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11 June 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 9 June 1987 HPSCI Briefing

CIA Briefer:

ADDI Helgerson

Congressmen Present:

Daniel, Hyde, Kastenmeier(chair),
Kennelly, Dwyer, McEwen, McHugh,
Lungren, and Wilson

Subjects Briefed:

Rome: Bombing of US Embassy
Persian Gulf: [Redacted]

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Cuba: Debriefing Defector
Sino-Indian Border: Recent
Developments

Questions/Answers:

Kastenmeier:

QUESTION: With respect to bombing, any particular significance to heads of states congregating in Venice? Any implications for the Summit since bombing not even close to Venice?

ANSWER: We can assume the significance of the attack only from the mind of a terrorist. They do it to demonstrate their presence. There is no question that it is not a coincidence; they can't hit in Venice so the US and UK Embassies get hit in Rome.

QUESTION: On the Persian Gulf, the Iranians are citing "anti-Iranian" actions that they will respond to. What are these actions?

ANSWER: The Iranians, including the most recent statements by President Khamenei, are really pegged into the future, not to actions that have already been taken. Certainly the Iranians see US and Soviet

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actions as supporting Iraq. We think they would attack unescorted American flag vessels. It is not likely they would attack warships, but we can't be sure of that. If the US goes ahead and flags ships, the Iranians are likely to attack first by turning to small patrol boats using RPG's and mining actions. They are less likely to do something as visible as Silkworm, but we can't rule that out. They clearly want the US and the Soviet Union out of the Gulf.

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Daniel

QUESTION: What are the other Arab states doing, with respect to basing and so on?

ANSWER: The small Gulf states are supporting us and asking us to go ahead with the flagging of Kuwaiti ships. But they are asking us to do it quietly, with cooler rhetoric. We haven't asked for basing and

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if we do, I would be very surprised if they don't drag their feet.

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QUESTION: I just wanted to ask, as I did before the session, about the airfield we built in Egypt but we haven't used since 1983.

ANSWER: I don't have the precise information for you, but we'll get back to you.

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Lungren

QUESTION: On the Cuban defector, why did del Pino defect?

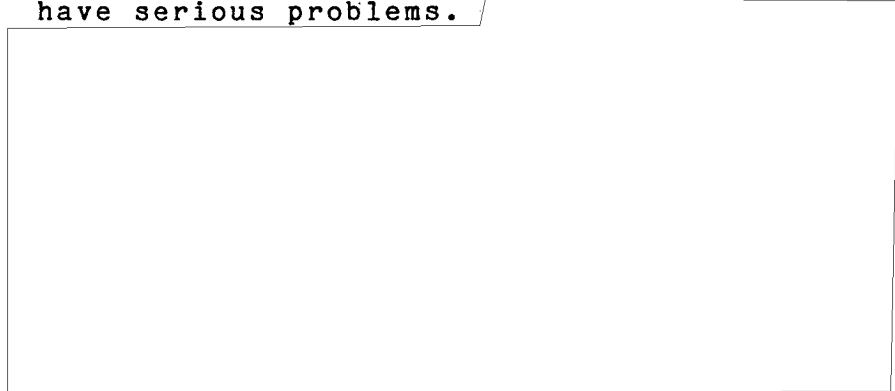
ANSWER: I am not sure we know the full answer. He had not already been discredited

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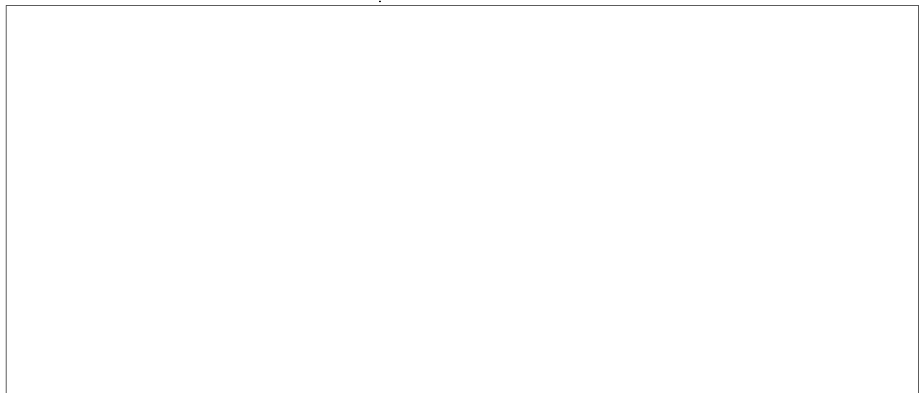
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in Cuba and still had a good job. But his son had been cashiered from the Air Force for crashing a plane in Zaire and seemed to have serious problems.

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QUESTION: Anything about Grenada?

ANSWER: I don't think we have discussed that yet. We have also held off on personality and politics topics, concentrating instead on specific military matters so we can check out his veracity.

McHugh

QUESTION: What are our Western Allies doing in the Gulf and what is President Reagan going to ask them to do?

ANSWER: On the second question, not sure exactly what the President is going to do but suspect he will explore the problem with the Allies but not make concrete requests-- partially because we do not want to receive a negative answer. Allies continue to express full support for freedom of the seas but drag their feet on specific actions. UK and French trumpet their longstanding presence in the Gulf while noting we are Johnny-come-latelys on this. They argue

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that market forces will get the oil out, noting there are 30 empty tankers just waiting to ship oil out. Europeans also know that only 3 European ships--with the exception of Greek vessels--have been attacked out of the hundreds that have passed the Straits. Europeans fear we may be adding to the problem, not solving it.

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McHugh

QUESTION: What is the French and British presence?

ANSWER: UK always has one ship in the area, sometimes two or three. The French usually have three.

QUESTION: Has the oil supply from the Gulf been affected?

ANSWER: The supply of oil has not been affected. The price jumped about \$2 on the spot market over the weekend, but it is usually up and down--I don't follow it religiously. But there is substantial unused production capacity worldwide.

QUESTION: How much of the Gulf oil goes through pipelines rather than tankers?

ANSWER: A substantial amount--all Iraqi oil, much of Saudi Arabia's, and the Kuwaitis are thinking of building a pipeline. About a third to half of all Persian Gulf oil goes via pipeline. All Iranian oil, however, goes by tanker which is why they care so much about shipping.

QUESTION: Difficult to understand the risk, what we are protecting by escorting Kuwaiti oil.

ANSWER: From Kuwait's point of view, the two dozen attacks this year represent a significant jump. Oil still goes out but the Kuwaitis have to worry.

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QUESTION: But you just said that the Iranians are the ones most interested in keeping the shipping going?

ANSWER: The Iranians are interested in the shipping and have said they will stop attacking it when the Iraqis stop. But then the Iranians won't stop the land war which is really what the conflict is all about. The Iranians are an unknown quantity. They are procuring the Silkworm--which could close down oil supply--for some reason. We cannot assume this missile will not be used. We have to guard against the threat posed by their new capabilities.

Wilson

QUESTION: I know that policy matters in the Persian are not your area, but it all seems a little esoteric to me, our snap decision to protect Kuwaiti tankers with an American flag in a war in which we have not taken either side. As a country, we have no interests there, only marginal interests in the economic area. We protect Kuwaiti ships, which carry Iraqi oil, in the Gulf where we are not militarily involved. And, the Kuwaitis don't even want us to be seen from shore, and will provide no base for airplanes. Why?

ANSWER: I could add something you didn't mention--the Soviet role. State's concern is the need to avert a growing Soviet presence by showing that we can help our Arab friends and not leave it to the Soviets.

QUESTION: It just doesn't make any sense. It would be wise for you at Langley to understand that I haven't met any strong defender of this in Congress.

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Kennelly

QUESTION: Who does defend it?

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Kastenmeier

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QUESTION: On India, Gandhi is in a strange position, confronting Sikhs, Sri Lanka, the Paks, and China. Doesn't the Indian Government feel overextended?

ANSWER: Absolutely. There is also an important state election putting pressure on Gandhi. I think that is why India did the air drop in Sri Lanka--Gandhi needed to do something positive. Publicly it was well received. India couldn't do anything about Pakistan or China so it acted against Sri Lanka.

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