

## THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

**1972-1-27, Assad, US, Trucks**

January 27, 1972

SECRET

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Proposed Sale of Trucks to Syria

The Chrysler Corporation informs us that the Syrian Government is planning to purchase 4,000 trucks for its army and wants a Chrysler product. These trucks are subject to Department of Commerce licensing and are not on the Munitions Control List. Chrysler has sought our permission to make the sale, valued at some \$25,000,000. For us to grant permission we need to make an exception to our current policy of embargoing shipments of military significance to those countries which broke diplomatic relations with us following the June 1967 war.

The Chrysler request poses us with a delicate question. Syria remains a negative factor in Middle East peace-making efforts, but under the Assad regime, which came to power following failure of Syria's attack on Jordan in late 1970, it is moving in the direction of greater pragmatism. To some extent Syria has also improved its relations with Jordan. The trucks are for the use of the Syrian military and thus are not without some military significance. The Israelis will not be particularly pleased with this transaction, but we believe with proper preparation their reactions will be manageable, particularly in view of what we are doing for Israel.

On the other hand, the sale would be a shot in the arm to our business interests. Aside from the substantive nature of the truck deal itself, it is likely to open the way to increasing sales of American products in Syria, and would be helpful to our balance of payments. If we do not allow Chrysler to sell these trucks to the Syrians, another country will do so and an American firm loses the business. This is essentially a dollars and cents

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Authority **E.O. 12958**By **KJ** NARA Date **4/10/18**~~MEMORANDUM~~

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION  
962SECRET

April 5, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. KISSINGER

FROM:

HAROLD H. SAUNDERS

SUBJECT:

Proposed Sale of American Trucks to  
Syrian Army

Syria is interested in a substantial number of trucks (4,000) for its army from Chrysler Corporation. To permit Chrysler to make this \$25 million sale would require USG permission to make an exception to our current policy--not law--of embargoing shipments of military significance to those countries which broke relations after the June 1967 war. These are, however, in the Department of Commerce licensing system and not on the Munitions List of more death-dealing equipment. Secretary Rogers "leans" in the direction of granting this exception.

The attached memo lays out the issue for the President and recommends we not approve this exception.

RECOMMENDATION: That you seek the President's position on the attached.

Concurrence: Robert Hormats

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## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION

962

April 18, 1972

SECRET

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN...

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER *HK*SUBJECT: Proposed Sale of American Trucks to  
Syrian Army

Syria is interested in buying a substantial number of trucks (4,000) for its army and wants a Chrysler product. Chrysler has sought our permission to make this \$25 million sale. The trucks are not on the Munitions Control List but are subject to Department of Commerce licensing. To permit the sale we would have to make an exception to our current policy--not law--of embargoing shipments of military significance to those countries which broke relations after June 1967.

Secretary Rogers, in the attached memorandum to you, sees a fine balance in this proposition. On the one hand, Syria has been a negative factor in the Mid East and these trucks, for military purposes, would not please the Israelis or Jordanians though he believes their reaction would be manageable. On the other hand, it is also true that Syria under Assad--who came to power after the 1970 Jordan crisis--has adopted more pragmatic and rational stands, has attempted to curb the fedayeen and has improved relations with Jordan. This is a fairly large business deal in the context of our balance of payments problem and might augur further sales in the future. The Secretary views the issue as primarily a commercial one; he does not see much political benefit from our approval. He "leans" in the direction of approving the transaction.

On balance my reaction is that it is difficult to see a strong enough argument to overcome the political objections to this sale.

The one political argument of any substance for the sale is the following: The Arabs are genuinely interested in a US alternative to exclusive dependence on the USSR. While we cannot expect a breakthrough in the absence of an Arab-Israeli settlement, we can promote whatever ties

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Authority E.O. 12730

By KJ NARA Date 4/10/18

TY COUNCIL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

SECRET

April 21, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

Mr. Theodore L. Elliot, Jr.  
Executive Secretary  
Department of State

SUBJECT: Proposed Sale of American Trucks to Syria  
(S/S 7201494)

The President has disapproved making an exception to current policy which would permit the sale of trucks to Syria by the Chrysler Corporation.

Jeanne W. Davis  
Staff Secretary

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Dispatched 4/21/72 - NSC Rept. (rb)

Authority E.O. 12152  
By KJ NARA Date 11/01/88SECRET

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to the US can exist in the current political atmosphere. These in many cases--as in Algeria and Egypt--are commercial ties. We should actively pursue these openings where they appear. The Arab-Israeli impasse is likely to go on for some time, and we cannot afford to let the Soviets perpetuate it--any more than is inevitable--to keep us from a reasonable relationship with the Arab countries.

If these trucks had no military application or if it were equipment with no offensive use, I would urge the sale. But even acknowledging that the Syrians will get the trucks somewhere, I have difficulty seeing how we would justify a sale to either Israel or Jordan.

RECOMMENDATION: That you disapprove exempting Syria from our policy for the purposes of this sale by Chrysler.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_



Allow the sale \_\_\_\_\_

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