

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 5, 1984

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National Security  
Decision Directive 139

MEASURES TO IMPROVE U.S. POSTURE AND READINESS  
TO RESPOND TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR (TS)

In light of recent developments in the Iran-Iraq War and the threat which an escalation of that conflict or a terrorist campaign could pose for the vital interests of the U.S. and its Allies, measures must be taken now to improve our immediate ability to deter an expansion of the conflict in the Persian Gulf and, if necessary, defend U.S. interests. Drawing upon the interagency work recently completed and the recent tour of the region by the Special Envoy for the Middle East, the following actions are approved: (TS)

- In recognition of the leading role of Saudi Arabia in the Gulf Coordination Council (GCC), and King Fahd's response to Ambassador Rumsfeld's presentation, a letter will be prepared and transmitted to King Fahd confirming his agreement, in principle, to undertake the consultations and advance planning necessary to permit contingent access for U.S. forces which may be deployed to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. (TS)
- A political-military mission will be dispatched to undertake consultations with the key Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Bahrein. This mission will build upon earlier consultations in the Gulf region. The purpose of this mission will be to review possible escalation scenarios and the associated warning indicators and obtain agreement for contingent access to Gulf facilities on warning of likely escalation. Agreement will be sought on the need for advance planning and arrangements required to support the timely movement and effective operation of U.S. forces. (TS)
- The Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense will undertake to continue improving our intelligence collection posture in the region. Pending agreement on contingent access to facilities in the Gulf

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1 of 6

states, the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is requested to submit specific recommendations on measures to enhance deterrence and reduce the vulnerabilities of U.S. personnel and facilities in the Gulf region and cooperative measures with regional states to improve the defensibility of area facilities. Recommendations should also be submitted on measures which would enhance our near-term readiness to respond to sudden attacks on U.S. interests in the region in a timely, effective, and forceful manner. The forward deployment of additional sea-based forces in the near-term should be weighed against the possibility of deploying land-based forces, specifically tactical air forces, closer to the objective area. With regard to the latter, the possible use of Diego Garcia and facilities in Egypt and Sudan should be explored as a matter of urgency. (TS)

- In the recognition of the growing threat of Iranian-sponsored terrorism, the Secretary of Defense will direct the enhancement of the anti-terrorist posture of U.S. military activities and facilities in the Persian Gulf region, especially in Bahrein and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. In addition, the Director of Central Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense should examine additional counter-terrorist measures and training we can undertake with regional states. (TS)
- To obtain complementary actions and support for U.S. efforts to enhance the security of Western interests in the Gulf region, the Secretaries of State and Defense will continue close consultations with appropriate Allied officials, especially the UK and France. (TS)
- The Secretary of State, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, will prepare a plan of action designed to avert an Iraqi collapse. The plan of action should include:
  - An evaluation of Iraqi military needs and measures which could be taken to facilitate indirect security assistance (e.g., from Egypt) and to provide enhanced intelligence analysis and advice, which will bolster Iraqi defenses. (TS)
  - Approaches to friendly states (e.g., France and Jordan) capable of providing overt and covert military support to Iraq. (TS)

-- The Secretary of State will ensure that the policy of the United States Government condemning the use of chemical warfare (CW) munitions in the Iran-Iraq war is unambiguous and consistent with the 1925 Geneva protocol. Our condemnation of the use of CW munitions by the belligerents should place equal stress on the urgent need to dissuade Iran from continuing the ruthless and inhumane tactics which have characterized recent offensives. (TS)

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