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prep by: ODDRE

Office of the Secretary of Defense
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MDR: 12-M-2605

Deterrence Considerations

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A highly credible deterrent has been the cornerstone of our strategic nuclear foreign policy almost from the inception of deliverable nuclear weapons. This is evidenced by the "massive retaliation" policy of the 1950's and the "assured destruction" policy of the 1960's.

The credibility of the deterrent rests on establishing high confidence, by both the United States and any potential adversary, of two factors:

- a) the capability of our forces if used in retaliation.
- b) our manifest will to use the forces in retaliation.

We establish high confidence in the capability by maintaining forces of sufficient strength, diversity and readiness. We establish high confidence in our manifest will by maintaining employment plans, by taking actions to protect U.S. national interests at all levels, and by maintaining a clear declaratory policy. In this regard it is often just as important to watch for evidences of misinterpretation and take prompt steps to counter any such evidence.

In order to properly structure our forces, our employment plans and our declaratory policy we must first elaborate on the general notion of deterrence to answer the question -- "deterrence of whom from doing what?" It is clear that a massive U/I retaliation capability, for example, does not deter many actions contrary to U.S. national interests, so long as these

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2.

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actions do not actually threaten, directly, the continuation of the U. S. government and the U. S. national society.^{1/} Moreover, failure to maintain a viable deterrence at lesser levels erodes confidence, throughout the world, of our will to exercise the ultimate deterrent.

This line of argument lends then to the maintenance of forces other than those suitable only for massive retaliation and to the establishment of plans to use all forces to underwrite deterrence of those actions for which they are technically and politically suitable.

When considering employment options for strategic nuclear weapons there is another consideration that must be counterposed to the foregoing line of argument. Care must be taken to ensure that the options included enhance, rather than detract, from the credibility of the ultimate deterrent. For example, if the employment options do not include an option dedicated to massive retaliation, and the Soviets were to know this, then they could question our will to implement the deterrent and, thus, lessen its credibility and effectiveness. Put more generally, if the employment plan is totally structured on the basis that deterrence has failed, then, in effect, the employment plan exhibits a lack of confidence in the deterrent.

JS 3.3(b)(5), (6)

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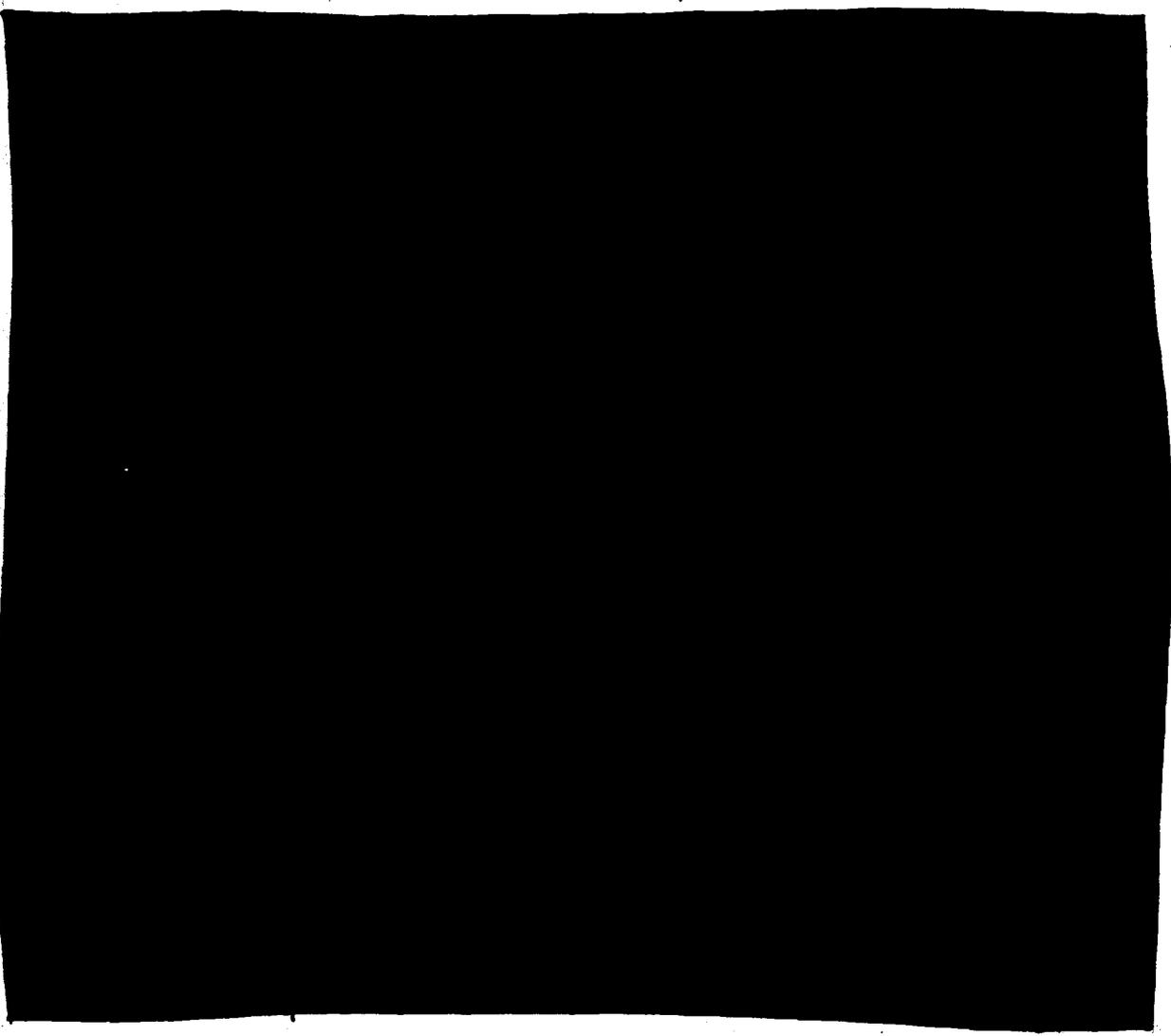
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3.

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Another concern on the viability of our deterrent is the impact of employment options on our Allies. We have promised the Allies a shield in the event they are attacked by a nuclear power. If the employment plan contains only "war fighting" options, then the Allies could view this as less than all-out U.S. support for them and in violation of stated U.S. policy.



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4. Incorporation of various "war fighting" options that serve to

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The construction of such war-fighting options should follow from the joint considerations of a) the action being deterred or to which a response is desired, b) the range of strategic and tactical situations most likely to exist at the time, c) the technical capabilities of the forces available.

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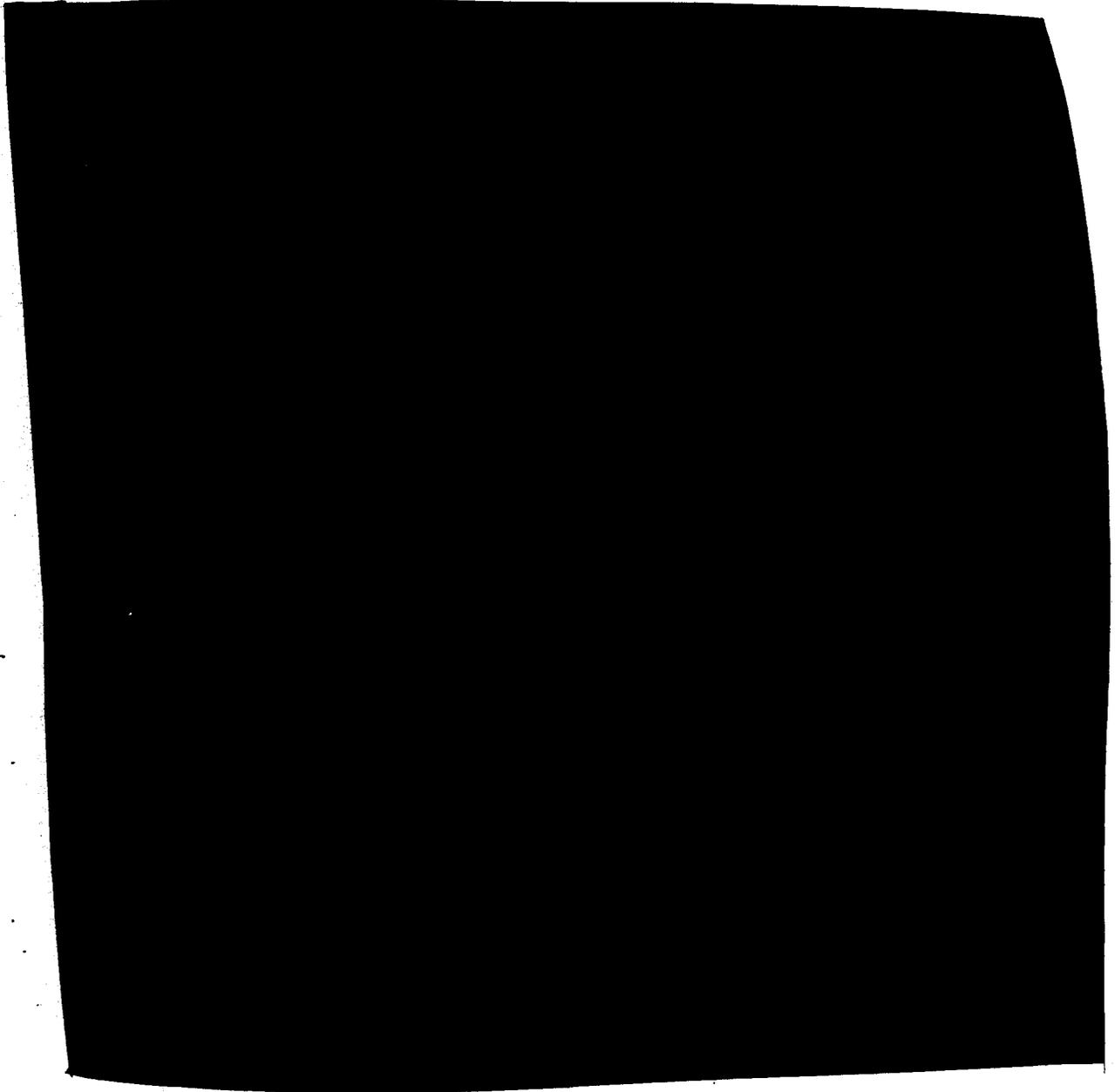
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ANNEX I

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ACTIONS THE UNITED STATES MAY WISH TO DETER



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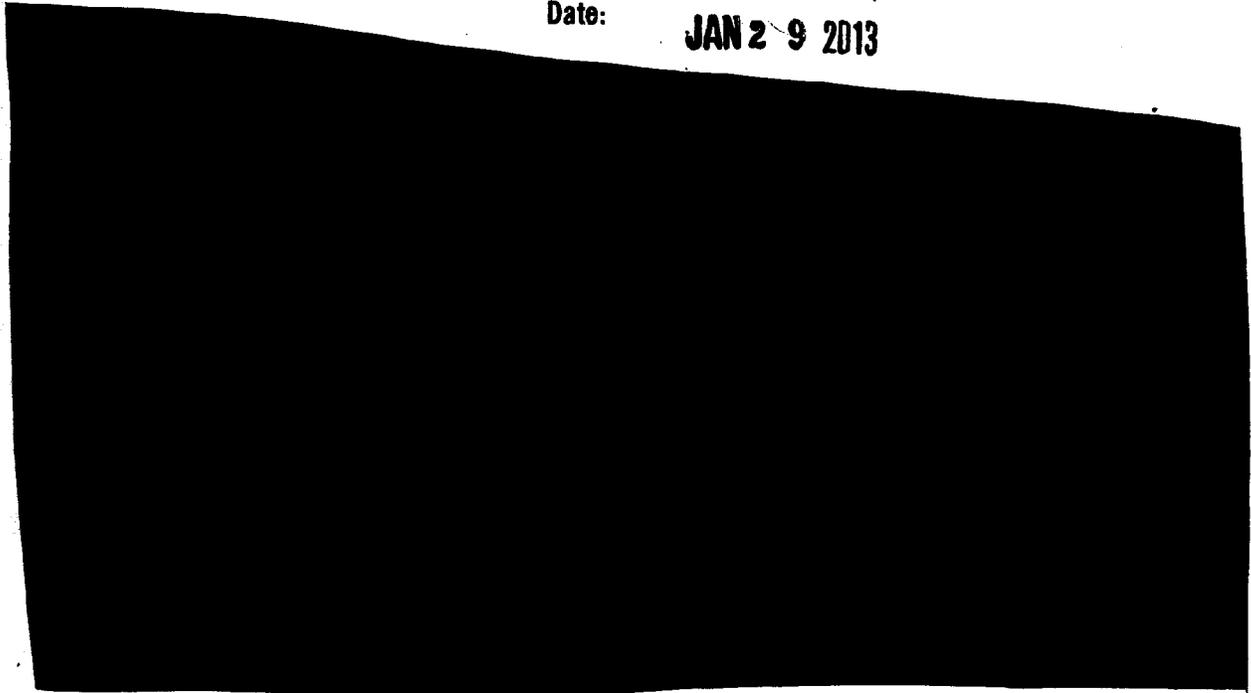
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ANNEX I

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