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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Congress of the United States  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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December 1, 1983

Honorable Caspar W. Weinberger  
Secretary of Defense  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Page determined to be Unclassified  
Reviewed Chief, RDD, WHS  
IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5  
Date: SEP 24 2013

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I have received several pieces of correspondence from Mayor Edward Koch conveying his concerns regarding certain news reports which cite statements made during a meeting between you and the Saudi Arabian Defense Minister earlier this year. I am certain that Mayor Koch's concerns have been brought to your attention, so I will not belabor you with the details of his grievance.

It seems unfortunate that a gulf was created between you because a so-called verbatim transcript was printed in the publication Al Safir. I would greatly appreciate it if you could shed any more light on the source of the transcript or provide information on the errors contained in the publication.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation. If you would prefer that a member of your staff contact my office by phone, they may contact Susan Andross of my subcommittee staff at 225-3424.

With kindest regards,

Yours very truly,

DANTE B. FASCELL  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on  
International Operations

DBF: SAR

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13-M-3121



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

I-17192/83

13 DEC 1983

Honorable Dante B. Fascell  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
International Operations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Date: SEP 24 2013

Dear Congressman:

Secretary Weinberger asked that I reply to your letter of December 1, 1983, in regard to the matter of the purported transcript of his meeting with Prince Sultan, which was published in the Lebanese newspaper Al Safir.

Having also attended that meeting, I can assure you that the purported transcript is a total falsehood and another example of crude disinformation. As you may be aware, hostile intelligence services often resort to published forgeries in an effort to influence U.S. public opinion. We have not been able to ascertain the origin of this forgery, as the author of the news story, Al Safir's Washington Correspondent Chouki Rafeh claims that he received the document in French, mailed in an envelope with a Paris postmark. It is clear, however, that it aims to discredit Secretary Weinberger through the imputation that he is concealing information from the President and is overly close to the Saudis, as well as publicizing the close U.S.-Saudi defense cooperation in a manner to arouse opposition both among supporters of Israel in the U.S. and perhaps among radical Arabs.

Please be advised that no transcript of the proceedings was kept. Naturally Secretary Weinberger sent a reporting cable to the President and the Secretary of State immediately following the talks. As you know, these cables are always private and are communicated only to those in the White House and the State Department who have a need to know.

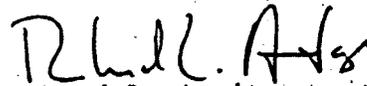
In general terms, the principal focus of the meeting was on the Lebanon crisis, as the meeting took place at the time Secretary Shultz was conducting his shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East in his effort to break the deadlock. Secretary Weinberger was most interested in exploring approaches by Saudi Arabia that would persuade Syria to withdraw from Lebanon, as Israel had just agreed to withdraw its forces.

There were also discussions concerning recent GCC visitors to Washington and exchanges of views concerning the situation in the Gulf.

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In addition to these topics, the whole range of bilateral security relations was also discussed, as is the case every time we hold our joint military meetings with the Saudis. I can assure you that, of course, no commitments were made on arms sales, as obviously none could be made without the support of both the Executive and the Legislative Branches. This is very well known to the Saudis as a result of the debates over the AWACS planes and other items. That is why the newspaper article is so absurd.

Sincerely,



Richard L. Armitage  
Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(International Security Affairs)

Office of the Secretary of Defense  
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS  
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