

20 April 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: PRG Meeting on the Persian Gulf, 20 April 1988

1. The PRG assembled at 11:00 a.m. Wednesday to discuss developments in the Persian Gulf and US next moves to meet the continuing Iranian threats. Admiral Jonathan Howe briefed on recent events and noted particularly the discovery of more mines, about 12 since the USS Roberts was mined last week. He focused on options being considered by the JCS to raise the deterrent level of US forces in the Gulf and to increase their effectiveness, particularly against Iranian mine and missile threats. He also talked about options for increasing the effectiveness of the US escort program and modest changes in the US Rules of Engagement to allow greater assistance to tankers and merchant ships attacked by Iran.

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2. I briefed the group on Iranian actions in the Gulf, the implications of Iraq's recapture of the Al Faw peninsula from Iran, and likely Iranian reactions to that and the confrontation with the US. I noted that Iran had fired a Scud missile into a neutral zone oilfield near Kuwait, hitting nothing, and that Iranian gun boats attacked a UAE tanker. On the loss of Al Faw, I noted that [redacted] the Iranians have been pushed back across the Shatt al Arab, they may have suffered heavy losses of men and equipment, and probably are not in a position to counterattack. Iraq's victory may encourage it to order further attacks against weakened Iranian forces on the southern front. I pointed out that we believe Iran is more likely to seek revenge than becowed by its setbacks in the Persian Gulf and at Al Faw. For the near term the Iranians may not seek further confrontation with US forces,

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In sum, the Iranians have maintained an aggressive posture in the Gulf since the US escort program was announced nearly a year ago. We have seen nothing to suggest that they are prepared to change their attitude on that or the war with Iraq.

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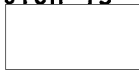
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Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

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