

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

SECRET ATTACHMENT

August 22, 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: PD-59 Chronology

Please find enclosed my chronology for the PD-59 epic. I hope it is helpful.

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Zbigniew Brzezinski

Attachment

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE  
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,  
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)

ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2011-064, document no. 37  
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## PD-59 Chronology

### Phase I - Work on Targeting Policy

1. PD-18 issued in August 1977, reaffirming NSDM 242, and calling for review of targeting policy for strategic forces, the latter requested in memorandum to the Secretary of Defense issued August 24, 1977.
2. OSD initiated a targeting policy review under Leon Sloss and initial draft sent to NSC in May 1978.
3. Mid-term review of defense issues with the President, with Secretary of State attending, reviewed our strategic modernization programs and Minuteman 2 vulnerability -- a two-hour meeting on September 29, 1978.
4. Three SCC meetings -- April 4, April 25 and April 26, 1979 -- two of which Vance attended and one at which Christopher attended. These meetings were each more than an hour in length.
5. Four PRC meetings -- May 7, May 10, May 30, August 8, 1979 -- on MX basing; and two full NSC meetings -- on June 4-5, and September 5, 1979.

### Phase II - Surfacing of the Evolved Doctrine

1. Consolidated Guidance in March 1980, and Harold Brown's DOD annual report for FY 1981, laid out in detail the Administration's countervailing strategy (released January 1980). This strategy was also previewed in the FY 80 report released in January 1979.
2. Brown presented the new approach to the nuclear planning group on June 3, 1980, with advance copies of his statement provided to State, which on June 11, 1980, circulated a summary of his speech through appropriate channels.

### Phase III - Emergence of PD-59

1. On March 26, 1980, a draft PD was forwarded to Harold Brown by Brzezinski for comment after NSC/DOD staff-level meetings held during March to develop an acceptable draft, designed to implement in the war plan the adjustments that the countervailing strategy has publicly surfaced.
2. April-May 1980, NSC/DOD exchanges in the final version, with DOD inserting more specific and highly sensitive SIOP changes.

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Review August 22, 1986  
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3. May 22, 1980, Brzezinski forwarded the agreed draft to the President, explaining the PD-18 origins, the SCCs in April 1979, and Brown's "countervailing strategy" as articulated in public reports to the Congress. The memorandum also raised the question about informing Muskie and Turner about the changes in the war plan. It gave the President two options: to sign the PD and to have Muskie and Turner briefed, or to convene an NSC meeting to discuss the draft. The President instructed Brzezinski that Brown brief him and the Vice President on the substance of the proposed PD.

*The President did it!*

4. Because of the Venice Summit and the trip to Japan, and the Vice President's trip to Africa, the briefing was not held until July 25.

5. On July 25, the President signed the PD and instructed Brown to brief appropriate Congressionals leaders as well as Muskie.

Phase IV - the Public Flap

1. Brown briefed Muskie at the M-B-B meeting of August 5, informing him that the full text of the PD would be available to him at his earliest convenience, and that Brown would further elaborate publicly on the countervailing strategy in a speech scheduled for the third week of August.

2. However, the previous Sunday, August 3, Beecher of The Boston Globe published a leak on the existence of a draft PD. On the afternoon of August 5, it was learned that Burt was planning to publish a fuller account in The New York Times the following day. By arrangement with Defense, Getler of The Washington Post was briefed at the NSC and Burt was briefed at Defense where the evolutionary character of the doctrine was stressed since there was concern that he would attempt to hype the story. Burt's article appeared on the front page of The New York Times and Getler's more restrained piece appeared in The Washington Post.

*from NSC*

3. On August 9, Brzezinski learned that Muskie, while traveling to the West Coast, was questioned by newsmen about PD-59 and had told them that he knew nothing about it. Brzezinski arranged for Brown to call him twice that weekend, in order to get State to dampen down the story. The Washington Post version was relatively muted; Gwertzman hyped it and The New York Times made it into a lead story.

Conclusion

1. All of the agencies were involved in the evolution of the new doctrine.

2. The new doctrine has been publicly surfaced, starting with 1979, and much more fully in 1980, including briefing of the Allies in June of 1980. State was involved in this.

3. Our Allies have shown no concern and understand the utility of the change.

4. PD-59 is designed to be an implementing directive, altering war plans in accordance with the evolved doctrine.

5. There was no intention to exclude the Secretary of State and the assumption was that, prior to the June NATO meeting, he was briefed by his own people, at least in general terms, on the evolving approach. (Incidentally, Vance feels that he was adequately consulted when in office and has so indicated to Brown.)