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NSC Matter -- Plan of Action
Donald T. Regan

1. Widen scope of investigation by Attorney General into NSC. Promise report to Congress as soon as it convenes in January. Urge Attorney General to use PFIAB expertise.
2. Call Senate and House leaders to meeting in White House at 11:00a.m. Include chairmen and ranking members of Intelligence committee. Byrd, Dole, Wright and Michel. Tell them all the facts we know.
3. Accept resignation of Admiral Poindexter because of failure to inform President of possible misfeasance by members of his staff, and failure to investigate.
4. Order reassignment of Marine Corps Lt. Col Oliver North, and relieve him of all duties pending further investigation.
5. Invite Secretaries of State, Defense, Treasury, and Director of the CIA to meeting with Congressional leaders. Have them informed by Chief of Staff as to reason for meeting.
6. Chief of Staff to prepare Presidential statement using his own White House staff plus representatives from Attorney General's office. Wallison, Thomas, Buchanan, Speakes.
7. President to go to Press room around noon to deliver statement. In it he should state he ordered Attorney General to look into arms shipment and who knew what. Discuss findings. How much detail to be decided by counsel. Enough to get our full story, how to protect innocent, or not harm future conduct of foreign relations should be decided quickly. Statement should express his shagrin, and shock at revelations. Should promise full investigation as in #1. Tell of his acceptance of John Poindexter's resignation and reassignment of North.
8. Who should background for press?
Attorney General, or his representative to be decided.
Admit details still fuzzy, further work is needed.
Congress, and public to be fully informed when investigation completed.

9. Tough as it seems. blame must be put at NSC's door -- rogue operation, going on without President's knowledge or sanction. When suspicions arose he took charge, ordered investigation, had meeting of top advisors to get at facts, and find out who knew what. Try to make the best of a sensational story. Anticipate charges of "out of control", "President doesn't know what's going on," "Who's in charge", "State Department is right in its suspicions of NSC", "secret dealing with nefarious characters", "Should break off any contacts with: a) Iranians, b) Contras
10. Try to get answers to such charges in advance. President should not answer in Press room, but others in Administration are going to be asked. President must ask George Shultz to muzzle State Department, ditto for Cap Weinberger, and Bill Casey, and Chief of Staff, or else there will be all kinds of stories and malicious gossip that can only hurt Admiral Poindexter. Remind all that Attorney General is investigating, and its best not to surmise what might happen, or be discovered.
11. Appoint a special review board to examine NSC policy implementation and procedures. The board should consist of three members, one with Congressional connections, and one a democrat.
12. Put Al Keel in charge of NSC on a temporary basis. Ask him to try to carry on business as usual. Use Chief of Staff's guidance, if needed.
13. Find replacement for John Poindexter as soon as possible. Warn President that George Shultz may "suggest" he take over both agencies on a temporary basis. He will put in his person and then return operation to White House. It will then be an outpost of State Department. Best course, to be recommended to President, "Find an outstanding person in Foreign Affairs/Foreign Policy/Intelligence Community and put him/her in charge immediately. Have person somewhat acquainted with job when Attorney General's findings are complete. Have person recruit new staff, and tighten all procedures.

14. Qualifications for NSC head:
 - a. Knowledge of foreign affairs, and experience in government in this area
 - b. Some knowledge of intelligence gathering
 - c. Vast knowledge of intelligence interpretation
 - d. Mature judgement
 - e. Calm exterior particularly in crisis
 - f. Ability to analyze, verbalize.
 - g. Desire to remain "out of sight", advise to President only, low profile in media
 - h. Some knowledge of Congress, and ability to get along "on the Hill"
 - i. Ability to recruit, and manage a staff of, hopefully, brilliant younger people.
 - j. Diplomatic skills to be able to handle disparate views of Cabinet level officers and their deputies.
 - k. Willingness to work extraordinary hours.
 - l. Must agree to serve at least through January 1989, or at the pleasure of the President.
 - m. Non-military.

15. Possible Candidates:
 - a. Max Kampleman/Arms Control
 - b. Larry Eagleburger/former State
 - c. Dave Abshire/Ambassador to NATO
 - d. Bob Gates/CIA #2
 - e. John McMahon/former CIA #2
 - f. Ken Adelman/Arms Control Agency
 - g. Richard Perle/Assistant Secretary Defense
 - h. Jeanne Kirkpatrick/Formerly UN Ambassador
 - i. Don Rice/Rand Corporation
 - j. Charlie Price/Ambassador to Great Britain
 - k. John Lehman