

~~SECRET~~

862

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 27, 1981

Time and Place: 4:30-5:20 PM, Cabinet Room, White House

Subject: El Salvador and Saudi F-15s (S)

Participants:

State  
Secretary Alexander M. Haig, Jr.

OSD  
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger  
Deputy Secretary Frank C. Carlucci

Justice  
Attorney General William French Smith

OMB  
William Schneider, Jr., Associate Director for National Security  
and International Security Affairs

CIA  
Director William J. Casey  
John McMahon, Director for Operations

USUN  
Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick

JCS  
General David C. Jones

White House  
Edwin Meese, III  
James A. Baker, III  
Richard V. Allen  
Charles Tyson (El Salvador only)

NSC  
Janet Colson  
Roger Fontaine (El Salvador only)  
Donald Gregg (El Salvador only)  
Major Robert Kimmitt (Saudi Arabia only)

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~  
Review 2/27/91  
Extended by Richard Allen  
Reason: NSC 1.13(g)

DECLASSIFIED  
White House Guidelines, August 28, 1997  
By CAS NARA, Date 11/21/04

~~SECRET~~



Summary of Conclusions

Mr. Allen reviewed the agenda mentioning El Salvador and F-15s for Saudi Arabia. He then introduced Secretary Haig and Director Casey to review their papers. (S)

Secretary Haig stressed the interdepartmental paper stresses short-term holding actions that will shore up the Salvadorean government while a long-term strategy would include the Cuban dimension. (S)

The Secretary said there had been differences of opinion, but they had been resolved. The agreement was to send in MTTs but there was a question of where they would be placed and whether they would be in uniform or not. (S)

He then presented the options and gave State's views. They were to move promptly because Duarte asked for them and the country team had agreed with the requests. (S)

Secretary Haig added that in the last two weeks the press has created a furor over it and it was his view that we should not back down under public pressure. The Secretary also said the MTTs will be restrained and their time in El Salvador is temporary. (S)

The President asked if the MTTs will remain in garrison or would they accompany the troops? (S)

Secretary Weinberger pointed out the specific restrictions on the MTTs. They would not go on patrol. They would not accompany on helicopter combat missions. They would use arms only in self-defense. They would not be stationed in areas where guerrillas are strong. (S)

The Secretary also said he now understands that San Salvador is NO safer than other places. The attempt is to recognize risk without pretending risk can be eliminated completely. He then mentioned the War Powers Act. (S)

Secretary Haig observed that Congress be kept informed and Secretary Weinberger agreed and added, we are not seeking Congressional approval. But the Congress should be informed of the constraints on the MTT. (S)

Mr. Baker than asked if the MTT personnel would remain in uniform? Both General Jones and Secretary Weinberger believed they should be in uniform. (S)

The President then asked who in the Congress would be notified? (S)

Secretary Haig observed that there was some misunderstanding in the Congress. It must be made clear to them that we are there at the Duarte government's invitation. (S)



Ambassador Kirkpatrick stated that in a conversation with Ambassador White before some 60 Congressmen there was a sentiment against aiding the government. We have to make it clear Duarte wants the aid and we must confront this issue directly. (S)

Secretary Haig said that White had bottled up government requests -- that he rewrote cables. In talking to Duarte today, it is clear he wants these items badly. They need an early demonstration of our intentions. (S)

Director Casey



Secretary Haig expressed his enthusiasm for the Casey paper. He added there was a special working group on Cuba and all of this should be put together now for a senior review. He pointed out the need to have the overt blend with the covert. (S)

Director Casey expressed his reluctance to lose more time and hoped the process would get started. (S)

The Vice President expressed his concern in placing our MTT personnel -- especially one getting killed. (S)

Secretary Weinberger reviewed the constraints and reminded everyone that San Salvador is no safer than other training sites. (S)

The President observed that the two labor people were killed in the capital. The President meant to say that our men were in other places taking risks. But it was far better to do it in uniform in an open mission than trying to hide it. (S)

Mr. Meese said it was important to call them training personnel and not advisors. (S)

Secretary Haig emphasized the need to talk to the press on this. (S)

The Vice President asked where were our personnel currently deployed? (S)

General Jones said they are in San Salvador, but the naval MTTs will be on the coast. (S)

E.O. 12958  
As Amended  
Sec. 3.3 (b)(1)



Secretary Weinberger expressed some concern regarding locating our men in Paraiso, but the area was fairly secure. (S)

Deputy Secretary Carlucci stated the greatest risk our people will face is an urban terrorist attack in San Salvador. (S)

Mr. Baker asked since we are losing the propaganda war, are we better off with them in uniform? (S)

Secretary Weinberger said that if they are caught without their uniforms, they could be executed. (S)

Secretary Haig emphatically supported them in uniform. Avoid the Laos approach. Don't sneak them in. (S)

Director Casey asked when this would begin to pay off? (S)

Secretary Weinberger said over a period of a few weeks, perhaps months. It was hard to say. (S)

Gheeral Jones then broke down the MTTs into their component parts and mentioned that OPAT would remain in San Salvador while the SUTs would be in two garrisons. (S)

Attorney General Smith asked if the men were volunteering. The answer was yes. (S)

Ambassador Kirkpatrick asked if helicopter maintenance and pilot training couldn't be done by civilians on contract. (S)

Secretary Weinberger said it could be done either way. (S)

Secretary Haig then outlined the funding options. One was \$5 million in reprogrammed aid. The second involved \$20 million under Section 506 which drew down on present stocks. Neither required Congressional action. (S)

The President asked what the \$20 million would be. (S)

Secretary Haig said most importantly four helicopters costing \$7 million. (S)

The Vice President asked if the MTTs could be given a time limit term of service. (S)

Secretary Haig said we cannot give a specific time, but emphasized they are temporary. (S)

General Jones observed that individual orders will be for six months. (S)

The Vice President observed that if we could put them in to do a job and then pull them out, it would be effective for our public position. (S)



The President asked if other Central American countries could be involved? (S)

Deputy Secretary Carlucci said that one MTT for Honduras is being considered. (S)

General Jones recommended that a survey team go in at once. (S)

The President said this could be a part of a regional policy, but the countries will have to ask for it. (S)

Secretary Haig said the next item was improving interdiction and intelligence, especially to stop infiltration by water. That involves lookout posts along the coast. (S)

There was then discussion between Secretary Haig and Director Casey on blending the intelligence and training operations. (S)

Secretary Haig preferred to defer a decision on this until the Casey plan was integrated with the SIG paper. (S)

Secretary Weinberger hoped that it could be sorted out -- who was doing what -- by the next meeting. (S)

Mr. Allen suggested that the covert action plan be finished and blended in by Monday. Delay would result in a better product. (S)

Secretary Haig added that this would include Cuba. (S)

Director Casey agreed to this. (S)

Secretary Haig then reviewed the decisions agreed on: (1) MTTs, (2) the funding in two packages -- \$5 million and \$20 million, and (3) the survey team for Honduras. (S)

Mr. Allen asked when they would go in? (S)

General Jones said within several weeks with one officer going to Honduras to brief the government and our Ambassadors with survey team action. (S)

The President then asked about Guatemala? (S)

Mr. Allen said we are making some diplomatic overtures and we are working on the Belize issue. (S)

Secretary Haig said that Carrington expressed his fear we were pro-Guatemala, and in a sense we were. (S)

Mr. Meese then reviewed the three decisions once more. (S)

Mr. Baker asked about the War Powers Act. Would deploying the MTTs outside the capital involve the WPA. What was the legal opinion? (S)



Attorney General Smith believed Secretary Weinberger's language avoided the problem. (S)

The question then became who specifically in the Congress needs to be informed. This needs to be worked out. (S)

Mr. Meese's suggestion is that consulting be as routine as possible with ordinary channel contacts. (S)



## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

February 28, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE VICE PRESIDENT  
 THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
 THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
 THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
 THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO  
 THE UNITED NATIONS  
 THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
 COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT  
 CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT  
 THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Summary of Conclusions of NSC Meeting,  
 February 27, 1981

Following for your information is the Summary of Conclusions of the NSC meeting on El Salvador:

- Deploy a single five-man Operational Planning Assistance Team (OPAT) and three five-man Small Unit Training Teams (SUT), for a total of 20 additional personnel, as requested by the Government of El Salvador and approved by our Ambassador with support of his entire country team. (S)
- Teams may be deployed to garrisons outside of San Salvador as the Ambassador (Chief of Mission) may direct. (S)
- Reprogram \$5M in FY 81 FMS for El Salvador. (S)
- Provide \$20M in FY 81 under Section 506a, Foreign Assistance Act, for El Salvador. (S)
- Deploy a military survey team to Honduras to determine requirements. (S)
- Integrate the CIA and DOD plans and programs. (S)
- Consult informally with Congress; War Powers Resolution does not apply to present circumstances. (S)

cc: Wm Schneider

*Jan W. Allen*  
 Richard V. Allen  
 Assistant to the President for  
 National Security Affairs

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

Review on Feb. 28, 1987

DECLASSIFIED

NLRR F00-002#852 #848 RWJ 11-17-11

BY LDS, NARA, DATE 2/22/08



SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

(El Salvador)

It was concluded that prompt action needed to be taken to shore up the GOES. It was also concluded that training personnel would be in uniform and would be deployed in garrisons outside San Salvador. The MTTs, however, would be there in a strictly training capacity and specific prohibitions against any combat advisory role were agreed on.

It was decided that Congress be consulted informally and on as routine a basis as possible.

It was also decided to continue work on a longer-term strategy which would carefully blend both covert and overt actions.

The short-term decisions were:

- sending the additional MTTs;
- funding additional military assistance from \$5 million of reprogrammed aid and \$20 million under Section 506;
- sending in a MTT survey team to Honduras.



Summary of Conclusions  
(Saudi Arabia)

Saudi F-15 Enhancement

- The President gave final approval to the February 6, 1981 proposal of the Secretaries of State and Defense to provide selected F-15 enhancement items to Saudi Arabia and to provide additional security assistance to Israel.
- As reflected in the Secretaries' proposal, the USG will be supportive of Israeli sales of Kfir aircraft in the context of our more forthcoming arms sales policy. The Israelis still will have to compete for sales on an even basis with US aerospace companies.
- This favorable decision on the Saudi request for F-15 enhancement should form the basis for an improved dialogue with the Saudis on a broad range of security issues of mutual concern. The cables from the Secretaries of State and Defense to their Saudi counterparts should make this point.
- The National Security Council Staff will prepare and circulate a draft talking paper for use with key leaders of the American Jewish community. The paper will stress the President's commitment that the USG will take no action in this area that would be harmful to Israel's security interests.