

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Culvahouse, Arthur B.: Files
Folder Title: Iran/Arms Transaction: Constantine
Menges
Box: CFOA 1129

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name

CULVAHOUSE, ARTHUR B.:FILES

File Folder

IRAN/ARMS TRANSACTION: CONSTANTINE MENGES

Box Number

CFOA 1129

Drawer

DLB

Withdrawal Date

2/18/2014

FOIA

S643

Systematic

SYSTEMATIC

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
164213	PAPER	ADDENDUM TO MEMO RE: MENGES	1	ND	B1
164214	PAPER	DUPLICATE OF #164213	1	ND	B1

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
 - B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
 - B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
 - B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
 - B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
 - B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
 - B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
 - B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

402/5/4
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

(Dictated on 4/22/87)

Unclassified with
TOP SECRET Attachment

May 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

FROM: PETER D. KEISLER *FDK*
SUBJECT: Interview with Constantine Menges

On April 21, 1987, Constantine Menges was interviewed by Ken Buck (House Select Committee), Bud Hall (House Select Committee), Mark Belnick (Senate Select Committee), and Victoria Nourse (Senate Select Committee). The interview began at 3:20 p.m. and ended at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Menges said that he worked at the NSC from October 1983 through July of 1986. He said that from October 1983 to July of 1985, he served as a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and as Senior Director for Latin American Affairs. Menges said that from July 1985 through July 1986, he served as Director for International Communications and Information, with responsibility for public diplomacy. Menges said that during that time he remained a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Menges was asked why his responsibilities were changed. Menges said that McFarlane had told him that he had done an outstanding job on Latin American affairs, that the situation in Latin America was now under control, that the President and McFarlane felt that the area of public diplomacy was one in which we had not yet done enough, and that therefore they wanted him to assume that responsibility. Menges was asked whether he believed that that was the real reason for the reassignment. Menges said that he did not. Menges said that he believes that the real reason for the reassignment was that he had insisted that the President be informed on various matters, and that this made McFarlane "very uncomfortable."

Menges was shown a letter that he had written to the President dated August 6, 1985. In that letter, Menges had written that (1) the State Department was undermining the President's policies, (2) the NSC process was not being appropriately used to see that the President's policies were implemented, and (3) we needed and did not have a strategy on counter-terrorism. Menges said that he had given this letter to other individuals and asked

that they give it to the President, and did not know whether the President has, in fact, ever seen it. Menges refused to identify to the Committee staffers the persons to whom he had given the letter. Menges said that he wrote the letter because he felt that the President was not being properly served. Menges said that the State Department was taking unilateral action, the NSC process was not working, and he felt that these were things the President needed to know.

Menges had stated in his letter that the President's policies had been faithfully implemented by Secretary Weinberger, among others. Menges was asked whether he had had any contact with Weinberger that had exposed him to Weinberger's views. Menges said that he saw Secretary Weinberger at NSC meetings, and sometimes would see him at social events, or "semi-official events." Menges said he saw William Casey at NSC meetings and at other occasions. Menges said that Casey had brought him into the Administration, and that he had worked at the CIA as the National Intelligence Officer for Central America from September 1981 through October 1983.

Menges said that the President's policy on Central America consisted of four elements: encouraging democracy, improving living conditions, diplomacy, and opposition to the violent right and the violent left. Menges said that the difference between the President's approach and the State Department's approach related to different definitions of what would constitute an acceptable political settlement in Central America. Menges said that the President had taken the position that the only acceptable political settlement would involve Nicaragua's becoming a true democracy, the end of Nicaragua's armed aggression against its neighbors, the removal of Soviet bloc operatives from Nicaragua, and the reduction of the Nicaraguan military forces to a size comparable to those of its neighbors. Menges said that the State Department had paid lip service to this position, but that it had acted so as to move towards a political settlement which would have left the Communist government in place and dismantled the armed resistance forces. Menges said that this is what happened in the spring of 1986 with respect to Philip Habib.

Menges was asked whether there had been any policy on how to keep the Contras viable during the period in which the broadest congressional restrictions on Contra aid were in force. Menges said that there had been no systematic planning, because the Contras were North's account. Menges said, somewhat sarcastically, that if North were involved, there did not need to be any planning. Menges was asked "How did that happen -- that one person got the account and there was no planning?" Menges said that the answer could be given "in two words: McFarlane and Poindexter." Menges said that there were two sets of rules -- "one for 99% of us," requiring strict accountability, forbidding people to talk to journalists without permission, and so on, and another set of rules for North.

Menges said that he knew nothing about the weapon sales or the arms shipments. Menges said that if he had known about those things, he would have been more active in registering his concerns about North. Menges said that there were people who talked with McFarlane and Poindexter regarding their concerns about North. Menges said that Jacqueline Tillman, after working with North for three weeks, came to Menges and said that North was delusional, a liar, and dangerous to the NSC and the country. Menges said that he told Tillman that North "does lie a bit," and was "a little sophomoric," but otherwise downplayed her concerns. Menges said that in December of 1984, he had come to the conclusion that he should not tell North about a specific operational idea he had had, because North might go off and implement the idea outside of proper channels. Menges said that in that case he took great care to ensure that North would not hear about it.

Menges was asked why North was allowed so much latitude. Menges said "You've all been in situations where someone is systematically deceptive of the people higher up." Menges said that "even those of us who saw what was going on" would not have imagined that North would have gone as far as he did. Menges said that North was dedicated and loyal, and Menges had not thought that North would "go beyond a certain point." Menges said that there were also intangible factors -- McFarlane and North were both Marines, Poindexter was a naval officer, the secretaries were related, etc. Menges said that North was familiar with the military mores, and therefore could function well in that environment. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter found it convenient to go along with North because North was always action-oriented, and always seemed to "have things together."

Menges said that when he was reassigned, the President had been told that he had been promoted. Menges said that this was another example of McFarlane and Poindexter "deliberately deceiving the President." Menges said that they should have fired him if that was what they wished, but that they could not do so because there would have been protests from members of Congress.

Menges said that it was because of McFarlane's and Poindexter's willingness to deceive the President that he wrote the August 6, 1985 letter. Menges said that he would have been willing to give that letter to McFarlane and Poindexter and be fired for it, instead of trying to transmit it to the President outside of the normal channels, had he felt that either of them would have had the "honor" to give the letter to the President.

Menges said that in preparing memos for the President, he would indicate what prior decisions the President had made on various relevant issues. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter would take that material out -- "it's ancient history" -- and would do so because the President, if he saw that material, would ask them why he was being asked to revisit old decisions. Menges said that "the answer would have been George Shultz."

Menges was asked whether North was theoretically supposed to be reporting to him. Menges said that North was not supposed to be reporting to him, and was in a separate directorate for Political-Military Affairs. Menges said that he thought that this was a problem, "because you had all these colonels there" in conflict with the regional experts. Menges said that you could define the jurisdiction of that directorate quite broadly. Menges was asked how the two directorates -- his and North's -- coordinated their work with each other. Menges said that his directorate was responsible for doing the regular NSC work on Latin America. Menges said that this involved making sure that the President made key decisions, that his decisions were followed throughout the government, that the policy was properly coordinated, that new concerns and threats were called to the President's attention, and that the President's policies were properly communicated. Menges said that the regional directorates were responsible for overall foreign policy strategy. Menges said that the political-military unit was originally supposed to consist of technically-oriented people who dealt with one issue -- military assistance. Menges was asked, "In your view, what was left for Political-Military Affairs to do on Central America once Boland II came into effect?" Menges said that he did not know. Menges said that he felt that the job of the NSC at that point was to persuade Congress to change its mind, and Menges said that he had worked hard on that. Menges said that he did not know what North was doing with respect to the Contras during this time. Menges said that North was the one who saw the Contra leaders when they were in town, or if the President was to meet with them. Menges said that North was the liaison to the Contras in the field. Menges said that North also contributed to the legislative strategy, but that North would often conduct his own private legislative strategy operation.

Menges said that he had not known that North was involved in coordinating the private resupply efforts. Menges said that he had read such allegations in the newspapers in September 1985. Menges said that he had known that "somebody on this globe" was helping the Contras, but he had not known that North was involved with facilitating this assistance. Menges said that he was not involved in responding to inquiries from Congressmen concerning what assistance was being provided.

Menges said that he did not know anything about the support given the Contras by other countries. Menges noted that he "didn't inquire." Menges said that he believed in compartmentalization.

Menges said he attended some of the RIG meetings on Latin America. Menges said that Thomas Enders, and then Langhorne Motley, would often exclude those who disagreed with them, and that often meant him. Menges said that he had protested to McFarlane several times that RIG meetings were being canceled.

Menges said that he has never attended a RIG meeting chaired by Elliott Abrams. Menges said that he remembers that the day after

his "promotion," he and his wife were at a ceremonial occasion on the White House South Lawn that Abrams attended as well. Menges said that he went up to Abrams and told Abrams that he was sorry that the two of them would not get to work together, and offered to be helpful if Abrams needed assistance of any sort. Menges said that he told Abrams at that time that North was a "person of real ability," but that North consistently misstated the facts, and that North's style was to "force you into action, box you in." Menges said that if North ever came to Abrams and said that there was "some intercept," or that "people will die" if some step were not taken, Abrams should not take any action until he had checked out the facts. Menges said that he told Abrams that if Abrams needed help, he should give him a call. Menges said that after that conversation, his wife said to him "Constantine, he did not understand what you said, and he will not call you." Menges said that he nevertheless felt that he had done his duty in having that conversation with Abrams.

Menges said that the RIG was the policy-making body on Central America. Menges said that the general decision-making process was that the State Department would chair a subcabinet group, either an IG or a RIG. Menges said that the intention had been that RIG meetings would occur regularly, and members would have the opportunity to discuss the general situation in the area. Menges said that minutes were sometimes kept, but that it was very episodic. Menges said that in the area of Latin America, under Enders and then Motley, the RIG was a "highly manipulated process," involving "typical bureaucratic politics." Menges said that they would deliberately schedule RIG meetings for times when he was going to be out of town.

Menges was asked why they were so worried about Constantine Menges. Menges said that the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency tended to agree with him, so if he came it would be three to one against the State Department. Menges said that he knew Weinberger, Casey, Ikle, and other cabinet members, and that the less Menges knew, the less trouble the Assistant Secretary would have. Menges was asked "But didn't Defense and the CIA attend these meetings too?" Menges said that they did, but that the State Department chair would often designate who from these agencies would attend. Menges said that from the perspective of the State Department, Nestor Sanchez was preferable to Fred Ikle because Sanchez would just "go along."

Menges said that he has never met Richard Armitage.

Menges said that Dewey Clarridge would sometimes attend the RIGs on behalf of the CIA. Menges said that Clarridge was not generally on the same side of these issues as he was. Menges said that "an inner club" formed, so that either RIGs would not be held, or they would be pro forma meetings and the real meeting would be a private meeting in somebody's office. Menges said that a lot of work was done by the State Department to co-opt Clarridge, taking advantage of his "lack of international

political judgment." Menges said that Clarridge would not understand that certain actions might look tough but be counter-productive, and in exchange for those actions would then agree to go along with an unacceptable political settlement.

Menges was asked to describe the conversation he had with McFarlane when he was reassigned. Menges said that he had come to the meeting with McFarlane expecting to be fired, because the other two senior "Reagan people" -- Lehman and Robinson -- had already been removed. Menges said that the essence of his conversation with McFarlane was that McFarlane was very positive about the superb quality of his work, and said that things were currently going well in Central America and that the area was therefore now beneath his abilities. Menges said that McFarlane told him that "the President and I" believed that it was important to do more on public diplomacy, and that "we" would like him to take on the new assignment. Menges said that McFarlane told him that he would appear on talk shows and write articles. Menges said that he told McFarlane that he thought that until Nicaragua became democratic, there would be a lot of work remaining to be done on Central America. Menges said that he suggested that he devote two-thirds of his time to Latin America and one-third of his time to public diplomacy. Menges said that McFarlane then laughed and said that that would be unfair to Menges. McFarlane then said that he had a meeting to go to, that the President and he had made this decision, and that Menges should let him know in a couple of days what he wanted to do.

Menges said that at that time he believed that the President had had no part in this decision. Menges said that he later learned that the President had in fact believed what McFarlane had told Menges -- that Menges was being moved up. "So I had evidence that the President was misled."

Menges was asked: "It seems that North would have to account to somebody, which assumes knowledge on the part of his superiors. Do you believe that McFarlane and Poindexter were aware that profits from the arms sales were going to the Contras?" Menges responded: "Based on the publicly available information, and my knowledge of the environment, my sense is yes, that Poindexter was aware of the diversion of the funds to the Contras. That's my guess, my speculation." Menges said that he would guess that McFarlane knew as well. Menges said that he believed that McFarlane found out in the spring of 1986.

Menges said that the Tower Report and the PROF notes it reproduced clearly showed North's "pattern of action." Menges said that North did in writing "what he did verbally with the rest of us." Menges said that, for example, when North said in a PROF note that Elliott Abrams had told him that he could call the President of Costa Rica, his (Menges') speculation was that Elliott Abrams never knew about it, that Elliott Abrams never gave permission, and that North never made the call.

[Menges was then shown a classified PROF note. The discussion concerning that PROF note is summarized in an addendum to this memorandum.]

Menges was asked again why he did not seek to transmit his August 1985 letter to the President through proper channels. Menges responded that he was convinced that McFarlane and Poindexter would never have passed the document on to the President. Menges said that he felt that as a citizen and as a Special Assistant to the President, he had a right to send a letter to the President. Menges was asked why he believed that McFarlane and Poindexter would not have communicated his letter to the President. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter were "constantly failing to tell the President" about major matters.

Menges described an incident in which he was successful in having an NSC meeting called to discuss a new State Department four-point plan on Nicaragua. Menges said that he was able to get this meeting scheduled only because McFarlane and Poindexter were angry about having been lied to by Shultz and Motley. Menges said that when representatives of the State Department had come to the NSC to discuss their four point-plan, one day before a special envoy was set to leave for Central America, they described step one only. Menges said that step one was "outrageous: 300 out of 10,000 Cubans would leave without any verification." Menges said that he asked them for the remaining three points of the plan, and they responded that they did not yet have them ready. Menges said that Poindexter had been present at that meeting, and Menges was able later that day to show Poindexter a copy of a memo from George Shultz which listed all four points of the four-point plan, and he was therefore able to tell Poindexter that Poindexter had been lied to. Menges said that that was what led to the calling of the NSC meeting, but that it should not have taken something like that. Menges said that "if one is serving the President, and not George Shultz," the President should run foreign policy and there should be frequent NSC meetings.

Menges said that in December of 1983, McFarlane was "still behaving as an NSC adviser." Menges described an incident in which Motley and Ambassador Richard Stone were flying to the inauguration of the new President of Argentina, and sat together on the airplane to Buenos Aires for ten hours. Menges said Stone was scheduled to meet with Latin American leaders, and the next day Stone found out from one Latin American President that Daniel Ortega was "chortling" because Ortega was having a secret meeting with Motley, on a separate track, and had been told by Motley that the meetings that were going on with Ambassador Stone were "bullshit." Menges said that Motley had not told Stone about this on the plane. Menges said that he complained to McFarlane, who complained to the State Department, and the State Department indicated that this was unauthorized. Menges said that he then had a telegram sent to Motley directing Motley to follow the

President's instructions and submit a written report on the trip upon his return.

Menges said that McFarlane's behavior during this incident contrasted with his later actions. Menges said that once the State Department "stabbed Stone in the back in 1984" McFarlane began to "waver," and "became Shultz's adviser, instead of the President's." Menges said that McFarlane would not be willing to "take Shultz on." Menges said that Shultz would often bypass the NSC process and meet privately along with McFarlane with the President, have a casual conversation with the President, and get authorization for what he wished to do. Menges said that the same thing was done on the Iran matter, and that in that case Shultz's habit of using informal meetings to get Presidential decisions was used against him.

cc: Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Jay B. Stephens
William B. Lytton III
C. Dean McGrath
Alan C. Raul
Paul Schott Stevens
Paul L. Colby

WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name
CULVAHOUSE, ARTHUR B.:FILES

Withdrawer
DLB 2/18/2014

File Folder
IRAN/ARMS TRANSACTION: CONSTANTINE MENGES

FOIA
S643
SYSTEMATIC

Box Number
CFOA 1129

22

ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
164213	PAPER ADDENDUM TO MEMO RE: MENGES	1	ND	B1

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing
Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

2/18/14
UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

(Dictated on 4/22/87)

Unclassified with
TOP SECRET Attachment

May 5, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

FROM: PETER D. KEISLER
SUBJECT: Interview with Constantine Menges

On April 21, 1987, Constantine Menges was interviewed by Ken Buck (House Select Committee), Bud Hall (House Select Committee), Mark Belnick (Senate Select Committee), and Victoria Nourse (Senate Select Committee). The interview began at 3:20 p.m. and ended at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Menges said that he worked at the NSC from October 1983 through July of 1986. He said that from October 1983 to July of 1985, he served as a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and as Senior Director for Latin American Affairs. Menges said that from July 1985 through July 1986, he served as Director for International Communications and Information, with responsibility for public diplomacy. Menges said that during that time he remained a Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

Menges was asked why his responsibilities were changed. Menges said that McFarlane had told him that he had done an outstanding job on Latin American affairs, that the situation in Latin America was now under control, that the President and McFarlane felt that the area of public diplomacy was one in which we had not yet done enough, and that therefore they wanted him to assume that responsibility. Menges was asked whether he believed that that was the real reason for the reassignment. Menges said that he did not. Menges said that he believes that the real reason for the reassignment was that he had insisted that the President be informed on various matters, and that this made McFarlane "very uncomfortable."

Menges was shown a letter that he had written to the President dated August 6, 1985. In that letter, Menges had written that (1) the State Department was undermining the President's policies, (2) the NSC process was not being appropriately used to see that the President's policies were implemented, and (3) we needed and did not have a strategy on counter-terrorism. Menges said that he had given this letter to other individuals and asked

that they give it to the President, and did not know whether the President has, in fact, ever seen it. Menges refused to identify to the Committee staffers the persons to whom he had given the letter. Menges said that he wrote the letter because he felt that the President was not being properly served. Menges said that the State Department was taking unilateral action, the NSC process was not working, and he felt that these were things the President needed to know.

Menges had stated in his letter that the President's policies had been faithfully implemented by Secretary Weinberger, among others. Menges was asked whether he had had any contact with Weinberger that had exposed him to Weinberger's views. Menges said that he saw Secretary Weinberger at NSC meetings, and sometimes would see him at social events, or "semi-official events." Menges said he saw William Casey at NSC meetings and at other occasions. Menges said that Casey had brought him into the Administration, and that he had worked at the CIA as the National Intelligence Officer for Central America from September 1981 through October 1983.

Menges said that the President's policy on Central America consisted of four elements: encouraging democracy, improving living conditions, diplomacy, and opposition to the violent right and the violent left. Menges said that the difference between the President's approach and the State Department's approach related to different definitions of what would constitute an acceptable political settlement in Central America. Menges said that the President had taken the position that the only acceptable political settlement would involve Nicaragua's becoming a true democracy, the end of Nicaragua's armed aggression against its neighbors, the removal of Soviet bloc operatives from Nicaragua, and the reduction of the Nicaraguan military forces to a size comparable to those of its neighbors. Menges said that the State Department had paid lip service to this position, but that it had acted so as to move towards a political settlement which would have left the Communist government in place and dismantled the armed resistance forces. Menges said that this is what happened in the spring of 1986 with respect to Philip Habib.

Menges was asked whether there had been any policy on how to keep the Contras viable during the period in which the broadest congressional restrictions on Contra aid were in force. Menges said that there had been no systematic planning, because the Contras were North's account. Menges said, somewhat sarcastically, that if North were involved, there did not need to be any planning. Menges was asked "How did that happen -- that one person got the account and there was no planning?" Menges said that the answer could be given "in two words: McFarlane and Poindexter." Menges said that there were two sets of rules -- "one for 99% of us," requiring strict accountability, forbidding people to talk to journalists without permission, and so on, and another set of rules for North.

Menges said that he knew nothing about the weapon sales or the arms shipments. Menges said that if he had known about those things, he would have been more active in registering his concerns about North. Menges said that there were people who talked with McFarlane and Poindexter regarding their concerns about North. Menges said that Jacqueline Tillman, after working with North for three weeks, came to Menges and said that North was delusional, a liar, and dangerous to the NSC and the country. Menges said that he told Tillman that North "does lie a bit," and was "a little sophomoric," but otherwise downplayed her concerns. Menges said that in December of 1984, he had come to the conclusion that he should not tell North about a specific operational idea he had had, because North might go off and implement the idea outside of proper channels. Menges said that in that case he took great care to ensure that North would not hear about it.

Menges was asked why North was allowed so much latitude. Menges said "You've all been in situations where someone is systematically deceptive of the people higher up." Menges said that "even those of us who saw what was going on" would not have imagined that North would have gone as far as he did. Menges said that North was dedicated and loyal, and Menges had not thought that North would "go beyond a certain point." Menges said that there were also intangible factors -- McFarlane and North were both Marines, Poindexter was a naval officer, the secretaries were related, etc. Menges said that North was familiar with the military mores, and therefore could function well in that environment. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter found it convenient to go along with North because North was always action-oriented, and always seemed to "have things together."

Menges said that when he was reassigned, the President had been told that he had been promoted. Menges said that this was another example of McFarlane and Poindexter "deliberately deceiving the President." Menges said that they should have fired him if that was what they wished, but that they could not do so because there would have been protests from members of Congress.

Menges said that it was because of McFarlane's and Poindexter's willingness to deceive the President that he wrote the August 6, 1985 letter. Menges said that he would have been willing to give that letter to McFarlane and Poindexter and be fired for it, instead of trying to transmit it to the President outside of the normal channels, had he felt that either of them would have had the "honor" to give the letter to the President.

Menges said that in preparing memos for the President, he would indicate what prior decisions the President had made on various relevant issues. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter would take that material out -- "it's ancient history" -- and would do so because the President, if he saw that material, would ask them why he was being asked to revisit old decisions. Menges said that "the answer would have been George Shultz."

Menges was asked whether North was theoretically supposed to be reporting to him. Menges said that North was not supposed to be reporting to him, and was in a separate directorate for Political-Military Affairs. Menges said that he thought that this was a problem, "because you had all these colonels there" in conflict with the regional experts. Menges said that you could define the jurisdiction of that directorate quite broadly. Menges was asked how the two directorates -- his and North's -- coordinated their work with each other. Menges said that his directorate was responsible for doing the regular NSC work on Latin America. Menges said that this involved making sure that the President made key decisions, that his decisions were followed throughout the government, that the policy was properly coordinated, that new concerns and threats were called to the President's attention, and that the President's policies were properly communicated. Menges said that the regional directorates were responsible for overall foreign policy strategy. Menges said that the political-military unit was originally supposed to consist of technically-oriented people who dealt with one issue -- military assistance. Menges was asked, "In your view, what was left for Political-Military Affairs to do on Central America once Boland II came into effect?" Menges said that he did not know. Menges said that he felt that the job of the NSC at that point was to persuade Congress to change its mind, and Menges said that he had worked hard on that. Menges said that he did not know what North was doing with respect to the Contras during this time. Menges said that North was the one who saw the Contra leaders when they were in town, or if the President was to meet with them. Menges said that North was the liaison to the Contras in the field. Menges said that North also contributed to the legislative strategy, but that North would often conduct his own private legislative strategy operation.

Menges said that he had not known that North was involved in coordinating the private resupply efforts. Menges said that he had read such allegations in the newspapers in September 1985. Menges said that he had known that "somebody on this globe" was helping the Contras, but he had not known that North was involved with facilitating this assistance. Menges said that he was not involved in responding to inquiries from Congressmen concerning what assistance was being provided.

Menges said that he did not know anything about the support given the Contras by other countries. Menges noted that he "didn't inquire." Menges said that he believed in compartmentalization.

Menges said he attended some of the RIG meetings on Latin America. Menges said that Thomas Enders, and then Langhorne Motley, would often exclude those who disagreed with them, and that often meant him. Menges said that he had protested to McFarlane several times that RIG meetings were being canceled.

Menges said that he has never attended a RIG meeting chaired by Elliott Abrams. Menges said that he remembers that the day after

his "promotion," he and his wife were at a ceremonial occasion on the White House South Lawn that Abrams attended as well. Menges said that he went up to Abrams and told Abrams that he was sorry that the two of them would not get to work together, and offered to be helpful if Abrams needed assistance of any sort. Menges said that he told Abrams at that time that North was a "person of real ability," but that North consistently misstated the facts, and that North's style was to "force you into action, box you in." Menges said that if North ever came to Abrams and said that there was "some intercept," or that "people will die" if some step were not taken, Abrams should not take any action until he had checked out the facts. Menges said that he told Abrams that if Abrams needed help, he should give him a call. Menges said that after that conversation, his wife said to him "Constantine, he did not understand what you said, and he will not call you." Menges said that he nevertheless felt that he had done his duty in having that conversation with Abrams.

Menges said that the RIG was the policy-making body on Central America. Menges said that the general decision-making process was that the State Department would chair a subcabinet group, either an IG or a RIG. Menges said that the intention had been that RIG meetings would occur regularly, and members would have the opportunity to discuss the general situation in the area. Menges said that minutes were sometimes kept, but that it was very episodic. Menges said that in the area of Latin America, under Enders and then Motley, the RIG was a "highly manipulated process," involving "typical bureaucratic politics." Menges said that they would deliberately schedule RIG meetings for times when he was going to be out of town.

Menges was asked why they were so worried about Constantine Menges. Menges said that the Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency tended to agree with him, so if he came it would be three to one against the State Department. Menges said that he knew Weinberger, Casey, Ikle, and other cabinet members, and that the less Menges knew, the less trouble the Assistant Secretary would have. Menges was asked "But didn't Defense and the CIA attend these meetings too?" Menges said that they did, but that the State Department chair would often designate who from these agencies would attend. Menges said that from the perspective of the State Department, Nestor Sanchez was preferable to Fred Ikle because Sanchez would just "go along."

Menges said that he has never met Richard Armitage.

Menges said that Dewey Clarridge would sometimes attend the RIGs on behalf of the CIA. Menges said that Clarridge was not generally on the same side of these issues as he was. Menges said that "an inner club" formed, so that either RIGs would not be held, or they would be pro forma meetings and the real meeting would be a private meeting in somebody's office. Menges said that a lot of work was done by the State Department to co-opt Clarridge, taking advantage of his "lack of international

political judgment." Menges said that Clarridge would not understand that certain actions might look tough but be counter-productive, and in exchange for those actions would then agree to go along with an unacceptable political settlement.

Menges was asked to describe the conversation he had with McFarlane when he was reassigned. Menges said that he had come to the meeting with McFarlane expecting to be fired, because the other two senior "Reagan people" -- Lehman and Robinson -- had already been removed. Menges said that the essence of his conversation with McFarlane was that McFarlane was very positive about the superb quality of his work, and said that things were currently going well in Central America and that the area was therefore now beneath his abilities. Menges said that McFarlane told him that "the President and I" believed that it was important to do more on public diplomacy, and that "we" would like him to take on the new assignment. Menges said that McFarlane told him that he would appear on talk shows and write articles. Menges said that he told McFarlane that he thought that until Nicaragua became democratic, there would be a lot of work remaining to be done on Central America. Menges said that he suggested that he devote two-thirds of his time to Latin America and one-third of his time to public diplomacy. Menges said that McFarlane then laughed and said that that would be unfair to Menges. McFarlane then said that he had a meeting to go to, that the President and he had made this decision, and that Menges should let him know in a couple of days what he wanted to do.

Menges said that at that time he believed that the President had had no part in this decision. Menges said that he later learned that the President had in fact believed what McFarlane had told Menges -- that Menges was being moved up. "So I had evidence that the President was misled."

Menges was asked: "It seems that North would have to account to somebody, which assumes knowledge on the part of his superiors. Do you believe that McFarlane and Poindexter were aware that profits from the arms sales were going to the Contras?" Menges responded: "Based on the publicly available information, and my knowledge of the environment, my sense is yes, that Poindexter was aware of the diversion of the funds to the Contras. That's my guess, my speculation." Menges said that he would guess that McFarlane knew as well. Menges said that he believed that McFarlane found out in the spring of 1986.

Menges said that the Tower Report and the PROF notes it reproduced clearly showed North's "pattern of action." Menges said that North did in writing "what he did verbally with the rest of us." Menges said that, for example, when North said in a PROF note that Elliott Abrams had told him that he could call the President of Costa Rica, his (Menges') speculation was that Elliott Abrams never knew about it, that Elliott Abrams never gave permission, and that North never made the call.

[Menges was then shown a classified PROF note. The discussion concerning that PROF note is summarized in an addendum to this memorandum.]

Menges was asked again why he did not seek to transmit his August 1985 letter to the President through proper channels. Menges responded that he was convinced that McFarlane and Poindexter would never have passed the document on to the President. Menges said that he felt that as a citizen and as a Special Assistant to the President, he had a right to send a letter to the President. Menges was asked why he believed that McFarlane and Poindexter would not have communicated his letter to the President. Menges said that McFarlane and Poindexter were "constantly failing to tell the President" about major matters.

Menges described an incident in which he was successful in having an NSC meeting called to discuss a new State Department four-point plan on Nicaragua. Menges said that he was able to get this meeting scheduled only because McFarlane and Poindexter were angry about having been lied to by Shultz and Motley. Menges said that when representatives of the State Department had come to the NSC to discuss their four point-plan, one day before a special envoy was set to leave for Central America, they described step one only. Menges said that step one was "outrageous: 300 out of 10,000 Cubans would leave without any verification." Menges said that he asked them for the remaining three points of the plan, and they responded that they did not yet have them ready. Menges said that Poindexter had been present at that meeting, and Menges was able later that day to show Poindexter a copy of a memo from George Shultz which listed all four points of the four-point plan, and he was therefore able to tell Poindexter that Poindexter had been lied to. Menges said that that was what led to the calling of the NSC meeting, but that it should not have taken something like that. Menges said that "if one is serving the President, and not George Shultz," the President should run foreign policy and there should be frequent NSC meetings.

Menges said that in December of 1983, McFarlane was "still behaving as an NSC adviser." Menges described an incident in which Motley and Ambassador Richard Stone were flying to the inauguration of the new President of Argentina, and sat together on the airplane to Buenos Aires for ten hours. Menges said Stone was scheduled to meet with Latin American leaders, and the next day Stone found out from one Latin American President that Daniel Ortega was "chortling" because Ortega was having a secret meeting with Motley, on a separate track, and had been told by Motley that the meetings that were going on with Ambassador Stone were "bullshit." Menges said that Motley had not told Stone about this on the plane. Menges said that he complained to McFarlane, who complained to the State Department, and the State Department indicated that this was unauthorized. Menges said that he then had a telegram sent to Motley directing Motley to follow the

President's instructions and submit a written report on the trip upon his return.

Menges said that McFarlane's behavior during this incident contrasted with his later actions. Menges said that once the State Department "stabbed Stone in the back in 1984" McFarlane began to "waver," and "became Shultz's adviser, instead of the President's." Menges said that McFarlane would not be willing to "take Shultz on." Menges said that Shultz would often bypass the NSC process and meet privately along with McFarlane with the President, have a casual conversation with the President, and get authorization for what he wished to do. Menges said that the same thing was done on the Iran matter, and that in that case Shultz's habit of using informal meetings to get Presidential decisions was used against him.

cc: Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.✓
Jay B. Stephens
William B. Lytton III
C. Dean McGrath
Alan C. Raul
Paul Schott Stevens
Paul L. Colby

WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name
CULVAHOUSE, ARTHUR B.:FILES

Withdrawer
DLB 2/18/2014

File Folder
IRAN/ARMS TRANSACTION: CONSTANTINE MENGES

FOIA
S643
SYSTEMATIC

Box Number
CFOA 1129

22

ID	Document Type Document Description	No of pages	Doc Date	Restric- tions
164214	PAPER DUPLICATE OF #164213	1	ND	B1

The above documents were not referred for declassification review at time of processing
Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- B-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- B-2 Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- B-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- B-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- B-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- B-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- B-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- B-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.