



## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

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

## 82. 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 22, 1978

### SUBJECT

Follow-up Actions on Your SAC/NORAD Trip

Your trip raised a large number of points, but follow-up action is relevant for only a few of them. It is useful to list the major points and then indicate the ways to follow up.

Key Points Emerging During Your SAC Briefings

1. US vulnerability to Soviet C3I attack, [2 lines not declassified].
2. SIOP rigidities and the limited work on flexible planning.
3. The problem of political guidance for LNO planning.
4. [1 line not declassified]
5. The growing importance of the SSBN fleet for US vulnerability.
6. The lack of a Minute Man reload capability.
7. The lack of redundancy in our SAC targeting data base. Once the NMCC, ANMCC, and SAC are destroyed, the airborne command system, including the NEACP, do not have the staff capability to handle flexible LNO and other targeting.
8. Our ability to assess damage after the SIOP or LNOs is problematical.

Key Points Made at NORAD

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1. The DSP system has blindspots at times and barely covers the threat areas. SSBNs could easily shoot through it undetected until the new PAVE PAWS coastal radar is active (1979 on the West Coast, but held up by an environmental impact court proceeding on the East Coast).
2. DSP ground stations are few and vulnerable.
3. Ground and satellite communications with the BMEWS system is degrading due to budgetary decisions to give up costly landlines.
4. There is virtually no BMEWS or other capability for characterizing a Soviet IRBM attack on Western Europe.
- 5.

Monitoring ASAT activities and other space activities exceeds NORAD's capability, and the forecast is for the gap to grow in the future. Do the Europeans know this?

### Follow-up Actions

This is a tentative list of things to do and approaches to take. The possibilities, of course, are rather staggering because you opened more issues than Defense could possibly resolve in a decade.

#### 1. How to deal with the rigidity in our SIOP and the lax of flexibility.

This is the issue of most direct concern and responsibility for you as chairman of the Special Coordinating Committee (Crisis Management). You have already mentioned the very schemes I would recommend.

*First*, you mentioned to General Jones some IVORY ITEM exercises to explore scenarios other than the SIOP. Four or five limited nuclear conflict scenarios, particularly scenarios taken from Soviet exercises, can teach the President, you, Brown, and the Joint Chiefs a great deal about our present predicament. Creating that awareness is the first and most important step now.

*Second*, you could establish an SCC for LNOs, one to be an NSC when you can get the President involved. Once that process is started, you will generate the kinds of guidance needed for more flexibility in LNO planning. You are also going to uncover the lack of integration of LNOs with Army and Navy commands and plans, particularly in the theaters of Europe and Northeast Asia.

This SCC for LNOs could in fact grow into what has been sought by many people for several years. NSDM–242 called for some small political–military war staff for the President;<sup>2</sup> it never took hold because Kissinger's war doctrine did not [\[Page 365\]](#) require it. The general idea appears again in the DOD targeting study.

It seeks a "mechanism" that connects the military planners with the political leadership for appropriate guidance. You and the President began generating such a small group with the IVORY ITEM. I have encouraged Defense to accept that informal group as the "mechanism" they want in this targeting study. Their reactions are mixed, but Leon Sloss is willing to consider it as second best to a formal SCC for this purpose.

As you drew out the LNO issue at SAC with General Ellis and suggested that we might review the LNOs with the President, I was reminded of a short passage from Clausewitz: "If war is to be fully consonant with political objectives, and policy suited to the means available for war, then unless statesman and soldier are combined in one person, the only sound expedient is to make the commander-in-chief a member of the cabinet so that the cabinet may share in the major aspects of his activities." An SCC on LNOs, etc., puts the National Security Council in a position to share in the major activities of military planning with strategic and other forces.

#### 2. The C3I Problem.

The best approach here is to discuss it first with Charles Duncan. He is beginning to take interest in the National Communications System and the WWMCCS as the DOD's major figure in that arena. Two topics for such a discussion are:

- The problem revealed in the SAC study of our vulnerability to a C3I attack and the kinds of things that make sense as program responses. (There is a DOD program issue paper on this C3I.)
- The institutional incentive structure for C3I budgeting: nobody wants to pay but everyone admits the need for someone to pay for WMMCCS.

#### 3. The SACEUR and NATO Planning Problem for TNE.

I am not abreast of the way PRM–38<sup>2</sup> is moving on this matter, but TNF policy is where the most immediate opportunity for follow-up lies. Uninformed of the PRM–38 rationale, I would guess that Gray Area Systems arms control perspectives are driving our weapons program options. European “psychological” or political needs (to avoid the “de-coupling” impression) probably rival the arms control concerns for driving weapons choices. Left out entirely is the perspective of [\[Page 366\]](#) planning for a theater nuclear campaign within and as part of the US strategic campaign planning.

#### 4. The “I” Concerns in C3I at NORAD.

Rosenberg can probably be more helpful on this point, but the satellite reconnaissance budget is obviously a relevant place to follow up NORAD’s worry about gaps in coverage of missile launches.

SALT and ASAT negotiations are also affected by the projected degradation of our capability to monitor space activities.

Telecommunications policy is an area for action to prevent degradation of NORAD ground communications, but after a chat with Bill Perry, I have reached the view that the AT&T monopoly—which allowed the DOD to set high standards for connectivity, hardness, and system interoperability—will erode and the National Communications System (including NORAD) will have to adapt. It is not clear to me what precise actions to take at present on this matter.

This is an initial hasty list. Several of the points need better staffing before you decide on precise follow-up actions.

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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. Brzezinski wrote next to the date: “Good memo! please review with VU and others, so that it can be staffed out + followed-up. ZB.”<sup>2</sup>
  2. NSDM 242 is printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXXV, National Security Policy, 1973–1976, Document 31.<sup>2</sup>
  3. Reference is to the interagency preparation of the response to Presidential Review Memorandum/NSC–38, “Long-Range Theater Nuclear Capabilities and Arms Control,” which Carter approved on June 22, 1978. Documentation on PRM–38 is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1977–1980, vol. V, European Security, 1977–1983.<sup>2</sup>