



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

13 APR 1976

In reply refer to:  
I-1926/76

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Limited Nuclear Attacks - ACTION MEMORANDUM

(U) The purpose of this memorandum is to obtain your signature on a proposed letter to Senator Symington (Tab A), in response to his letter of 19 February 1976 concerning limited nuclear attacks (Tab B).

(U) Recommend you sign the proposed reply to Senator Symington (Tab A).

Amos A. Jordan  
Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense  
International Security Affairs

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON D C. 20301

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Honorable Stuart Symington  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Stu:

Your recent letter, which provided views on several of the more difficult problems current in the ongoing SALT negotiations, was received and read with much interest.

As you are aware, the issues of cruise missiles and BACKFIRE are currently under serious negotiations at the highest levels of both governments. I have had to spend a great deal of time on SALT negotiations during the past five months. I certainly share your appreciation of how big these issues are.

Your views are helpful. Most important, so is your continuing support for equitable arms control agreements.

Sincerely,



*I'll call you  
for lunch later this  
week so we can visit -  
D.*



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STUART SYMINGTON  
MISSOURI

STANLEY R. FIKE  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 19, 1976

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I read with interest your testimony re the Defense Department's annual posture statement, also the proposed FY 1977 Defense Budget.

Before Secretary Kissinger made his last trip to Moscow, I sent him a letter, attached, urging no trade off of cruise missile development in return for restraints on the Backfire bomber.

I know we both agree that we should try to halt and reverse the the armament race with the Soviet Union; agreements on arms limitations and mutual reductions in strategic weapons.

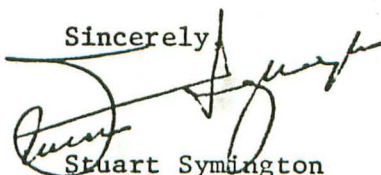
A disturbing facet to such worthwhile goals would seem the concept of so-called "limited nuclear war." Any defense posture which embraces the idea of possible limited strategic nuclear exchange, closely controlled and orchestrated, appears dangerous to me.

Upon the carrying out of any "limited" strategic nuclear exchange, who could say that escalation to total massive attack would not be inevitable?

As an example, when I first questioned this concept many months ago, I asked the Pentagon for the death estimate, was told 800,000. This seemed ridiculously low, so we asked Defense to recheck; and the answer came back 22,000,000; and also 800,000 Canadians.

Good luck in your vitally important work.

Sincerely,



Stuart Symington



SS:mm  
Enclosure

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T-1926