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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION

February 13, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR:

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM:

JIM THOMSON *JAT*
ROBERT BLACKWILL

SUBJECT:

BBV Lunch Item — US / UK Strategic
Cooperation (TS)

The issue is whether we should now move swiftly to consummate the US / UK TRIDENT deal, or if not, whether we are prepared to give the British a date certain (Wade-Gery told David that they could better adjust to a date certain that was later rather than uncertainty, even though that held out the prospect of an earlier decision.) Although this item has not been formally inscribed on the agenda (because of its sensitivity), we notified State and Defense that their principals should be prepared to discuss it, as you requested. (TS)

As we see it, the earlier we consummate the deal the better. We should shoot to finish it in a month.

1. From the TNF perspective (our original reason for delaying the decision), the next key decision point is the Belgian review in June. Although a British modernization decision is bound to hurt in Belgium, the political ramifications would damp-down considerably by June if the decision were announced now.
2. The British were willing to put up with the prospect of a few months' delay because of the SALT link when the SALT scenario was to be played out by March. But with SALT delayed indefinitely, we cannot count on continued silence: leaks — including ones damaging to us — can be expected if the US continues to put the UK off. David's conversation with Wade-Gery indicates that the British are also getting concerned that election year politics will soon obviate any possibility of a decision this year.

3.



4. Finally, we will find adverse congressional and domestic reaction muted during this period. (TS)

If BBV agree that we should move swiftly to strike the deal, the next step with the British would be to invite Wade-Gery to Washington to review the proposed exchange of letters. (Recall that Armstrong gave you a Thatcher to Carter letter; I have reviewed it and put together a draft response.) This will require Presidential authorization. (TS)

RECOMMENDATION

That I draft a memo to the President reflecting BBV agreement to proceed toward the announcement of a US / UK deal as soon as possible. (TS)

_____ Approve _____ Disapprove

