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MEMORANDUM

DOC # 55 MX #1
MX

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

February 27, 1980

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
SUBJECT: Meeting with Governors List and Matheson (U)

Harold Brown has sent you a background memo (Tab A) for your meeting today with Governors List and Matheson. The memo provides an update on his efforts to gain support for M-X, talking points for you to use with the Governors, and a statement of support for M-X for your use with the Governors and / or the press. (S)

Harold's memo is on-the-mark, though I would emphasize that you must steer a careful course between encouraging the Governors to believe that another potential deployment area will definitely be carried forward in the EIS process; and on the other hand, undercutting the Air Force analysis of alternative deployment areas by saying that any alternative to Nevada / Utah is simply out. Encouraging the Governors could lead to increased costs and significant delays-- undercutting the Air Force analysis might lead to legal problems. (S)

I also think that you should make the points in Harold's recommended statement supporting M-X to the Governors, and perhaps release this statement to the press after meeting with them. In my view, the most important objective of this meeting is to demonstrate your continued support for your M-X decision. (U)

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Date: SEP 16 2015

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Date: 16 SEP 2015 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
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MDR: 15 -M- 1628

Jc, NSA, Brz Mat, Subj File, Missiles, 10/77-3/80, Box 43, #6

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~~Review Feb. 27, 1980~~

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

February 26, 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Meeting with Governors List and Matheson

This is the follow-on MX paper I promised you in the memorandum I sent you on Saturday about the Senator Garn letter.

Your meeting with Governors List and Matheson is timely in that support for MX needs to be expressed now from the highest level. The MX system faces serious obstacles in Congress and also in Nevada and Utah. These obstacles can be overcome, but only if strong support is given now, the Administration's previous commitment is reaffirmed by you, and continuing active support is offered at high levels over the months ahead. The meeting with Governors List and Matheson provides an ideal opportunity for such reaffirmation. (In this connection, I believe it would be helpful for you to issue a statement to the press in support of MX following your meeting with the Governors, or provide the press a summary of your meeting.)

Attached is a paper on several issues of concern to the Governors, and a draft statement for your use with the Governors or with the press.

Here is my personal assessment of where we stand. In the Congress, members who are normally advocates of strong national security conclude that something like MX is needed, but think the MX system is too complicated and too expensive. The Senators from Nevada and Utah mistakenly see (or claim to see) the MX basing mode as arising from SALT considerations. To the extent that opposition to MX can be used politically to question the Administration's competence in strategic matters, it will be so used. Congressional "liberals" question the need for the system altogether. They view it as posing a first strike threat and, therefore, as destabilizing. They agree, erroneously, with many who previously endorsed the system, that in a no-SALT context MX may not be survivable. They also are most concerned about the disruption of the environment.

Should we actually get into real difficulties in the land withdrawal process or in the environmental area, and face much longer delays, I think it probably would be possible

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to obtain special legislative relief, particularly if our relationship with the Russians stays on its current course. There is good precedent for such an outcome in the Alaska pipeline case, where legislative relief from the National Environmental Policy Act was finally obtained as the oil supply situation in the country worsened. But it is desirable to avoid having to take that route if we can solve the problems under the present rules.

We are designing the missile so that it can be deployed in Minuteman silos--"silo stuffing"--as a hedge against the kind of delays we may encounter in the environmental assessment and land withdrawal processes. We are also working to improve our strategic indications and warning systems to enhance the credibility of this option.

Engineering studies continue on the basing mode, as required by the Stevens Amendment and in line with our own desires to improve the design. We have evolved a variation of the horizontal shelter system which allows the transporter to be separated from the erector-launcher, thereby reducing complexity and cost (perhaps by as much as several billion dollars). However, we do not intend to make a major issue out of this variation, because it could be misconstrued as another "change of mind."

In Nevada and Utah, the Governors and members of Congress, with one exception, have raised objections to MX deployment. (The exception is Congressman McKay who has supported the system, and who deserves recognition.) I believe the opposition of these "national level" leaders is not fundamental; they are testing the wind. However, they are trying to create a situation where the federal government will guarantee that any adverse environmental, social and economic impacts of deploying MX will be appropriately alleviated with generous doses of federal funds.

Local leaders--mayors, county commissioners, state legislators and business groups--are far more supportive of MX. These officials see the economic benefits, and can evaluate possible environmental impacts realistically. What concerns them most is possible changes in their life style that will be caused by an influx of large numbers of people from out of state to construct and operate a system of this magnitude. With them too, federal assurances that the strain on public facilities will be mitigated by federal assistance will go far towards easing their concerns.

Harold Brown

Attachments

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