

September 17, 1973

Your Imperial Majesty,

The attached piece of paper is self-explanatory. It has no head or tail for elementary security reasons. Also it bears no top secret classification so as not to attract unusual attention. I am sending the paper to you by this means in an effort to conserve your time.

May I take this occasion to extend heartfelt good wishes for every possible success as you embark on the 33rd year of your extraordinary reign. May God preserve you in good health and guide your hand in the days to come.

Most respectfully,

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE: MAR 2008

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1. When last we discussed contingency planning on Saudi Arabia, you asked that I submit a set of possible options, situations which might conceivably eventuate. I have identified three in which some action from outside might improve the chances of keeping a favorably oriented government in power. These I outline below.

a. A military group seizes control of one or more radio stations and some other government installations, proclaims itself the republican government of Arabia and calls for recognition and military assistance from Iraq, PDRY and the Soviet Union.

b. A succession crisis follows King Faysal's death in which Princes Fahd and Sultan with the support of their "Sudayri" brothers and cousins control the army and air force, while the non-Sudayri Princes control the National Guard and contest the Sudayri domination of the government.

c. A partially successful coup by anti-royalist army elements is resisted by the royal family supported by elements of the National Guard and some loyal army elements, leading to civil war. Iraq, PDRY and the Soviet Union recognize the revolutionary

regime and commence sending it military aid.

2. In presenting the above options, I am not estimating that any of these contingencies is likely. In point of fact King Faysal's recent rapprochement with President Sadat has doubtless strengthened his position as against his radical Arab opponents. Rather I am following the suggestion of King Hussein when at Nowshahr he postulated the desirability of thinking in contingency terms simply because consultation among governments when a crisis does arise are usually too slow to bring about an effective result. Of course we all hope that none of these situations will develop since the extent of escalation which would inevitably follow possible countermeasures is difficult to predict and could be downright nasty. Certainly we must continue to pursue our joint efforts in Saudi Arabia designed to strengthen its stability and to enhance the prospects of an orderly succession to King Faysal when he passes from the scene.