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16th May, 1956

U.K. EYES ONLY

CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

JOINT PLANNING STAFF

**U.K. EYES ONLY**

OIL DENIAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Report by the Joint Planning Staff

1. At the request of the Foreign Office the Chiefs of Staff expressed their views on oil denial measures in the Middle East. After ministerial agreement to these views had been obtained the Anglo-American conversations on oil denial were held in February, 1956.
2. The Foreign Office have now invited the Chiefs of Staff to agree or comment upon the summary of the conclusions of the records of these conversations and to make any suggestions regarding future procedure. In anticipation of instructions we have prepared a report which is at annex.
3. We have consulted the Foreign Office.

Recommendation

4. We recommend that, if the Chiefs of Staff approve our report, they should forward it to the Foreign Office as an expression of their views.

(Signed) E.D.G. LEWIS  
D.S.S. O'CONNOR  
J.G. DAVIS

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, S.W.1.

COB(55)340 and COB(56)63  
COB(56)116

OIL DENIAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST

INTRODUCTION

1. At the request of the Foreign Office the Chiefs of Staff expressed their views<sup>§</sup> on oil denial measures in the Middle East. After ministerial agreement to these views had been obtained the Anglo-American conversations on oil denial were held in February, 1956.
2. The Foreign Office have now invited<sup>¶</sup> the Chiefs of Staff to agree or comment upon the summary of the conclusions of the record<sup>¶</sup> of these conversations and to make any suggestions regarding future procedure.

COMMENTS FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW

General

3. We are in agreement with the conclusions reached in sub-paragraphs 78(a) to (e) inclusive, (g) (h), (j) and (l). We have however, the following comments to make.

Planning (Sub-paragraph (f))

4. We understand that if the United Kingdom and United States Governments accept the Delegations' recommendations contained in sub-paragraph (c)<sup>¶</sup> this will cover our previous statement<sup>£</sup> that all outstanding matters concerning legal, financial and compensatory aspects of the oil denial measures, should be resolved before the responsibility for oil denial measures is transferred to the military planners. We therefore agree with the conclusions in sub-paragraph (f)<sup>¶</sup> that the preparation of British plans for oil denial in the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms begin. We consider that there is no military objection to a United Kingdom planning officer accompanying an American representative and a United Kingdom oil technician proceeding on a tour of the oilfields in Iran and the Levant as well as the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms. Such preliminary planning would be without prejudice to any intergovernmental decision on responsibility.

Responsibilities (Sub-paragraph (i))

5. Iran. We note that the Delegations deferred a decision on the responsibility for oil denial measures in Iran. Since in the near future the only feasible means of oil denial would be by American nuclear air action, we consider that planning in Iran should be an American responsibility.
6. Kuwait Neutral Zone. As no decision was reached on the responsibility for oil denial measures in the Kuwait Neutral Zone we reiterate our view that since the balance of influence in this territory lies with the Americans it is logical that they should assume the responsibility.

§ COS(55)340 and COS(56)63  
¶ COS(56)116  
£ COS(55)340 sub-paragraph 13(a)

Annex (Concluded)

Well-plugging (Sub-paragraph (k))

7. With reference to the conclusion in sub-paragraph (k) we have noted the economic and political advantages of well-plugging operations and consider that such measures should be adopted whenever possible provided surface denial measures are in no way prejudiced.

Sabotage in Conditions Short of Global War (Sub-paragraph (m))

8. A study of the operations necessary for conserving oil wells and installations against sabotage or attacks arising in conditions short of global war as requested in sub paragraph (m)<sup>ø</sup> is already being undertaken<sup>≠</sup>.

CONCLUSIONS

9. We conclude that:-

- (a) The preparation of plans should begin on the assumption that responsibility for the planning and execution of oil denial measures in the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms might eventually be transferred to the United Kingdom.
- (b) A qualified United Kingdom planning officer should be designated to accompany an American representative and a United Kingdom oil technician on a tour of the Sheikdoms in order to survey existing arrangements. This tour should also include Iran and the Levant.
- (c) The oil denial measures in Iran and the Kuwait Neutral Zone should be a United States responsibility.
- (d) Oil denial measures by well-plugging operations should be adopted whenever possible provided surface denial measures are not prejudiced.

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ø COS(56)116  
≠ COS(56)39th Meeting, Minute 15.