

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

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

Collection: Counterterrorism and Narcotics, Office
of, NSC: Records

Folder Title: [Program Review of the Vice President's
Task Force on Combating Terrorism, 06/02/1987] (1)

Box: RAC Box 10

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: COUNTERTERRORISM AND NARCOTICS, NSC
OFFICE OF: Records

Archivist: mjd

File Folder: [Program Review of the Vice President's Task Force on
 Combatting Terrorism, 6/2/87] (1) ~~Box 91956~~ *RAC Box 10* **Date:** 8/11/99

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. memo	Admiral James Holloway to the Vice President re: Program Review, 1p <i>R 6/9/00 NLSF97-082# 78</i>	6/1/87	P1/F1
2. report	Program Review: Evaluation of Recommendations, 52 pages	6/2/87	P1/F1

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
- P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].
- P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
- P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].
- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
- P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].
- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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

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

~~SECRET~~

SENSITIVE



~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

June 1, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

FROM: ADMIRAL JAMES L. HOLLOWAY, *JLH*

SUBJECT: Program Review of the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism

Attached for your signature is the letter-report to the President on the program review of our terrorism policy. It is substantially unchanged from the draft you saw earlier. I would call your attention briefly to the third paragraph in which the reference to the "mistakes involved in our contacts with Iran" has been modified on the recommendation of Attorney General Meese.

The unclassified letter-report with the attached detailed evaluation of the recommendations (these evaluations are classified), is ready to be submitted to the President. I understand you are to do this in a meeting with the President tomorrow morning, June 2, 1987.

Subsequent to your signing and giving the President the full document, the unclassified portion will be released to the press and the entire package will be forwarded to the members of the Task Force, thus completing their work.

This will also substantially complete my work in the program review. I intend to continue for another few weeks to improve some procedural aspects of our response mechanism. Unless you believe there is more to be done, I would expect to end my consultant's role by the end of this month.

It has been a great honor and pleasure working for you again. I look forward to our next association.

Attachment
Letter-Report to President
w/enclosures

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~
Declassify: OADR

DECLASSIFIED

NLS F97-082478

BY M7D DATE 6/9/00

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE



UNCLASSIFIED
SECRET/SENSITIVE ATTACHMENT

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

June 2, 1987

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On March 4, 1987 you directed me to reconvene the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism to review our policy for combatting terrorism and to evaluate the effectiveness of our current program. That review has now been completed.

I am pleased to report that the Task Force has reaffirmed that our current policy as articulated in the Task Force report is sound, effective, and fully in accord with our democratic principles and national ideals of freedom, justice, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. That policy, however, needs re-emphasis and its provisions and purposes need careful explanation to the American people.

Americans must understand that our actions in preventing and responding to terrorism are part of a conscious policy and an integrated national program that was spelled out in detail in the report to you a year and a half ago. In following the policy and the program we have been effective in countering terrorism. Hence, our commitment to that policy has been, and will continue to be, beneficial. The mistakes involved in our contacts with Iran caused a temporary reduction in credibility which has been regained as our resolve has become apparent. Indeed, our programs of practical cooperation with friendly states -- intelligence sharing, training and assistance -- have expanded and grown stronger in recent months.

In this program review the Task Force has focused primarily on an item-by-item review of the effectiveness with which each of the Task Force recommendations have been implemented. Where any new concerns or issues emerged, they were examined in the review process.

Overall we have found progress has been excellent and the improvement in our counterterrorism capability has been evident in the results. Most of the taskings have been completed. Others of a continuing nature are being effectively

8/12/97
MSP
#

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

managed. In a few cases -- usually requiring the cooperation of foreign governments -- our final objectives have not yet been attained, but the efforts of the Administration have been vigorous and sustained. These situations were not unanticipated.

A detailed evaluation of the effectiveness with which the original recommendations have been implemented is forwarded as a classified enclosure to this letter-report. When the remaining work noted in these evaluations is completed, our program will, in a technical sense, fulfill the resource requirements of our national policy.

Although this remarkable progress is praiseworthy, I must emphasize that our vulnerability to terrorism, though reduced, has not been eliminated. This is a critical point which must be conveyed to the American people. Democratic societies are by their nature more vulnerable to terrorism than others. As a practical matter, in the face of extensive worldwide international terrorist activity, the United States will certainly continue to be a principal target of terrorists. Because of the growing experience of the terrorists and the sophistication of their methods, human casualties and property losses to American citizens and US interests regrettably will continue to occur. When we suffer these losses at the hands of terrorists, we must be prepared to minimize the impact.

Except in the case of a catastrophe resulting from biological, chemical or nuclear terrorism, the gravest threat is the potential political impact: a short term crisis, reduced American credibility in the eyes of others, and an upsurge in activity by terrorists who believe they have succeeded.

We can minimize the political effects of a successful act of terrorism against the United States so that it will not upset or cast doubt on our process of government or our leadership. To do this we must emphasize at all levels of government that adherence to our policy, our program, and our procedures is most important. Only in this way, by demonstrating resolve and consistency in dealing with the threat, can the political impact be blunted.

Evidence has demonstrated that our policy for combatting terrorism has been effective when carried out with consistency and supported by the expanded resources we are devoting to it. According to the latest statistics for 1986, the year following the issuance of the Task Force Report, the number of Americans who died worldwide as the result of terrorist incidents declined to 12 from 38 in 1985. Also, working unilaterally or with friendly nations we took preemptive action in several hundred instances to stop possible terrorist

acts against Americans and American interests. Finally, of special note is that only one American was killed in the United States by terrorists in 1986 and that a dozen intended terrorist acts in the U.S. were avoided due to the efforts of our counterterrorist agencies.

We should also highlight our effective efforts to deal with state-sponsored terrorism. Although terrorist incidents had been increasing for several years, there was a noticeable drop in Mideast-related, state-sponsored, terrorism in Europe in the second half of last year. This resulted from our strike on Libya last April, the expulsion from Western Europe of Libyan "diplomats" and "businessmen", and increased surveillance and intelligence. These actions produced good effects, thus showing that carefully chosen military action combined with cooperation with our Allies can be beneficial. In concert with other nations we have also selectively applied diplomatic pressure to good effect. Tightened airport and travel security has also contributed to fewer hijackings and incidents.

The best approach to a terrorist incident is to prevent its occurrence. Hence, we and our friends and allies have devoted increased attention and resources to identifying, tracking, and apprehending terrorists, and through courageous judicial actions to effectively prosecuting, convicting and punishing the terrorists as the criminals they are. This quiet, unspectacular, but very effective, police and intelligence work combined with a determined judicial process has resulted in a significant decline in international terrorist incidents and an increase in the numbers of terrorists in custody around the world. These successes have been the direct result of a step-by-step application of our policy.

I am convinced that we are doing a better job in combatting the terrorism now than we were seventeen months ago when the Task Force submitted its report. I am equally convinced that we must do better. As we increase our efforts we as a nation should not exaggerate either the threat, or the limited damage that terrorists can do to us and to our society. To do so only plays into the terrorists' hands by increasing their political impact. We must, therefore, emphasize good intelligence, careful police work, international cooperation, judicial process, and a controlled approach to public handling of terrorist incidents. Only in this way can we stop and then extinguish this criminal menace to all civilized societies.

Sincerely,

George Bush

Enclosure: As Stated

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

UNCLASSIFIED
SECRET/SENSITIVE ATTACHED



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

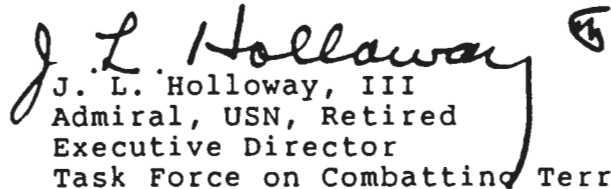
WASHINGTON
June 12, 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE PRESIDENT
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
DIRECTOR, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
CHIEF OF STAFF TO THE VICE PRESIDENT
ASSISTANT TO THE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Letter-Report of the Vice President's Task
Force on Combatting Terrorism

Attached is a copy of the final, signed letter-report of the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism which was sent to the President on June 2, 1987. The letter contains the unclassified overall evaluation of the Task Force and has attached to it the detailed, classified evaluations of each of the original recommendations. I would appreciate it if you would make appropriate distribution in your agency.

Follow on action, as necessary, will be tasked by the NSC staff as was done with the original Report of the Task Force, dated December 20, 1985.

J. L. Holloway 
J. L. Holloway, III
Admiral, USN, Retired
Executive Director
Task Force on Combatting Terrorism

Enclosure: VP Ltr-Report to President
dated June 2, 1987 w/
enclosure

UNCLASSIFIED
SECRET/SENSITIVE ATTACHED

MSD 8/12/99

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

SYSTEM II
90565



UNCLASSIFIED
SECRET/SENSITIVE ATTACHMENT -

THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

June 2, 1987

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On March 4, 1987 you directed me to reconvene the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism to review our policy for combatting terrorism and to evaluate the effectiveness of our current program. That review has now been completed.

I am pleased to report that the Task Force has reaffirmed that our current policy as articulated in the Task Force report is sound, effective, and fully in accord with our democratic principles and national ideals of freedom, justice, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. That policy, however, needs re-emphasis and its provisions and purposes need careful explanation to the American people.

Americans must understand that our actions in preventing and responding to terrorism are part of a conscious policy and an integrated national program that was spelled out in detail in the report to you a year and a half ago. In following the policy and the program we have been effective in countering terrorism. Hence, our commitment to that policy has been, and will continue to be, beneficial. The mistakes involved in our contacts with Iran caused a temporary reduction in credibility which has been regained as our resolve has become apparent. Indeed, our programs of practical cooperation with friendly states -- intelligence sharing, training and assistance -- have expanded and grown stronger in recent months.

In this program review the Task Force has focused primarily on an item-by-item review of the effectiveness with which each of the Task Force recommendations have been implemented. Where any new concerns or issues emerged, they were examined in the review process.

Overall we have found progress has been excellent and the improvement in our counterterrorism capability has been evident in the results. Most of the taskings have been completed. Others of a continuing nature are being effectively

MSG 6/12/87
~~SECRET~~ SENSITIVE

managed. In a few cases -- usually requiring the cooperation of foreign governments -- our final objectives have not yet been attained, but the efforts of the Administration have been vigorous and sustained. These situations were not unanticipated.

A detailed evaluation of the effectiveness with which the original recommendations have been implemented is forwarded as a classified enclosure to this letter-report. When the remaining work noted in these evaluations is completed, our program will, in a technical sense, fulfill the resource requirements of our national policy.

Although this remarkable progress is praiseworthy, I must emphasize that our vulnerability to terrorism, though reduced, has not been eliminated. This is a critical point which must be conveyed to the American people. Democratic societies are by their nature more vulnerable to terrorism than others. As a practical matter, in the face of extensive worldwide international terrorist activity, the United States will certainly continue to be a principal target of terrorists. Because of the growing experience of the terrorists and the sophistication of their methods, human casualties and property losses to American citizens and US interests regrettably will continue to occur. When we suffer these losses at the hands of terrorists, we must be prepared to minimize the impact.

Except in the case of a catastrophe resulting from biological, chemical or nuclear terrorism, the gravest threat is the potential political impact: a short term crisis, reduced American credibility in the eyes of others, and an upsurge in activity by terrorists who believe they have succeeded.

We can minimize the political effects of a successful act of terrorism against the United States so that it will not upset or cast doubt on our process of government or our leadership. To do this we must emphasize at all levels of government that adherence to our policy, our program, and our procedures is most important. Only in this way, by demonstrating resolve and consistency in dealing with the threat, can the political impact be blunted.

Evidence has demonstrated that our policy for combatting terrorism has been effective when carried out with consistency and supported by the expanded resources we are devoting to it. According to the latest statistics for 1986, the year following the issuance of the Task Force Report, the number of Americans who died worldwide as the result of terrorist incidents declined to 12 from 38 in 1985. Also, working unilaterally or with friendly nations we took preemptive action in several hundred instances to stop possible terrorist

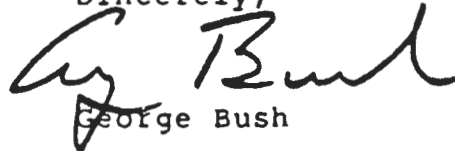
acts against Americans and American interests. Finally, of special note is that only one American was killed in the United States by terrorists in 1986 and that a dozen intended terrorist acts in the U.S. were avoided due to the efforts of our counterterrorist agencies.

We should also highlight our effective efforts to deal with state-sponsored terrorism. Although terrorist incidents had been increasing for several years, there was a noticeable drop in Mideast-related, state-sponsored, terrorism in Europe in the second half of last year. This resulted from our strike on Libya last April, the expulsion from Western Europe of Libyan "diplomats" and "businessmen", and increased surveillance and intelligence. These actions produced good effects, thus showing that carefully chosen military action combined with cooperation with our Allies can be beneficial. In concert with other nations we have also selectively applied diplomatic pressure to good effect. Tightened airport and travel security has also contributed to fewer hijackings and incidents.

The best approach to a terrorist incident is to prevent its occurrence. Hence, we and our friends and allies have devoted increased attention and resources to identifying, tracking, and apprehending terrorists, and through courageous judicial actions to effectively prosecuting, convicting and punishing the terrorists as the criminals they are. This quiet, unspectacular, but very effective, police and intelligence work combined with a determined judicial process has resulted in a significant decline in international terrorist incidents and an increase in the numbers of terrorists in custody around the world. These successes have been the direct result of a step-by-step application of our policy.

I am convinced that we are doing a better job in combatting the terrorism now than we were seventeen months ago when the Task Force submitted its report. I am equally convinced that we must do better. As we increase our efforts we as a nation should not exaggerate either the threat, or the limited damage that terrorists can do to us and to our society. To do so only plays into the terrorists' hands by increasing their political impact. We must, therefore, emphasize good intelligence, careful police work, international cooperation, judicial process, and a controlled approach to public handling of terrorist incidents. Only in this way can we stop and then extinguish this criminal menace to all civilized societies.

Sincerely,



George Bush

Enclosure: As Stated

RONALD W. REAGAN LIBRARY

THIS FORM MARKS THE FILE LOCATION OF ITEM NUMBER 2 LISTED ON THE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET AT THE FRONT OF THIS FOLDER.