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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5
NSC/Soubers to Smith 9/6/2002
By WLO Date 7/9/07

August 9, 1973

National Security Decision Memorandum 230

TO: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: U. S. Strategy and Forces for Asia

Based on a review of the NSSM 171 study, the President has decided that the following guidance should govern our future military planning for Asia.

Strategic Planning

The basic strategic guidance for Asia as originally defined by NSDM 27 shall remain in force. U. S. forces should be planned so that U. S. and Allied forces would be capable of conducting a combined conventional defense against a joint PRC/Communist ally attack in either Northeast or Southeast Asia as well as a non-PRC attack in the other Asian theater. The U. S. should continue to plan for an adequate capability to reinforce our Allies in support of this strategy, including the full range of land, naval, and tactical air forces.

Tactical nuclear forces should be planned in Asia as a hedge against the failure of a conventional defense. However, this does not preclude early use of tactical nuclear weapons in the event of a major PRC attack.

Security Assistance planning will continue to focus on assisting our Allies to meet indigenous and non-PRC communist nation threats. Planning will not be based on building Allied self-sufficiency in meeting major threats from the PRC. However, improvements in Allied capabilities to enhance a joint U.S./Allied defense will be planned as a lower priority goal.

U. S. Deployments

U. S. planning for the next five years should include Asian baseline deployments at essentially current levels in Korea, Japan/Okinawa, and

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the Philippines. Normal minor adjustments in manning and support forces would be made; but, any proposed changes in combat force levels or major changes in manpower levels should be submitted to the President for approval. Deployments on Taiwan and in Thailand will be kept under continuous review. There will be no increases in forces or manpower on Taiwan without prior Presidential approval.

The Department of State should develop a scenario for informing the governments of Korea, Philippines, and Japan and other governments they believe appropriate of our deployment plans for FY 74. This scenario should be submitted to the President for approval by August 15, 1973.


Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Director, Arms Control and
Disarmament Agency
The Director, Central Intelligence
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director, Office of Management and Budget