Presidential Review Memorandum/NSC-12

TO:    The Vice President  
The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO:   The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Director, Office of Management and Budget  
The Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers  
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency  
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff  
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT:  Arms Transfer Policy Review (U)

The President has directed that the Policy Review Committee, under the chairmanship of the Department of State, review our policy with regard to the international transfer of conventional arms.

The review should be completed by March 15, 1977, and should:

1. Examine the role of arms transfers in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, identifying the benefits and disadvantages of arms transfers as a policy tool, and their dominant or subordinate position relative to U.S. political, economic, and military interests. This examination should include:

   (a) the feasibility and desirability of various unilateral and multilateral initiatives to restrict arms transfers on a national, regional, and global basis;

   (b) consideration of such factors as: the type of weapon, equipment, or service being transferred; the role and activities abroad of commercial arms suppliers; third country transfers; transfer of high technology and sensitive items; co-production; employment of U.S. citizens on defense contracts abroad; and international standards of human rights; and

   (c) the impact of arms transfers on our strategic defenses and on our relations with the countries receiving the transfers.

   (d) the economic and social effects of arms transfers on recipient countries.

   (e) the impact of arms transfers on our relationships with other countries and international organizations.

   (f) the relationship between arms transfers and our foreign policy objectives.

   (g) the role of arms transfers in the conduct of U.S. foreign policy, identifying the benefits and disadvantages of arms transfers as a policy tool, and the extent to which arms transfers are a major factor in shaping our foreign policy decisions.

   (h) the relationship between arms transfers and our national security interests.

   (i) the impact of arms transfers on our fiscal and economic resources.

   (j) the impact of arms transfers on our technological capabilities.

   (k) the relationship between arms transfers and our national security strategy.

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   (o) the feasibility and desirability of various unilateral and multilateral initiatives to restrict arms transfers on a national, regional, and global basis;

   (b) consideration of such factors as: the type of weapon, equipment, or service being transferred; the role and activities abroad of commercial arms suppliers; third country transfers; transfer of high technology and sensitive items; co-production; employment of U.S. citizens on defense contracts abroad; and international standards of human rights; and
(c) the feasibility and desirability of restricting all U.S. arms transfers to government-to-government transactions.

2. Identify and analyze basic policy options, on the basis of the foregoing examination. Consider the impact of each option on the U.S. economy, on defense readiness and procurement, and on U.S. relationships with both recipient and supplier states.

3. Review the current organizational structure for departmental and interagency consideration of arms transfer requests, and develop options for mechanisms and procedures to provide systematic policy guidance in the future.

4. Assess the current relationship between the executive and legislative branches in this area, and propose guidelines and changes necessary for an optimum relationship.

Zbigniew Brzezinski