

310

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October 16, 1975

National Security Decision Memorandum 310

TO: The Secretary of Defense  
The Administrator, Energy Research and  
Development Administration

SUBJECT: FY 1976-1978 Nuclear Weapons Stockpile

I approve the proposed nuclear weapons stockpile plan for FY 1976-1978 submitted on April 2, 1975, as amended by the revisions submitted on July 31, 1975. Specifically, I approve a total adjusted stockpile of [redacted] nuclear warheads for the end of FY 1976, [redacted] for the end of FY 1977, and [redacted] for the end of FY 1978.

The approved nuclear weapons stockpile levels represent authorized ceilings, not to be exceeded except as provided below or otherwise approved by me. The ceilings and specific programs are subject to change due to budgetary actions and policy decisions that affect our future nuclear posture.

For the FY 1976-1978 period, I authorize:

-- The production and retirement of those quantities of nuclear warheads and nuclear warhead parts necessary to achieve and maintain the approved stockpiles, as well as the production of additional parts of nuclear weapons necessary for transfer to the United Kingdom pursuant to the Agreement for Cooperation.

-- ERDA, in coordination with DOD, to initiate production of such long lead-time nuclear warhead parts as may be necessary to prepare for FY 1979 production of warheads required to support approved DOD forces.

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Classified by [redacted] Kissinger

Partially Declassified/Released on 2/9/96  
under provisions of E.O. 12958  
by J. Saunders, National Security Council



Authority NSC Letter; 4/16/96

By Ut NLF Date 4/7/97

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-- ERDA to produce and transfer to DOD parts of nuclear weapons, not containing special nuclear material, as may be agreed by ERDA and DOD. These parts may be used in nuclear weapons, training programs, research and development, or production.

-- ERDA, in coordination with DOD, to make such changes in the production and/or retirement of nuclear warheads in FY 1976-1978 as may be necessary to reflect changes in ERDA material availabilities, production/retirement capabilities, or quality assurance requirements; or as necessary to reflect changes as may be required by DOD because of adjustments in military requirements or delivery assets so long as the changes do not exceed  $\pm$  10 percent in each year in strategic offensive, strategic defensive, tactical, and fleet anti-submarine/anti-air warfare warhead totals.

-- ERDA to maintain a surplus of three metric tons of reactor products above annual weapon requirements to provide a contingency reserve. The need for this reserve is to be reviewed each year in the annual stockpile plan.

-- DOD to designate as retired and, in coordination with ERDA, to retain custody of nuclear warheads for a period of up to one year from the date the designation is made if necessary to reduce ERDA requirements for weapon storage during periods of high production workload at ERDA assembly facilities.

Any changes which indicate a significant shift in defense policy or ERDA production capabilities will be submitted to me for my approval.

I have noted the FY 1979-1980 stockpile projection submitted with the FY 1976-1978 request. Since the FY 1979-1980 projection is for planning purposes only, I neither approve nor disapprove the stockpile levels or composition for those years. However, the extended projections are useful in developing integrated programs, and I would like you to include an extended planning projection again with next year's stockpile approval request. The submission should note any additional nuclear materials production capabilities required to satisfy the planning projection. If additional capabilities are required in the recommended planning estimate,

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the submission should also provide an alternative planning estimate that can be satisfied with available capabilities.

The FY 1977-1979 stockpile approval request and the planning projection for FY 1980-1981 should be submitted in February 1976.

*A. R. Ford*

cc: The Director, Office of Management and Budget  
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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