

Terrorism

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OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

POLICY

12 March 1981

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT

THROUGH: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

SUBJECT: Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism, 12 March 1981

The Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism (IG/T) met from 1430 to 1530, 12 March 1981 at the Department of State. I represented OSD. The purpose of this IG/T was to continue to review draft papers associated with the interagency review of US counterterrorist programs and policies directed by the President.

The agenda included discussion of the following items:

1. Report on the implementation of previous IG/T decisions;
 - Instructions to Marine Guards
 - Guidelines for Official Americans Abroad
2. Review of Paper
 - Combating International Terrorism - A Public Affairs Strategy
3. Discussion of police training assistance.

The Department of State is also in the process of coordinating a draft cable to all diplomatic posts concerning the protection of embassies. The IG/T approved this draft cable. Because Secretary Weinberger has indicated a definite interest in this subject, I have attached a copy of the draft cable.

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: FEB 25 2019

Michael K. Sheridan
Michael K. Sheridan
COL USMC
Director, Planning
and Requirements

Copy to:
Dr. Ikle
Mr. Kramer
MGEN Boverie

12 MAR 81

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SEC DEF CONTR No. X13404

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To: ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS
SUBJECT: Embassy Protection
FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MANAGEMENT

In the aftermath of the attacks on our embassies in Tehran, Islamabad, Tripoli, and San Salvador there is a strong feeling in the Congress and public that no more American embassies should be overrun or our officials taken hostage. As you are aware, the new Administration has taken a strong stand against terrorism and the President has said that henceforth American representatives will be accorded every means of protection that America can offer.

As you can appreciate, any further loss of diplomatic facilities or the taking of official Americans hostage would have grave political and psychological consequences. In this connection, Chiefs of Mission bear a special responsibility for protection of their installations against assault and for the safety of official Americans assigned to them. Therefore, it is incumbent upon all American Ambassadors to insure that every appropriate step has been taken to reduce the vulnerability of their installations and personnel to terrorist or mob action. You should insure that contingency plans are prepared

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and provide for an effective organization of Embassy resources to respond should embassy installations come under attack.

From recent experience we have learned several important lessons which all Chiefs of Mission should take into account in preparing their crisis contingency plans. These include:

- The need to be quicker at reducing staff when public order appears fractured and the ability/intention of the host government is in question.
- The need to define, communicate and exercise emergency reaction chain-of-command. This should involve clear designation of a chain of command below the DCM.
- The critical importance of reducing classified holdings to bare essentials in a volatile political environment.
- The need to ensure that internal defense plans and internal destruction plans are clearly formulated and supported by frequent live drills involving all post personnel.

When embassies are under siege the use of lethal force by the Marine guards may be necessary. Because circumstances vary from country to country, there is no single rule of engagement which would be applicable to all posts. However, you should carefully review your defensive plan to determine whether it would be appropriate to adopt in some situations a more aggressive posture, including a publicly stated willingness to use force to defend an embassy (as was done in El Salvador)

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could have an important deterrent effect.

Chiefs of Mission should urgently review existing embassy defense plans, including the instructions to Marine guards. Such a review should focus on ways to strengthen the Embassy against assault. In this context, Ambassadors are urged to consider adopting a more forward defensive policy. When such a policy is adopted at a particular post, it should be communicated to Marine guards and other mission personnel with security responsibilities. Plans which involve a higher defense profile should be tested and reviewed regularly. In all cases, Ambassadors should understand that they have an obligation to protect their missions against assault and that, in consequence, they may have to accept certain risks short of embarking on rash or suicidal courses of action.

Drafted by: D/CT: F.H. Perez:nwh

Approved: M - Mr. Kennedy

Clearance:

D/CT - Amb. Quainton

D - Mr. Claire

SY - Mr. Ackerman

ARA -

EUR -

EA -

NEA -

AF -

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