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ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

1-23-81

21 JUL 1981

In reply refer to:
I-20621/81



INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THROUGH THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY *7I 22*

SUBJECT: Moroccan Request for CBU's - ACTION MEMORANDUM (U)

1 In April Morocco requested a letter of offer for 1000 CBU's (Tab A). We turned down a similar request last year. The issue was raised again during your visit and you agreed to look into the matter. Subsequently, one of the follow up actions identified was to prepare a letter to Deputy Secretary Clark on this matter, for your signature.

1 There are some good reasons to press State to go ahead with the sale:

- Morocco is already using CBU's supplied by France in the Western Sahara (which should serve to reduce Congressional opposition somewhat); however, the French designed munition is less effective than the US model, and more expensive (which is why Morocco wants to buy CBU's from us).

- CBU's would be particularly effective at the present stage in the Sahara war (when Polisario forces attacking reinforced Moroccan positions are likely to be exposed in relatively open terrain).

- The sale would further enhance our military relationship with Morocco at a time when we are seeking access rights to Moroccan airfields for future SWA contingencies.

- We could deliver the CBU's rapidly; 1400 CBU 71/B (\$2600 each), and 300 CBU 58/B (\$1900 each) are available for immediate delivery from remaining Iranian assets.

1 An argument can also be made to defer the sale of this type of munition to Morocco at this juncture in the Saharan conflict:

- The sale of a high-visibility and effective weapon like CBU's could interfere with the peace process initiated at the recent OAU summit in Nairobi, which we strongly support. (King Hassan has publicly supported this process which entails a ceasefire followed by a referendum on the future of the Western Sahara. An OAU implementation committee is to meet before the end of August to work out the details.)

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, LSD, WHS
Date: 21 MAR 2019 Authority: EO 13526
Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
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Reason: _____
MDR: 19 -M- 0060

5 U.S.C. § 552

M-M-0060

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAR 01 2019

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~~16-11-2008~~

380-83-0104, bx13, Morocco

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(Jul-Dec)

Sea Def Cont Nr. 15368

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- Morocco would use the CBUs in the Western Sahara with probably devastating effectiveness, leading to further criticism that the US has abandoned its neutral stance towards the Western Sahara issue in favor of Morocco.

- A sale of CBUs to Morocco could attract special attention and criticism not only by Morocco's enemies abroad but by Congressional critics of US arms sales to Morocco.

- CBUs have a special sensitivity on the Hill because of the controversy over their use in Vietnam. Even Israel's use of CBUs has been severely criticized in Congress. We have instituted special controls on CBUs provided Israel; they can only be used if "Israel is engaged in active general hostilities with the regular armed forces of one or more Arab states at a level of armed conflict on the scale experienced during June 1967 and October 1973."

- We should avoid conflict with Congress over the sale of CBUs to Morocco while we are trying to gain approval for the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia.

State appears to be split on the issue. There are factions both in the Bureau and PM that will weigh in heavily against it, and the outcome remains in doubt.

On balance, I believe you should recommend to State that we go ahead with this sale. The importance of our politico-military relationship, and our need for contingency access to Moroccan facilities, appear to me to outweigh the negatives. At a minimum, it is important to press State for a decision. (Kabbaj asked for an early reply.) A proposed letter to Secretary Clark is attached for your signature (Tab B).

2 Attachments
a/s


Francis J. West, Jr.

P.S.
L. HILLEBRANDT
OASD/ISA/Africa, x79753

Kabbaj wants CBUs to hit the Polisario land rovers, which he cannot hit with iron bombs. The concern that Kabbaj will strike civilian encampments is compounded by the fact that ~~SECRET~~ Algeria protects the Polisario towns.