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Collection: Culvahouse, Arthur B.: Files
Folder Title: Iran/Arms Transaction: Alleged Drug
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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

Collection Name CULVAHOUSE, ARTHUR B.:FILES

Withdrawer

DLB 2/20/2014

File Folder IRAN/ARMS TRANSACTION: ALLEGED DRUG
SMUGGLING (2 OF 2)

FOIA

S643

Box Number CFOA 1129

SYSTEMATIC

44

ID	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
164253	MEMO	CULVAHOUSE TO THE PRESIDENT, RE: ABC NEWS COVERAGE ON ALLEGED US-ISRAELI AIRLIFT OF WEAPONS FOR THE CONTRAS AND DRUGS	4	4/8/1988	B1
164254	MEMO	TO ALAN C. RAUL, RE: CIA RESPONSE TO 7 APRIL 1988 ABC NEWS REPORT	1	4/13/1988	B1
164255	REPORT	RE: ABC NEWS REPORT ON ALLEGED CONTRA/ISRAELI/DRUG CONNECTIONS	2	4/9/1988	B1

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

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

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

GERYLD B. CHRISTIANSON, STAFF DIRECTOR
JAMES P. LUCIER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 17, 1988

Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. Culvahouse:

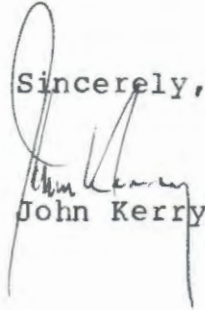
As you know, I wrote you on January 25 and again on February 5 to request prompt declassification of certain documents. When you responded to my letter of the 25th, I set forth further why it is a matter of urgency to accelerate the declassification process with regard to our current investigation into drug trafficking and national security.

We are only requesting some 50 pages for review, covering about 20 dates. It is very difficult to believe that such a small number of pages cannot be expeditiously reviewed.

I still have received no response to my letter of February 5. Once more, I request your assistance in declassifying these documents promptly. It is a matter of urgency that I have access to the requested documents in a timely fashion, and in any case before the Committee's next scheduled hearing on these issues in March.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate you letting me know when I can expect action on this request.

Sincerely,

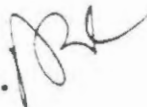

John Kerry

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 18, 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM L. BALL, III
COLIN L. POWELL
C. NICHOLAS ROSTOW

FROM: ARTHUR B. CULVAHOUSE, JR. 
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Letter from Senator John Kerry

We should discuss an appropriate response to the attached letter.

Attachment

cc: Paul Schott Stevens
Alison Fortier
Brenda Reger
Alan C. Raul

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-8228

GERRYL S. CHRISTIANSON, STAFF DIRECTOR
JAMES P. LUCIER, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 17, 1988

Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Counsel to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. Culvahouse:

As you know, I wrote you on January 25 and again on February 5 to request prompt declassification of certain documents. When you responded to my letter of the 25th, I set forth further why it is a matter of urgency to accelerate the declassification process with regard to our current investigation into drug trafficking and national security.

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Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate you letting me know when I can expect action on this request.

Sincerely,


John Kerry

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 29, 1988

Dear Senator Kerry:

We have had an opportunity to review our records relating to your request as stated in your letters of January 25 to Colin Powell and February 5 and 17 to me for the declassification review of certain excerpts you identified from the notebooks apparently maintained by Lt. Col. Oliver L. North while he was a member of the National Security Council staff. As you may know, these documents were not available to us and therefore not included among the materials produced by the White House or NSC to the House and Senate Select Committees investigating the Iran/Contra matter. Rather, the documents were produced to the Select Committees directly by Lt. Col. North. The transmittal letter from the Select Committees accompanying one of the first deliveries to us of North's notebooks for declassification stated: "These notebook excerpts were provided to the Committee pursuant to a subpoena and in connection with a grant of immunity to Mr. North. As such, their contents should not be disclosed to any person other than those who are participating in the [declassification] review that is requested by this letter." (Letter from W. Neil Eggleston, Deputy Chief Counsel to the House Select Committee, to Alan Charles Raul, Associate Counsel to the President, dated July 2, 1987)

Thus, the White House received only those portions of the North notebooks that the House and Senate Select Committees chose to provide to us in connection with their declassification requests. The Select Committees did not purport to provide us with the complete set of North notebooks. Moreover, the identification numbers you used to identify the excerpts you asked to have declassified appear to be Bates stamp numbers applied to the notebook pages by the Senate Select Committee -- unfortunately, these identification numbers are not keyed into our document retrieval system. This, combined with the fact that we do not have all of the North notebooks, makes it extremely difficult for us to determine whether we even have copies of the excerpts you identified.

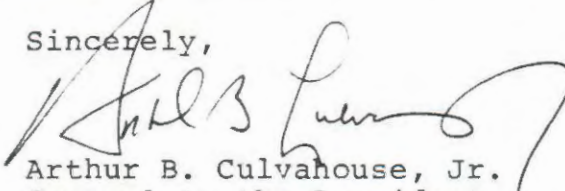
I can assure you, however, that all portions of the North notebooks submitted to us for declassification review by the House and Senate Select Committees were reviewed thoroughly by the inter-agency declassification review committee that was established under the auspices of the White House Counsel's Office and NSC. Accordingly, those portions of the North notebooks submitted to us for declassification have already been reviewed and declassified to the extent consistent with the national security standards set forth in Executive Order 12356, and returned in unclassified form to the House and Senate Select Committees.

Since the House and Senate Select Committees submitted only limited portions of the North notebooks to us for declassification, and we have reviewed them, there is simply nothing further we can add at this time. In fact, it is entirely possible that we never received and, consequently, do not have, the excerpts identified in the attachment to your January 25 letter. We must therefore respectfully refer you to the Senate Select Committee for any further information. That Committee may be in a position to advise you whether the materials have previously been declassified or, alternatively, whether they were never provided to the White House for declassification review. It may also be appropriate to consider with the Senate Select Committee whether it is consistent with that Committee's governing Resolution, and the subpoena issued to and agreements reached with counsel for Lt. Col. North, as well as other applicable rules, for members of the staff of your Subcommittee or any other committee to have access to the documents in question.

Finally, we only this week concluded an expedited and very substantial declassification review for an ongoing independent counsel investigation, and we also were completing some other declassification tasks pursuant to longstanding commitments. Accordingly, it simply was not possible to undertake a declassification review of any additional material during February. A declassification review requires the dedication of significant legal and intelligence officer resources on an inter-agency basis by the intelligence community, and we have taxed those scarce human and budgetary resources to the very limit.

While I understand that this response may be somewhat disappointing, I can assure you that we will consider requests for declassification should documents be properly submitted to us by the Committee on Foreign Relations for declassification review.

Sincerely,



Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Counsel to the President

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

cc: The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
The Honorable Warren B. Rudman
The Honorable Lee H. Hamilton
The Honorable Dick Cheney
Arthur L. Liman, Esq.
John W. Nields, Jr., Esq.
Mr. Thomas R. Smeeton

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

2

March 17, 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILE

FROM: ALAN CHARLES RAUL *ACR*
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Senator Kerry Declassification Request

On March 16, 1988, I met with Jack Blum and Kathleen Smith of Senator Kerry's subcommittee staff to discuss procedures for narrowing Senator Kerry's declassification request to materials relevant to his subcommittee's investigation. Patti Aronsson and Ken Johnson also participated in the meeting.

We resolved that Kathleen Smith would review the North notebooks to identify only those particular portions relevant to Senator Kerry's investigation. After her review, Ken Johnson would review the materials.

Prior to the meeting, we ascertained that Kathleen Smith had not been cleared into the "V" program. Ms. Smith had been the subject of an appropriate background investigation and held the current codeword clearance. Pursuant to my instructions, Patti Aronsson made the necessary arrangements to have Brian Merchant read Ms. Smith into the program.

cc: Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Patti Aronsson

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

ABC:ACR:nge
ABCulvahouse
ACRaul
Chron

April 1, 1988

A

Dear Senator Kerry:

As requested, we have convened an inter-agency review committee to declassify portions of the North notebooks which you and Senator Inouye transmitted to us. Pursuant to the standards set forth under Executive Order No. 12356, the inter-agency committee has completed its declassification review of the notebook excerpts relating to the year 1984. These unclassified excerpts are enclosed.

We anticipate that declassification review of the remaining notebook excerpts will be completed next week. We will transmit the materials to you as soon as they have been declassified.

These materials are provided solely in connection with the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operation's investigation into drug trafficking. We take the position that the Subcommittee may not properly release any classified material that has not been declassified pursuant to Executive Order No. 12356. If your Subcommittee has any question about a particular declassification decision, please contact us.

We appreciate your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,
Original Signed by ABC

Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Counsel to the President

The Honorable John Kerry
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225

cc: The Honorable Jesse Helms
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
The Honorable Warren B. Rudman

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 1, 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR ARTHUR B. CULVAHOUSE, JR.

FROM: ALAN CHARLES RAUL *AR*

SUBJECT: Senator Kerry - Excerpts from North Notebooks

Attached for your review and signature is a proposed letter to Senator Kerry transmitting declassified portions of the North notebooks.

Attachments

*AB. please note the cc to
Jesse Helms. I included
him as ranking on
the Foreign Relations Committee.
Alan.*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 5, 1988

Dear Senator Kerry:

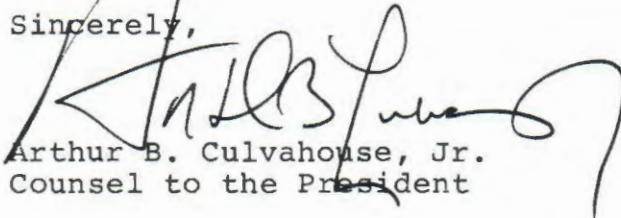
As requested, we have convened an inter-agency review committee to declassify portions of the North notebooks which you and Senator Inouye transmitted to us. Pursuant to the standards set forth under Executive Order No. 12356, the inter-agency committee has completed its declassification review of the notebook excerpts relating to the years 1985 and 1986. These unclassified excerpts are enclosed.

These materials, together with the materials transmitted to you on April 1, 1988, complete our declassification review of the portions of the North notebooks you submitted to us.

These materials are provided solely in connection with the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operation's investigation into drug trafficking. We take the position that the Subcommittee may not properly release any classified material that has not been declassified pursuant to Executive Order No. 12356. If your Subcommittee has any question about a particular declassification decision, please contact us.

We appreciate your continued cooperation.

Sincerely,



Arthur B. Culvahouse, Jr.
Counsel to the President

The Honorable John Kerry
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225

cc: The Honorable Jesse Helms
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
The Honorable Warren B. Rudman

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: April 11, 1988

TO: A.B. CULVAHOUSE

FROM: KATHERINE D. LADD *KD*
Special Assistant to the President
and Director of
White House Secretariat

The attached memo was sent to the President Thursday night, and he has not returned his copy yet. Thought you would want the original returned to you.

WITHDRAWAL SHEET

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Collection Name

CULVAHOUSE, ARTHUR B.:FILES

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DLB 2/20/2014

File Folder

IRAN/ARMS TRANSACTION: ALLEGED DRUG SMUGGLING
(2 OF 2)

FOIA

S643

SYSTEMATIC

Box Number

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ABC COVERAGE ON CONTRAS/DRUGS (Thursday evening, April 7)

Jennings: We have the news tonight of a major ABC News investigation. We have been reporting for many months now on the ins and outs of the Iran-contra affair -- selling arms to Iran and using the profits to buy guns for the Nicaraguan contras. We can now report that long before that operation began, there was another operation to provide guns for the contras, which was also against the law. In this operation, Americans and Israelis provided arms to the contras and then the same network smuggled drugs into the U.S.

ABC's Richard Threlkeld: For three years, from 1983 to 1986, the contras fought the Marxist government of Nicaragua with weapons made in the communist bloc, bought by Israeli agents with American financial support and delivered by a U.S.-Israeli airlift, which wound up, incredibly enough, delivering illegal drugs to the U.S. That's the astonishing story told to ABC News by American, Israeli, and Panamanian sources -- some of whom insist on remaining anonymous, including this American we'll call "Harry," who helped purchase the arms and deliver them.

("Harry": "I guess you'd have to say at that time I felt my primary employer was Israel. Secondarily my employer was the United States of America.")

The operation was launched in the spring of 1983 at Washington's request with at least \$20 million of Israeli government money, later reimbursed we're told, from U.S. covert operations funds. The Israelis purchased the weapons from Poland and Czechoslovakia and began shipping them secretly from Yugoslavia to Bolivia and then to Panama. The Israeli liaison man there, this man Michael Herari (phonetic), until recently a close aide to Manuel Noriega. Israel was already selling arms to Central America, what better middleman for Washington to use to arm the contras.

(Policy expert: "I don't think that Israel will get involved in these kinds of things without the very clear understanding with the Reagan Administration.")

Although the Israeli government today denied that it has ever supplied arms to the contras, nonetheless our investigation shows a supply network did exist -- a makeshift air cargo network, also experienced in running illegal drugs. From Panama our sources say the weapons were shipped in cargo planes -- old DC6's and C123's flying from an extensive network of Panamanian airfields to supply points for the contras in Costa Rica and El Salvador. And what was the American connection in all this? Our sources tell us it included the late William Casey's CIA, and Felix Rodriguez, a former CIA agent and counterinsurgency expert active in aiding the contras. Although Rodriguez denies it, Jose Blandon, Noriega's former intelligence aide, confirms there was such a network and says Rodriguez was, in fact, a key figure:

(Blandon: "There was a man who worked in El Salvador -- (inaudible) who was in charge of all the relations and who supplied the arms to the contras.")

But ABC News has learned arming the contras was only the half of it. After dropping off their weapons, the planes and contract pilots of this makeshift Israeli-American airlift went back to business as usual -- smuggling illegal Colombian cocaine across the U.S. border. If U.S. officials who had sponsored this airlift knew it was drug dealing, they did nothing to stop those cargo planes.

("Harry": "You'd bring the ship into Colombia, you'd load the drugs aboard it and you would bring those drugs back to Panama with you.") From Panama and Colombia, the planes flew north to the U.S. -- loaded with illegal drugs. "Harry" flew one of the drug deliveries himself to one of these secluded dirt airstrips near Amarillo, Texas -- a mission he'd just as soon forget.

("Harry": "And that's what you were hired to do. Bringing that stuff into the United States -- that was something else. I've never been so thoroughly disgusted with myself in my life.")

It was one of his last flights. By spring of 1986 this operation was winding down, replaced by another secret contra supply network directed by other men. The questions remain -- if those in Washington and Tel Aviv did know about those drug shipments, why didn't they just say no? Was the drug money from those shipments used to buy more weapons for the contras? How was it that in three years a network Washington set up to run arms to the contras wound up running cocaine into this country for the most vicious drug cartel in the world? At the same time we were supposed to be fighting a war against drugs. A Senate subcommittee is currently investigating to find some answers. (ABC-5)

###

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###

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Date: April 13, 1988

TO: COLIN POWELL

FROM: **ARTHUR B. CULVAHOUSE, JR.**
Counsel to the President

FYI: RE: ABC News Story

COMMENT: _____

ACTION: _____

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164254 MEMO

1 4/13/1988 B1

TO ALAN C. RAUL, RE: CIA RESPONSE TO 7
APRIL 1988 ABC NEWS REPORT

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