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29 September 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Today's cable from Abu Dhabi foreshadowing a possible request for US military assistance leads me to think that we should go to work right away on conceptualizing a plan for air defense assistance to the Gulf states. I think the Saudis might well agree to use the AWACS for this purpose. Whether they would allow the F-15s (if they go to Saudi Arabia) to be so used I am not sure; perhaps the F-14s might have a role to play here, at least in terms of reassurance.

In any event, I think that Dave Jones ought to be instructed to raise with the Saudi's the question whether they would be willing in principle to extend the air defense assistance to be provided by the US to Saudi Arabia to the Gulf states if asked, and, if the answer is in the affirmative, to incorporate that possibility on a contingent basis in the planning. At the same time, the Joint Staff ought to be asked to look at this Gulf-state issue both on the assumption that the Saudis agree and that they don't.

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