

April 1, 1986

**NSPG Meeting re: Acting Against Libyan Support for
International Terrorism**

Citation:

"NSPG Meeting re: Acting Against Libyan Support for International Terrorism", April 1, 1986, Wilson Center Digital Archive, National Security Council
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/230137>

Summary:

Memorandum outlines three options for American and allied intervention in Libya in response to terrorist attacks in Rome and Vienna. Options range from economic and political sanctions to military intervention with allied support.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

SYSTEM IV
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January 4, 1986

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM: JAMES R. STARK *A*
OLIVER L. NORTH *UPA*
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JOCK COVEY *UPA*
ROD MCDANIEL *UPA*
ELAINE MORTON *EM*

SUBJECT: NSPG Meeting, January 6, 1986, 11:00 - 12:00,
White House Situation Room, re: Acting Against
Libyan Support for International Terrorism

The President has called for an NSPG meeting at 11:00 on Monday, January 6 to decide on U.S. measures in response to the terrorist attacks at the Rome and Vienna airports and the more general problem of Libyan support for international terrorism.

Attached at Tab I is a meeting memorandum for the President with supporting tabs for his use at the meeting. You should attach the Military Actions paper prepared by Secretary Weinberger (Tab C). No copies of this document have been reproduced.

Talking points for your use during the NSPG are at Tab II.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum to the President at Tab I.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

Attachments

- Tab I - Poindexter Memo to the President
 - Tab A - Agenda
 - Tab B - NSC Strategy Paper
 - Tab C - Military Actions Paper from Secretary Weinberger
 - Tab D - Talking Points
- Tab II - Talking Points

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BY RW NARA DATE 9/19/17

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SUMMARY OF OPTIONSBY RW NLRN MID89 #100677
NARA DATE 4/20/17OPTION 1: Economic and Political Sanctions

- Full U.S. unilateral implementation of IEEPA.
 - Total trade ban
 - Mandatory transaction controls
 - Criminal penalties for U.S. businesses and personnel
- Before announcement, seek Allied (e.g. U.K., Canada, Italy, France, Japan, Korea) agreement to:
 - implementation of comparable economic sanctions;
 - at a minimum, insist Allies not replace U.S./business and technical personnel; and
 - imply cost for non-responsiveness.
- Diplomatic and public affairs campaign to isolate Libya, e.g. closure of People's Bureaus.
- Reserve the right to act militarily.

Pros

- Demonstrates seriousness of U.S. purpose
- Increases prospects for Allied economic sanctions
- Reduces likelihood of Allied criticism of precipitate U.S. action
- Promotes international cooperation against terror
- Conditions environment for future military action
- Imposes economic cost on Libyan people and may generate unrest

Cons

- May reveal Alliance disunity
- Given public posture, economic sanctions alone signal lack of resolve to wage war on terrorism
- Terrorism not necessarily affected by lost revenues
- Qadhafi can exploit to solidify domestic position

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34

~~TOP SECRET~~OPTION 2: Simultaneous Economic Sanctions and Limited Military Strikes

- Economic and political measures described in Option 1.
- Coincident to announcement of economic/political sanctions, launch limited military strikes against key Libyan targets associated with terrorism and Qadhafi's power base.
- Some prior consultation with Allies on economic measures prior to announcement/military strike.

Pros

- Much greater demonstration of U.S. seriousness and willingness to confront Qadhafi.
- Helps convince Europeans their citizens are in danger and should be withdrawn.
- Demonstrates vulnerability of Libyan security structure.
- Forces Qadhafi to react to U.S. and creates opportunities for more decisive future action.

Cons

- Shifts onus of escalation to U.S. without inflicting serious damage on terrorist infrastructure.
- Increases threat to U.S. and Allied personnel/facilities/interests.
- Likely to promote greater external and internal short-term support for Qadhafi.
- May cause us to miss opportunity to get Allies committed to economic option.

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~~TOP SECRET~~OPTION 3: Economic Sanctions Followed by Limited Military Strikes

- Economic/political sanctions as in Option 1.
- Two-week pause after announcement to implement economic sanctions and to deceive Libya on military option.
- Limited military strike as described in Option 2.
- Consult with Allies prior to economic sanctions.

Pros

- Demonstrates U.S. seriousness while preserving maximum flexibility.
- Provides time for departure of Western workers from Libya.
- Increases prospects for European cooperation in economic measures (as compared to Option 2).
- Throws Qadhafi off balance; lowers his guard.

Cons

- Greater likelihood of erosion of U.S. resolve to use military force.
- Lack of immediate military response may embolden Qadhafi.
- Provides time for Libya to improve defenses and alliance relationships.

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