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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY December 20, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

1973-12-24, Faisal, Nixon, Oil

The Saudi Foreign Minister, Omar Saqqaf, has told our Ambassador that King Faisal has now decided that the Arabs have made their point; that the world understands the ability of the Arabs to use their oil weapon effectively; and that many of the Arabs' friends and other innocent, uninvolved countries are now being hurt. The King has therefore decided that the oil boycott must be lifted and limits on production removed.

According to Saqqaf, this decision will be implemented as follows:

- The Saudis will convey their intention to the Arab oil conference on December 25th.
- The Saudis are attempting to move the meeting site from Tripoli to Kuwait and are suggesting that Arab Foreign Ministers, as well as Oil Ministers, attend the meeting.
- The position of the Saudi delegate will be that you have made solemn commitments to work for peace and that King Faisal believes you and hopes you will be successful. In the event you are not successful, the embargo could be reimposed and the blame would then be on Israeli, rather than Arab, intransigence.
- The estimate of the Saudis is that Algeria and Egypt will concur; Iraq and Libya will oppose, but have already broken the boycott themselves and their voice will not matter anyway; and Kuwait and Abu Dhabi could create problems.

There is no reason to believe that Saqqaf is not telling the truth, but this news should still be viewed with caution. The December 25 meeting is solely for the purpose of gaining the approval of the other Arab states. If the Saudis are successful, that meeting will trigger

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