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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET WITH
TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT

January 19, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

I am attaching a copy of Presidential Directive/NSC-59 for your information and appropriate but close-hold use. A small part of the pre-planned options section has been deleted because it contains sensitive information [redacted] not normally held outside the Department of Defense and the White House. This small deletion in no way alters the sense and content of the remainder of the directive. (S)

1.5 (a) +
(g)

Zbigniew Brzezinski

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Review on January 19, 1987

Partially Declassified/Released on 3-6-98
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by R. Soubers, National Security Council
F88-215

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July 25, 1980

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~Presidential Directive/NSC-59

TO: The Vice President
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO: The Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy (S)

In PD-18, I directed a follow-on study of our targeting policy for nuclear forces. I have reviewed the results and considered their implications for maintaining deterrence in the present decade, particularly in light of the growing Soviet strategic weapons arsenal and its capabilities. (S)

The most fundamental objective of our strategic policy remains nuclear deterrence. I reaffirm the directive of PD-18 to that effect. The purpose of this directive is to outline policies and actions in the nuclear force employment field to secure that continuing objective. (S)

Our strategic nuclear forces must be able to deter nuclear attacks not only on our own country but also on our forces overseas, as well as on our friends and allies, and to contribute to deterrence of non-nuclear attacks. To continue to deter in an era of strategic nuclear equivalence, it is necessary to have nuclear (as well as conventional) forces such that in considering aggression against our interests any adversary would recognize that no plausible outcome would represent a victory on any plausible definition of victory. To this end and so as to preserve the possibility of bargaining effectively to terminate the war on acceptable terms that are as favorable as practical, if deterrence fails initially, we must be capable of fighting successfully so that the adversary would not achieve his war aims and would suffer costs that are unacceptable, or in any event greater than his gains, from having initiated an attack. (C)

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Reason for Extension: NSC 1.13(e)

Partially Declassified/Released on 8-20-96
under provisions of E.O. 12958
by D. Van Tassel, National Security Council

The employment of nuclear forces must be effectively related to operations of our general purpose forces. Our doctrines for the use of forces in nuclear conflict must insure that we can pursue specific policy objectives selected by the National Command Authorities at that time, from general guidelines established in advance. (S)

These requirements form the broad outline of our evolving counter-vailing strategy. To meet these requirements, improvements should be made to our forces, their supporting C3 and intelligence, and their employment plans and planning apparatus, to achieve a high degree of flexibility, enduring survivability, and adequate performance in the face of enemy actions. The following principles and goals should guide your efforts in making these improvements. (S)

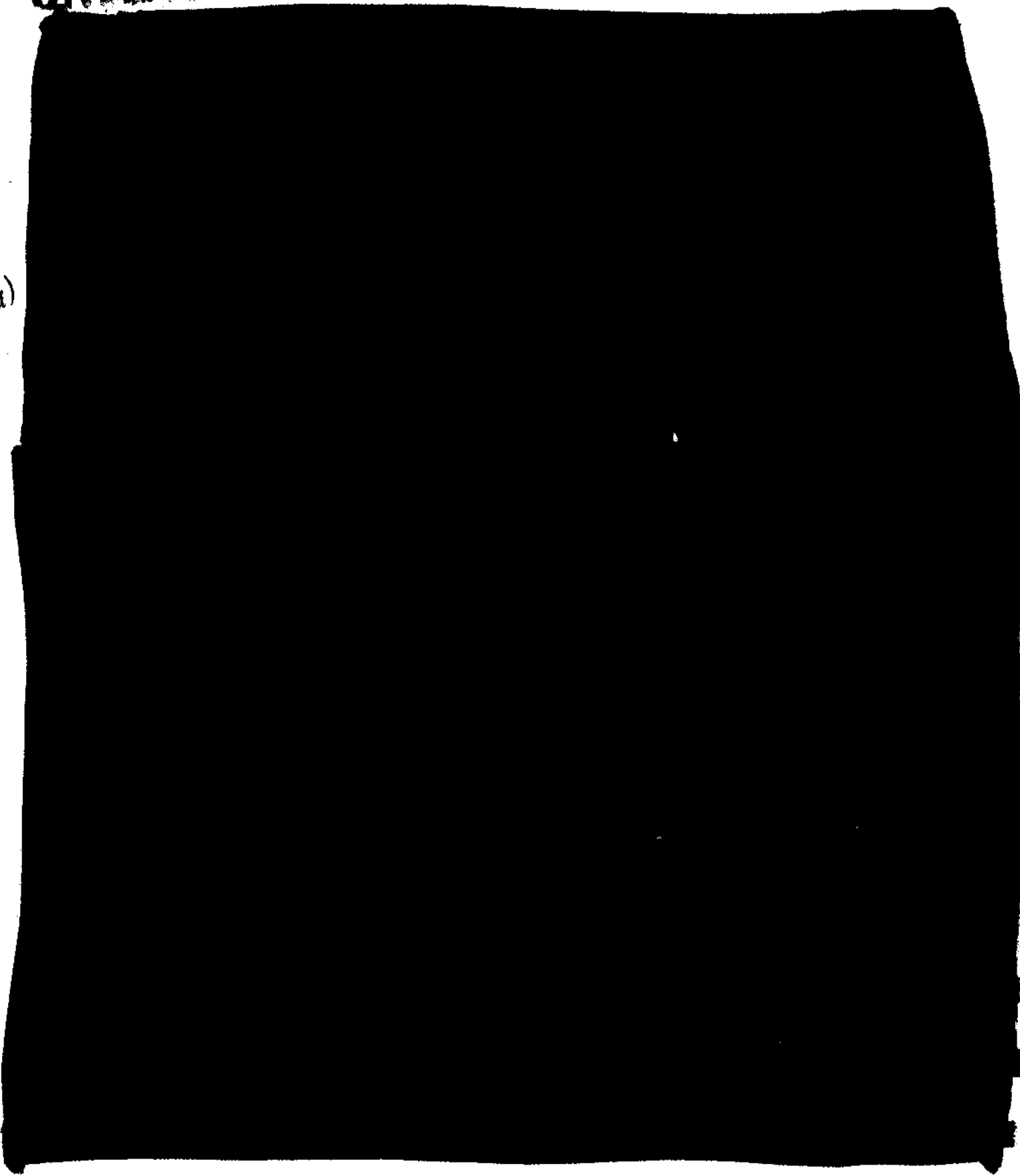
Pre-planned options.



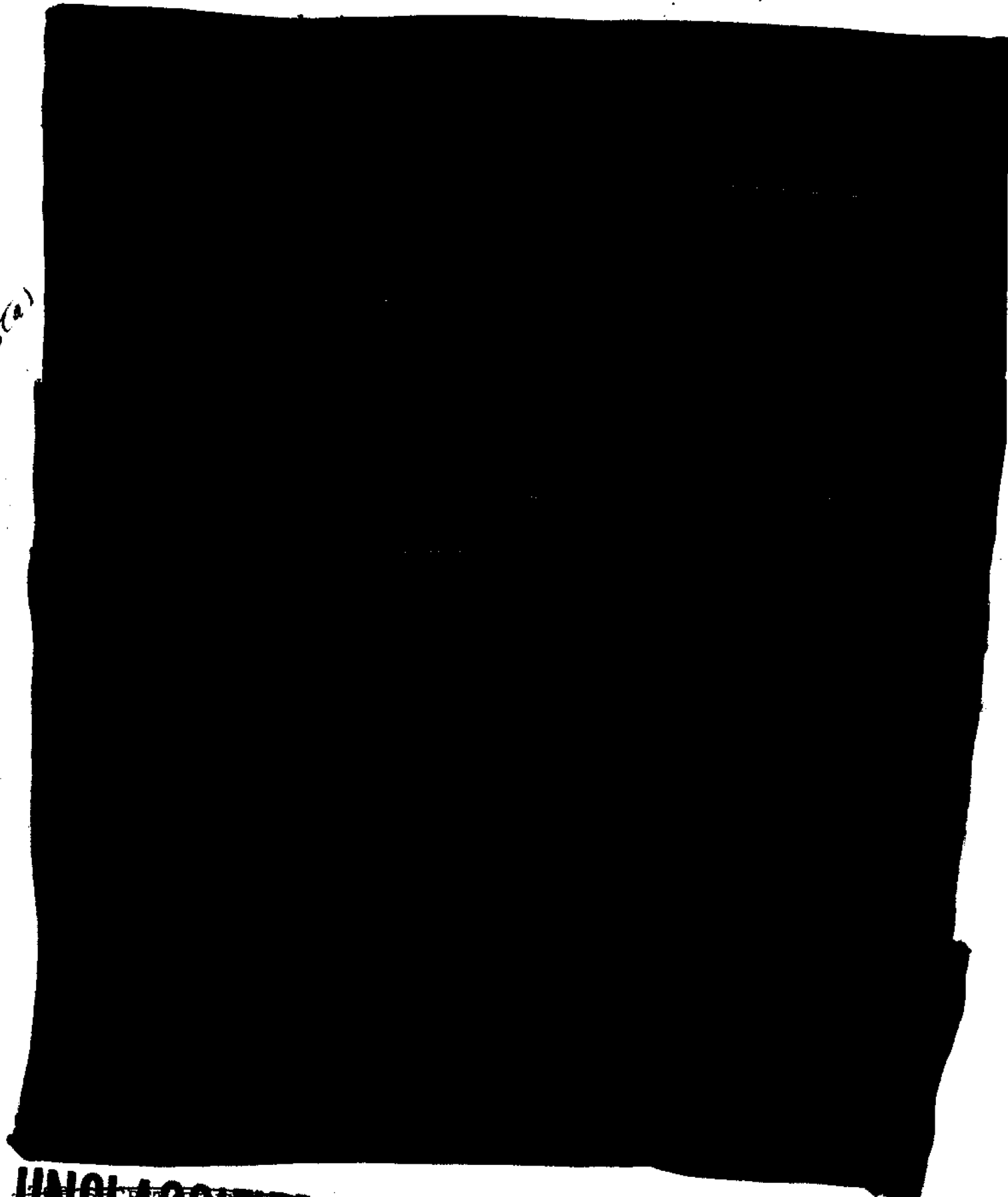
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~~(TS)~~

NSDM-242 is superseded by this directive. (U)

Jimmy Carter

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