

16 April 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Plans
SUBJECT : The [REDACTED] Libyan
Operation and F-5 Aircraft

1. The United States has contracted to deliver 8 F-5 aircraft; the commitment predates the September revolution. The matter of the U.S. Government honoring its agreement with Libya has assumed a political significance that obviously transcends the military value of the aircraft.

2. I hosted a lunch on 15 April for Ambassador David Newsom and Deputy Assistant Secretary Rodger P. Davies; the latter represented Joe Sisco. David Blee and Archie Roosevelt completed the Agency side of this meeting.

3. The purpose of the meeting was to expose State more fully to the thinking underlying the "Option 1-A" approved by [REDACTED] the President. Newsom consistently took the position that the USG was not really interested in Libya and that in official matters the White House did not appear to reflect any of the attitude inherent in both the [REDACTED] discussion, as he understood it, and the decision [REDACTED]. He cited the White House view on the problem of the 8 F-5 aircraft as evidence of this. Both Newsom and Davies appreciate that the decision on the F-5s was directly related to the French

*What does
mean*

Mirage deal with Libya, the agony over Phantoms for Israel, public attitudes on the Arab-Israel war and the Israeli pressures on the problem of Libyan arms. Nevertheless, both thought it might help save Libya if the USG could get around the problem of renegeing on its F-5 agreement.

4. Ambassador Palmer has come in with a proposal that is designed to gain time and avoid the risk of a crisis over a Libyan charge that the U.S. is not meeting an obligation. The cable is attached and is a concise statement of the problem.

5. I have had extensive indicators from the oil companies in the past ten days that they are now convinced that they should compromise and offer the Libyans a price adjustment. What they will offer is late and little but may just get them by their own crisis with the Libyans.

6. I think we are making some headway on our Option 1-A operation; it will take several months to measure progress more concretely. In the meantime, no bad news on Libya is good news [REDACTED]

7. If there is any opening which will permit the USG to slip around the F-5 question it would clearly be most helpful to the purposes of [REDACTED] U.S. policy objectives in Libya to do so. Since the White House has shown interest in the fate of Libya, would it not be appropriate for you to use an occasion to go over this one lightly with at least Dr. Kissinger? If the opportunity occurs and you share our view on this problem, I recommend that you register interest and concern on this with Kissinger. At a minimum our colleagues in State would be appreciative of your intervention. However, all of us expect that if the F-5s are sold as agreed, there would be almost insurmountable pressures to sell Phantoms to Israel. If the government is not prepared to resist these pressures, it would be better not to go through with the F-5 agreement.

Attachment *mc*

James H. Critchfield
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CONCUR:

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