



POLICY

~~SECRET~~ ~~EYES ONLY~~

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

2 JUL 1981

#6

1 June 1981

*[Handwritten signature]*

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: The Saudi Sales -- Our Approach - DECISION MEMORANDUM

(U) We need an agreed strategy and more of a structure to manage the Saudi arms sales package.

(S) The stakes are high. The battle in Congress will be prolonged and difficult. A Congressional disapproval would inflict a major foreign policy setback on the Reagan Administration. Yet, even if we can prevent this, there could be damaging side effects: undesirable commitments to Israel, new cleavages with the Saudis, massive political damage to the Reagan Administration.

(S) Al Haig, concerned that there be visible White House backing in selling the package to Congress, suggested the Vice President head up the effort. It is my understanding that the Vice President had decided against such a role.

(U) But the need to step up our effort remains. I would be delighted not to be burdened with this task; it cuts heavily into other priorities to which I should attend. Also, the risk of failure is high. If, however, I am to forge ahead, I need your guidance and support to improve the chances of success.

(S) Here is my proposal:

1. A Task Force should be formed with people detailed to contribute half time to full time for the duration of the effort (with lull and peak periods to be accommodated).
2. My existing Coordinating Committee would then be used to guide the work of the Task Force and to keep our strategy in harmony with related Administration policies.
3. The lines of authority must be clearly drawn to maintain a disciplined, integrated approach to (1) the negotiations with the Saudis, (2) the (later) negotiations with Israel, and (3) the dealings with Congressional leaders. We can't have a dozen different negotiators on each of these issues. One structure might be that I report through you (or Frank) to the NSPG. In this way, a common strategy would be decided for State, Defense and the White House and followed through.

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Authority: EO 13526  
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: SEP 06 2018

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Work has to proceed on several fronts:

- (1) Our effort with Congress must be stepped up to prevent members from becoming locked into opposition to the sale.
- (2) To the extent legal and proper, we should mount a public information campaign to counter the campaign of AIPAC and other domestic organizations opposed to the sale.
- (3) Negotiations with the Saudis can now move forward -- in a tightly controlled fashion -- to have some of the key agreements ready when the Informal Submission to Congress will take place, after the July 4 recess.
- (4) An approach to Israel must be ready to be activated after the Israeli elections.

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Date: SEP 06 2018

*F. C. Ikle*  
Fred C. Ikle

Copy to:

Dep Sec Def

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
Date: 06 SEP 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 USC § 552  
Declassify: X Deny in Full: \_\_\_\_\_  
Declassify in Part: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
MDR: 18 -M- 14419

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