Excerpted from:

"History of the Custody and Deployment of Nuclear Weapons, July 1945 Through September 1977," February 1978:

HISTORY OF THE CUSTODY AND DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (U)

JULY 1945 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1977

PREPARED BY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE (ATOMIC ENERGY)
FEBRUARY 1978

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APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

TRANSFER AND DISPERAL

OF

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

CY 1950 - CY 1977
CHRONOLOGY
TRANSFER AND DISPERSAL OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Jun 14, 1950  Transfer of nonnuclear components of the Mk 4 bombs from AEC to DoD for training.

Aug 1950 Transfer of nonnuclear components from AEC to the USAF for storage at overseas bases and to the Navy for storage on the weapons.

Late 1950 Nonnuclear components moved to UK and to Guam.

Dec 6, 1951 Nonnuclear components authorized.

May 1951 Nonnuclear components authorized.

Apr 6, 1951 President authorized the transfer of nuclear bombs from AEC to General Vandenburg. This was the only dispersal and transfer authorization in fiscal years 1951 and 1952.

Jun 1951 The bombs transferred to General Vandenburg's custody were moved to Guam.

Jul 22, 1952 Nonnuclear components authorized for storage in UK, Guam, and on carriers.

Jun 20, 1953 President authorized dispersal of weapons under AEC control to carriers, ammo ships, Guam, and the UK. Nonnuclear components could be stored at the above locations and Alaska, Hawaii. This constituted the dispersal authorization for fiscal years 1953 and 1954.

Jul 1953 Arrangements were made with the AEC for storage of nuclear weapons on carriers and Guam.

Apr 1954 The President authorized the dispersal of nuclear weapons under AEC control to ammunition ships, cruisers and submarines.
Dec 1, 1954  For FY 1955 the President authorized the transfer of 
[nuclear weapons from AEC to DoD. Dispersals were 
authorized to CONUS, the UK, West 
Germany, Hawaii, Guam, naval vessels.] 

Jan 1955  Nuclear weapons were dispersed to UK, Guam, Hawaii, naval vessels. Dispersal to 
Alaska, and West Germany had also been authorized by the President on December 1, 1954. 

Aug 29, 1955  The President authorized low yield (under DoD 
custody) and high yield (under AEC custody) to be dispersed in CONUS, UK, West Germany, 
Guam, Hawaii, naval vessels in FY 1956. 

Mar 8, 1956  The President amended the August 29, 1955 authorization 
and established a ceiling of weapons to be transferred from AEC to DoD, exclusive of high yield. 

Nov 24, 1956  The FY 1957 dispersal plan was approved. Totals of 
low yield under DoD and high yield under AEC 
could be dispersed. 

Aug 6, 1957  A total of low yield and high yield weapons and a combined total of were authorized for 
dispersal during FY 1958. 

Jan 3, 1959  The President ordered the transfer of low yield 
and high yield weapons (for the first time) to 
DoD for FY 1959. The high yield weapons were to be 
transferred when AEC and DoD had worked out the 
arrangements. 

Feb 26, 1959  The President authorized the transfer of 
nuclear weapons to DoD for FY 1959. This authorization replaced 
the FY 1959 January 3, 1959 approval. DoD now was 
authorized custody of both low and high yield weapons. 

Nov 5, 1959  The President approved the FY 1960 dispersal plan and 
authorized DoD custody of weapons. Dispersal 
was authorized for the first time to 

Jan 16, 1961  The FY 1960 dispersal plan was approved by President 
Eisenhower. DoD was given custody of weapons. 

A-3
President Kennedy approved the FY 61 NWDCP of January 16, 1961 provided that additional weapons were not dispersed in support of non-US forces and subject to the desirability of retaining a substantial reserve in the National Stockpile Sites. This was the basic dispersal authorization for US forces for FY 61, 62 and 63, and for non-US forces in FY 61.

NSAM 143 authorized the dispersal of [redacted] nuclear weapons for support of designated non-US NATO forces. However, it also precluded the loading of [redacted] exclusive of forces in the United Kingdom. This was the basic dispersal authorization for non-US forces for FY 62 and FY 63.

NSAM 197 required "approvals in principle" by the President for support of non-US forces. Dispersal approval for weapons for these forces would continue under NSAM 143.

President Kennedy disapproved the proposed FY 62 dispersal plan but did permit DoD custody of [redacted] nuclear weapons and components.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense clarified the President's authorization/denial of December 26, 1962. He permitted the additional dispersal of [redacted] weapons over the January 16, 1961 (FY 61) authorization to areas under full US control.

NSAM 305 approved the FY 64 NWDCP. It authorized DoD to obtain custody of [redacted] nuclear weapons and components. It continued the requirements of NSAMs 143, 160 and 197.

The Secretary of Defense, Mr. McNamara, imposed a ceiling of [redacted] ADMs which could be dispersed to Europe.

NSAM 334 approved the NWDCP for FY 65 and FY 66. DoD was authorized custody of [redacted] nuclear weapons. No additional ADMs could be dispersed to Europe. A ceiling of [redacted] weapons was imposed on NATO Europe. NSAM 143 and NSAM 197 actions were continued.

The President authorized the transfer to DoD of all finished nuclear weapons in the stockpile.
Aug 4, 1967

NSAM 364 authorized DoD to disperse weapons for FY 67 and FY 68. The ceilings for NATO Europe and ADMs for Europe were continued.

Jan 26, 1968

The Deputy Secretary of Defense notified the JCS that no additional dispersals would be made to NATO Europe and that he intended to hold the number of weapons in NATO Europe/Atlantic and afloat in the Atlantic and Pacific at the numbers actually deployed as of December 31, 1967. He allowed a 10% overage for weapons afloat. Any dispersals over these limits had to be approved by the Secretary of Defense.

Jan 26, 1968

The actual number of weapons in NATO Europe was

Apr 6, 1968

The Deputy Secretary of Defense authorized an increase of weapons to his ceiling of weapons for the Atlantic Fleet.

Jun 11, 1968

NSAM 370 approved the NWDCP for FY 69. The ceilings for NATO Europe and ADMs in Europe were continued in effect. NSAM 143 was modified to permit "case by case" dispersals to be authorized by the annual NWDCP. A ceiling of weapons was set for dispersals outside of CONUS.

Jun 25, 1968

The Deputy Secretary of Defense established a new ceiling of weapons afloat less Polaris warheads.

Aug 6, 1968

The Deputy Secretary of Defense established a ceiling of weapons for NATO Europe and a total of weapons afloat excluding strategic offensive missiles.

Jan 18, 1969

NSAM 372 authorized the FY 70 NWDCP. The ceilings for total weapons in NATO Europe and ADMs in Europe was continued. The maximum number of weapons outside CONUS was set at

May 9, 1970

NSDM 60 authorized the FY 70 NWDCP. The President desired revised NATO and ADM tables. Revised tables as approved established NATO Europe ceiling at the ADM ceiling for Europe at. The maximum number of weapons outside CONUS was set at
The Deputy Secretary of Defense delegated authority to the JCS to increase approved deployment levels in NATO Europe when specified conditional deployments were made and to increase specified deployments in any theater up to 10% when necessary to meet contingencies.

NSDM 121 authorized the FY72 NWDCP. The President approved ceilings of to NATO Europe and for ADMs in Europe. He denied an increase of weapons A ceiling of was set for dispersals outside of CONUS.

NSDM 178 authorized the FY73 NWDCP. The President approved ceilings of to NATO Europe and a European ADM ceiling of A ceiling of was set for weapons dispersed outside of CONUS.

NSDM 226 authorized the FY74 NWDCP. The President established ceilings of for NATO Europe and for ADMs in Europe. The total authorized for dispersal outside CONUS was

The President, by NSDM 258, approved a change to the nuclear weapon yield constraint imposed by NSAMs 143 and 199. The yield shall now not exceed (accommodating B61-2 and B61-3 nuclear bomb support of non-US NATO forces).

NSDM 274 authorized the FY75 NWDCP. The President established ceilings of for NATO Europe and for ADMs in Europe. A ceiling of was set for dispersals outside CONUS.

General Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, notified General Wickham, Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, that the President had directed there would be no withdrawal of US forces or nuclear weapons from overseas areas without his expressed approval.
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(f) Warheads in excess to European requirements being retained in-theater for MBFR purposes.

(g) Additional warheads were deployed to Government request and US Presidential approval.