

APPROVED FOR
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HR70-14

INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE (ICBM) AND
INTERMEDIATE RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILE (IRBM) PROGRAMS
(Coordinator: Defense)

1. NSC Action No. 1433 (approved September 13, 1955): TOP SECRET

a. There would be the gravest repercussions on the national security and on the cohesion of the Free World, should the USSR achieve an operational capability with the ICBM substantially in advance of the United States.

b. In view of known Soviet progress in this field, the development by the United States of an operational capability with the ICBM is a matter of great urgency.

c. The U. S. ICBM program is therefore a research and development program of the highest priority above all others, unless modified by future decision of the President.

d. The Secretary of Defense will prosecute the program with maximum urgency, and all other Executive departments and agencies will assist the Department of Defense as required. The Secretary of Defense will report promptly to the NSC any significant developments or causes of delay in this program (including avenues not explored), and additionally will give the Council a special briefing at least once a year, normally in December, on the status of progress and major problems involved, including a statement of what could be done in the direction of setting an earlier target date for operational capability and the arguments for and against such a proposal.

2. NSC Action No. 1484 (approved December 20, 1955): TOP SECRET

a. The President stated that the political and psychological impact upon the world of the early development of an effective ballistic missile with a range in the 1000-1700 mile range would be so great that early development of such a missile would be of critical importance to the national security of the United States.

b. The President directed that the IRBM and ICBM programs should both be research and development programs of the highest priority above all others. Mutual interference between these programs should be avoided so far as practicable, but if a conflict should occur in which strict application of paragraph a above would, in the opinion of the Secretary of Defense, cause major damage to the security interests of the United States, then the matter will be promptly referred to the President.

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~~TOP SECRET~~3. NSC Action No. 1615-c (approved October 8, 1956): TOP SECRET

The Council requested the Secretary of Defense, in connection with the special briefing which he is scheduled to give the Council annually in December on the intercontinental ballistic missiles program under NSC Action No. 1433-a-(4), additionally to brief the Council on progress in developing a defense against ballistic missiles.

4. NSC Action No. 1653 (approved January 12, 1957): TOP SECRET

a. The Council noted and discussed the second annual briefing by the Department of Defense on progress of research and development programs for the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) and the status of developing a defense against ballistic missiles.

b. The President stated that the presentation at this meeting of projected force units and missile inventories to achieve an initial operational capability for the ICBM and the IRBM in accordance with NSC Actions Nos. 1433-a and 1484, should not be interpreted as constituting Presidential approval at this time of any specific numbers of such force units and inventories.

5. NSC Action No. 1690 (approved April 1, 1957): TOP SECRET

a. The Council noted and discussed a briefing by the Secretary of the Air Force on the status of current plans of the Department of Defense for the IRBM and the ICBM, supplementing the second annual briefing on the subject (NSC Action No. 1653-a).

b. The President approved the plans presented by the Department of Defense to achieve initial operational capability for the IRBM and the ICBM at the earliest practicable date, in accordance with NSC Actions Nos. 1433-a and 1484, under the following conditions.

(1) These plans shall make use of available research and development facilities and production for test purposes, and shall be flexible to the end that missiles earmarked for inventory in present plans may be diverted to further development programs if a technical problem should arise requiring such change in plans.

(2) In order to avoid delays in operational capability, this approval includes initial arrangements for training of operational personnel and for the deployment of missiles involved in this initial operational capability.

(3) Presidential approval is not sought at this time for production arrangements beyond those provided for development purposes nor for the accumulation of inventories beyond those set forth in the initial operational capability plan.

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~~TOP SECRET~~5. NSC Action No. 1690 (Continued)

(4) Whenever it is deemed necessary to make substantial changes in these plans, such changes must be submitted to the National Security Council for Presidential consideration.

c. The President requested that the Department of Defense prepare a report, assuming reasonable success in carrying out the plans for the IRBM and the ICBM, which would set forth the relative military advantages (excluding psychological considerations) of these missiles in comparison with manned aircraft and with non-ballistic missiles assumed to be available at the same time.

6. NSC Action No. 1733 (approved June 21, 1957): TOP SECRET

a. The Council noted and discussed a report on the subject by the Department of Defense pursuant to NSC Action No. 1690-c.

b. The President commented that, although not requested or included in the above-mentioned report, the economic element of total cost of each of these weapons systems, in relation to their effectiveness, must always be taken into account, in view of the fact that the maintenance of a sound U. S. economy sets limits to U. S. defense expenditures.

c. The President approved review of the above-mentioned report one year hence in the light of technological and other developments during the year.

7. NSC Action No. 1765 (approved August 5, 1957): TOP SECRET

The President approved the following recommendations by the Secretary of Defense presented at the meeting:

a. That the THOR and JUPITER development programs be combined into a single missile program.

b. That a committee composed of one member each from the Departments of Defense, the Air Force and the Army, consider both the THOR and JUPITER programs and, after evaluating the engineering and scientific information available to date, recommend such final single missile program, to be under the management of the Air Force; with a report thereon by the Secretary of Defense to the Council not later than October 1, 1957.

c. Meanwhile, as to the THOR and JUPITER programs:

(1) Suspend or cancel the production of additional missiles and missile components beyond those necessary for a continuing test program; and

(2) Eliminate overtime except that necessary in connection with flight testing and to take care of emergencies.

~~TOP SECRET~~7. NSC Action No. 1765 (Continued)

d. Recognize that, while the actions in a, b and c above may cause some delay in the IRBM development program, such delay is not expected to be significant in the light of the time required to accomplish operational use and deployment of a perfected missile.

e. Continue the ATLAS program at the highest priority; reexamining the facilities and schedules for experimental production, including a careful study of the overtime problem, to see if acceptable economies can be made.

f. Reduce the priorities on the TITAN program in an effort to make substantial economies in this alternative development.

8. NSC Action No. 1800 (approved October 11, 1957): TOP SECRET

The President approved the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense that, because the various factors to be considered do not in total clearly favor the selection of one program at this time, both the THOR and JUPITER programs be continued until successful flight tests are achieved by either missile, in order that greater assurance of the early availability of an operable missile system may be achieved.

The President instructed the Department that, in approving the above recommendations:

a. He would expect the Department of Defense to keep under constant study the most effective organizational structure for the ICBM and IRBM programs, including the possibility of concentrating such programs outside of the military services in one organization similar to the wartime Manhattan District; and, if deemed desirable as a result of such constant study, to make recommendations thereon to him.

b. The overriding objective of the IRBM program, in view of the political and psychological impact referred to in NSC Action No. 1484-c, continues to be the successful achievement of an IRBM with approximately 1500 miles range and reasonable accuracy; and that the related problems of ground support, methods of employment contemplated by the various military services, and increased range, should not be allowed to delay such an achievement.

c. Similarly, the overriding objective of the ICBM program continues to be the successful achievement of an ICBM with necessary range and reasonable accuracy, in priority over related problems.

In approving the above, the President directed that the Secretary of Defense report to the Council as soon as more adequate test information shall have been accumulated as to the THOR and JUPITER programs and, in any event, not later than December 31, 1957.

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~~TOP SECRET~~9. NSC Action No. 1846 (approved January 24, 1958): TOP SECRET

The President, on the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, has established the following programs as having the highest priority above all others for research and development and for achieving operational capability; scope of the operational capability to be as approved by the President:

(Order of listing does not indicate priority of one program over another.)

ATLAS (ICBM) Weapon System
 TITAN (ICBM) Weapon System
 THOR-JUPITER (IREM) Weapon Systems
 POLARIS (FBM) Weapon System
 Anti-missile missile defense weapon system, including active defense and related early warning for defense of the United States proper
 IGY scientific satellite (VANGUARD-JUPITER C) programs
 Satellite programs (other than VANGUARD and JUPITER C) determined by the Secretary of Defense to have objectives having key political, scientific, psychological or military import.

The above action supersedes those portions of NSC Actions Nos. 1433, 1484, 1545, 1653, 1656, 1713, 1765, 1799, and 1800, which are in conflict with the above priorities.

10. NSC action No. 1956 (approved August 4, 1958): TOP SECRET

Noted that the President approved for planning purposes the advanced reconnaissance satellite program presented by the Department of Defense, including the eight test vehicles which will orbit over the USSR; with the understanding that Presidential authorization with respect to the launching of the eight development satellites capable of reconnaissance over the USSR and the subsequent scope of the operational capability of the program, will be sought by the Department of Defense in early 1960 or prior to the launching of the first of the above eight satellites, whichever date is sooner.

11. NOTE following NSC Action No. 2013 (approved December 16, 1958): TOP SECRET

The President, in approving NSC Action No. 2013, directed that this action should also show the President's approval of the following recommendations by the Secretary of Defense as presented at the meeting by the Director of Guided Missiles:

- *(1) The 'presently approved 13-squadron ICBM Program (9 ATLAS and 4 TITAN) be increased to a total of 20 squadrons (9 ATLAS and 11 TITAN).

* Superseded by NSC Action No. 2168 (approved January 13, 1960).

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~~TOP SECRET~~11. NOTE following NSC Action No. 2013 (Continued)

- (2) The production of land-based IRBMs be limited to the 5 squadrons of THOR and 3 squadrons of JUPITER for which production commitments have already been made, with the understanding that this program may be increased by not to exceed 2 additional squadrons if further NATO requirements are expressed within the next few months and military aid funds therefor can be made available.
- (3) Authorization of the use of FY 1959 appropriated funds for:
- (a) Research and development, and for conversion of a submarine tender.
- (b) Construction of 1 additional POLARIS submarine beginning in FY 1959, bringing the total authorized to 6 POLARIS submarines.
- *(4) Authorization to construct 3 additional POLARIS submarines beginning in FY 1960, bringing the total authorized to 9 POLARIS submarines; using in part FY 1959 appropriated funds.
- *(5) Authorization to proceed with the planning and necessary leadtime procurement actions for construction of 3 additional POLARIS submarines with FY 1961 funds, bringing the total authorized to 12 POLARIS submarines.

12. NSC Action No. 2081 (approved May 13, 1959): TOP SECRET

a. Noted and discussed memorandum on subject by Acting Secretary, National Aeronautics and Space Council, transmitted by memo of May 7, 1959.

b. Noted that the President has established the following programs as having the highest priority above all others for research and development and for achieving operational capability; scope of the operational capability to be approved by the President:

(Order of listing does not indicate priority of one program over another)

- (1) ATLAS (ICBM) Weapon System.
- (2) TITAN (ICBM) Weapon System.
- (3) THOR-JUPITER (IRBM) Weapon Systems.
- (4) POLARIS (FBM) Weapon System.
- (5) Anti-missile missile defense weapon system, including active defense and related early warning for defense of the United States proper.

* Superseded by NSC Action No. 2168 (approved January 13, 1960).

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~~TOP SECRET~~12. NSC Action No. 2081 (Continued)

(6) Space programs determined by the President on advice of the National Aeronautics and Space Council to have objectives having key political, scientific, psychological or military import.

c. Noted that the President has designated the following projects under the category specified in (6) above:

SENTURY (satellite-borne visual and ferret reconnaissance system).

DISCOVERER (satellite guidance and recovery).

MERCURY (manned satellite).

d. Noted that the actions in b and c above did not change the requirement contained in NSC Action No. 1956-b for Presidential authorization with respect to the launching of development satellites capable of reconnaissance over the USSR and the subsequent scope of the operational capability of the advanced reconnaissance satellite program.

e. Noted the statement by the President that all feasible efforts should be made to reduce the costs of the liquid fuel ICBM weapon systems, especially the costs of bases.

13. NSC Action No. 2118 (approved August 21, 1959): TOP SECRET

Noted that the President has established the following programs as having the highest priority above all others for research and development and for achieving operational capability; scope of the operational capability to be approved by the President: NSC Action No. 2081

(Order of listing does not indicate priority of one program over another) NSC Action No. 2081

(1) ATLAS (ICBM) Weapon System. NSC Action No. 2081

(2) TITAN (ICBM) Weapon System. NSC Action No. 2081

(3) POLARIS (FBM) Weapon System. NSC Action No. 2081

(4) MINUTEMAN (ICBM) Weapon System.

(5) Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS) Phase I, including Project DEW DROP.

(6) NIKE-ZEUS Weapon System (research and development only).

(7) Space programs determined by the President on advice of the National Aeronautics and Space Council to have objectives having key political, scientific, psychological or military import. NSC Action No. 2081

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~~TOP SECRET~~13. NSC Action No. 2118 (Continued)

Noted that the President has designated the following projects under the category specified in (7) above:

SENTRY (satellite-borne visual and ferrent reconnaissance system.
NSC Action No. 2081)

DISCOVERER (satellite guidance and recovery) NSC Action No. 2081)

MERCURY (manned satellite). NSC Action No. 2081)

SATURN (1,500,000 pound-thrust, clustered rocket engine).
January 26, 1960)

14. NSC Action No. 2168 (approved January 13, 1960: TOP SECRET

Noted the President's approval of the recommendations of the Secretary of Defense, contained in enclosure to memorandum dated January 5, 1960, that:

a. The presently-approved 20-squadron ICBM program (9 ATLAS and 11 TITAN) be increased to 27 squadrons (13 ATLAS and 14 TITAN).

b. The present authorization to construct 9 POLARIS FBM submarines be increased to 12 (3 additional beginning in FY 1961) and authorization be given to proceed with the necessary long leadtime planning and procurement actions permitting construction of 3 additional POLARIS FBM submarines.

The above action supersedes paragraphs (1), (4) and (5) of the NOTE following NSC Action No. 2013.

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