



## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

### FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, 1977–1980, VOLUME IV, NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

## 80. Memorandum From the Military Assistant to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Odom) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)<sup>1</sup>

Washington, August 19, 1978

### SUBJECT

Background for your SAC/NORAD Trip

#### Trip Purposes

Get a personal sense for the forces, equipment, and command procedures; *inspire* the officers and troops by your personal attention expressed in this visit—something not to underestimate and something you will do easily and with great impact.

Get a better sense for the relation between the realities of our forces structure and C3I on the one hand and a number of on-going policy issues on the other. Some examples are the targeting study, the secure reserve force study, adequacy of our intelligence capability, policy on theater nuclear forces, and arms control efforts, including SALT, ASAT, and verification.

#### The Larger Perspective for the Trip

Three general questions provide a larger conceptual framework for organizing what you want to learn. They flow from the doctrinal differences between “war fighting” and “deterrence.” They can be put this way:

- What is different about the kinds of forces and C3I that one buys for a “deterrence” posture as opposed to the forces one would buy for a “war fighting” posture?
- How would the forces and C3I for one posture interact in a conflict with the forces and C3I of the other posture?
- What changes and improvements in our own forces are implied by answers to the above questions?

These questions should inspire concern with:

- The length of a war.
- What one targets.
- Flexibility in targeting.
- The coordination (or absence of it) between strategic and other forces in the campaign.
- What the enemy will shoot at with his strategic forces.
- Survivability of C3I forces.
- Mobilization capabilities.

- Soviet views, forces, and plans.

## Specific Issues and Areas of Concern

### I. Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence

There are two kinds of problems in C3I. The first, most serious, is whether *the Soviets could attack our C3I in a way that would prevent us from retaliating*. Second, is our C3I adequate for “sustained war fighting?” Could we manage flexible planning for supporting theater campaigns? Do our intelligence assets provide timely enough information to support operational needs? And will they survive? More specific questions you might ask on these points are:

- Where are weak links in communications with the bombers? ICBM’s? SSBN’s?
- Can our communications equipment withstand the “electro-magnetic impact” (EMP) they would receive from nuclear blasts?
- For how long could the Soviets repeat and sustain EMP over large parts of the U.S.?

[1 line not declassified]

- Should any actions be taken to enhance connectivity amongst our critical C3I modes? What?

[1 line not declassified]

- Do we have any backup/reserve satellites ready to launch to replace damaged ones during a campaign?
- Congressional oversight committees have concluded that our intelligence is adequate for peacetime only—if this is true, what should be done to improve the situation?
- How will SAC update its intelligence after the first strike? Successive strikes?
- Can the air command post do more than manage SIOP-type options? How will its intelligence and force connectivity be kept up to date in the weeks and months after a war begins?
- Where will surviving SAC bombers go after the initial strikes?
- If public electrical power is lost, can the ICBM force still launch? How long can it endure without public electrical power?

### II. Planning and Targeting

As the PD–18 targeting study indicates, our major planning effort has been on the SIOP and its MAO and SAO variants. The SIOP is no small achievement, but its great complexity also introduces rigidities. As you recall from IVORY ITEMS, once there was a search for refinements to adjust a retaliatory response to various and different situations, the rigidity became apparent —e.g., recalling the bombers after a couple of hours. That is still virtually undoable without calling off every other part of the SIOP.

Another problem lies in the integration of our strategic forces with SACEUR’s theater nuclear forces. The same problem also exists in Korea although it does not get the same attention. Here is the problem as I understand it. If SACEUR shoots his “general strike plan” (TNF) in conjunction with the SIOP, things are all right. If they are fired separately, great gaps occur. The most troublesome aspect of this seems to be the possibility of escalation in Europe which we want to hold at the theater level. There are differing views on the adequacy of our present planning of nuclear fires for that event.

LNO’s and RNO’s are the planning devices which are meant to move us away from the SIOP rigidity. The ones now planned are largely academic exercises because circumstances, military and political, will never be exactly as assumed in the planning phase. The direction to move with LNO’s is toward more speed in planning them for particular situations as they arise. You

should try to get a good sense for SAC's lack of flexibility and speed in such planning. SAC and the Air Force like to evade this issue because it shows so clearly how they are unprepared for anything but the big spastic retaliation.<sup>2</sup>

You will want to ask about "secure reserve force" (SRF) planning.<sup>3</sup> This topic, like LNO's, brings up the question of how long a war will last and how to endure for the long campaign. SAC is very weak on this matter. The planners don't know what they would target with the SRF, and they are not sure how they will control them. SRF is also a bone of inter-service contention. The Navy likes to use SRF for justifying more SSBN's, and SAC knows that creating a survivable SRF from bombers and [Page 358] ICBM's is not promising. That is another reason SAC shows low interest.<sup>4</sup>

On targeting priorities, you have read the memos from Huntington and Utgoff,<sup>5</sup> and you may want to discuss "economic recovery" versus "military forces" in targeting. This topic becomes scholastic very quickly. Once you move to duration of the war, planning flexibility, C3I, SRF, etc., the targeting priorities are implicitly reversed.<sup>6</sup> The subject remains important, however, for the structure of the SIOP.

The following list of short questions may be useful in probing the briefers:

- How long does it take to plan an LNO from scratch?
- Who can plan LNO's? JCS? SAC?
- Could SAC support SACEUR in a theater nuclear campaign? Who would control planning? Where would it take place?
- How will targets be identified for LNO's?
- How will damage be assessed after LNO's have been fired?
- Are LNO's coordinated with actions by other forces? Ground offensives? If so, what is the planning link to the land force commander?
- Could we track, target, and hit a Soviet naval task force at sea with an LNO?<sup>7</sup>
- What constitutes our Secure Reserve Force? How do we know it is "secure?"
- What will we target with the SRF?<sup>8</sup>
- How will we assess SRF<sup>9</sup> damage?
- Will the SRF be coordinated with theater forces (Europe) after a SIOP exchange?
- Could surviving SSBN's be reloaded with SLBM's? Where? Would it make sense to build and store extra SLBM's? Do we have any industrial mobilization for missile production in the event of a long nuclear war?
- Do we have LNO's for Soviet C3I?<sup>10</sup>
- What does the increasing number of Soviet rail mobile command posts and airborne command posts mean for our targeting and planning?<sup>11</sup>
- Does our target list have all the Soviet C3I bunkers in the USSR? In East Europe?
- Could we launch an LNO on only Soviet theater C3I in East Europe?
- Does SACEUR, in his RNO context, have the capability to destroy Warsaw Pact C3I.
- How far down the command line can SAC acquire and target command posts? Front? Army Group? Army? Division?

### III. Interaction of U.S. and Soviet Forces and C3I

This topic pushes up the force structure implications of planning and programming for a “deterrence” doctrine versus planning and programming for a “war fighting” doctrine. I am attaching at Tab E a special paper done for me by a concerned denizen in the depths of CIA.<sup>12</sup> His thoughts are based on close examination of several years of Soviet military exercises. His most striking conclusion is the growing Soviet interest in nuclear conflicts limited in one fashion or another. Bob Rosenberg’s SAC/NORAD trip report (Tab D) summarizes Intelligence Community growing evidence of a Soviet sustained war fighting capability.<sup>13</sup>

Flexibility, use of nuclear forces in combination with other forces, and scenarios allowing for slower escalation are the hallmarks of Soviet exercise evolution.

Some questions in this area are:

- Where are the weak points in the Soviet approach?
- What changes are we making to take into account changing Soviet capabilities and exercise practices?<sup>14</sup>
- What should be done as opposed to what is being done?
- What are the implications of ASAT developments, both Soviets and U.S.?
- What is the consequence of the [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. What can be done about it? (Bob Rosenberg suggests that you discuss this with Bill Perry during the trip and initiate a “counters to damage assessment” effort.)<sup>15</sup> [Page 360]

#### IV. IVORY ITEM and NORAD

At NORAD you should ask General Hill about his problems with IVORY ITEM. In short, the issue is this. The JCS, in designating an IVORY ITEM scenario, assumes a sequence of enemy actions. When the President asks General Hill for refinements and clarifications of the enemy action, he may not have them in his JCS brief. If he makes them up, he risks throwing the entire scenario off base.

You might ask General Hill and General Ellis about trying some IVORY ITEM drills where a war begins in Europe or Korea with conventional forces and then escalates to the nuclear level. In other words, can we use the IVORY ITEM format to discover more clearly our ability to “control escalation” and to keep things at the theater level? An IVORY ITEM for an LNO scenario might also be interesting.<sup>16</sup>

#### V. Arms Control, Force Postures, and Doctrine

Senator Nunn has recently declared that our arms control negotiating requirements drive our military programs while the Soviet programs drive their negotiating requirements. During the trip, test this proposition. “Deterrence” ties our arms control approach to our force developments. Is deterrence an adequate paradigm for integrating arms control with programs? Or is it encouraging us to launch programs that do little to improve our military capabilities?

Some examples:

- MAPS for the ICBM force while ignoring C3I?
- Launch from under attack?
- Targeting policy “fixes” to compensate for Soviet civil defense?
- Targeting priority on “economic recovery” rather than flexibility to adapt to appropriate policy objectives during a war?

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1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 52, SAC and NORAD 8/20–21/78 Brzezinski Trip 7–9/78. Top Secret; Sensitive. Outside the System.↵

2. Brzezinski drew two vertical lines in the left margin next to this and the previous sentence.↵
3. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this sentence.↵
4. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this and the previous sentence.↵
5. Huntington's memorandum to Brzezinski is printed as Document 71. Utgoff's memorandum was not found.↵
6. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this sentence.↵
7. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this sentence.↵
8. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this sentence and underscored "with."↵
9. Brzezinski underlined the words "assess SRF."↵
10. Brzezinski circled this sentence.↵
11. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this sentence.↵
12. Tab E was not found attached. Above this sentence, Brzezinski wrote: "Sustained limited nuclear war." To the right of that comment, he wrote another illegible comment.↵
13. Tab D was not found attached.↵
14. Brzezinski drew an arrow in the right margin pointing to this sentence.↵
15. Brzezinski drew two vertical lines in the left margin next to this paragraph, and an arrow in the right margin pointing to it.↵
16. Brzezinski drew a vertical line in the left margin next to this and the previous sentence.↵