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## 124. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, April 25, 1979, 3–5 p.m.

### SUBJECT

Strategic Forces Employment Policy

### PARTICIPANTS

#### State

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*Summary of Conclusions*

An SCC meeting was held for the purpose of hearing some briefings by the JCS that DOD sees as important background for the SCC's continuing discussion of strategic forces employment policy. (S)

The first brief described the latest major revision of the SIOP. It described the targeting guidance under which the SIOP is prepared, the numbers and types of targets that are included in the national target base and are thus candidates for attack, the numbers of weapons applied to the targets under each attack option, and the consequences of execution under different conditions. (TS)

The most important points made in this brief were that (1) under the best of conditions we can destroy [*percentage not declassified*] of the Soviet nuclear threat targets, (2) in their most vulnerable posture, the Soviets would lose [*percentage not declassified*] of their population, and (3) Soviet civil defense can hold these fatalities under the worst of our [[Page 571](#)] currently planned attacks to about [*percentage not declassified*]. (TS)

The second brief described the results of the latest RISOP analysis in which Studies, Analysis and Gaming Agency analysts apply Soviet strategic forces in hypothetical strikes against the US. The objectives assumed for the Soviet Union are to defeat "enemy nuclear capabilities," eliminate the US as a major global power, facilitate Soviet recovery and reconstruction, improve the (postwar) correlation of forces, and be prepared to fight the PRC. (TS)

The first "Soviet" attack option considered involved a preemptive attack with both sides on fully generated alert and with counterforce being the dominant objective. The attack employs over [*number not declassified*] warheads and holds over [*number not declassified*] warheads in reserve. It places a high priority on destroying the US C3 system in order to disrupt our retaliatory attack. It results in severe damage to [*percentage not declassified*] the US missile silos, destruction of [*percentage not declassified*] of the manufacturing value added of the assumed US industrial target base, and fatality levels of approximately [*percentage not declassified*] for the US and [*percentage not declassified*] for our European Allies. (TS)

The second "Soviet" attack option considered was a bolt-from-the-blue attack again emphasizing destruction of "enemy" nuclear forces. The Soviets attack [*number not declassified*] hours into a major Soviet exercise. Some [*number not declassified*] fewer weapons are available as a consequence of not being on a full alert. However, the damage expectancies achieved in the attack are nearly as high as in the first option. (TS)

In closing, the briefer emphasized two points—first, while their attack plans could not guarantee the destruction of the alert bomber force or the C3 network connecting the NCA to the SLBM force, it might achieve very significant results against these systems if the US response to attack warning was at all delayed or confused. Second, US casualties would be significantly higher than for the Soviets, particularly if the Soviets have had time to evacuate their cities. (TS)

The third brief presented the results of a recent JCS examination of the Soviets ability to destroy the connectivity of the C3 system running from our tactical warning and attack assessment systems to the NCA and on out to our strategic forces. (TS)

The study was based on the Soviet nuclear attack constructed by the RISOP analysts. The study showed that within [*less than 1 line not declassified*] of the start of the attack, the Soviets could expect that *all* of the major nodes (White House, Crown helo, NMCCS, etc.) of the current C3 system except for SAC's Airborne National Command Post and the Post Attack Command and Control System would be gone. (TS)

The study also looked at a number of possible changes to the C3 system including deployment of mobile ground [[Page 572](#)] stations, improving the Crown helo and moving it closer to the White House, and rebasing NEACP further from the coast. [*2 lines not declassified*] (TS)

The final brief concentrated on the connectivity of the airborne national command post aircraft to the SSBN force. It showed that successful receipt and transmission of an EAM through this portion of the C3 network is very uncertain. The brief also showed that a number of fairly straightforward and inexpensive improvements can be made that will significantly improve this situation. (TS)

There was some discussion of the briefs but no specific conclusions were drawn. The discussion included the following points:

*General Jones* pointed out the disparity in fatalities and silo destruction capabilities estimated for the US and the Soviet Union in the first two briefs. He also pointed out the large number of strategic reserves the Soviets have left over after they have fulfilled what we think might be their reasonable strategic attack objectives. He expressed concern that the importance of moving the NEACP aircraft inland from Andrews and making the suggested improvements for the Crown helicopter would not be fully appreciated. Finally, he noted that while the SALT II limits bound the Soviet threat, the difficulties illustrated in these briefs would still exist at force levels well below the SALT II limits. (TS)

*Secretary Duncan* noted that *General Jones*' last point illustrates the importance of achieving deep reductions in SALT III. (TS)

*Dr. Brzezinski* illustrated the value of the three question framework he presented in the last meeting by commenting that (1) the briefs make the weaknesses in our ability to manage a nuclear war quite clear, (2) Soviet knowledge of this fact would weaken our position to bargain over our respective interests in a nuclear crisis, and (3) this in turn would lead to a weakening of deterrence. (TS)

*Secretary Vance* asked a number of questions about the assumptions underlying the analysis presented in the four briefs. He questioned the expected destruction of the Crown helo in particular, and the implication that the current system would only allow about [1 line not declassified] (TS)

*George Seignious* asked how the corresponding situation might look from the Soviets' point of view. He was told that while this question had not been analyzed in any detail, Soviet geographical advantages and the attention they have paid to making their C3 hard and redundant should lead to a better result for them. (TS)

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1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Defense/Security, Utgoff, Box 202, Targeting: Strategic Nuclear Forces: 1–6/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed the upper right corner of the memorandum. No minutes of the meeting were found.↵