
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Detection of a Soviet launch by the satellites would trigger transmittal of the codes required to fire selected Minuteman missiles. The code combinations—hidden in constantly changing cryptographic memory banks (similar to message-security systems already in use)—would render the odds against accidental launch or Soviet interference astronomically high. To further reduce the dangers of a mistaken launch, the satellites would activate Minuteman missiles with “inert” warheads, which could be armed in flight electronically by U.S. authorities.

A launch-under-attack strategy, contends Garwin, is inherently no more accident-prone than the current Minuteman firing system, which requires a human decision to launch. And since the plan is designed primarily to *deter* a Soviet first strike, the more “dangerous” it seems to Moscow, the better it fulfills its mission.

Odd Job

“A Job That Doesn’t Work” by I. M. Destler, in *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1980), P.O. Box 984, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

The tendency of White House National Security Advisers such as McGeorge Bundy, Henry Kissinger, and Zbigniew Brzezinski to become “highly visible policy advocates” has handicapped Secretaries of State, irritated Congress, and confused America’s friends and enemies abroad. The job should be abolished, says Destler, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Dwight D. Eisenhower created the position of National Security Adviser in 1953 to coordinate foreign policy planning among the various agencies represented on the White House’s National Security Council. In 1961, John F. Kennedy dramatically changed the job. He asked his forceful National Security Adviser, McGeorge Bundy, to serve also as his personal foreign policy coordinator. Bundy became responsible for controlling the flow of information to and from the President. By 1965, he was shielding Lyndon B. Johnson from much advice against Vietnam escalation, says Destler.

The influence of the National Security Adviser peaked during the Nixon administration. Henry Kissinger beefed up the NSA’s staff from 12 (under Bundy) to more than 50 aides (Brzezinski has since reduced it to around 35). Kissinger used his proximity to the President to completely overshadow Secretary of State William P. Rogers.

In the Carter administration, the prominence of Brzezinski alongside Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance has given the impression at home and abroad of a fragmented U.S. foreign policy. In June 1978, apparent discrepancies in their public statements became so glaring that 14 Congressmen formally asked President Carter to clarify “U.S. policy on such issues as Soviet-American relations and Africa.”

The Secretary of State, as in Truman’s time, should be “clearly and visibly pre-eminent,” says Destler; the White House coordinating job should go to a silent junior aide.