

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 20, 1969

National Security Decision Memorandum 2

TO: The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Director of Central Intelligence
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of the U.S. Information Agency
The Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness

SUBJECT: Reorganization of the National Security Council System

To assist me in carrying out my responsibilities for the conduct of national security affairs, I hereby direct that the National Security Council system be reorganized as follows:

A. The National Security Council (NSC)

The functions, membership and responsibilities of the National Security Council shall be as set forth in the National Security Act of 1947, as amended.

The National Security Council shall be the principal forum for consideration of policy issues requiring Presidential determination. The nature of the issues to be considered may range from current crises and immediate operational problems to middle and long-range planning.

The Council shall meet regularly, and discussion will—except in unusual circumstances—be limited to agenda subjects.¹ The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, at my direction and in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense, shall be responsible for determining the agenda and ensuring that the necessary papers are prepared. Other members of the NSC may propose items for inclusion on the agenda. The Assistant to the President shall be assisted by a National Security Council Staff, as provided by law.

B. The National Security Council Review Group

An NSC Review Group is hereby established to examine papers prior to their submission to the NSC. These papers may be received from NSC Interdepartmental Groups, from NSC *Ad Hoc* Groups,² or from Departments (at their discretion).

The role of the Review Group shall be to review papers to be discussed by the NSC to assure that: 1) the issue under consideration is worthy of NSC attention; 2) all realistic alternatives are presented; 3) the facts, including cost implications, and all

¹ The Director of Central Intelligence will brief the NSC on each agenda item prior to its consideration.

² Discussed below.

department and agency views are fairly and adequately set out. The Review Group shall also be empowered to assign action to the NSC Interdepartmental Groups or NSC *Ad Hoc* Groups, as appropriate.

The membership of the Review Group shall include:

- The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Chairman);
- The representative of the Secretary of State;
- The representative of the Secretary of Defense;
- The representative of the Director of Central Intelligence;
- The representative of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Depending on the issue under consideration, other agencies shall be represented at the discretion of the Chairman.

C. The National Security Under Secretaries Committee

The NSC Under Secretaries Committee shall consider:

1. Issues which are referred to it by the NSC Review Group.
2. Matters pertaining to interdepartmental activities of the U.S. Government overseas:

- Which are of an operational nature³ (in distinction to matters involving a substantial security policy question); *and*
- On which NSC Interdepartmental Groups have been unable to reach agreement, or which are of a broader nature than is suitable to any such group; *and*
- Which do not require consideration at Presidential or NSC level; *and*
- Which are then referred to it by the Secretary of State.

The results of NSC Under Secretaries Committee consideration of the matters listed in 2. above, will be submitted to the Secretary of State.

3. Other operational matters referred to it jointly by the Under Secretary of State and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

The membership of the Under Secretaries Committee shall include:

- The Under Secretary of State (Chairman);
- The Deputy Secretary of Defense;
- The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs;
- The Director of Central Intelligence;
- The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

³ Determination shall be made jointly by the Secretary of State and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Depending on the issue under consideration, other agencies shall be represented at the discretion of the Chairman.

D. The National Security Interdepartmental Groups

Existing Interdepartmental Regional Groups and the existing Political-Military Interdepartmental Group, chaired by the appropriate Assistant Secretary of State, are hereby reconstituted as part of the National Security Council structure. The Interdepartmental Groups shall perform the following functions: 1) discussion and decision on interdepartmental issues which can be settled at the Assistant Secretary level, including issues arising out of the implementation of NSC decision; 2) preparation of policy papers for consideration by the NSC; 3) preparation of contingency papers on potential crisis areas for review by the NSC.

The membership of the interdepartmental regional groups shall include the agencies represented on the NSC Review Group. Depending on the issue under consideration, other agencies shall be represented at the discretion of the Chairman.

E. The National Security Ad Hoc Groups

When appropriate, I intend to appoint, NSC *Ad Hoc* Groups to deal with particular problems, including those which transcend regional boundaries.

The operational responsibility or authority of a Secretary over personnel from his Department serving on interdepartmental committees—in the performance of interdepartmental group duties—is not limited by this NSDM. Nor does this NSDM limit the authority and responsibility of the Secretary of State for those interdepartmental matters assigned to him by NSDM 3.

Copies of reports of the interdepartmental groups shall be transmitted to the heads of Departments and Agencies simultaneously with their submission to the NSC Review Group.

NSAM 341 is hereby rescinded.

/s/ Richard Nixon