MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

September 23, 1964

Re: Summary of the existing plans for emergency use of nuclear weapons

On March 26 you approved recommendations from McNamara and the Joint Chiefs to put into effect updated instructions for expenditure of nuclear weapons in emergency conditions.

This instruction covers four emergency situations. Two of them are

In these two cases the commanders

The other two cases are

The instructions reveal an interesting difference between situations in which nuclear weapons would do enormous civilian and industrial damage and situations in which they would be used in the upper atmosphere or on the high seas.

It is possible that we ought to take account of this distinction in anything we say in the next few days.

Sincerely,

McG. B.