



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2400
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OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

(2)



2 October 1996

SAUDI ARABIA

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Secretary Perry's Meeting with Saudi Arabian Ambassador (C)

(U) At his request, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador, HRH Prince Bandar bin Sultan, met with Secretary of Defense William J. Perry at the Pentagon for forty-five minutes on Wednesday, October 2. In addition to Dr. Perry, the U.S. side included: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Walter B. Slocombe; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Bruce O. Riedel^{(b)(6)}; Senior Military Assistant MG Randy House; and^{(b)(6)} (not taker). Deputy Secretary John P. White joined the group at mid-point. Prince Bandar was unaccompanied.

~~(C)~~ Bandar began the meeting by expressing his appreciation for the Secretary's being able to accommodate his sudden schedule changes. He had been called to meet with Chairman Arafat at 7:00 am and had been with him until just before arriving at the Pentagon at 1150. He had been forced to cancel his meeting with General Shalikashvili earlier in the day and several other important engagements.

~~(S)~~ The Ambassador conveyed Prince Sultan's best wishes and recalled Crown Prince Abdullah's request for his own meeting with the Secretary when he next visited the Kingdom. King Fahd considered his September 16 meeting with the Secretary in Jeddah the most important session since he met with President Clinton at Hafr al Batin (October 1994). As a result of Dr. Perry's meeting, at which all the senior princes were present, the U.S. should have no doubt that the Kingdom was squarely behind the President's policy in the region. The American presence was not forced on Saudi Arabia but had been requested. It is only the American presence that deters Saddam from further aggression. While there were occasional differences on implementing the policy, it was wrong to think that reluctance to take a squadron of F-16s was of any significance for a country that had welcomed 500,000 Americans in 1990. All elements of the Saudi national security structure were in agreement on this point.

~~(S)~~ Bandar said that he had conveyed this theme to the President, Tony Lake, and Sandy Berger. He also said that he had argued with DCI Deutch over his testimony that Saddam had emerged stronger politically from his recent activities in northern Iraq and the moderate U.S. military response. If you think that, Bandar said he told the DCI, you should go back and read the minutes of His Majesty's meeting with Secretary Perry.

(U) Bandar briefly noted the recent changes in the Saudi military leadership, saying that there were no policy implications involved. Humayd's and Hammad's retirement papers

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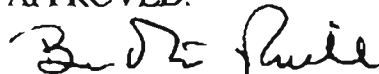
had been ready for over a year awaiting the King's assent. He thought that General Shali would enjoy working with his new counterpart as Chief of General Staff, Salih Al-Muhaya ("his only drawback is that he is an air defense officer, not a fighter pilot").

~~(S)~~ Turning to the Middle East Peace Process summit, Bandar described the situation as "very bad." Arafat was totally discouraged and wanted to leave, but was scared to return home. He was described as having "culture shock" in dealing with Netanyahu after Rabin and Peres. Bandar questioned whether Netanyahu understood the strategic situation in the region—if he does, does he care? The Israeli PM also seemed poorly informed about the details of recent events, according to Bandar. The Ambassador said that the only people "happy tonight" are Iran, Iraq, Hamas, and Hizballah. It was the regional friends and supporters of the Peace Process who were now in danger. Mubarak, he said, did not attend the summit, in part, to prevent his military from mobilizing to demonstrate resolve against Israel.

~~(S)~~ The Saudi Ambassador expressed concern about outbreaks of violence in the Middle East, including in Saudi Arabia, if the summit continued on its present course and produced no results. He said that he was recommending to his government that it go to a higher state of alert and suggest that the U.S. do likewise. Dr. Perry replied that we were already at the highest level in the Kingdom. Bandar noted that he found it scary when the opponent (Netanyahu) didn't seem to understand the risks of the game he was playing, but concluded on a note of optimism that he hoped that President Clinton would pull off a miracle over lunch today with Netanyahu and Arafat. The Secretary expressed his confidence that the President would certainly put his mind to the problem. DOD, the Secretary concluded, was only an observer in the process and hoped to keep it that way, with the our military on the sidelines of the Middle East conflict: "because of that, we care a lot."

~~(S)~~ At the close of the meeting, the Secretary told Prince Bandar that he planned to return to the Kingdom next month, perhaps over Thanksgiving. He wants to visit Prince Sultan Air Base "with Prince Sultan." Bandar noted that he understood that his father wants to host the Secretary at his farm nearby: "Having shown you his nomadic side, he now wants to demonstrate his pastoral nature," referring to Sultan's display of his camel herds two years ago. Bandar also told the Secretary that he would meet with other DoD officials shortly to discuss the "strategic petroleum reserve" matter, which Dr. Perry encouraged.

APPROVED:



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