

France

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
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By smf, NARA, Date 1/18/05

FM THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE ELYSEE

VIA BLUE CHANNELS

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT MITTERAND FROM
PRESIDENT REAGAN

TO: JEAN-LOUIS BIANCO
SECRETARY GENERAL, OFFICE OF PRESIDENT MITTERAND
THE ELYSEE
PARIS, FRANCE

FROM: JOHN M. POINDEXTER
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

~~TOP SECRET~~ EYES ONLY

DEAR JEAN-LOUIS:

1. WE HAVE BEEN APPRISED THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS THAT FRENCH
DECISION ON OVER-FLIGHT OF U.K. BASED AIRCRAFT FOR STRIKES ON
LIBYA HAS BEEN DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER VISIT BY SPECIAL EMISSARY
WALTERS. UP TO NOW, WE HAVE BEEN PRECEDING IN ACCORD WITH
UNDERSTANDINGS REACHED DURING WALTERS' VISIT IN FEBRUARY AND
FOLLOW-ON MILITARY PLANNING TALKS. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HAS ADVISED THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WISHES TO DELAY FURTHER
DISCUSSIONS OF THIS ISSUE UNTIL AFTER WALTERS MEETS WITH PRESIDENT
MITTERAND ON MONDAY, APRIL 14, IN THE AFTERNOON. UNFORTUNATELY
PLANNING FOR MILITARY OPTIONS REQUIRES THAT WE DEVELOP COURSES OF
ACTION BEFORE THIS SCHEDULED MEETING. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS
THEREFORE ASKED THAT YOU TRANSMIT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO
PRESIDENT MITTERAND AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT:

BEGIN TEXT

DEAR FRANCOIS:

IN THE PAST WE HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT CIRCIMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF
LIBYAN PLANS FOR TERRORIST ACTION AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. A
NUMBER OF THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE, AS YOU KNOW, BEEN CONDUCTED IN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING FRANCE. WE NOW HAVE CONFIRMATION OF
DIRECT LIBYAN SPONSORED ACTIVITY AGAINST THE U.S. IN BOTH BERLIN
AND PARIS. IN BOTH OF THESE ATTACKS THE OPERATIONS WERE DESIGNED
TO INFLECT MAXIMUM NUMBERS OF INDISCRIMINATE CASUALTIES. WE ALSO
HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFORMATION THAT LIBYA IS WELL UNDERWAY IN
PLANNING ADDITIONAL OPERATIONS AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS IN EUROPE
AND OTHER COUNTRIES. WE HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SOME OF
THESE OPERATIONS IN SUDAN, WEST GERMANY, TURKEY, SYRIA, SPAIN,

12958
As Amended
Sec. 1.4d

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, KENYA, AND LATIN AMERICA ARE TO TAKE PLACE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE. DESPITE OUR EFFORTS TO WARN OUR CITIZENS AND HOST GOVERNMENTS IN ADVANCE, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT UNLESS SOMETHING IS DONE TO STOP QADHAFI NOW, OTHER INNOCENT VICTIMS WILL DIE.

BECAUSE THE EVIDENCE WE HAVE ON DIRECT LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IS SO CONVINCING AND OUR INFORMATION ON THEIR FUTURE PLANS IS SO THREATENING I HAVE RELUCTANTLY TAKEN THE DECISIONS TO USE U.S. MILITARY FORCES TO EXACT A RESPONSE TO THESE LIBYAN ATTACKS.

MY MILITARY PLANNERS HAVE ADVISED ME THAT THE USE OF FB-111 AIRCRAFT IN CONCERT WITH OTHER STRIKES FROM THE SEA, WILL MINIMIZE BOTH THE RISK TO OUR PERSONNEL AND THE CHANCE OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE. WE HAVE RECEIVED THE SUPPORT OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT FOR THE USE OF U.K. BASED MILITARY ASSETS FOR THIS PURPOSE. THIS MISSION WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED IF OUR AIRCRAFT ARE PERMITTED TO OVERFLY FRANCE ENROUTE TO AND FROM LIBYA.

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As Amended
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[REDACTED]

I HAVE NOW BEEN ADVISED THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT WISHES TO DEFER DECISION ON THIS COURSE OF ACTION UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE MET WITH MY SPECIAL EMISSARY, AMBASSADOR WALTERS ON MONDAY. UNFORTUNATELY PLANNING FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS REQUIRES THAT WE KNOW OF YOUR DECISION PRIOR TO THE TIME YOU ARE AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH AMBASSADOR WALTERS.

I WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT REQUEST WHICH REQUIRES YOUR CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. IN MAKING YOUR DECISION, I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT WE ARE NOT TARGETING CIVILIANS, ECONOMIC FACILITIES OR REGULAR MILITARY TROOP CONCENTRATIONS. WE INTEND TO STRIKE TARGETS THAT ARE DEMOSTRABLY INVOLVED IN THE CONDUCT AND SUPPORT OF LIBYAN TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. THESE INCLUDE HIS COMMAND AND CONTROL FUNCTION AND LOGISTICS SUPPORT FOR TERRORIST OPERATIONS. I HAVE ALSO AUTHORIZED LIMITED DEFENSE SUPPRESSION MISSIONS IN ORDER DEFEND OUR OWN FORCES.

I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT THESE ACTIONS WILL ELIMINATE ENTIRELY THE TERRORIST THREAT POSED BY QADHAFI. I AM, HOWEVER, CONVINCED THAT WE CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT OFFICIALLY SPONSORED TERRORIST ACTIONS BY THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT CAN ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN AT SIGNIFICANT COST. THE LOSS OF SUCH STATE SPONSORSHIP OVER THE LONGER TERM WILL INEVITABLY WEAKEN THE ABILITY OF TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS THEIR CRIMINAL ATTACKS AS WE WORK THROUGH DIPLOMATIC, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANNELS TO ALLIEVIATE THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF SUCH TERRORISM.

TO PERPETRATE

THE USE OF U.K. BASED FB-111 STRIKE AIRCRAFT AND SUPPORT ASSETS ARE IMPORTANT TO MINIMIZING THE RISK TO INNOCENT CIVILIANS AND OUR OWN AIR CREWS. THE ADVANCED AVIONICS AND PRECISION STRIKE CAPABILITIES OF THESE AIRCRAFT ARE CRITICAL TO THESE OBJECTIVES. I HOPE THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO AUTHORIZE THE OVERFLIGHT OF YOUR TERRITORY, BY THESE AIRCRAFT, IN SUPPORT OF THESE OBJECTIVES.

I BELIEVE THAT THIS A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN ATLANTIC RELATIONS. AMERICAN TOURISTS, SERVICEMEN AND DIPLOMATS ARE BEING BRUTALLY MURDERED BY TERRORISTS IN EUROPE. YOU SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE PROFOUND EFFECT ON THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IF OUR ACTIONS TO PUT A HALT THESE CRIMES CONTINUE TO RECEIVE ONLY LUKE-WARM SUPPORT OR NO SUPPORT AT ALL FROM OUR CLOSEST ALLIES WHOM WE ARE COMMITTED TO DEFEND -- EVEN WHEN EUROPEANS THEMSELVES ARE VICTIMS OF THE SAME CRIMINAL ACTS. THE UNITED STATES FEELS A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY BECAUSE WE ARE IN A POSITION TO ACT DECISIVELY. I NEED YOUR SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. I HOPE, FOR ALL OF US, THAT IT WILL BE FORTHCOMING.

WITH WARMEST REGARDS, RON

END TEXT

2. AMBASSADOR WALTERS, WHEN HE ARRIVES PARIS, WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON TARGETS AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT. OUR HOPE IS THAT WE CAN OBTAIN YOUR GOVERNMENT'S CON-
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SURRENCE IN THE OVER-FLIGHT REQUESTED ABOVE AND IMMEDIATELY RE-OPEN [REDACTED] PLANNING. PLEASE ADVISE SOONEST VIA THIS CHANNEL.