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Libya

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301



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Date: FEB 25 2019

6 AUG 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR HONORABLE WILLIAM P. CLARK
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Operations in the Vicinity of Libya (U)

Because of the sensitive nature of present or projected military operations in the eastern and southern Mediterranean littoral, I thought it prudent to share with you some preliminary information and thinking on operating in the vicinity of Libya.

Since the Sixth Fleet missile exercise in August of 1981, until 8 July 1982, US military operations in the vicinity of Libya have been limited to routine ship transits and P-3 maritime patrol/antisubmarine warfare (ASW) flights. Maritime patrol aircraft have flown, below the radar horizon without any known reaction, in the Libyan Flight Information Region (FIR), i.e., south of 34°-20' north latitude, on approximately 50-75 occasions in addition to ASW flights prosecuting unidentified submarine contacts. During both transits and flights, ships and aircraft have remained well outside the politically sensitive areas along the Libyan coast, defined as 12 nautical miles (nm) for ships and 50 nm for aircraft. No US ships or aircraft have operated south of 32°-30' latitude in the Gulf of Sidra. In order to recondition the Libyans to US military presence in international waters and airspace north of Libya, we are developing a program which will gradually increase the tempo of US operations in the area. When forces are available we will conduct a series of operations, increasing in scope and intensity, and evaluated at each step to assess progress toward our objective. The objective is a return to the previously enjoyed free and unencumbered use of all central Mediterranean international waters and airspace by US forces. As we move to restore these previous levels of activity, Libyan reaction will be closely monitored.

LIBYA

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~~(S)~~ We are now developing the concept for "the stair-step approach." While we have not determined all of the precise steps or their timing, I have outlined below our approach to the problem. Two of the steps have already been taken. On 8 July, USS INDEPENDENCE issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to fly aircraft within the FIR on 10 July. Subsequently, those flight operations were cancelled, but the NOI was not withdrawn. The NOI predictably caused interest within Libya and associated Libyan military alert measures were noted. In step two we have been proceeding incrementally towards the third step. On 27 July, USS FORRESTAL operated aircraft for a short period of time within the Libyan FIR, with no prior notification. No visible reaction was detected. On 1 August, USS INDEPENDENCE carrier air operations (four passes through the FIR) were conducted, without prior notice, above 33°-30' and outside 50 nm from the Libyan coast, exclusive of the Gulf of Sidra. Again, no visible reaction was detected. The next increment is tentatively planned for 7 August 1982, and will involve surface transit and aircraft flights from the USS INDEPENDENCE Carrier Battle Group. Aircraft will not operate below 33°-30' or within 50 nm of the Libyan coast. Tentatively, these follow-on operations are being considered by USEUCOM, subject to availability of forces and concurrence of the Washington agencies concerned, as required:

- ~~(S)~~ Carrier air operations to within 12 nm of 32°-30' (32°-42'--Libyan-claimed territorial waters) or to within 50 nm of the Libyan coast, exclusive of the Gulf of Sidra, with or without prior notice. No ships south of 34°-20' (see attached chart).
- ~~(S)~~ Carrier air operations, with or without prior notice, similar to above, with ships stationed south of 34°-20'.
- ~~(S)~~ Carrier air operations, within the Gulf of Sidra, south of 32°-42', at night, with or without prior notice.
- ~~(S)~~ Carrier air operations, within the Gulf of Sidra, south of 32°-42', during daylight, with or without prior notification.
- ~~(S)~~ Aircraft and/or ships operate, within the Gulf of Sidra, south of 32°-42', day or night, with or without notification.
- ~~(S)~~ Large-scale open ocean missile exercise to be held north of Libya, including an area within the Gulf of Sidra, for about 2 days.

~~(S)~~ The sequence of the steps, described above, and their timing will depend upon the availability of forces (e.g., two

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carrier battle groups will be required for certain steps), Libyan reaction, and the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Any operation contemplated south of 30°42' will be notified in accordance with standing procedures on a case-by-case basis.

(U) I will keep you informed as our planning progresses and our stair-step approach is refined.



Frank C. Carlucci
Deputy Secretary of Defense

Attachment
a/s

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