

ZB HAS SEEN

~~Outside the System~~

6230 xx

~~1897 XX #1~~

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

March 18, 1980

ACTION

URGENT

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: JIM THOMSON *JAT*

SUBJECT: Summary of yesterday's SCC (U)

Attached (Tab I) is a memo for the President covering the summary of the March 17, 1980 SCC meeting on UK Strategic Force Modernization. I was a bit unclear about who would contact the British initially if the President decides to suggest 1981 -- the President to Mrs. Thatcher personally or someone else (David - Wade-Gery); I have assumed the former. (TS)

A personal aside: you know my views on the international and SALT connections from my earlier memo, but I think 1981 courts domestic political disaster far more than moving ahead now or in June. As time (and primaries) go by, the President's vulnerability is increasingly from the Right. Should this issue get loose, it will be added to the list of "soft on defense" decisions (B-1, neutrom bomb, etc.) that the Right likes to chant; it will loom even larger since it involves a loyal ally. And it is almost certain to get loose: we spoke yesterday about the British problems of controlling their bureaucracy, but we have our own problem. Although we have kept this matter restricted to a small circle, the circle is always larger than we know since the agencies (and not we) determine agency staffing. For example, it is likely that the US Navy, which has a big stake in this decision, has a good idea what is going on. (TS)

Finally, even for a late June / early July decision, the need for a Congressional para. 36-b review should not be a problem. If -- as McIntyre predicts -- Congress will be in session into October, there will be roughly 8-10 more weeks of legislative periods after July 1. This is roughly the time needed for the 50-day review period (30 formal and 20 informal), and there are ways to foreshorten the informal period (State is looking into this since June is Cy's option). (TS)

RECOMMENDATION

COPY CARTER LIBRARY

That you sign the memo to the President at Tab I.

Approve Disapprove