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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

6 September 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: U.S. Relationship with Middle East Countries

(S) I have been thinking about the following for some time and, while I know we probably cannot do much about it until the late fall, our discussions at the NSPG on August 31, involving the Middle East, led me to conclude I should send you the thoughts now, particularly because it seems to me to be so urgent that we all now bend every effort to secure the benefits of your Mid-East initiatives as our major priority for the rest of the year and your second term.

(S) Recent developments in many Middle East countries, particularly the plans of those countries to buy arms from the Soviet Union, or, in the case of Morocco, to form a union with Qadhafi's Libya, have been highly disturbing. While we have been able to gain Congressional approval for some Arab requests for U.S. weapons systems, our inability to satisfy the majority of their valid security assistance requirements has been a major factor in their turning to Moscow for their necessary arms.

-- In Kuwait, subsequent to our disapproval of their Stinger request, they announced their intention to purchase \$100-300 million in Soviet military equipment, primarily air defense, and more importantly to allow 6-8 Soviet military advisors into Kuwait. Although Kuwait claims this is only a political move, it certainly is an apparent gain for the Soviets.

-- In Jordan, again after our refusal to sell them Stingers, there have been serious discussions of an extensive list of military equipment between senior GOJ officials and the Soviets, which will culminate with King Hussein's visit to Moscow this fall. Again, air defense weapons are their primary interest, with a reported total Jordanian purchase from the Soviets exceeding one billion dollars (to be repaid at low interest rates) if the package includes new aircraft. Jordan already has a few Soviet advisors in-country in conjunction with the previous SA-8/2SU-23 purchase. We expect a significant increase if the new equipment is delivered. Although this does not necessarily mean a reorientation of Jordan's foreign policy, King Hussein is said to be convinced that the U.S. cannot or will not meet his political and security needs, and the Soviets of course will offer them excellent financial terms.

-- In Syria, the Soviets have supplied weapons and advisors for many years. Following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and

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Syria's air and ground defeats, the Soviets completely re-equipped the Syrian military with new, more advanced weapons systems. About 6000 Soviet military personnel are in-country as advisors, and in some cases manning the new air defense systems.

(9) There also are other disturbing trends in the Middle East.

-- In Egypt, we have seen a return to normalization of relations with the Soviet Union with the exchange of Ambassadors. It is probable that the Soviets will continue to try to use the Egyptian need for support for Soviet-origin equipment as a lever for increasing their influence in that country. Also, President Mubarak still feels he cannot even allow us to help in the construction of a base at Ras Banas.

-- In Iraq, although some notable items have been acquired by Iraq from France, and the Iraqis are attempting to diversify their sources, the Soviets are continuing to meet the majority of Iraq's military equipment requirements for the war with Iran. We see little possibility of a political or military solution to the fighting in the near term. Thus the Iraqi military system will be increasingly dependent upon the Soviets for the foreseeable future.

-- In Pakistan, President Zia continues to strive to obtain a true defensive capability in the face of Soviet-backed Afghanistan incursions and bombings and a perceived Indian threat. We will have a very difficult problem in trying to maintain Congressional support for our programs, because Congress will be preoccupied with Pakistan's alleged faults.

-- In Morocco, while the security dimensions of the recently concluded Moroccan-Libyan agreement are unclear, King Hassan II's new flirtation with Qadhafi could have ominous implications for continued U.S. influence in that whole area. King Hassan has said he turned to Libya because he felt we could not or would not meet his major military needs. ~~Disturbing~~ disturbing is the fact that apparently it was King Hassan himself who initiated the union idea with Qadhafi.

(9) Most moderate Arab states doubt U.S. ability to fulfill their legitimate military needs because of the Congressional approval process; thus they feel they have to buy from the Soviets instead. We have seen how weapons sales breed dependency; in fact, Soviet security assistance policy is designed to breed such dependence. Our own security assistance experience has shown how hard it is to extract technical advisors once the host country is dependent on their services, and our own system, unlike the Soviets, is designed to foster self-sufficiency. In every conversation I have had with Arab leaders they always point out that they would prefer much closer relationships with the U.S., but that their perception that we want (or Congress insists on our having) only a close relationship with Israel, makes it impossible for them to strengthen or enhance their ties to the U.S.

(9) Whenever U.S. security assistance programs are replaced or new opportunities missed, our ability to provide a moderating influence in these moderate Arab countries is lost. For example, in Jordan and Kuwait where the Soviets are displacing our personnel, our ability to influence their policy or keep their friendship will diminish.

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(5) Finally, paradoxically, this growing trend, much of which is occurring because Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and others think we will refuse to help them because of our friendship with Israel, will directly and adversely affect Israel's security and our efforts to ensure it. We cannot expect other countries to duplicate Egyptian moderation since the 1979 Accords, especially when our efforts to meet their valid military needs in response to Soviet or other regional threats are blocked by lobbies here. I fear that as our influence in the Mid-East decreases, ~~the threat to Israel and~~ our other friends in South-west Asia (SWA) will increase dramatically, thus jeopardizing our entire SWA strategy.

(6) It is clear that the moderate Arabs will obtain their armaments from some source. But most arms supplying countries simply make the sales. Only the U.S. has taken extraordinary measures to try to safeguard those weapons systems against misuse, or ~~possibilities are against the Israelis,~~ for example.

(7) I think we must increase our efforts to educate the Congress to this real threat to ourselves and to Israel, as well as to Arab nations potentially favorable to us. In particular, I think we should try to convince those who aim to thwart legitimate Arab requests for U.S. assistance that such efforts are detrimental to Israeli security. We should renew our efforts to provide our Arab friends the means to improve their self defense, and, in exchange, we should seek from them their recognition of Israel's right to exist. We should focus our attention on blunting Soviet opportunities in the region, and renewing as vigorously as possible your political and diplomatic initiative, which is the only real hope for a comprehensive and lasting Middle East peace.

(8) I believe the first steps should be taken shortly after the election by individual meetings with the Israeli government and with the heads of the moderate Arab nations to begin this process. In essence, our purpose would be to secure Israel's acquiescence (without which Congress would never approve) for our aid to moderate Arab nations. In return, we would apply our strongest efforts to obtain ultimately the agreement of those Arab countries to recognize and begin peaceful relations with Israel. We need to find out what the Arab countries need from Israel to induce the Arabs to recognize Israel's right to exist. Finally, everything we do should be pointed toward securing adoption of your Mid-East initiative. We have virtually stopped work on that because we were trying to solve Lebanon's problems first. I think we should now make the adoption of your peace initiative the centerpiece of all our ~~activities in the region.~~

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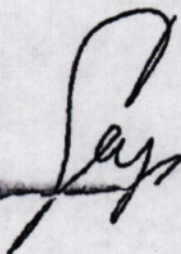
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

September 6, 1984

Memo For ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Bud:

Here is a paper I've been working on for quite a while. I would appreciate it if you will send it directly to the President.



Attachment

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