

Even the operational capability we can now obtain with 25 satellites, and up to 24 terminals, is not satisfactory. The primary factors restricting the potential utility of the system are the nonavailability of satellites due to the drifting nature of the orbit, the limited capacity due to the low power output, or effective radiated power of the satellites and terminal outages due to a lack of redundancy in the terminals and a lack of backup terminals. For these reasons I have recommended an improved system utilizing the present state-of-the-art technological developments produced by NASA, the Comsat Corp., and DOD programs, including TacSatCom and the Defense satellite communications program.

Now, if I may, I would like to turn for a few minutes to the National Communications System (NCS).

Last year the finalization of a system of assigning the priority of restoration of disrupted communication circuits was reported. There is now a common set of criteria for assignment of priorities by all communications users, whether they represent the Government or industrial requirements, and centralized management for review of the propriety of these assignments. This system was implemented by domestic and international U.S. communications common carriers during 1967.

The NCS emergency action group, normally on standby at my call, was convened to assist my office in carrying out its emergency mission during the Near East crisis in June 1967. This group is composed of representatives of the NCS operating agencies.

Procedures for processing requirements for communications circuits were clarified so that agencies which intend to lease transoceanic circuits coordinate their actions with my office. This procedure provides the opportunity to secure effective utilization of these expensive and, in some cases, scarce facilities.

A system for assigning precedence, or relative priority, to telephone calls in the National Communications System was developed and forwarded to the President for approval.

In the area of long-range planning, the third long-range plan covering the period fiscal years 1969-73 has recently been reviewed by the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications. This plan outlines further steps for increasing survivability and flexibility of our overall Federal and common carrier assets, and is oriented toward increased integration and interconnection of the telecommunication assets of the several participating agencies to meet Federal Government needs more effectively and economically. The review by the President's office approved the assignment of the Atomic Energy Commission's SADIE system (secure automatic data information exchange system) as an NCS asset. The next long-range plan is now in initial coordination.

In the area of actions for the future, the Special Assistant to the President for Telecommunications, the Bureau of the Budget, and the Executive Agent, NCS, have determined it is now appropriate to apply planning-programing and budgeting processes to insure that NCS plans and agency plans and programs are on a consistent basis. The Executive Agent, NCS, has assigned me the responsibility to develop specific procedures for this purpose.