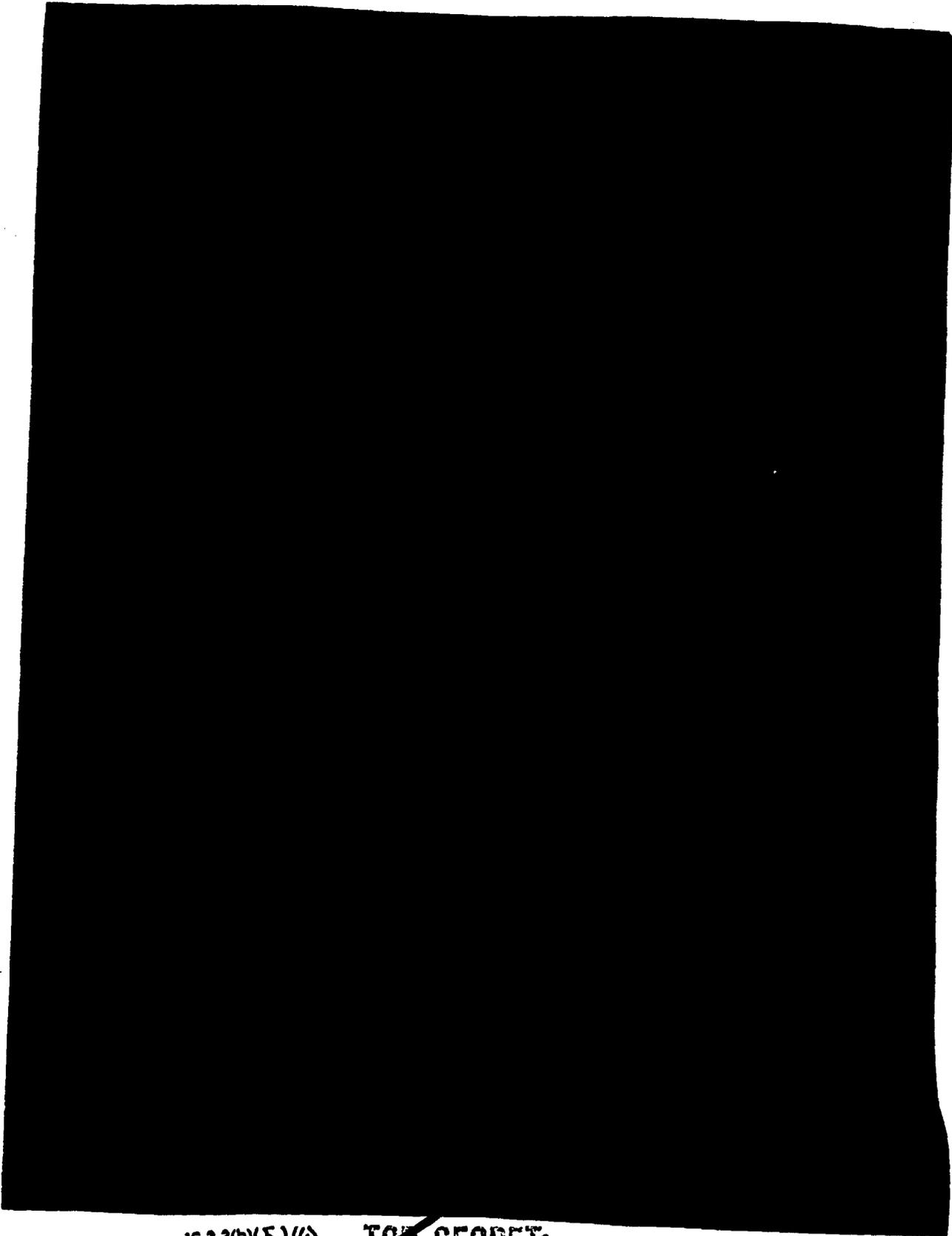
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III. Issues for Consideration by the Secretary of Defense

The members of the Foster Panel are agreed on the general approach to nuclear weapon employment planning contained in the Tentative Guidance. There was not, of course, agreement on all the details; areas of disagreement are footnoted in the May 2 version of the Tentative Guidance. Decisions by the Secretary of Defense on these disagreements are not needed now. Provided he concurs with the general approach, the Foster Panel may be able to eliminate some disagreements and can prepare issue statements on those remaining. Before additional work can proceed, however, it is important to get the Secretary's views on the general approach. To this end, he should particularly consider the following major innovations in the Tentative Guidance:

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IV. Additional Analysis

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A need for the following additional analysis emerged during the deliberations of the Foster Panel:

1. Develop more detailed policy guidance for theater nuclear employment plans. The panel has so far not gotten very deeply into this area.

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Completion of this additional work could, in some cases, take as much as 6-12 months. As an initial step, the Foster Panel should be tasked to develop more detailed work statements for these analyses, to add to the list of further analyses as necessary, and to recommend agencies for their accomplishment.

V. Recommended Actions by the Secretary of Defense

There is little question that the Tentative Guidance makes necessary and long over-due changes in the policy for nuclear weapon employment. But the detailed implementation of these changes in the SIOP and other nuclear employment plans will be such a major departure from past practices that it probably should not be made in one step. The staff analyses conducted to date may not have uncovered all the potential problems associated with implementing the Tentative Guidance. On the other hand, we may be able to move to even more attack options than specified in the Tentative Guidance. It is also important to ensure that the military commanders and their staffs completely and fully understand the concepts of the Tentative Guidance.

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Then, the Secretary of Defense should have another careful review in DOD and in the NSC before making the Tentative Guidance official.

The following schedule is proposed.

1. July 10-20. The Secretary of Defense should:

a. Obtain Admiral Moorer's personal views on the approach of the Tentative Guidance (he has been provided copies of the Tentative Guidance and the Panel's report).

b. Discuss the Tentative Guidance with the Foster Panel (a briefing covering the Tentative Guidance has been prepared).

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- c. Discuss the Tentative Guidance privately with Dr. Kissinger.
- d. Provided the Secretary concurs with the general approach, endorse the general approach and formally transmit the Tentative Guidance to the JCS for comment.
- e. Provide copies of the Tentative Guidance to selected DERC principals for comment.

2. July 20-August 31. The Foster Panel should accomplish the preliminary work needed to initiate the analysis of paragraph IV and should reduce or eliminate the footnoted points of disagreement in the Tentative Guidance.

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3. September and October. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Foster Panel should resolve any ambiguities or uncertainties in the guidance, as they arise.

4. November. The Foster Panel should evaluate the capability of these illustrative plans to achieve the objectives of the Tentative Guidance and, if necessary, recommend changes to the guidance.

5. December. The Secretary of Defense should review with the NSC the proposed guidance and the resulting nuclear weapon employment capabilities, then officially issue the guidance as policy.

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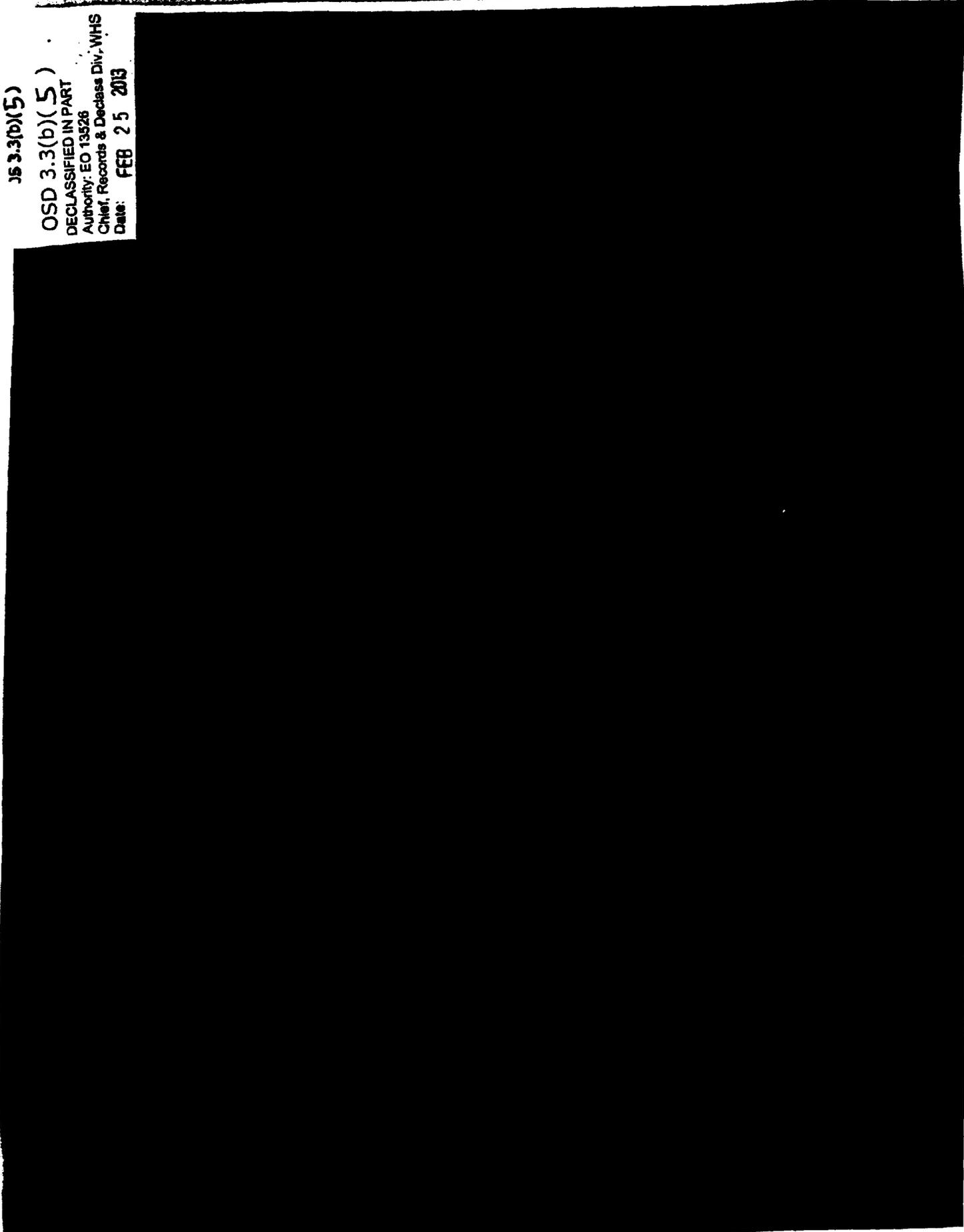
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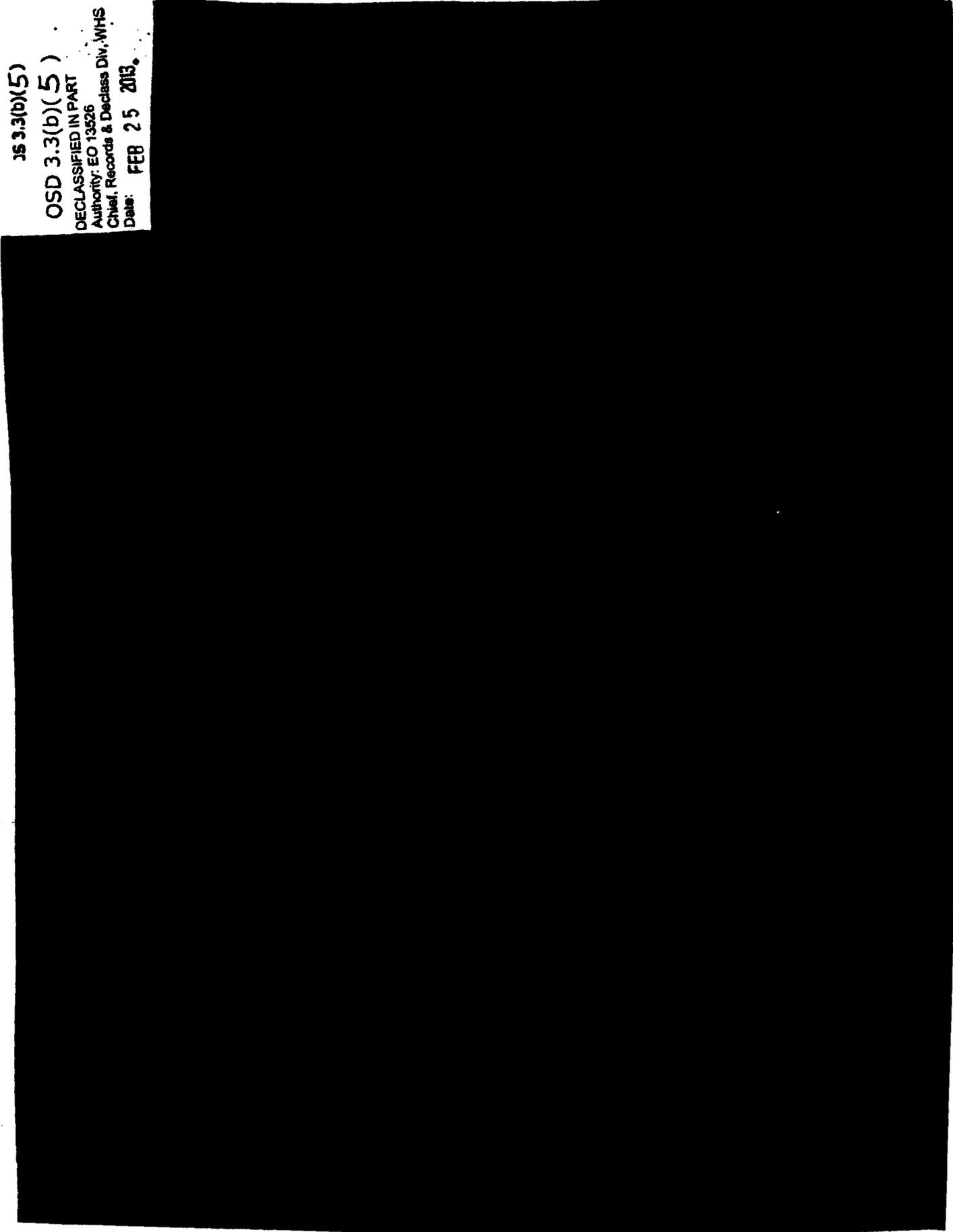
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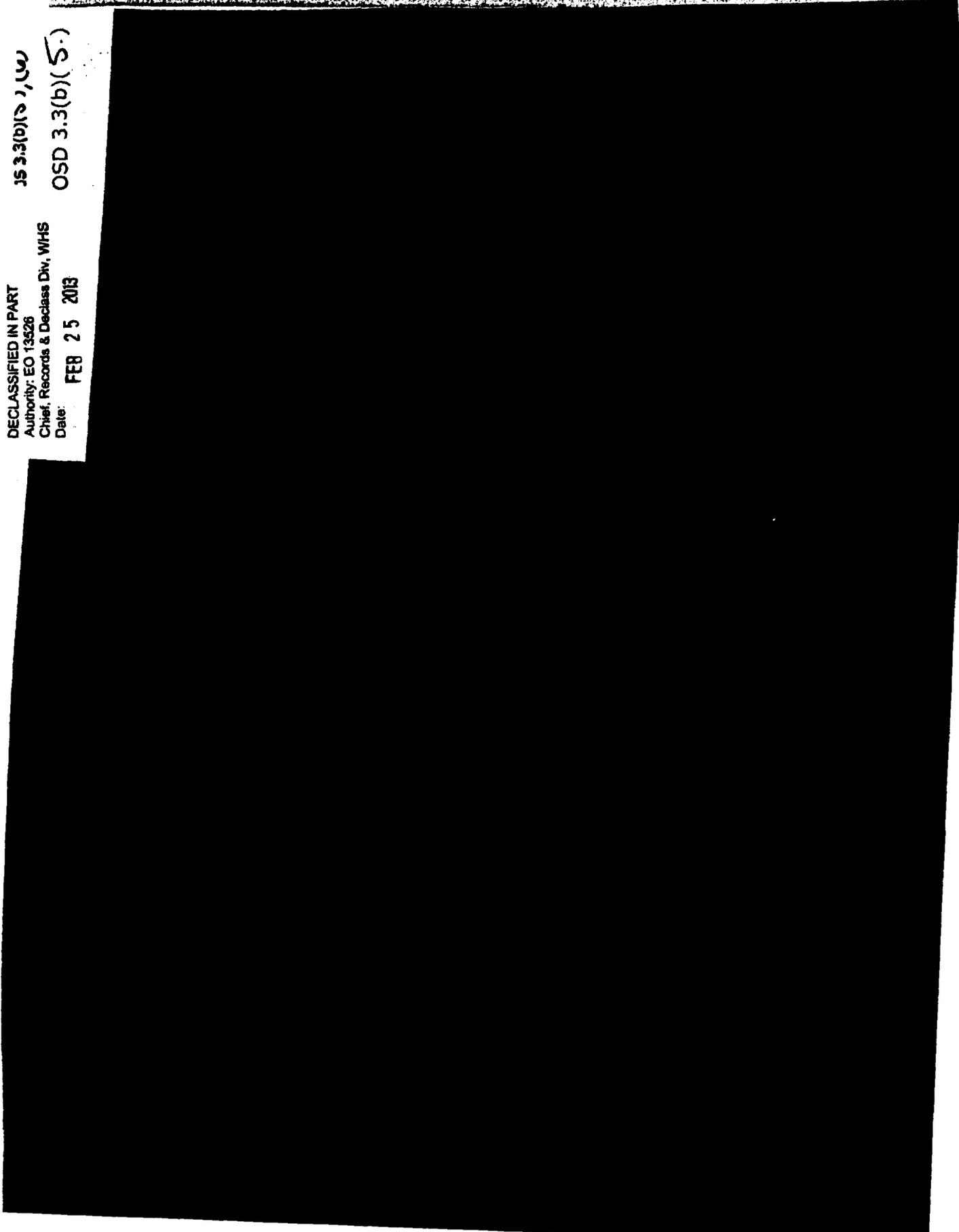
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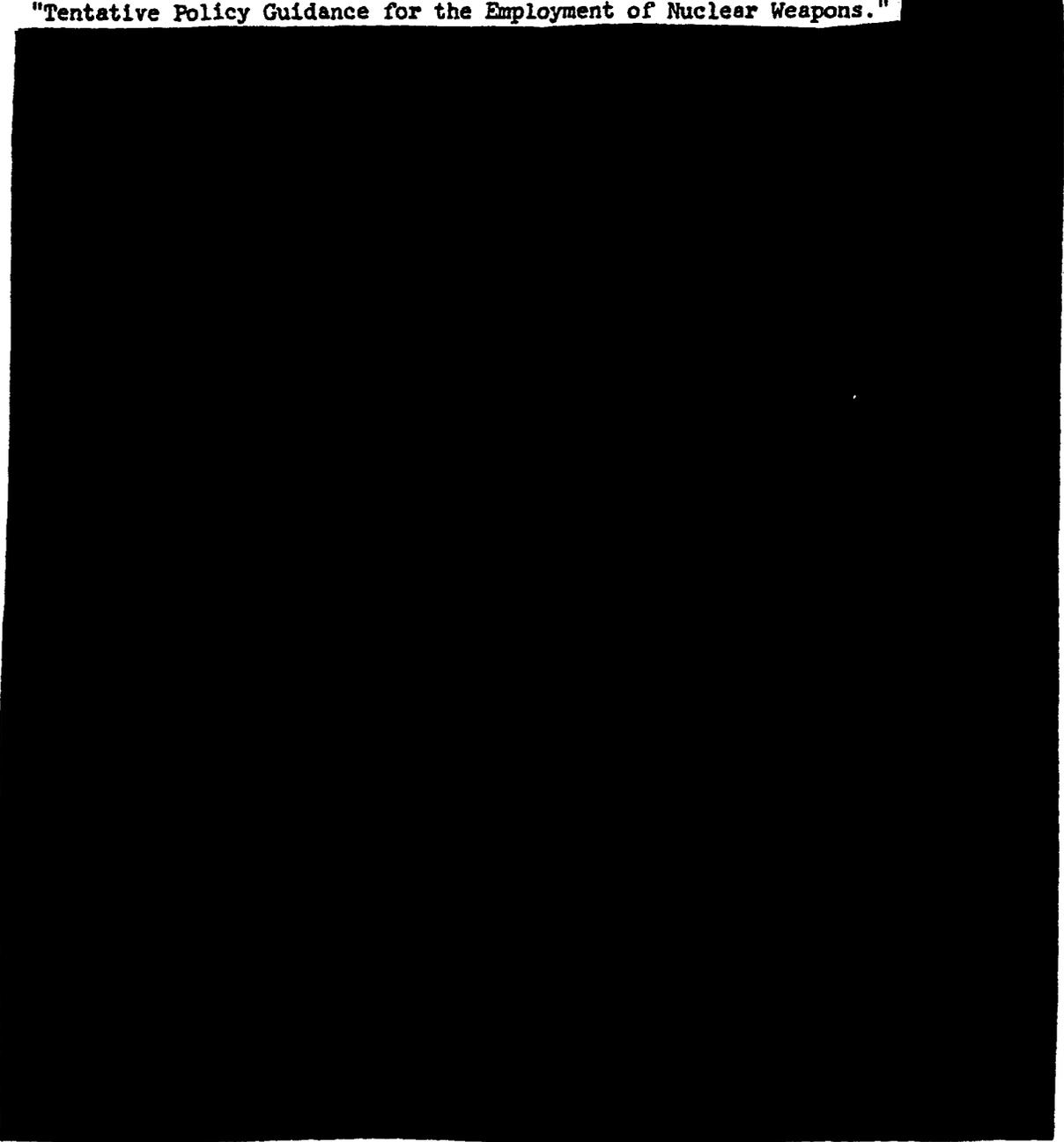
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Appendix A

Below are shown the target classes and regions which are targeted in the Major Attack Options and Selected Attack Options of the Foster Panel's "Tentative Policy Guidance for the Employment of Nuclear Weapons."



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