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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON

19 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

I understand that Drs. Killian, Kistiakowsky and Rabi expressed concern to President Eisenhower about the possible use of nuclear weapons in South Vietnam. I have today called each of the three men to tell them that:

1. The JCS have not even discussed the use of such weapons in South Vietnam.
2. Because of terrain and other conditions peculiar to our operations in South Vietnam, it is inconceivable that the use of nuclear weapons would be recommended there against either Viet Cong or North Vietnamese forces.

They expressed appreciation for my calls. Kistiakowsky stated that their telegram was inspired in part by a newspaper report in which President Eisenhower was reported to have left the door open for the use of nuclear weapons in South Vietnam.

Robert S. McNamara

Robert S. McNamara

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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4

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By JW, NARA, Date 7-2-93

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