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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

25 February 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President
✓The Vice President
Secretary of State
Secretary of Defense
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

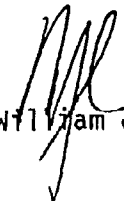
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PER E.O. 13526
2012-1291-MR
SCS 8/22/13

SUBJECT: Middle East Terrorism: The Threat and Possible
US Responses

You may find useful this comprehensive review of the relative implications of counterterrorism steps taken with respect to each of the major Middle East sponsors of terrorism and different types of targets.

Among the key conclusions are these:

- A single US strike is likely to lead to terrorist attacks against our interests.
- Limited strikes are unlikely to cause any of the sponsors to modify their behavior.
- Terrorist connected targets are near cities in Iran and attacks against them would have, by themselves, little if any significant impact.
- If the US fails to respond to attacks by Iranian-sponsored groups, Iranian terrorism will continue and very likely grow.
- Sustained military and economic pressure in response to Iranian terrorism may in the long term strengthen Iranian moderates, but could also drive the Iranians closer to the Soviets in search of protection.
- Libya is reluctant to target the US directly because it fears retaliation, but at the same time it is in the poorest position to sustain itself against well targeted actions. In contrast, Iran could sustain itself for a long while against anything but sustained military or economic action.


William J. Casey

Attachment:
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