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197. Paper Prepared in the National Security Council[1]

Washington, undated

Tab A

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council

Washington, undated

[*Top Secret. 13 pages not declassified*]

Annex A

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council

Washington, undated

[*Top Secret. 2 pages not declassified*]

[Page 842]

Annex B

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council[2]

Washington, undated

SOVIET NUCLEAR THREAT TO U.S. LEADERSHIP

(TS) A critical question in the COG problem is, if the Soviet Union were to attack the United States, would the civilian and military leadership infrastructure be attacked as well? The evidence suggests that they would. Soviet doctrine stresses the importance of effective command and control for the successful conduct of military operations. Accordingly, Soviet military planning emphasizes the neutralization of enemy C3 assets. In the case of a conflict within a theater of operations, there is an extensive body of information regarding Soviet planning for attacks on opposing command posts and communications

centers. Targeting of such facilities is accorded the highest priority, equivalent to targeting nuclear weapons of opposing forces. In the case of intercontinental conflict, there is no direct evidence of recent vintage. However, a considerable body of indirect evidence suggests that targeting priorities are similar.

(TS) Although direct evidence of Soviet intentions is not available, it is considered highly unlikely that the Soviet Union would launch a major intercontinental strike against U.S. military forces that would not include strikes against key command, control, and communications centers, including the National Command Authority (NCA). Since the locations of the primary U.S. federal relocation sites are publicly available, it is again considered highly unlikely that these would not be targeted. Thus, it must be assumed that the Soviet Union would apply as many weapons as necessary to ensure the destruction of these key sites. The single warhead versions of the SS–17, SS–18, and SS–19 (in particular, the SS–18) would be the most likely candidates for attacking [*1 line not declassified*] given our estimate of their damage expectancy.

(S) There is some dated evidence of Soviet intent to use SLBMs against command posts and communications centers. Although current Soviet SLBMs have a much lower damage expectancy than more modern ICBMs, SLBMs have the advantage of shorter flight times, which reduce the amount of warning time available. However, it is not believed that the Soviet Union would consider a "decapitation" attack alone, that is one aimed solely at the NCA command and control, to be adequate to [Page 843] attain their war-fighting objectives. Thus, an attack against the NCA would almost certainly be part of a large scale strike against U.S. military forces.

(S) The length of strategic warning of nuclear attack would depend on the circumstances of the crisis leading to the attack. The intelligence community, however, has estimated that war in Europe "would be preceded by a period of extreme tension in a crisis of unprecedented severity." The Soviet Union apparently believes that a period of increased tension will precede any major use of military forces. The intelligence community believes that there is virtually no chance that the Soviet Union would attack NATO countries from a standing start, and the majority view is that the USSR and the Warsaw Pact would take at least eight days of preparation before initiating hostilities in Europe. However, "strategic warning" cannot be regarded as something that can be provided with any degree of precision, since it depends as much on the interpretations and perceptions of the national policy authorities as it does on any array of intelligence evidence.

Annex C

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council[3]

Washington, undated

ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS FOR PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSOR SUPPORT

Over the past several years, a number of studies have been conducted to evaluate various concepts to improve the survivability and endurance of the Presidency in a protracted nuclear conflict. These concepts include:

— Submarine Emergency Alternate Command Post (SEACP);

— Maritime surface vessels;

— Airborne systems, including the NEACP;

— Land-based systems.

All are motivated by the basic need for the Presidency to survive and function over extended periods of time in a nuclear environment.

The following outlines the major conclusions of these efforts and offers some thoughts on directions various basing platforms might go.

SEACP [Page 844]

A recent Navy study concluded that it would be feasible to convert a POLARIS SSBN to perform most of the missions associated with a national-level command post. However, the concept was judged to be deficient in the following areas:

— Safe and timely embarkation of the President (or successor) would present major problems. It would be extremely difficult to effect a timely rendezvous with a SEACP.

— The pre-attack and early trans-attack survival of a submarine command post is dependent upon its ability to remain undetected by the enemy. Its location would be compromised, and its probability of survival reduced, if it were to tie into tactical warning and attack assessment communications networks.

— It is doubtful that submarine communications technology would support the volume of communications traffic which would be associated with the President's functions. Submarines are normally not required to effect a great deal of transmissions; their communications systems are focused on receiving.

— Dedicated submarine platforms are extremely costly.

It was apparent from the study that the SEACP is not a cost-effective platform for Presidential survival. However, submarines do offer potential for other key COG functions, such as the reconstitution of C3I systems which are destroyed during the early stages of a nuclear conflict.

Surface Vessels

Navy, Coast Guard, and even merchant vessels can be configured to carry special communications and support packages for the President. Surface vessels offer advantages in mobility and flexibility. The proliferation of ships in different locations would enhance survival through dispersion. However, surface vessels have some significant shortcomings as well:

— Connectivity with surviving domestic telephone nets would be tenuous from the high seas. The volume of radio communications which would be necessary to support Presidential functions would provide an EM signature which could jeopardize the vessel.

— Dedicated and proliferated platforms would be costly. This was the experience with the NORTHAMPTON, a cruiser formerly dedicated to the COG role.

— Surface vessels are vulnerable to submarine attack, especially if the ship has been identified prior to the conflict as a high-value target. Under those circumstances, such a vessel would probably have a submarine tail at all times.

— There may be come [*some*?] political liability associated with the President leaving the continental United States.

An alternative seaborne concept, of considerably less cost, is to develop our land-based systems such that they are readily deployable on ships, tugs, or barges which could operate on inland waters or in coastal areas. This would provide an additional measure of flexibility and mobility in a COG system.

Airborne Platforms

Our current COG system relies heavily upon airborne assets, [*5 lines not declassified*]

The [*less than 1 line not declassified*] also has some major drawbacks:

— [*6 lines not declassified*]

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C3 and staff configuration are such that the President will probably be unable to execute his functions as Chief of State or Chief Executive, in addition to his requirements to command theater nuclear and conventional forces.

For these reasons, it would be imprudent to rely exclusively upon [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

As with seaborne platforms, it may be possible to combine a land mobile system with airborne carriers, such as C–130s. Under this concept, the land-based system could embark on aircraft and be moved to various parts of the country, depending upon the attack pattern.

Land Based System

Several land based deployment concepts were also evaluated by the Working Group. For analytic purposes, these deployment modes were treated as discrete sets. Operationally, these concepts could clearly be mixed. (Other somewhat different modes of deployment could evolve and expansions of specific mixtures could be developed in response to a changing threat.)

Detailed analyses were performed on basing modes with (a) dedicated prepared sites and stationary or semi-mobile operation; (b) designated unprepared sites and stationary or semi-mobile operation; and (c) a fully ground mobile concept.

—*Dedicated Prepared Sites.* Sites are selected in low-risk areas and will have fall-out protection, connectivity to the commercial telephone system, life support supplies and access to designated ground vehicles. Since these preparatory steps are austere, some added advanced preparation may be required. Depending on the threat, from 20 to 650 of these sites were used in the analysis. If used in stationary operation, all sites must be equipped with full communications packages. The successor and his team would disperse at random to one of the sites and leapfrog between the sites.

In semi-mobile operations mode, the number of communications packages would be reduced to 2–4 per potential [Page 846] successor. These packages, while not fully mobile, would be moveable and would permit some limited communications while on the move. The successor could move at random between sites using designated vehicles or aircraft.

—*Designated Unprepared Sites.* Again, sites should be located in such buildings as motels, schools, armories or small federal, civil, or military installations.

In the stationary operating mode, a site would be activated at random by dispersing communications and support packages to the site. Successors and their support team would then be dispatched to the activated site in designated vehicles or aircraft.

In the semi-mobile operating mode between 2 to 4 semi-mobile support groups, communications and support packages per successor would move at random between sites. Teams would have limited communications while on the move (in designated support vehicles).

—*Fully Mobile Operations.* Ground-mobile operation can be achieved by having the successor joint a fully-equipped caravan in a relatively low-risk area with little possibility for exposure to fall-out. Three caravans per successor were used in the analysis. The teams relied on fuel and food caches in the area; nevertheless, their endurance would be limited. (Other full mobile deployment modes have been evaluated in previous analyses. Alternates such as submarines, fully airborne and shipborne operations were excluded for reasons of cost, limited communications and reduced endurance.)

Evaluation

The five basing modes were then evaluated on the basis of the following parameters:

— Survivability, which depends on the threat (Soviet weapons availability, yield, and accuracy); the enemy's intelligence capability to detect and acquire an evading successor; U.S. protective measures consisting of hardening; and the extent of location uncertainty which can be introduced through secrecy, proliferation of sites, or mobility.

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Endurance characteristics, requiring the deployment modes to be able to operate essentially self-contained and be able to endure for 30 days during trans-attack. Endurance depends on the availability of essential life support, electric power, and fuel.

— Operability, which is the ability to perform the required functions. (The more mobile a ground-based system, the greater its potential for operability degradation.)

— Costs.

Examining the various basing options, some rough comparisons can be made. From this general assessment, it [Page 847] appears that the designated unprepared semi-mobile mode presents the most cost-effective option. It should be stressed, however, that this is not based upon definitive analysis; it only represents a logical starting point for the iterative development and evaluation processes outlined in the basic paper. The table also does not exclude the possibilities of mixed systems, drawing upon several alternate basing modes to maximize redundancy and dispersion.

CHARACTERISTICS

	Survivability	*Endurability*	*Operability*	*Cost*
BASING MODES				
Submarines	high	good	poor	high
Surface Vessel	low-moderate	good	poor-moderate	high
[*less than 1 line not declassified*]	high	poor	moderate	moderate-high
Land-based Dedicated Prepared Stationary	low-moderate	good	good	moderate-very high
Dedicated Prepared Semi-Mobile	moderate-high	good	moderate-good	low-high
Designated Unprepared Stationary	low	good	good	very low
Designated Unprepared Semi-Mobile	high	moderate-good	moderate-good	low-moderate
Fully Mobile	high	poor	poor	high

EVALUATION MATRIX

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1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 114, SCC 322, 06/12/80, Civil Defense. Top Secret. 3 pages not declassified↩
2. Top Secret.↩
3. Secret.↩