

SECRET

Doc # 215-871

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, October 16, 1979

421
43

Time and Place: 4:00-5:00 p.m.
White House Situation Room

Subject: North Africa

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS.
Date: DEC 30 2014

Participants:

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
David Newsom, Under Secretary for
Political Affairs
Harold Saunders, Assistant
Secretary for Near Eastern and
South Asian Affairs

ACDA

Spurgeon Keeny, Deputy Director
Barry Blechman, Assistant
Director, Weapons Evaluation
and Control Bureau

OSD

W. Graham Claytor, Deputy
Secretary
Robert Murray, Deputy Assistant
Secretary for Near East, Africa
and South Asian Affairs

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Martha Kessler, Assistant NIO for
Near East and South Asia

JCS

Admiral Thomas Hayward, Acting
Chairman
Vice Admiral Thor Hanson, Director,
Joint Staff

NSC

James M. Rentschler (Notetaker)
Robert M. Kimmitt

Secretary Vance opened the meeting by noting that the partici-
pants were essentially down to three choices, continuance of
our present policy, or going all the way to help Morocco,
including the sale of OV-10 aircraft and Cobra helicopters,
or some step in between. He briefly reviewed his UNGA
consultations in New York and noted the Saudi demarche
calling for bilateral cooperation with us on assisting
Morocco militarily, a recent and significant development.
Whatever we did, we would have to tell King Hassan that we
saw no prospect of a military solution and that he should
get on with a negotiated settlement. The Secretary then
solicited views around the table and asked Dr. Brzezinski to
lead off. (9)

~~SECRET~~ RG 330-82-0205, box 16, Morocco, 1979
ORIGINAL CL BY ZBrzezinski

DECLASSIFIED BY OCT 16, 1999

~~EXT BEND 6 YEARS BY ZBrzezinski~~
~~NSC 1.13(f)~~

15 m-04/17

Dr. Brzezinski said he leaned to the view that continued deterioration in Morocco's military situation will not improve conditions for a negotiated settlement. Our experience with the Egyptians and the Israelis had demonstrated that we were more likely to move disputants to a negotiating process if both sides felt confident in their strength and stability. This was not now the case for Morocco. Moreover, our record in supporting our friends, or the perception of that record--which is what counts in foreign affairs--is ambiguous. All things considered, he favored cutting the Gordian knot and supplying Morocco with what it needed to bolster its military position, which would in turn enable Morocco to negotiate from strength. As far as Algeria is concerned, we should not be shy in telling them that we do not believe a weak, unstable Morocco is in our interest. At the same time, we can honestly tell them that we favor a negotiated settlement and are putting pressure on Hassan for that purpose. We should, in sum, act like a big and strong country should act. (S)

Speaking for the DOD, Deputy Secretary Claytor said that he had discussed the situation with Secretary Brown and both believed that we had to strengthen Hassan's position. Defense was in essential agreement with Dr. Brzezinski's view and felt that any other course would risk destabilization in a strategic part of North Africa. Defense also agreed with the need to tell Hassan that he had to negotiate. One way to ensure that he did might be to give him part of an arms supply package now and withhold the rest until we had evidence that he was actively pursuing a negotiated settlement. (S)

Admiral Hayward noted that the JCS fully shared the views expressed by Deputy Secretary Claytor and Dr. Brzezinski. (S)

Following some discussion about the merits of the OV-1 as a possible substitute for the OV-10 (which Admiral Hayward believed would be a substantial letdown psychologically to the Moroccans), Director Turner expressed pessimism about inducing Hassan to negotiate, a) because the King thinks he has to have military success, and b) because there is a "wave of enthusiasm" among loyalist officers for improving command-and-control and in general achieving greater fighting effectiveness. Director Turner added that we ought not to overlook the Polisario; in other words, we may want to try to play both sides of the street. (S)

Summarizing ACDA's preference for sticking to our present policy, Mr. Keeny said that liberalization risked protracting and perhaps escalating the conflict. It would send a wrong signal to Morocco and complicate our life with both Algeria and Congress. In

~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL

Authority: EO 13526

Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS

Date: DEC 30 2014

response to Dr. Brzezinski's query concerning the source of Congressional opposition to a changed policy, Mr. Keeny noted that Steve Solarz was out in front. Losing a confrontation with him and other members of Congress would not help us with our friends. (C)

Under Secretary Newsom then recapitulated State's point of view which favored a partial relaxation of our present policy to include items which would not incur Congressional opposition. (replacements, for example, for all eight F-5s lost by Morocco). Supporting Secretary Vance's contention that Congressional sentiment was a key factor which had to be put on the table, Mr. Newsom said that we faced a real fight in the House and no strong endorsement in the Senate. The OV-10 had become a symbol and as such could give us trouble not only with Congress but with Algeria. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski replied that it would be nice if we could please everybody; yet in the real world we cannot. We must choose, and if it is a question between pleasing Algeria and pleasing Saudi Arabia, there was no doubt in his mind where the US national interest lay. Moreover, we have to ask ourselves how we will look in that part of the world if Hassan falls. Hassan may not be our favorite person, as a human being or otherwise. Yet he has been our friend. And our track record in support of our friends is not reassuring. (C)

Secretary Vance then summed up his own position, emphasizing that we have to support Hassan but that we would have great trouble getting the OV-10 through Congress. In those circumstances he recommended seeing if we can put together a decent package with items that would not be as Congressionally sensitive as the OV-10. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski asserted that we have an overriding national interest which is worth the effort of arguing. The problem with the option favored by State is that it is a typical halfway measure which gets everybody mad. When the stakes are high, as they are in North Africa, the US has an obligation to support its friends. He reiterated his belief that we should fight Solarz on this; he had seen the latter on television knocking the President over Cambodia. Solarz is not the Secretary of State. We had done him a lot of favors and we can play hardball politics, too. He agreed that we should certainly flag the possibility of Congressional opposition for the President, but in response to Assistant Secretary Saunders' emphasis on the "rare occurrence" of detailed State-Hill consultations on North Africa, expressed concern that such consultations could become abdication. (C)

In concluding the substantive deliberations, Secretary Vance said there was now a need to submit three differing options for Presidential decision, defined as follows:

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL

Authority: EO 13526

Chief, Records & Declass. Div, WHS

Date: DEC 30 2014

~~SECRET~~

- Option 1: maintenance of our present policy, with no liberalized supply relationship, i.e., the status quo; (e)
- Option 2: a liberalized arms supply "package" which would include F-5s, Hughes helicopters, and OV-1s (if the JCS determined that the latter would be something more than mere "make-weight"); (e)
- Option 3: a liberalized arms supply "package" which would include F-5s plus OV-10s and Cobra TOWs. (e)

Dr. Brzezinski stipulated that to ensure the greatest possible fairness and accuracy in the presentation of these options, respective "sponsors" should submit their own language, not to exceed a half-page in length and to reach the White House by noon on October 17. He added that should the President favor Option 3, Dr. Brzezinski would recommend this contingent upon a more thorough canvassing of Congress. Dr. Brzezinski then cautioned the participants to keep the PRC proceedings leak-free; an unfortunate piece had already appeared in the New York Times on this subject, and it was in no one's interest to divulge any of this sensitive material before the President had had a chance to make his decision. (e)

Secretary Vance seconded Dr. Brzezinski and emphasized the difficulty such leaks could cause. (e)

In response to Dr. Brzezinski's question concerning what we might be able to do with the Algerians, Secretary Vance agreed with Under Secretary Newsom that it would in principle be a good idea to field a high-level US delegation for the 25th anniversary of the Algerian revolution scheduled for November 1. (e)

After agreeing to cable appropriate follow-up instructions to OSD/ISA Deputy Assistant Secretary Murray (who was leaving for Saudi Arabia that evening), the PRC adjourned. (e)

Office of the Secretary of Defense
 Chief, RDD, F D, WHS
 Date: 30 DEC 2014 Authority: EO 13526
 Declassify: X Deny in Full: _____
 Declassify in Part: _____
 Reason: _____
 MDR: 15 -M- 0417

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
 Authority: EO 13526
 Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
 Date: DEC 30 2014

SECRET