

Memo to Don Gregg

December 2, 1986

From: Doug Menarchik

Subject: The NSC Terrorism Office

I know that you and the Vice President need to focus on the immediate problems of the Iran-Contra crisis, but I believe that the NSC terrorism office problem needs to be addressed in the very near term. I also think that, given Poindexter's transfer and Ollie's dismissal, Holloway should return, sooner rather than later.

The VP's Task Force recommended that a full-time terrorism NSC position be created with augmented staff. The NSC under Poindexter defined this as Ollie (who brought along all his other portfolios), and Earl and Coy. When I raised the issue about the lack of a "full-time" commitment to terrorism, I was "informed" that this was NSC business on how to run the terrorism show.

With Ollie's departure, I understand that Rod St. Martin, a Navy Captain who runs the Crisis Management Center, has been placed in charge. This again fails to meet the "full-time" criteria of the Task Force recommendation.

In addition, the NSC position, as I understood it, was a compromise between a "terrorism czar" (a concept that I pushed), or having terrorism run out of the Pol-Mil NSC office, as it had been before the Task Force. That full-time NSC position "should" have been given to a person with clout, one who had received a mandate from the President to fix the ills of the US capability to combat terrorism. That did not happen then, and it is not occurring now.

I'm concerned that if the "St. Martin" temporary fix stays in place during the "interregnum," that the Executive Branch loses ground, and consequently, US policy to combat terrorism suffers.

The NSC Terrorism Office is weakened with the Iran-Contra affair. But State is on the move. Ambassador Bremer is a take charge guy who appears to have breathed new life into the Interagency Group on Terrorism. That's good. The US needs more people like him in the terrorism business. But State is also now drawing power to itself at the expense of the NSC, a natural process given the blood-letting the NSC is undergoing. Shultz has directed Bremer to assume controls in the event of a terrorist crisis. The power play would probably work given the paralysis in the NSC terrorism office. The NSC terrorism office needs to be "stiffened," and soon.

I recommend that you discuss the problem with your counter-parts and consider:

-- bringing Holloway back sooner, rather than later

-- appointing a "heavy-hitter" as the replacement for Ollie, someone like Holloway, Kingston, Brian Jenkins