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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 25, 1984

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National Security  
Decision Directive 141

Responding to Escalation in the Iran-Iraq War (S)

Recent escalation in the Iran-Iraq War, specifically attacks against shipping in the non-belligerent trade with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, has led to urgent requests from Saudi Arabia for accelerated arms deliveries and tanker support. Moreover, the trends in the war are ominous, and barring a breakthrough in current diplomatic efforts to stop the escalation, there is a growing risk that key oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, as well as U.S. military forces, facilities, or flag vessels in the Persian Gulf, may be targeted for attack by either conventional or terrorist means. (S)

In light of the growing threat to U.S. and Allied vital interests in the Gulf region, the following actions are directed: (S)

Support for Saudi Arabia

- The United States will transfer to the Saudi Arabian Government (SAG) a total of 400 STINGER surface-to-air missiles as soon as possible. This sale will be made under my emergency authority under Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act (the Act). The formal determination as required under the Act, should be readied for my signature prior to the transfer of the systems from U.S. custody. In view of the threat of Iranian preemption, a formal announcement of the sale will not be made until I have signed the determination. (S)
- In response to a request from the SAG, the United States will provide aerial tanker support to the Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force to enhance air defenses in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom. Agreement will be sought to permit the deployment to Saudi Arabia of the additional tanker aircraft necessary to support this request. (S)
- Recommendations regarding the disposition of other outstanding Saudi arms requests, which have not been approved, should be forwarded for my review.

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Lt: Leary to Weinstein 4/20/85 + "In Full List"  
 BY clb  
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Contingency Planning for Possible Escalation and U.S. Responses to Attacks on U.S. Forces, Facilities, or Flag Vessels

- In view of the increasing threat to U.S. flag vessels in the Persian Gulf, the Department of State will provide additional special warnings to U.S. ships destined for Kuwait. (e)
- The United States will be prepared to respond promptly to deliberate acts of aggression against U.S. military forces, installations, or flag vessels. (TS)
- In anticipation of the possibility of direct attacks on U.S. forces, facilities, or flag vessels, the Department of Defense, with the Department of State, should develop a concept paper outlining the most likely escalation scenarios, including attacks on U.S. warships, AWACS or tanker aircraft, and U.S. flag vessels. (TS)
- The concept paper should also address more ambiguous threats such as unconventional or terrorist attacks against facilities used to support U.S. military forces in the Persian Gulf region, as well as diplomatic installations. (TS)
- Options for responding to the attacks, postulated in each of the foregoing scenarios, should be described. (TS)
- Military plans to support each appropriate option should be prepared and reviewed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a matter of urgency. (TS)
- For each scenario and option, the Department of State should provide recommendations regarding the nature and extent of prior consultations we could undertake with the Gulf Arab states and our key Allies. (S)

Ronald Reagan

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