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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

OSD Review Completed

SECRET (GDS)

October 11, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GENERAL SCOWCROFT

MORI C05296592

FROM:

ROBERT B. OAKLEY
CLINTON E. GRANGER

SUBJECT:

Israeli Requests for Advanced
Technology Weaponry and Equipment

You requested a fuller explanation of the reasons behind the Department of Defense recommendation that we refuse the top-priority request of Israeli Minister of Defense Peres for three advanced items of military weaponry and equipment: Forward-looking Infra-red Radar (FLIR), cluster bomb CBU-84 (Gator), and cluster bomb CBU-55B/72 (fuel air explosive). These explanations are at Tab A.

All three items have been requested repeatedly by Israel through DOD channels [redacted] The Department of Defense has rejected all these requests, for the reasons set forth in the fact sheets at Tab A. There are three very strong arguments supporting the position of the Department of Defense:

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--If we release advanced technology items to Israel, we will be under the most extreme pressure to release it to others (e. g. our NATO allies) thereby decreasing further our technical advantage and increasing the chances of compromise.

--We are being asked to break a cardinal principle of not releasing weapons prior to their having been fully tested and become operational for United States forces, particularly with respect to the CBU-84.

--The CBU-55B/72 is a weapon with very strong emotional connotations and as such would create an uproar in the Arab world and elsewhere were we to give it to Israel, and especially were Israel to use it in a non-war situation (e. g. against targets in Lebanon).

Subject to GDS of E. O. 11652
Automatically Downgraded at
Two Year Intervals; Declassified
December 31, 1983.

SECRET (GDS)

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FACT SHEET

FLIR (Forward-Looking Infra-Red)

Essentially, this sensor greatly improves the ability of aircraft to fight at night. The Israelis want 25 sets for their F-4 aircraft and later 50 sets for use on attack helicopters to strike ground targets and low-flying helicopters at night. The U.S. is the world leader in FLIR technology.

DoD is unwilling to share the latest U.S. advances in FLIR development with foreign nations. We have, in fact, repeatedly rebuffed U.S. contractor requests to demonstrate FLIR equipment to some of our closest NATO allies. We possess an R&D and, more importantly, a competitive combat advantage in this area that we are unwilling to jeopardize through possible compromise of our advanced FLIR systems.

In addition to the problem of sharing such advanced military technology with other nations, there is the problem of giving Israel under present circumstances a greatly increased capability for night operations, particularly for air-to-ground strikes. Israel already conducts occasional operations of this nature against targets in Lebanon, and providing an increased capability could lead to more frequent strikes, as well as to more accurate ones, in Lebanon and possibly elsewhere. The United States would receive the credit (with Israel) and the blame (with the Arabs) for encouraging such operations - something

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FACT SHEET

FAE

The Israelis have repeatedly requested CBU-72 and CBU-55B munitions. Both CBUs are Fuel Air Explosives (FAEs). Basically, they create powerful overpressure on a target by dispersing a volatile aerosol prior to detonation. The technology involved is not especially sophisticated nor are there overriding security considerations that would preclude release. However, FAE munitions have not been sold to any foreign armed forces and they do represent a unique capability. DoD has characterized the introduction of CBU-55B/72 to the region as politically counterproductive and destabilizing. Further, though the charge may be technically fallacious, there is a popular tendency to link FAE munitions with chemical and/or inhumane weapons and it is my understanding that their trial employment during the war in Vietnam generated some controversy.

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FACT SHEET

GATOR

Known also as the CBU-84, this air-delivered cluster bomb unit which dispenses land mines is still under development. At present, it is estimated that the CBU-84 will enter the US Air Force inventory sometime in 1979. It is contrary to DoD policy to sell to foreign governments any military article prior to completion of its test and evaluation cycle and acceptance for use by US forces. Although there are no currently discernible grounds for denying eventual release of the CBU-84 to Israel, it is essential to defer a release decision until after the weapon becomes operational.

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