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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: AUG 07 2018

X

JCSM-275-84
21 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Nuclear-Powered Warship Transit of the Suez Canal (U)

1. (S) USS ARKANSAS is presently conducting surveillance of the LENINGRAD surface action group (SAG) in the Gulf of Aden. Should the LENINGRAD SAG return to the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal, the USS ARKANSAS will have to transit the canal if she is to continue this operation.

2. (S) As you are aware, we have been attempting since 1977 to obtain approval for US nuclear-powered warships to transit the Suez Canal. Last summer, an official Egyptian delegation transited the Panama Canal embarked on USS ARKANSAS. They concluded that US nuclear-powered warships are safe; but there has been no subsequent Government of Egypt (GOE) decision that would allow Suez transit. In view of our positive response to the GOE for mine countermeasures assistance, coupled with an existing operational requirement (as opposed to a routine transit request), the time appears to be right to continue the effort.

3. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that you request the Secretary of State to have the US ambassador approach the GOE with the transit request. Timing of the approach should be keyed to the first indication of the Soviet SAG's return to the Mediterranean. A draft memorandum in the Appendix is attached for your consideration.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 07 Aug 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 3 USC 552
Declassify: Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: _____
Reason: _____
MDR: 18-M-1233

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

John W. Vessey, Jr.

JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

21 Sep 64

Attachment

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