

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
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Date: 16 May 2019 Authority: EO 13526  
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MDR: 18 -M- 1464

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS  
Date: MAY 16 2019

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July 28, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
From : George P. Shultz *GPS*  
Subject: Reassuring Saudi Arabia Regarding its Security

OSD 3.3(b)(6)

The recent renewal of fighting between Iran and Iraq has caused the Saudis increased concern over possible attacks on the Kingdom. Iranian radio quoted Ayatollah Khomeini on Sunday as threatening those states which support Iraq.

While we have, and should continue to maintain our neutrality in the Iran-Iraq war, we do need to let the Saudis know that neutrality does not extend to a disregard for their security. A succession of Presidents and cabinet members have told the Saudis that their security is a vital concern to us and assured them "of full US support for the maintenance of Saudi Arabia's integrity."

It is in this spirit that we recently offered joint air defense exercises to the Saudis and dispatched a Contingency Planning Group. Our goal is to give the Saudis and the other Gulf states the ability to defend the West's crucial oil supplies themselves. We recognize, however, that there may be threats that we would have to assist them in meeting. In such a case, we would consult fully with the Congress and we would seek the participation of our Allies.

While it is important that the Saudi leadership be left in no doubt about our capabilities and will to assist them, we must guard against 1) having them believe we are committed in advance to specific acts; and 2) leaks about US commitments or joint planning that could embarrass the Saudis and cause them to pull back from us.

Thus, we support Secretary Weinberger's recommendation that a small DoD delegation go to Saudi Arabia soon to reassure the Saudis and to explain the types of contingencies that we

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336-84-0004, Ex 21, Saudi Arabia (Auth - Dec)

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believe the Contingency Planning Group should review. That delegation could also explain, illustratively, the types of forces that we could have in the area within certain amounts of time.

It should make clear, however, that we are not providing any commitments with regard to the availability of those forces because we could only do so at the Presidential level and with Congressional review. Moreover, to avoid any misunderstanding about commitments and to avoid the possibility of damaging leaks, the illustrative details might best be provided orally to the Saudis. I have attached a revision of the draft letter to Prince Sultan that meets those requirements. We will work with DoD on the oral presentation.

As a result of interagency review and the recommendation of the Senior Interagency Group, we have underway a continuing appraisal of Gulf security and will keep you informed of its progress.

Attachment: As stated.

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His Royal Highness  
Prince Sultan bin Abd al-Aziz  
Second Deputy Prime Minister and  
Minister of Defense and Aviation  
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Your Royal Highness:

(S) During this time of utmost gravity and concern with respect to both the situation in Lebanon and the Iranian attack on Iraqi forces around Basra, I have been pleased and heartened to have the opportunity to consult with His Highness, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, and to receive through him an understanding of your views and concerns. This is a time for close friends to consult together and work toward positive solutions to the difficult problems threatening our common interests. I am gratified at the vision and steadfastness demonstrated by you and by His Majesty King Fahd as we jointly pursue peace and stability in the area. I look forward to discussing these issues with you in person at an early date.

(S) The Iranian invasion of Iraq is particularly disturbing in our view because it heightens the threat to peace and security of other states in the Gulf region. As President Reagan stated in his July 16 letter to His Majesty King Fahd, "We will continue to support international efforts to achieve an early end to the hostilities between Iran and Iraq," but at the same time "we are ready to help support the security of Saudi Arabia and its Gulf state neighbors during the conflict." I have, in fact, discussed this very issue with Prince Bandar.

(S) We have done extensive work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop concepts and planning for active mutual cooperation in the defense of Saudi Arabia in the event of a serious threat to the Kingdom's security. Of course, we would come to the assistance of Saudi Arabia in this manner only under circumstances in which the Saudi Government requested our help, and the President in accordance with constitutional processes directed such action. In the current circumstances, we believe it would be most appropriate and helpful to concentrate on air defense.

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(U) Because of my great interest in sharing our thoughts with you on this matter, I have asked Major General Richard Secord, my Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Near East and South Asia, and Brigadier General Andrew Cooley of our Joint Staff to discuss with you in greater detail ways we can work together in meeting serious threats to the Kingdom's security.

(U) Please accept my warm regards and best wishes for continued good health and success.

Sincerely,

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