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SPECIAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 4, 1979

Time and Place: 1:45-3:00 p.m., White House Situation Room

Subject: Strategic Forces Employment Policy (U)

Participants:

State

Cyrus Vance  
Secretary

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski  
David Aaron

Defense

Harold Brown  
Secretary

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner  
Director

ACDA

Spurgeon Keeny  
Deputy Director

NSC

Victor Utgoff

JCS

General David Jones  
Chairman

Detailed Minutes

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by suggesting that we discuss how to proceed. He said that the ultimate goal of the process would probably be an NSC meeting with the President, and perhaps a new PD on Strategic Targeting Policy, or at least an update -- some parts of the current PD need an update. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski also noted that there are a large number of important political questions raised by this study; in particular, what we say about employment policy to our Allies and to our public. He recommended Harold state the purpose of the study, summarize its main results and discuss what it is and what it isn't. (S)

~~TOP SECRET~~

Classified by Z. Brzezinski  
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Secretary Brown noted that what we say about deterrence and war fighting are particularly important. He then began his introduction of the study. He noted that in his mind the principal purpose of being prepared to handle various war fighting scenarios is the effect such capabilities have on deterrence. He noted, however, that the report does not propose that we move from deterrence to a war fighting capability. He noted that some Soviet writers and strategists seem to recognize a difference in potential nuclear war outcomes. He said that we must take such things into account when we consider how to deter the Soviets. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski noted that what we deter them from doing is a central issue. (U)

Secretary Brown responded by noting that one of the things we are trying to deter them from is attempting political intimidation of the US or its Allies. (C)

Secretary Brown continued his summary by noting that the study does not say that the Soviets are right in believing that nuclear war can be won in any meaningful sense, and it doesn't say that we should shift from targeting the Soviet urban industrial base to targeting Soviet military forces. He noted that most of our SIOP weapons have always been targeted on Soviet military forces. (TS)

Secretary Vance questioned Harold's statement that the study was not proposing to shift from economic to military targets. (S)

Secretary Brown and General Jones noted that the changes proposed by the study probably won't change the target list much at all. (S)

Mr Keeny disputed this by saying that shifting our emphasis from urban industrial to military targets is a central theme in the study. He argued that the study notes that we don't understand how to prolong Soviet recovery from a nuclear attack, and thus that we should place more emphasis on military targets. (TS)

[Spurgeon is wrong on this point -- he is mixed up on two issues: The study says that we don't understand how to prolong Soviet recovery and thus should drop prolonging recovery as an objective of our targeting and shift our industrial targeting back toward two broad sets of targets -- war supporting industry, and, as the ultimate deterrent, the broad urban industrial base that would support the post-war power of the Soviet Union. Within military targeting, the

study proposes a more flexible building block approach to the SIOP, plus the development of a capability to target Soviet conventional forces even after they have begun moving away from their peacetime locations. While implementation of the study's recommendations may lead to some shifts in the fraction of our weapons going to military as opposed to non-military targets, it does not appear that this shift will be significant.] (TS)

Secretary Brown responded by saying that Mr. Keeny was making too big an issue of how the study's recommendations might change the percentage of our weapons allocated to military as opposed to non-military targets. Secretary Brown noted that the study recommends placing more emphasis on being able to hit moving targets, C<sup>3</sup> and leadership. He noted that while the ability to do these things was important, he still thought that if a nuclear war ever got started, it was very likely to quickly become an all out war. (TS)

Secretary Vance asked how many weapons might be shifted from urban industrial to military targets if the study's recommendations were adopted. (S)

Secretary Brown answered that only a small percentage change would occur because we have always emphasized targeting military forces in the SIOP. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski asked Secretary Brown to elaborate on Mr. Keeny's point. He noted the proposal to change how we target industry and asked what war supporting industry really is. (S)

Secretary Brown attempted to go back to his original line of argument by noting that if in the course of a war between the US and the Soviet Union, we did not destroy Soviet general purpose forces, they might use these forces to capture the European industrial base and use it to aid in their own recovery. He said that this sort of possibility motivates his interest in being able to destroy moving Soviet general purpose forces. He argued that being able to destroy such forces can serve as additional deterrent to nuclear war, but questioned how we could convey the deterrent message to the Soviets. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski answered by noting that if we display sufficient flexibility to do this sort of thing, the Soviets will get the message. (S)

Mr. Keeny then argued that the study says that the Soviets may be more deterred from starting a nuclear war if we shift our targeting more toward military forces. (S)

Secretary Brown responded by saying that the study does not say that. It proposes to improve our capabilities to target military forces, and that such improvements would be an additional deterrent to the Soviets. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski then rescued the discussion by asking Harold to return to his summary of the study. (U)

Secretary Brown continued by saying that the study does not suggest that we abandon economic or city targeting. He noted that the ultimate deterrent will continue to be the comprehensive targeting of the urban industrial base. Finally, he argued that the main point is that the study is not urging a big change in targeting policy. (S)

Secretary Brown then began to summarize some of the additional follow-on efforts being made within DOD. He cited a list of studies on criteria for targeting various categories of targets such as nuclear threat targets, other military targets, C<sup>3</sup>I, Soviet leadership, etc. He mentioned work underway to improve the flexibility of the SIOP by structuring building block options that could be combined to suit evolving circumstances in a nuclear war. He mentioned several efforts to restructure some of the selected attack options that were defined several years ago. (S)

He noted that DOD is now developing a launch under attack option. He said that 71 percent of the Minuteman force is now targeted against low collateral damage military targets in the SIOP, but that we currently have no way to withhold the remaining 29 percent. (S)

He said that DOD is looking at limited nuclear option attacks to damage and disrupt Soviet forces on the Chinese frontier. He noted that DOD is also developing plans to substitute regional nuclear options for SIOP attacks on China. (TS)

He commented on efforts being made to improve the targeting data base. He cited efforts being made to improve the crisis management process, in particular by structuring exercises that would include senior officials in planning non-SIOP options. He noted that several efforts are underway to improve our C<sup>3</sup> capabilities. He said that first priority must go to achieving improved survivability for our C<sup>3</sup> in the initial stages of a war and, after we have achieved

this, we should pursue measures to improve long-term endurance of both C<sup>3</sup> and forces. He noted that both the Air Force and the Navy are carrying out studies on connectivity of their C<sup>3</sup> networks. Finally, he noted that DOD is constructing some additional nuclear options against Soviet conventional forces in Eastern Europe. He raised the question of how we might go about telling our NATO Allies about these efforts. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski commented that this was a long list of efforts and that it, along with the other issues in the study, constituted a very long list of items for the group to discuss. He suggested that we should structure the discussion by framing the major issues as follows: (1) what are the requirements of stable deterrence at different levels? (2) what are the requirements of stable crisis bargaining? and (3) what are the requirements of effective war management? He noted that we must move beyond planning for nuclear force employment as if all the forces would be employed in a single spasmodic attack. (TS)

Secretary Brown agreed with this last point, but said that it is important to have our planning for all out nuclear war well in hand because an all out spasm war is the most likely possibility, given the unlikely possibility of nuclear war in the first place. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski responded by noting that the very likelihood of all out nuclear war is increased if all out spasm war is the only kind of nuclear war we can fight. He then asked Secretary Vance if the three questions he had posed constituted a reasonable framework for further discussion. (S)

Secretary Vance responded by noting that the first question was fine, but asked what was meant by the second. (U)

Dr. Brzezinski responded by noting that our requirements for C<sup>3</sup>I and civil defense could only be understood if we discussed the roles they would play in crisis bargaining scenarios. (S)

Secretary Brown agreed that while we should relate targeting to these issues, the targeting study is not cast in these terms. He noted that the question at hand was what should be the thrust of our targeting policy. (C)

Mr. Keeny then said that many things in the study are very difficult to discuss because the study presents little information on what we would have to buy if we accept its recommendations. (C)

Secretary Brown noted that the first question is what to do with what we have. (U)

Mr. Keeny rebutted by saying that our employment policy has implications for our acquisition policy. (U)

Secretary Brown noted that we have traditionally separated employment from acquisition by discussing employment in terms of what should be done with the available forces. Acquisition was then discussed separately in terms of the degree to which the agreed employment objectives were met. (C)

Mr. Keeny then commented that we must understand the declaratory policy issue we before we proceed with the study's recommendations. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski responded by stating what we should first decide what we need, and then establish how we should package or explain it. (C)

Mr. Aaron proposed a middle course, specifically that we talk about targeting issues, but then test our resulting ideas against Dr. Brzezinski's questions. (C)

He went on to make the point that stability at one level can be the enemy of deterrence at another level. For example, overall strategic superiority may create a very stable situation with respect to deterring Soviet military initiatives, but be very destabilizing in the degree to which it encourage Soviet efforts to improve and expand their forces. (S)

He also noted his concern about the impact of our discussion of these issues on our own and our Allies' confidence. He suggested that many who discuss these issues give us less than proper credit for our real capabilities. (U)

Secretary Vance noted that he shares this concern. (U)

Secretary Brown commented that Mr. Aaron's last point had more to do with the adequacy to our strategic posture than the targeting issues. (U)

Mr. Aaron then made the point that we must focus on how certain types of preparations to fight nuclear war might actually undermine deterrence. (C)

General Jones said that he sees the basic thrust of of the study as a push for much more flexibility and in the future for more endurance, not only for our forces but for our C<sup>3</sup>I systems. He noted that there were a number of narrower

issues that we can and should get on with. He cited the issue of how we should target China as an example. He said that we can make some useful decisions without solving all the broad problems. (TS)

Admiral Turner said he thinks of the study in terms of three questions: how does our targeting policy affect (1) Soviet diplomacy; (2) Soviet deterrence; and (3) Soviet war fighting? (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said that he agreed with Mr. Aaron's suggestion that we should focus on some of the more important issues and then test them against the larger framework he had proposed. As a first issue, he proposed discussion of whether or not China should be removed from the SIOP. As a second issue, he proposed a discussion of the problems involved in targeting population/leadership/C<sup>3</sup> and the idea of targeting to achieve regionalization of the Soviet Union. (TS)

General Jones suggested that the population targeting issue be dropped because population targeting is illegal under international agreements to which the US is a party. (S)

There were several comments to the effect that retaliation for attacks that killed civilian population was not illegal. Secretary Brown noted that while our current efforts to minimize collateral damage to population bias our targeting away from residential areas, strikes against industry may cause many fatalities. (S)

Secretary Brown then noted there is a real issue here -- do we want to be able to hit an evacuated Soviet population? (TS)

Admiral Turner asked what the group believes really deters the Soviets most. (U)

Dr. Brzezinski responded that it is the threat to the Soviet population, and Secretary Vance agreed. (S)

Secretary Brown expressed some skepticism, and also noted that the population fatality calculations that are done currently reflect only fatalities due to prompt nuclear effects, and thus might be quite low. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski reiterated his belief that Soviet leadership is concerned about the survival of its population, and noted that it is appropriate to discuss the population issue in terms of the importance of assuring that there are no significant asymmetries in the population losses that might be suffered by the two sides. (TS)

As a third issue, Dr. Brzezinski proposed discussion of economic targeting, and in particular, whether we should continue to have as an objective the prolongation of Soviet recovery, or should instead target the Soviet economy in terms of war sustaining industry and the broad urban industrial base upon which Soviet post-war power would depend. (TS)

Secretary Brown noted that this may not be an important issue because whichever policy we choose for economic targeting will probably lead to pretty much the same targets. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then asked how we should deal with the issue of hard-target kill -- specifically the ability to destroy Soviet silos, sheltered leadership and targets of this type. (TS)

Secretary Brown noted that this is primarily an acquisition issue. (U)

Mr. Aaron responded by saying that it is important to discuss it, nonetheless, because many people think of targeting in terms of this issue. (C)

Secretary Brown noted that a major reason to want hard-target kill capabilities is to eliminate Soviet capabilities to reload and reuse their missile silos. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then stated that the fourth issue would be a discussion of the need for prompt hard-target kill capability. (S)

Secretary Vance then suggested that the SCC discuss how our targeting policy impacts on European interests. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski argued that this issue should be taken up later. (U)

General Jones said that some new SAOs are being constructed for targeting conventional forces in Eastern Europe, and that these targeting plans might be well received by our NATO Allies. (TS)

Mr. Aaron said this is probably not true of all of our European Allies and the issue of whether, when and how to discuss these new SAOs with our Allies should be thought through carefully. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski then suggested that the fifth and sixth issues for discussion should be the launch-under-attack question, and the impact of our targeting plans upon our Allies. (TS)



Mr. Aaron suggested that after the issues Dr. Brzezinski had suggested had been dealt with, the SCC should discuss our declaratory and acquisition policies. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski then suggested Harold Brown should be prepared to open the discussion in the next meeting on the first two or three issues, and that background papers drawing on the study should be prepared on all the issues. (U)

Secretary Vance noted that these papers would be very sensitive and suggested that they be distributed to the principals through the ALPHA channel. (S)

General Jones then commented that the discussion had missed two important points, specifically, that we should pursue greater flexibility and endurance in our strategic targeting and our force posture. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski responded by saying that he had assumed this was understood by all. (U)

Mr. Aaron noted that it is the purposes of flexibility that must be discussed by the SCC. (C)

Secretary Brown reacted by saying that in his view flexibility was not the central theme for discussion -- that achievement of greater flexibility in the SIOP was simply something he believed the President would expect DOD to be pursuing. (S)

[Two issues are being raised up here -- flexibility achieved within the SIOP by means of the building block approach which is well within Harold's charter to do. However, the other type of flexibility, the kind required to attack Soviet forces on the move, does raise issues that should be discussed within the NSC process.] (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski commented that it may require more than one additional meeting to discuss all these issues and that in future meetings, the principals could each bring one additional person. (U)

Secretary Brown also proposed that the group receive briefings he had recently gotten on four subjects: the SIOP, the RISOP, C<sup>3</sup> connectivity, and the MX. He said that these briefings could be heard in a total of approximately two hours. At this point, Dr. Brzezinski adjourned the meeting. (C)