

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NSC/Soubers to Smith 09/06/2002

By 6/22 Date 02/13/07

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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December 14, 1970

National Security Decision Memorandum 96

TO: The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Nuclear Weapons Safety Rules

Under the provisions of NSAM-272 of November 13, 1963, the Defense Department has been forwarding to the President information on all approved changes in nuclear weapons safety rules. In general these changes have been routinely noted. Such a system serves the prime objective of insuring that this important area receives the attention it deserves. There are, however, several problems:

-- The changes described are usually highly technical and difficult to evaluate without a precise knowledge of the characteristics of the weapons involved.

-- At this point the President does not have a clear idea of what the overall system for nuclear weapons safety is and how the approved changes relate to it.

In order to deal with these problems, the President has directed that:

-- NSAM-272 be revoked.

-- An annual report be forwarded to him at the beginning of each calendar year describing the nuclear weapons safety rules in effect for all weapons systems and noting changes in those rules during the past year.

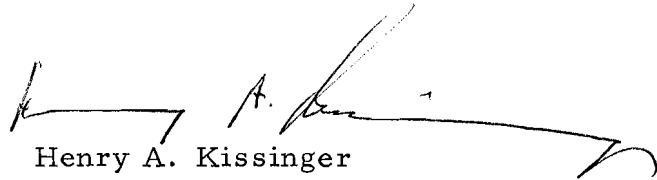
-- He be informed promptly of the rules approved for new weapons systems and of any significant changes with regard to existing systems.

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The President requests that a proposed format for the annual report be forwarded to him for his review by January 15, 1971.



Henry A. Kissinger

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