

TOP SECRET

MEMORANDUM

23

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET-SENSITIVE
CONTAINS CODEWORD

January 24, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

NLC Review Completed.

SUBJECT:

Information Items

Intelligence

Soviet Launch-On-Warning Capability: According to State, recently acquired evidence indicates that as much as 70 percent of the current Soviet ICBM force could be ready to launch in about three minutes, even from a normal readiness posture. Previously, only those ICBMs in the highest level of preparedness with gyroscopes continuously running -- presumably only a small portion of the force -- were believed capable of being launched so quickly. This fast reaction ICBM capability has apparently led the Soviets to consider their ICBMs as their prime retaliatory force. This may explain, in part, the Soviet drive for such a large number of land-based ICBMs. This emphasis will continue into the 1980s; the intelligence community projects that over two-thirds of the warheads available to the USSR at that time will be deployed on ICBMs.

While the new evidence is not inconsistent with the Soviet belief that a period of increasing tension will precede nuclear conflict, it indicates that they have not placed full reliance on systems that take a long time to achieve high readiness. The new evidence is also consistent with the USSR's continuing efforts to improve its early warning capabilities and with indications from recent Soviet exercises and military writings of increasing interest in the launch-on-warning concept.

U.S.-Japan Trade Relations: An interagency technical group estimates that the new Japanese package that resulted from last week's U.S.-Japan trade consultations will not be sufficient to prevent another large current account surplus. It calculates that, while the surplus will decline from the \$11 billion reached in 1977, it will still probably amount to \$7-10 billion in 1978.

The forecast assumes, however, that the current yen/dollar ratio will continue. In fact, the group feels that the

TOP SECRET

OSD & DOS review(s)

completed

**NATIONAL
SECURITY
ARCHIVE**

This document is from the holdings of:

The National Security Archive

Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University

2130 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20037

Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, nsarchiv@gwu.edu