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SYSTEM II
90500 Add-On

National Security Planning Group Meeting
May 18, 1987, 2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m., Situation Room

SUBJECT: U.S. Policy and Gulf Security

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President's Office:
Sam Watson

State:
Secretary George Shultz
Richard Murphy

Treasury:
James Baker

OSD:
Secretary Caspar Weinberger
Richard Armitage

Justice:
Attorney General Edwin P. Meese
Charles Cooper

OMB:
James Miller

CIA:
Robert Gates
Tom Wolfe

JCS:
Vice Admiral Henry Mustin
General Robert T. Herres
Lt. General Richard Burpee

White House:
Howard Baker
Kenneth Duberstein
Frank C. Carlucci
William Cockell
Robert Oakley
Grant Green

Minutes

President Reagan opened meeting, observing that the tragic attack upon the USS Stark is a reminder of the risks we run as protectors of the free world. There has been significant progress

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BY RW NARA DATE 7/22/11

in the Gulf since last NSPG on March 23. Must not back down in face of pressure from Iran and USSR. Must explain policy better to Congress and get greater cooperation from our friends. Must also take hard look at operating procedures and capabilities of our military forces in the Gulf, and work with GCC and others to bring end to war -- now.

Carlucci endorsed the President's views and noted particular need to explain U.S. policy on protecting Kuwaiti shipping to Hill. He asked Secretary Weinberger to explain how USS Stark incident had occurred.

Weinberger noted that twice that same day Iraqi planes had come close to USS Stark and other USN vessels, as they did an average of 4 times per week. Two Iranian ships had been attacked by Iraqi planes earlier in the day, about 60 miles NE of Stark. Only explanation for Stark not acting against Exocet missile was familiarity with Iraqi planes, causing the Stark to think it would not be attacked by what it knew (thanks to AWAC's) to be Iraqi plane.

Herres added to briefing, noted that there had been one minute or so for Stark to use Phalanx gun or chaff against missile, but no apparent use for reasons as yet unknown. Stark just did not expect to be hit by Iraqi plane. Existing Rules of Engagement would have allowed skipper of Stark to determine hostile intent and reply vs. F-1 or missile (if there had been time). However, given danger in area and in order to minimize chances of a repetition, orders being sent to MIDEASTFOR that any aircraft approaching a USN ship as if to fire a missile or attack will be considered hostile, so ship can attack in self-defense. Also, any aircraft approaching Stark and USN ships around it will be considered hostile.

Shultz said that State is pressing the Government of Iraq for apology and compensation, will keep after them.

Weinberger said DOD had been about to brief Congress on Kuwaiti shipping, having already alerted them and provided initial brief. May have trouble with Congress but must go ahead. May need to notify under War Powers.

Howard Baker said his reservations on protecting Kuwaiti ships under U.S. flags already well known, but he wanted to repeat them. Will be seen as subterfuge. Strongly prefer protect under Kuwaiti flag, where Kuwait would bear more responsibility.

Jim Baker recalled negotiating agreement with Congress re War Powers at time of 1973 action vs. Lebanon. Could comply this time but challenge in court.

Shultz said he supported Howard Baker; more GCC involvement needed, including Saudis.

Meese said one could notify under War Powers but express reservations. If there should be satisfactory apology and explanation from Iraq, should be able to avoid War Powers.

Howard Baker said that the Administration should probably not challenge War Powers in court at this time.

Jim Baker said that if we notify under War Powers it must include all ships to be protected, U.S. flag or not.

Reagan said Kuwait's location is such that it naturally is vulnerable to and fears Iran. We have told them we would protect ships, and we will do so.

Carlucci asked about Rules of Engagement for escorted ships and was told by Herres. Mustin noted that any response was limited to the actual attacker, and Iranians land mass was not to be attacked without approval of NCA. The new instructions provide for greater readiness, but no change in ROE.

Weinberger said that if an Iranian plane attacked a U.S. ship, he would recommend attacking Iran directly.

Miller said we still need to know why the USS Stark did not fire or attempt to avoid missile.

Reagan said that as he understood it, from now on our ships would be in a heightened state of readiness as they had been in the Gulf of Sidra, able to respond if aircraft or boats approached.

Gates said we should show greater displeasure toward Iraq, perhaps cutting off intelligence.

Howard Baker agreed we have been too nice.

Shultz also agreed. He had ordered all references to accident removed from Presidential statement since we did not have real apology. Should take some sort of action.

Carlucci said that we should wait for another 24 hours, since they claim to be conducting an investigation. This could take a little time. If no satisfactory answer received, then we should conduct a full review to decide upon steps to take.

Howard Baker agreed for cut-off first and then restoring help if satisfactory reply received.

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Shultz said it would be bad for U.S. if Iran were to win the war.

Reagan reminded everyone of the 28-30 young men who died for their country under terrible circumstances.

Howard Baker said that time is pressing. Must have a statement from Iraq before the President leaves tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. Also, he must be able to answer questions on the incident when he meets journalists. Must know what our policy is and must have regrets from Iraq.

Prepared by:
Robert Oakley

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SYSTEM II
90500 Add-On

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

May 20, 1987

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR FRANK C. CARLUCCI

FROM: ROBERT B. OAKLEY *RO*

SUBJECT: NSPG Minutes, May 18, 1987

Attached at Tab I for your approval are the minutes of the NSPG meeting held on May 18 from 2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

WQ: Bill Cockell concurs.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the NSPG minutes at Tab I.

Approve *✓* Disapprove

Attachment

Tab I Minutes of NSPG Meeting

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White House Guidelines, August 18, 1987
By *GA* NARA, Date *4/12/02*