



## OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN

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

## 149. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of Defense Brown<sup>1</sup>

Washington, August 10, 1979

### SUBJECT

Telecommunications and C3I Policy Issues (U)

A number of C3I issues (which require action by the National Security Council) have been raised by telecommunications legislation and the National Communications System Annual Report.<sup>2</sup> They can, I believe, be brought together in two groups. (U)

The *first* concerns legislation for de-regulating the telecommunications industry. Executive Order 12046 placed responsibility for national security telecommunications policy with the National Security Council, and in carrying that policy responsibility, my staff has tried to resolve a number of differences on pending legislation between the Department of Commerce and national security agencies represented through the National Communications System. The interagency paper at Tab I reflects NCS efforts at stating a national security position on telecommunications legislation.<sup>3</sup> Commerce found it [Page 686] unacceptable, but a dialogue continues on legislative issues. (U)

Three points emerge rather clearly from an examination of the debate between the NCS agencies and Commerce.

— In the past, there has been a reliance on AT&T for the provision of adequately survivable and restorable communications networks. It is doubtful, in light of present vulnerabilities in the system, that such reliance is justified. (U)

— De-regulation, if it leads to a competitive telecommunications industry, is not necessarily detrimental to our national security interests as long as legislative authority is reserved to the Federal Communications Commission enabling it to set standards that ensure adequately survivable and restorable networks. (U)

— The lack of defined national security requirements addressing survivability and restorability hamper our efforts to obtain legislative authority to deal with these national security needs. (U)

Concerning this last point, your Annual Report on the National Communications System calls for the establishment of a national policy for C3I addressing survivability and restoration. Indeed, we need such a policy if it will provide the basis for legislation and for holding telecommunications common carriers to appropriate standards. My concept of such a policy is a statement of national security telecommunication objectives which serve as the basis for your staff and other agencies' staffs determining C3I requirements and working out the technical standards essential for telecommunication carriers to meet them and for the FCC to rule effectively in support of them. (U)

I propose the following set of objectives as national security telecommunications policy: (C)

1. Provide communications between the NCA and our strategic forces to support a flexible execution of retaliatory strikes during and after an enemy nuclear attack. (C)
2. Provide communications to support the operational control of the armed forces at all levels of conflict, including an extended nuclear war. (C)
3. Provide for continuity of government in a nuclear war and during natural disasters. (C)
4. Support recovery of political, economic, and social structure of the nation during and after a nuclear war or natural disaster. (C)
5. Provide for adequate transmission of intelligence to support all of the foregoing objectives. (C)

I welcome your reaction to these objectives. I would like to present them to a meeting of the SCC in September before recommending them to the President. (U)

The *second* group of issues concerns NCA survivability beyond the endurance of the NEACP, that is, about 72 hours. [Page 687] I have directed a review of the Federal Preparedness Agency (now FEMA) programs, which include this longer-term survival for Presidential successors and the civil side of emergency government. Progress reports from that study indicate that our present system of alternate hardened sites for the Executive Branch are not adequate to withstand a Soviet attack. The vulnerability of our “continuity of government” system as well as our “NCA survivability system” is growing no less rapidly than the vulnerability of some of our weapons systems, i.e., land-based ICBMs. I request, therefore, that you give special assistance to John Macy, the Director of FEMA, in working out a new concept of basing the NCA for both of the leadership responsibilities in an emergency: commanding the armed forces and governing the country. (S)

I am also particularly concerned that military contingency planning for *less than all-out* nuclear war be fully integrated with the basing and protection of our civil leadership in emergencies. (C)

Crisis stability in the future could depend on managing a conventional conflict from a leadership posture which could survive a surprise nuclear attack. Furthermore, a number of vulnerabilities revealed by the recent JCS connectivity studies can be dealt with effectively only through a significantly different approach to leadership protection. (S)

It is desirable to make a decision on a more survivable system of leadership protection early this fall. I would like to expedite that part of the FEMA study and take the results to the President by October 19. (C)

**Zbigniew Brzezinski**

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1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Subject Chron File, Box 83, Communications: 7–12/79. Secret.↵
  2. The 1978 National Communications System (NCS) Report is *ibid.*↵
  3. Not found attached.↵