

04-F-0625

(20)

14/11

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THE MILITARY ASSISTANT

Mr. ARMITAGE,

Per CONV.

VR

Page determined to be Unclassified
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
Date: AUG 21 2013

49701

13-M-3128

Dispute Boiling Between Koch And Weinberger

Others Defend or Attack the Two Protagonists

By ERIC FACK

The Koch-Weinberger dispute is boiling on, with denunciations from several sides.

Mayor Koch has stepped up his criticisms of Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, saying, "It's outrageous what Weinberger has done on so many levels to hurt the United States."

The Mayor has been demanding that Mr. Weinberger disclose what he told the Saudi Arabian Defense Minister at a May meeting. Mr. Koch has cited a Beirut newspaper report that the Secretary said things that, the Mayor suggested earlier, were unduly pro-Arab, shocking and appalling, if true.

The newspaper said Mr. Weinberger had talked to the Defense Minister about, among other things, delivering to Saudi Arabia a new United States tank that was not yet used by American troops, and about keeping Saudi arms requests secret from President Reagan. Mr. Weinberger has said the report is false but has refused to disclose what he said.

Mayor Is Called "Disruptive"

Reached at City Hall, Mr. Koch now further contends that the lives of American Marines wounded in the Beirut truck-bombing had been endangered by the Pentagon's rejection of Israel's offer to treat them. The official United States position has been that the Americans had adequate medical facilities of their own and did not need Israeli help.

At the Pentagon, William Caldwell, a civilian spokesman for the Department of Defense, declined to comment on this and other allegations by the Mayor, saying, "As a matter of policy we do not comment on statements made to other parties or in publications."

Dr. Clavis Makoud, the Arab League's chief representative in the United States, defended Mr. Weinberger as "more authoritative and credible" than the Mayor, whom he denounced as "disruptive" and "insulting concerning the Arab position." Dr.



Arab magazines and newspapers on sale at the shop of Raymond Rashid on Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn.

Makoud is also the Arab League's permanent observer at the United Nations.

And Raymond Rashid, an American of Lebanese origin who is a partner in Rashid Sales Company, a 48-year-old Brooklyn-based concern that distributes, wholesales and retails Arab films and photographic records as well as Arabic books and newspapers, criticized Mayor Koch with a smile. He said, "In some other countries, if a mayor made disharmony with a cabinet minister, they might shoot him."

Malcolm I. Hoenlein, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, an umbrella organization grouping 25 major Jewish communal organizations, denounced the Secretary, contending that "criticism of Mr. Weinberger is more than justified."

The dispute between the Mayor and the Secretary originated in an exchange of letters that began on a relatively courteous note and became more heated.

The Mayor has been fervent in calling on Mr. Weinberger to disclose his statements to the Defense Minister, Prince Sultan, at the meeting, which was in Paris. The Beirut newspaper,

the leftist daily Al Safir, published a purported transcript.

In one of his letters from the Pentagon, Mr. Weinberger said that "no one here ever heard" of Al Safir, which is Lebanon's second-largest newspaper. (However, Ambassador Makoud of the Arab League pointed out the Mr. Koch had misspelled Al Safir's name. The Mayor also initially misidentified it as a news magazine.)

Mr. Weinberger has also suggested that the Mayor has been engaged in "a clumsy effort to make political capital."

Speaking from his office, Mr. Koch responded by denouncing Mr. Weinberger as "the man who refused to allow American Marines to receive quicker first aid by sending them to Israel" after the Oct. 23 truck-bombing of a building at their base in Beirut.

The Mayor noted that he did not customarily follow the Arab press, adding, "I just can't read Arab." Asked how he had been given a translation of the Al Safir report, he said, "It came in over the transom." Asked who provided it, he said, "I didn't see the arm pitching it over." Asked whether it had been conveyed by the Israeli Government, he said, without elaborating, "Not

true."

Reached at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, the press counselor, Victor Harel, said, when asked whether his government had played a role in the translation reaching the Mayor, "I'm the best of my knowledge, no."

Also reached in Washington, Ambassador Makoud contended that "it is well known that Israeli intelligence does plant many stories in many areas and there are some politicians, unfortunately, who are willing and sometimes eager to assume responsibility of conveyance."

"Mayor Koch has a record, unfortunately, of trying to be very disruptive to any kind of Arab-American understanding on any level," he asserted.

Concerning Al Safir, the Mayor said "It may very well be that some of our defeats around the world are because Weinberger has not put together a really first-rate intelligence operation as demonstrated by the fact he doesn't even know what's the second-most important newspaper in Lebanon — where they sell it in Brooklyn."

Reached in Washington, a State Department official said that Al Safir "is looked upon as one of the leading Arabic-language journals."

Office of the Secretary of Defense 5450 552
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS and
Date: 22 AUG 2013 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: _____
Reason: _____
MDR: 13-M-3128