



OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

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14. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 25, 1977

SUBJECT

Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) Targeting Philosophy

This memorandum responds to your question² regarding Soviet fatalities if population were attacked directly in the SIOP rather than following current policy, which targets industry. The estimates provided are the result of manual calculations using data bases which were not designed to allow precise computation of the results of a population attack.

In the most recent dynamic Soviet/U.S. wargame simulation, the largest option in the current SIOP (*[less than 1 line not declassified]*)—primarily an industrial targeting plan) is estimated to produce Soviet fatalities of about 33 percent (84.5M) of the total population (includes estimated effects from fallout). If we were to directly target Soviet population with today's SIOP weapons, including the POSEIDON weapons committed to SACEUR and several hundred weapons now targeted on military objectives, the estimated fatalities would increase to about 44 percent (115M).

The above estimates do not reflect the range of uncertainty about fallout-related fatalities nor do they consider the possible effects of varying blast and fallout shelter postures. Preliminary analysis has indicated that direct population attacks are less sensitive to assumed population sheltering postures than are economic attacks. However, available intelligence does not permit high confidence analysis in this area.

Harold Brown

1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 52, USSR: 3–7/77. Top Secret.↵

2. Not further identified.↵