NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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February 13, 1973

National Security Study Memorandum 171

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

SUBJECT: U. S. Strategy for Asia

The President has directed that in the aftermath of the Vietnamese conflict, current U. S. strategy for Asia should be reviewed.

The study should define current U. S. strategy in Asia and changes that the U. S. could adopt for the future. In developing these policy options the study should consider:

-- A range of specific defense objectives.

-- Alternative goals of U. S. security assistance programs in terms of the size and type of threat allied forces could be structured to meet. Economic and political constraints should be considered.

-- Associated U. S. conventional force requirements and the likely impact on overall U. S. force levels. In considering the impact on overall force levels, the study should assume no change in U. S. strategy for defense of NATO.

-- The impact of adopting these policy options on relations with our Allies and potential adversaries. This work should consider, among other things, the political factors that are likely to influence relations between Asian nations over the coming five years.

The study should assess our current nuclear doctrines, forces, and employment planning in Asia and develop alternative doctrines which

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Exempt from GDS

could be used to support our future planning. The focus should be on the use of nuclear weapons in support of conventional forces (Allied and U.S.). The relationship between these alternative doctrines and U.S. nuclear delivery systems and deployments should be considered.

The study should also evaluate alternative U.S. military basing postures for the Asian mainland and Western Pacific islands for the FY74 to FY75 period in terms of:

-- Capabilities to support alternative military strategies against the current and projected threat. For example, the capability inherent in various deployment postures to move the necessary men and material should be evaluated.

-- Allied reactions to alternative basing postures including the phasing from our current deployment posture to the alternative considered. Particular attention should be given to an evaluation of how various deployment postures would impact on Allied perceptions of U.S. capability and willingness to support strategy objectives.

The analysis should be based upon the work done previously for the NSSM-69 study and should be completed by March 30, 1973, for review by the Defense Program Review Committee prior to its consideration by the President. The study will be prepared by a committee composed of the representatives of the addressees and the NSC staff and chaired by a representative of the Department of Defense.

Henry A. Kissinger