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STUDY PROJECT

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS

BY

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U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050

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| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | | READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM |
|---|---|---|
| 1. REPORT NUMBER | 2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. | 3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER |
| 4. TITLE *(and Subtitle)*<br><br>CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS | | 5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED<br><br>Individual Study Project |
| | | 6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER |
| 7. AUTHOR(s)<br>Colonel Stephen L. Thacher | | 8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s) |
| 9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS<br>US Army War College<br>Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050 | | 10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS |
| 11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS<br>Same | | 12. REPORT DATE<br>12 February 1990 |
| | | 13. NUMBER OF PAGES<br>30 |
| 14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS *(If different from Controlling Office)* | | 15. SECURITY CLASS. *(of this report)*<br><br>Unclassified |
| | | 15a. DECLASSIFICATION DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE |

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT *(of this Report)*

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT *(of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)*

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)*

20. ABSTRACT *(Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)*
Ever since the United States and the Soviet Union first possessed the ability to destroy each other with nuclear weapons, they have been looking at means to defuse crisis situations and avoid inadvertent nuclear warfare. One of the means that evolved was the Washington-Moscow Hotline, put into operation on August 31, 1963. This was the first crisis communications system, ever, between superpowers and the first bilateral arms control agreement. Over the past twenty-seven years, this and other crisis communications systems have evolved, and others have been recommended. Information was gathered using a review of

the literature and through analysis of the views of key military and civilian leaders. Although opponents have many reasons for opposing crisis communications systems, the evidence supports the position that these systems have been a deterrent to war and that further improved crisis communications systems between the superpowers would be advantageous as we move into the 1990's.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

BY

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## ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Stephen L. Thacher, COL, SC

TITLE: Crisis Communications Between Superpowers

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 12 February 1990   PAGES: 28   CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Ever since the United States and the Soviet Union first possessed the ability to destroy each other with nuclear weapons, they have been looking at means to defuse crisis situations and avoid inadvertent nuclear warfare. One of the means that evolved was the Washington-Moscow Hotline, put into operation on August 31, 1963. This was the first crisis communications system, ever, between superpowers and the first bilateral arms control agreement. Over the past twenty-seven years, this and other crisis communications systems have evolved, and others have been recommended. Information was gathered using a review of the literature and through analysis of the views of key military and civilian leaders. Although opponents have many reasons for opposing crisis communications systems, the evidence supports the position that these systems have been a deterrent to war and that further improved crisis communications systems between the superpowers would be advantageous as we move into the 1990's.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii

# CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SUPERPOWERS

## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

"Gentlemen:

This open letter is respectfully written to make the following suggestion:

When you have your private talks in Moscow this June, I urge you to consider the establishment of a direct telephone line between you that will be open 24 hours a day, with standby interpreters.

Its purpose: to prevent the possibility of an accidental war."[1]

With these words, Jess Gorkin, the editor of _Parade Magazine_, urged the leaders of the two most powerful nations on earth to establish a crisis communications system between themselves. The three-year public campaign of such people as Mr. Gorkin and the events of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis finally brought about the agreement on June 20, 1963, to establish the Washington-Moscow Hotline. This paper will look at the evolution of crisis communications between the superpowers, analyze why they developed and evolved the way they did, and make some recommendations on future measures that would enhance stability between the superpowers in today's political situation. It will attempt to answer the questions of what the role of crisis communications has been in deterrence and what role they will play in the future.

## BACKGROUND

The need for crisis communications has been around since
the creation of formal armed forces. Throughout history this
need has been answered by a series of means from envoys to
ambassadors. The necessity to establish a more formal crisis
communications system between the two superpowers became
critical with the invention of nuclear weapons and their rapid,
non-recallable delivery means, such as the Inter-Continental
Ballistic Missile (ICBM). The massive destructive power of
these weapons with their ability to destroy large portions of
each nation's population in minutes, and the fear that somehow a
nuclear exchange could be ignited by accident started focusing
attention on the problem of how to prevent such an occurrence.

Most crises arise out of a sudden incident. Even rational
leaders and decision makers through miscalculation or
miscommunications may respond to an incident with a higher level
of response then appropriate. This in turn could lead to an
increased response from the other side. This ever escalating
series of responses could quickly lead to a nuclear exchange.

The United States and the Soviet Union have come close to a
nuclear war five times in recent history.[2] These were the
Berlin crises of 1948 and 1961, the Cuban missile crisis of
1962, and the Middle East wars of 1967 and 1973. The first
three events convinced the leaders of the superpowers to look
for a way to help prevent such crises from erupting into a
nuclear war.

These crises raised tensions to high levels between the superpowers. Both nations recognized the seriousness of the situations and even more realized the possibility of other scenarios that could lead to a nuclear exchange. Even with all the fail safe mechanisms, an ICBM could be launched by accident or by an unauthorized authority. Without a crisis communications system that could rapidly convey to the other superpower the fact that an accidental launch had occurred, the other side might commence massive retaliation. A massive radar failure could give false indications that one side had begun a pre-emptive strike. Again, a crisis communications system would have to be able to pass critical information within the time frame available before the other side would retaliate.

With the foregoing in mind, the two superpowers defined the parameters of the crisis communications system that would be established between the two most powerful nations on earth. It would be restricted from use except for crisis circumstances and it would only be used for communications between the two nations' leaders. The system would be designed to be rapid enough to pass critical information within the minutes available in order to prevent war. The system would have to be be reliable. The system would be designed for complete accuracy with the minimum of interpretation. It would not be used for routine exchanges of information. It would not be used by military or State Department personnel for negotiations or other non crisis situations.

# ENDNOTES

1.  Jess Gorkin,  "An open letter from the Editor of Parade to President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Premier Nikita Khrushchev Re: Accidental War," <u>Parade Magazine</u>,  March 20, 1960, p. 6.

2.  William Ury,  <u>Beyond the Hotline</u>, p. 15.

CHAPTER II

THE WASHINGTON-MOSCOW HOTLINE

The Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, brought the
problem of the lack of an established direct communications link
between the superpowers clearly into focus. During this crisis,
the diplomatic channels proved to be too slow and cumbersome.
The Soviets resorted to broadcasting on a public radio the fact
that they were withdrawing the missiles.[1]

Meanwhile, in the United Nations the Eighteen Nation
Committee on Disarmament (ENCD) had been discussing measures
that could help prevent accidental war between the United States
and the Soviet Union. One proposal laid on the table by the
United States' negotiators in April, 1962, was the establishment
of a direct communications link between the heads of each
government.[2] Little progress had been made on this proposal,
up to the Cuban missile crisis. The communications link was
initially treated as part of the overall disarmament
negotiations package and talks became bogged down. After the
Cuban missile crisis, the Soviets responded favorably and
detailed negotiations started. The direct communications link
discussions were separated from the overall disarmament
package. Between May 6 and June 20, 1963, nineteen negotiating
sessions were held and finally on June 20, 1963 a Memorandum of
Understanding was signed by the United States and Soviet, acting
representatives to the ENCD.[3]

The Memorandum of Understanding defined the direct
communications link to consist of:

A.  Two terminal points with telegraph-teleprinter

equipment between which communications shall be

directly exchanged;

B.  One full-time duplex wire telegraph circuit routed

Washington-London-Copenhagen-Stockholm-Helsinki-Moscow,

which shall be used for the transmission of messages;

C.  One full-time duplex radio telegraph circuit,

routed Washington-Tangier-Moscow, which shall be used

for service communications and for coordination of

operations between the two terminal points.[4]

Arrangements were made for the exchange of the terminal

equipment necessary for the transmission and reception, as well

as for the encoding of messages.  The messages were to be sent

from Moscow to Washington in the Russian language and from

Washington to Moscow in English, using teletypes equipped with

the alphabet of the country of origin.  At the destination, the

messages were automatically decoded, and then translated.  The

teletype messages could be sent at 66 words per minute over the

leased cable and microwave system, a distance of 4,800 miles.

The Hotline became operational on August 31, 1963.

Several years later on August 25, 1967, the United Kingdom

and the Soviets signed an agreement to establish a

communications link between the residence of the Prime Minister

in London and the Kremlin.  Very similar to the Hotline, it

consisted of a duplex telegraph circuit routed Britain, Holland,

Denmark, Poland, and the Soviet Union; and a duplex radio telegraph channel between London and Moscow.[5] A direct communication link was also later established between France and the Soviet Union.[6]

## ENDNOTES

1. William Ury, _Beyond the Hotline_, p. 52.

2. Robert C. Ribera, "The Evolution of the Direct Communications Link,"_Signal_, December 1985, p. 95.

3. Ibid.

4. United Nations Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, _Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Regarding the Establishment of a Direct Communications Link signed June 20, 1963_, p. 1.

5. Marjorie Whiteman, "Hot Lines," _Digest of International Law_, p. 861.

6. Webster Stone, "Moscow's Still Holding," _The New York Times Magazine_, 18 September 1988, p. 67.

# CHAPTER III

## UPGRADES TO THE HOTLINE

The basic Hotline remained unchanged until January 16, 1978, when two independent satellite paths were officially put into operation. This upgrade came as a result of negotiations as part of the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT). One of the reasons to upgrade the link from a microwave and cable system, to satellite, was the improvement in reliability that satellite communications technology offered. In addition, the satellite system did not have to rely on third country facilities and was less vulnerable to sabotage and interruption.

Although exact statistics of how many times the Hotline has been used, and how reliable the communications link has been, have not been released, several incidents reported by the press showed potential weaknesses in the original system. In April of 1965, a Danish bulldozer operator reportedly cut the cable while doing roadwork west of Copenhagen.[1] In another incident, a fire in a manhole in Rosedale, Maryland reportedly cut one of the Hotline circuits in May of 1965.[2] A Finnish farmer was reported to have severed the teletype circuit while plowing his field.[3] Other reported incidents include a technician taking down a switch for maintenance, and a microwave terminal being blown down by high winds.[4] A Soviet freighter cut the cable when it ran aground in Denmark, and a thief supposedly stole 20 feet of the cable , unaware of what he was cutting.[5]

The satellite upgrade was agreed to on September 30, 1971. It called for two independent satellite systems to be put into

operation. As a part of this upgrade, the Hotline was officially renamed the "Direct Communications Link" (DCL). One of the paths consisted of four Soviet MOLNIYA II satellites in a highly elliptical orbit, relaying the signal down to a new MOLNIYA earth station built at Fort Detrick, Maryland. This Army station was built and operated via a contractor. The second path was via an INTELSAT commercial satellite in a geosynchronous orbit at 22,300 miles. It relayed its signal down to a commercial INTELSAT ground station at Etam, West Virginia. Two INTELSAT terminals were built in the Soviet Union. Commercial circuits connect the earth stations to the National Military Command Center in the Pentagon. After the stations were constructed, the two paths were tested for a period of almost four years prior to becoming operational in early 1978. At the time the DCL became operational the original Hotline HF radio link was deactivated. The cable and microwave link remained active as a backup. The satellite system now gave the two superpowers a 99.9 percent reliable system, although the teletype still only operated at 66 words per minute. Thus space age technology was used to improve reliability, one of the key parameters set down by the superpowers for the crisis communications system.

On July 17, 1984, the U.S. and the Soviets agreed to a further upgrade of the Direct Communications Link.[6] This upgrade was the addition of a high speed facsimile capability, operating at 4800 bits per second. The transmission was secured by a microprocessor located in a computer at both ends. A

secure order wire was also engineered to allow coordination between the distant ends. All facsimile equipment was provided by the United States, as well as the IBM personal computers used for the order wire. This facsimile capability allowed either party to transmit an entire page of material at once including graphics materials such as charts, drawings, and maps. This upgrade improved upon two of the original parameters set down by the superpowers for the crisis communications system. These were speed - the rapid transfer of information, and complete accuracy with the minimum of interpretation. The teletype at 66 words per minute could not pass much more than a preformatted message in a real crisis situation such as an accidental nuclear launch. The high speed facsimile could pass much larger volumes of accurate information in a short time frame. Using the facsimile to transfer accurate map and chart information alleviated the need for interpretation of message traffic and the possible errors such interpretation could lead to. The installation was completed in the summer of 1985, and after several years of testing and use it proved to be so reliable that the teletype circuits were turned off in 1988.

As part of the facsimile upgrade, the Soviets transferred the DCL mission over to a newer, geosynchronous satellite of the STATSIONAR family. This eliminated the satellite ground station at Fort Detrick from having to hand off the DCL mission every four hours between the four MOLNIYA satellites. Currently, the earth station at Fort Detrick is under contract for a complete antenna and radio upgrade.

On November 11, 1983, the Nunn-Warner Working Group on Nuclear Risk Reduction proposed the concept of Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers in both countries linked through communications means.[7] These centers became a reality in 1988 and had as their mission the monitoring of nuclear incidents such as Chernolbyl. As a result of the INF negotiations the role of the centers expanded to include the coordination of visits and inspections by either side as part of the missile destruction verification process. While the working group had envisioned the possibility of voice and video-teleconferencing capabilities, the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers utilize the same satellite paths as the Hotline and terminate at each end with high speed facsimile devices. This communications link provides a 24-hour, lower level diplomatic channel for exchange of arms control information.[8] State Department personnel man the terminal location of this communications link within the US. These centers are not intended to replace the the Direct Communications Link and the role of the nations' leaders in managing crisis situations. They will by their nature go a long way towards resolving situations involving nuclear weapons destruction and the monitoring of nuclear incidents, thus preventing these situations from possibly growing into crisis situations requiring top level involvement.

## ENDNOTES

1. "Hot Line Cut, Danes Report," Washington Evening Star, 27 April 1965.

2. "Fire in Manhole Knocks Out Circuit in Hot Line," _Washington Post_, 17 May 1965.

3. Stan Carter, "Capital Stuff," _New York Daily News_, 1 October 1971.

4. Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, _Avoiding Inadvertent War: Crisis Management_, p. 41.

5. _Ibid., p. 52._

6. Robert Ribera, "The Evolution of the Direct Communications Link," _Signal_, p. 95.

7. John Boyes, "Crisis Stability and $C^3I$," _Signal_, March 1984, p. 15.

8. Webster Stone, "Moscow's Still Holding," _The New York Times Magazine_, 18 September 1988, p. 67.

# CHAPTER IV

## ANALYSIS OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS EVOLUTION

The road to establishing the various crisis communications systems between the superpowers has been slow and deliberate. It has involved many players and has been tied directly together with many of the other negotiations involving arms control and use of nuclear weapons. It might prove helpful for the future, to look at some of the reasons why the communications systems evolved as they did.

Although the original Hotline concept had been proposed in the late 1950's, and the technical means were available, the project was not operational until 1963. Jess Gorkin, as mentioned earlier, had published his famous open letter in Parade Magazine in 1960. This started a public campaign of letter writing from thousands of readers. As public awareness grew and support gathered, Gorkin pressed for national and international political support by personally appealing to Kennedy, Nixon, and Khrushchev. All three publicly supported the idea. Kennedy stated, "It is vitally important that we have some method of instant communications with the Soviet Union."[1]

Thomas Schelling, a Harvard economist and nuclear strategist, worked for the Defense Department in 1961. He was also concerned that there was no means for the U.S. to quickly contact the Soviet leadership in times of crisis. He proposed his idea of a rapid, direct dialing capability between the US and the Soviet Union to Henry Owen, a policy planner in the

State Department. Owen convinced Gerald Smith, the director of the policy planning staff, who became a strong advocate within the administration.[2]

Even though there was strong public, political, and administration support, there was also strong opposition against establishing a communications system with the Soviets. Officials within the State Department were afraid to have the President talking directly to the Soviet head of state behind their backs. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned against Russian tricks. The John Birch Society launched a letter writing campaign against the Hotline.[3] The Russians were only willing to discuss the establishment of direct communications between the superpowers, as part of the general disarmament proposals. Even after the administration had accepted the idea, it was hard to move the bureaucracy to move the idea to a high priority.

The Cuban missile crisis provided the incentive to establish the Hotline. Strong allied support was also generated by the incident. As can be seen, it took public, political, congressional, and administration support, the support of the key players including the State Department and the Department of Defense, as well as the support of allies, the willingness of the Soviets, and the right circumstances and climate to move the Hotline into existence.

The next area of concern was what type of communications system to put in. Gorkin had envisioned a telephone in his public campaign. Voice communications were ruled out in favor

of teletype messages for several reasons. Communications between adversaries is already difficult because of technical, cultural, structural, and psychological reasons. The language barrier could lead to misunderstandings. Verbal communications, especially if they are spontaneous rather than well prepared, could lead to miscommunications and misperception. A written message allows each side more time to translate and reflect on what the other side has sent, and to consult advisors before responding. No one wanted the two Chiefs of State to engage in idle chit chat, as once spoken, words are impossible to undo. Finally, a teletype message provides a written record of exactly what the other side has communicated.

Another area of concern was technology transfer and intelligence protection. Neither side wanted to expose to the other knowledge of what they knew about the other's communications equipment or capabilities in fear that intelligence sources and capabilities might be compromised. Especially in the area of cipher equipment for the Hotline, the latest devices available were not considered. Negotiations were conducted carefully to ensure that each side was not offended and that each side contributed equally to the costs involved.

The modernization to satellite communications reflected the growing confidence that the two superpowers had in the need for the Hotline and the need for a more reliable system. Satellite communications reduced the reliance on the original system that was dependent on third countries for facilities and protection from disruption and sabotage. The establishment of two

satellite paths gave the DCL more redundancy than the original Hotline, in that it now had two independent satellite paths and a cable/microwave system as opposed to just the cable/microwave system and the radio telegraph system.

The upgrade to the facsimile capability agreed to in 1984, was one of the confidence-building measures proposed by the Reagan administration. This technical upgrade reflected the realization of both parties that in time of crisis, the 66 word per minute teletype was just too slow to provide the amount and level of detail required. The rising third world nuclear involvement, the possibility of military accidents, and the serious consequences of miscalculation during crises, called for the rapid exchange of military information. The facsimile provided the speed, accuracy, and ability to pass graphics materials, which provided much more detail than a teletype message.

The use of the Direct Communications Link has been reserved for the President and Soviet Communist Party Chief. The number of times it has been used is classified to preserve flexibility and the alternatives under Presidential control. The establishment of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center facsimile circuits in 1988 is the first time that a dedicated communications system has been utilized at a level below the heads of state. This is an indication that both sides believe that crisis communications are required at various levels within both governments and that the lower the level the more frequent the exchange of information.

Have the communications measures been a deterrent? Although the specific use of the Hotline and DCL is classified, numerous incidents have been referenced. The first reported use was during the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, where over a dozen messages were sent back and forth. The Hotline was utilized in 1971 during the Indian-Pakistani War and again during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. It was used again in 1974 when Turkey invaded Cyprus and again in 1979 when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan.[4] These examples demonstrate that the two superpowers relied heavily on the crisis communications system in times of crisis. Just the fact, that each side knows that there is a means of rapidly communicating with the leaders of the other side, provides a level of stability in any situation. The fact that both sides moved towards upgrades, in spite of political tensions, showed the deterrent effect of the crisis communications systems. Communications means along with other confidence building measures strengthen deterrence by reducing the danger of war by accident or inadvertence.

## ENDNOTES

1. William Ury, Beyond the Hotline, p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 143.

3. Ibid., p. 144.

4. Webster Stone, "Moscow's Still Holding," The New York Times Magazine, 18 September 1988, p. 59.

# CHAPTER V

## THE FUTURE OF CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

During the last several years, we have seen startling changes within the Soviet Union and the rest of the eastern bloc countries. Communist governments have fallen from power within East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The Warsaw Pact is weakening and may fall apart. The Soviet Union has unilaterally started to cut the size of its armed forces and is negotiating a conventional arms agreement for Europe. The INF Treaty has been signed and intermediate range nuclear missiles are being destroyed on both sides. What is the impact of these changes on the need for crisis communications between the Soviet Union and the United States? What improvements in today's system might be appropriate for the 1990's?

The reduction in the level of overt threat from the Soviet Union has not reduced or eliminated the need for crisis communications systems between the two superpowers. The rising ethnic problems within the Soviet Union, the push for independence from the Baltic States, and the rising nationalism of the eastern bloc countries all create a climate of unrest. Unrest could lead to severe problems for the Soviets including mass disturbances, battles between eastern bloc nations, and the possible deployment and use of Soviet military units. It is vital that the two superpowers have the ability to communicate on the full details of any such crisis so as to ensure that it does not escalate into a crisis between them. The changes in Eastern Europe do not change the basic parameters of the crisis

communications systems; that is speed, reliability , accuracy and the minimum of interpretation. The real impact is the need for improved crisis communications systems below the level of the heads of state, in order to prevent critical situations from turning into crisis situations. In other words, the continued improvement in confidence building communications measures, designed to pass information of a diplomatic and military nature, to allow both sides to be fully knowledgeable of what is going on in all parts of the world.

Certainly the openness shown by the Soviet Union under perestroika would be highly conducive for talks on any future changes to the crisis communications system. Although tensions between the two superpowers have significantly lessened, the situations involving possible Third World conflicts have not. Increasing numbers of Third World countries have the potential to develop and use nuclear weapons. Nuclear terrorism could become a possibility. Nuclear accidents are a distinct possibility. Insurrections within the eastern bloc countries are very possible and these type situations could be the trigger for an inadvertent crisis between the superpowers. Improvements in the crisis communications system that would manage these possible crises would be highly desirable.

Proposals for improvements to the Washington-Moscow Direct Communications Link (Hotline) can be traced back to the efforts of Senators Jackson, Nunn, and Warner in the early 1980's. They were instrumental in having the US Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1983 direct the Secretary of Defense to

study initiatives for improving the containment and control of the use of nuclear weapons, particularly during crisis.[1] As a result of the Authorization Act, the Secretary of Defense prepared a study and formally reported back to Congress on April 11, 1983.[2] This study made three recommendations in the area of crisis communications between the two superpowers. The first was the addition of a high-speed facsimile capability to the Hotline. This addition, as previously discussed, was added in 1988. The second recommendation was the creation of a Joint Military Communications Link between the US and the USSR. The third recommendation was the establishment by the US and Soviet governments of a high rate data links with their embassies in the capital of the other. These measures were intended to improve the ability of the two countries to resolve crisis situations and to prevent the escalation of military incidents specifically by increasing the speed, reliability, accuracy, and completeness of direct communications between them. President Reagan formally endorsed these recommendations on May 24, 1983.

The Soviets agreed to the facsimile upgrade on July 17, 1984 but did not want to discuss the Joint Military Communications Link or the upgrade of the embassy communications systems.[3] It has been suggested that the Soviets did not want to appear to be reducing tensions at the time of these proposals in 1983, and also that they did not favor a military to military link.[4] At that time the US was deploying cruise and Pershing II, medium range missiles.

What then, if anything, can be done to improve the crisis communications systems between the superpowers? First of all we must realize that many of the decisions made on the types of communications systems and how they were configured, were made based on political considerations of both the parties. The fact that certain systems were ruled out in 1983, does not prevent them being reintroduced and discussed in the 1990's. Within this country we need to formulate a solid position on how we want to handle crisis situations in the future and what roles the State Department, the military, and the White House will play. In addition, we must decide if crisis communications systems will remain bilateral, or will become multilateral to include all nuclear powers.

The technical means are here today to provide many additional upgrades and features to the present crisis communications systems. Such improvements could include secure voice, video-teleconferencing, computer to computer links, and the exchange of digital data from all sources within the spectrum. The existing links could be HEMP hardened to prevent disruption of communications by a high energy magnetic pulse (HEMP) in the event of a nuclear explosion from any source.

The present crisis communications systems are strictly pre-attack systems. The US and Soviets could build a dedicated satellite system in high orbit, which would be safe from either direct or inadvertent attack from existing anti-satellite systems. A backup network could be engineered using dispersed and redundant adaptive high frequency radios. This network

would function in a post-attack environment.[5]

In addition to a Joint Military Communications Link and improved embassy communications system, many experts in the nuclear arms control arena favor the establishment of a joint crisis control center. This concept was introduced by Senators Jackson, Nunn and Warner in the Senate, and a later version of their plan was passed by the Senate in June, 1984.[6] This concept envisions two jointly manned centers located in the capitals of each country linked by telephone, computer, facsimile, and video-teleconferencing. These centers would have military and diplomatic experts from each country exchanging information on a daily basis, as well as being the center for crisis control in the event of any world wide incidents.

Clearly, the addition of the high speed facsimile and the establishment of the Nuclear Risk Reduction Centers has been a major step in the improvement of crisis communications. Yet, these means still do not provide the face to face, person to person communications required to build long lasting confidence and trust. In today's environment, both sides may want to take another step to improving crisis communications. Certainly voice, video-teleconferencing, and finally the establishment of joint crisis management centers, seem the next logical step.

## ENDNOTES

1. Jon Boyes, "Crisis Stability and C[3]I," _Signal_, March 1984, p. 11.

2. Caspar Weinberger, _Report to the Congress by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger on Direct Communications Links and Other Measures To Enhance Stability_, p. 1.

3.  Robert Ribera, "The Evolution of the Direct Communications Link," **Signal,** December 1985, p. 96.

4. Lynn Rusten and Paul Stern, **Crisis Management in the Nuclear Age,** p. 30.

5.  Cornell University Peace Studies Program, **Crisis Stability and Nuclear War,** p. 25.

6.  Willaim Ury, **Beyond the Hotline,** p. 62.

# CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The evolution of crisis communications systems between the superpowers, has proven to be a deterrent to war over the past twenty-seven years. Communications alone cannot prevent war, but as a part of a total package of confidence building measures and arms reduction agreements, communications plays a significant role. As Thomas Schelling said, " The Hot Line is not a great idea, just a good one."[1] The DCL, and now the Nuclear Risk Reduction Center circuits are visible symbols of the commitment that the two nations have made to avoiding nuclear war. They are also the only quick means available for the superpowers to contact each other.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States are the best they have been since 1945. This improving climate has opened up new opportunities for the two superpowers to take and implement new initiatives in handling crisis situations. Further confidence building measures, designed to pass information at levels below the heads of state, would greatly reduce the misunderstanding of both sides as well as reduce the time necessary to assess crisis situations, allowing key advisors to provide better recommendations built upon greater amounts of information. The United States should take advantage of this opportunity to restate the recommendations of President Reagan for the Joint Military Communications Link and for the high speed data circuits between embassies.

The role of crisis communications systems in the future will be for information exchange. The better the information exchange, the better the ability of both countries to clarify ambiguous circumstances, especially those concerning third parties. Since most crises involve military actions on the part of one party or the other, it is vital that the military leaders on both sides be linked together for the rapid exchange of information. The concept of the joint crisis management centers located at the capitals of each superpower; manned by US and Soviet military as well as US State Department and Soviet personnel; tied together by communications such as facsimile, secure telephone, and video-teleconferencing is a concept that should be pushed forward now. The establishment of such centers would lead to the development of standard procedures, establish confidence in each other, and save valuable time in case a crisis were to erupt.

In conclusion, the superpowers must have a viable communications system linking them in order for each of them to act responsibly in time of crisis. The time has never been better for strengthening the crisis communications systems , than right now.

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1. Thomas Schelling, "Signals & Feedback in the Arms Dialogue," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist, January 1965, p. 6.

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