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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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October 23, 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: White House Speech

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: SEP 16 2015

A White House speech is planned for tomorrow in which the following statements are made with respect to the Persian Gulf.

1. Tactical air forces can be in the region within hours, a battalion within 48 hours and a division within 2 weeks.
2. The seven NTPS in the Indian Ocean contain equipment for a force of 12,000 men and ammunition for more than 500 fighter-attack aircraft.
3. Three exercises of the RDJTF have been conducted so far in the U.S.

We need to answer the following questions:

1. For all three statements are they true and, if so, can this information be stated publicly?
2. For the ammunition for fighter-attack aircraft, what is the basis of the calculation of how many aircraft the ammunition will support?
3. For the RDJTF exercises, what are the names and times of the exercises conducted so far?

Because of the short time fuze the answers to these questions are needed ASAP.

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 Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
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1. (U) Statement one is partially correct.

a. ~~(S)~~ Naval tactical air forces embarked on carrier in the Indian Ocean could be in the Persian Gulf area "within hours". However, to provide adequate shore basing and logistical support for USAF forces would take longer. Assuming airlift, overflight clearances and prior alerting of units covered, tactical air units based in the continental United States could begin closing in approximately [40 hours] and completely close in about [75 hours]. Adequate basing for these forces have not yet been fully developed and long term effectiveness and sustainment of these forces would be dependent upon airlift of munitions, repair parts, and other supplies and materiel.

b. (U) A light infantry battalion from the continental United States could close into the region within the 48 hours specified. This again assumes overflight clearances and an early decision to move a unit which routinely maintains a readiness posture which would permit this rapid movement. Sustainment of this force would require augmentation and would be dependent upon maintenance of an airline of communication. Normally, a battalion would not be employed as a single unit over an extended period of time but would more likely be used either in the role of a reaction force for a very minor contingency or the lead element for a larger force which would follow immediately.

c. (U) The combat elements of a light infantry division from the continental United States would require, with minimal support, 14 days to close by air. The division would normally be deployed with minimal tactical air support, which closes within the same period.

d. (U) All information in this page is releaseable except that portion enclosed in brackets ~~1~~.

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2. (S) The Near-Term Pre-positioning Ships (NTPS) do have sufficient equipment, POL and water for a force of approximately 12,000 personnel. It must be realized, however, that these are cargo ships which require port facilities for off loading and do not have onboard all of the equipment essential for distribution of these supplies ashore. Distribution to deployed forces of the water and POL, in particular, would pose real challenges. With regard to the number of fighter-attack aircraft which could be supported by the aviation munitions aboard the NTPS, approximately 9 USAF tactical fighter squadrons of eighteen aircraft each (162 aircraft) plus 22 Marine Corps tactical fighter aircraft could be supported for 10 days. This would be about 3240 sorties which could be supported. There are other support requirements for such a tactical fighter force which also present demanding logistical problems. The detailed NTPS planning factors above are classified. The statement we were asked to review was used by the President in his radio speech on 19 Oct 80.

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3. (U) Two RDJTF exercises have been conducted to date.
  - a. (U) POSITIVE LEAP began with an employment exercise during 10-15 Apr. On 2 June 80 a short five day follow-on command post exercise was conducted.
  - b. (U) RDJTF Red Flag 80-4 was a USAF TAC Air Exercise using a Middle-East scenario.
  - c. (U) This information is releasable.

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