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March 4, 1972

National Security Study Memorandum 147

TO: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: U.S. Strategy and Projection Forces

The President has directed a comprehensive review of the U. S. capability to project its military capabilities overseas and support its strategic objectives. The purpose of this evaluation shall be to assess the adequacy of currently planned forces and to develop alternative force postures for the President's consideration in light of growing Soviet capabilities.

Drawing upon previous interagency work, this review shall cover:

-- An identification of U. S. and allied forces and resources related to the force projection, mobility, sea control, and logistical support missions. In turn, these broad missions should be further evaluated in terms of the specific tasks and the air and naval as well as ground forces associated with them.

-- An evaluation of the objectives and comparative effort of the Soviet Union and its allies. This comparison should provide, among other things, a net assessment of the U. S. and Soviet naval balance in various areas. The size and composition of resources required to support our respective force postures and capabilities shall also be evaluated.

-- An examination and identification of U. S. requirements for force projection, mobility, sea control, and logistical support, and for missions and forces in relation to specified U. S. foreign and strategic policy objectives. This should include a thorough assessment of the present Soviet threat and the capability of the U. S. and its allies to carry out the missions noted above in a manner consistent with the U. S. strategy in Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia, and elsewhere. This should examine, among other things, the possible situations in which the U. S. might become engaged in a conflict confined to the sea, and the implications of such an engagement.

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-- The development of alternative objectives and related force postures for each of these major missions with their associated resource requirements through FY 1977. The alternatives shall also incorporate, where appropriate, forces of modified design and capabilities. The strategic implications of the alternative postures should be evaluated. The Department of State should contribute an assessment of the political and diplomatic implications of the alternative postures, including prospective allied reactions to the use of U.S. forces under the circumstances postulated.

This review shall be prepared by the Department of Defense in cooperation with other interested agencies under the guidance of the DPRC Working Group. The review should be completed no later than May 1, 1972, for consideration by the Defense Program Review Committee.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "H. A. Kissinger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers  
The Director, Office of Management and Budget  
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament  
Agency