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THE WHITE HOUSE

ACTION MEMORANDUM

WASHINGTON

LOG NO.:

Date: December 13, 1976

Time:

FOR ACTION:

cc (for information):

up 12/13

Jack Marsh

FROM THE STAFF SECRETARY

DUE: Date: Immediate turnaround Please

Time:

SUBJECT:

Brent Scowcroft memo 12/11/76 re Military Items for Israel

ACTION REQUESTED:

For Necessary Action

For Your Recommendations

Prepare Agenda and Brief

Draft Reply

For Your Comments

Draft Remarks

REMARKS:

Secretary Rumsfeld is holding meetings today and tomorrow with representatives from Israel. This decision should be made while these meetings are taking place, therefore, NSC is asking that this package go to the President immediately.

ENITE ORIGINAL PACKAGE ATTACHED
SECRET --- Please return.

NSC advised President gave back directly to Scowcroft

PLEASE ATTACH THIS COPY TO MATERIAL SUBMITTED.

If you have any questions or if you anticipate a delay in submitting the required material, please telephone the Staff Secretary immediately.

Jim Connor
For the President

ACTIONSECRET (GDS)

December 11, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *BS*
SUBJECT: Military Items for Israel

The Departments of State and Defense have completed their study of the means of implementing your decision to respond affirmatively to Israel's request for M-60 tanks, M-109 howitzers, FLIR and CBU-72/B to Israel. Their proposals, which are outlined below, are consistent with your decision as well as your earlier policy guidelines in NSDM 315 that future Israeli military requests should be handled in accordance with standard procedures of the Department of Defense, taking into account the impact on US inventories and procurements, commitments to other nations for arms transfers, and the safeguarding of sensitive technology.

1. M60A1 Tanks (Israel's Request: 126):

The Army currently has only forty-two percent of its overall prime tank objective. Deliveries for Israel from normal, uncommitted production capacity between July and December 1978 presents the least difficulty for the US. Diversion of tanks from production for US forces could shorten delivery periods from six to twelve months but would:

- delay filling of significant shortages caused by withdrawals from our forces and from US War Reserves as a result of the 1973 war;
- contradict Administration assurances to Congress last spring that future arms sales would refrain from diverting or withdrawing US military assets in order to supply foreign buyers;
- jeopardize appropriations needed for additional programmed, but as yet unfunded, Army tank requirements.

Subject to GDS of E. O. 11652
Automatically Downgraded at Two-
Year Intervals and Declassified on
December 31, 1984.

SECRET (GDS)

KR 5/18/88

As an alternative, we could offer M48A5 tanks from uncommitted production/conversion capacity in lieu of the M60A1. Israel has ordered M48A5s previously. The cost would be somewhat more attractive (62.5 rather than 80.3 million) and would have less impact on Israel's cash flow problem. However, deliveries would be made from January to June 1979, one year later than the M60A1. In addition, provision of the M48 tank is unlikely to assuage the Israeli appetite for the M-60.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide 126 M60A1 tanks from normal uncommitted production, with deliveries starting in July 1978 and ending in December 1978. In addition, inform the Israelis of the availability of M48A5s as an alternative means of meeting their tank objectives.

APPROVE _____ OTHER _____

DISAPPROVE, accelerate delivery by providing from production for US forces _____

2. M109 155mm Self-Propelled Howitzers (Israel's Request:94):

Delivery from regular production in accordance with existing policy would take two years, beginning in January 1979. Diversions from established production schedules would allow delivery to start six months earlier but would delay the filling of Army requirements, contradict assurances to Congress as above, and could have serious repercussions on our relations with The Netherlands (which has an option to buy) and other FMS buyers who have firm commitments on production and delivery.

RECOMMENDATION:

Offer Israel 94 M109 Howitzers from uncommitted production on a schedule not to interfere with potential delivery dates offered by the United States to The Netherlands. Deliveries to Israel would be completed earlier if The Netherlands declines the US offer.

APPROVE _____ OTHER _____

DISAPPROVE, provide from production for US forces _____

3. Forward-Looking Infra-Red (FLIR) Equipment (Israel Request: 25 for Fighter and 50 for Helicopter Application):

FLIR devices are used to "see" in the dark and through dust, camouflage, and adverse weather conditions. FLIR can be utilized simply in a surveillance/reconnaissance mode or, in the most advanced forms now under development, can be linked with selected weapons as integrated detection and guidance systems, providing a revolutionary day-night weapons delivery capability. The technology also has ground and naval force applications, and Israel has recently indicated an interest in obtaining FLIR applications for the TOW missile system in its possession.

The United States is believed to have a decisive lead in applied FLIR technology. When the advanced form becomes operational, it will overcome the adverse tank ratios in the Central Front in Europe. Loss or compromise of such advanced devices or technology could result in Soviet access to the system and permit the development of countermeasures with severe negative consequences for US forces and capabilities.

Introduction into the Middle East of any FLIR systems, and especially the advanced weapons guidance forms, would also represent a major increase in capabilities for one side, probably stimulating strenuous efforts by the other side to counter or match this added sophistication.

The more advanced weapons delivery FLIR systems are presently in an R & D stage and there is no operational mode ready for use even by the US military. We have no precise estimate when these systems will become available for production. While uncertain of Israel's specific intended applications, we anticipate that the GOI wants to obtain the most advanced FLIR systems for their aircraft and helicopters. This problem is compounded by the fact that our own forces will have considerable need for this device and presumably absorb the initial tranches of its production, introducing another degree of uncertainty into the ultimate availability date of this system for Israel. Finally, there are the questions of whether Israel should be given access to advanced equipment

still in R and D and before the US or any of its NATO allies (in event of an eventual limited release to NATO) have obtained a full operational capability. NATO would resent early release to Israel. NATO and others (e. g. Iran) would immediately request the same equipment. In making a judgment on what (and when) to supply the FLIR, you should be aware of the four different levels of thermal imaging technology which could be made available to Israel. These are listed below in ascending order of sensitivity:

-- Thermal-image line-scan systems are available for reconnaissance applications on RF-4 aircraft and helicopters. While less capable than FLIR, these devices could provide a major increase in the effectiveness of night and poor-weather operations for surveillance and detection purposes, but not for weapons guidance. Available in 1977-1978.

-- Development of a near real-time cockpit display system for the RF-4, using thermal-image line-scan technology, appears to be feasible and would provide a significant improvement over the standard equipment above, while avoiding the level of sophistication found in FLIR. Available by 1979.

-- OR-89 FLIR sets are currently in production for helicopter application. They provide significantly better imagery than the line-scan systems above, but no weapons guidance capability. [The Department of Defense notes that provision of this equipment, a true FLIR capability, would represent a threshold which, once crossed, could make it increasingly difficult to restrain additional Israeli research in developing the most advanced technology with weapons delivery guidance applications. Consequently, release should be accompanied by controls on physical security, conditions on operational use, and Israeli access to basic maintenance and production technology. The Department of State did not address the question of controls.] Available by 1978.

-- Advanced FLIR, still under development, will provide real-time imagery and weapons guidance capability. If it were released, the most stringent controls would have to be applied to ensure physical security and Israeli access to basic technology to prevent reverse engineering and potential Israeli production.

RECOMMENDATION:

Offer the Israelis a combination of: (a) two types of thermal-image line-scan systems for their RF-4 (reconnaissance) aircraft and for helicopters; (b) development of a near real-time cockpit display system for the RF-4; and (c) OR-89 FLIR sets for helicopters with appropriate controls on physical security, conditions of use and access to basic technology as determined by the Department of Defense. Do not offer the most advanced FLIR technology still in R and D.

APPROVE _____ OTHER _____

4. CBU 72/B (Fuel Air Explosive) (Israeli Request: 250):

FAEs are designed for demolishing structures, clearing minefields, clearing densely vegetated areas, etc. Our general policy on sales of all types of CBUs, FAE or otherwise, to Israel is to require Israeli acceptance of certain conditions on their use. The latest statement of these conditions was approved by the Secretary of State in June 1976 and is as follows:

-- These weapons will be used only if Israel is engaged in active general hostilities with the regular armed forces of one or more Arab states at a level of armed conflict on the scale experienced during June 1967 and October 1973. (Training within Israeli territory is exempted from this provision.)

-- These weapons will be used only against clearly defined military targets, and they will not be used against targets located in, or in close proximity to, civilian population centers.

-- These conditions are to be applied to all CBUs sold by the United States pursuant to the Approved List of equipment provided to the GOI in January 1976, as well as to those previously sold, those which may be sold in the future, and those which may be produced in Israel utilizing, directly or indirectly, US components or technology.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1. *Cyprus*
2. *Cyprus*
3. *Cyprus*
4. *Cyprus*

It is even more important that we apply conditions to CBU-72/B (and its predecessor, the CBU-55) because fuel-air explosives also have a particular anti-personnel character (they consume all available oxygen and are lethal in the blast area) and have been attacked internationally as an "inhumane weapon."

The CBU-72/B is an advanced FAE designed for delivery by high-performance aircraft. The initial weapons are beginning to enter the US inventory now. The CBU-55 is the current US standard model in the inventory. This model is designed for delivery by helicopters and slower aircraft. Production has stopped. Neither weapon has been sold to any other country. Delivery of CBU-72/B from normal production could begin in about mid-1978. The Department of Defense notes that CBU-55 could be made available from existing excess US stocks as soon as a Letter of Offer is signed.

RECOMMENDATION:

Offer Israel 250 CBU-72/B in accordance with their request, with delivery to be accomplished in about mid-1978 from normal production, not interfering with US requirements.

APPROVE _____ OTHER _____

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