

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

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28 APR 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM: Donald H. Rumsfeld



SUBJECT: Contingency Planning

As we discussed over the telephone, the WSAG meeting on 22 April highlighted a problem of concern to me. It is clear that, given the amount of effort that goes into contingency planning, we must be sure the work is properly focused to meet the President's needs.

There should be prior agreement, based on an interagency paper, as to (a) U.S. aims and (b) the anticipated political environment in which these aims would be pursued. Once we have agreed with respect to those two points, reducing them to writing with a reasonable degree of precision, then contingency planning can go forward without wasted effort. Otherwise, the number of contingencies for which we might plan is almost unbounded. The inevitable result would be wasted effort, time, and money. In view of the number of people who would have to be involved, it could also result in massive leaks.

DOD, of course, can and does produce conceptual plans (CONPLANS) for a wide range of options and much more detailed operation plans (OPLANS) for specific contingencies. One would expect most of our NSC/DOD contingency planning to be in CONPLAN form.

Before tasking DOD, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs would cause the appropriate subcommittee of the NSC to develop an interagency paper which specifies U.S. aims, the assumed political environment, and the various options the U.S. might pursue. If there is not agreement on these points or if, with agreement, the issues involve special significance to the United States, the matter would be presented to the NSC for Presidential decision. Following this, in support of the options selected, DOD can be tasked in writing to produce appropriate CONPLANS to achieve the stated objectives within the political environment visualized. After affirmative National Security Council judgment that a particular CONPLAN is likely to be implemented, DOD will then do the detailed operational planning.

I am confident that we can be most responsive to NSC needs and serve the President better if these preliminary steps are performed.

I mentioned to you on the phone last week, I will await receiving from you the proposed tasking on the three countries discussed.

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