

**FOREIGN
RELATIONS
OF THE
UNITED
STATES**

1977–1980

VOLUME XI

PART 1

**IRAN:
HOSTAGE
CRISIS,
NOVEMBER 1979–
SEPTEMBER 1980**



**DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE**

Washington



**Foreign Relations of the
United States, 1977–1980**

Volume XI, Part 1

**Iran:
Hostage Crisis,
November 1979–
September 1980**

Editor Linda Qaimmaqami
General Editor Kathleen B. Rasmussen

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN
FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

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About the Series

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the U.S. Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The staff of the Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, plans, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102–138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991. Section 198 of P.L. 102–138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State’s Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the U.S. Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the *Foreign Relations* series is guided by the principles of historical objectivity and accuracy; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The *Foreign Relations* statute requires that the published record in the *Foreign Relations* series include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. It further requires that government agencies, departments, and other entities of the U.S. Government en-

gaged in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support cooperate with the Department of State historians by providing full and complete access to records pertinent to foreign policy decisions and actions and by providing copies of selected records. Most of the sources consulted in the preparation of this volume have been declassified and are available for review at the National Archives and Records Administration.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have complete access to all the retired records and papers of the Department of State: the central files of the Department; the special decentralized files ("lot files") of the Department at the bureau, office, and division levels; the files of the Department's Executive Secretariat, which contain the records of international conferences and high-level official visits, correspondence with foreign leaders by the President and Secretary of State, and the memoranda of conversations between the President and the Secretary of State and foreign officials; and the files of overseas diplomatic posts. All of the Department's central files for 1977–1979 are available in electronic or microfilm formats at Archives II and may be accessed using the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) tool. The Department's central files for 1980–1981 will eventually be transferred to the National Archives. Almost all of the Department's decentralized office files covering this period, which the National Archives deems worthy of permanent retention, have been transferred to or are in the process of being transferred from the Department's custody to Archives II.

Research for *Foreign Relations* volumes is undertaken through special access to restricted documents at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and other agencies. While all the material printed in this volume has been declassified, some of it is extracted from still-classified documents. The staff of the Carter Library is processing and declassifying many of the documents used in this volume, but they may not be available in their entirety at the time of publication. Presidential papers maintained and preserved at the Carter Library include some of the most significant foreign-affairs related documentation from White House offices, the Department of State, and other federal agencies including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Some of the research for volumes in this subseries was done in Carter Library record collections scanned for the Remote Archive Capture (RAC) project. This project, which is administered by the National Archives and Records Administration's Office of Presidential Libraries, was designed to coordinate the declassification of still-classified records held in various Presidential libraries. As a result of the way in which records were scanned for the RAC, the editors of the *Foreign Relations* series were not always able to determine whether attachments to a given document were in fact attached to the paper copy of the docu-

ment in the Carter Library file. In such cases, some editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have indicated this ambiguity by stating that the attachments were “Not found attached.”

Editorial Methodology

Documents in this volume are presented chronologically according to time in Washington, DC. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance from the General Editor and the Chief of the Editing and Publishing Division. The original document is reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Texts are transcribed and printed according to accepted conventions for the publication of historical documents within the limitations of modern typography. A heading has been supplied by the editors for each document included in the volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in the documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words or phrases underlined in the original document are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations and terms is included in the front matter of each volume. In telegrams, the telegram number (including special designators such as Secto) is printed at the start of the text of the telegram.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted. Entire documents withheld after declassification review have been accounted for and are listed in their chronological place with headings, source notes, and the number of pages not declassified.

All brackets that appear in the original document are so identified in the footnotes. All ellipses are in the original documents.

The first footnote to each document indicates the source of the document and its original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the *Foreign Relations* statute, monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation of the series and declassification of records. The Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 13526 on Classified National Security Information and applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this volume, which began in 2010 and was completed in 2018, resulted in the decision to withhold 16 documents in full, excise a paragraph or more in 54 documents, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 77 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this volume and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and editorial notes presented here provide a thorough, accurate, and reliable

record of the Carter administration's response to the Iranian hostage crisis.

Kathleen B. Rasmussen, Ph.D.
General Editor

Adam M. Howard, Ph.D.
The Historian

Foreign Service Institute
November 2020

Preface

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations Series

This volume is part of a subseries of volumes of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important issues in the foreign policy of the administration of Jimmy Carter. It is one of two which document U.S. policy toward Iran during the Iranian Hostage Crisis of 1979–1981. This volume ends in September 1980. A subsequent volume, *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XI, Part 2, Iran: Hostage Crisis, September 1980–January 1981*, will cover the Algiers Accords of January 1981 and the release of the hostages.

For the immediate period leading up to the hostage crisis, readers should consult *Foreign Relations, Volume X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977–November 1979* upon its publication. Two volumes on oil and energy topics are also of importance for understanding the global and economic aspects of the crisis: *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, Volume XXXVI, Energy Crisis, 1969–1974* and *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, Volume XXXVII, Energy Crisis, 1974–1980*. This volume provides documentation on the U.S. strategic response to the Iranian Revolution in the Persian Gulf and Middle East in general. For documentation on the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula*.

Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XI, Part 1

The focus of this volume is on U.S. efforts to resolve the U.S.-Iranian crisis over the hostage taking. Members of the Carter administration met almost daily for the first several months of the crisis, mostly as the Special Coordination Committee, and less often in the form of the Policy Review Committee or as the National Security Council. Additionally, the Department of State prepared “Sitreps” and “Updates” on a daily basis to keep track of a crisis that grew in complexity. One of the demands of this volume was to sift through the voluminous material and separate out those events, people, and decisions that truly moved the crisis from stage to stage. Additionally, there were Iranian domestic developments stemming from the Iranian Revolution that impacted the crisis. In the absence of direct diplomatic communications between the United States and Iran, the role of a number of official and unofficial intermediaries in resolving the crisis is documented. While the volume’s principal focus is on Washington policymaking, an effort was made wherever possible to keep the focus on the hostages

themselves. The former Shah of Iran is also an important element in the volume. Until his death in July 1980, his movements in exile provoked Iran into continued efforts to obtain his extradition and his alleged fortune. Another, and not insubstantial focus of the volume, is on policy discussions within the administration concerning rescue efforts.

The volume can be divided into three main sequences: the initial embassy takeover and response by the Carter administration, efforts to negotiate with Iran through various intermediaries, and the resort to military force in the attempted rescue mission and its fallout. These developments took place against the backdrop of one of the twentieth century's most significant revolutions, the scale and historical background of which confounded U.S. policymakers who nevertheless made tremendous efforts to understand. Their frustrations with the situation are all too obvious.

Several themes are apparent by volume's end. First, the Carter administration, for all its effort, lacked appropriate leverage to influence Iranian developments. The hostages were held in the heart of a major city by non-governmental actors. Communication with members of the Iranian Government, therefore, was of little avail. Military power was also judged to be proven ineffective. The fact that the whereabouts of all of the hostages was unknown limited planning options. Moreover, the lack of an institutional structure for effective inter-service coordination of special operations activities hindered the execution of the rescue attempt. Other military actions were considered, but were deemed too risky in the context of Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union. Economic sanctions were hampered by a lack of international support. Furthermore, Iran itself was relatively economically insulated from dependence on foreign supplies.

Acknowledgments

The editor wishes to acknowledge the assistance of officials at the Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia. Special thanks are due to Mark Ellcessor and David Robarge of the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence of the Central Intelligence Agency, who were extremely helpful in arranging full access to the files of the Central Intelligence Agency. Douglas Richards and Mike Johnson of the Joint Chiefs of Staff were likewise extremely helpful in expediting access to the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Delta Force papers held by the JCS relating to the hostage rescue mission. The Office of the Historian wishes to thank Greg Perett of the Office of Information Programs and Services for coordinating the declassification review of this volume within the Department of State. Additional thanks are due to the Historical Programs Staff at the Central Intelligence Agency, the Office of Access Management at the National Security Council, and the Govern-

ment of Switzerland for assisting with the declassification of this volume.

Linda Qaimmaqami collected documentation for this volume and selected and edited it, under the supervision of Edward C. Keefer, then General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series. Chris Morrison assumed responsibility for resolving issues of compilation and review during the final stages of production. Kerry Hite coordinated the interagency declassification review, with the assistance of Chris Tudda and Carl Ashley, Chief of the Declassification Division. Heather McDaniel, Kerry Hite, and Rita M. Baker performed the technical and copy editing under the supervision of Mandy A. Chalou, Chief of the Editing and Publishing Division.

Linda Qaimmaqami
Historian

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Sources

*Sources for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume XI, Part 1, Iran:
Hostage Crisis, November 1979–September 1980*

In preparation for this volume, the editor made extensive use of Presidential papers and other White House records held by the Carter Library, which proved the best source of documentation on President Carter's and the National Security Council's role in conceptualizing, formulating, and implementing the response to the Iranian hostage crisis. Within the National Security Affairs Files, Brzezinski Material, the Country File, General Odom File, and the Subject File were particularly valuable. Among the Staff Material, the Middle East File and the Office File were critically important. The editor did not have access to the personal diaries of either President Carter or National Security Advisor Brzezinski.

Second in importance to the records held by the Carter Library were the records of the Department of State. The Department's central files contain the cable traffic recording U.S. diplomatic relations with Iran, Panama, and all countries critical to the hostage crisis, memoranda of diplomatic conversations, and memoranda proposing action or providing information.

The Department of State Lot Files provided material not duplicated elsewhere, and, in some cases, provided access to materials either destroyed or displaced within the federal government. Essential to the compilation were Lot Files 81D154 and Lot 82D85, both records of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David D. Newsom. Both were extensive, especially in the area of Nodis cables and the Iran Updates. The Updates, prepared daily under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Hal Saunders, often attached backchannel messages from the Swiss that were not available elsewhere.

The Central Intelligence Agency provides access for Department of State historians to high-level intelligence documents from those records in the custody of that Agency and at the Carter Library. This access is arranged and facilitated by the History Staff of the Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, pursuant to a May 2002 memorandum of understanding. Among the intelligence records reviewed for the volume were files of the Director of Central Intelligence, the CIA Registry of National Intelligence Estimates and Special National Intelligence Estimates, and Files from the Office of Research and Reports. Job 82M00501R from the Executive Registry was

two boxes of material on the hostage rescue mission that proved critical.

Documents from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218–98–0064, Records of the Joint Staff, and RG 218–07–0002, Records of J–3 DDSO Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984 were crucial to piecing together the rescue operation. The latter collection of over 20 boxes of material held the records of the Delta Force operation, planning, and intelligence.

Almost all of this documentation has been made available for use in the *Foreign Relations* series thanks to the consent of the agencies mentioned, the assistance of their staffs, and especially the cooperation and support of the National Archives and Records Administration.

For this volume, memoir material proved crucial for those episodes of the crisis when records were missing, off the record, or when negotiations entered the public arena.

The following list identifies the particular files and collections used in the preparation of this volume.

In addition to the paper files cited below, a growing number of documents are available on the Internet. The Office of the Historian maintains a list of these Internet resources on its website and encourages readers to consult that site on a regular basis.

Unpublished Sources

Department of State, Washington, D.C.

Bureau of Intelligence and Research

Papers of Stephen Grummon

INR/IL Historical Files. Files of the Office of Intelligence Coordination contain records from the 1940s through the 1980s and are maintained by the Office of Intelligence Liaison, Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Iran 1980

Covert Action 1980

Lot Files. These files have been transferred or will be transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland.

Lot 80D135: Office of the Secretariat Staff, Personal Files of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980

Lot 81D154: Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981

Lot 81D263: Records of the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Iran Desk

Lot 81D336: Records of the Office of the Historian; Iran Study

Lot 82D85: Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Lot 84D241: Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980

Lot 85D382: Records of the Executive Secretariat, S/S–I

Lot 88D276: Executive Secretariat FOI Files

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State

Central Foreign Policy File

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, Georgia

Brzezinski Donated Material

Geographic Files

Subject Files

National Security Affairs

Brzezinski Material

Agency File

Cables File

Country File

Brzezinski Office File

Country Chron File

Subject Chron File

General Odom File

Subject File

VIP Visit File

Staff Material

Europe, USSR and East/West File

West Europe Country File

Middle East File

Chron File

Meetings File

Subject File

Trip/Visits File

Office File

For President or Brzezinski Only File

Institutional File

Office File

Outside the System File

Meetings File

Presidential Advisory File

National Security Council, 1977–1981

Institutional Files (H-Files)

Office of the Chief of Staff

Jordan's Confidential Files

Plains File

President's Daily Diary

Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President

Lloyd Cutler's Files

Central Intelligence Agency, Langley, Virginia

Office of the Director of Central Intelligence

Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator

Job 81B00112R: Subject Files

Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979)

Job 82B00162R: Subject Files

Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files

Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981)

Directorate of Intelligence

Office of Support Services (DCI)

Job 81T00208R: Production Case Files (1979–1980)

National Security Council

Carter Intelligence Files

Department of Defense

Record Group 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

RG 218–07–0002, Records of J–3 DDSO

Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984

RG 218–98–0064, Records of the Joint Staff

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- Vance, Cyrus. *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy*. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1983.
- Washington Post*.

Abbreviations and Terms

A-6, U.S. long-range attack aircraft

AA, anti-aircraft

ACQ, acquired

ADA, Air Defense Artillery

AFB, Air Force Base

Amb, Ambassador

ARAMCO, Arabian-American Oil Company

AWB, Australian Wheat Board

AWACS, Airborne Early Warning and Control

B, Christian Bourguet

B-52, U.S. bomber

B&V, Bourguet and Villalon

BDG, Bangladesh Government

bpd, barrels per day

C, Jimmy Carter; Confidential

C-5, U.S. military transport aircraft

C-9, U.S. aeromedical transport aircraft

C-130, Hercules, general purpose, four-engine fixed wing military transport aircraft

C-141, Starlifter, fixed wing military transport aircraft

C-5, Galaxy, fixed wing military transport aircraft

C&R, communications and records

C³I, Communications, Command, Control, and Intelligence

CA, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State

CENTO, Central Treaty Organization

Cherokee, telegraphic distribution channel for the Eyes Only messages between the Secretary of State and an Ambassador

CIA, Central Intelligence Agency

CINC, Commander in Chief

CINCPAC, Commander in Chief, Pacific Command

CJCS, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

COG, Continuity of Government

COMSAT, Communications Satellite Corporation

CONUS, Continental United States

CPX, Command Post Exercise

CRICON, Crisis Confrontation

COMJTF, Commander Joint Task Force:

CT, Counterterrorism

CTJTF, Counterterrorism Joint Task Force

CVA, U.S. Navy Attack Aircraft Carrier

D, Office of the Deputy Secretary of State

DA, David Aaron

DAO, Defense Attaché Office

DCA, Defense Cooperation Agreement

DCI, Director of Central Intelligence

DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission
DDCI, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
DDN, David D. Newsom
DDO, Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency
DDSO, Deputy Director for Special Operations
Delta, 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment D, commanded by Colonel Charlie Beckwith
Desert One, designated landing spot for Delta Team and helicopters inside Iran, U.S. rescue mission
Desert Two, designated mountain hideout southeast of Tehran
DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency
DJS, Director, Joint Staff
DOE, Department of Energy
DOI, date of information
DOUBLESTAR, an operational test and evaluation activity for JTF procurement and training for a second rescue operation
DRE, Defense Research and Engineering

E-3, AWACS aircraft
Eagle Claw, code name for the rescue operation, operational phase
EC, European Community
EC-9, nine members of the European Community
EDS, Electronic Data Systems
EUCOM, European Command
Exdis, Exclusive Distribution

F-4, U.S. jet interceptor and fighter-bomber
F-5, U.S. light fighter aircraft
F-111, U.S. supersonic tactical attack aircraft
FBI, Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBIS, Foreign Broadcast Information Service
FCO, U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Fedayeen al-Khalq, secular Marxist group
FI, Foreign Intelligence
FLAG, Family Liaison Action Group
FMS, Foreign Military Sales
FOI, Freedom of Information
FRG, Federal Republic of Germany

G (GH), Ghotbzadeh
G-3, rifle produced in Iran under license from Heckler and Koch
GA, General Assembly
GDP, Gross Domestic Product
GOI, Government of Iran
GOP, Government of Pakistan; Government of Panama
GS, Gary Sick

H, Bureau of Congressional Relations, Department of State
HB, Honey Badger; Harold Brown
helo(s), helicopters
HUMINT, human intelligence

ICA, International Communication Agency
ICJ, International Court of Justice

ICRC, International Committee of the Red Cross
IEA, International Energy Agency
IEEPA, International Emergency Economic Powers Act
INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
INS, Immigration and Naturalization Service
INTELSAT, Global Fixed Satellites and Telecommunications Services; International Telecommunications Satellite Organization
IO/UNP, Office of UN Political Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
IRG, Islamic Revolutionary Guard
IRP, Islamic Republican Party
IWG, Iran Working Group, Department of State

J-2, Joint Staff Intelligence Division
J-3, Joint Staff Operations Division
J-3/DDSO, Joint Staff Operations Division/Deputy Director for Special Operations
J-5, Joint Staff Plans Directorate
J, JC, Jimmy Carter
JCS, Joint Chiefs of Staff
JTD, Joint Task Delta
JTF, Joint Task Force
JW, Jasper Welch

KC-135, U.S. aerial refueling aircraft
Komiteh, self-appointed revolutionary committees that sprang up spontaneously in most neighborhoods of Tehran

L, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State
LDC, less developed country
LOH, Light Observation Helicopter
LPH, Amphibious Assault Ship (helicopter); Landing Platform/Helicopter

MAAG, Military Assistance Advisory Group
Majles (Majlis), Iranian Parliament
MB, Marshall Brent
Mbd, Million barrels per day
MC-130, Combat Talon, U.S. four-engine fixed-wing special operations military aircraft
MD, Military District
MEDEVAC, medical evacuation
MFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mujahidin, Islamic guerrilla fighters; person who wages jihad
Mujahiddin al-Khalq, People's Mujahiddin of Iran, Islamic Marxist anti-Shah group founded in 1960s

NCA, National Command Authority
NE, Near East
NEA, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
NEA/IRN, Office of Iranian Affairs (Iran Desk), Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
NEA/IWG, Iran Working Group, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
NESA, Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Central Intelligence Agency
NFAC, National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency
NIOC, National Iranian Oil Company

XXIV Abbreviations and Terms

NM, nautical miles

Noform, Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals

NSA, National Security Agency

NSC, National Security Council

OECD, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OER, Office of Economic Research, Central Intelligence Agency

OJCS, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

OPEC, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

Oplan, operation plan

OPSDEPS, Service Operations Deputies

OPSEC, Operational Security

OSD, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Otter, U.S. low-level research airplane

P, Office of the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs; President

PACOM, U.S. Pacific Command

Pasdaran, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

PD, Presidential Directive

PDB, President's Daily Brief

PFLP, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization

PN, Panama, Panamanian

PNG, persona non grata

PRC, Policy Review Committee

PRM, Presidential Review Memorandum

RDF, Rapid Deployment Force

RDJTF, Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force

REDCOM, U.S. Readiness Command

RG, Record Group

RH-53, U.S. Navy (Marine Corps) Sea Stallion Helicopter

Rice Bowl, code name of the rescue operation in its planning stages

RSO, Regional Security Office(r)

S, Office of the Secretary of State; Secret

SALT, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

SAMA, Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency

SAR, search and rescue

SASC, Senate Armed Services Committee

SATCOM, Satellite Communications

SAVAK, Farsi language acronym for Iranian National Security and Information Organization (*Sazman-i Ittili'at va Amniyat-i Kishvar*)

SAVAMA, Farsi language acronym for Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and National Security (*Sazman-E Ettela'at Va Amniat-E Melli-E Iran*); replaced SAVAK

SCC, Special Coordinating Committee

SDR, Special Drawing Rights, International Monetary Fund

SEAL, Sea/Air/Land Force, U.S. Navy

SecGen, Secretary General

Secto, series indicator for telegrams sent from the Secretary of State

SFRC, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

SOD, J-3 Special Operations Division, Joint Staff

SOG, Special Operations Group (Central Intelligence Agency)

SNOWBIRD, Department of Defense planning for a second rescue operation

S/P, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
SR-71, Blackbird, U.S. reconnaissance aircraft
S/S, Executive Secretariat, Department of State
Stadis, State Department distribution only
SY, Office of Security, Bureau of Administration, Department of State
SYG, Secretary General

T, Tabatabai

Tabas, Iranian name for Desert One

TACAIR, tactical air

TASS, official Soviet news agency

TS, Top Secret

Tudeh, Iranian Peoples (Communist) Party

Twin Otter, codename for reconnaissance flights into Iran to locate what would become
Desert One

U-2, U.S. high-altitude reconnaissance airplane

UAE, United Arab Emirates

UN, United Nations

UNGA, United Nations General Assembly

UNSC, United Nations Security Council

UNSYG, United Nations Secretary General

USG, United States Government

USNATO, United States Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USUN, United States Mission to the United Nations

V, Hector Villalon

V&B, Villalon and Bourguet

VHF, Very High Frequency

VOA, Voice of America

VP, Vice President

WO, William Odom

Z, Zulu time, Greenwich Mean Time

ZB, Zbigniew Brzezinski

Persons

- Aaron, David L.**, President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs
- Agah, Manucher**, Chargé d'Affaires of the Iranian Embassy in the United States
- Aguilar, Andres**, Venezuelan Ambassador to the United States and Permanent Representative to the United Nations; former Justice Minister of Venezuela; Co-Chairman of the Commission of Inquiry established February 1980
- Ahmad, Rafiuddin (Rafi, Rafiq)**, Chef de Cabinet (Executive Secretary) to United Nations Secretary General
- Albright, Madeleine**, Congressional Relations Officer, National Security Council Staff, from March 1978
- Ames, Robert C.**, National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia, Central Intelligence Agency
- Amini, Ali**, former Prime Minister of Iran
- Arafat, Yasir**, head, Palestine Liberation Organization
- Armao, Robert**, U.S. public relations consultant; aide to former Vice President Nelson Rockefeller; adviser to the former Shah of Iran
- Ashraf, Princess**, twin sister of the Shah of Iran
- al-Assad, Hafez**, President of Syria
- Atherton, Alfred L. Jr. (Roy)**, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt from July 2, 1979
- Atwood, J. Brian**, Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs from August 3, 1979, until January 14, 1981
- Aubert, Pierre**, Swiss Foreign Minister
- Baker, Howard H., Jr.**, Senator (R-Tennessee)
- Bakhtiar, Shahpur**, Iranian Prime Minister from January 4, 1979, until February 11, 1979; head of the National Resistance Movement of Iran in Paris
- Ball, George**, Under Secretary of State from December 1961 until September 30, 1966
- Bani-Sadr, Abol Hassan**, Acting Iranian Foreign Minister from November 1979; member, Revolutionary Council; President of Iran from January 25, 1980, until June 22, 1981
- Bartholomew, Reginald**, Deputy Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State, from January until November 1977; member, National Security Council Staff for USSR/East Europe, from November 1977 until April 1979; Director, Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs, Department of State, from July 1979
- Bayh, Birch**, Senator (D-Indiana); Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
- Bazargan, Mehdi**, Iranian Prime Minister until November 6, 1979; member, Revolutionary Council
- Beckwith, Charlie**, Colonel, USA; Commander, Delta Force, Fort Bragg; Commander, Special Forces Operational Division, Masirah
- Bedjaoui, Mohammed**, Algerian Permanent Representative to the United Nations and former Algerian Minister of Justice; Co-Chairman of the February 1980 Commission of Inquiry
- Beheshti (Behesti), Ayatollah Seyed Mohammad**, Vice Chairman, Council of Experts; member, Revolutionary Council; leader of the Iranian Republic Party; President of Iran, September 1980
- Benyahia, Mohammed Seddik**, Algerian Foreign Minister
- Bergland, Robert S.**, Secretary of Agriculture from January 23, 1977

- Blackwill, Robert D.**, member, National Security Council Staff for Western Europe from September 1979 until January 1981
- Blumenthal, W. Michael**, Secretary of the Treasury from January 23, 1977, until July 19, 1979
- Bourguet, Christian**, French lawyer; referred to as one of the “two Frenchmen,” “French lawyers,” “French connections,” “French friends,” or B in “V&B” or “B&V”
- Bowdler, William G.**, Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from April 1978 until December 1979
- Bowen, David R.**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D–Mississippi)
- Bremet, Marshall**, member, National Security Council Staff for USSR/East Europe from May 1979 until January 1981
- Bremer, L. Paul**, Deputy Executive Secretary, Department of State
- Brewster, Kingman, Jr.**, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom
- Brezhnev, Leonid I.**, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
- Briggs, Everett E.**, Director, Office of Mexican Affairs, Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
- Broomfield, William S.**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–Michigan)
- Brown, Harold**, Secretary of Defense
- Brunner, Edouard**, senior Swiss Foreign Ministry official responsible for the Middle East
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew**, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
- Byrd, Robert**, Senator (D–West Virginia); Senate Majority Leader
- Caddell, Patrick**, public opinion pollster
- Caldwell, Lee**, Federal Bureau of Investigation
- Capucci, Hilarion**, Syrian Archbishop of the Basilian Aleppian Order
- Carlucci, Frank**, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
- Carrington, Right Honorable Lord (Peter)**, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, United Kingdom
- Carswell, Robert**, Deputy Secretary of the Treasury
- Carter, Billy**, brother of Jimmy Carter
- Carter, Hodding, III**, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Spokesman of the Department of State
- Carter, Jimmy**, President from 1977 until 1981
- Carter, Rosalynn**, wife of President Carter
- Castenada, Jorge**, Mexican Foreign Minister
- Chamran, Mustafa Ali**, Iranian Deputy Prime Minister for Revolutionary Affairs from April 1979 until September 1979; National Defense Minister from September 1979 until September 1980
- Chatti, Habib**, Secretary General of the Islamic Conference from 1979
- Christopher, Warren**, Deputy Secretary of State; Interim Acting Secretary of State from April until May 1980
- Church, Frank**, Senator (D–Idaho); Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, from January 1979 until January 1981
- Civiletti, Benjamin R.**, Attorney General from August 16, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Clark, Joe**, Canadian Prime Minister
- Clark, Ramsey**, former U.S. Attorney General; emissary to Iran November 1979
- Clarke, Bruce M.**, Deputy Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency
- Claytor, W. Graham**, Deputy Secretary of Defense
- Clement, Carl**, Deputy Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and member, Iran Working Group, Department of State
- Clift, A. Denis**, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs
- Cogan, Charles G.**, Chief, Near East and South Asia Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency

- Constable, Peter**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and member, Iran Working Group
- Cordovez, Diego**, Secretary of the UN Commission of Inquiry
- Cooper, Richard N.**, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs
- Cossiga, Francesco**, Italian Prime Minister from 1979 until 1980
- Cottam, Richard**, Professor of Political Science, University of Pittsburg; unofficial/private liaison with Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh
- Cutler, Lloyd**, White House Counsel from October 1, 1979, until November 30, 1980; unpaid consultant on hostage negotiations and Presidential papers, December 1980 until January 1981
- Daoudi, Adib**, Foreign Affairs Adviser to President Hafez al-Assad of Syria; Member of the UN Commission of Inquiry
- Davis, Richard**, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Operations
- Deal, Tim**, National Security Council Staff member for International Economics
- Dean, John G.**, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon
- DeBakey, Michael**, heart surgeon
- Dembri, Mohammed Salah**, Director General of the Algerian Foreign Ministry
- Denend, Leslie G.**, Special Assistant to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs from January 1980 until January 1981
- Diba, Farah**, wife of the Shah of Iran
- Djam (Jam), Fereidyun**, General, head of the Iranian Imperial Army Corps under the Shah; opposition leader in exile
- Dobrynin, Anatoly**, Soviet Ambassador to the United States
- Donovan, Hedley**, Senior Advisor to President Carter from 1979 until 1980
- Draper, Morris**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
- Dubs, Adolph H.**, U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan from July 1978 until his murder on February 14, 1979
- Duncan, Charles**, Secretary of Energy from August 24, 1979, until January 20, 1981
- Dustin, Eben H.**, Director of Medical Services, Department of State
- Dworkin, Douglas A.**, Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State
- Eizenstat, Stuart E.**, Executive Director, White House Domestic Policy Staff and Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy
- Entezam, Abas Amir**, Iranian Deputy Prime Minister 1979 from February 1979 until August 1979; Iranian Ambassador to Sweden from August 1979 until December 1979; arrested and imprisoned in December 1979
- Ermarth, Fritz**, member, National Security Council Staff for Defense Coordination, September 1978
- Escobar Bethancourt, Romulo**, Chief Adviser to Panamanian Military Leader Omar Torrijos
- Escudero, Stanley T.**, Office of United Nations Political Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Department of State
- Eshraghi, Ayatollah Shahab**, son-in-law of the Ayatollah Khomeini
- Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz al Saud**, Crown Prince; Saudi Minister of the Interior and Second Deputy Prime Minister
- Falk, Richard**, Professor of International Law, Princeton University; unofficial/private liaison with the Iranian Revolutionary Government
- Fara Diba, Shahbanou**, wife of the Shah of Iran
- Farhang, Mansour**, Cultural Attaché of the Iranian Embassy in the United States; Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations from December 1979
- Fascell, Dante B.**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Florida)

- Findley, Paul**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–Illinois)
- Fish, Hamilton**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–New York)
- Fisher, Roger**, Professor and Director of the Harvard Negotiation Project
- François-Poncet, Jean**, French Foreign Minister
- Friendly, Alfred, Jr.**, Press Officer and Associate Press Secretary, National Security Council Staff, from March 1980 until January 1981
- Funk, Gerald**, member, National Security Council Staff for Sub-Saharan Africa from December 1978 until January 1981
- Gast, Philip C.**, Major General, USAF; former chief of U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Iran; member, Joint Task Force
- Gates, Robert**, Special Assistant to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs from April 1979 until December 1979; National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union, Central Intelligence Agency, from January 1980
- Genscher, Hans-Dietrich**, German Foreign Minister
- Ghorbal, Ashraf**, Egyptian Ambassador to the United States
- Ghotbzadeh (Qotbzadeh), Sadegh**, member, Iranian Revolutionary Council; Iranian Foreign Minister from November 28, 1979, until August 1980
- Gilman, Benjamin A.**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–New York)
- Giscard d'Estaing, Valéry**, President of France
- Goldwater, Barry**, Senator (R–Arizona); Vice Chairman, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
- Gonzales, Felipe**, Secretary General of the Spanish Socialists' Party from 1979
- Gonzales, Rory (Rori)**, Panamanian businessman
- Gorman, Paul**, General, USA; Director for Plans and Policy, Joint Staff
- Graham, Sir John**, U.K. Ambassador to Iran
- Green, M.**, Office of Research and Analysis for Near East and South Asia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Gregg, Donald**, member, National Security Council Staff for Intelligence Coordination from June 1979
- Griffith, William E.**, Special Adviser to Zbigniew Brzezinski on Soviet affairs
- Gromyko, Andrei A.**, Soviet Foreign Minister
- Grummon, Stephen R.**, Office of Research and Analysis for Near East and South Asia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Guyer, Tennyson**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–Ohio)
- Habibi, Hassan**, Spokesman for the Revolutionary Council, Iranian presidential candidate, and Member of Parliament
- Haig, Alexander M.**, General, USA; Senior Military Adviser to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, June 1969 until June 1970; President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs, June 1970 until January 1973; Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, August 1973 until August 1974
- Hanni al-Hasan**, Political Adviser to Yassir Arafat; envoy to Tehran from the Palestine Liberation Organization
- Hansen, George**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R–Idaho)
- Hanson, Thor**, Vice Admiral, Director of the Joint Staff from June 1979 until June 1981
- Harriman, W. Averell**, U.S. statesman
- Harris, George S.**, Director, Office of Research and Analysis for Near East and South Asia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Hartman, Arthur A.**, U.S. Ambassador to France
- Hashemi, Cyrus**, liaison with Qom and Admiral Madani; intermediary for Reza Pasim-dideh (nephew of Khomeini)
- al-Hassan, Khalid**, senior Fatah adviser, Palestine Liberation Organization representative in Tehran

- Hayward, Thomas D.**, Admiral, USN; Chief of Naval Operations
- Heikal (Heykal), Mohammed**, Egyptian journalist, editor of *al-Ahram* from 1957 until 1974
- Helman, Gerald**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Political and Multilateral Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs
- Helms, Richard**, Director of Central Intelligence from 1966 until February 1973; U.S. Ambassador to Iran from 1973 until 1977; international consultant
- Henderson, Sir Nicholas**, U.K. Ambassador to the United States
- Henze, Paul B.**, member, National Security Council Staff for Intelligence Coordination, for Cyprus/Turkey/Greece, for Horn of Africa, and for international broadcasting, from January 1977
- Hinton, Deane R.**, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs
- Hoffman, John**, partner, Shearman & Sterling, New York
- Holloway, James L., III**, Admiral, USN; Chairman, Special Operations Review Group
- Hunter, Robert**, member, National Security Council Staff for Western Europe from January 1977 until August 1979
- Hussein (Husayn) ibn Talal**, King of Jordan
- Hussein, Saddam**, President of Iraq
- Huyser, Robert**, General, USAF; head, military mission to Iran, January-February 1979
- Illueca, Jorge**, Panamanian Ambassador to the United Nations
- Inman, Bobby Ray**, Admiral, USN; Director of the National Security Agency from July 1977 until February 12, 1981
- Jackson, Henry (Scoop)**, Senator (D-Washington)
- Jackson, William**, lawyer to the Shah of Iran in exile
- Javits, Jacob K.**, Senator (R-New York); ranking Republican member of Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Jayewardene, Harry**, member of the United Nations Subcommittee on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities and close adviser to his brother, Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene; Sri Lankan Representative to the United Nations; member of the Commission of Inquiry established February 1980
- John Paul II, (Karol Józef Wojtyła)** Pope from October 16, 1978
- Johnson, Mark**, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and Member, Iran Working Group, Department of State
- Jones, David C.**, General, USAF; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff from June 1978
- Jordan, Hamilton (Ham)**, White House Chief of Staff from July 1979 until June 1980
- Kaiser, Marcus**, Charge d'Affaires of the Swiss Embassy in Iran
- Kalaris, George T.**, Special Assistant for Counter Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency
- Katz, Julius L.**, Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs from September 26, 1976, until November 29, 1979
- Kean, Benjamin, Jr.**, specialist in tropical diseases, New York Hospital; doctor for the Shah in exile
- Kennedy, Edward M.**, Senator (D-Massachusetts); 1980 Presidential candidate
- Keough, Katherine**, wife of hostage William Keough
- Khalid bin Abdul Aziz**, King of Saudi Arabia from 1975 until 1982
- Khalil, Mustafa**, Egyptian Prime Minister
- Khalikhali, Ayatollah Sadegh**, Chief Justice of the Iranian Revolutionary Courts; presumed organizer of the Embassy takeover
- Khodapanahi (Ghodapanahi), Mohammed Karim**, Iranian Foreign Minister from August 1980 until March 11, 1981

- Khoeini (Khoeni), Ayatollah Mohammed Moussavi**, spiritual adviser to the students holding the Embassy; liaison between the students and the Ayatollah Khomeini; Deputy Speaker of the Majles, 1980
- Khomeini, Ahmad**, son of the Ayatollah Khomeini
- Khomeini, Ayatollah Ruhollah**, Imam, Supreme Leader of Iran from February 11, 1979
- Khomeini, Houssein**, grandson of the Ayatollah Khomeini
- Kirbo, Charles**, friend of President Carter
- Kissinger, Henry A.**, former President's Assistant for National Security Affairs from January 1969 until November 1975; Secretary of State from September 1973 until January 1977
- Klutznick, Phillip**, Secretary of Commerce from January 9, 1980, until January 20, 1981
- Komer, Robert**, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Kreisberg, Paul H.**, staff member, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
- Kreisky, Bruno**, Chancellor of Austria
- Krys, Sheldon J.**, Executive Director, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State
- Kyle, James**, Colonel, USAF; Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force Fixed Wing Air Operations at Masirah
- Laingen, L. Bruce**, Charge d'Affaires, U.S. Embassy in Tehran; hostage
- Lake, Anthony (Tony)**, Director, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
- Lake, William T.**, Office of the Legal Adviser, Department of State
- Lambsdorff, Otto**, German Minister of Economics
- Lang, Erik**, Swiss Ambassador to Iran
- Larrabee, Stephen**, member, National Security Council Staff for USSR/East Europe from September 1978
- Lewis, Gabriel**, Panamanian Ambassador to the United States from 1977 until 1978; Panamanian businessman
- Lewis, Samuel W.**, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
- Long, Robert L.J.**, Admiral, USN; Commander in Chief Pacific from 1979 until 1983
- López Portillo, José**, President of Mexico
- Madani, Ahmad**, Admiral, former Governor-General of Khuzestan Province and Commander of the Iranian Navy
- Magee, Robert W.**, Acting Chief, Near East and South Asia Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency
- al-Mahdi, Sadiq**, Sudanese religious and political figure; former Prime Minister from 1966 until 1967; head of the national Umma Party; and head of the Ansar Sufi sect
- Maraghei, Moghadam**, Azeri leader and head of the Radical Movement
- Mark, David**, Deputy Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
- Marwan, Ashraf**, son-in-law of Gamal Abdel Nasser
- Mathias, Charles**, Senator (R-Maryland)
- Matin-Daftari, Hedayatollah**, leader, National Democratic Front
- Maynes, Charles W.**, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs
- McBride, Sean**, former Irish Foreign Minister; former head of Amnesty International
- McCloy, John J.**, banker, lawyer, Presidential adviser
- McGiffert, David**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs from 1977
- McIntyre, James T., Jr.**, Director, Office of Management and Budget
- McHenry, Donald**, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations
- McMahon, John D.**, Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency, from January 11, 1978
- Miller, G. William**, Secretary of the Treasury from August 6, 1979

- Milam, William B.**, Deputy Director, Office of Monetary Affairs, Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, Department of State
- Miller, William G.**, Staff Director, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence; emissary to Iran, November 1979
- Mondale, Walter F. (Fritz)**, Vice President
- Montazeri, Ayatollah Houssein**, head of the Iranian Revolutionary Council, November 1979
- Moore, Frank**, President's Assistant for Congressional Liaison
- Moss, Ambler**, U.S. Ambassador to Panama
- Moussavi-Khoeini, Hajjatol Islam**, key participant in Embassy takeover
- Mubarak, Hosni**, Vice President of Egypt
- Murray, Robert**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near Eastern, African, and South Asian Affairs
- Muskie, Edmund S.**, Secretary of State from May 9, 1980, until January 20, 1981
- Nahavandi, Hushang**, former Chancellor of Tehran University
- Nazih, Hassan**, Azeri leader; former head of National Iranian Oil Company
- Newsom, David D.**, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs
- Nobari, Ali Reza**, Governor, Bank Markazi
- Noriega, Manuel**, Colonel, Head of Panamanian Intelligence Services
- Odom, William E.**, Colonel, USA; Military Assistant to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, and Crisis Coordinator, National Security Council Staff
- Ohira, Masayoshi**, Prime Minister of Japan
- O'Neill, Thomas P., Jr. (Tip)**, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Massachusetts); Speaker of the House
- Oveissi (Oveisi), Gholam Ali**, General, former commander of the Iranian Army; former Ground Forces Commander; opposition leader in exile
- Owen, Henry D.**, National Security Council Staff Special Representative for Economic Summits and member for International Economics from October 1977
- Owen, Roberts B.**, Legal Adviser of the Department of State from October 4, 1979
- Oxman, Steve**, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State; Partner, Shearman and Sterling Law Firm and point of contact with the former Shah of Iran
- Pahlavi, Mohammed Reza**, Shah of Iran, exiled in 1979
- Palme, Olof**, leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party
- Pasandideh, Reza**, nephew of the Ayatollah Khomeini
- Perot, H. Ross**, founder, Electronic Data Systems
- Pertini, Sandro**, President of the Italy
- Pettiti, Louis-Edmond**, former President, Paris Bar Association; member, UN Commission of Inquiry
- Pittman, Charles (Chuck)**, Colonel, USAF; Special Assistant to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; Deputy Commander, Helicopter Operations, USS *Nimitz*
- Platt, Nicholas**, Director of the Office of Japanese Affairs, Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Department of State, from 1977 until 1978; member, National Security Council Staff for East Asia/China from July 1978 until November 1979
- Poats, Rutherford**, member, National Security Council Staff for International Economics from September 1978 until January 1981
- Powell, Joseph (Jody)**, White House Press Secretary
- Precht, Henry**, Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, and manager, Iran Working Group, Department of State; U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania from July 1980
- Press, Frank**, Director of the White Office of Science and Technology Policy
- Probst, Raymond**, Swiss Ambassador to the United States

Pustay, John S., General, USAF; Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Qashqai, Nasser Khan, leader of the Qashqai tribe

Quainton, Anthony C.E., Director, Office for Combating Terrorism, Department of State

Rafsanjani, Hajatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi, member, Iranian Revolutionary Council;
President of Iranian Consultative Assembly, July 1980

Rafshoon, Gerald, President's Assistant for Communications

Rajai, Mohammed Ali, Iranian Prime Minister from August 12, 1980, until August 4, 1981

Raphel, Arnold, Special Assistant to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance; Special Assistant to Secretary of State Edmund Muskie

Read, Benjamin M., Deputy Under Secretary of State for Management from August 1977 (title changed to Under Secretary of State for Management in October 1978)

Reagan, Ronald, Governor of California; Republican Presidential nominee, 1980

Reed, Joseph, member, David Rockefeller's staff

Ritzel, Gerhard, German Ambassador to Iran

Rockefeller, David, Chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank

Ross, Christopher E., Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Algiers

Rouhani, Moussa Fakhri, Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon

Royo, Aristides, President of Panama

al-Sadat, Anwar, President of Egypt

Sadr, Imam Musa, leader of radical Lebanese Shia movement

Sahabi, Yadollah, Acting Speaker of the Iranian Parliament

Salamatian, Ahmad, Special Envoy of Iran to the United Nations, Acting Foreign Minister, and Bani-Sadr's campaign manager

Salamin, Marcel, Panamanian Ambassador to the United Nations

Sanjabi, Karim, leader of the National Front Party

Salim, Salim Ahmed, President of the United Nations General Assembly, 1979

Saud bin Faisal al-Saud, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs

Saunders, Harold H., Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, until April 1978; thereafter, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and head of the Iran Working Group

Sawhill, John, Department of Energy

Schlesinger, James, Secretary of Energy from August 4, 1977, until July 20, 1979

Schmidt, Helmut, German Chancellor

Schwebel, Steven, Deputy Legal Adviser for Special Problems and Member, International Law Commission, Bureau of Legal Affairs, Department of State

Seignious, George M., Director, U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency

Shariat-Madari (Shariatmadari), Ayatollah Mohammed Kazem, religious authority of the Azeris

Shulman, Marshall, Special Adviser to Secretary of State Vance on Soviet Affairs

Shemirani, (Shamirani) Jamal, Chargé d'Affaires of the Iranian Mission to the United Nations

Shutler, Philip D., Lieutenant General, Director for Operations, Joint Staff

Sick, Gary, member, National Security Council Staff for the Middle East/North Africa

Solomon, Anthony M., Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs from March 1977 until March 1980

Spiers, Ronald L., Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from January 1980

Stevens, Theodore, Senator (R-Alaska)

Stoessel, Walter J., U.S. Ambassador to Germany

Streator, Edward, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in London

Suddarth, Roscoe S., Executive Assistant, Office of the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Sullivan, William L., U.S. Ambassador to Iran from June 17, 1977, to April 6, 1979

Sultan bin abd al-aziz al-Saud, Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation

Swift, Elizabeth Ann, Political Officer, U.S. Embassy in Tehran; hostage

Tabatabai, Ali Akbar, press attaché for the Shah; founder of Iran Freedom Foundation; assassinated in Bethesda, Maryland, on July 22, 1980

Tabatabai, Sadegh, Iranian emissary; Khomeini's relative by marriage

Tarnoff, Peter, Executive Secretary of the Department of State

Taylor, Kenneth, Canadian Ambassador to Iran

Terzi, Zehdi, Permanent PLO Representative to the United Nations

Thatcher, Margaret, British Prime Minister from May 1979

Thornton, Thomas, National Security Council Staff member for South Asia/UN Matters

Tomseth, Victor, Political Counselor, U.S. Embassy in Iran; hostage

Torrijos, General Omar, Commander of the Panamanian National Guard, Military Leader of Panama

Turner, Stansfield, Admiral, USN; Director of Central Intelligence

Utgoff, Victor, member, National Security Council Staff for Defense Coordination

Vance, Cyrus, Secretary of State from January 23, 1977, until April 20, 1980

Van Well, Gunter, Deputy to German Foreign Minister Genscher

Vanden Heuvel, William J., U.S. Representative to the United Nations European Office, Geneva

Vaught, James B., Major General, USA; Commander, Joint Task Force

Videla, Jorge Rafael, Lieutenant General, President of Argentina and Commander of the Army

Villalon, Hector, Argentine businessman; referred to as one of the "two Frenchmen," "French lawyers," "French connection," "French friends," or V in "V&B" or "B&V"

Volcker, Paul, Chairman, Federal Reserve

Waldheim, Kurt, United Nations Secretary-General

al-Walid, Abu, Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Wallau, Theodore, Special Assistant to German Foreign Minister Genscher

Waller, John H., Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency

al-Wazir, Khalil, Fatah Military Chief

Webster, William H., Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, from 1978 until 1987

Welch, Jasper, Major General, USAF; member, National Security Council Staff for Defense Coordination from November 1979 until January 1981

West, Togo, Special Assistant to Secretary of Defense Brown

West, John C., U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from June 1977 until March 21, 1981

Wise, Phillip J., Jr., President's Appointments Secretary

Yazdi, Ibrahim, Iranian Foreign Minister from April 22, 1979, until November 6, 1979

Young, Andrew, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations from January 30, 1977, to September 23, 1979

Zablocki, Clement J., member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Wisconsin)

Zahedi, Ardeshir, Iranian Ambassador to the United States under the Shah

Zia-ul-Haq, Mohammad, General, President of Pakistan from September 1978

U.S. Hostages Held for 444 Days

Ahern, Thomas L., Jr.
Barnes, Clair Cortland
Belk, William E.
Blucker, Robert O.
Cooke, Donald J.
Daugherty, William J.
Englemann, Robert
Gallegos, William
German, Bruce W.
Gillette, Duane (Sam)
Golancinski, Alan B.
Graves, John E.
Hall, Joseph M.
Hermening, Kevin J.
Hohman, Donald R.
Holland, Leland J.
Howland, Michael
Jones, Charles A., Jr.
Kalp, Malcolm
Kennedy, Moorhead (Mike) C., Jr.
Keogh, William F., Jr.
Kirtley, Steven
Koob, Kathryn L.
Kupke, Frederick Lee
Laingen, L. Bruce
Lauterbach, Steven
Lee, Gary E.
Lewis, Paul Edward
Limbert, John W., Jr.
Lopez, James M.
McKeel, John D., Jr.
Metrinko, Michael J.
Miele, Jerry J.
Moeller, Michael E.
Moore, Bert C.
Morefield, Richard H.
Needham, Paul M., Jr.
Ode, Robert C.
Persinger, Gregory A.
Plotkin, Jerry
Ragan, Regis
Roeder, David M.
Rosen, Barry M.
Royer, William B., Jr.
Schaefer, Thomas E.
Scott, Charles W.
Sharer, Donald
Sickman, Rodney (Rocky) V.
Subic, Joseph, Jr.
Swift, Elizabeth Ann
Tomseth, Victor L.
Ward, Phillip R.

U.S. Hostage Released on July 11, 1980, Because of Illness

Queen, Richard I.

U.S. Hostages Released, November 1979

Gross, Kathy
Hughes, James
Johnson, Lillian
Maples, Ladell
Montagne, Elizabeth
Quarles, William
Rollins, Lloyd
Robinson, Neal (Terry)
Tedford, Terri
Vincent, Joseph
Walker, David
Walsh, Joan
Williams, Wesley

U.S. Hostages Smuggled Out (the Canadian Six), November 1979

Anders, Robert
Lijek, Mark J.
Lijek, Cora
Schatz, Henry L.
Stafford, Joseph D.
Stafford, Kathleen

Members of the Special Operations Review Group (Holloway Group)

Holloway, James L., III
Gray, Alfred M., Jr.
Manor, Leroy J.
Piotrowski, John L.
Smith, James C.
Wilson, Samuel V.

Note on U.S. Covert Actions

In compliance with the *Foreign Relations of the United States* statute that requires inclusion in the *Foreign Relations* series of comprehensive documentation on major foreign policy decisions and actions, the editors have identified key documents regarding major covert actions and intelligence activities. The following note will provide readers with some organizational context on how covert actions and special intelligence operations in support of U.S. foreign policy were planned and approved within the U.S. Government. It describes, on the basis of declassified documents, the changing and developing procedures during the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter Presidencies.

Management of Covert Actions in the Truman Presidency

The Truman administration's concern over Soviet "psychological warfare" prompted the new National Security Council to authorize, in NSC 4-A of December 1947, the launching of peacetime covert action operations. NSC 4-A made the Director of Central Intelligence responsible for psychological warfare, establishing at the same time the principle that covert action was an exclusively Executive Branch function. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) certainly was a natural choice but it was assigned this function at least in part because the Agency controlled unvouchered funds, by which operations could be funded with minimal risk of exposure in Washington.¹

The CIA's early use of its new covert action mandate dissatisfied officials at the Departments of State and Defense. The Department of State, believing this role too important to be left to the CIA alone and concerned that the military might create a new rival covert action office in the Pentagon, pressed to reopen the issue of where responsibility for covert action activities should reside. Consequently, on June 18, 1948, a new NSC directive, NSC 10/2, superseded NSC 4-A.

NSC 10/2 directed the CIA to conduct "covert" rather than merely "psychological" operations, defining them as all activities "which are conducted or sponsored by this Government against hostile foreign states or groups or in support of friendly foreign states or groups but which are so planned and executed that any US Government responsibility for them is not evident to unauthorized persons and that if un-

¹ NSC 4-A, December 17, 1947, is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1945-1950, Emergence of the Intelligence Establishment*, Document 257.

covered the US Government can plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them.”

The type of clandestine activities enumerated under the new directive included: “propaganda; economic warfare; preventive direct action, including sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures; subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberations [*sic*] groups, and support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. Such operations should not include armed conflict by recognized military forces, espionage, counter-espionage, and cover and deception for military operations.”²

The Office of Policy Coordination (OPC), newly established in the CIA on September 1, 1948, in accordance with NSC 10/2, assumed responsibility for organizing and managing covert actions. The OPC, which was to take its guidance from the Department of State in peacetime and from the military in wartime, initially had direct access to the State Department and to the military without having to proceed through the CIA’s administrative hierarchy, provided the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) was informed of all important projects and decisions.³ In 1950 this arrangement was modified to ensure that policy guidance came to the OPC through the DCI.

During the Korean conflict the OPC grew quickly. Wartime commitments and other missions soon made covert action the most expensive and bureaucratically prominent of the CIA’s activities. Concerned about this situation, DCI Walter Bedell Smith in early 1951 asked the NSC for enhanced policy guidance and a ruling on the proper “scope and magnitude” of CIA operations. The White House responded with two initiatives. In April 1951 President Truman created the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) under the NSC to coordinate government-wide psychological warfare strategy. NSC 10/5, issued in October 1951, reaffirmed the covert action mandate given in NSC 10/2 and expanded the CIA’s authority over guerrilla warfare.⁴ The PSB was soon abolished by the incoming Eisenhower administration, but the expansion of the CIA’s covert action writ in NSC 10/5 helped ensure that covert action would remain a major function of the Agency.

As the Truman administration ended, the CIA was near the peak of its independence and authority in the field of covert action. Although the CIA continued to seek and receive advice on specific proj-

² NSC 10/2, June 18, 1948, is printed *ibid.*, Document 292.

³ Memorandum of conversation by Frank G. Wisner, “Implementation of NSC-10/2,” August 12, 1948, is printed *ibid.*, Document 298.

⁴ NSC 10/5, “Scope and Pace of Covert Operations,” October 23, 1951, is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community, Document 90.*

ects from the NSC, the PSB, and the departmental representatives originally delegated to advise the OPC, no group or officer outside of the DCI and the President himself had authority to order, approve, manage, or curtail operations.

NSC 5412 Special Group; 5412/2 Special Group; 303 Committee

The Eisenhower administration began narrowing the CIA's latitude in 1954. In accordance with a series of National Security Council directives, the responsibility of the Director of Central Intelligence for the conduct of covert operations was further clarified. President Eisenhower approved NSC 5412 on March 15, 1954, reaffirming the Central Intelligence Agency's responsibility for conducting covert actions abroad. A definition of covert actions was set forth; the DCI was made responsible for coordinating with designated representatives of the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that covert operations were planned and conducted in a manner consistent with U.S. foreign and military policies; and the Operations Coordinating Board was designated the normal channel for coordinating support for covert operations among State, Defense, and the CIA. Representatives of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President were to be advised in advance of major covert action programs initiated by the CIA under this policy and were to give policy approval for such programs and secure coordination of support among the Departments of State and Defense and the CIA.⁵

A year later, on March 12, 1955, NSC 5412/1 was issued, identical to NSC 5412 except for designating the Planning Coordination Group as the body responsible for coordinating covert operations. NSC 5412/2 of December 28, 1955, assigned to representatives (of the rank of assistant secretary) of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the President responsibility for coordinating covert actions. By the end of the Eisenhower administration, this group, which became known as the "NSC 5412/2 Special Group" or simply "Special Group," emerged as the executive body to review and approve covert action programs initiated by the CIA.⁶ The membership of the Special Group varied depending upon the situation faced. Meetings were infrequent until 1959 when weekly meetings began to be held. Neither the CIA nor the Special Group adopted fixed criteria for bringing projects before the

⁵ William M. Leary, editor, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents* (The University of Alabama Press, 1984), p. 63; for text of NSC 5412, see *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community*, Document 171.

⁶ Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, pp. 63, 147–148; *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, Book I, Foreign and Military Intelligence* (1976), pp. 50–51. For texts of NSC 5412/1 and NSC 5412/2, see *Foreign Relations, 1950–1955, The Intelligence Community*, Documents 212 and 250.

group; initiative remained with the CIA, as members representing other agencies frequently were unable to judge the feasibility of particular projects.⁷

After the Bay of Pigs failure in April 1961, General Maxwell Taylor reviewed U.S. paramilitary capabilities at President Kennedy's request and submitted a report in June that recommended strengthening high-level direction of covert operations. As a result of the Taylor Report, the Special Group, chaired by the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy, and including Deputy Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman Lemnitzer, assumed greater responsibility for planning and reviewing covert operations. Until 1963 the DCI determined whether a CIA-originated project was submitted to the Special Group. In 1963 the Special Group developed general but informal criteria, including risk, possibility of success, potential for exposure, political sensitivity, and cost (a threshold of \$25,000 was adopted by the CIA), for determining whether covert action projects were submitted to the Special Group.⁸

From November 1961 to October 1962 a Special Group (Augmented), whose membership was the same as the Special Group plus Attorney General Robert Kennedy and General Taylor (as Chairman), exercised responsibility for Operation Mongoose, a major covert action program aimed at overthrowing the Castro regime in Cuba. When President Kennedy authorized the program in November, he designated Brigadier General Edward G. Lansdale, Assistant for Special Operations to the Secretary of Defense, to act as chief of operations, and Lansdale coordinated the Mongoose activities among the CIA and the Departments of State and Defense. The CIA units in Washington and Miami had primary responsibility for implementing Mongoose operations, which included military, sabotage, and political propaganda programs.⁹

President Kennedy also established a Special Group (Counter-Insurgency) on January 18, 1962, when he signed NSAM No. 124. The Special Group (CI), set up to coordinate counter-insurgency activities separate from the mechanism for implementing NSC 5412/2, was to confine itself to establishing broad policies aimed at preventing and resisting subversive insurgency and other forms of indirect aggression in friendly countries. In early 1966, in NSAM No. 341, President Johnson

⁷ Leary, *The Central Intelligence Agency: History and Documents*, p. 63.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁹ See *Foreign Relations, 1961–1963*, volume X, Cuba, 1961–1962, Documents 270 and 278.

assigned responsibility for the direction and coordination of counter-insurgency activities overseas to the Secretary of State, who established a Senior Interdepartmental Group to assist in discharging these responsibilities.¹⁰

NSAM No. 303, June 2, 1964, from Bundy to the Secretaries of State and Defense and the DCI, changed the name of "Special Group 5412" to "303 Committee" but did not alter its composition, functions, or responsibility. Bundy was the chairman of the 303 Committee.¹¹

The Special Group and the 303 Committee approved 163 covert actions during the Kennedy administration and 142 during the Johnson administration through February 1967. The 1976 Final Report of the Church Committee, however, estimated that of the several thousand projects undertaken by the CIA since 1961, only 14 percent were considered on a case-by-case basis by the 303 Committee and its predecessors (and successors). Those not reviewed by the 303 Committee were low-risk and low-cost operations. The Final Report also cited a February 1967 CIA memorandum that included a description of the mode of policy arbitration of decisions on covert actions within the 303 Committee system. The CIA presentations were questioned, amended, and even on occasion denied, despite protests from the DCI. Department of State objections modified or nullified proposed operations, and the 303 Committee sometimes decided that some agency other than the CIA should undertake an operation or that CIA actions requested by Ambassadors on the scene should be rejected.¹²

The effectiveness of covert action has always been difficult for any administration to gauge, given concerns about security and the difficulty of judging the impact of U.S. initiatives on events. In October 1969 the new Nixon administration required annual 303 Committee reviews for all covert actions that the Committee had approved and automatic termination of any operation not reviewed after 12 months. On February 17, 1970, President Nixon signed National Security Decision Memorandum 40,¹³ which superseded NSC 5412/2 and changed the name of the covert action approval group to the 40 Committee, in part because the 303 Committee had been named in the media. The Attorney General was also added to the membership of the Committee. NSDM 40

¹⁰ For text of NSAM No. 124, see *ibid.*, volume VIII, National Security Policy, Document 68. NSAM No. 341, March 2, 1966, is printed *ibid.*, 1964–1968, volume XXXIII, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy; United Nations, Document 56.

¹¹ For text of NSAM No. 303, see *ibid.*, Document 204.

¹² *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, Book I, Foreign and Military Intelligence*, pp. 56–57.

¹³ For text of NSDM 40, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, volume II, Organization and Management of U.S. Foreign Policy, 1969–1972, Document 203.*

reaffirmed the DCI's responsibility for the coordination, control, and conduct of covert operations and directed him to obtain policy approval from the 40 Committee for all major and "politically sensitive" covert operations. He was also made responsible for ensuring an annual review by the 40 Committee of all approved covert operations.

The 40 Committee met regularly early in the Nixon administration, but over time the number of formal meetings declined and business came to be conducted via couriers and telephone votes. The Committee actually met only for major new proposals. As required, the DCI submitted annual status reports to the 40 Committee for each approved operation. According to the 1976 Church Committee Final Report, the 40 Committee considered only about 25 percent of the CIA's individual covert action projects, concentrating on major projects that provided broad policy guidelines for all covert actions. Congress received briefings on only a few proposed projects. Not all major operations, moreover, were brought before the 40 Committee: President Nixon in 1970 instructed the DCI to promote a coup d'etat against Chilean President Salvador Allende without Committee coordination or approval.¹⁴

Presidential Findings Since 1974 and the Operations Advisory Group

The Hughes-Ryan amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 brought about a major change in the way the U.S. Government approved covert actions, requiring explicit approval by the President for each action and expanding Congressional oversight and control of the CIA. The CIA was authorized to spend appropriated funds on covert actions only after the President had signed a "finding" and informed Congress that the proposed operation was important to national security.¹⁵

Executive Order 11905, issued by President Ford on February 18, 1976, in the wake of major Congressional investigations of CIA activities by the Church and Pike Committees, replaced the 40 Committee with the Operations Advisory Group, composed of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the DCI, who retained responsibility for the planning and implementation of covert operations. The OAG was required to hold formal meetings to develop recommendations for the President regarding a covert action and to conduct periodic reviews of previously-approved operations. EO 11905 also banned all U.S. Government employees from involvement in polit-

¹⁴ *Final Report of the Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities*, United States Senate, Book I, Foreign and Military Intelligence, pp. 54-55, 57.

¹⁵ Public Law 93-559.

ical assassinations, a prohibition that was retained in succeeding executive orders, and prohibited involvement in domestic intelligence activities.¹⁶

Approval and oversight requirements for covert action continued to be governed by the Hughes-Ryan amendment well into the Carter administration, even as the new administration made alterations to the executive branch's organizational structure for covert action. President Carter retained the NSC as the highest executive branch organization to review and guide U.S. foreign intelligence activities. As part of a broader NSC reorganization at the outset of his administration, President Carter replaced the Operations Advisory Group (OAG) with the NSC's Special Coordination Committee (SCC), which explicitly continued the same operating procedures as the former OAG.¹⁷ Membership of the SCC, when meeting for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations on covert actions (as well as sensitive surveillance activities), replicated that of the former OAG—namely: the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; the Secretaries of State and Defense; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Attorney General and Director of the Office of Management and Budget (the latter two as observers). The designated chairman of all SCC meetings was the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Carter formalized the SCC's replacement of the OAG in EO 11985 of May 13, 1977, which amended President Ford's EO 11905 on "United States Foreign Intelligence activities."¹⁸ In practice, the SCC for covert action and sensitive surveillance activities came to be known as the SCC (Intelligence) or the SCC-I, to distinguish it from other versions of the SCC.

The SCC's replacement of the OAG was reaffirmed in E.O. 12036 of January 24, 1978, which replaced E.O. 11905 and its amendments. E.O. 12036 also reaffirmed the same membership for the SCC-I, but identified the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget as full members of the Committee, rather than merely observers.

¹⁶ Executive Order 11905, "United States Foreign Intelligence Activities," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 12, No. 8, February 23, 1976.

¹⁷ The broader NSC reorganization sought to reduce the number of NSC committees to two: the Policy Review Committee (PRC) and the Special Coordination Committee (SCC). The SCC's jurisdiction included all intelligence policy issues other than annual budget and priorities reviews; the SCC also had jurisdiction over other, nonintelligence matters. Presidential Directive 2, "The National Security Council System," January 20, 1977, Carter Library, Vertical File, Presidential Directives. See also Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977–1981* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 1983), pp. 59–62.

¹⁸ Executive Order 11985, "United States Foreign Intelligence Activities," May 13, 1977, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 13, No. 20 (May 16, 1977), pp. 719–720.

Also in the first days of the Carter administration, the SCC-I established a lower-level working group to study and review proposals for covert action and other sensitive intelligence matters and report to the SCC-I. This interagency working group was chaired by the Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (David Aaron), or in his absence, the NSC Director for Intelligence Coordination. The working group was named the Special Activities Working Group (SAWG). The SAWG was active in early Carter administration reviews of ongoing covert action, and remained active through at least 1978. NSC officials in mid-1978 sought to downgrade or abolish the SAWG and replace it as needed with ad hoc working groups. Internal NSC reviews at the end of the Carter administration state that the SAWG gradually fell out of use. By late 1979, the means for debating, developing, and guiding certain covert actions was an interagency working group chaired by Aaron at the NSC. This group was referred to by several names during the late Carter administration, including the Deputy's (or Deputies) group, the Aaron group, the interagency group, the Black Chamber, and the Black Room.

The Carter administration made use of a new category of presidential findings for "world-wide" or "general" (or "generic") covert operations. This continued a practice initiated late in the Ford administration in response to the Hughes-Ryan requirement for presidential findings. The worldwide category covered lower-risk operations that were directed at broad policy goals implemented on a worldwide basis as assets allowed. These operations utilized existing assets as well as existing liaison contacts with foreign intelligence or security services, and in some cases also consisted of routine training or procurement undertaken to assist foreign intelligence partners or other agencies of the USG. A new type of document—known as "Perspectives"—provided more specific tasking guidance for these general, worldwide covert activities. Perspectives detailed the themes to be stressed in furtherance of a particular policy goal. Riskier operations required their own presidential finding or Memorandum of Notification (see below). Perspectives were drafted by the CIA and cleared by the Department of State, so that the CIA could vet the operational feasibility and risks of the program while State could assess the diplomatic risks and verify that the program was consistent with overall foreign policy goals. At least initially, Perspectives did not require further coordination with the OAG, SCC, or the President. Once an agreed-upon Perspectives document was finalized by CIA and the Department of State, it was transmitted to the field, and posts were required to make periodic reports on any achievements under the Perspectives guidelines. Beginning in 1978, actions in this worldwide category were authorized by the President as specific line-item additions to a previously existing "world-wide" finding, though Perspectives were still used to provide additional details.

Another new document used during the Carter administration was the “Memorandum of Notification” (MON). MONs were initially used to introduce higher-risk, significantly higher-cost, or more geographically-specific operations under a previously-approved worldwide or general objective outlined¹⁹ in a Perspectives document. Like Perspectives, MONs had to be coordinated between the CIA and the Department of State, but they also required broader interagency coordination within the SAWG or SCC. MONs subsequently came to be used for significant changes to any type of finding, not just worldwide ones. Entirely new covert actions continued to require new presidential findings. The Hughes-Ryan amendment stipulated that Congress be notified of new findings “in a timely fashion,” but did not specify how much time that meant. During the Carter administration, the CIA typically notified Congress of new covert initiatives within 48 hours, including those outlined in Perspectives or MONs.

In October 1980, the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1981—also known as the Intelligence Oversight Act of 1980—scaled back the Hughes-Ryan amendment’s provisions for congressional oversight of covert action. While the requirement to notify Congress about presidential findings remained in place, the new Act limited the committees of Congress that had to be briefed to the two intelligence committees, and also explicitly clarified that this requirement to keep the committees “fully and currently informed” did not constitute a requirement for congressional approval of covert action or other intelligence activities. Moreover, the new Act stipulated that if the President determined it was “essential to limit prior notice to meet extraordinary circumstances affecting vital interests of the United States,” the President could limit prior notice to the chairmen and ranking minority members of the two intelligence committees, the Speaker and minority leader of the House, and the majority and minority leaders of the Senate—a group that came to be known as the “Gang of Eight.” If prior notice of a covert action was withheld, the President was required to inform the two intelligence committees “in a timely fashion” and provide a statement of the reasons for not giving prior notice.²⁰

¹⁹ Executive Order 12036, “United States Foreign Intelligence Activities,” January 24, 1978, *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (January 30, 1978), pp. 194–214. Since E.O. 12036 governed foreign intelligence activities, all references in the E.O. to the “SCC” were effectively references to what was known in practice as the SCC (Intelligence), or SCC-I.

²⁰ PL 96–450, Sec. 407 (October 14, 1980). See also the description of the Hughes-Ryan amendment and its replacement by PL 96–450 in: Richard A. Best, Jr., “Covert Action: Legislative Background and Possible Policy Questions,” Congressional Research Service, RL33715, December 27, 2011, pp.1-2; and L. Britt Snider, *The Agency and the Hill: CIA’S Relationship with Congress, 1946-2004*, Washington: Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 2008, pp. 280–81.

Iran: Hostage Crisis, November 1979–September 1980

First Responses

1. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 4, 1979

SUBJECT

Takeover of Embassy Tehran

1. According to reports from Embassy Tehran, an estimated 3,000 Iranian student demonstrators occupied the Embassy this morning. Although they did not brandish any weapons and professed to be engaged in a peaceful sit-in demonstration, the students penetrated the security barricades within the Embassy and have apparently taken the Embassy duty personnel hostage, tying their hands behind their backs and moving them from the inner area of the Embassy. Chargé Laingen, who was not present in the Embassy at the time of the takeover, was at last report located at the Iranian Foreign Ministry. A Radio Tehran broadcast confirms that hostages have been taken and that the demonstrators are demanding the extradition of the Shah.

2. State Department has established a crisis task force headed by Asst Secretary Hal Saunders who is currently monitoring the situation

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79. Confidential. The memorandum was transmitted via telegram WH92089 from the White House Situation Room to Phil Wise for the President at 1141Z (6:41 a.m. Washington time). Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner. He was at Camp David on November 4; he returned to Washington the next morning.

in the State Operations Center.² Efforts are being made to contact Prime Minister Bazargan.

² The Iran Working Group under Saunder's leadership issued regular updates and situation reports.

2. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 5, 1979, 10:30–11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary

David Newsom, Under Secretary, Political Affairs

Harold Saunders, Asst. Sec., Bureau of Near East & So. Asian Affrs

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown

JCS

Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations

DCI

Stansfield Turner

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

Gary Sick

William Odom

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/5/79: SCC re Iran. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Unless otherwise noted, no minutes of SCC meetings have been found. As standard procedure, Gary Sick prepared summaries of each SCC meeting, "identifying conflicting points of view and issues requiring presidential decision." Brzezinski then reviewed the summary and sent it, within hours of the meeting, to the President, who then made handwritten comments in the margins. This annotated version was then used as the first item of business at the following SCC meeting. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, p. 247) According to Turner, members of the SCC never saw or were allowed to read these prepared summaries. (Turner, *Terrorism and Democracy*, p. 28)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC met to review the present situation in Iran and next steps. The following issues were addressed:

1. *Presidential Statement.* There is an internal rivalry inside Iran between the religious authorities under Khomeini and the more moderate, secular elements represented by Prime Minister Bazargan and Foreign Minister Yazdi. The U.S. Chargé this morning counseled extreme caution in any U.S. public statements which could undercut the position of the Bazargan-Yazdi forces or further inflame anti-American sentiments among the religious groups.² State and NSC will prepare on an urgent basis a statement which could be issued either by Jody Powell or by the President. The statement will stress that this is a time for coolness, not inflammatory rhetoric. (S)

2. *Emissary.* The SCC agreed that it would be useful to offer sending an emissary to Khomeini. This could provide a face-saving device for the religious authorities if they are looking for a way out of the situation. The two most likely candidates are Bill Miller, who has personal contacts with individuals close to Khomeini, and Ramsey Clark. On balance, the SCC preferred Miller, but both possibilities will be explored. All agreed that our offer of an emissary should be tied to Iranian willingness to release the hostages. A decision memorandum for the President will be prepared by State.³ In the meantime, State will proceed with efforts to find a secure channel to relay our thinking to Chargé Laingen. Professor Richard Cottam will also be approached to see if he would be willing to undertake a trip to Tehran on a private citizen basis to use his own contacts with religious authorities on behalf of the hostages. (S)

3. *Security for the Shah.* The Rockefeller group, which is managing the Shah's affairs, has increased the security around the Shah. We will suggest that they seek help from the New York police if they have not yet done so. We have suggested that they issue a new medical bulletin on the Shah's condition and the necessity of further surgery as some-

² Laingen's message was not found.

³ According to handwritten notes of the meeting, Brzezinski passed on the message that Carter was "rather negative" at first on using Ramsey Clark as an emissary. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/5/79: SCC re Iran) In the November 5 decision memorandum to the President, Christopher recommended that Ramsey Clark and Bill Miller speak "directly to the religious authorities in Tehran and Qom." They were to stress early release of the hostages, speak on major issues between the United States and Iran, and listen to the Iranian response. (Ibid.)

thing which might be helpful.⁴ The SCC agreed that a public statement by the Shah at this point would not be helpful. (S)

4. *Contingency Plans.* A small group of State, Defense, CIA and NSC will examine steps which we might have to take in the event hostages are harmed, if we are faced with threats from Iran, or if the country begins to come apart. This examination will be conducted with the greatest possible discretion, and no tangible steps will be taken without further review. The focus will be on possible rescue operations and on the integrity of the oil resources in the south.⁵ The SCC agreed that diversion of the Midway Task Force should be retained as an option in the event we are faced with direct threats to our people in Tehran. (TS)

5. *Another meeting* will be held tomorrow. (C)

⁴ The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center released a November 5 update on the former Shah's medical condition, citing his recuperation from a choledochotomy, the need to remove an additional stone in the bile duct, delayed chemotherapy for his malignant lymphoma, and radiation therapy for a tumor in his neck. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah, Oct–Nov 1979, Vol. III)

⁵ According to handwritten notes of the meeting, Brown and Brzezinski discussed taking Iranian airfields, cooperating with the Iranian military, and seizing the southern oilfields should Iran have a major civil war. The bombing of Qom was briefly discussed. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/5/79: SCC re Iran)

3. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Seizure of U.S. Embassy and Personnel

PARTICIPANTS

Ayatollah Seyed Mohammad Beheshti
Henry Precht, Country Director for Iran

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation. Secret. Drafted by Stanley Escudero (IO/UNP). Copies were sent to Christopher, Newsom, Saunders, and Sick. Beheshti was in Tehran; Precht was in Washington.

Mr. Precht telephoned Ayatollah Beheshti to request his assistance in securing the release of Embassy personnel and evacuation of the Embassy compound by Iranian students. The request was couched in humanitarian terms and included statements of understanding for the views of the Iranian people and the aims of their revolution.

The Ayatollah replied that the Iranian people should be expected to become angry when a nation speaks of good relations but shelters Iran's principal enemy. The Shah could have gone elsewhere for treatment. The presence of Bakhtiar and others in England has also angered the Iranian people and has resulted in the occupation of the UK Embassy as well. Iran will go its own way and although it wants equal relations with all countries, will remain independent.

The students have emphasized that they will take care of the security and safety of the hostages. We cannot oppose the zeal of the nation; there can be no separation of the Iranian leadership from the desires of the Iranian people. Meanwhile, Beheshti advised the U.S. to consider carefully "the true causes of happenings which nobody likes." The Iranian authorities will do their best to control the situation but much will depend upon the U.S. and UK reactions.

According to Beheshti, the USG must offer the Iranian people an acceptable answer to the question of the Shah's presence in the United States. Statements on good relations can help to improve the situation and the Iranian authorities will expect such a statement.

Finally, Beheshti agreed to speak to other members of the Revolutionary Council and other decision-makers to see what might be done.

4. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran

Iranian internal politics are seriously complicating the hostage negotiations. The division in the government between the religious

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran 11/1/79-11/10/79. Secret. A stamped notation in the upper right-hand corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

authorities on one hand—headed by Khomeini and his cohorts in Qom acting through the religious komitehs and Revolutionary Guards—and the secular, more moderate forces of Bazargan, Yazdi et al. on the other. We have had a growing body of evidence for several months now that Bazargan and co. were increasingly aware of their inability to influence Khomeini. Consequently, they seem to have decided to initiate a close working relationship with us on the intelligence side. My guess is that they believe in the omnipotence of the CIA and want to get the Agency on their side in the event of a clear break with Khomeini. They know that their jobs depend almost entirely on Khomeini and they are looking for alliances and clandestine support from us as a safety net in case they are fired.

This explains their willingness to meet with us and talk reasonably about our bilateral problems, but this approach (as most recently evidenced by the criticism they have suffered for meeting with you)² makes them even more suspect by Khomeini. A man who spent much of the summer in Qom (Bill Miller's friend Haeri) says that Khomeini trusts no one but his son. He is willing to make use of people like Bazargan, Yazdi, Chamran, etc., but he would have no compunction about dropping them in an instant if it suited his purposes.

The present circumstances may be the crunch point in this rivalry. Yazdi has accepted responsibility for trying to get the hostages released. He has interceded with Qom on our behalf and he has permitted Bruce Laingen to stay at the Foreign Ministry. For most of yesterday, Laingen was physically in Yazdi's office, using Yazdi's telephone on a permanent basis to pass messages back and forth to Washington. At the same time, Yazdi and Bazargan are being attacked in the press for having met with you without the Ayatollah's permission, and the rhetoric from religious luminaries such as Beheshti has been drawing an ominous distinction between the "language of the revolution" (i.e. the students) and "the language of diplomacy." Hence Yazdi is in an impossible situation, and this could be issue which costs him his job.

The Shah's presence here is extremely helpful to Khomeini. Just as in August, when he rallied the population against the Kurds to revive his sagging fortunes, this provides a chance for him to unite the population against the one symbol they all hate. It takes them back to the "good old days" of last year when they all agreed on something. As long as the Shah is here—or perhaps as long as the Shah lives—this will be an issue which Khomeini will exploit.

² Reference is to Brzezinski's meeting with Bazargan and Yazdi in Algiers, November 1. The memorandum of conversation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977–November 1979.

Since the Shah is a given and since Khomeini's need to hold on to power domestically will outweigh any benefits he might receive from cooperation with us (at least in his own mind), this argues for a shift in our own policies. We have made a conscious effort to develop good relations with the Iranian government as a long-term investment. At least publicly, we can continue with that but we should have no illusions that it will pay off. Otherwise, we should shift the balance of our efforts to building up contacts with the secular leadership and other opponents of Khomeini to place ourselves as well as possible for a successor government and to end Khomeini's rule as soon as possible. The longer Khomeini remains in power, the worse it will be for us—and for Iran.

[1 paragraph (3 lines) not declassified]

In the meantime, Khomeini will use the hostages for his own political purposes. We must continue our efforts to convince him that this is a losing game by mobilizing all the resources we can. A special emissary still strikes me as a very useful initiative on our part. I suspect (and Bill Miller agrees) that when Khomeini has made his point, he will release the hostages. Unfortunately, our principal channel—Yazdi—is not the most effective way of getting our message through to the Ayatollah, and if we overload that circuit we may merely succeed in getting Yazdi, Bazargan and other possible friendly elements fired.

5. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran

You asked how our contingency plans held up when put to the test. Obviously, the answer is: not at all. The extraordinary effort which has been exerted over the past nine months to reinforce the Chancery building proved futile when the mob managed to penetrate the base-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 142, Chron File, Sick 11/1/79-11/15/79. Confidential.

ment. Our security people believe that it was an inside job, but we may never know.

Our previous plans called for buttoning up the Embassy, keeping only a tiny handful of people there on alert, and dispersing other employees to central points unlikely to be known to the demonstrators. If the mob had attacked last Thursday² as we expected, I think we would have come through.

The demonstrators were extremely well informed and organized. They knew exactly where to go, which building to attack, when the guard force would be at a low level of alert, and were even able to produce an acetylene torch when they ran into a steel door. Their success was due neither to good luck on their side nor bad luck on ours. It was organization, not luck.

This incident has led me to question whether it is even realistic to talk about security when your embassy faces a large, well-organized mob which can choose its time and place, and where police protection vanishes at the first sign of trouble.

² November 1.

6. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 6, 1979, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State
Secretary Cyrus Vance
David Newsom

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 195 Iran. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

White House

The Vice President
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Hamilton Jordan
Jody Powell

NSC

Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC met to review the situation in Iran. The following issues were addressed:

1. *Public statement.* A statement was approved for immediate release from the White House press office.² (U)

2. *Emissaries.* A Presidential letter is being drafted. The two emissaries (Ramsey Clark and William Miller) should be positioned as close as possible to Tehran in order to be able to respond quickly if we get an indication that they will be accepted by the authorities in Qom. (S)

3. *Contacts with Foreign Governments.* Secretary Vance briefed on the efforts being made to mobilize support from Islamic nations who may have influence with the Khomeini regime, our contacts with the Turkish Government about possible refuge for our Chargé, and our approach to the Red Crescent (through the ICRC) to visit the hostages at the U.S. Embassy compound in Tehran. (C)

4. *Energy.* The Department of Energy, together with State and the NSC, will examine the following: (1) the feasibility and desirability of triggering IEA allocation mechanisms in the event of an embargo or reduced production by Iran; (2) explore the possibility of arranging compensatory oil supplies from other oil producers which would permit us to reject any oil threats by Iran; and (3) Secretary Duncan and Chairman Miller will consult with the leaders of U.S. oil companies about steps they could take to minimize the effects of any oil cutoff by Iran. It was estimated that the U.S. share of Iranian production amounts to about 700,000 barrels per day. If Iran successfully shuts off these supplies, it would take several months to be felt in this country, but the effects would eventually be serious. (TS)

² The White House issued the first public statement on the hostage crisis on November 9, after Carter met with members of the hostage families. Carter referred to the strong feelings, frustration, and "deep anger" felt by all Americans, feelings that he shared, as a result of the hostage situation, and asked U.S. citizens to "exercise restraint" and "refrain from any action that might increase the danger to the American hostages in Tehran." For the full text of the statement, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pp. 2102–2103.

5. *Contingencies*. Before the meeting tomorrow, a very small group will examine each of the following cases:

(1) *Rescue*. The SCC saw no way for us to intervene militarily to rescue the hostages without seriously risking their lives. We would expect the Iranian military to oppose any such intervention. The most likely means would be to secure an airfield and conduct a helicopter raid into the embassy compound.³

(2) *Retaliation*, if some or all of the hostages were killed. A number of economic responses are available, including seizure of Iranian assets, cutoff of trade (including food), and cessation of supply of spare parts for the military. Militarily, we could: blockade Iran's oil shipments; strike or seize a site such as the Bandar Abbas military base in the south, Kharg Island oil loading terminal, or the three islands which Iran occupies at the mouth of the Persian Gulf; we could attempt to destroy the F-14s and/or other military assets by air strike; we would consider renewing direct support to the Kurds; and we could potentially kidnap a leading Iranian figure as a counter-hostage.

(3) *Disintegration*. Our previous plan to defend the oil fields was predicated on the assistance of the Iranian military. This must now be reconsidered. (TS)

6. *Iranian Students*. For tomorrow's meeting, the Department of Justice will provide a report on the numbers of Iranians in various categories (including illegal aliens) in the United States, investigations which may currently be under way, and the steps which might be available to us. (TS)

³ As Carter and Sick later recalled, Brzezinski called Brown to inform him that Carter wanted the Joint Chiefs to move ahead on a rescue mission contingency plan. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 459, and Sick, *All Fall Down*, pp. 213–216) By November 4, Jones activated a small ad hoc planning cell under Major General Vaught housed within the Joint Staff Special Operations Division, J-3. Vaught reported directly to Jones. (Holloway Report, July 23, 1980, pp. 9, 26)

7. Letter From President Carter to Ayatollah Khomeini¹

Washington, November 6, 1979

Dear Ayatollah Khomeini:

Based on the willingness of the Revolutionary Council to receive them, I am asking two distinguished Americans, Mr. Ramsey Clark and Mr. William G. Miller, to carry this letter to you and to discuss with you and your designees the situation in Tehran and the full range of current issues between the U.S. and Iran.

In the name of the American people, I ask that you release unharmed all Americans presently detained in Iran and those held with them and allow them to leave your country safely and without delay. I ask you to recognize the compelling humanitarian reasons, firmly based in international law, for doing so.

I have asked both men to meet with you and to hear from you your perspective on events in Iran and the problems which have arisen between our two countries. The people of the United States desire to have relations with Iran based upon equality, mutual respect, and friendship.

They will report to me immediately upon their return.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23, Iran, 6/75–12/79. No classification marking. According to a November 6 memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, the letter was approved by Vance and reviewed by Clark and Miller. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79) The letter was never delivered, as the emissaries never reached Iran.

8. **Record of a National Security Council Meeting¹**

Washington, November 6, 1979, 4:30–6:15 p.m.

NSC MEETING CHAIRED BY THE PRESIDENT
IN THE CABINET ROOM

ATTENDEES ARE

The President
Vice President
Secretary Vance
Secretary Brown
General Jones, Chairman of the JCS
Hamilton Jordan
Jody Powell
Gary Sick

The President opened the meeting by noting that the Iranian problem was one of the most difficult problems we have faced since he has been in the White House. American people have been captured, there was no government to work with and there appears to be no desire to negotiate. We face the prospect of the hostages being killed one at a time or perhaps all of them. The integrity of our nation demands some form of punitive action if this occurs. However, first it is important to do everything possible to save lives. If we succeed in getting everyone out of Tehran then it would be his intention to break relations with Iran. First we must consider how to get people out. Secondly, we need to consider what to do if a punitive action is required. The President thought seriously about this issue and was inclined not to take any action which would get us bogged down or a situation where extrication was difficult and any pullback would be viewed as a defeat.

Dr. Brzezinski suggested an agenda for the meeting. First of all a review of the negotiating situation with Iran and the international actions which are available to us. Secondly, the military options which fall into three categories. First of all a possible rescue operation for the hostages; second of all a retaliatory or punitive action as required; and, thirdly what might be required in the event of a fragmentation or breakdown internally within Iran. He noted that he had talked to Ambassador Sam Lewis during the day and was told that the Israelis

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/6/79: NSC re Iran. No classification marking. Brzezinski was also in attendance.

were watching the situation with bated breath. It was a test of how we would react.

The Vice President interjected that this was this week's test.

Secretary Vance reviewed the situation briefly. We had succeeded in reaching Ayatollah Beheshti in Tehran.² He felt that the sending of emissaries was a good idea and he promised to raise this idea with the Revolutionary Council. We had a plane standing by to fly the emissaries first of all to Athens where they could wait for a decision. There was a short letter from the President which they would take with them.³ The plane was large enough to bring back sixty hostages if they are released.

The President wondered whether bringing the Americans out of Iran would constitute breaking relations.

Secretary Vance said only if we say that we are breaking relations. We may simply say that we are going to take everyone out. If the Iranians ask for the Chargé to remain, Ramsey Clark has said that he will remain with the Chargé in Tehran.

Hamilton Jordan asked whether it may be presumptuous for us to send these emissaries off before we have an answer from the Iranians.

Secretary Vance said yes it was, however, we wanted to have them close at hand in the event the answer was yes. If they flew directly through, they could arrive in Tehran tomorrow morning and be in Qom around 10:00 in the morning. It is extremely important that public knowledge of this initiative remain quiet until we have their answer.

Hamilton Jordan noted that Frank Moore had told him that the word was already out on the Hill. It was a secret that was not well kept.

The President said he saw no downside to having the emissaries in Athens, if the answer is no they can simply come home.

² In a telephone call of November 6, Precht informed Beheshti that the United States wanted to send Clark and Miller to Tehran or Qom to discuss "all questions outstanding between our two governments once the Americans have been released," and that the emissaries were bringing a letter from Carter to Khomeini. Precht also asked that a representative from the Red Lion and Sun or one of the Islamic embassies visit the hostages. Beheshti agreed to take up the issues with the Revolutionary Council. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran 11/1/79-11/10/79)

³ See Document 7.

Secretary Vance read through the instructions which were prepared for the two emissaries.⁴ The key part of the instructions involves two parts: first, a statement that the length of the stay of the Shah in the United States would be commensurate with the reasons for his admittance and the second phrase that the Shah will not remain permanently.

Dr. Brzezinski recommended that the second phrase was really not necessary since it was already implied in the first phrase. However, the emissaries could be instructed to explain that the first phrase really meant that the Shah would not remain permanently.

The President agreed and suggested that the emissaries could say that the Mexican government had extended an invitation.⁵

Secretary Vance noted that the Shah has expressed concern with the problems which have arisen about his presence and he did not want to be the cause of harm coming to the American citizens.

The President said that Ramsey Clark could tell that to Khomeini and quote the rather effusive Mexican invitation for the Shah to return.

Dr. Brzezinski said that he thought it important that the Iranians not interpret Ramsey Clark statement as a promise from the President that the Shah will leave. Rather they should say there is every reason to expect that the Shah will return. The less chance we give the Iranians to boast about their prevailing over the United States the better off we are.

The Vice President agreed. He felt that it was better to keep any promise very fuzzy because it would be used against us.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that the less we give them the better.

Secretary Vance noted that we should not raise expectations that the Shah will immediately leave although he might be willing to. At the present time he has a tube implanted in him and also has cancer of the neck and could not easily be moved.

⁴ The instructions stated that the primary objective of the emissaries was to secure the early release of all U.S. citizens detained in Iran, and that the secondary objective was to meet with religious authorities in Iran and "hear their views on ways to overcome the difficulties in our relationship." The instructions also stated that the United States had admitted the Shah for medical treatment and that he would not engage in any political activity, that the U.S. Government had little information on his U.S. assets, that the U.S. Government was not involved in Kurdistan and supported Iran's territorial integrity, that some resolution with Iranian authorities had been achieved on military supply issues, and that the U.S. Government exercised no control over the U.S. press. (Telegram 290407 to Clark and Miller in Istanbul, November 7; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Nov 1979)

⁵ See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean, Document 166.

Secretary Brown noted that it was probably not impossible to evacuate him physically; we did medical evacuation all the time. However, it was a real political problem.

The President asked what the Shah had agreed to.

Secretary Vance said that the Shah had agreed to have his doctors talk to Iranian doctors about his medical state but not to see him.

The President said that the instructions were all right with the one deletion.

Secretary Vance went on to note that the Pakistanian Ambassador went to Qom today to see Khomeini. The Algerians are probably willing to weigh in as well. He also noted that there was a man named Hosan ala Hosani in Lebanon who was reputed to be very close to Khomeini. [1 line not declassified] Although they could also approach him through Sarkis.

Stan Turner said it would be better to go through Sarkis and the State connection since he would have to have a Presidential Determination to do it.

The President noted that he could have a Presidential Determination in fifteen minutes.

Dr. Brzezinski noted he had just received a report that Mr. Valeriani of NBC has a story about the emissaries going to Iran which he planned to use this evening. Hodding Carter was trying to dissuade him of using it.

Secretary Vance noted that Valeriani was a good man who would listen to reason.

The President said that Hodding Carter and Jody Powell and Secretary Vance if necessary should talk to him to try to stop the story. He wondered if other networks had the story as well. Everyone agreed that the indications were that they did not.

Secretary Vance went on to brief that the Pakistanis had been very helpful and that their Ambassador would go to Qom to talk with Khomeini. The Turks had chickened out. They were unwilling to offer their Embassy as a refuge for our Chargé. The UN Secretary General is calling in all the Islamic Ambassadors to indicate the seriousness of the international implications of the Iranians' actions.

Stan Turner gave a brief report on the group holding the hostages. They are called the Tunidi Islami. They were originally Islamic fanatics totally devoted to Khomeini. In more recent times they have been infiltrated by the leftists to a considerable degree though they have retained Khomeini support. Recently they got into the Radio Tehran broadcast and criticized the talks that Brzezinski had in Algiers with Bazargan and Yazdi. They are clever and well organized and their objective seems to be to try to bring down the moderates in the govern-

ment. They have no history of violence that we are aware of. It does appear that Khomeini gave permission for the occupation of the Embassy. The chances of negotiating with them do not appear to be good. He also noted the Kharg Island oil terminal had been shut down this morning and that presently no oil exports were coming out of Iran.

The President inquired about the results of the students' press conference in Tehran.

Dr. Brzezinski said it was largely more of the same.

Stan Turner added that they had said that any action aimed at freeing the prisoners would lead to killing the hostages.

Secretary Brown said that led to the discussion of a possible rescue operation. They had examined this option and considered that the chances of carrying it off successfully were very small.

General Jones noted that his Israeli counterpart Eitan was currently visiting in Washington and the subject of a rescue operation had come up naturally during lunch. Eitan considers the situation in Tehran far more difficult than Entebbe⁶ because of the urban environment, the distance from the airport, and other complications.

At this point *General Jones* displayed a number of pictures of the Embassy compound in Tehran and its surroundings showing how difficult it would be to come through the city on the ground. Such an approach could be impossible and Khomeini could put millions of people in the streets. In general they thought that helicopters was the only way to come in. We are not sure exactly where the hostages are located, though there are reports that they are being held in the basement of the Embassy. It might be possible to bring three helicopters down on the Embassy grounds at night in the open area. It would [be] necessary to bring in at least 120 people, 30 of which would go immediately to the residence area. There are high buildings around the Embassy where people could shoot down into the compound. Therefore, they recommend three additional helicopters coming in after the initial three to help secure the compound. They had examined the area around Tehran looking for isolated airfields which were unlikely to be armed or manned. They had discovered one very slightly used airfield about sixty miles south of town which had originally been used as a C-130 base. They felt that aircraft could land there and the helicopters could cycle in and out of town from that airfield. The likelihood that this could be done without the Iranians knowing it in

⁶ On July 4, 1976, Israeli commandos rescued approximately 100 hostages held by pro-Palestinian hijackers at the Entebbe airport in Uganda. The rescue focused on rapid air assault, extraction, withdrawal operations, and information from released non-Jewish hostages. All 7 hijackers, 3 hostages, 20 Ugandan soldiers, and Lieutenant Colonel Yonatan Netanyahu, leader of the assault force, were killed.

advance was near zero even if they did not know where the operation was going to be conducted. Tehran cannot easily be reached from the sea. It would probably require staging from bases in either Saudi Arabia or Turkey. Marine helicopters are not equipped to be refueled in the air, therefore, it would be necessary to use Air Force helicopters. Six of these are in Britain, others are in United States and Okinawa, which would require a long movement in order to bring them into position. This would effectively ruin any chance for a lengthy practice session. They were currently examining ways in which helicopters could be moved into position without in any way connecting it with this operation such as an exercise in the Mediterranean. If an operation were conducted during daylight hours, they would probably have to confront the Iranian air force. It was estimated that fifty percent of the Iranian air force could be airborne, if they discovered the helicopters in the air or sighted the C-130s. The area is 500 miles from the Persian Gulf so it would greatly stretch the ability of carrier based aircraft to provide air cover. It might be possible to accomplish that from Turkey or Dhahran.

Secretary Vance noted that the Turks would probably turn us down.

General Jones added that any advance tip-off would permit them to get the hostages out of the area to unknown locations.

Secretary Vance said that he could not see how we could get in without giving them time to kill the hostages.

The Vice President noted that they would probably see the helicopters coming perhaps an hour before they arrived.

General Jones said that even under the very best of circumstances the chances were great that there would be some casualties.

Dr. Brzezinski said that casualties are to be expected in this kind of a situation. He noted that this group is not organized and communications are not good. Their warning system might not function. There was a good chance of conducting the operation with surprise.

Secretary Brown said that they might very well have strategic warning if the planes landed in Saudi Arabia. It would mean many hours to organize a staging operation from there. Moreover, it was a five hour flight time from there to Tehran.

The President wondered whether an attack team could go in with empty spaces in the helicopter to carry out some hostages.

Secretary Brown said that they needed to put a great number of people in, in order to be able to hold the airfield.

General Jones noted that a helicopter holds twenty-five persons. There is a 120 man team to go in and only 3 helicopters could land at once. The operation was a very high risk. It would require up to one to two hours on the ground inside the compound if everything worked

perfectly. It was also a question of how to assure that they would get all the hostages back.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that there [were] some advantages since an undisciplined mob might very well panic when faced with disciplined troops. An operation of this nature should be undertaken only if the hostages were being killed.

Hamilton Jordan noted that they could start killing one person per day or one person per hour which would put us in a very difficult position.

Dr. Brzezinski said that the military should be encouraged to refine this option. If they start killing hostages, we will need to do something.

Stan Turner suggested that we should stage a carrier to the Eastern Mediterranean.

General Jones noted that we would probably want to have a CVA in the Persian Gulf.

Hamilton Jordan noted that there would be strong chance that a third country would observe our movements.

General Jones agreed noting the chances of our being observed in a commercial airport like Dhahran were very high.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered how quickly the Saudis could react and transmit the information to Tehran, even if they observed it.

Stan Turner noted that it would be possible to put the refueling aircraft in Cypress, at Akhatia airbase by prepositioning a carrier and an LPH in the Eastern Mediterranean with helicopters on board; they could be much closer to the area of operations.

Secretary Brown generally agreed and said that the way to go in was to overfly Turkey. That should pose no problem since the Soviets do it all the time even without permission.

The President said that they should do more work on the plan. To him it looked more like the Egyptian raid on Cyprus.⁷

General Jones noted that successful raids are always rehearsed many times and this [did] not offer an opportunity for detailed preparations, however, they would go ahead and flesh out the plan.

The President said that if they killed the hostages we must be able to conduct a punitive operation which would blast the hell out of Iran.

⁷ On February 19, 1978, 58 Egyptian commandos failed to rescue 16 hostages taken by 2 terrorists who had assassinated Youssef Sebai, chairman and editor of Egypt's semi-official daily newspaper, *al-Ahram*, and Sadat's friend. The terrorists held the hostages aboard a hijacked Cyprus Airways DC-8 at the Larnaca airport. Egyptian commandos attacked the plane but were fired upon by Cypriot national guardsmen. The Egyptians took shelter, then surrendered, and the hijackers gave themselves up. Fifteen Egyptians died, and their plane went up in flames.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if we could look at the punitive options.

Secretary Brown referring to the earlier discussion noted that we could defend the compound for an hour.

Hamilton Jordan noted that the press would not keep quiet on this end and that was the biggest risk to warning them we were up to something.

The President said the Iranians were not idiots. They would not be sitting and waiting for us to take them out. They would move the hostages out of the Embassy to other locations. He wondered whether the civilians were in fact coming out.

Secretary Vance said we don't know at this point. We have no one to talk to, however, normal scheduled airline flights are continuing.

The President wondered if the British could pass word to our people.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if we could ask the companies to tell their people to get out.

Secretary Vance said he would check. He thought that that had been done but he was not sure.

General Jones noted that for a retaliatory attack Kharg Island was probably the most critical facility in Iran. Originally they thought it would require very little to seize the island. Later today however they had discovered that there were about 250 soldiers, another 250 air defense personnel, and several hundred (up to 500) military personnel involved in a hover craft program there. Our tactics could be to either seize the island or to impose a blockade. We cannot effectively block the entire Persian Gulf since it is impossible to discriminate between ships and their destinations. Moreover, Kharg Island is not so easy to blockade; it is very close to the coast and there are many aircraft.

Secretary Brown noted that Kharg Island provided a bargaining lever. We could show the Iranians that if they take our oil we can block theirs. This is a very dangerous process, however. He wondered whether it would not shut off other oil in the Gulf. How would the Soviets react.

Dr. Brzezinski said the reaction would depend on circumstances. If we did something like this right now, it would be extremely bad and the reaction around the world would be extremely critical. However, later if killings occur they might possibly consider it alright particularly if they saw Iran disintegrating.

The President wondered about an aerial attack on the island.

Secretary Brown said that would be more permanent since it would destroy the installation.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that seizing the island provided a bargaining lever. We would have land and people in our own custody which permits us to bargain.

Stan Turner noted that you could not simply count the piers and put the island out of operation for quite a while.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered how long it would take us to mount that kind of attack.

Secretary Brown said a week.

General Jones noted that we can lean forward and cut down the time. At present our Marines are completing an exercise in Spain, but moving them to the Eastern Mediterranean or into the Indian Ocean would send a strong political signal.

The President felt that occupying Iranian territory would arouse the opposition of the entire world.

General Jones noted another option where the small islands of Abu Musa and the Tunbs near the mouth of the Gulf [which] were occupied by the Iranians several years ago and their sovereignty was contested by several of the Emirates in the UAE. They were lightly inhabited and lightly defended and they had limited strategic value except for the psychological value of being very near the mouth of the Gulf.

Hamilton Jordan wondered whether Kharg Island was important to Khomeini and his group.

Secretary Brown said that it might not be in the first instance but in fact a whole livelihood and economy depended on the oil exports from Kharg Island.

The President noted that with regard to closing off the oil from Kharg Island we could stand it. He was not sure, however, that the French, British, Japanese, and others could stand it especially if other oil producing nations closed down their own operations as a sign of sympathy.

General Jones noted that the small islands at the entrance of the Gulf represent the exact opposite extreme of Kharg Island. Kharg Island is of enormous practical and economic significance. The small islands are largely of symbolic importance. Another possibility are air strikes particularly against the U.S. F-14s in Iran. However, he noted that many of these F-14s were in shelters which we built specifically for their protection. Therefore, we could expect to get some of them but not all. Another possibility is Bandar Abbas a town in the south where most of their navy is located. However a strike on their military forces would be most likely to turn against us the people who would be most likely to be helpful later on.

Hamilton Jordan wondered if it was beyond imagination to do something like kidnapping Khomeini's son.

Secretary Brown said that getting Khomeini himself might be easier.

Stan Turner wondered about the possibility of simply mining the waters around Kharg Island.

Dr. Brzezinski said the results of that would be to simply punish our friends. He thought that there was more merit in taking the little islands inside Gulf.

The President said they would probably simply say take them and not worry about it.

Dr. Brzezinski said he thought it would bother them. They have a strong territorial instinct. Going after Kharg Island would create a worldwide oil crisis.

Secretary Brown said the three small islands would provide no bargaining lever.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that if they only kill a few hostages we need a bargaining leverage; if they should kill all of them we need a punitive action.

Secretary Brown said they will probably kill all of the hostages if we do anything at all.

Secretary Vance noted that there were also economic steps that we should look at.

Secretary Brown noted that we could possibly seize an Iranian ship.

The Vice President suggested looking very closely at the economic steps. He found this to be an outrageous precedent. He wondered what was the legal status of an act such as this of taking diplomats hostage. Was it an act of war?

Dr. Brzezinski said it was contrary to a great many agreements to which Iran was a party but it was not a *casus belli* unless they begin killing hostages. He wondered if we should consider taking it to the United Nations Security Council and seeking a denunciation of Iran's action.

Secretary Brown said the Third World would be against us.

The Vice President said he was not so sure. For instance in cases of piracy and terrorism there were only a few extreme nations who would not condemn those actions.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that the reaction by Iraq and Kuwait were both interesting. Both nations were quite concerned and this might be reflected in any UN debate.

The Vice President said he would like to have a legal analysis of the situation. He suspected that something like this had happened many times before.

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we should take a much closer look at the military option. First of all we should look at a simple punitive act which would be effective but would not get us engaged in a long military campaign. Secondly, we should look at other actions which would provide us with leverage to deter future action by Iran. He

believed that seizure of the three islands provided interesting possibilities. At this point there was a lengthy break in the meeting while the President met with Ramsey Clark and William Miller, the two emissaries who were due to leave for Tehran that evening.⁸ When the meeting resumed *The President* suggested that if the Iranians say yes to our emissaries we should do nothing to upset that process. Ramsey Clark believes that movement to the UN would be a good thing but that we should avoid going to the UN for the moment unless they turn us down on the emissaries.

Ramsey Clark also recommended calling in the Iranian Chargé as an interpreter and placing a call from the President to Khomeini appealing to him on religious grounds if the Iranians will not let our emissaries come in. With regard to the United Nations, we should focus on the violation of international law.

Secretary Brown noted that by holding up all actions we would lose time in the event we should need to retaliate.

The President noted that in the meantime we should simply explore the possibilities.

Secretary Brown noted that we would be meeting tomorrow morning to consider whether to move the helicopters, carriers and other items. He took it from what the President had said that we will do nothing if the Iranians agree to accept our emissaries.

The President said that was correct. Since these men had put their lives on the line we should do nothing to endanger their mission. The President wondered, however, whether there was no way we could move the carrier without that fact appearing on the front page of the *New York Times*.

Secretary Brown said that the carrier was due to arrive in Mombasa on November 9th; if it did not show up that would attract attention. He thought that if we did it verbally we could probably turn the carrier around without it appearing in the news for perhaps two to three days.

Jody Powell said he thought this was one case where it was justified for the press secretary to tell a lie.

Dr. Brzezinski said we should defer a decision until tomorrow. If they do not accept our emissaries then it would be appropriate to turn the carrier around.

Secretary Brown said that we could make up a story why the carrier was late in arriving in Mombasa. He then suggested considering what we would do in the event of a break up of Iran. He noted that any

⁸ Carter and Vance met with Clark and Miller in the Oval Office from 5:40 to 6 p.m., then returned to the Cabinet Room. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

attack on the Iranian military as a punitive gesture would make much more difficult actions that we might want to take in the event the country came apart.

The President said we had not adequately assessed the possibilities of an embargo on Iran assets and economic steps that we could take. They were very vulnerable on this score. If we had to move, we should move on a broad front including economics. To the extent possible we should avoid the loss of life. Economic options were potentially much better than bombing.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if the United States could get away with only economic steps if American citizens are killed. After a long pause *the President* said that he doubted it. We would probably have to take some punitive action but he wanted to do something which would avoid heavy costs and lengthy problems of trying to extricate ourselves.

Stan Turner interjected that we really ought to try to isolate Iran and blockade it.

The President agreed and said that we should insist that our European allies cooperate with us on an air blockade as well as naval blockade. They might not agree but we should go to the mat on this one.

Jody Powell noted that our blockade as leverage is alright but if it is designed as a punitive action where would we end it.

Dr. Brzezinski said we may need both. Even if they kill the hostages we will still need leverage to prevent further action against U.S. citizens remaining in Iran.

Hamilton Jordan wondered if the American citizens were truly identifiable.

Secretary Brown wondered whether we should look at the pipeline which carries Iran's refined product from the refinery to the market place.

The Vice President noted that the weather is getting cold and this might be a real vulnerability.

Secretary Brown said it would be interesting in several ways since it would conceivably make them rely on us for refined products.

Hamilton Jordan wondered how much lead time it would take to conduct an air strike of that sort.

The President wondered how long it would take if we wanted simply to bomb refineries.

General Jones noted that the Carrier *Midway* is about five days away. Another alternative would be to bring in B-52s from Guam which could be done in about 48 hours or 72 hours at the most. They could not land at Diego Garcia. We had intentionally kept the runway at Diego Garcia too narrow for the use of B-52s, however, refueling air-

craft could operate from Diego Garcia. In any event we would probably want the *Midway* in or near the Gulf in order to fly fighter protection for the B-52s. Another alternative would be to bring F-15s into Saudi bases.

Dr. Brzezinski said we would make a decision on the *Midway* tomorrow.

Stan Turner said that hitting the refineries would hurt us as well but others disagreed and said that partially supplied Iran's needs, not our own.

The President noted that if they should kill sixty American citizens we must punish Iran. One way to do that would be to cut off the supply of diesel fuel and kerosene. We might also declare an embargo.

The Vice President recalled something that Secretary Duncan has said at the SCC in the morning⁹ that a very high proportion of ARAMCO and other American companies' oil was going to Europe since it was more profitable there. He thought it was an excellent idea to call in these companies and tell them that we expect them to make up any shortfalls in our own production. We should see just how American they really are.

Secretary Vance said that Ambassador West believes that the Saudis would be pleased to make up any difference in the event the Iranians should embargo us.

Secretary Brown wondered if they would be still interested if we should take out a refinery in Iran.

Dr. Brzezinski said we were having an SCC meeting at 8:30 in the morning and Secretary Duncan was to present a report on the energy situation and the implications.

The President said that we need a way to punish Iran without punishing the rest of the world.

Hamilton Jordan said that if the Iranians begin killing one American at a time the American people will expect us to try to rescue them even if the chances are only one in a hundred.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that kidnapers normally don't kill all of their hostages. They are not trained. This group particularly has no combat training. As the meeting broke up the President approved notifying the press that an NSC meeting had been held. The group agreed that it probably would be a good idea for the President to call Khomeini directly in the event the Iranians turn down our offer of emissaries.

⁹ See Document 6.

9. **Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)**¹

Washington, November 6, 1979

SUBJECT

Military Options for Iran

This is to update you on my investigations following the SCC this morning.²

Unless the JCS is told firmly to go forward with staging for an operation with something like DELTA, they will not get down to the tough issues and work them out. I worked over the things General Jones brought to the NSC meeting this afternoon, and they merely reveal two significant problems:

- the long time it takes to get helicopters and forces into position near Iran;
- the lack of intelligence on the situation on the American Embassy compound.

Given these problems, the probability of achieving surprise is very small, and the probability of large numbers of casualties at the embassy is large. Thus, I am forced to recommend against military options based on what I know now.

Reluctantly, the JCS planning group is developing a number of additional possibilities. To overcome the intelligence gap, they may recommend sending in observers who could pass as Germans, or Hungarians, or some other nationality. Means for communicating their reports, however, are not easy to find. To overcome the transportation gap, they may recommend sending DELTA covertly as civilian tourists to some staging point in Europe. They would travel individually, and they would regroup at a U.S. air base. Their equipment would go by separate means, a transport flight to the base.

I would be supportive of these moves if the JCS believes discovery of the DELTA move is unlikely. The intelligence effort seems imperative in any event.

You may know more as a result of the NSC this afternoon.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 11/78–11/79. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System. Sent for information.

² See Document 6.

You also should know that I told Ham Jordan, at his request, that the military options do not look good and that I would recommend against them at present.

10. Intelligence Information Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, November 7, 1979

COUNTRY

Arab States/Iran

SUBJECT

Dispatch by Yasir Arafat of PLO Delegation to Tehran [*1 line not declassified*]

SOURCE

[*1 line not declassified*]

1. On 6 November 1979 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir Arafat approved the dispatch of a PLO mission to Tehran for the purpose of freeing American Embassy personnel currently being held as prisoners in the Embassy.² The PLO delegation, which was dispatched from Kuwait on 7 November, consists of three of Fatah's top officials: Hani al-Hasan, Political Advisor to Arafat and until recently PLO Envoy to Tehran; Khalil al-Wazir, Fatah Military Chief; and Brigadier Sa'd al-Sayil, a Fatah military leader. Arafat believes that the dispatch of this delegation is a good-will gesture toward the United States (U.S.) Government and hopes that as a result, PLO relations with the U.S. will be improved.

2. ACQ: [*date not declassified*]

3. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Dissem: [*1 line not declassified*]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran, [Retained] 11/1/79–11/15/79. Secret; [*handling restrictions not declassified*].

² [*name not declassified*] contacted Arafat, who immediately agreed. (Message, November 8; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–1/14/79)

11. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 7, 1979, 8:30–9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

David Newsom

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton, Jr.

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan

John Sawhill

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC addressed the following issues:

1. *Situation.* Secretary Vance briefed the group on the expected arrival of the two emissaries in Tehran tonight. In general, he detected a lowering of rhetoric from Tehran and considered the situation somewhat better than the day before. A legal analysis of the Iranian actions shows that they have broken numerous international agreements, from the UN Charter to bilateral treaties. We have a very strong case if and when we decide to go to the UN. Ambassador McHenry will approach the President of the General Assembly today to see if he will join

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 196 Iran. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

the Secretary General's actions of yesterday to put pressure on the Iranians.² (C)

2. *Energy.*³ If the Iranians reduce production significantly, this will pose a problem for us. If oil is only redirected away from the U.S., we could compensate. The chances are good that we could find 700,000 bpd additional production from other sources at least for a period of 3–4 months. The Saudis would probably be willing to help. A reduction of that amount would not trigger the IEA allocation mechanism, but we could manage redistribution through informal consultations with our IEA partners. We would almost certainly need to institute some demand restraint program of our own to manage the shortfall and persuade others to cooperate. DOE and Treasury will meet with oil company executives tomorrow and will raise with them the question of reallocation of supplies if that becomes necessary. An EC meeting next Friday will permit consideration of when and how to use the triggering mechanism. (S)

3. *Economic Countermeasures.* Secretary Vance will have a memorandum on this later in the day.⁴ Defense will reexamine the military pipeline, but they believe it can be stopped almost immediately upon request. One major issue is Fluor company's construction of a refinery in Isfahan. The Iranians badly want this for internal needs, and they are treating Fluor personnel well. Our position has been to recommend that all Americans be pulled out, but for the moment Fluor is standing fast. In fact, their withdrawal at this point would be a highly negative factor in the negotiations. Henry Owen will head a small group to prepare a checklist of all material flowing from this country to Iran, including military items.⁵ (S)

² Waldheim gave Iranian Chargé d'Affaires Jamal Shemirani a message for Khomeini that stressed the need "to preserve the framework under which diplomatic relations are conducted and without which the entire fabric of international relations could be in jeopardy." He also appealed to Khomeini to "take all possible steps to assure the prompt release" of the hostages and "secure the continuing inviolability of the diplomatic premises concerned." (Telegram 4969 from USUN, November 7, repeated in telegram 290429 to USDel Iran in Istanbul, November 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790512–0809)

³ This discussion on energy is based on a November 6 briefing memorandum from Katz and Goldman to Secretaries Vance and Duncan. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 196 Iran, 11/07/79) Attached to the November 6 briefing memorandum is an undated paper on Iranian Oil Contingencies prepared in the Department of State. It is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXXVII, Energy Crisis, 1974–1980, Document 242.

⁴ See footnote 9, Document 13.

⁵ In a November 7 memorandum, Odom informed Owen that he was to work with Katz and Murray to develop an inventory of economic sanctions. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 11/78–11/79) Katz submitted the paper, "Possible Economic Measures Vis-à-Vis Iran," with a November 7 briefing memorandum to Vance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800005–1863)

4. *Military Options*. Thus far, the press has speculated on military options but has been unable to get any official sources to talk. It was agreed that no U.S. forces would be moved while the emissaries are conducting their talks. The principal weakness of the possible rescue operation is intelligence on exactly where the hostages are being held, how their captors are armed, etc. This is being worked on, but JCS continues to be very pessimistic at the odds of a successful operation. [1 line not declassified]. Stan Turner presented a Presidential Finding which would permit him to employ agents of influence and propaganda efforts to assist.⁶ The SCC recommended approval. The JCS will continue with planning on the possible rescue and punitive measures. We will not for the moment expand our contacts with former Iranian military and intelligence figures, although we have received strong indications on the part of some of them to launch a counterattack through Kurdistan. A meeting will be held tomorrow to examine the military and intelligence issues in greater detail. (TS)

5. *Iranian Nationals and Property*. The Attorney General presented a report on Presidential powers. Although the powers are wide, there is no quick, effective way to deport Iranians who are out of status.⁷ Justice will coordinate with local authorities and U.S. attorneys to try to withhold permission for Iranian student demonstrations during this difficult time. The SCC feared that popular reaction could be violent and thereby create a threat to the hostages. (C)

⁶ Brzezinski summarized the attached Presidential Finding as permitting the CIA to "employ agents of influence and propaganda actions aimed at ensuring the welfare and well-being of all U.S. nationals in Iran." (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, November 7; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 142, Chron File, Sick 11/1/79-11/15/79)

⁷ Civiletti outlined the constitutional and practical problems associated with deportation of Iranians in a November 7 memorandum to Brzezinski. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, 11/1/79-11/10/79) In a November 7 handwritten note to Brzezinski, Carter wrote: "When we get Americans out of Iran, I want all Iranian 'students' who are not enrolled full time in college to be expelled. Tell Ben [Civiletti] to prepare optimum implementation of this enforcement of U.S. law." (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 10)

12. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, November 8, 1979

Peter Constable spoke to Kharazi and Beheshti at 1:45 a.m. and 2:45 a.m. Speaking in your name he asked for clarification of the position of the Clark/Miller visit. Both said it would not be possible until the USG made a statement of its intentions on the Shah. Beheshti said a new Foreign Minister would be named today from the Revolutionary Council² and would discuss these matters with us in the future. In addition to a request for reconsideration, Constable urged that (1) an independent observer be given access to the American hostages and (2) Bruce Laingen be given telephone access to Washington and to his diplomatic colleagues. Kharazi and Beheshti said a new effort would be made today to get the Turkish Ambassador into the Compound (if the student conditions can be met, according to Kharazi). While defending the necessity for Bruce's isolation, Kharazi said he would look into possibility of improving his communications.

A full account of the conversations is attached.³

Hal

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 197 Iran 11/08/79. Secret. Attached to a November 7 memorandum from Newsom and Saunders to Vance.

² Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr was appointed Foreign Minister on November 12.

³ Attached but not printed.

13. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 8, 1979, 8:30–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS²

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay
(Col. King, JCS, was the
briefer on military options)

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Hamilton Jordan
Lloyd Cutler

NSC

Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Dr. Brzezinski summarized the areas which the President wishes to pursue: reconnaissance flights over the F-14 air bases (U-2 or SR-71); diversion of the *Midway* toward the Persian Gulf; prohibition of any Iranian student demonstrations on Federal property; a legal brief for the President on modalities for expulsion of Iranian students; a stronger statement than heretofore regarding the safety of the American citizens, our expectation that others will protest these actions by Iran, and assertion of our right to act in legitimate self-defense under international law in the event they are harmed; and an approach to the United Nations. (TS)

1. *Iranian Students*. It was agreed that no demonstrations would be permitted on Federal property. Some properties, e.g. national parks,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 197 Iran 11/08/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² NOTE: Not all of these individuals were present for the entire meeting. The discussion of military options was restricted to those directly involved, i.e. State, Defense, JCS, CIA and NSC. [Footnote is in the original.]

require no permit for public gatherings. Justice will review the regulations. Summary expulsion is prohibited by due process. However, Justice will examine possible legislation to expedite handling of such cases. Justice will prepare an examination of steps available to the President.³ (C)

2. *Clark Mission/PLO*. Ramsey Clark has been in touch with an Islamic figure in Tehran who may accompany the PLO delegation to Qom.⁴ Clark believes that he may be able to work something out and requested that we forego any official approach to the UN for the moment. The SCC agreed that we would limit our activities today to the consultations in New York being undertaken by Ambassador McHenry.⁵ The Clark mission will remain in Istanbul for the time being. Clark is authorized to undertake contacts with the PLO and will serve as the principal channel for any such contacts. (S)

3. *Statement*. It was agreed that a draft statement by Vance⁶ would be used today, primarily to reassure the public. It will indicate that the U.S. Government recognizes its obligation to protect innocent American citizens and will do all it can to fulfill that responsibility. (U)

4. *The Shah*. We have had signals from high-level Iranians that the Shah should at least be removed from the United States as a gesture.⁷ There are indications that the Shah may in fact wish to leave. However, his doctors have thus far advised against moving him. David Newsom is in New York to talk to those close to the Shah to see what his position is.⁸ All agreed that flying him out when he is in very bad condition would be a mistake. Dr. Brzezinski observed that sending the Shah

³ Department of Justice Status Report on Iran-Related Actions, November 8; and memorandum from Civiletti to Carter, November 8. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 34)

⁴ Conversations with Ramsey Clark and Tehran, November 10, is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/10/79: SCC re Iran.

⁵ Sick and Saunders agreed that the United States should encourage Waldheim to nominate his own personal representative to go to Iran following “closed door consultations” with members of the UN Security Council. Brzezinski approved the recommendation and wrote “notified GS [Sick] by phone 11/8/79.” (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, November 8; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran 11/1/79–11/10/79)

⁶ Not printed. Vance’s November 8 statement is in Department of State *Bulletin*, December 1979, p. 49.

⁷ See Document 12.

⁸ The Shah stated that he felt “terrible about the situation that his presence in the United States is creating in Iran,” and would “leave the United States today” if possible. His physicians remained “adamant” that he could not be moved. (Memorandum for the Record by Suddarth, November 8, and Statement From the Shah’s Entourage, November 8; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah, Oct–Nov 1979, Vol. III)

away in response to coercion would be an act of acquiescence to blackmail unprecedented in American history. (S)

5. *Economic*. Secretary Vance presented a paper on possible economic countermeasures.⁹ Other studies are also under way. (S)

6. *Military Contingencies*. Further study has been given to the rescue option. The JCS does not believe it is viable. There would be a very high risk of failure, even with very good intelligence on the location of the hostages and other operational detail. (TS)

A number of punitive options have been examined in more detail. An attack on the refinery at Abadan would potentially destroy a large proportion of domestic fuel stocks and reduce refinery capacity for kerosene, heating oil and gasoline by more than half. There are three specific targets: the power plant, the refinery and the catalytic converter. The power plant could be repaired relatively quickly, although it would be very disruptive. The refinery would take about six months to replace, and the catalytic converter would take several years. The operation could be conducted by carrier-based aircraft from the *Midway* (4–5 days away), a Seal team to be put ashore (could be organized in 2–3 days), or by an AC–130 gunship (3–4 days lead time). On balance, Defense and JCS favor the gunship since it is extremely accurate, very effective, and involves no likely problem of extracting personnel. Air defenses in the area are extremely light. The AC–130 could make an attack from Diego Garcia with refueling. Use of Diego Garcia would require coordination with the British. Defense will examine further the possibility of such an attack without coordination with any other nation. (TS)

Three Iranian harbors could be mined to close off 65 percent of Iran's imports without affecting the oil export facilities. The most appropriate [1 line not declassified]. (TS)

An attack on the F–14s could not expect to get more than about half the Iranian inventory. Defense believes it would be an error to strike at the Iranian military, since they may be helpful later. Also, a disruptive attack on the military might tempt the Soviets to move in.

⁹ The November 8 briefing memorandum from Katz to Vance outlined that the United States could prohibit imports of oil, implement an export embargo of food and spare parts, freeze the estimated \$1.4 billion of Iranian Central Bank funds on deposit with the New York Federal Reserve, suspend the FMS pipeline, and impose financial and trade transactions. All of these economic sanctions would require a Presidential determination. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/8/79: SCC re Iran) In a subsequent November 8 memorandum to Vance, Katz changed his assessment of Iranian assets in U.S. and foreign branches of U.S. banks from \$1.4 billion to \$6 billion, and noted an estimated \$3.5 billion in U.S. claims on Iran. (Department of State, Records of the Executive Secretariat, S/S–I, Lot 85D382, Section III.E., Misc Assessment of Strength & Durability of Shah's Regime)

Defense will examine the best means of conducting reconnaissance flights of F-14 bases and provide a recommendation tomorrow. (TS)

7. *Midway*. Although the members of the SCC favored diversion of the carrier, a careful weighing of the pros and cons persuaded them that it would be inadvisable. Cancellation of the port call which is scheduled to begin tonight would immediately become known and would be played by the press in an inflammatory way tomorrow. This could disrupt the various efforts that are under way on the diplomatic front and even endanger the hostages. We gain very little. The *Midway* can break off its port call at any time and be 4–5 days away from the Persian Gulf. Since our scenarios call primarily for use of the *Midway* in a punitive operation, rather than the rescue effort, gaining a day or two does not seem worth the risk. On balance, the SCC recommended proceeding with the visit, keeping the task force on call if the situation takes a turn for the worse. (TS)

14. Record of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 8, 1979

In the course of the meeting, Vance brought up the Shah's health, how soon he might be moved back to Mexico. Brown added that he would look into a military medevac C-9 aircraft to help speed up the move. The Shah might still be full of post-operation tubes and so forth. I was aghast at this turn of the discussion, and I watched Brzezinski boggle. Then he began in low voice, saying that if we were to return the Shah now, under any circumstances, to Mexico, we would be backing down to the demands of student mob in Tehran. A month ago we backed down to the Soviets and Cubans after declaring that we found the status quo unacceptable.² Now we shall back down again. What will this mean for our international role as a global power? What will it mean for our allies? Who will find us credible on any commitment

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Geographic Files, Box 13. Secret. Brzezinski chaired the meeting. There is no drafting information. See also Document 13.

² In August, U.S. intelligence reported the existence of a brigade of Soviet troops in Cuba. Carter addressed the nation on October 1 but chose not to challenge the Soviet presence since investigations confirmed the brigade was the remnant of a much larger force that had been in Cuba since the early 1960s. See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XXIII, Mexico, Cuba, and the Caribbean.

hereafter? Vance meekly argued that we don't have to decide these things as a whole; we can decide the Shah's disposition and then later do something different in connection to Tehran. ZB responded that he was quite prepared to move the Shah as part of a strategy to get our Embassy personnel back and then retaliate, but only as part of an overall strategy decided in advance. Vance and Brown argued that an overall strategy is not essential because we can take the decisions a step at a time. ZB repeated his lecture, adding that this would be a historical first for the United States as abject capitulation, not a first he cared to participate in creating: backing down before foreign mobs, sullyng the dignity of US values and power. He explained that if he were a relative of one of the hostages, he would naturally be grieved about their fate and want a concession made for them. But in the position of responsibility for recommending a decision to the President, he could not let those feelings prevail. We in the SCC must look at the larger American interest and the significance for the fate of Americans and our allies elsewhere. From that viewpoint, Vance and Brown were making no sense at all. Again, he agreed to consider a plan of deception, using the Shah to get our people back, but only as a tactical ruse, not as an ignominious act of surrender.

Brown waffled, agreeing with ZB but also arguing that we should not take an overall strategic decision. Rather, take each in light of the current situation. ZB confronted him, "You can't have it both ways, Harold; you must decide whether you will surrender the Shah to the mob or not. If not, you must accept my points." Brown leaned, sheepishly, toward agreeing with ZB but tried to leave a loop hole for later escape. Vance's "lawyer" Weltanschauung, dump the Shah now if expedient, was repeated.

Civiletti was the only other person to speak up. He supported ZB fully. Strangely, General Jones remained silent and poker faced.

One could only take away a feeling of disgust. Brown's squeamish smiles and Vance's naturally dull face revealed, in this exchange, a shocking lack of character and moral courage. A sniveling spinelessness informed their performance. One can only wonder if they are worthy of the power with which they are entrusted. I confess to a deep sense of satisfaction in watching ZB confront them so directly and candidly with the political and moral implications of their positions.

15. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 8, 1979

I know that you are pressed from all sides with free advice and ideas on the situation in Iran. I don't want to contribute to that problem, but need to state frankly my views to you.

There is no doubt that we will be ultimately judged on two fronts: what happens to the Americans and what we do after their release/murder to retaliate against Iran.

Having said that, we must also be in the correct public posture to minimize the public and political damage to your Presidency and our country's image in the world if we have a bad result and/or to maximize the benefit of a good result if the Americans are freed.

This gets to the question of your trip to Canada. The American people are frustrated at our country's inability to do anything to free the prisoners and retaliate in a fashion that makes us feel better about ourselves. There was a person-on-the-street interview this morning on NBC asking citizens what they would do. I found the individuals surprisingly sympathetic to the plight which faces you as to the rescue of the hostages. Having said this, there were a couple that wanted you to consider foolish things, i.e., send in the Marines.

We will never convince or satisfy the hawks on this question, but we don't need to lose the understanding and support of those who share your own frustration. I believe that if you leave for Canada tomorrow, you will be very vulnerable on two fronts.

First, you will be perceived as not taking the "crisis" that exists seriously. It makes no difference that you will only be an hour away by plane or that you have left Vance and Zbig or that you have good communications.

It will be perceived at the time of an international crisis involving the lives of American citizens, their President is traveling to a foreign country for a reason not obvious or relevant to them. At this point, you will seem irrelevant to the crisis. I realize that there is not much more that you could do if you were here, but the American people want to have a sense that you are on top of the situation, minding the store, exploring every possibility, etc.

An even worse possibility would be that violence is done to the hostages while you are in Canada. If that happens, you will be ravaged

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 11/79. Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper-right corner.

politically for being out of the country at the time of a major crisis. I would predict that it would cost you your re-election as President. Suppose the chances of this happening are 1 in 10. Should you have to take such a gamble?

An argument could be made that to cancel the trip would send a bad signal. I think that it would have to be made clear that you are staying merely to give this situation your complete and undivided attention. I don't see how Joe Clark could fault you for delaying your trip to a later date.

Mr. President, this crisis is a crisis in every sense. It is a crisis for your Presidency, for the hostages and for our country's image around the world. I can see no good or valid reason for you to leave the country—even for 24 hours—while this is going on. Your trip to Canada will be perceived by the American people as largely ceremonial. Issues and problems will pop up here that will require your attention and thought. I don't see how you can justify your trip under these circumstances.

(CBS news last night devoted 55% of its coverage last night to Iran. The Today Show this morning spent the full first 20 minutes of its half hour on Iran).²

² A handwritten addition by Jordan at the end of the memorandum reads: "If you even consider cancellation of the trip, it should be done earlier instead of later. I have not talked to the VP about this. Possibly someone should." Carter did not go to Canada.

16. Briefing Memorandum From the Director of the Office for Combating Terrorism (Quinton) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom)¹

Washington, November 8, 1979

SUBJECT

[*less than 1 line not declassified*] Khomeini—Implications for Negotiations

[*3 paragraphs (17 lines) not declassified*]

(1) We should not provoke Khomeini or make statements that will polarize the situation. Categorical statements about what we *cannot* do could have a counter-productive effect.

(2) We need to appear to be strong. Since Khomeini respects authority we should try to get across an image of strength without threats. We should also convey the idea that we accept Khomeini's authority in this situation but that because we do there will be real costs for Iran if anything goes wrong.

(3) Any proposal put to him should appeal to his own positions and beliefs. Offers to bargain, mediate or negotiate will not work. In this respect, the PLO's stance of not speaking for the US is a very sound one.

(4) We should be reluctant to convey concessions directly to Khomeini. He is likely to see this as weakness and to ask for more. However, if concessions are announced indirectly, he may judge this as our giving in to *his* power, thereby enabling him to decide that he can unilaterally terminate the incident.

(5) Time is on our side. We should project the view that the ball is in Khomeini's court and we are waiting to see what the Iranians will do. We should allow approaches such as that of the PLO to go forward without any direct link or association to the US. The PLO's known antagonism to the US is a very positive aspect in its dealings with Khomeini.

(6) Humanitarian appeals are not likely to move Khomeini, although they may have an impact on some of his followers.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran: Ghotbzadeh, Bani-Sadr, Khomeini (Iranian Government and its Degrees). Secret. Copies were sent to Read, Saunders, and Constable. A note on the first page reads: "Mr. Newsom has seen Nov 18 1979." [*text not declassified*]

[*less than 1 line not declassified*] the possibility of serious psychological trauma for the hostages. The cable from Geneva² reflects some of the same concern. Under the circumstances, we should have in mind a contingency plan to ensure the hostages receive prompt medical and psychiatric support on their release.

² Not further identified.

17. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 9, 1979

SUBJECT

The Soviet Role in the Crisis in Iran

The SCC discussions to date have conspicuously ignored the Soviet variables in the power equation in Iran. I am sure they are clear in your mind but as a reminder I enumerate the following points:

First, the Soviet strategy in the Persian Gulf region for several years has been aimed at demobilization. The seizure of power in Ethiopia and later in Afghanistan² showed a Soviet willingness to set in motion upheavals in Iran, Iraq, and the Arabian Peninsula. Clearly the Soviet decision on this strategy was based on the assumption that they could ride the upheavals and benefit.

Second, the Tudeh cadres and other pro-Soviet groups have proved relatively weak as an objective basis for Soviet influence within Iran. The obvious tactic for them, therefore, is to exacerbate tension and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79. Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. A stamped notation in the upper right-hand corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

² On February 11, 1977, Mengistu Haile Mariam became head of state in Ethiopia. He accepted aid from the USSR, subsequently closing the U.S. military mission in April 1977. On April 28, 1978, the Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan assassinated Afghan President Mohammad Daoud Khan. He was succeeded by Nur Mohammad Taraki who implemented Marxist-Leninist policies in Afghanistan.

conflict. What little intelligence we have about the student takeover of the embassy supports this assumption.

Third, the Soviets can profit from either of two scenarios in Iran. A radical left regime which gains control of the entire country and develops a Vietnamese or Cuban-like relationship to Moscow is the preferred outcome. An alternative outcome is dissolution of the Persian empire and the intervention of outside forces, possibly Western in southern Iran, which would justify Soviet intervention in northern Iran.

Fourth, our demonstrated weakness in the present crisis not only has adverse effects on our allies in the region but also in Europe and East Asia. If we do nothing, the credibility of our nuclear deterrent posture is thrown into question. But if we react by punishing Iran and endangering oil production there, Europe and Japan will be no less upset at us. Either outcome encourages our allies to avoid tensions with Moscow.

Fifth, the Politburo faces a dilemma in how to deal with Khomeini in the present circumstance. Objectively, Brezhnev should support him. The cost of doing that publicly, however, is so great that he will likely avoid it. Nonetheless, Radio Tehran reports tonight that Brezhnev and Gromyko support Khomeini's stance against "plots."

Implications for U.S. Policy

—Other forces such as Moslem opinion or world opinion may save our Embassy personnel, but it looks completely beyond our power.

—It is not in our objective interest either to break up Iran or to destroy its oil production. In other words, any retaliatory measure may soothe our emotions, but it is difficult to see how it could serve our objective interests.

—Other crises like this will face us in the months and years ahead until we have regained a preeminent military posture based on a firmer economy.

—A shorter term implication concern is our military posture in the Persian Gulf. More ships in the Indian Ocean will never compensate for ground bases and a strong military advisory effort which integrates all countries on the Arabian Peninsula and perhaps a broader area.

18. Intelligence Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

[*cable number not declassified*]

Washington, November 10, 1979, 0225Z

COUNTRY

Iran

SUBJECT

Situation in and around U.S. Embassy in Iran as concerns instigators of the occupation, access to Embassy and security considerations² [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

SOURCE

[*less than 1 line not declassified*]

1. The decision to occupy the American Embassy in Tehran was made personally by the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on or about 20 October 1979. Implementation of the plan was assigned to students from the religious center at Qom who have taken the title "Islamic Students Following the Way of the Imam". ([*less than 1 line not declassified*]) comment: The Mujahidin-e Islam probably furnished advisors and officers (L-Encadrement) for the students. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*]) comment: A confidant of former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar in Paris said on 9 November that the occupation of the Embassy was certainly a planned action authorized by Khomeini and therefore the identities of the occupants of the Embassy are not important in terms of freeing the hostages. The order will have to come from Khomeini. He suggested National Voice and Profile of Iran Director Sadeq Ghotbzadeh as the one person in the Khomeini group who might be relatively reasonable, but noted that Ghotbzadeh is not in Khomeini's inner circle.)

2. The occupation was carried out by a group of about 100 persons but that number is now at least 200. The only group located outside the premises of the Embassy to guard against the curious is a team of "Guardians of the Revolution", about twenty to thirty of them by day, and half that many at night.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran, [Retained] 11/1/79-11/15/79. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. Sent to the National Security Agency, Department of State, DIA, Department of the Treasury, Secret Service, FBI, White House Situation Room, NSC Staff, CIA Office of Current Operations, and Department of Justice.

² An unknown hand wrote in the right margin: "did they have the info in advance?"

3. The Moslem students in the compound possess no heavy arms. They have light weapons (G-3), grenade launchers, and hand grenades. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] comment: The G-3 is a 7.62 mm rifle, produced in Iran under license from the West German firm Heckler and Koch. It is similar to the U.S. M-14 rifle.)

4. As of 9 November, the students had published 17 communiqués and held several press conferences. After 6 November, the communiqués stopped, but a press conference was supposed to be held the afternoon of 9 November.

5. Since 7 November, the Embassy has been completely cut off from the outside, no one having gone inside except for Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali who went in the afternoon of 7 November. Journalists have not been permitted to enter, having been brutally pushed away by the guards stationed outside. The determination of the students seems certain. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] comment: [*1½ lines not declassified*] Khalkhali is the leader of armed group called "Islam Fedayeen" which is not the same as the Fedayeen-e Khalq who are against the occupation. It is possible the "Mujahidin Islam" [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and the "Islam Fedayeen" led by Khalkhali are the same group.)

6. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] comment: Except for some intellectuals knowledgeable of international law, the Iranians have absolutely no idea of the gravity of the action undertaken by the Islamic students at the direction of the Imam.)

7. The Iranians approve of the action in general, the only reservation expressed thus far having been those of new Iranian Foreign Minister Abdol Hassan Banisadr who was concerned on 7 November that Iranian ambassadors abroad might one day suffer the same fate. Since then, however, Banisadr has rescinded his statement, and as of 9 November, was seeing only the positive points of the students' action.

8. Iranian opinion estimates that the action constitutes a humiliation which is without precedent, imposed by a small nation on a great power. The oppressed have finally had an effect on the oppressors. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] comment: This public opinion naturally does not take into account the consequences which their enterprise can have and are convinced that the United States will give in to their demands.)

9. In the mind of Khomeini, these demands are to obtain the extradition of the Shah, to judge him and to execute him in order to destroy the only dangerous enemy which remains. According to Khomeini, the Shah is the only person who is capable of endangering the Islamic Republic.

10. An American military action could be considered by the Iranians as a cause for war (*casus belli*) and could lead Iranian officials to call

upon the Soviets, which is now permitted by a clause in the constitution. ([less than 1 line not declassified] comment: In early November 1979, this particular clause was among several abrogated by the Iranian Government in the Soviet-Iranian treaty of 1921.)

11. ACQ: [less than 1 line not declassified]

12. [less than 1 line not declassified] Dissem: Embassy and DAO at Paris. Sent to [2 lines not declassified] USCINCEUR, COMIDEASTFOR, CINCUSNAVEUR, CINCPAC, IPAC, CSG, PACFLT, PACAF, USNMR SHAPE for General Rogers.

19. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 10, 1979, 9:24–10:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

David Newsom**

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan**

John Sawhill**

Justice

John Shanafield**

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

Lloyd Cutler**

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Captain Gary Sick

**Those so marked attended only the discussion of domestic issues: Economic, Energy, Legal.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #200 11/13/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC meeting was divided into two parts: first, a discussion of issues involving domestic considerations or with direct domestic implications; second, a more restricted group to discuss political/military issues.²

1. *Demonstrations.* After a close call yesterday,³ the District of Columbia has now forbidden any further pro- or anti-Iran demonstrations. There is a need for better coordination between State, Justice and the White House Counsel's office to share information and facilitate decision-making. A joint working group comprising these agencies will be formed under chairmanship of the Attorney General. State will explore the possibility of getting the Iranian Government to request no further demonstrations here. (C)

2. *Iranian Students.* Justice, State and Cutler will report by Monday morning specific steps which can be taken in the immediate future. The most promising approach may be an order requiring all Iranian students to report to Immigration to verify their status. Such a survey would be helpful in clarifying the facts and would send a clear signal. Actual deportation would be a lengthy process.⁴ The Attorney General in August issued an order making the departure of Iranians voluntary, even if out of status. This was done to protect Jewish Iranians and others from being forced to return to Iran against their will. Congressman Fish has asked that this be revoked in view of the present circumstances. The consequences of such a revocation will be reviewed. (C)

² An unknown hand wrote on Brzezinski's November 9 log of his activities related to Iran: "The P. told ZB he would use force, if necessary; ordered the development of various rescue and retaliatory options. Compartmentalization of SCC approved." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80)

³ On November 9, approximately 900 Iranian students marched through downtown Washington for 6 hours, escorted by more than 400 police. Hundreds of angry anti-Iranian counter-demonstrators confronted them. The original route of the march included the White House, but the Park Police and Capitol Police revoked the permit for demonstrations on Federal property. At the insistence of Washington Mayor Marion Barry, the city permits for the marches remained in place. (Tom Sherwood, "Barry Is Urged To Limit Today's March by Iranians," *Washington Post*, November 9, 1979, p. A1, and Felicity Barringer and Judith Valente, "Marching Iranians Cursed, Pelted Here," *Washington Post*, November 10, 1979, p. A1) On a November 15 memorandum from Civiletti to the President, Carter wrote: "I prefer that we do our best to prevent permits being issued for pro- or anti-Iranians until hostages are free. Take our case to court if necessary. cc Cy, Zbig." (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 10)

⁴ On November 10, the White House announced that the Attorney General would deport any Iranian students in the United States who violated their student visa status. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979, Book II, p. 2109*)

3. *Iranian Assets*. There is a report that Iran has ordered the withdrawal of all their assets from U.S. banks.⁵ The Federal Reserve can probably delay acting on this, but private banks will find it much more difficult. By declaring a national emergency, all Iranian transactions could be blocked. Dr. Brzezinski and Lloyd Cutler will talk to Treasury Secretary Miller and ask that he contact Federal Reserve Chairman Volcker to see what can be done to delay any withdrawals without taking dramatic, overt actions. Their views will be sought on the implications of any freeze or other public act on our relations with other major depositors. (TS)

4. [1 paragraph (8 lines) not declassified]

5. *Energy*. Secretary Duncan will present a memo on Tuesday⁶ outlining the range of options available to us in the event oil deliveries are cut off. Basically, these fall into four categories: (1) acts which the President can take unilaterally; (2) actions which the State governments can take; (3) voluntary actions; and (4) emergency legislation. (C)

The following issues were discussed in restricted session:

1. *Future Options*. David Aaron will chair a group composed of Hal Saunders (State), Frank Carlucci (CIA), and Robert Komer (DOD) to examine the longer term implications of a possible disintegration of Iran and how we could best position ourselves to influence the course of events. The group will look at means of improving our intelligence [less than 1 line not declassified], identifying groups which might cooperate with us, and evaluating contacts with expatriate opposition groups. (TS)

2. *Evacuation*. State is working with the Swiss to develop a plan for bringing our people out if they should be released. An incomplete survey indicates 87 known Americans still in Iran in addition to the hostages. There are probably others that we do not know about. The two largest groups are the Fluor personnel (about 50) building the refinery in Isfahan and 30 Americans associated with the international school in Tehran. Secretary Vance intends to inform Fluor to pull their people out or their passports will be revoked. (S)

3. *Emissaries and Negotiating Efforts*. Ramsey Clark in Istanbul is attempting to negotiate his entrance as a private citizen. Bill Miller will be told to return. An emissary of the Pope was to see Khomeini this

⁵ As reported in a November 9 memorandum from Poats to Brzezinski. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79-11/14/79)

⁶ November 13. See Document 25.

morning. Four Ambassadors visited the hostages this morning.⁷ They saw the hostages (including 12 women) but could not talk to them. Waldheim is considering an emissary but wants to avoid crossing wires with the PLO representative who was reportedly in Qom yesterday.⁸ Secretary Vance has sent a message to Arafat encouraging his efforts at securing release of the hostages. Strong representations were made to Soviets to cease their propaganda.⁹ (S)

⁷ On November 9, the Apostolic Nuncio to Iran, Monsignor Annibale Bugnini, delivered a message to the Iranian Foreign Ministry from Pope John Paul II to Khomeini asking that Khomeini ensure the safety of the hostages. ("Ayatollah Gets a Plea From Pope on Hostages," *New York Times*, November 10, 1979, p. 7) Khomeini rejected the plea. The text of his reply to the Pope was transmitted in telegram 8403 from Ankara, November 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790534–0161) On November 10, four diplomats—the Syrian and Swedish Ambassadors to Iran and the French and Algerian Chargés d' Affaires—were allowed to view some of the hostages, their first contact with the hostages by "outsiders" since November 4. (Don Oberdorfer, "Envoys See Captives," *Washington Post*, November 11, 1979, p. A1)

⁸ Presumably Abu Walid. An untitled note, dated 5 a.m., November 9, relayed related information that had come from Arafat. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 30, Iran 11/1/79–11/10/79)

⁹ In telegram 292025 to Moscow, November 9, The Embassy was instructed to convey to the Soviet Government that two recent Soviet propaganda commentaries were "inflammatory and unacceptable in view of tense situation in Iran." Shulman made a similar démarche to the Soviet Embassy in Washington. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790516–0154)

20. Intelligence Information Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

[*cable number not
declassified*]

Washington, November 10, 1979, 1655Z

COUNTRY

[*less than 1 line not declassified*]

SUBJECT

1. Coup plotting regarding Iran by Paris based group
2. [2 lines not declassified]

SOURCE

[3 lines not declassified]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 198a Iran 11/10/79. Secret; Priority; [*handling restrictions not declassified*]. Sent to the Department of State, DIA, NSA, and NSC.

1. A group of [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Iranian expatriates [*less than 1 line not declassified*] have formed a group, in Paris, France, to organize a new, pro-Western government in Iran. The group hopes to shut down oil production in Iran during November 1979 as part of its campaign to remove the current leadership from Iran's political scene. The group is considering selecting either an Iranian general or former Prime Minister Shahpur Bakhtiar to be the titular leader of the provisional government, which could be confirmed subsequently in a national referendum. A shadow government has been named to the extent of having three choices listed for each of several principal government jobs. Some of those on the list are Iranian expatriates, [*1½ lines not declassified*]. Bakhtiar [*less than 1 line not declassified*] is not everyone in the group's first choice to head the government, but he is the most likely nominee because he already is in France, and previously has served as Iranian Prime Minister. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] Comment: [*less than 1 line not declassified*])²

2. The Paris group has made high-level contacts with at least two Persian Gulf governments in an effort to secure support for the venture. [*3 lines not declassified*] Major Western governments apparently have not been approached by the Paris group. The expatriates have not received any firm pledges of support from any foreign government; the search for signs of encouragement from such quarters continues.

3. The group's timetable was dictated in part by [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the United States Government intended to replace or repair some of Iran's military equipment commencing in January 1980. The group concluded its best chance of success involved taking action in Iran prior to that time. The expatriates reportedly believe the problem is not so much the ouster of the Ayatollah Khomeini as it is having enough support internally to keep a new government in power.

4. [*1 paragraph (12 lines) not declassified*].

5. ([*less than 1 line not declassified*] Comment: [*4½ lines not declassified*].)

6. Reference: [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

² A November 10 CIA Report [*text not declassified*] identifies those members of the Iranian Army coalescing around General Fathollah Minbashian in France. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 142, Chron File, Sick 11/1/79-11/15/79) Sick thought Bakhtiar's appeal was "directly proportional to Khomeini's perceived vulnerability" and that "thus far, his movement has not gotten off the ground." (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, November 5; *ibid.*) On November 5, Turner had provided Vance and Brzezinski with an October 10 report on Bakhtiar's activities for the month of September. (*Ibid.*)

21. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 10, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran (U)

My reading of Khomeini's past behavior suggests that, although he is not a man who "bargains" in the normal sense of the word, he is capable of considering flexibility and even tactical retreat when he perceives that a specific policy is in conflict with his ultimate goals. We have a number of instances of such actions in the past. He opposed the original draft constitution but found that there was widespread support within his own government. So he permitted it to be published with his blessing—and then used the Council of Experts to make the Islamic changes he had wanted all along. He fired the army chief at one point, then reversed himself when he found that the army chief had more support than he had expected. The man was later eased out in a general "reorganization." He decreed that there would be no more music, but music continues to be played in Iran. He called for all women to wear the chador but then allowed that to lapse when there was a general protest. He launched a major effort to incite the Shia population of Iraq but then pulled back when he was convinced that there was danger of an Iraqi attack. He has not changed his mind about the Shia question, and he has lately raised the temperature again, but he is being more careful. (S)

In considering our own strategy in the hostage situation, we should focus all our efforts on convincing Khomeini that continuation of his present policy is damaging to his long-term goals. Those goals I would define as two: universal recognition of the Iranian revolution as a new beginning in Islamic history; and his own retention of absolute power in Iran. (S)

Our strategy of mobilizing world opinion against the taking of hostages is aimed directly at the first of those goals, and I believe it has had considerable effect. The fact that Khomeini apparently felt it necessary to deliver a long statement of self-justification after his meeting with the Papal envoy² (atypical of his style), suggests that the message is beginning to get through. The Papal message, the coura-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79. Secret; Outside System. Sent for Information.

² See footnote 7, Document 19.

geous analyses of his representatives in Washington and New York, and the flood of messages from previously sympathetic or uncommitted observers throughout the world should at least have given him grounds for concern that the revolution is being seriously damaged. (S)

Of more immediate importance—and more difficult for us to influence—is his concern about his own power position. As you know, I am convinced that he is exploiting this situation (as he exploited the Kurdish situation) to consolidate his direct control. In each case, he has used a popular cause to rally public opinion against a well-identified enemy, thereby taking their minds off the failures of his own rule. He has also used these occasions to accomplish specific political objectives. In the Kurdish case, he appointed himself commander in chief of the armed forces, closed down a troublesome press, and banned opposition political activity which was beginning to develop some clout. In the present case he has disposed of the Bazargan government, which had become a thorn in his side. (S)

Just before going to Algiers, Bazargan had submitted to Khomeini a petition signed by most of the members of his government calling for the disestablishment of the Islamic Council of Experts on the grounds that they had exceeded their mandate in revising the constitution. Khomeini must also have known that Yazdi, Bazargan and others were meeting with U.S. [*less than 1 line not declassified*]—which he would interpret as nothing more than plotting against him. Although Bazargan was quite open in admitting his powerlessness, he also refused to shirk his responsibility to inform Khomeini of what was going wrong and the disagreeable steps necessary to correct it. Was he the bearer of bad tidings one time too many? (S)

Every policy option available to us should be examined first in light of whether it will contribute to persuading Khomeini that his own power position is being undermined by his present course of action. We have very little to work with, especially since Khomeini will be making his judgment in terms of the facts on the ground rather than words. Some thoughts:

—[*1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified*]

—[*1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified*]

—I have suggested to State that they take advantage of the telex link to Bruce Laingen (directly through the Iranian Foreign Minister) to give periodic updates on events as we see them. We could slip in a few facts to give the Iranians pause, e.g. the USG is being flooded with popular calls to take drastic action but the President is resisting. This telex link is probably the most authoritative way we have of communicating with the Iranians and we should try to use it imaginatively. (S)

Some of these thoughts [*less than 1 line not declassified*] might better be raised in David Aaron's special group on intelligence. I am providing David a separate copy. However, my analysis leads me to the conclusion that ending the hostage situation and ending Khomeini's absolute power in Iran are in fact two sides of the same coin. (S)

22. Editorial Note

On November 12, 1979, President Jimmy Carter announced an embargo on the import of Iranian crude oil into the United States. He stated that the "grave situation" in Iran required "constraint" but that the United States must "refuse to permit the use of terrorism and the seizure and the holding of hostages to impose political demands." He urged the U.S. public to reduce its consumption of oil. The announcement and Carter's remarks are printed in *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pages 2109–2111. Members of the International Energy Agency (IEA) were also informed of this decision, citing it as necessary "in the interest of removing oil as an issue in our efforts to free the American hostages held in Iran" and in order to "emphasize that the issues at stake are the fundamental international principles of the safety of our citizens abroad, the prevention of the use of hostages for political purposes and respect for diplomatic personnel." (Telegram 294946 to multiple posts, November 12; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Nov 1979) Talking points prepared by the Department of Energy and the White House for briefing the House and the Senate, November 13, stated that such an embargo would not increase gasoline rationing, would be supported ultimately by IEA members, would only briefly increase the price of oil, and would not affect heating oil supply prices for the coming winter. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #200 held 11/13/79)

After Carter's announcement, Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Bani-Sadr announced in Tehran that the Iranian Revolutionary Council had decided to stop all oil exports to the United States. (Jonathan C. Randal "Aide Lists Terms on Captives," *Washington Post*, November 13, 1979, page A1)

23. **Briefing Memorandum From the Acting Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Mark) to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, November 12, 1979

Prospect of Indefinite Impasse in Iran

We think that enough evidence is now on hand to warrant the judgment that

1) diplomatic action has almost no prospect of being successful in liberating our hostages in Tehran;

2) no economic or other American pressure on the Iranian regime (including U.S. military action) is likely to be any more successful in securing their safe release; and

3) with a continuation of present conditions, the detention of the hostages could continue for some months.

No significant improvement has taken place in the status of the American hostages despite seven days of exceptionally intensive American diplomatic efforts. The Iranian authorities have made it clear that they are—and will remain—scornful of all foreign initiatives to effect the release of the hostages

On the other hand, during the same period, the Iranian position has solidified, and the Iranian determination to stand firm has been greatly strengthened:

—With ever increasing enthusiasm, the great majority of Iranians has supported the Embassy seizure. Demands for the return of the Shah and attacks on the U.S. are being voiced with growing stridency. Khomeini and others have played on the martyrdom theme by praising the glory of dying for Islam and the nation.

—The adamancy of the national leaders and of the “student” captors is now so intense that none but Khomeini himself now has any flexibility in this affair (not that he has shown any signs of a desire to exercise such flexibility in any event).

—The Iranian authorities have enunciated a conceptual framework of self-justification, and it has gained great national acceptance. According to them, the Shah is a criminal, and human decency demands his

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Nov 1979. Secret; Nodis; Sensitive. Drafted by Mark, Harris, Green, and Grummon. Copies were sent to S, D, P, S/P, NEA, S/S, and S/S-I. An unknown hand wrote “Urgent” in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

return to Iran for condemnation. He has been a U.S. puppet, through whom America plundered Iran and destroyed its cultural and social fabric. The American embassy was not a normal diplomatic mission, but rather an espionage center, through which the U.S. exercised its control over the Shah and Iran. Thus, the embassy and its staff have lost all claim to traditional diplomatic immunity.

—The Iranian authorities have begun an international campaign to present their position to the world. Their explanation of what is going on coincides neatly with the thinking of many “establishmentarians” in Third World countries. Some radical nations may soon state public support of Iran. Others will probably accept Iran’s arguments privately. In any case, Iran’s currently prejudiced standing in international eyes is likely to be retrieved in the coming weeks among many Third World governments, and Iran will gain prestige for having successfully humiliated Washington. The Soviets, by their reluctance to speak out in behalf of established diplomatic principles, and by their support of the justice of the Iranian students’ cause, are positioning themselves to exploit the situation.

—We do not anticipate that the Iranian authorities have any present intention of harming the hostages, but the situation is unstable and could change, given the volatile nature of Iranian mass emotions. Moreover, if, as seems probable, economic conditions deteriorate further in Iran over the next six months, and if this evolution generates new political turmoil, it is impossible to foresee what might happen to our hostages, should they then still be in captivity.

Only two contingencies offer a possible escape from the impasse: The Shah’s death, or the Shah’s transfer to a third country. Although the “students” in the embassy compound have insisted that the latter event would not lead them to release the hostages, Iranian leaders have not been so precise. Still, we cannot be at all certain that they would not accept the students’ position and continue to hold the hostages to induce the U.S. to bring pressure on Mexico (or the Shah’s other country of asylum) to extradite him to Iran. On the other hand, Khomeini might decide at some point after the Shah’s departure that he had gained maximum advantage from the affair, that he could claim a great victory over America, and that he should end the matter by expelling the hostages (and, probably, by breaking diplomatic relations with the U.S.).²

² Vance wrote in the margin next to this last sentence: “good point.”

24. Paper Prepared by the Interagency Group¹

Washington, November 12, 1979

Political Actions Contingency Planning

At SCC direction, David Aaron chaired a small interagency meeting to consider political action/intelligence aspects of the Iran crisis. The following points emerged:

—The key issue is whether we now want to undermine Khomeini with a view to his overthrow. Up to now, we have tried to get along with him in the hopes that moderates associated with him will prevail. The assessment is that Khomeini is no longer in control of events, that leftward radicalization is increasing and that a struggle for power is under way. The moderates and we may be better off without Khomeini than with him.

—[1 paragraph (14½ lines) not declassified]

—If we decide to try any of this, should we begin before the hostage issue is resolved? No one had a clear assessment of whether stirring up divisions among the current leadership would increase or reduce Khomeini's flexibility or the chances of getting the hostages back safely.

Finally, it should be stressed that at this point we cannot be confident that we can actually overthrow Khomeini and install a moderate regime. We can influence a process that is already underway but not control it. There are very preliminary planning judgments that will now get systematic scrutiny and assessment on a very close hold basis.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79. Secret. A handwritten note by Carter reads: "Zbig: I need to meet with Stan and David." The interagency group, established at the November 10 SCC meeting and chaired by Aaron, is referred to as "the small group," the "working group," the "interagency group," the "Aaron group," or the "black group."

25. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 13, 1979, 9:30–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor

JCS

General David Jones

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**

Energy

John Sawhill**

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti**

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

White House

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell**

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

**Present for discussion of domestic issues only.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Iranian Nationals.* All agreed that a further act directed at Iranian nationals was not desirable today. The acts taken to date have been very effective,² but if we get into a routine of taking a new act every day it could be perceived as largely political in motivation. State will

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105, SCC 198a Iran 11/10/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² The actions to date included deportation proceedings against all Iranian students in violation of applicable immigration laws, in-depth inspections of documentation carried by Iranians entering the United States, emergency regulations identifying two additional grounds for deportation, the interview of students arrested for violations of local laws to determine the legality of their immigration status, and involvement of the FBI if found to be in violation. (Memorandum from Civiletti to Carter, November 12; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/1/79–11/14/79)

provide an advisory opinion by tomorrow on revocation of existing visas which have not yet been used, exclusion of further Iranian nationals from entering the U.S., and the best means for prohibiting or delaying issuance of additional visas. One possibility is to request that all new visas be referred to Washington for review.³ It was noted that about half of the visas granted in the past year were to minority groups (Jewish and Bahá'í), and a formal exclusion could impact on these groups. (S)

2. *Unofficial Trade Embargo.*⁴ On the military side, State and Defense have talked to the principal companies involved and they will cooperate on a quiet basis. Commerce will have a paper ready today cataloguing other areas of commerce except food. Treasury will provide a recommendation tomorrow on how best to proceed. Secretary Bergland has provided to the NSC a survey of food exports to Iran which will be examined today.⁵ All agreed that interference with food exports is quite different from other commodities and should be handled with great care. Any work on a trade embargo is to be handled as extremely sensitive. (S)

3. *Iranian Assets.* There was no unusual movement of Iranian assets from U.S. foreign branch banks yesterday. The initial report of withdrawal of Iranian assets appears to have been exaggerated.⁶ Major U.S. banks have been asked privately to keep us closely informed of any request for withdrawal and to delay action on the grounds of assuring authenticity of the order after the change of government in Tehran. All communications on this are to be conducted through Treasury. State [*less than 1 line not declassified*] will turn off [*less than 1 line not declassified*] normal contacts with banks. Treasury has done a draft paper for the NSC on steps to be taken in the event of a freeze, and the machinery is ready if needed. Iranian assets are estimated at \$6–7 billion in U.S. banks, versus about \$3 billion in U.S. bank loans to Iran. (TS)

4. *Energy.* Foreign and domestic reactions to yesterday's announcement⁷ have been uniformly positive thus far. DOE has prepared a list

³ Carter wrote in the margin next to this sentence: "I agree."

⁴ On the front page of the Summary of Conclusions of the November 12 SCC meeting, Carter wrote: "Zbig: Expedite proposal for unofficial economic embargo." The meeting did not discuss an embargo. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 105)

⁵ Carter underlined "paper," "recommendation," and "survey of food exports" and wrote "to me" in the margin. Several of these papers were conveyed to Brzezinski under a November 13 covering memorandum from Sick. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 29, Iran 11/15/79–11/16/79)

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 19.

⁷ See Document 22.

of actions in three categories: (1) what we will ask the state governors to do when they are called in within the next week; (2) steps we would ask the public to take; and (3) steps the government would initiate. The first two relate primarily to conservation measures. Steps under consideration for government action include: improvements of the crude oil allocation system; modification of gasoline allocation regulations to prevent the distortions of last summer; better management of fuel stocks to prevent a precipitous run down; and acceleration of coal conversion. DOE is looking at a possible two-stage rationing proposal: first, a windshield sticker keeping each car off the road one day per week; and secondly, a backup coupon rationing plan. A small inter-agency group under DOE is looking at specific steps. It was agreed that any legislative steps should be carefully orchestrated to prevent getting bogged down in a lengthy debate on the Hill. The Governors of the IEA will meet in Paris next Monday and we will need to consider what we ask of them. (C)

5. *Demonstrations.* Justice will recommend that Interior revoke the automatic permit previously granted to a group of Iranian militant students to demonstrate in Washington. We expect the students to challenge this in the courts. State and Justice are working together on this and believe there is a decent chance that the revocation will be sustained. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Investigation/Trial of the Shah.* Ramsey Clark is to talk to Professor Falk to persuade him to drop his efforts at an international tribunal. All agreed that a show trial was unacceptable as a means of seeking release of the hostages. (S)

2. *Eilts Mission.* Hermann Eilts will arrive in Washington this afternoon. Instructions will be drafted immediately following the meeting in preparation for the President's meeting with him.⁸ (S)

3. *Fluor.* The SCC agreed that it would be best to permit the negotiations between Fluor and the Iranians for departure of their personnel from Isfahan to proceed without public comment for the moment. It was felt that drawing public attention to the issue would risk hardening the Iranian position. Fluor is now down to 25 people. They may be required to remain for another week to coordinate turnover to the Iranians and other foreign nationals. (S)⁹

⁸ No record of a meeting was found. For Eilts's report on his mission, see Document 43.

⁹ Carter wrote in the margin: "Prepare for me a statement to be made *if/when* Fluor people are detained."

4. *UN Security Council.* The Iranians are calling for a UNSC meeting to establish a commission to investigate the Shah's crimes and return his assets to Iran.¹⁰ All agreed that a formal debate in the Security Council was undesirable, and Ambassador McHenry has been instructed to attempt to turn off the request.¹¹ If a UNSC meeting cannot be avoided, we would take the position that there should be no discussion of the Shah until after the hostages are released, since that represents a clear violation of the UN Charter and international law. (C)

5. *Diplomatic Relations.* The SCC believed that severing diplomatic relations with Iran at this point would complicate the efforts which are presently under way, including the PLO and the Iranian Chargé who is trying to get a meeting with Khomeini. It could also introduce unpredictable and possibly unproductive consequences from the Iranians; however, the possibility of a break in relations should not be precluded as part of a larger deal. Secretary Vance felt that other friendly nations would probably resist any attempt to persuade them to join us in breaking relations. The British Ambassador only yesterday recommended to London that they cut back as far as possible but maintain their staff in Tehran. The Mexican withdrawal is related to their own expectation that the Shah will return to Mexico at some point. State will do a more complete assessment of these questions on an urgent basis. (S)

6. *Contact by Kurds.* State has informed our Embassy in London not to meet with the Kurdish delegation seeking to contact us there.¹² We could probably not get the Kurds to do more than they are already doing, and the contact could be used as evidence of hostile intent. (S)

7. *Embassy Security.* State briefed the press last week on the precautions which had been taken at the embassy, but the story got little play. State will make the attempt again to get the story out. (C)¹³

¹⁰ As reported in a memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, November 13. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #200 held 11/13/79)

¹¹ Not found.

¹² The Department instructed the Embassy not to "have any contact with dissident Kurds at this time. Any public suggestion that we are having such contacts could have dangerous consequences for the hostages." (Telegram 294989 to London, November 13; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject File, Iran 11/1/79-11/10/1979). The Embassy had requested instructions in telegram 22387, November 13, 1979. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840175-1684)

¹³ Carter wrote in the margin: "Let Jody & Hodding issue a written report—send me a copy."

26. **Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹**

Washington, November 1979

Iran: Forces Occupying the US Embassy in Tehran
[*portion marking not declassified*]

Summary

There are conflicting reports on the composition of the forces occupying the US Embassy in Tehran. The principal organization involved may be the “Islamic Monotheists,” a group of Islamic militants which has declared its loyalty to Ayatollah Khomeini, but which apparently has been heavily infiltrated by leftists whose loyalty to Khomeini is probably only a protective measure. Leftists in the group may have links to a radical Palestinian organization, [*2 lines not declassified*].

Spokesmen for this group have remained adamant in refusing any negotiated compromise that does not include the return of the Shah to Iran for “trial.” If a basis for negotiation short of returning the Shah receives support from Khomeini, the latent ideological differences among those occupying the Embassy could cause dissension within the group and confusion over policy. It is unlikely, however, that the group would continue to hold the hostages if Khomeini ordered them released. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The group occupying the Embassy reportedly numbers 150 to 200. Reports of security measures, including the posting of guards equipped with light arms both inside and outside the Embassy gates, indicate they are well organized. The hostages are dispersed among at least three separate buildings in the Embassy compound, and relations between the hostages and their captors reportedly are good. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is a schematic of Tehran.]

Occupation of the Embassy

On 4 November a group identifying itself only as the “Muslim Student Followers of the Imam’s Policies” occupied the US Embassy in Tehran. The incident followed a pattern that has been frequently repeated since Khomeini took power in Iran last February—that is,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 35, Iran—CIA Reports, 11/79. Top Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. Prepared by [*name not declassified*] of the Iran Task Force; coordinated with the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia. Information available as of November 13 was used in the report’s preparation.

groups taking a specific action in Khomeini's name following his general policy statements. [3½ lines not declassified]

Although individual members of the occupying forces are reportedly equipped with light arms, the initial entry into the Embassy came as a protest demonstration rather than an armed attack. Some 400 to 500 people were reportedly involved in the initial entry. Their number apparently has since been reduced to about 150 to 200. [portion marking not declassified]

The occupying group is well organized. There is a security force of 20 to 30 men outside the Embassy gates, some are carrying walkie-talkies, to control the crowd of anti-US demonstrators on the street. Five or six of these guards are outside the main gate and three or four are at each of the other gates or on patrol around the Embassy in several jeep-type vehicles and reportedly are armed with G-3 rifles. Watch posts reportedly have been established in buildings within at least a one-kilometer radius of the Embassy. According to one report, a group has been organized outside the Embassy to come to the assistance of the occupying forces if required. [portion marking not declassified]

Inside the Embassy gates, which are chained and padlocked, a further security force of 20 to 30 men is reportedly located in the parking lot. These guards also are armed with light weapons, including G-3 rifles, machineguns, machinepistols, grenade launchers, and handgrenades. The compound and adjacent buildings are illuminated at night. Despite the presence of armed guards and the daily demonstrations outside the Embassy gates, the atmosphere inside the Embassy compound is reportedly calm, and groups of up to 60 of the occupying force gather periodically for prayer services. The relations between the hostages and their captors is apparently good. The hostages, who have been dispersed to at least three separate buildings in the Embassy compound, have been provided with food and reading material from the Embassy library. There have been no reports of violence directed at the hostages. [portion marking not declassified]

Composition of the Occupying Forces

Although there are conflicting accounts on the forces occupying the Embassy, the principal group involved reportedly is the "Islamic Monotheists," a group of Islamic militants devoted to Ayatollah Khomeini that was formed a number of years ago. The group has been infiltrated recently by leftists who reportedly compose nearly 50 percent of the present membership and who strongly influence the group's policies. On 9 November, when documents apparently recovered from Embassy files were released, a statement was issued by spokesmen for the group that was couched in leftist jargon and contained sophisticated analysis which indicates that at least some members of the occupying group are university educated. [portion marking not declassified]

Spokesmen for the group have refused adamantly any negotiated compromise that does not include the return of the Shah to Iran for “trial” and have stated they will not obey an order from the Revolutionary Council to release the hostages unless the Shah is extradited to Iran. If a basis for negotiation short of returning the Shah receives any support from Khomeini, the apparent ideological differences among various members of the forces occupying the Embassy could result in dissension within the group and confusion over policy. It is unlikely, however, that the group would continue to hold the hostages if Khomeini ordered them released. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Islamic militants who reportedly form the nucleus of the Islamic Monotheists may be an offshoot of the “Hezb-eh-Allah” (Party of God): groups of young, poorly educated, lower class Muslim fanatics, initially organized during the 1967–68 period by the Mujahidin-eh-Khalq guerrilla group. The Mujahidin organized the Hezb-eh-Allah as a means of drawing sympathizers and recruits from lower class opponents of the Shah. Hezb-eh-Allah groups were poorly organized and engaged in limited operations such as attacks on police to acquire weapons. These groups, which have gone by a variety of names, have in the past year stated their allegiance to Khomeini and have been involved in such activities as attacking liberal demonstrators protesting Khomeini’s policies. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The size and organization of groups such as the forces that have occupied the Embassy are difficult to determine. Unlike the two guerrilla groups active during the Shah’s regime—the Mujahidin-eh-Khalq and the Cherikha-yeh-Fedai-yeh-Khalq—that developed a cohesive ideology, tight organization, and security procedures that isolated them from the social environment, the more loosely organized groups of Islamic militants have tended to remain embedded in the society, drawing support from their families and coming together on an ad hoc basis. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The leftists among the forces occupying the Embassy may have infiltrated the Islamic organization as a means of advancing their goals under the protective coloration of ostensible fidelity to Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini has been strident in his attacks on the left, and the leftist guerrilla groups that played a prominent part in overthrowing the Shah have since been driven underground. [*3½ lines not declassified*]

Possible PFLP Involvement

[*1 paragraph (5½ lines) not declassified*]

We do not believe that the PFLP, whatever its involvement in the Embassy seizure, is in collusion with Iranian Government officials. Ayatollah Khomeini and his entourage have been deeply hostile toward the PFLP and other radical Palestinian groups. Prime Minister Bazar-

gan's government was even more suspicious of radical Palestinian activity in Iran. We cannot rule out the possibility, however, that the PFLP is involved with at least some faction of the group occupying the Embassy. For a number of years the PFLP has had contacts with Iranian leftists. *[portion marking not declassified]*

The Palestine Liberation Organization's Role

[1½ lines not declassified] Principal PLO leaders, however, moved quickly to gain what international and American good will they could from the situation. They presumably believe they gained a minor victory in the relaxation of Washington's ban on contacts with them, but their primary goal appears to be the major improvement in their image if they can play a mediating role in obtaining the release of the hostages. *[portion marking not declassified]*

[Omitted here is the remainder of the memorandum.]

27. Memorandum for the Files¹

Washington, November 13, 1979

The Danish Ambassador phoned at 12:45 today, November 13 to forward a summary of the Danish Ambassador in Tehran's account of the EC-9 meeting with Bani Sadr at 11:00 AM Tehran time today (November 13):²

The EC-9 Ambassadors reaffirmed their humanitarian concerns regarding the occupation of the U.S. Embassy and reinforced their earlier protest regarding the violations of international law.

The Danish Ambassador in Tehran commented that Bani Sadr appeared after 45 minutes of discussion to take the EC-9 concerns seriously and agreed to look into the betterment of the hostages' conditions.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret. Drafted by Suddarth. Copies were sent to Constable for the Iranian Working Group, Saunders, and Newsom.

² The British Embassy in Washington retransmitted the text of a message, November 14, from the British Embassy in Tehran to the Foreign Commonwealth Office, which was a written account of the meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 30, Subject Files, [Retained] 11/1/79-11/15/79)

The Danish Ambassador in Washington indicated to me that he assumes the other EC–9 members will be reporting separately and that the Irish Ambassador is taking the lead in reporting the collective views of the meeting. He, however, wished to pass on the account from his Ambassador in Tehran at this time.

The Danish Ambassador called back at 2 PM November 13 to report the following:

Bani Sadr has also mentioned to the EC–9 Ambassadors that Iran has asked the UN Secretary General to seek U.S. agreement to (a) discuss a tribunal for investigating the Shah, with modalities to be decided in the UNSC; and (b) for the U.S. to agree that it would accept the decision of the tribunal with respect to the Shah and his family and the disposition of his assets.³

Bani Sadr said that he was hopeful that such an agreement would be carried through. Bani Sadr had told the EC Ambassadors that this general proposal had been brought to the Iranian Government by “American sources”.⁴

³ The Iranian requests to the UN Secretary-General were reported in telegram 5221 from USUN, November 14. (Ibid.)

⁴ A reference to Professor Richard Falk.

28. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 13, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran Breakdown?

In our own decision-making on Iran, we should try to keep in mind what the world must look like in Tehran. They have just thrown out a government without having any qualified people to replace it; there is a full-scale struggle for power among the many factions around

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 142, Chron File, Sick 11/1/79–11/15/79. Secret.

Khomeini; ministries are ill staffed and demoralized; a small war is going on with the Kurds, and the Kurds are not losing; an angry mob of unemployed workers yesterday attacked the Ministry of Labor to demand action on jobs; today there is a report that Iraqi helos penetrated Iranian airspace and drew AA fire—all this and many other problems while they are engaged in a test of will with a superpower.

Besides observing that it could not happen to a nicer bunch of guys, we also need to be alert to the signs of total systemic breakdown. Khomeini has gathered all power to himself and the Revolutionary Council, but he is an old man, with no experience in government, and a “staff” composed of squabbling clerics.

The risk of serious mistakes, miscalculations, or irrational acts of sheer frustration is very high. There may not be much we can do about it, but we should not assume we are working with an opponent who is capable of exercising real judgment.

29. Memorandum for the Record by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders)¹

Washington, November 14, 1979

In a telephone conversation with an American contact, I received the following report at 0700: the American contact had received a phone call from Khalid al-Hassan in Germany. The report was as follows:

—Hani al-Hassan, the PLO representative in Tehran, saw Khomeini for three and one-half hours Tuesday, November 13.

—They have set up a committee consisting of Khomeini, Hani al-Hassan, a representative of the students in the American Compound, a representative of the Foreign Ministry (possibly Bani-Sadr himself).

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1979. Secret; Eyes Only. Copies were sent to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom. Turner passed similar information to Vance and Brzezinski under a November 14 covering memorandum. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel)

—The committee is going to arrange that the “blacks, women, and children” be released to the PLO today.² (Khalid al-Hassan’s advice was that the U.S. should not be overly grateful to the PLO in public because it would complicate their role in Iran.)³

Next, Hani al-Hassan has asked Khalid al-Hassan to check out in the United States whether the following scenario could be worked out with the USG: an announcement would be made that the Shah would leave the U.S. on “x date.” An announcement would be made in Tehran that the hostages would be released on “x date.”

Khalid al-Hassan also wanted to check out whether it was true that Ramsey Clark had said that the Shah’s assets could be turned over to Iran. I responded with the standard line on this subject—that any Iranian who felt he had a rightful claim to any assets that might be present in the United States would have access to the courts for pursuing that claim.

During the course of Khalid al-Hassan’s phone call, he warned against too many people muddying communications channels. He said that the PLO is uncomfortable with Ramsey Clark and feels that he is not well plugged in. In this connection, we were asked not to tell anyone outside the Executive branch of this conversation—particularly not Paul Findley.

Relations between Khalid al-Hassan and Abu Walid are close. (Note: I presume from this comment that they would not regard the Abu Walid channel as a muddying of the waters.)

Finally, Khalid reported that hatred of the U.S. in Iran is so great that the PLO would prefer not to be thanked for anything it achieves in this situation.

² In a November 14 telephone conversation which took place at 7:30 p.m., Ambassador to Lebanon John Dean informed Saunders that he had received a letter from the PLO stating that Iranian authorities would release the women and African-American hostages by November 16 and expected “in writing a declaration by the USG announcing the exact date of departure of the Shah.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation)

³ On November 13, Khalid al-Hasan stated that Arafat had “put himself so far out on a limb at this point that he will do anything necessary for a successful conclusion of the PLO-Iranian talks over the hostages.” Al-Hasan added that Arafat “is now acutely sensitive to misinterpretations of his motives,” which are “strictly humanitarian” and not founded in political gain. The PLO would thus “issue what are basically disclaimers (including anti-U.S. statements) to protect its flanks.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iranian Embassy Students)

30. Editorial Note

On November 14, 1979, Iranian Acting Foreign Minister Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr told reporters in Tehran that Iran would transfer approximately \$12 billion deposited in U.S. banks to branches of banks that would not be able to block the funds. He specifically mentioned Iranian withdrawal of funds from Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, headed by David Rockefeller. (John Kifner, "Iran Defends Move To Withdraw Funds," *New York Times*, November 15, 1979, page A1) Rockefeller, a friend of the Shah, had lobbied for the Shah's acceptance into the United States for medical treatment. Further documentation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, volume X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977–November 1979.

The same day, in response, President Jimmy Carter issued Executive Order 12170, which states that the situation in Iran "constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy and economy of the United States and [I] hereby declare a national emergency to deal with that threat." Under the terms of this order, the President froze all Iranian Government and central bank assets in the United States. A White House announcement issued at the same time noted that the freeze, which included assets in all U.S. banks and their foreign branches and subsidiaries, was to ensure that claims on Iran by the United States or its citizens would be covered, (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pages 2118–2119)

Secretary of the Treasury William Miller told reporters that Iran's liquid assets amounted to less than \$6 billion, the largest component of which was \$1.3 billion in Treasury notes held by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The freeze did not affect the assets of private individuals, including those of the former Shah. (Edward Walsh and John M. Goshko, "The Freeze: U.S. Blocks Iran Assets, Heads Off Debate at the U.N.," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1979, page A1; Bernard Gwertzman, "U.N. Session Averted," *New York Times*, November 15, 1979, page A1)

31. Memorandum From the Chief, Near East and South Asia Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (Cogan) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, November 15, 1979

SUBJECT

White House Situation Room Meeting on 14 November 1979 Concerning Covert Action Prospects in Iran

1. The following is for your information.

2. On 14 November 1979 the DDCI, accompanied by the undersigned, attended a meeting chaired by David Aaron at which Mr. Robert Murray of DOD, Hal Saunders and Gary Sick were also present. Explaining the background to this and the previous meeting on 12 November,² Mr. Aaron said that the Vice President, after consultation with the President, felt that planning should be initiated regarding covert action in Iran, but this should be kept outside the SCC framework at least for the present.

3. The aim of the group, continued Mr. Aaron, was to develop options on Iran—without having crossed the threshold into anti-Khomeinism but on the assumption this will be the case. Mr. Aaron outlined the broad lines of options as follows:

a. Sowing dissension within the Khomeini regime. Creating differences within the Revolutionary Council to enhance destabilization. [*2 lines not declassified*] In general, sowing dissension through both internal and external contacts.

b. [*1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified*]

c. The “infrastructure” option: irrespective of a and b above, what can we do to build up assets (e.g., among the dissidents) who would play a role in a future, post-Khomeini Iran?

4. Setting a target date of 19 November, Mr. Aaron said he would like to have from the Agency a paper detailing what steps we could take in response to the above three suggested options. NE Division will work with Chief, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Staff in preparing this paper.³

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 10: C–372. Secret; Sensitive. Sent through the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and the Deputy Director for Operations.

² See Document 24.

³ Turner placed a large checkmark next to this item and wrote in the margin: “I’d like to see 1st.”

5. Another consideration in the above context, said Mr. Aaron, is the Soviet position and response in the current situation. What are the Soviets doing and how can we counter this? DDCI plans to task NFAC to respond to this requirement.

6. At the conclusion of the meeting, the DDCI noted that it would seem feasible to undertake destabilization measures in Iran; e.g., orchestrating a press campaign that Khomeini is leading the country to disaster; inducing defections; announcing these defections; having Bakhtiar go public in his opposition; organizing anti-Khomeini rallies, etc.

7. A paper prepared by NE Division (attached) was given to the DDCI as background and talking points for this meeting.

Charles G. Cogan

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁴

Washington, undated

Possible Options to Increase Pressure on Khomeini, Assuming Policy Decision to Unseat Him

I. While the hostages are still held, and there are believable assurances that they will not be harmed:

- (A) [1 paragraph (3½ lines) not declassified]
- (B) [1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]
- (C) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]
- (D) Orchestrate an open anti-Khomeini rallying call by Bakhtiar. Insure widespread press play. [1 line not declassified]
- (E) [1 paragraph (3 lines) not declassified]
- (F) Float rumor (press) campaign suggesting other western countries are soon to freeze Iranian assets.

(G) Establish contact with [less than 1 line not declassified] to confer with him on options for possible future government.

II. While the hostages are being held, but we are uncertain as to their well-being (threats having been made, one or more having already been executed); and/or the post hostage situation:

⁴ Secret.

(A) Make the necessary commitments to the following individuals in order that they issue public statements withdrawing their support of Khomeini

(1) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(2) [name not declassified]

(3) [name not declassified]

(4) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(5) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(6) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(B) After this is done, make needed commitments to the following to follow suit:

(1) [name not declassified]

(2) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(3) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(4) [1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

(C) [1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

(D) Initiate widespread [*less than 1 line not declassified*] press campaign pointing out disaster of Khomeini government. Focus on economic problems, collision course, isolation, irrationality.

[1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

In efforts such as described under II above, the risk of leading to the collapse of the central government is inherent. Just what would suffice to halt the diffusion of power once the Khomeini forces were gone, is uncertain. Bakhtiar, for all his liabilities is perhaps the answer. We believe from available evidence the left in Iran is not yet ready to move to establish control from the center or in any of the provinces. They do have the capability to instigate economic disruption—particularly in the oil fields. In the face of this, it might look possible that the succeeding government would have to invite foreign technicians and skilled workers back to Iran to get the fields working again.

32. **Memorandum From the Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency (Waller) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹**

Washington, November 15, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran Situation

1. This memorandum contains an idea for your consideration and further exploration.

2. On 14 November 1979, you asked me if I had any ideas as to what action we might take in view of the deteriorating situation in Iran—ideas which, in my opinion, should be based on the premise that any viable accommodation with Khomeini is neither possible nor desirable. This does not address itself to the more acute problem of the refugees.

3. I have attached a few thoughts. I am sending copies to the DDCI, the DDO and Chief, Near East and South Asia Division, whose grasp of the present situation is better than mine and who may have a sound basis on which to reject this out of hand or modify it. Clearly there are some drawbacks. Any covert action under the 662 procedures carries with it the consequences of leakage.² Also any dynamic political action in the south of Iran, if it became known, could stimulate compensating Soviet covert action in the north (including Tehran), in which leftists, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Mazandarani, etc., are used to promote pro-Soviet regimes, as was the case in 1945–1946. I believe, however, that it must be assumed that the Soviets already have dynamic links to one or more leftist movements and would be quick to capitalize on provincial chaos in the north anyway, if they could do so.

John H. Waller

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1: Iran (Tab B, Iran Notebook). Secret. Copies were sent to DDCI, DDO, and Chief, Near East and South Asia Division.

² A reference to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 which expanded congressional oversight and control of the CIA. See also footnote 2, Document 44.

Attachment

Paper Prepared by the Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency (Waller)³

Washington, November 15, 1979

INTRODUCTION

In May 1979, I sketched out a scenario (hereto attached)⁴ in which the Iranian left would coalesce ultimately attracting more moderate liberal lay elements in opposition to Khomeini. This was based on the assumption that Khomeini could not construct or keep a functioning government, thus economic decline, unemployment and exasperation by literate Iranians would create a situation in which Khomeini would eventually be ousted. I also predicted a feudal breakup of the country in which urban-oriented leftists would control the capital and some other large northern cities such as Isfahan, Meshed and Kerman, while provincial ethnic or tribal groups would take advantage of the army's virtual impotence to assume de facto autonomy in their respective regions. The Kurds would resist central authority in Kurdistan, the Azerbaijani Turks would control that province, the Arabs of oil-rich Khuzistan would resist strong central control, the Qashqais and their close neighboring tribes would enjoy autonomy in the south, and Baluchi separatism would begin stirring again in southeast Iran.

I also suggested that "before the left seizes urban-labor power, various conservative middle-class landowners, pro-Shah and military elements in Iran or abroad will seek secret Western backing and support."

I concluded that the feudal picture painted by this scenario "will provide the U.S. with neither a reliable source of oil nor political influence in Iran," and that "the situation will beg progressively for U.S. covert interference as the only viable alternative to chaos and a hostile government antagonistic to U.S. policy aims and infecting other oil-bearing Persian Gulf areas vital to our economy." And, you will recall, I predicted that "as U.S. influence declines, there will be pressure from

³ Secret.

⁴ Attached; scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977–November 1979.

the administration on CIA to find political action solutions in Iran; congressional/public concerns for Iran will provide an atmosphere permitting such operations."

That the above scenario is unfolding as predicted is no tribute to my prescience; it is the result of an entirely inevitable, predictable dynamic. That the administration made an honest try to get along with Bazargan, provide military supplies, etc., was good insofar as the onus of the deterioration of relations now rests firmly on the Iranians. But, if this short-lived policy of accommodation with Khomeini was based on a genuine conviction that Bazargan or some other reasonable government under Khomeini could work and cooperate with the U.S., then this policy was demonstrably unworkable.

At any rate, the situation as it stands today is:

—The left on one major occasion on 12 August 1979 tested its street strength with impressive showing. That it has not made a serious bid for street control and power is probably based on the conviction that the time is not ripe. Khomeini, particularly now that he benefits from a new anti-American wave, is not yet dislodgeable [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and economic disintegration has not reached an advanced enough stage. The left is still biding its time.

—The moderates in Iran's political spectrum are becoming rapidly disenchanted, and with Khomeini having obviously jettisoned responsible government in favor of medieval Islamic bigotry, totally devoid of statecraft, this process will accelerate rapidly.

—The various "conservative, middle-class land-owners" referred to above seem, indeed, to be finding a rallying point in Bakhtiar. Bakhtiar has, in all likelihood, or will seek, Iranian expatriate private backing and will probably seek backing from the U.S. if he has not already done so (feelers through the Qashqai, etc.). Bakhtiar's move, if it ever comes, (or some other move by moderates, possibly military) will precede a leftist bid for urban power and the leftists will be the urban beneficiaries of civil war in the streets. They will have the advantage thus of not having to take on Khomeini, a semi-deified saint in the eyes of Iran's common man; they will instead pose as the champions of order in the face of a bourgeois effort to depose Khomeini.

The groundwork for the other feature of my scenario, tribal, provincial autonomy, is already taking place. The Kurds clearly are beyond reach of the center and intend to stay that way even though it means withdrawing into the mountains. Khuzistan Arabs, possibly incited by Iraq, have had to be brutally suppressed by Admiral Madani (who has now resigned and may not be replaced by such a resolute man). And, [*1½ lines not declassified*], the Qashqai strategy is to build a tribal coalition to maintain southern tranquility ostensibly as a favor to Khomeini, but actually to get into position to bid for power under a nationalist banner in the event of civil war in which Khomeini is martyred. In many ways, the Qashqais, using a provincial base of power, are

aiming to do in the south what the left intends to do in northern urban arenas.

POSSIBLE U.S. COURSES OF ACTION

[1 paragraph (1 line) not declassified]

a. Provide secret encouragement and give material assistance to Bakhtiar as the moderate opposition figure who seems to have the most momentum. But this course of action must presuppose that he can overthrow Khomeini and form a viable alternative government. I believe he may be able to upset Khomeini, providing two things: (a) he can rally some kind of viable military underground which can seize street power in the face of both leftist and pro-Khomeini street machinery, and (b) he can somehow get Khomeini personally out of the picture—*[less than 1 line not declassified]*. But, I doubt if Bakhtiar could last long if he did overcome the odds and take power. Either resurgent Islamic mass protest or leftist street disruption could prevent him from effectively ruling. He might well be assassinated by one fanatic or another. In sum, Bakhtiar, bearing an intolerable burden of ousting a saint, ill-equipped to contest on the street and with the best of luck armed only by an uncertain military force, and with no provincial backing (except the Bakhtiar tribe between Tehran and Isfahan) is not a good bet, in my opinion. *[2 lines not declassified]*

b. *Let nature take its course in Tehran—monitor it but not influence it—until someone else rides Iran of Khomeini, [3½ lines not declassified].*

The purpose of the following analysis is to explore in outline how we could achieve this latter alternative:

[heading (1 line) not declassified]

The Saudi Arabian Government must be assumed to be concerned and worried by events in Iran as:

a. A breakdown of Iran would lead to leftist, pro-Soviet control or, at a minimum, a feudal chaos in Iran. Geopolitically, either possibility must be frightening to the Saudis.

b. Evidence of Shia missionary zeal could pose a direct threat to Gulf Sheikdoms who have significant Shia populations (Bahrain, particularly) and, more importantly, pose a possible—at least, theoretical—threat to the Saudi Shia population which dominates Saudi Arabia's oil producing and refining regions near Dhahran.

c. Apparent U.S. impotence and inability to do anything once again underscores how little hope Saudi Arabia can put in the U.S. as its protector.

d. As a provincial vacuum in Iran provides its prime rival, Iraq, with a happy hunting ground for intrigue amongst the Arabs of Khuzistan (possibly also amongst the Kurds, although the Iraqis must view the Kurds as a double-edged sword).

e. As a situation in which an irresponsible clerical, nationalist government might revive irredentist agitation for the return of Bahrain.

[2 paragraphs (9 lines) not declassified]

[1 page (heading and 7 paragraphs) not declassified]

33. Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, November 15, 1979

Cy:

Don McHenry called while you were away to report a conversation he has had with the Secretary General. Basically it relates to a response which the Secretary General wishes to make to an indication from Tehran that he may now be welcome. He is working with Rafiq Ahmed on a scenario in which he would like our input.

Basically the scenario would call for the Secretary General to go to Iran. His first requirement would be the release of the hostages. Next, he would need something relating to the departure of the Shah but would want that to be part of the scenario and would not want it to happen before things were worked out. Thirdly, there must be some recognition of the criminality problem possibly through establishing a commission of former ICJ judges. Finally, there must be elements suggesting the beginning of a return to normality in US-Iran relations.

He indicated that he may find it necessary to make it successful to come up with statements indicating that he understands the emotion-alism of the revolution but he would want to discuss any such statement with us in advance.

David D. Newsom²

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council. Secret.

² Printed from a copy with this typed signature.

34. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to President Carter¹

Washington, November 15, 1979

I believe that any rescue operation into Teheran within the next two weeks would have a very low probability of success.²

We need better to help you prepare for a decision on such an operation, and on what the alternatives are.

First, you deserve an *explicit* statement of the likelihood of success of a rescue attempt. (Recall that the JCS reviewed the plan for the Bay of Pigs and judged it to have a “fair” chance of success. To the military, “fair” is like a “D” in college; the White House interpreted the JCS opinion as a “fair chance of success.”)

Next, you need to know how the likelihood of success would improve over time. You may not be able to control the timing, but you will want to consider alternatives in this light.

In addition, you deserve optional rescue strategies that have different political requirements. Only you can balance the political costs with the changes in probability they afford.

I suggest that you ask the JCS and Secretary of Defense to prepare a chart like the attached. (A second copy with only nominal entries is also attached to provide a feel for how useful it might or might not be.)³

Finally, you deserve a considered list of alternatives. If you eschew a rescue operation, the pressure of public opinion will require as immediate and decisive a set of actions as possible.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 5: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Various Subjects. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² According to an undated paper prepared by the JCS, on November 12, Jones, by verbal order, created a Joint Task Force within J-3 to develop operation RICE BOWL, the original name of the rescue operation. RICE BOWL led to the establishment of a linked communications and intelligence net among NSA, Department of State, JCS, DIA, CIA, Fort Bragg, Ranger, Fixed-wing, and Helicopter elements that comprised the components of the proposed rescue operation. (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 8, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, 1-93 Rice Bowl Annex B (Intelligence) JTF Oplan 1-80)

³ The second chart is not attached.

Attachment

Chart Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁴

Washington, November 15, 1979

RESCUE OPERATION OPTIONS

Plan	Type of Operation	External Support	Probability of Success by: ⁵			Dec 17	Key Factors Driving Probabilities
			Nov 20	Nov 27	Dec 3		
A	Air land rescue team; helo to Tehran and return; fly out.	[less than 1 line not declassified]	Very low	Very low	Low	Medium	Vulnerability of air lead; availability of helos.
B	Air land rescue team; helo to Tehran and return; fly out.	[less than 1 line not declassified]	Very low	Low	Low-Medium	Medium	Vulnerability of air lead; availability of helos. [less than 1 line not declassified] distances less; chance of land exfiltration higher.

⁴ Top Secret; Sensitive. An updated chart was attached to a November 27 memorandum from Turner to Brzezinski. This memorandum detailed the status of the CIA's role in developing a rescue operation. Turner noted that the CIA would continue to play an important role in "providing technical and operational guidance and logistical support "to virtually all aspects of the Delta team planning effort" and that "interface" between CIA and Defense and Delta "in planning for a hostage rescue operation has been extensive and continuous." (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1.)

⁵ "Success" defined as 50% of hostages and rescue team exfiltrated safely. [Footnote is in the original.]

C	Air land rescue team; infiltrate to Tehran; exfiltrate by road to air field.	[<i>less than 1 line not declassified</i>]	Very low	Very low	Low	Low-Medium	Difficulty of exfiltration by road.
D	Infiltrate attack team; helo directly in and out.	[<i>less than 1 line not declassified</i>]	Not possible	Not possible	Low	Low-Medium	Need time to infiltrate rescue team, helo distance long.
E	Infiltrate attack team; helo directly in and out.	[<i>less than 1 line not declassified</i>]	Not possible	Not possible	Low-Medium	Medium	Distances less.
F	Infiltrate attack team; helo directly in and out.	[<i>less than 1 line not declassified</i>]	Not possible	Not possible	Low-Medium	Medium-High	Distances still less.

35. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 17, 1979, 9–9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President
Hamilton Jordan
Jody Powell**

State

Secretary Vance
Warren Christopher
Dave Newsom
Harold Saunders

Defense

Secretary Brown
Graham Claytor

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

CIA

Admiral Turner
Frank Carlucci

Justice

Attorney General Civiletti**

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**
Robert Mundheim**

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan**
John Sawhill**

NSC

Gary Sick
Bill Odum

**Present for discussion of domestic issues only.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Hostages.* Secretary Vance briefed on the announcement this morning that women and blacks not guilty of espionage would be released.² The decree by Khomeini has been confirmed by the students. Arrangements have been made with the Swiss to fly them out when the release actually occurs. They will go to Frankfurt for medical exami-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106, SCC 204a Iran. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² In a November 16 telephone conversation at 5:30 p.m., Dean informed Saunders that Khomeini would agree to release women and African-American hostages because "as far as the Blacks are concerned their release is on the grounds that they are underdogs in US and sympathetic supporters of the PLO," and the release of the women "is consonant with mercy and compassion which characterize Islam." (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1979) The White House issued a brief statement on November 17, welcoming the development and urging Iran to release all remaining hostages. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979, Book II, p. 2141*)

nation and a rest of a day or so before coming back to the U.S. We expect about 10–12 people. We do not know how the transfer will actually take place. The hostages may be released to the PLO or some other intermediary. (C)

2. *Demonstrations.* The Attorney General believes that the ruling yesterday permitting demonstrations will be upheld by the Circuit Court on appeal. However, in view of the strong belief of the Secretary of State that the danger to the hostages created by any incidents is very great, the ruling will be appealed. (U)

3. *Iranian Assets.* Transactions involving the FMS trust fund under control of the Department of Defense will be licensed. Operation of the Bank Melli in New York was unilaterally assumed by New York authorities. Secretary Miller believed this was unfortunate, but it is now an accomplished fact. The Iranian Embassy officials state that they need \$20 million per month to maintain remittances for students in this country. Treasury is still investigating the actual procedures used, but intends to authorize new Iranian funds (i.e. beyond those blocked by the action earlier this week) to pay for these remittances as well as financial obligations.³

Iran also holds accounts in foreign branches of U.S. banks in currencies other than dollars. These amount to \$300–500 million total. Continued blocking of these assets will intensify the conflict of laws problem, e.g. preventing transactions in British pounds in a London bank. The SCC agreed with Treasury that these funds should be unblocked.⁴

The British have thus far refrained from issuing any counter order and are being generally cooperative. Secretary Miller intends to stop in London for further discussions on his way back from the Middle East. The latest figures on total Iranian assets are as follows: \$1.2 billion in the Federal Reserve (hard figure); \$5.9 billion in foreign branches of U.S. banks. The \$5.9 billion includes the foreign currency accounts of \$300–500 million and may include double counting of some oil payment accounts of as much as \$1 billion. Iran has claims of about \$1.8 billion on U.S. banks, so the net advantage in U.S. favor is about \$5 billion. Other claims may also appear, including up to \$1 billion of U.S. direct investment in Iran. The Export-Import Bank has a technical default on an Iranian loan for failure to meet a payment of \$2,000. Treasury intends to proceed very deliberately in declaring a default since Iran may have been unable to make the payment as a result of our action. Private banks, however, may declare default on Iranian

³ Carter approved this item with a checkmark.

⁴ Carter initialed in the margin next to this paragraph and approved the item with a checkmark.

loans, and we have no authority or any inclination to interfere in what is a private banking matter. Thus far there has been no attempt to interfere with U.S. accounts in Iran. (C)

4. *Energy.* Secretary Duncan drew attention to press indications that we are requesting other nations not to purchase the oil freed by our embargo. He noted that it was in our interest to permit this oil to enter the world market. All agreed that we would not attempt to interfere with contractual purchase of the oil, but no public statement is necessary.⁵ (C)

5. *Visas.* Dr. Brzezinski relayed the President's approval of postponing revocation of visas until Monday. (C)

Political-Military Issues

1. *Security.* The Attorney General reported that preliminary evidence resulting from a search of the premises of the Iranian students arrested in Baltimore suggests that there may be some truth in an earlier report that Khomeini has ordered agitators in this country with false documentation and specific instructions to stir up violence. There may be a security issue separate from the prior decision to revalidate visas. (S)

2. *White Paper.* The Department of State, in coordination with the NSC, will prepare a White Paper on administration actions dealing with Iran.⁶ (C)

⁵ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed next to it.

⁶ Carter wrote "good, expedite" in the right margin.

36. Paper Prepared by the Joint Staff¹

Washington, November 17, 1979

BEST ESTIMATE OF SITUATION AT THE COMPOUND

Immediate Security of Compound:

Although not confirmed by hard intelligence, it appears that hostages are being held in at least five and possibly eight locations within

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79-11/20/79. Top Secret.

the compound. Security includes 20–30 “students” and Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRG) personnel at the Chancellory gate, supported by foot and motorized patrols. News reports on evening of 16 November indicate that up to 100 “soldiers” are joining guard personnel around compound. There are 20–30 additional “students” and IRG in the Chancellory, with 125–175 “students” providing direct security of the hostages, who are reportedly loosely bound. “Students” inside the hostage holding areas appear to be armed with pistols while those outside have automatic rifles and submachine guns. Explosive devices on the perimeter wall have also been reported. It is likely that the compound is under surveillance from adjacent buildings although no observation posts or gun positions have been seen on surrounding rooftops.

Reinforcements:

Within 10–15 minutes after beginning to move about 100 local IRG militia can be at the compound, followed by an IRG motorized “Strike Team” of 150–200 personnel in 20–30 minutes. A motorized 120–160 man Ranger reaction company and up to 1500 IRG back-up strike force personnel may arrive in 30–45 minutes, followed shortly thereafter by an additional 1500–2000 man IRG Strike Force. In addition, an easily excited populace has tended to rally to the compound in large numbers in support of the students when unusual events occur (e.g., recent power outage resulted in mob scene at Embassy). The sheer numbers, without regard to their discipline, cohesion or competence, add up to a most significant threat.

Rescue Assault at the Compound:

Best judgment is that it would take all of the available 75 specially trained Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta personnel scaling the walls during darkness and with complete surprise to have a reasonable chance of freeing at least a substantial number of the hostages. The assault personnel would have to complete their task within 30–40 minutes, from assault to movement from the compound. The assault would be timed for the quiet hours after midnight when few people are on the streets. If surprise is achieved and Delta’s actions can be completed quickly within the compound, the probability of successful movement away from the compound is enhanced. However, there is a high risk of any movement being impeded by the convergence of reinforcing elements and civil mobs. Cover and deception actions elsewhere in the city and the neutralization of the radio/TV stations are being planned.

Insertion and Extraction:

Any chance for success is critically dependent upon achieving surprise and therefore a low visibility insertion concept is envisioned. This

would entail having people in the city providing hard intelligence, developing safe havens in advance, arranging for guides, transportation, communications, and general support. Some progress is being made in developing this capability and personnel involved believe much can be done but some time will be required to reach the desired level of effectiveness. Insertion concept is to have two MC-130 "Combat Talon" aircraft (specially equipped C-130 aircraft and crews trained for blackout night operations at low altitude over hostile territory) take off from a country in area (planning now from Aswan, Egypt) and airdrop or assault land Delta personnel in outskirts of Tehran to be met by personnel in-country, transported to safe havens, and spend approximately 24 hours reconnoitering and preparing for assault the following night.² If successful in freeing hostages, force will then move to transportation (such as garbage trucks which are reportedly a common sight during the night). Departure would be to the north and west (into area of city with best roads and fewest people) to designated departure airstrip (e.g., blocked off road or flat open field) for MC-130 aircraft pick up. Aircraft will make an assault landing, quickly load passengers and depart for third country.

Personnel and Aircraft Preparatory Movements:

Air refuelable MC-130s are required, and because of their limited number would have to be drawn from Florida and Okinawa. The aircraft from Florida would go through Europe to Egypt and aircraft from Okinawa through Diego Garcia. Personnel from Delta would be transported to Europe via C-141 aircraft and transferred to MC-130s in forward area for onward movement to Aswan.

Actions Required for Implementation:

—Delta personnel must assemble in isolation, plan, rehearse and make final preparation. Thirty-six Delta personnel have been isolated and are in training, preparation and rehearsal. A scale model of the compound has been provided to assist with familiarization and planning. The number of Delta personnel in isolation is being increased gradually and carefully to reduce potential for compromise.

—Detailed planning will continue by Delta personnel [*less than 1 line not declassified*] until departure. Planning with limited, essential interagency interface will continue in Washington. MC-130 crews will have to be alerted to begin their specific planning and rehearsal for the mission. Some limited face-to-face coordination and planning

² In the left margin, Jones wrote: "May be possible to do operation in one night if we can get some Delta people in a day or two in advance—time consuming to arrange. We are working on it. DJ."

between the Florida crews and Delta personnel can take place prior to departure for Europe; the entire force will not be assembled until arrival at Aswan.

—From standpoint of moving people and aircraft, insertion could be made in about four to five days from the decision to go, with assault about one day later. However, there are still many loose ends, particularly as to in-country arrangements. It is difficult to tell how soon those arrangements can be brought to a minimum satisfactory level. To shorten the movement time appreciably it will be necessary to alert MC-130 units and link up elements with Delta personnel in forward areas, with attendant obvious security risks. Proceeding from where we are to D-day would then still depend upon receiving definitive intelligence and solving support problems in Iran.

Required Decisions:

Authority already given:

—Isolate, train, rehearse, and prepare Delta personnel.

—[1 line not declassified]

Authority required:

—Establish [*less than 1 line not declassified*] contacts for required assistance for insertion of the force, for aid in assault and extraction or, if necessary, movement to safe havens.

Authority required, but no action recommended until in-country elements are in place and preparations underway:

—Alert MC-130 crews and have them begin required preparations (some of this may be feasible to begin covertly without informing crews of the nature of their mission).

—Move MC-130s from Okinawa to Diego Garcia.

—Provide tanker support as required throughout operation.

—Move US-based MC-130s to Europe.

—Move Delta from isolated training area to Europe to join MC-130s.

—Direct movement of all elements to Aswan.

—Launch aircraft and insert Delta.

—Execute Delta assault and extraction following night (MC-130 aircraft launched for extraction timed to rendezvous with Delta and hostages on designated pick-up assault landing strip).

Actions to Improve Probability of Success:

Continue to:

—Assemble intelligence on actions within and in vicinity of compound. This intelligence will be fed to Washington planning cell, to Delta, and to MC-130 planners.

—Build in-country capability to receive, guide, transport, provide safe haven for and generally assist Delta upon insertion.

—[2 lines not declassified]

Alternatives:

Use of helicopters for extraction from the general area of the compound and movement to an assault air strip for pick up by the MC-130 aircraft has been under consideration from the outset. If the extremely difficult logistical and visibility (security) problems could be solved, use of helicopters would be the preferred tactical option for extraction. Efforts to solve these difficult problems are continuing.

Risk:

Actions are being taken to improve chances for success but in any event it will be a very high risk operation throughout. All planning and security could be disrupted by premature forward positioning in order to reduce implementation time. To proceed now beyond what we are doing before in-country support problems are solved would not be prudent.

37. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 18, 1979

SUBJECT

Looking Ahead

The Constitution as Prime Mover

The events in Iran since mid-summer can be related directly to the power struggle underlying the formulation and adoption of a new constitution. In June and July, Khomeini acceded to a western-style constitution based on the 1906 document. However, in late July and August he moved with great determination to insure that his own version of the constitution would be adopted. First, he packed the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79-11/20/79. Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

Council of Experts with his own radical Islamic followers, headed by Beheshti, and directed them to rewrite the original draft according to his own vision of an Islamic Republic. To support this effort, he used the crisis with the Kurds to proclaim himself commander in chief of the armed forces, to shut down press opposition and criticism, and to ban independent political organization.

This initial coup successfully rallied the people around his own leadership and threw the incipient opposition off balance. The show of force was sufficient to convince Iranians inside and outside the country that it was futile to oppose Khomeini, and it solidified fickle Iranian political opinion behind him as the apparent winner. The Council of Experts proceeded to redraft the constitution systematically, placing the clergy at the center of power and creating a special role for Khomeini personally as a sort of President for Life. Once this was well underway, Khomeini's interest in the Kurdish conflict waned. Recently he has shown willingness to negotiate an accommodation providing for considerable cultural autonomy.

Bazargan and his cohorts in the "government" opposed the super-Islamic constitution, and they began to press more and more openly for a more democratic model. Shortly before Bazargan, Yazdi and Chamran left for Algiers,² they presented a petition to Khomeini asking that the Council of Experts be disbanded on the grounds that they had exceeded their mandate. Khomeini refused. This may have been the final straw. In addition, Khomeini was probably aware that the Bazargan faction had begun [*less than 1 line not declassified*] establishing the potential for eventual opposition to his personal rule.

The arrival of the Shah in New York and the absence of Bazargan et al. in Algiers provided the opportunity for the second coup. The focus of propaganda attacks shifted from the Kurds to the United States, and Bazargan suddenly came under attack for his meeting with you. The attack on the embassy was carefully organized. Not only did the attackers come prepared with detailed information and equipment (gas masks and acetylene torches), but the coincidence of the attack with a massive (diversionary) demonstration at Tehran University and the absence of all responsible government officials insured that police protection would be unavailable during the critical first hours.

The incident provided the opportunity to remove the Bazargan government and replace it with the Revolutionary Council. It also solidified support from the students who were an unpredictable element in the anticipated debate on the constitution. Thus, Khomeini further consolidated his personal control of effective power and elimi-

² They met with Brzezinski in Algiers on November 1. See footnote 2, Document 4.

nated those elements most likely to be troublesome in achieving his own vision of an Islamic Republic.

Khomeini's Position

Khomeini now has a tiger by the tail, but he is playing for high stakes and is willing to risk all. By placing himself at the visible center of authority, he becomes directly responsible for government actions. Since he and his people are largely incapable of administering the country, this will work against him in time. However, by seizing the initiative in a bold way, he assures that all factions remain cautious. Groups may get together and complain, but as long as he is unyielding and winning, they will probably do little but talk. The stakes have been increased, however, since Khomeini cannot allow himself to be perceived to be out maneuvered or defeated in this latest test of wills.

I suspect that his confidence at present is based on several assumptions:

—The United States will take no direct action for fear of losing the hostages.

—He can wait longer than we can, and eventually he will be able to drive a bargain that makes him appear the winner.

—If the U.S. should strike, the U.S. moral position will be undermined and his own position strengthened. He does not mind losing even large numbers of lives.

—He is the glue holding the country together, and especially in a time of great threat, Iranians will stick behind him as the only alternative to total chaos and dismemberment of the country.

—Although he cannot ride this wave forever, it should be enough to get him through the announcement of the constitution and the referendum now scheduled for December 2. In the meantime, he will attempt to shift the burden of proof to the United States by conducting spy trials.

—Celebration of Ashura on November 28–29 assures that religious frenzy and emotional commitment will increase, rather than decrease, in the short run.

Nevertheless, Khomeini is not in full control. His control over the students is less than complete. Unrest is growing in the military and probably in other areas of society. He is losing in Kurdistan. Azerbaijan is on the verge of revolt and would require only the smallest signal from Shariat-Madari to move against him. The oil fields are increasingly anarchic. Iraq is sending threatening military signals. The Bazargan group is looking for an opportunity to reestablish itself. And the average Iranian is probably far more apprehensive about a direct clash with the U.S. than Khomeini himself.

U.S. Options: Strategy I

Khomeini is playing for time. He must get the constitution ratified by referendum. After that, the usefulness of this ploy will no longer be great and he may be willing to resolve the problem or try to make it go away—as he did with the Kurds after a month or two.

In the meantime, we should work for limited objectives:

—Get additional hostages released on the grounds that they are not spies. Khomeini may find an occasional release is a means of keeping the international community off his back, while he determines the pace of events. The PLO and UN channel could work on this.

—Get the hostages transferred from the students to the Revolutionary Guards. This might appeal to Khomeini since it would give him better control over the day-to-day situation. At the same time, it would increase the pressures within the Revolutionary Council and elsewhere favoring release since it would require only a government decision rather than a prolonged negotiation with the students. We could start working on this objective now, even though it may not be doable until after the referendum or some other later time.

In support of this strategy, we should continue the international barrage, while pressing hard for regular contact with the hostages.

Strategy II

Khomeini is ultimately susceptible to domestic pressures. If there is substantial evidence that this approach is working against him and seriously eroding his power base, he will be inclined to find a way to shift his approach. We can help speed up that realization:

—[1 paragraph (5 lines) not declassified]

—[1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

—[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]

Strategy III

We must recognize that neither of the above courses may succeed. It may be preferable to seize the initiative by a rescue effort. I cannot second guess the expert thinking on this, but I would offer the following:

—[1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

—November 29–30 is the obvious date.

Although preparations for such an effort are compatible with Strategy I, Strategy II should be avoided to prevent growing suspicions of an active U.S. intervention. Also, it would be useful to send some lulling signals via covert channels (particularly the PLO) to the effect that we might consider releasing the Shah in certain circumstances. This would engage them in internal debate and reinforce their belief that we were thinking of no direct action.

Comment

I do not believe the hostages are in imminent danger of their lives. A U.S. escalation therefore carries the danger of casualties which could have been avoided by a more cautious approach. Strategy I could possibly succeed in getting back many, even most, of the hostages over time. However, some of the hostages would almost certainly remain in Iran as “convicted spies” for a long period of time—if only to deter a U.S. military intervention. We will have to be prepared to live with that.

Strategy II should be adopted soon in some form. We must begin to make decisions about successors we would be willing to support. The Soviets will certainly have their candidates, and we cannot afford to leave it all to chance.

If the chances of getting 75% of the remaining hostages by a rescue operation are higher than 50%, I strongly recommend Strategy III. I understand the absolute necessity for compartmentalization, but you should be aware of the importance at some point of relating any direct action to a fine-grained awareness of the political and internal developments. You will be the best judge of whether an independent evaluation is desirable at some point, but I urge that any such operation not be left entirely in the hands of the JCS. You know where to find me.

38. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

[*document number not declassified*] Washington, November 19, 1979

Iranian-US Economic Sanctions: Impact and Reactions [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran’s revolutionary leaders appear determined to continue their head-on conflict with the United States. The Ayatollah Khomeini and

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14. Top Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. A cover page and table of contents are not printed. Three annexes, titled “Iran: Import Patterns and Vulnerabilities,” “Major Developed Countries: Responses to US Economic Countermeasures Against Iran,” and “Iran’s Transportation Network: Capabilities and Vulnerabilities,” are attached but not printed. The CIA prepared a similar December 4 paper [*document number not declassified*] titled “The Iranian Crisis: International Economic Fallout,” which Turner sent to Carter, Mondale, Vance, Brzezinski, Brown, Miller, and Duncan under separate December 5 covering memoranda. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran December 5–9, 1979)

his advisors now believe they have the opportunity to extract retribution from the United States for its past support of the Shah. Furthermore, Khomeini undoubtedly is using the anti-US campaign to revitalize his revolution and to distract attention from the country's pressing domestic economic problems. The Ayatollah and his entourage, increasingly carried away with revolutionary zeal, are showing little concern for the impact of their moves on Iran's economic and political future. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Economic Moves to Date

The Iranians have used a number of economic weapons—some pre-dating the most recent seizure of the US embassy in Tehran—in their attempt to apply pressure to the United States:

- All banks and insurance companies—including US holdings—were nationalized prior to the current flareup. While compensation for the value of US investments (estimated at \$100 million) has been promised, payment has not been made.
- Oil shipments to US companies were banned following US action to prohibit the import of Iranian petroleum. While adding some pressure on oil prices, this action will not have a major effect on the world oil market so long as Iranian production is not cut.
- Withdrawal of Iranian funds from the United States and from foreign subsidiaries of US banks was threatened. Initially causing some confusion in currency markets and driving down the value of the dollar somewhat, this action—even if not thwarted by a US blocking of Iranian assets—would have had little impact as long as the funds were placed in dollar-denominated accounts.
- Remaining US investment in Iran (estimated at \$300 million) reportedly has been nationalized. Considerable amounts of equipment and supplies owned by US contractors also are involved. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The United States, for its part, has (a) frozen Iranian assets, (b) banned the import of Iranian oil, and (c) halted all shipments of military supplies. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Future Economic Moves by Iran

Although the opening salvos have been fired, neither Iran nor the United States has wheeled out its major economic guns. Iran's prime economic weapon would be the complete cutoff of oil exports. Variations could include: (a) reducing oil exports only by the amount going to the United States or to US companies or (b) extending the embargo to cover countries supporting US policy. The impact of these measures would depend on the reaction of other oil producers who could: (a) do nothing (possible), (b) cut output in support of Iran (unlikely), or (c) increase output to offset the shortfall (possible). [*portion marking not declassified*]

Unless it felt seriously threatened by the United States, Iran probably would prefer to take less drastic actions. These might include:

- Refusing to accept dollars for payment of oil. With 70 percent of oil payments to Iran in dollars at present (\$15 billion annually) this would cause minor, short-term disruptions in world currency markets.
- Blocking debt payments to the United States. Total Iranian debt to the United States amounts to about \$3 billion, with debt-service payments probably running over one-half billion dollars a year. US banks reportedly have seized an estimated \$1 billion of frozen Iranian assets to cover themselves against this contingency.
- Converting all liquid dollar assets to other currencies. This would put substantial downward pressure on the value of the dollar. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Possible US Countermoves

Most US economic countermoves would involve cutting Iranian imports. The Iranian import picture has changed drastically since the revolution. Exports to Iran, led by capital goods and semi-manufactures, have fallen about 70 percent in value so far this year compared with 1978. Food imports, down 25 percent from last year, still cover a quarter of Iranian requirements. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran is especially dependent on imports for the following agricultural products:

- *Vegetable oil* imports equal about 80 percent of domestic consumption; shortages have already been reported.
- *Corn, sorghum, and other feed grain* imports cover nearly 60 percent of domestic consumption; stocks are low.
- *Rice* imports provide about 40 percent of domestic consumption; current stocks are probably sufficient for one to two months.
- *Wheat* imports provide 15 to 20 percent of consumption; current stocks probably equal one and one-half months of supply.
- *Mutton and beef* imports supply about 20 percent of domestic consumption; current stocks are reportedly very low. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The United States, West Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, Italy, and France (in that order) have been Iran's major suppliers during the past several years. These countries provided roughly 70 percent of Iran's imports in 1978. This year, because of the increased importance of food items and Iran's attempt to diversify trading partners, Australia, New Zealand, and some less developed countries—especially sugar exporters—have grown in importance. [*portion marking not declassified*]

About three-fourths of Iran's international trade arrives at the Persian Gulf ports of Khorramshahr, Bandar Khomeini, Bushshahr, and Bandar Abbas. Khorramshahr, traditionally the best equipped and most modern port (surpassed by Bandar Khomeini in traffic in 1978), primarily handles private sector trade, while Bandar Khomeini is the port of

entry for government imports. The port of Khorramshahr is up the Shatt al Arab River, which is used both by Iran and Iraq. The remainder of Iran's foreign trade passes through rail and road links with Turkey and the Soviet Union or through minor ports on the Caspian Sea. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iranian Vulnerability to Economic Sanctions

The principal economic levers available to the United States include: (a) a partial or complete unilateral trade embargo against Iran, (b) a collective embargo by the United States and its main allies, and (c) a US naval blockade. Of these, a naval blockade would be most disruptive to the Iranian economy. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Unilateral Embargo on Exports

An embargo imposed by the United States alone would exert only slight economic pressure on Iran. With a few possible exceptions, other suppliers could be found for most categories of Iranian imports, including food. The cutoff of US food shipments to Iran would likely cause only a few months of disruptions. Even before the recent flare-up, the Iranians were diversifying their sources of agricultural imports in order to become less dependent on the United States. [*portion marking not declassified*]

- *Vegetable oil* imports—half of which normally come from the United States—could be obtained in South America and Western Europe, albeit with considerable delay. Brazil, for example, has frozen export sales of soy oil until the next crush is completed in March 1980 due to a poor crop.

- *Rice*—now supplied almost entirely by the United States—is available from other sources, especially Japan.

- *Wheat* is available on the world market. While the United States once supplied 90 percent of Iranian imports, Tehran has already substantially diversified its source of supply by signing agreements with Australia for 520,000 metric tons and Turkey for 50,000 tons. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The transshipment of US food through third countries would be extremely difficult to control. Export agents have already started to designate the Persian Gulf and Pakistan as destinations in order to overcome problems associated with the refusal of US longshoremen to load Iran-bound cargoes. There have also been reports in recent months of extensive shipments of US rice to Dubai, undoubtedly for transshipment to Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

While other industrialized countries, including those of Eastern Europe and the USSR, could eventually replace the United States as suppliers of most raw materials and spare parts, some items can only be provided by the United States, at least for an extended period of

time. The most critical items include military equipment and spares, spare parts for civilian aircraft, turbine compressors for gas pipelines, pumps, drilling rigs, power generating equipment, and telecommunications equipment. How long it would take for an embargo on these items to have some effect would depend in part on inventories in Iran. While we do not have specific information on inventories, recent trading patterns would suggest that stocks are extremely low. Stocks of kerosene, in short supply earlier this year, have been rebuilt, and kerosene should not be a problem as long as the oil refineries are kept operating. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Collective Embargo by the West

A collective ban on exports to Iran is only a remote possibility as long as Iranian oil continues to flow. Given their heavy dependence on Iranian oil and worsening domestic economic conditions, Japan, Western Europe, and major LDCs such as Brazil would oppose actions that could lead to a complete oil cutoff. Collective action by even a few countries would probably prove difficult as illustrated by the inability of the United States to get support for its trade embargo against Cuba. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Upon extreme Iranian provocation—a cutoff of oil exports or the killing of US Embassy hostages—a collective export embargo might be feasible. Such action, if rigidly enforced, would affect some three-fourths of total Iranian imports, including over 50 percent of all food imports and most manufactured and industrial imports. The problems associated with controlling a US embargo would also apply in the case of a collective embargo. Although the USSR and other suppliers, mostly less developed countries, would be unable to replace all the embargoed trade, they could supply most essential imports. Replacement of spare parts for Iranian industry, which was developed largely with Western equipment, would be especially difficult. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Naval Blockade

An effective naval blockade of Iran would have the most serious disruptive effects on the economy. The international support of a blockade would depend upon whether it was seen as an unprovoked US unilateral action or as a countermeasure to extreme Iranian measures. Barring further Iranian provocations, such action would probably be vigorously opposed by the major foreign oil importers. If employed as a countermeasure, it would receive more support in the West. [*portion marking not declassified*]

History has shown that efforts to interdict a nation's lines of communications on a sustained basis are rarely completely successful.

While a naval blockade would increase the cost of transport of Iran and cause severe economic disruptions, basic requirements could continue to be imported along established rail, highway, and waterway links with the USSR and, to a lesser extent, with Turkey and with Pakistan. These transport links have combined optional capacity of some 7 million tons per year. The most these routes have carried in recent years, however, is 3 million tons. Iranian imports are currently running at about 7.75 million tons per year, one-half last year's amount. *[portion marking not declassified]*

In this situation, transport routes through the northwest region of Iran would become an important funnel for the movement of high-priority goods. On the rail side, the Soviets could increase the volume to the rail link with Iran at Jolfa. The two lines, however, are of different gauges and would require either transshipment or a change of wheel sets. If there were a substantial pickup in truck traffic, the Iranians would soon be confronted by problems of both road and truck maintenance (especially since the flow of parts and supplies would be disrupted), which would reduce the capacity of the highway alternative. *[portion marking not declassified]*

Other fallback possibilities would include the limited rail and highway link with Turkey and the road link with Pakistan. The Pakistani rail and highway line runs as far as Zahedan, Iran. Zahedan, however has no rail link with the rest of Iran and the road link is difficult. For this reason, high-priority goods coming through Pakistan would probably be airlifted from Zahedan's airport; Zahedan was used as an airlift facility for Iran's support of Pakistan during the last India-Pakistan War. *[portion marking not declassified]*

The backbone of any regional airlift operation would be the Iranian Air Force's 50 C-130 and nine 747 aircraft along with Iran Air's five 707-320Cs. In combination this fleet of 64 aircraft could lift approximately 1,700 tons at any one time. We estimate that three-fourths of the combined fleet would be initially available for airlift activities. A sustained and concerted airlift operation, however, would quickly run into maintenance problems. *[portion marking not declassified]*

Iranian Pain Threshold

The effectiveness of economic trade sanctions to compel nations to act against their perceived national interests has traditionally been overstated. In the case of the US embargo against Cuba, for example, the Cubans were able and willing to increasingly tighten their belts. Khomeini would be able to rally some mass support, especially from the poorer classes, by focusing on the theme of martyrdom in Shia Islam. However, substantial disruption of supplies would almost certainly heighten opposition among the middle and upper classes. The

bazaaris who were the financiers of the revolution would be hard hit by economic sanctions; their support of Khomeini has already waned because of deteriorating economic conditions. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The most immediate pressure on Khomeini could come from the cutoff of US military equipment and supplies. While he has shown little concern over the domestic economic and political difficulties created by his actions, Khomeini might be more disturbed by the loss of military equipment because of the sorry state of the Iranian military and the tense state of Iranian-Iraqi relations. The most realistic members of Iran's military are already aware that they are no match for the Iraqis. As the US ban results in a further military deterioration, their views are increasingly likely to be transmitted to Qom where they probably will cause great concern. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The timing of US actions will also be critical in determining the resolve of the Iran populace. US actions taken without extreme provocation would probably solidify Persian support behind Khomeini's anti-American campaign. All economic hardships—including those suffered since the start of the revolution—are now justified by blaming the United States. In the absence of what the Iranians see as new provocations, a chance exists that in time Iranian attention will be refocused on the domestic economic situation. The revolution has not produced the hoped-for improvement in economic conditions. Indeed, it has made things worse for many, including the large number of unemployed urban workers, and disillusionment is spreading. Moreover, many Iranians are becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the fundamentalist Islamic percepts that guide today's Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The urban workers would be the hardest hit, at least initially, by trade sanctions. These workers, who had hoped to reap substantial economic benefits from the new Islamic government, are instead finding high unemployment, rising inflation, and shortages of goods. Given the exodus of middle and high level managers and skilled technicians, industry is unlikely to be kept running at even its current low rate with the additional burden of trade sanctions. Thus, as unemployment mounted and additional shortages appeared, a trade embargo or blockade could exacerbate the frustrations of many socioeconomic interest groups. These frustrations could be vented against the Khomeini government as well as against the United States. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Foreign Reactions and Positions to Date

Foreign official reactions to the US-Iranian confrontation have been predictably low-profile and publicly balanced. Privately, foreign gov-

ernments have been somewhat more supportive of US measures. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Most *Arab* nations have privately condemned the seizure of the American embassy, with only Libya supporting Iran. Many Arabs feel that the Iranian regime is giving Islam a bad name. The Arabian Peninsula Arabs, moreover, fear the new Shia militancy being pushed by Khomeini. Iraq has been the most vocal in expressing anti-Iranian feelings. The Iraqis have talked of abrogating the 1975 Iran-Iraq security agreement and have signaled to the United States their support of continued US pressure on Khomeini. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Arabs have, however, expressed concern over the precedent being set by the blocking of Iranian assets. UAE officials, for example, reportedly feel that the US move was misguided and that it will force a reevaluation of UAE foreign investment policies as well as those of other oil producers. The Libyan delegation to the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in Tunis called for joint Arab reprisals against the United States. The Libyan initiative received only mild support from Syria and was soundly rejected by the conference, suggesting considerable sympathy for the US position. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Reactions from the major *industrial countries* have been subdued and publicly balanced. This apparent lack of enthusiasm for US measures is probably due to nervousness over the potential for disruptions in international financial and oil markets. Reaction to the US halt of purchases of Iranian oil has been positive and supportive, but extremely low key. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The US decision to freeze official Iranian assets held abroad is causing few specific difficulties for foreign governments, but almost all foreign governments have questioned the legality of the US action. Nevertheless, there appears to be general agreement not to actively pursue the question of legality at this moment. All available reports indicate that the US blocking order has been extremely effective abroad, particularly in the United Kingdom, which harbors a large percentage of Iranian investments. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Prospects for Foreign Cooperation With Other US Sanctions

The prospects for active foreign support of additional US countermeasures against Iran are slim, if the American hostages are not harmed and if other countries are not more directly provoked. The West Europeans and Japanese will continue to maintain as low a profile as possible and will watch the mood and response of the other OPEC states extremely carefully. In the meantime, they will likely continue to applaud US firmness, argue against military action, and attempt to remain as uninvolved as possible. [*portion marking not declassified*]

A request that Brazil—a possible major exporter of food to Iran—join an embargo would be met by stiff opposition on the grounds that

Brazil would be needlessly antagonizing a source of needed oil while closing a potentially lucrative market. Given appropriate inducements, such as US guaranties to make up oil losses, however, Brazil could probably be persuaded to join. [*portion marking not declassified*]

If Iran shut down its oil production, the Big Six and Brazil might be induced to cooperate with the United States in a collective embargo. Under these conditions, the other members of the IEA probably would demand that the United States, at a minimum, bear its share of the burden of the reduction in oil supplies based on its total consumption. Complete cooperation for a collective embargo is unlikely; in particular Turkey would be unwilling to stop cross-border trade in the absence of major Western incentives. Brazil, while probably going along with a trade embargo, might use the occasion to demand a substantial restructuring of its foreign debts. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Arab support and reaction also depends upon the timing of events. If the United States imposed a strict embargo while the hostages remained unharmed and oil continued to flow, a strong negative Arab reaction could be expected. This could possibly include a cutback in Arab oil production. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Even if the trade embargo or naval blockade followed extreme Iranian provocation, the Arabs would probably condemn it publicly. Privately, however, many Arabs would be pleased to see Khomeini replaced so long as a more radical alternative was not likely. Many would also like to see the United States take a strong position. The Iraqis have indicated that they might even be willing to help, though indirectly, by not objecting if other OPEC members increased oil production to offset an Iranian cutback. [*portion marking not declassified*]

39. Editorial Note

On November 19, 1979, the White House released the following statement:

“Three of our hostages in Tehran have been released and have left Iran. After a brief period of rest and care, they will be reunited with their families here in the United States. The remaining hostages must also be released. Their detention is without justification. The Government of Iran is responsible for achieving their immediate and safe release, and the United States has the right to expect that Iran will do so. The specter has been raised of other American diplomatic hostages being placed on trial. Such a step would be a further flagrant violation

of elementary human rights, religious precepts, and international law and practice. Worldwide outrage at the detention of the hostages would be greatly heightened by any attempt to put these diplomatic personnel on trial." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pages 2141–2142)

According to telegram 300145 to all diplomatic posts, November 19, Khomeini had repeatedly endorsed the students' declaration that those hostages not released would be tried as spies by a revolutionary court under Islamic law. (Department of State, Records of the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Iran Desk, Lot 81D263, Hostages Released/Escaped)

40. Report Prepared by the Interagency Group¹

Washington, November 20, 1979

BLACK ROOM REPORT

We have been examining the situation in Iran from the standpoint of influencing the course of political developments. These developments are likely to include one of the following:

—a hostile Islamic state or hostile leftist state—either supported by the USSR.

—disintegration of Iran with possible Soviet intervention in the north.

To influence events, there are several approaches which could be followed. Each involves an increasing level of U.S. commitment:

1. *Contingency Planning*. Let nature take its course and be prepared to weigh in at the appropriate moment by virtue of indirect contact with dissidents.

2. [1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106, SCC 206 Iran 11/20/79. Top Secret. Carter wrote at the top of the memorandum: "Zbig, J." On a November 20 transmittal memorandum from Sick to Aaron attached to a draft, an unknown hand wrote: "DA [Aaron] briefed SCC on this—it was accepted, and DA prepared a single copy clean version for the President only." (National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Subject File, Box I026, Iran Finding 27 Dec 1979) The draft was summarized at the 9–10:10 a.m. November 20 SCC meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106, SCC 206 Iran 11/20/79)

3. *Contact Opposition.* Direct U.S. contact with potential alternative leaders indicating support for their efforts. Expanded contacts with tribal elements, initially aimed at better intelligence collection.

4. *Encourage/Organize Alternative.* On political side, aim at a government-in-exile or creation of a political cadre which could move in quickly. On the tribal side, provide arms, support and coordinating mechanism for regional movements.

Several basic policy questions must be answered in considering our approach:

1. Are we prepared to accept a commitment to destabilize the situation in Iran and try to replace the present leadership?²

—It could be a protracted effort, and success is by no measure assured.

—The commitment will tend to grow over time and to become increasingly visible.

—This could weld the left and religious extremists together on a common anti-American theme.

But

—Friendly opposition forces are unlikely to act effectively without a clear signal from us.

—Continuation of Khomeini's rule is likely to destroy the moderate elements in the political spectrum, leaving the left as the only credible alternative to religious fanaticism when Khomeini inevitably falls or passes from the scene.

2. If we make such a decision, what is our strategy? Should we *focus* our efforts on the regime in *Tehran* and attempt to replace the central government?

—Tends to preserve territorial integrity and unity.

—Minimizes risks of Soviet (or Iraqi) dismemberment.

But

—Khomeini is strongest in Tehran—controls the streets.

—[1 line not declassified]

3. Alternatively, should we *focus* our efforts on the *periphery* to build up an alternative government?

—Tribal opposition is real and could undermine Khomeini's authority.

—The oilfields are the possible prize. We would maximize our chances of holding the oil in the event of complete collapse or Soviet intervention.

² Carter wrote "not yet" in the left margin.

But

—The risk of civil war and complete disintegration is serious.

—The danger of Soviet intervention in the north is increased. This is likely to be a partition option.

What *assets* do we have?

—[3½ lines not declassified]

—[2½ lines not declassified]

—[1½ lines not declassified]

—Exile groups are begging for a signal from us. There are some good people (Amini, Bakhtiar) outside Iran that can have an impact there, but they would need a lot of help to become a significant factor.

—Ultimately, direct overt U.S. intervention could be required. *The extent of our commitment should be no greater than our willingness to play it out to the end.* This is particularly important the more we involve the Saudis and Egyptians.

—The Iranian military at present belongs to no one. Although our capability to swing it to our support is limited, neutralizing it is a realistic objective.

Our *liabilities*:

—Khomeini is viewed as a saint by much of the Iranian population and the embodiment of the national will. Opposing him directly may only strengthen his appeal. He is ruthless and thrives on confrontation.

—Khomeini controls Tehran and the streets. It is hard to visualize any leader or organization taking him on on his own turf.

—There is no obvious alternative leader. Most have been tainted by association with the Shah. This is particularly true of the exiled military.

Three alternative assessments:

1. The only way to find out how much strength Khomeini really has is to test it. That means we have to take some action, e.g. [*less than 1 line not declassified*], probing weak spots in the military and political structure, and increasing our level of contacts with tribal elements and exiles. We are never going to be able to work with the Khomeini regime. We might as well recognize that fact and begin a systematic effort to build an alternative infrastructure. Letting nature take its course in fact means abandoning the field to the left as the only viable alternative. The longer Khomeini remains in power, the more tempting it will be for the moderates to move to the left or be crushed. A center coalition will emerge only if we encourage and support it.

2. Although we do not like Khomeini, [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. By opposing him directly, we play into his hands and strengthen his appeal. Khomeini is his own worst enemy. Left to his own devices, he will destroy himself. We should prepare for that event and [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. But we should not get ourselves committed to

his overthrow.³ We will probably not be able to bring it off, and the commitment is open-ended. The Iranian revolution was a true expression of deep-seated national will, and the anti-Americanism we are seeing is a true expression of national outrage at U.S. actions over the past 26 years. To support the overthrow of Khomeini will be seen in Iran as an attempted replay of 1953 and the return of the Shah. Such a move opposes the fundamental trend of events and will foreclose any future cooperation.

3. We are not in control of events, and we must prepare for the worst. The oil fields are what count in the final analysis. We should focus our attention on the south and prepare to hold it no matter what. [1 line not declassified]

Our Choices:

Actions

—Destabilize the current situation—this can be done without showing the American hand and could contribute to undermining Khomeini and the emergence of more moderate leadership but equally could hasten the advent of a more radical leftist regime.

—Increase contacts with dissidents. To be more effective to our current contacts, this would have to involve some financial support. Our hand would begin to show.

—[1 line not declassified]

Strategy

—Focus on developments in Tehran.

—[2 lines not declassified]⁴

³ Carter wrote "I agree" in the left margin.

⁴ At the bottom of the page, Carter wrote: "Be extremely cautious about U.S. action for now, but assess options within CIA. Let them give me analysis of all potential Anti-Khomeini elements. J."

41. Editorial Note

On November 20, 1979, Carter administration officials held a series of meetings to discuss developments in the hostage crisis. The SCC met from 9 to 10:10 a.m. and covered a variety of topics, including preliminary ideas for responses to hostage trials, ongoing consultations at the UN, and a special report prepared by the Interagency Group

(printed as Document 40). Vice President Walter Mondale, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, Graham Claytor from the Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General David Jones, General John Pustay from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner, Frank Carlucci from the Central Intelligence Agency, Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan, Press Secretary Jody Powell, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs David Aaron, and William Odom and Gary Sick from the National Security Council Staff attended the meeting. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional File (H-Files), Box 106, SCC 206 Iran 11/20/79)

President Jimmy Carter, who was at Camp David for the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, called Powell at 11:19 a.m. and told him to join with Vance and others in an emergency SCC meeting to draft a statement in response to a speech Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini would give that day. (President's Personal Notes, November 20; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 1) Khomeini's speech was reported by FBIS at 12:30 p.m. that afternoon. In the speech, Khomeini characterized President Carter and likeminded leaders as a "clique" of oppressors given to the "disease of self-glorification." He said that Mohammed Reza Shah had "the illness only to see himself and a few flatterers and a number of clowns around him, to see only these people and not to have any consideration for the nation" and that this illness had caused his destruction. Carter, he said, "is afflicted with the same disease, except in a more severe form—the more the power, the more severe the disease." According to Khomeini, the hostages were spies, and unless the Shah was returned to Iran, the hostages might be tried and then "Carter knows what will happen." (FBIS 91, 12:30 p.m., November 20; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79–11/20/79)

That afternoon, several meetings occurred to address the issues of the potential trial and execution of the hostages and Khomeini's speech. From 1:30 to 2 p.m. in Washington, Aaron chaired a brief meeting of the Interagency Group. Policy Planning Staff Director Anthony Lake, Saunders, Robert Komer and Robert Murray from the Department of Defense, Carlucci, and Sick attended the meeting.

The Interagency Group reviewed a contingency paper prepared by the Iran Working Group that delineated U.S. options should a trial occur and/or the hostages be moved to an Iranian prison under Pasdaran Guard control. The last option (Item 31) in the draft plan was to carry out a military rescue operation to save any hostages not

executed as the result of a trial. This group dispersed at 2 p.m. so that some of its members could attend the emergency SCC meeting called by Carter. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran Cables and Memos 11-12/79)

The emergency SCC meeting took place at 2 p.m. in Washington. In attendance were Vance, Christopher, Carlucci, Turner, Hamilton Jordan, Claytor, the President's Assistant for Congressional Liaison Frank Moore, Pustay, Mondale, Brzezinski, Aaron, Sick, Odom, and Powell. Carter called Brzezinski during the meeting to say he was leaving Camp David for the White House to hold an emergency meeting of the NSC at 4 p.m. The emergency SCC meeting ended at 3:15 p.m. without a decision, although Vance remained behind to work on the draft reply to Khomeini's speech. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/20/79 SCC Meeting re Iran)

Carter returned from Camp David and convened the emergency NSC meeting at 4 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Mondale, Brzezinski, Vance, Turner, Claytor, Jordan, Powell, Brown, and Jones attended. According to Brzezinski's Iranian activities log, the meeting "approved key deployments." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80) In his personal notes, Carter wrote that he "directed that another carrier be brought to the Arabian Gulf. That a replacement be moved from the West Coast to Subic Bay in the Philippines. That we build up refueling capability on Diego Garcia. And move some large helicopters there by C5A to be transferred to the carriers." (President's Personal Notes, November 20; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 1) No further account of this meeting has been found. Carter returned to Camp David after the meeting.

While principal members of the administration attended this emergency NSC meeting, Aaron, Lake, Carlucci, and Sick concurrently reconvened the Interagency Group at 4 p.m. and resumed the discussion on the contingency paper that had been suspended at 2 p.m. While the Interagency Group was meeting, the emergency NSC meeting concluded and sent to Aaron a "Matching Options" paper prepared by the President, which provided a checklist of possible U.S. responses to hostage trials, including non-specific potential military actions. Later that evening, Sick took this "Matching Options" paper to Lake's office for incorporation into the draft contingency paper that the Interagency Group had been discussing. Both papers are attached to the record of the Interagency Group's November 20 meetings. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran Cables and Memos 11-12/79) No other accounts of these meetings have been found.

These parallel meeting tracks resulted in a finalized November 20 contingency paper printed as Document 42 and a White House statement released on November 20. The full statement reads:

There are reports that the American citizens being illegally held as hostages in Tehran with the support of the Iranian Government might soon be put through some sort of 'trial.' This would be a flagrant violation of international law and basic religious principles, and the Government of Iran would bear full responsibility for any ensuing consequences. The United States is seeking a peaceful solution to this problem through the U.N. and every other available channel. This is far preferable to the other remedies available to the United States. Such remedies are explicitly recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. The Government of Iran must recognize the gravity of the situation it has created. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979, Book II, page 2148*)

42. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, November 20, 1979

CONTINGENCY PAPER

SUBJECT

Trials of Hostages

I. Introduction

Khomeini apparently has now committed himself to trying the hostages for espionage. He has said nothing about the modalities or how many would be tried, nor has there been any official comment on the possibility raised by the German Embassy that prisoners would

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79–11/20/79. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. A handwritten note at the top of the page reads, "Revised." For the background to this paper, see Document 41. The paper was briefly discussed at the November 21 SCC meeting, and it was agreed that "it would be useful for the President to see it after key members of the SCC had had the opportunity to comment." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Donated Material, Geographic Files, Box 13) An unknown hand wrote on Brzezinski's November 21 Iran activities log: "Odom to Camp David with operational plans." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80) In his memoir, Brzezinski wrote that he had sent Odom to Camp David "with a sealed envelope containing a chart outlining additional military options developed by Defense and summarizing for the President their scale and likely impact." (Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 483)

be moved to Ebin Prison. (The Germans believe the latter would be a constructive move since it would place the hostages outside of student control.)

The trials could take a number of alternative courses:

—Quick, *in camera* trials with some or all of the hostages found guilty and all expelled unharmed. If trials are inevitable, as now seems likely, this is the most favorable outcome.

—Some hostages are found innocent, but others are found guilty and sentenced to prison terms. This could include a public show trial in which hostages “confess” and “documentary” evidence of espionage is produced.

—As above, but with some hostages sentenced and quickly executed.

—Trials could be held at the compound by students, or by revolutionary courts, or by both.

General Strategy

—While we want to generate universal condemnation of the trials by governments, organizations and jurists in an effort to prevent them, we will also want, in recognition of the probability that trials will be held, to work through some special channels for the least damaging outcome.

—Our primary objective, once trials seem imminent, should be to influence the Iranians to adopt the most moderate approach in conducting the trials, i.e., rapid, *in camera* proceedings leading to quick and safe expulsion of all hostages.

—We should avoid any steps which would lend any legitimacy to the trials, such as urging the presence of international observers.

—Policy options below should be considered against the following criteria: (1) will they have an impact on the Iranian position on trials or (2) will they further inflame opinion in Iran without producing the desired outcome? And will they help the President maintain the initiative with domestic opinion, but without inflaming U.S. public anger?

—We need also to consider the psychology of Khomeini and his entourage. Open threats and punitive signs may influence the Revolutionary Council toward moderation, but may inflame Khomeini and arouse his own sense of martyrdom. Threats quietly delivered can also influence the Council, and may speak to Khomeini’s respect for “strength.”

—A crucial question is whether a series of “tit for tat” actions, or a more dramatic step, is more likely to be effective in moving Khomeini.

—In any case, we should keep the negotiating track open through Waldheim and the PLO, with elements already introduced, i.e., once

the hostages are released, willingness to accept a Security Council debate on the Iranian complaint, leading to some sort of inquiry of human rights under the Shah; placing no obstacles in the way of Iranian efforts to obtain the Shah's assets through our court system; and agreeing to conduct relations in accordance with UN principles.

Section II, which follows, provides a chart illustrating the options available to both the Iranians and the United States, at various levels of escalation. It is broken down into those actions each side can take itself and those requiring action by others.

Section III discusses diplomatic steps.

Section IV outlines the advantages and disadvantages of action options available to us. The options are divided into diplomatic, economic, and political. (Military and intelligence options are addressed elsewhere.) Within these three categories, the options are listed in order of increasing severity.

[SECTION II] ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF ACTIONS

Level of Confrontation	Iranian Actions Against U.S.	U.S. Actions Against Iran	Multilateral Acts vs. Iran	International Acts vs. U.S.
Present	Took Hostages; partial release Threaten Trials Closed Consulates	Embargo oil imports Freeze Assets Hint military response Kitty Hawk INS and students	UNSC Statement EC-9 Declaration Démarches in Tehran by others Continued efforts to mobilize world opinion and supportive statements	Seek UNSC debate Seek OPEC non use of dollar Seek condemnation of Shah (no success to date)
Escalation	Announce Trials Stop using dollars for oil Reduce oil production 700,000 bpd Withdraw diplomatic personnel Hostages moved to prison Break diplomatic relations	Restrict and/or declare PNG Iran diplomats Revoke/ Revalidate Iranian visas Embargo imports from Iran High-level Emissary consult Saudis, Shaikhdoms, Iraq(?)	Press foreign governments to reduce presence in Iran UNGA condemn Ostracize Iran diplomats Intensify appeals	Continue to seek support—probably with little success

	Embargo all U.S. products	Further reinforce military forces, Indian Ocean Initiate destabilization efforts Break diplomatic relations	
Serious Escalation	Students hold trials Islamic Court begins trials Reduce oil exports to 2 mbd Burn/Destroy Embassy or U.S. property Expel all Americans Some hostage(s) found innocent, others await trial	Overflights Step up destabilization efforts Deny visas to all Iranians except special cases Move carrier close to or in P.G. Expel Iranian students/others Total Embargo on exports to Iran	Seek economic measures by U.S. allies Seek UN sanctions Shah to Mexico or Egypt Ask many nations break diplomatic relations Convince IFIs/ UN reduce operations in Iran
Severe Escalation	Hostage(s) found guilty American(s) hurt or executed Declares war on U.S. Attack U.S. ship/acft	Selective military option(s)	Emergency UNSC

[Omitted here are Sections III and IV of the Contingency Paper.]

43. Memorandum From Ambassador Eilts to President Carter¹

Washington, November 21, 1979

This supplements my series of reports from the field (attached).²

INTRODUCTION

At your request,³ I visited Cairo, Jidda and again Cairo during the period November 13–November 20. While in Cairo, I met twice with President Sadat and also with Vice President Mubarak, Prime Minister Khalil and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Boutros Ghali. In Jidda, I met first with Islamic Conference Secretary-General Chatti and, subsequently, had a four-hour conversation with Prince Fahd. In both capitals, I briefed the ambassadors on my mission and the results of my talks.

Both Sadat and Fahd asked that I pass on to you their warm regards and best wishes.

You had asked that I take up with Sadat and Fahd (a) the Iranian hostage situation, (b) the need for a thaw in Egyptian/Saudi relations in the interest of progress on the Middle East peace process, and (c) any other matters that they might wish to raise. With Chatti, you asked that I take up the Iranian hostage problem. This report is divided into three sections: (a) Iranian hostage problem, (b) Egyptian/Saudi relations, and (c) other matters.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 77, Presidential Advisory File, Sensitive X: 11–12/78. Top Secret; Eyes Only for the President. According to Carter's personal notes, Eilts reported the contents of this memorandum to him on the evening of November 20. (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 1) Carter had returned to Camp David at 6:15 p.m. and he spoke to Eilts on the telephone from 9:29 to 9:51 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

² Not found.

³ According to a November 13 memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, Carter would give Eilts three tasks: First, Eilts was to talk to Sadat and Fahd about Saudi-Egyptian relations. Second, he was to get their advice on "how the Islamic world might be helpful in resolving the hostage situation." Third, he was to mention to Sadat "the possibility of a *retaliatory* military action against some facilities in Iran; and in this connection ask Sadat a) for his assessment of the likely reaction of the Arab countries, notably oil producers, to such an action; b) whether Sadat would permit the use of the Aswan airfield by a limited no. of U.S. planes (perhaps even as few as only 2) for such a strike." Brzezinski wrote point three at the bottom of the memorandum by hand. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 77, Presidential Advisory File, Sensitive X: 11–12/78) The portion of Eilts's report not related to the hostage crisis is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. IX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, August 1978–December 1980, Second, Revised Edition, Document 312.

*IRANIAN HOSTAGE PROBLEM**My Two Talks With Sadat (November 14 and 18)*

As we had anticipated, Sadat felt that there was relatively little that he could do with respect to the Iranian hostage situation. He characterized Khomeini as "mad." He suggested that Fahd might be able to exert some influence on Khomeini, but acknowledged that because of Sunni/Shi'a cleavages, even Fahd's prospects might be limited. He doubted that the Lebanese Shi'a leadership could do much, but thought it was worth a try and suggested the Saudis be asked about this.

I explained to Sadat that you were thinking of (a) a possible contingency action in the event our hostages were hurt, and (b) a possible punitive action against Iran after the hostages have been gotten out. While you had not yet made any decision, you would welcome Sadat's views and also, should you decide to undertake one or another such action, his help. I specifically mentioned your hope that he might permit us to use the Aswan Airfield for staging purposes. Aswan, I noted, is somewhat remote and therefore out of the public eye.

Sadat said that he had been thinking a great deal about the Iranian hostage problem. He had been looking at maps to consider what kind of action he might take if he were in your position. He spoke firmly about the need to undertake some kind of punitive action against Iran in order to reestablish the United States' credibility and national honor in the Middle East. If Khomeini gets away with his action, Sadat said, the position of the United States in the Middle East will be badly hurt. At my first meeting, Sadat had no specific ideas; at my second meeting, however, he suggested that after the hostages are out, the United States should level the Iranian oil fields as a lesson. Whatever you decide to do, Sadat emphasized on both occasions, should be done in the form of a one-time action rather than an American occupation of parts of Iran. A one-time, punitive strike, in Sadat's view, will be understood by most of the nations of the Middle East, even though some will publicly protest. An American occupation, on the other hand, will be counterproductive in terms of Middle East attitudes.

Sadat wants you to know that, should you require help, any facility in Egypt is at your disposal. He mentioned Aswan and also Berenice as possible places to be considered.⁴ Should you wish to send an advance team for planning purposes, this can be taken up with

⁴ On November 30, Mubarak reiterated Sadat's suggestion to Atherton. In a December 3 memorandum, Brzezinski informed Brown that Carter wanted Brown and Vance to explore this idea and report. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Agency File, Box 6, Defense Department 12/79)

Mubarak. Mubarak was present at both meetings and Sadat instructed him to handle the matter with all discretion. Mubarak told me, incidentally, that aviation fuel is available at both places. I stressed to Sadat that you have not as yet made any decision on this matter, but that I knew you would be very grateful for his understanding and proffered help.

Sadat also suggested that a second strike through Turkey might be useful, but acknowledged that the Turks may be reluctant. He had heard news reports of the move of the MIDWAY toward the Persian Gulf, applauded this show of force and suggested that a second carrier be sent to show the American determination.

Talk With Prince Fahd (November 17/18)

I conveyed to Prince Fahd your appreciation for what he has already done in connection with the hostage problem and asked if he had any further thoughts on what Saudi Arabia might be able to do with Khomeini in order to get the hostages released. I said nothing to Fahd about possible contingency or punitive action.

Fahd spoke scathingly of Khomeini and affirmed that Saudi Arabia has been trying, in an Islamic context, to point out how Khomeini's action is hurting Islam's international reputation. He said that he had earlier in the day sent Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal to see Yasir Arafat in Riyadh in order to press Arafat to continue the PLO effort with the Iranians. He freely acknowledged that the Saudis are making the point to Arafat that the PLO image in the United States and in the world at large will be immeasurably enhanced if it can somewhat succeed in getting the hostages released.

Fahd's only other thought was the possibility of trying to organize a multi-national group of distinguished *'ulama* (Islamic religious doctors) who would go to Tehran to remonstrate with Khomeini about the damage that the Iranian action is doing to Islam's good name. Such a group, Fahd noted, would be able to point to Khomeini that the Iranian treatment of the American diplomats is totally contrary to the Prophet's handling of diplomatic envoys. Fahd acknowledged the potential difficulty caused by the Sunni/Shi'a cleavages and said he was not sure whether his idea is viable. He planned to discuss it before he left for Tunis the following day with Qudhi Harakat, one of the most learned Saudi religious doctors and a former Minister of Justice, in order to ascertain the latter's estimate of the feasibility of such an idea. If Harakat believes it makes sense, Fahd said, he would try to enlist support for the idea at the Tunis Summit meeting. (I rather doubt that this idea is viable with a man like Khomeini and since, I understand, Fahd's visit

to Tunis was cut short because of the Mecca incident,⁵ he probably did not have the opportunity to raise it. Still, it is worth a try.)

I asked Fahd if he thought that the Lebanese Shi'a leaders might have any influence on Khomeini. Fahd noted that since the disappearance of the Imam Musa Sadr, there is no acknowledged Lebanese Shi'a leader. He frankly did not know whom to suggest, but said he would consider the matter further. Later in the conversation, he suddenly reverted to this theme and said he would be seeing Lebanese politician Saeb Salaam the next day and would ask him. (I am not sure Salaam can help much, since he is Sunni.) It might be worth following up on this with Fahd, although the prospects are limited.

Fahd had two other points on Iran. First, he was extremely curious about the Shah's state of health. Did the Shah really have cancer and, if so, how serious is it? (I think his curiosity was prompted primarily by suspicion that we may have allowed the Shah in under a pretext of the need for medical treatment.) In asking these questions, he showed no signs of hostility toward the Shah, but also no particular affection. Second, after I had told him that the blocking of Iranian assets was prompted by the need to assure that American claims against Iran will be settled, Fahd wanted to know what the extent of these American claims might be. Again, he did not criticize our action, but I did sense an underlying uneasiness on his part over the freezing. Since I did not have specific information on either of these two points, I limited my comments to an assurance that I understood (a) the Shah is indeed seriously ill and (b) the American claims are sizeable, though I had no specific information on their exact amount. You may wish to consider instructing Ambassador West to provide clarification to Fahd on these two points.

Talk With Chatti (November 16)

Chatti, who has just taken over the function of Secretary-General of the Islamic Conference, had relatively little to offer.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

⁵ On the morning of November 20, approximately 200 Islamic students attending the Islamic University of Medina, attacked and occupied the Grand Mosque in Mecca. The attackers were led by Juhaiman ibn Muhammad ibn Saif al-Utaibi, who claimed to be motivated by opposition to the Saudi ruling family. After receiving permission from the ulema to bear arms in a holy place, the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) tried unsuccessfully to regain control of the mosque. Approximately 127 people died. Two weeks later, a coordinated assault by the Saudi military, under instructions from three French special operations commanders, defeated the students, leaving 250 dead and 600 wounded. By November 27, the Saudi Government had regained complete control of the mosque. Al-Utaibi was subsequently found to have been a member of SANG. Sixty-three people, including al-Utaibi, were publicly beheaded on January 9, 1980, for participation in the attack. For the U.S. reaction to the attack, see *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula, Documents 201-205.

44. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 20, 1979

SUBJECT

CIA Support to Rescue of Hostages in Iran [*portion marking not declassified*]

1. This Agency has been asked to undertake activities in support of possible DOD Delta team efforts to rescue the hostages in Iran by assisting in contingency planning and training and by furnishing certain supplies and support services. To date the only activities of this Agency have been the provision of documentation for the members of the Delta team. Now, however, we have been requested to provide ammunition, communications equipment, travel arrangements and certain other supporting material and services to the Delta team. Because these activities involve a not insubstantial expenditure of Agency funds, they raise a serious question of legality under the Hughes/Ryan amendment.² [*portion marking not declassified*]

2. My General Counsel advised me that there are two bases on which the Agency could proceed:

a. A possible interpretation of the Hughes/Ryan amendment is that the amendment does not apply to covert CIA activities when conducted in support of operations by another agency of the United States Government that will not be conducted or designed in a fashion intended to conceal the role of the United States Government. This interpretation, while finding some support in the legislative history of the amendment, is not entirely consistent with analyses of Hughes/Ryan previously written by the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice. Therefore, my General Counsel is not willing to render an opinion that Hughes/Ryan is inapplicable without an opportunity to consult with the Attorney General, although he is hopeful that the Attorney General would accept the same interpretation of the statute.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79–11/20/79. Secret. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² The Hughes-Ryan Amendment, a section of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1974 (Public Law 93–559) amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Hughes-Ryan required the President to issue a "finding" that a specific covert operation was essential to the national security of the United States. Normally, the "finding" listed in general terms the component parts of the operation. Specifically, each covert operation had to be reported in a timely fashion to appropriate congressional committees. Hughes-Ryan was amended in 1980 in the Intelligence Oversight Act. This act required all U.S. Government agencies to report covert actions to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

b. The Hughes/Ryan amendment provides that it is inapplicable “during military operations initiated by the United States under a declaration of war approved by the Congress or an exercise of powers by the President under the War Powers Resolution.” My General Counsel is of the opinion that the current level of activities in support of contingency planning would be subsumed under this exception if it were clear that any actual operation, when and if initiated, would be pursuant to an exercise of the President’s powers under the War Powers Resolution. The General Counsel cannot, however, render an opinion to this effect without appropriate assurance that any approval to carry out the proposed contingency plan will in fact be given by the President and in accordance with the War Powers Resolution. [*portion marking not declassified*]

2. Based on the foregoing, I must conclude that the CIA cannot properly provide the required assistance unless the legal doubts are resolved in one of two ways:

a. Permission for the Agency’s General Counsel to consult with the Attorney General of the United States, or

b. A written assurance from the President, either directly or through you, that any initiation of actual operations would be pursuant to an exercise of powers by the President under the War Powers Resolution.

There is no guarantee under option a. that the Attorney General would agree with the preliminary legal view of the CIA General Counsel, in which case it might be necessary to proceed to option b., in any event or even to seek a Presidential finding under the Hughes/Ryan amendment.³ [*portion marking not declassified*]

Stansfield Turner

³ Brzezinski forwarded this memorandum to Carter under a November 20 covering memorandum, which asked whether to proceed under the War Powers Act or to consult with Civiletti. Carter wrote at the bottom of Brzezinski’s memorandum: “Check with Fritz & Cy first, then discuss with AG directly re preference between options a. and b. Then give Stan necessary assurance. J.C.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79–11/20/79) According to Carter’s personal notes, Brzezinski called him on November 21 on the secure phone. Carter “gave him permission to state to Stan Turner that if we had to do a rescue operation that I would do it under the War Powers Act.” (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 1)

45. Telegram From the Consulate in Frankfurt to the Department of State¹

Frankfurt, November 21, 1979, 2339Z

11239. Pass to IWG. Subject: (S) Debriefing of Hostages.

1. (S) Entire text.

2. The treatment of the hostages varied from harsh to mild, with the women receiving considerably worse treatment than the Marines. During lengthy interrogation, three of the women were threatened at gunpoint and all but Gross were verbally threatened. One woman was subjected to a form of Russian roulette. The military hostages were not threatened. In contrast to harsh treatment during interrogation, the women's physical needs were met. The Marines feared their lives were in danger during the first day but were less fearful in the following days. The women, in contrast, were not concerned the first day but became increasingly fearful as the days progressed.

3. The captors relayed no oral or written personal messages to the hostages. Although some asked if they could communicate with their families, they were told they could not.

4. All the hostages were given a few hours of revolutionary propaganda just prior to their release. The students showed them one one-hour movie and one video half-hour tape of the revolution and students' demonstrating. They also had photographs of SAVAK's atrocities and books on the revolution. The films had a significant impact because the hostages had spent two weeks without communicating.

5. The assault on the Embassy appeared to be well-planned in advance. The students brought bolt-cutters with them to cut the chain of the front gate. While many of the Iranians appeared to be students, as they claimed, several among them appeared to possess a high degree of organizational ability and set up separate guard groups and shift schedules. There was a high degree of discipline and orders were usually strictly obeyed. It is possible that a handful of students had been trained in logistics and psychology of conducting a hostage terrorist

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Release of Hostages—Under Secretary Newsom. Secret; Immediate; Stadis. Sent via SY Channel. A stamped notation on the top of the first page reads: "Mr. Newsom has seen, Dec 2 1979." Two other telegrams from Frankfurt provided details of the hostages' experiences. (Telegram 11217 from Frankfurt, November 21; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Hostages Released—Escaped; telegram 11261 from Frankfurt, November 22; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Release of Hostages—Under Secretary Newsom)

incident. They employed such interrogation techniques as playing one hostage against another, and telling them the U.S. had abandoned them. While the hostages could not discern all the leaders or a chain of command or fixed command post, there appeared to be a firm leadership within the compound. The students would not identify who was in charge when asked, but the Iranian who appeared to be the chief interrogator claimed to have been trained by the PLO. He gave his name as "Mehdi." He claimed to have operated in the U.S. for the PLO and also claimed to have been incarcerated in an Israeli jail for three years for PLO activities. He claimed to be from the Isfahan area and gave his PLO name as Abu Ali.

6. There were several religious leaders in the compound but none appeared to play a leadership role. Khomeini's son however played a major part and reportedly visited the compound often; he had much authority and was responsible for having Joan Walsh released from 36 hours of solitary confinement. The students stated firmly that they would do whatever Khomeini told them.

7. The hostages believe that the remaining hostages will be freed when Khomeini orders it.

8. All cryptographic equipment was reportedly destroyed in the communication center. All files of the following offices were not repeated destroyed: DAO, Embassy Political Office, Ambassador's suite, and MAAG offices. The students highlighted the following documents:

—Precht/Laingen letter dated August 2, 1979, Secret "Eyes Only" concerning ramifications of Shah's entry into U.S.

—Airgram drafted by Mike Metrisko re sabotage of oil fields.

—RSO Golacinski's report of counterfeit money in Iran which a walk-in provided to RSO and was under investigation. The students convoluted this report into a plot by the United States to destroy the economy of Iran.

—Metrisko memcon with a relative of General Bolibzan, a figure in Kurdistan whom the students feel is fomenting revolt there. [5 lines not declassified] The students were extremely intent on identifying intelligence personnel and claimed that those so identified would be executed.

9. The students were defensive about being labeled terrorists. During the press conference at the Tehran airport, the Iranians appeared concerned that the students were being portrayed as abusing the hostages. The Iranians took pictures the first week, asking the hostages to smile and look comfortable. The day the Pope's emissary arrived was the only day the women were untied all day and given a snack. When

the Red Cross visited, the women were afraid to tell them they had been threatened.²

10. The hostages believe the two remaining women were kept because they are Farsi-speaking officers. Charles Jones remained in the C&R vault for two hours after the takeover so it is believed the students thought he was an intelligence officer as well.

11. The hostages believe that publicity of their treatment would have a very negative impact on the remaining hostages.

12. The captors appeared to be aware of U.S. public opinion but did not seem dissuaded by it. Instead, they exaggerated or falsified U.S. news stories. They told the hostages that Americans were beating and raping Iranians and that four Iranian students had been killed in San Francisco.

13. The cessation of oil imports, blocking of assets was raised with one hostage but the students used it to try to convince her that the U.S. had abandoned them.

14. The hostages were told by the students that the return of the Shah to Mexico would do no good.

15. The hostages could not determine what the students' reaction would be to the Shah's return to Mexico but were generally pessimistic about the possibility of the remaining hostages' early release.

Betts

² For the Papal emissary's visit, see footnote 7, Document 19. Representatives of the Red Lion and Sun Society visited the hostages on November 9. (William Branigin, "Security Council Urges Release of Americans," *Washington Post*, November 10, 1979, p. A1)

46. Message From the Chargé d'Affaires in Iran (Laingen) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Tehran, November 22, 1979, 1630Z

[Omitted here are handling instructions.] Following is message from Laingen addressed to Secretary Vance, which he handed to the

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 1, Folder 17. Confidential. Sent from the British Embassy in Tehran via the British Embassy in Washington to the Department of State for the Iran Task Force, then forwarded from the White House Situation Room to Camp David on November 23, 5:04 p.m., with instructions to deliver to Hamilton Jordan in a sealed envelope.

Norwegian Ambassador when the latter visited him today. As Norwegians have only limited facilities we have been asked to transmit it. I should be grateful if text could be conveyed urgently to Mr. Vance.

Begins: For the Secretary.

1. We had an opportunity to send a message several days ago via the British Ambassador with some specific suggestions on the situation here and which we hope you have seen.² This morning the Australian Ambassador was allowed to see us and we asked him orally to convey via his Embassy in Washington some of our concerns about the period immediately ahead. We reiterate them below, hoping we will have some means later today to communicate them on the record.

2. Before doing so, I must note with regret that aside from these occasional Ambassadorial contacts and access to a portion of the media, our ability to know what is underway in the background is extremely limited. I have had no substantive contact with Iranian authorities for the past ten days.

3. The public atmosphere here is one of dangerous emotional frenzy. Yesterday's demonstrations around our Embassy were almost unprecedented in size and venom and were supplemented by similar affairs in cities all over the country. Khomeini and his entourage of clerics have skillfully used the seizure of our Embassy, charges that our diplomats are spies, and our refusal to hand over the Shah, to develop a mass psychology of hate that may have few parallels in history. The few Iranians who recognise the disastrous implications of the course Khomeini has set for his country are too frightened to speak out.

4. Worse, we are now entering the mourning month of Moharram, a period when even during normal times emotions run high. Hence the next week to ten days will be exceedingly dangerous for the hostages. We cannot emphasize too much the importance of avoiding as much as possible any actions and statements on our side during this period that risk exacerbating the situation here, no matter how compelling they may appear in terms of public opinion at home. It is in any event vital that we avoid any action that risks vitiating in any way the

² In this November 19 message, Laingen suggested that the United States "continue using every possible means to bring the weight of world public opinion to bear on Iran," including a Security Council resolution, and "try to find some third party intermediary(s) that would try to reach the decision makers here, looking toward a framework for discussion that might lead to a possible compromise." Laingen added that "it is important that for our part we avoid anything that risks further escalation in the crisis. Continued restraint is vital, both in terms of retaining our now overwhelming support on the world scene and with regard to the safety and welfare of the remaining hostages." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 11/16/79-11/30/79)

overwhelming support we now hold with world public opinion on the seizure of our Embassy and the treatment of our hostages.

5. We are dealing with a populace for whom demonstrations have become a way of life, a religious period (Moharram) that glorifies martyrdom, a revolutionary leadership that sees its success in overthrowing the Shah as assurance that mass demonstrations will again succeed, and a single leader whose whole life has been one of refusing to brook compromise. Regrettably, because of this mentality and because of the way Khomeini's actions and statements have in themselves restricted Iran's options, there may remain very few courses of action that he can take (and that would be tolerable for us) without risk of great loss of face for Iran internationally and for Khomeini domestically. It seems to us there are essentially only two broad options in terms of courses of action that Khomeini will or could take.

6. The first is that he may himself decide to hold the line in terms of further threats and actions until at least the constitutional referendum process is complete on December 2. With the overwhelming endorsement that the campaign against us helps assure him in that vote it is conceivable that he might then be prepared either a) simply to announce a full rupture of relations and an expulsion of the hostages (without trial) as spies or b) to continue holding at least some of the hostages while signaling a willingness to begin talks through some UN arrangement or third party intermediary.

7. The first of these is at least feasible, given Khomeini's overwhelming authority, but it would not be easy given the heady talk of trials here. The second is also feasible but only if offered promise of meeting at least some of Iran's demands vis à vis the Shah.

8. But more likely than either of these may well be that Khomeini will go ahead with trials of some sort, for all or a selected number of the hostages, followed by their total expulsion from Iran. The call by the student occupiers of the Embassy on November 21 for trials and Bani Sadr's almost desperate appeal to the US via his telephonic interview with NBC's Today program the same day not to be too afraid of the eventuality of trials, suggests that this option is under active consideration.

9. There is obviously great risk in such a course, both in practical terms and in terms of principle. There is the danger that the sentences handed down would go beyond mere expulsion. And for us to acquiesce in such trials would mean accepting a process that flies in the face of all international convention and practice and civilized behaviour and undermines the very principle on which we now stand. We believe our preferred course must remain that of strenuous opposition to such trials, while buying time to secure the hostages release (or simple expulsion) by diplomatic means.

10. But acquiescence in trials may yet prove the only means of securing the release of the hostages unharmed. If we are reduced to that option, we would need to continue to hold firmly to our public position that such trials are totally contrary to international law and that the Iranian Government remains fully responsible for the safety of our diplomatic personnel. It can be argued that by taking this position, while the regime here goes ahead with the spectacle of such trials, that Iran is humiliated more than we. But that is a judgement that affects both principle and public opinion at home that we cannot and should not make from here.

11. We wish you and all our colleagues in Washington a very blessed Thanksgiving day.

Ends.

Graham

47. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 22, 1979, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the right-hand margin of the page.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *AWACS*. Secretary Brown and General Jones will prepare a recommendation for the President concerning the possible location of an AWACS aircraft in the region, possibly at Aswan, with overflight rights for Saudi Arabia.² (S)

2. *Presidential Views*. The President talked to Dr. Brzezinski just prior to the meeting. He wants the group to consider how to prepare for the next stage. Should we try to deter trials? Should we communicate privately with Khomeini or those around him, informing them how we would react in the event of trials, including the possibility of military action? The SCC should review our options, including possible restriction of Iranian diplomatic activities in this country. The President felt that a break in diplomatic relations would be premature at this point. It had been suggested to the President that he might consider making an address to the UN General Assembly. He asked for the views of the SCC. If this seems appropriate, he would suggest a small drafting group under Hedley Donovan. (S)

3. *United Nations*. Secretary Vance believed that we should begin work on a draft Presidential speech, but he thought it was too early to go to the UN. He expects the Security Council to meet on Monday or Tuesday³ as part of the negotiating effort being conducted through the Secretary General. He felt that a Security Council resolution should precede any Presidential address. He recommended that the negotiations through the UN channel be permitted to play out for a bit more. After the SC resolution, we can consider a possible Presidential address calling for Security Council sanctions. Three of the four points in the present negotiating package seem to be negotiable. He was uncertain about the fourth.⁴ We should know by mid-week if this approach has worked and if the Secretary General could go to Tehran to bring back the hostages. It was agreed that Hedley Donovan would begin drafting a statement in cooperation with State. (S)

4. *Trials*. The group agreed that we wished to deter the holding of trials and, if trials were held, to deter any executions. We could privately inform Khomeini or those close to him that holding trials would bring

² Carter wrote "proceed" in the left margin beside Item 1.

³ November 26 or 27.

⁴ See Document 33. Waldheim outlined his negotiating proposal to McHenry in a November 16 meeting. The package would include 1) release of the hostages, 2) "some kind of investigation of Iranian grievances with regard to the Shah," 3) departure of the Shah "only in connection with a scenario which includes or coincides with the release of the hostages, and 4) "any other steps which Khomeini and those within Iran who wished to bring the impasse to an end might use to persuade the students to go along." (Telegram 5321 from USUN, November 16; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137–2439)

U.S. action and that any executions would result in very severe action. A blockade was considered as a possibly appropriate step in the event trials begin. This is to be discussed further with the President. (TS)

5. *The Shah*. Available information indicates that radiation treatment should be completed this week, with a non-surgical attempt to remove the gallstone early next week.⁵ If all goes well, we are informed it is the Shah's present intention to leave near the first of December, either to Mexico or some other location. Warren Christopher believes the Shah will ask for our advice before taking any decision. The Shahbanou is apparently counseling him not to go and to ignore the United States. It would be useful to have direct information, rather than second-hand messages, about what the Shah is thinking. The DCI will consult with the Attorney General about possible technical surveillance. The DCI believes the Shah's departure would lead to an emotional outburst in Tehran which would be unpredictable but dangerous for the hostages. (TS)

6. *Iranian Diplomats*. The SCC felt that restrictions on Iranian diplomats were too insignificant to have any effect on the negotiating situation. They might, however, interfere with the progress of negotiations or—if our restrictions were very severe, e.g. restricting them to the embassy—it could lose us support by dragging us down to Khomeini's level. The Vice President recommended continuing for several more days with the negotiating track through the UN. If that does not work, then we should do something with some bite, such as sanctions, limiting sale of foodstuffs, perhaps mining harbors. (TS)

7. *Covert Action*. The DCI will prepare a finding for the meeting tomorrow to begin specific steps [3 lines not declassified].

8. *Longer Range Options*. The SCC discussed our objectives in the post-hostage situation. All agreed that a decision to work for the overthrow of Khomeini would require a major U.S. commitment to follow through with money and the risk of direct military involvement. David Aaron will circulate an options paper drawn from the work by his "black chamber" group. (TS)

⁵ Attendees at the November 19 SCC meeting discussed the Shah's health, noting that he had completed his fifth radiation treatment and that he was scheduled for non-surgical gallstone removal, a procedure that, if successful, meant that the Shah could leave the United States as early as December 1. Attendees questioned the impact on the hostage crisis. On the Summary of Conclusions of the meeting, Carter wrote: "I think it's better for him to leave when able." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #205 held 11/19/79)

48. **Memorandum From the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury (Carswell) to the Special Coordination Committee and the National Security Council¹**

Washington, November 22, 1979

SUBJECT

Extension of Economic Measures Against the Government of Iran

Background

On November 14, the President blocked all assets of the Government of Iran and its controlled entities held by persons subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.² This action appears to have blocked assets with a market value substantially in excess of \$8 billion, of which more than half are dollar deposits in the foreign branches of U.S. banks. The present estimate of claims of Americans against the Iranian Government is around \$3.5 billion but that is probably low by at least \$1 billion. Since it is unlikely that we will be able to “vest”, that is to seize, assets outside the United States, at this point it is not certain that U.S. claimants against Iran would receive full payment from the assets presently blocked.

Principally because of that uncertainty, Treasury has modified the blocking regulations so that “setoffs” against blocked deposits in the foreign branches would not be unlawful under the regulations. A setoff is an action by a bank whereby it uses deposits of a customer without the customer’s consent to pay off a loan to that customer. The conditions under which a setoff may be used by a bank are governed by the law of the jurisdiction where the setoff is made, and it is by no means clear that the setoffs described below have been effective. In any event, the effect of the Treasury action was to permit setoffs where the foreign law permits and thereby to satisfy U.S. claims against Iranian assets in foreign countries, thus increasing the chance that the Iranian assets in the U.S. will satisfy the rest of the claims. (Setoffs have not been permitted in the U.S. because to do so might result in banks being paid off 100¢ on the dollar when other claimants receive less.)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 97, Meetings File, 11/23/79 NSC and SCC re Iran. Confidential.

² See Document 30.

Since the Treasury action permitting setoffs in blocked accounts, up to \$1 billion in setoffs have been made by U.S. banks—mostly in London. Some banks that have made sizeable loans to Iran did not have Iranian deposits, and they have, therefore, not been able to setoff. Those banks are presently considering attachments, that is action by which they can seize Iranian assets wherever they can find them by a court order known as an attachment, to satisfy their loans to Iran. Again, attachments (like setoffs) are governed by local law and it is by no means clear that they can be utilized in the present state of affairs. The only attachment Treasury knows of is the Morgan Guaranty attachment in Germany of the Iranian's shares in Krupp.

Generally speaking, neither a setoff nor an attachment is available to satisfy a debt unless the debt is due and unpaid. Debts become due and payable when there is a failure to pay interest or principal when due or when there is an anticipatory breach or a violation of a term in the loan agreement. For instance, some of the Iranian loan agreements contain a provision, known as a cross-default clause, that states that the loan becomes due and payable if Iran defaults under any other loan.

As a consequence of the blocking, Iran did not pay the interest due on a \$500 million loan on which Chase Manhattan is the agent bank. Chase notified all the members of the syndicate of the default and asked instructions as to whether the loan should be accelerated and thus become immediately due and payable. A majority of the banks in the syndicate (including all U.S., but none of the foreign banks) voted to accelerate the loan. Chase accelerated the loan on Tuesday (November 20). Several other loans have since gone into default; others are soon expected to. Thus, cross default provisions are being triggered and other loans will also soon become due. That will widen the scope of setoffs and attachments that are possible. It could lead foreign banks to try to protect their positions by setoffs and attachments, thus wiping out most of Iran's presently free assets. (It also may be relevant to this discussion that last week Treasury modified its regulations to permit the Iranians to pay interest and principal due on a loan, with new (unblocked) dollars. Thus Iran cannot argue that the blocking made compliance with the terms of the loan impossible. Iran has made no attempt to pay interest or principal on any loan with new money.)

Eximbank has about \$400 million in loans outstanding to Iran. Several of these are now in default, either because interest has not been paid or because of cross-default provisions. Eximbank has never declared a loan to a foreign government to be in default and initiated attachment proceedings, although there have been a number of defaults in the past.

Options Available

The balance of this memorandum discusses the options available in the context of the situation described above and in the context of

possible pressure on the dollar that may come if the Iranians no longer accept dollars in payment for oil or try to shift their unblocked assets out of dollars.

They are not mutually exclusive and are not ranked in any order of preference. All but the first two require active cooperation (which has not yet been forthcoming) from our major allies: United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, France, and possibly the Swiss.

It should also be recognized that none of these economic measures will have much immediate impact. Over weeks and months, they may help to destabilize conditions in Iran. Over a longer term Iran, like Rhodesia and other recent subjects of economic warfare, will be able to frustrate even our best designed measures because eventually it will be able to sell its oil.

Option 1. Continue the present policy of eliminating obstacles to setoff or attachment and maintaining neutrality as to whether defaults are declared and loans accelerated.

- This may result ultimately in most loans to Iran being accelerated and Iran's assets being wiped out. But it is also possible that some foreign banks may not accelerate but will try to help Iran, in the hope of becoming its lead bank in the future.

- This is the lowest profile position to take and the least likely to antagonize our allies.³

Option 2. Encourage U.S. and other banks to declare defaults by Iran and accelerate their loans. A second variation of this option is to have Eximbank publicly declare a default and accelerate.

- This may happen anyway but overt government encouragement would speed up the process, but it would also identify the U.S. publicly with a quasi-economic warfare measure.

- Indirectly this action would put pressure on foreign banks who would worry about the soundness of their loans which would probably be in default because of cross-default provisions.

- If the Eximbank were to accelerate its loans that would unmistakably signal U.S. resolve.

Option 3. Encourage U.S. and other banks to make setoffs and attachments to collect accelerated loans. A second variation of this option would be for Eximbank to proceed by way of attachment in a foreign jurisdiction.

³ At the November 21 SCC meeting, attendees decided to "nudge" the default process. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Donated Material, Geographic Files, Box 13)

- This action is the natural corollary to Option 2 and the same considerations apply.

Option 4. Request the key foreign central banks to advise their banks to proceed with calling defaults on Iranian loans and collecting by way of setoff or attachment.

- If the key foreign central banks were to act, this would be the most effective way to ensure that all credits to Iran are collected. That would dry up at least another \$2 billion of Iranian dollar assets.

- The central bankers are in a position to advise their private banks that Iranian credits are unsafe and unsound, but they are not likely to do so without instructions or acquiescence from their governments.

Option 5. Obtain agreement from the major purchasers of Iranian oil that they will only purchase, or facilitate the purchase of Iranian oil, through dollar contracts.

- This would preserve the oil market as a dollar market and reduce possible damage to the dollar in the exchange markets.

- Technically it may be difficult to make this stick for the long term because Iran might be able to switch a good part or all its oil sales to the spot market through non-major entities.

- This would expose our allies to possible oil cutoffs by Iran.

Option 6. Obtain the agreement of our major allies to prohibit their central banks from taking substantial increases in non-dollar Iranian deposits.

- This would complement Option 5 and would have the effect of locking the Iranians in dollars.

- On the one hand this would run counter to a general policy of free exchange rates and markets; on the other hand, it might appeal to Germany's desire to avoid having the mark become a reserve currency.

- So long as the Iranians were unable to find a way to hold large amounts of foreign currencies through intermediaries, this would strengthen the dollar. However, it is unrealistic to think that this type of action would be sustainable over the longer term as too many evasion routes are available.

Option 7. Move to a full export embargo and get our allies to do the same.

- In the longer term quite apart from other considerations, this would not be effective.

- It might have limited appeal domestically as it is readily understandable.

Option 8. Move to a broad range effort to mobilize overt multilateral support, of which some or all of the economic measures outlined above would be a part.

- To be effective, even for a brief period, economic measures will require the active support of our allies. That may be best obtainable through a broader based appeal.

• Such action might be best undertaken under U.N. auspices through action under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter.⁴

Robert Carswell⁵

⁴ Chapter VII of the UN Charter grants the Security Council the right to determine a threat to peace and take military or non-military measures to “restore international peace and security.”

⁵ Carswell initialed “RC” above this typed signature.

49. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, November 22, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR

The President
The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The National Security Advisor

On Tuesday² we discussed the pros and cons of the Shah’s departure to some country other than Iran. I have since asked the [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and Iranian experts to articulate their views on this succinctly. The result is attached.

I agree with their views, though I am less persuaded that the students in the embassy may act independently of Khomeini. The initial debriefings of our 13 released hostages seem to indicate a close loyalty to Khomeini on the part of the student captors.³

Stansfield Turner⁴

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 11: C–372 Iran. Secret.

² November 20.

³ See Document 45.

⁴ Printed from a copy with this typed signature and an indication that Turner signed the original.

Attachment**Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency⁵**

Washington, November 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Dangers if the Shah Leaves the US

I. We are concerned that an early departure of the Shah from the US would increase the risks faced by the hostages.

A. The present tenuous equilibrium in the hostage situation would be broken by the Shah's departure, especially if it occurs in the emotional religious mourning period over the next four weeks.

—Early on, such a move might have been interpreted by the captors and the Khomeini regime as an act of good faith by the US.

—Now, it would increase their frustration over their inability to bring the Shah and the US to account for past actions and to prevent future US/pro-Shah involvement in Iranian affairs.

B. The captors have been operating in a very well organized manner, but we think they might split over how to react to what they would see as a US effort to circumvent their rightful claims. Individually or as a group, they might over-react.

—We believe their public announcements show a significant degree of tension over possible US retaliatory moves against them.

—As little as a single frustrated captor's angry outburst or blow (or a slight provocation by a hostage) might spark a disintegration of the group's internal control that could lead to abuse of the hostages.

C. As the captors see it, the US will have given an absolute no to their demands that the Shah be returned to Iran.

D. Some, if not all, will also see his departure as the first step in a new US attempt to overthrow the Iranian revolution.

E. At the very least, the Shah's departure is likely to precipitate trial of the hostages.

—Despite a statement on 20 November by a government spokesman that the Revolutionary Court would [not] conduct any trial, it is not certain that the Khomeini regime could easily take control of the hostages from their captors.

—Khomeini apparently had some difficulty in arranging the release of the thirteen women and blacks.

⁵ Secret; Noform.

—Any effort by the regime to remove the hostages remaining on the compound from their captors' control would be seen by the latter as indicative of the regime's lack of trust in them and even of its intention eventually to compromise with the US.

II. We believe the group at the Embassy, and possibly Khomeini and some of his most influential advisors, would not now back off under any circumstances short of a US agreement to return the Shah.

A. In our opinion the captors' shift of emphasis in their statements to US espionage in Iran suggests that they now realize that the US will not meet their demands and that they are trying to force a complete severance of Iran-US contacts.

B. Consequently, the captors are likely to underscore further their "proof" of the "guilt" of these particular individuals held as hostages.

C. [1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

D. [1 paragraph (7½ lines) not declassified]

—[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]

—[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]

III. Circumstances of the Shah's departure could modify the reaction in Iran—but probably not change it fundamentally.

A. His removal to Mexico would be a lesser provocation than his arrival in, or stated intention to go later to Egypt, which has actively opposed the Khomeini regime.

B. Statements by the Shah permanently renouncing any Pahlavi claims to power and assets in Iran, and/or offering to account for or return some assets would be generally disbelieved and create far less impact than if they had been forthcoming in the immediate aftermath of the Embassy takeover.

C. The coincidence of the Shah's departure with the highly emotional period of Moharram, the Shia time of mourning in commemoration of an important early martyr, is likely to intensify reactions by the Khomeini regime, the captors, and the populace to his move.

50. Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, undated

THE U.S. STAKE IN IRAN

I. *Introduction*

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the U.S. stake in Iran from a broader perspective than that of our present concern with the hostages. In effect, it attempts to leap across the morass of negotiating tactics and turbulent Tehran politics to the situation a year hence, however the hostage situation is resolved. Its approach is: first, to define critical U.S. national interests in Iran as they now appear; second, to identify the range of possible Irans of, say, 1981; and third, to analyze each of these in terms of U.S. interests.

II. *Assumptions*

A. Khomeini's attempt to rule a semi-developed state of the late twentieth century by the standards of a tenth century theocracy will ultimately fail.

B. If there were ever any possibility of the U.S. doing business with the present regime, it has been destroyed in the past few weeks.

C. The Soviet Union's primary national goals are to strengthen itself and to weaken the U.S. It will exploit any opportunity open to it in the pursuit of these goals, restrained only by its calculations of risk. It is not in the interest of the United States to become, or to be perceived as becoming, weaker than the USSR.

III. *U.S. National Interests*

1. U.S. national interests in Iran are many and complex, but events of the past two years have served to clarify in the starkest way which

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 11: C–372 Iran. Secret. Drafted by Richard Lehman. Sent under a November 22 covering memorandum from Turner to Carter, Mondale, Vance, Brown, and Brzezinski, and distributed at the November 22 SCC meeting (see Document 47). In a November 23 memorandum, Brzezinski recommended that Carter scan this paper and an attached companion paper prepared by Waller. Brzezinski suggested “we should take advantage of the first opportunity to begin organizing a series of actions which make it less likely that the less attractive alternatives” Lehman outlined would come to pass. He suggested that Carter raise the issue at the next NSC meeting “especially because I have encountered real reluctance (notably from State) to reach any specific recommendations regarding covert activity within the SCC.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/21/79–11/27/79)

of these can be termed vital. We have four *critical* national interests; two of them *vital*. These four are listed below in priority order:

A. It is vital to prevent the turbulence in Iran, or the outward drive of a Shiite state, from disrupting the flow of oil from the Western shore of the Gulf.

B. It is vital to deny Iranian oil to the Soviet Union and to keep Iran out of the Soviet sphere of influence.

C. It is critical to avoid serious confrontation with the USSR.

D. It is critical to keep Iranian oil flowing to the West.

In subsequent paragraphs, each of these goals is viewed in geopolitical terms.

A. *The Flow from the Gulf*

2. The “quarantine” of Iran is ranked first because the loss to the West of the oil of the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq would threaten its collapse. The Iranian debacle can impact on the Gulf States in at least three ways:

—Export of radicalism, either leftist or Muslim, leading to political instability. Production facilities would be subject to physical damage and export flows to political uncertainty.

—A reinforcement of the growing tendency among exporting states to see a reduction of production as the most desirable course in a period of short supply and unspendable national revenues.

—Military interruption of oil flow from the Gulf by a power controlling the Straits of Hormuz. Such a power might be a resurgent Iran, the USSR, or conceivably Iraq if Iran became even weaker.

3. So far, the industrial economies of the West and Far East have proved remarkably resilient; they successfully weathered the crisis of 1973–74 both in energy supply and money flows and are managing reasonably well with the uncertainties of Iranian supply; they have come to understand their vulnerability and taken some tentative steps to reduce it. The non-oil LDC’s have done less well and their ability to absorb an even greater shock is questionable.

4. Cessation or severe reduction of the oil flow from the Gulf, however, coupled inevitably with price rises on a scale hitherto unimaginable, would test and perhaps even break the resilience of the West. It would produce at the least severe depression and inflation. Turmoil in the LDC’s would contribute by interrupting the supply of other commodities. In such a situation, the stability and orientation of major U.S. allies, and of the U.S. itself, could no longer be assumed. The USSR and its allies, with a basically autarchic economy, would be shielded from these effects. In simplest terms, the present world power equation, in which the military strength of the USSR is roughly balanced by the economic and technological strength of the West, would be fundamentally and perhaps irretrievably changed to the detriment of the West.

B. Denial to the USSR

5. Even without Iran, the power balance will be exceptionally delicate in the early to mid-1980s. In this period Soviet military strength will grow substantially relative to that of the U.S., an imbalance that will only be redressed when military programs now underway or under consideration come to fruition in the later years of the decade. On the other side of the scale, the USSR will be subject in roughly the same time-frame to increasing economic difficulty, most notably in the energy field. Petroleum production has peaked and will apparently begin to decline sharply. The Soviet economy, lacking the West's cushion of unnecessary consumption that can be conserved, can only maintain its present position by a combination of drastically reduced exports and purchases in the Western market. In fact, the Soviet leadership may be able to maintain its military power advantage only by accepting even greater economic and ideological disadvantages—sacrifice of technology imports for imports of grain and petroleum, political turmoil in Eastern Europe, a reduced standard of living at home, all adding to a demonstration that the Soviet model for a modern state is a failure.

6. Moreover, the Soviet leadership itself is in a state of interregnum. The introverted cluster of old men surrounding the fading Brezhnev are jockeying among themselves to succeed him, but appear united in resistance to the admittance of younger and more vigorous men to their circle. Their behavior as a group, with or without Brezhnev, is likely to become increasingly erratic and unpredictable until power passes to the next generation, although it could lapse into paralysis. We know little of the policy views of the younger men, although some analysts have suggested that they are impatient with the caution of their elders: the Soviet state has too long tolerated the pretensions of a declining West; it should take advantage of the power it has achieved and press more aggressively toward its national goals.

7. We are not sure how fully the Politburo yet understands its predicament. If the power balance is delicate without Iran, however, it will become even more so when the Soviet leaders recognize their situation and the possible role that Iran might play in it. To an old Soviet leadership that sees its achievements of decades past gravely threatened by a lack of petroleum, or to a younger one that sees its opportunities for the future equally threatened, the prospect of a chaotic Iran, its armed forces shattered and its allies alienated, may become tempting in the early 80s. Not only could Soviet energy shortages be alleviated, but the supply of foreign exchange could be assured. Moreover, in geo-political terms the Soviets would be in a position from Iran to dominate the Middle East and South Asia, and ultimately to deny Gulf oil to the West.

8. Either leadership would of course calculate the risks. They would be relatively small if a Marxist, preferably controlled Communist,

regime could be brought to power in Tehran without overt Soviet intervention, but would appear much greater if military intervention were required. How much greater would in turn depend on Moscow's assessment of the "correlation of forces."

9. In that the Politburo members would see geography as on their side. Not only are their general purpose forces stronger than those of the U.S. (and any allies that might become involved), but their ability to project that power into Iran far exceeds that of the U.S. Against this they would weigh the danger that a venture in Iran could not be confined to Iran and its neighbors but might escalate to nuclear confrontation. The critical factor for them would be the U.S. leadership. They clearly see the present one as weak and indecisive, but they do not fully understand the U.S. political process. To them the U.S. is unpredictable and especially dangerous in adversity, when it may react like a wounded animal. Both these considerations will be strongly operative in the election year 1980. Moreover, they may calculate that the administration that takes office in 1981 will have a mandate to restore U.S. military strength, although any actions it could take would not substantially affect the power balance for several years.

10. This is not an estimate that the Soviets will seize the Iranian oil fields. It is rather that the combination of the Soviet need for oil, the power vacuum in Iran, the "strategic window" of the early 80s, the perceived weakness of U.S. leadership, and the geographic advantages of the USSR make such an action a thinkable course either for an erratic older Soviet leadership or an aggressive younger one. The Politburo might come to see Iran as the *schwerpunkt*² of the long Soviet struggle with the U.S. A successful Soviet operation in Iran, even if it did not lead to a cut-off of other Gulf oil, would affect the power balance almost as decisively as a long-term disruption of that supply.

C. Avoid Confrontation with the USSR

11. Controlling risks by avoiding confrontation is obviously a desirable goal for the U.S., but it ranks below those of protecting the other Gulf states and denying Iran to the Soviets. These are *vital* to the U.S. national interests in the long term. Indeed, they may only be achievable by risking confrontation. That said, the arguments that make military action appear less risky for the USSR in the early 80s window are equally applicable to risk-taking by the U.S. Short of a direct threat to our vital interests, the risk of military confrontation with the USSR

² A German military term variously defined as the focal point, concentration of effort point, central point of attack, center of gravity of an attack, i.e., that thing which is most important as a target.

should be limited, particularly so on ground so disadvantageous as Iran.

D. Maintenance of Iranian Oil Flow to the West

12. Obviously, a substantial and dependable flow of Iranian oil would, at least in the short run, relieve pressure on the oil market and limit economic difficulties in the West. The market, however, has absorbed a considerable decrease in Iranian production and continuing uncertainties as to its future. A complete cut-off of exports would drive prices higher, slow Western growth and severely handicap the non-oil LDCs, but would be far less traumatic than the loss of oil from across the Gulf. Its loss has already to a certain extent been discounted in the West; supply will in the longer run decrease in any case.

IV. Interests of other Powers

13. It is as critical for the West Europeans and Japanese as it is for the U.S. that the flow of non-Iranian Gulf oil be sustained and that the world power balance not be seriously disturbed in favor of the Soviet Union. There is no question that these states recognize the importance of the flow, but some will believe that they can better protect themselves by bilateral than by multilateral action. Some will not see the balance as so seriously threatened, short of Soviet military operations in Iran. The greater weight they give to avoidance of US-Soviet confrontation will make it difficult to convince them of the reality of the Soviet threat. As to Iranian oil flow, they are likely to view this and to seek ways to maintain it in bilateral, nationalistic ways, regardless of the position of the U.S.

14. The Middle Eastern states, and particularly those of the Gulf, are of course less concerned with the economic well-being of the West than of their own, but their interest in avoiding infection from Iran is as great as ours in protecting them from it. Some are concerned over the general U.S.-USSR power balance (Saudi Arabia) but most (Iraq) would be more concerned over the clear and present danger of a Soviet-oriented Iran. They would fear a U.S.-Soviet confrontation, if only because it might force them to chose sides between a USSR that was militarily stronger in the area and a West on which their economic well-being depends. Their attitude toward Iranian oil as opposed to Iranian politics will range from indifference to pleasure at the effect of its loss on a sellers' market.

15. China desperately needs a strong West to divide Soviet attention, but it sees the West as losing its will in the face of Soviet power. China may well believe it sees the dangers to Western interests in the Iranian situation more clearly than the West itself. It certainly will be more strident in pointing out those dangers. For Peking some degree

of U.S.-Soviet confrontation would be desirable, because it would have the effect of strengthening U.S. will and accelerating Western arms programs. In China's view Gulf oil, from Iran or elsewhere, is important only in that if it flows south it strengthens the West, but that if it flows north it both weakens the West and strengthens the USSR.

16. The non-oil LDC's outside the Middle East will be forced by their dependence on foreign sources of energy and the general weakness of their economies to view Iran in essentially opportunistic terms. They will want a maximum flow to keep prices down and their economies turning over, and they will deal with whoever can provide such a flow, if anyone can. This means they would prefer the status quo in the Gulf. If the status quo were disturbed, they would want to see stability restored by whatever power had the strength to do it, and if that power were Soviet they would not be overly concerned. In any case, they would see themselves, accurately, as having little influence over the course of events.

V. Possible Irans of 1981

17. There are at least six possible outcomes, each with infinite variations, for the present mess in Iran. In general terms, these are:

- Survival of Khomeini's primitive Moslem theocracy.
- Replacement of Khomeini, et al., by a radical nationalist regime.
- Replacement of Khomeini by a Soviet-oriented Communist or strongly Communist-influenced regime.
- Disintegration of Iran into a number of smaller ethnically-based entities, with or without partition or occupation by neighboring nations.
- Civil war, involving any of a number of combinations of antagonists, ethnic, political, and religious.
- Emergence of a right or center-right regime backed by the military.

18. Any of these outcomes could lead to any other. In fact, by 1981 Iran could have seen all of them. The present state, and the anarchy into which it seems to be collapsing, is clearly a transitional phase. A civil war could lead to the emergence of a strong state of the left or right, to partition, or back to anarchy. The uncertainties are so great that there seems little purpose in speculating on the likely sequence of events, although it can be said that a leftist outcome appears the most probable and a rightist one the least. For the purpose of this paper, however, the important thing is not to determine what might produce a particular outcome or assess its probability, but rather to see how each might affect the U.S. national interests defined above.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

VI. Conclusions

39. As long as Iran remains in chaos, it will be a source of political instability in the Middle East and uncontrollable economic fluctuation

throughout the non-Communist world. As long as it remains weak, and Western attitudes are not defined, it will present temptation to a USSR that may well become desperate for energy. These statements, and the four U.S. national interests discussed above, suggest a policy for the U.S. once the hostage issue is behind us. First, define Western attitudes, lest the Soviet Union miscalculate. Second, take concrete steps with our allies to make this position credible. Third, take measures with them to shield the Gulf States from subversion and military action. Fourth, work toward a degree of strength and stability at least in strategic areas of Iran. Fifth, prevent the extension of Soviet power and influence in these areas.

40. The discussion above suggests that among possible lines of development in Iran one, the extension of Soviet influence behind a shield of nationalism, offers a greater threat to U.S. interests than any other. Two, however, offer greater promise of protection for major U.S. interests than the others. These are: 1) emergence of a strong left-nationalist regime; 2) disintegration of Iran, leaving a relatively stable Khuzistan protected from Soviet influence. A choice as to which of these goals to pursue, and of the means to achieve it, is beyond the scope of this analysis.

51. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Camp David, November 23, 1979, 8:15–10:11 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The President

The Vice President

STATE

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

DEFENSE

Secretary Harold Brown

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7, NSC/SCC Minutes, 11/15/79–12/12/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place at Camp David.

JCS

General David Jones

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

WHITE HOUSE

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

The President: Need to reassess where we are. We cannot let the Iranians decide the pace. We may need to bring the situation to a head. Should the Shah leave? How can we expedite it? What can we tell Khomeini about the consequences of a trial, of harm to hostages? Harm to even one is the same as to all.

There are two military options: mine three ports; destruction of Abadan refinery. How do we get Khomeini to realize that we will do this without having him lose face? That is something we need to resolve. When should we exercise that option?

We should try to get our allies to do more. They have not done enough. They have not really reacted. We might call to stop all shipping.

What terms through Waldheim would be acceptable? They could have recourse through our courts but that and international review of the Shah's policies would be seen as a political defeat for the United States. Our hostages have already been punished—we have already been abused.

Should we restrict or expel Iranian diplomats? We should kick them out. These diplomats are of no use to us here.

To what degree should we consult our allies on our options? If they knew we might mine ports, it might spur them into more action.

Secretary Vance: PLO and UN are our main channels. UN exploring the four-point proposal that you and I have approved.²

The President: And Zbig.

² See attachment. In his memoir, Vance wrote that on November 17 (Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 379), he handed the four points to Waldheim, who then handed the proposal to Iranian representatives at the UN. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, p. 84) Salamatin arrived in New York on November 16 to request a formal meeting of the Security Council in order to "set forward" Iran's views and to help the Iranian government deal with the students in control at the Embassy. Salamatin told Security Council President Palacios that "the present situation is such that in order to release the hostages the govt would have to kill the students." (Telegram 5344 from USUN, November 17; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790535–0354)

Secretancy Vance: Clark spent four hours with the Iranian emissary. The emissary asserts he has Khomeini's approval. McHenry thinks we should go to the Security Council on Monday³ with a three-point resolution:

- (1) respect for diplomatic immunity and release;
- (2) U.S. and Iran peacefully to resolve differences;
- (3) Secretary General to offer good offices.

The PLO channel was helpful in the release of the 13. I believe one must test fully the UN channel.

The President then reviewed the four points that "Cy, Zbig and I" went over last Friday.⁴ The Iranians sense their increasing vulnerability. (Discussion of the four points—what do they mean?)

General Jones: Point 4 rules out punitive action.

The President: It would not prevent breaking diplomatic relations.

Dr. Brzezinski: The mining then wouldn't make much sense; a single punitive strike would be better.

Hamilton Jordan: Our signing a document like this will cause a domestic outcry.

The Vice President: We may have to sign to get our people out.

Secretary Brown: How about substantial economic warfare and substantial military presence?

Admiral Turner: Is there a moral difference between violating the agreement and publicly doing something?

Dr. Brzezinski: We should act in a way that retains international respect for ourselves; a punitive strike after signing an agreement would be counterproductive.

Point #2 to be interpreted as including Khomeini, and this would be made clear on the first day of the debate.

Jody Powell: This means we have accepted preconditions. We claimed before that we wouldn't.

Dr. Brzezinski: Suggest second sentence of #2 be amended.

The President: "None of the interested parties." (Changes in #3 dictated by the President; #4 slightly amended to permit breaking of diplomatic relations.)

Hamilton Jordan: If it looks like we ate crow and then diplomatic relations are broken, it will sit badly with the American people.

³ November 26.

⁴ November 16.

The President: Fairly severe punishment—diplomatic and economic relations broken.

Admiral Turner: The results would not be that bad; embargo without international cooperation would not be that bad.

Dr. Brzezinski: argues that we should accompany the negotiating approval with a credible threat that we will mine if trials are held and will *do more* if our people are harmed. If peace succeeds, we could let it be known that we made a credible military threat.

Secretary Vance: (Recounts how bitter our people are against the press.)

Hamilton Jordan: If the mining could be done prior to release, it will look better.

Secretary Vance: We shouldn't act unless our people are hurt. (Cites Truman with Angus Ward and Johnson with *Pueblo*.)⁵

Dr. Brzezinski: The public and world are now much less certain about the United States; hence this is not the same situation.

The President: Go ahead and negotiate—and plan punitive action.

Assuming the above doesn't work, what about the Shah? How authentic is the PLO claim? If the Shah goes and our people are released, we would free to take punitive action. Mining appeals to me.

The Vice President: We don't know the basic facts.

The President: Zbig, how do you feel?

Dr. Brzezinski: It depends on how it is perceived. If it looks like we contrived it, it will look bad. If the Iranians are against it, it looks less bad. But I am skeptical that we can avoid such an impression. Also, I don't think we would then take the punitive action that we would need to take.

Admiral Turner: A high risk for our hostages if he leaves. Could we negotiate with the Iranians?

The President: That would be the worst. Now it would be a blow to Khomeini if he went to Mexico. Should ZB talk to David Rockefeller?

(Discussion of contacts)

⁵ In November 1948, U.S. Consul at Shenyang Angus Ward was placed under house arrest by Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army. Ward was ultimately arrested, brought to trial, and deported in December 1949. During the crisis, Truman and his advisors discussed but rejected the option of a rescue operation. The *USS Pueblo* was captured by North Koreans in January 1968. Eighty-two crew members were held as POWs and tortured by the North Korean government for 11 months. To gain the hostages' release, the Johnson administration issued an apology in December 1968, admitted the *Pueblo* was spying, and assured North Korea that the United States would not spy again. There were no rescue attempts. The apology was rescinded after the crewmen were released.

The President: Authorization of telephone tap through Attorney General. Newsom to talk to Reed about the Shah leaving.⁶

What means should we use to warn Khomeini of consequences of trial?

Dr. Brzezinski: What is the message?

The President: We should say: (1) any trial would result in interruption of Iranian commerce; (2) any harm to any *one* would result in direct retaliatory action.

Secretary Vance objects to the first.

The President: How can I sit here as President and watch the trials?

Dr. Brzezinski: Either the Iranians understand we will do something, in which case it is a useful repetition; or they don't, in which case they need to be told.

The President: We need to put more pressure on our allies. We should communicate the foregoing also to our allies.

General Jones describes modalities of blockade; also its variants. Mining best.

Secretary Vance objects to threats.

Secretary Brown supports Secretary Vance. You have a bigger effect by military deployments.

Dr. Brzezinski: So far they have done daring things without advance warnings from us. So we know they do outrageous things if or when not warned by us.

The President asks the Vice President.

The Vice President: It is very difficult.

The President: This puts our allies under pressure. There is no way I could sit here. We would have to take action if there is public trial.

Secretary Vance: You would not be ruling it out.

Admiral Turner: Khomeini said you have been bluffing. You need to make it clear.

The Vice President: Might not this threat imperil the success of the negotiating track? Might not a few days be needed—then if hostages are hurt, national honor will come first.

The President: National honor comes first.

Jody Powell: The longer we wait, the less we deter.

⁶ Reed told Newsom that the Shah intended to leave for Mexico if his scheduled surgery was successful, wanted advice, and was embarrassed by the problems resulting from his presence. (Memorandum from Newsom to Vance, November 23; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Misc on Shah)

Dr. Brzezinski: Suggest that we leave the UN channel only for negotiating; and that we ask the French to carry the threat to Tehran.

The President: I would prefer to tell the chargé, and we notify the French, British, Germans, etc. I want to stop the trials. You decide, Cy, how to get to Khomeini. My *decision* is as indicated above.

Secretary Vance: Ambassadors will call on heads of government in Paris, London, Bonn to carry out. Who will tell Waldheim?

Dr. Brzezinski: How do we convey it to Khomeini?

Admiral Turner: Entezam could be a channel.

Dr. Brzezinski asks should we separate the negotiating process from the Shah initiative? Both together might be too much.

The President: The negotiating process won't work.

On diplomats, I feel strongly, but will defer to Cy. On punitive steps later, Jody's idea of closing down their ports for how long the prisoners were held is good.

Attachment

Paper⁷

Undated

Points Given Iranian Envoys by Rafi Ahmad 11/17/79

1. Release of personnel held in the United States Embassy in Tehran and permission to leave the country immediately for all U.S. Government employees.

2. Establishment of an international commission to enquire into allegations of grave violations of human rights in Iran under the former regime.

3. The Government of the United States will raise no objection to any legal recourse in the courts of the United States by Government of Iran in relation to its demand concerning assets which in its view have been illegally taken out of the country by the Shah.

4. Affirmation by the Government of Iran and the United States to abide strictly by the declaration on principles of international law concerning friendly relations and cooperation among states in accordance with the charter of the United Nations, and by the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

[header and 4 paragraphs (21 lines) not declassified.]

⁷ Secret; Eyes Only; Highly Sensitive Sources. Carter initialed the first page.

52. Message From the U.S. Government to the Iranian Government¹

Washington, undated

We request that the following message from the highest levels of the US Government be transmitted by the most secure and discreet channels possible to Acting Foreign Minister Bani Sadr for the highest authorities in Iran:

1. As the President has said, our preference remains a peaceful solution, which we are pursuing through the channels that are available to us.

2. Any public trial or governmental trial of US personnel in Iran would result in interruption of Iranian commerce.

3. Any harm to any hostage would result in direct retaliatory action.

4. This message is being conveyed totally privately by the most secure channel available. We do not intend to give any publicity to the message, but we do not want there to be any misunderstanding about the seriousness of our message.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106. Top Secret; Sensitive. Transmitted through the Swiss Embassy. According to a June 4, 1980, Memorandum for the File by Precht, the message was transmitted to Bern at 1800 EST on November 23, reached Tehran the next morning, and was given to Bani-Sadr by Lang at 0705 EST, November 24. Precht wrote that "Bani-Sadr read the message and said he would transmit its contents at once to the Revolutionary Council." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot81D154, Swiss Channel) Sick recalled that the United States received assurance within 48 hours that the message had been received and understood. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, p. 276) In telegram 304399 to Paris, November 23, the Department transmitted instructions that Giscard receive the content of this message through oral communication only for his sole information and that any tapes of the message should be destroyed after delivery. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 23, France 1/79-12/79)

53. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 23, 1979

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting on Iran (C)

Attached is the Summary of Conclusions of the SCC meeting this morning.² Two items are of particular note:

—Bani Sadr's statement that Iran will not honor its financial obligations³ may do more to destroy Iran's international standing in the economic community than anything we can do. For the moment, we should just monitor the effects. By tomorrow we will give you a recommendation on whether or not the Export-Import Bank should declare Iran in default. They have never declared a nation in default, and this would further dramatize Iran's precarious economic position. (S)

—A decision will be required in the next week or so about allocation of crude oil stocks and production of gasoline. DOE and Eizenstat's office are looking at options.⁴ (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #209 held 11/23/79. Secret. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² Not attached. A copy is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #209 held 11/23/79.

³ On Friday, November 23, Bani-Sadr announced that Iran intended to default on all its foreign debts, estimated at more than \$15 billion. He later stated he meant only the debts of 28 private banks, not those of the Iranian Government or central bank. The decision affected U.S. banks (Chase Manhattan, Bank of America, Continental Illinois, Citibank, First Boston Co., and Mellon Bank) and European banks, the latter not having access to frozen Iranian assets. Bani-Sadr presented these two decisions as creating the economic independence necessary for a break in relations with the United States. (Jonathan C. Randal, "Iran Says It Won't Pay World Debts," *Washington Post*, November 23, 1979, p. A1)

⁴ Brzezinski informed Vance, Miller, and Duncan that Carter had approved two other recommendations from the November 23 SCC meeting: There would be no effort to determine the size of the Shah's assets in the United States, and the United States would not attempt to discourage Japan or others from making oil purchases from Iran. (Memorandum, November 26; Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 13)

54. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, November 23, 1979, 10:10–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor

JCS

General John Pustay

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

CIA

Frank Carlucci

OMB

John White

White House

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC(I) met to discuss a proposed finding by the DCI (attached) [1½ lines not declassified] to influence Khomeini and others to abandon or moderate anti-American positions and to reduce their ability to incite anti-American violence or threats to U.S. interests. (S)

Mr. Carlucci described the range of activities contemplated, including broadcasts critical of Khomeini's policies as violations of Islamic teachings, providing a forum for opposition figures to address the Iranian people, stressing that present policies are leading Iran down a road to disaster, publicize links between some present leaders in Iran with SAVAK, and warn of leftist efforts to exploit religious leadership. (S)

Mr. Christopher questioned whether the actions envisaged were in fact compatible with the objective of reducing anti-American positions by Iranian leaders. The Attorney General and all others noted that the finding as written was sufficient to allow for such activities, particularly since it calls for "reducing the ability" of Khomeini and others to incite violence. Their ability could not be reduced without taking some of the steps called for in the finding. (S)

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Box I020, SCC Meetings, Minutes—SCC 1979. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

Mr. Carlucci noted that we might be backing into a major political decision to overthrow Khomeini by this finding. He noted, however, that Khomeini is already accusing us of worse than what we are proposing. In the acts proposed in this finding, the U.S. hand will not show. We will need to coordinate [*less than 1 line not declassified*] for specific technical access to broadcast and other facilities. (S)

The finding was approved, with State reserving its position until the issue could be discussed with the Secretary. (U)

Mr. Newsom provided a brief summary of the debrief of hostages.² Those released warn that we should not try to make a case about forged U.S. documents since the Iranians have many genuine documents that they can produce. They appear to be focusing their “spy” charges on Mike Metrisko, a Foreign Service Officer who maintained contact with Kurdish leaders prior to the fall of the Shah, and on Ann Swift, a Foreign Service political officer. They do not appear to have identified Agency people, [*1 line not declassified*]. (TS)

[*5½ lines not declassified*] Damage assessment is proceeding, and we are attempting to match faces (on TV, etc.) with individuals who were in charge or who conducted interrogations. An older man named Mehdi apparently ran the operation. (TS)

Two of the hostages were particularly susceptible to indoctrination about the crimes of the Shah. The decompression period in Wiesbaden was invaluable in helping to deal with this problem before the hostages met with the press. The Marines felt that the Code of Conduct did not adequately prepare them for this type of situation and they were unsure what to do. (S)

² See Document 45.

Attachment

Presidential Finding³

Washington, undated

Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, As Amended, Concerning Operations in Foreign Countries Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection

I find the following operation in foreign countries is important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this finding to the concerned committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and to provide such briefings as necessary.

<i>SCOPE</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>
WORLDWIDE	Using any and all possible means, including tasking or encouraging the network of agents or other contacts in foreign countries, clandestine radio broadcasting and the use of media placements, to cause the distribution or broadcast in foreign countries of non-attributable propaganda for the purposes of: influencing the Ayatollah Khomeini, other Iranian religious and political leaders and anti-American segments of the Iranian populace to abandon or moderate anti-American political and economic positions and to protect the safety of U.S. nationals and U.S. property in Iran; and reducing the ability of the Ayatollah Khomeini and other anti-American religious and political figures in Iran to incite anti-American violence, or to stimulate policies and activities hostile to the interests of the United States and to the safety of U.S.

³ Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. In a November 23 memorandum, Brzezinski asked Carter to approve the finding, noting that it “does move toward a decision to support overthrow of Khomeini.” (National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Box I020, SCC Meetings, Minutes—SCC 1979)

nationals and property, in Iran and other countries.⁴

Jimmy Carter

⁴ On December 7, the CIA asked for and received NSC approval of an economic propaganda campaign that would fall under this Presidential Finding. The proposal was for the placement of information in influential European media venues emphasizing Iran's growing monetary and trade problems, encouraging foreign ship owners to cut back on services to Iran, stressing the certainty of a drastic decline in Iranian oil production, and pointing to the severe heating oil shortage that threatened Tehran. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 12/1/79–12/7/79)

55. Memorandum Prepared by the Iran Task Force, Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, November 23, 1979

SUBJECT

Iranian Exiles and Exile Movement

Almost all of our information on Iranian exiles and their organization comes from reports from new sources or from the exiles themselves. Much of the information that follows has not been substantiated by more than one source. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The main figures in the opposition movement among exiles appear to be Shahpour Bakhtiar, General Jam, General Oveisi and Nahavandi—with Bakhtiar as the leading figure. [*portion marking not declassified*]

We do not think at the present time any of the exiles or exile groups pose a challenge to the Khomeini regime in Iran. Most exiles, though perhaps supporting one or more leaders with their money, have not wished to get involved in an organized movement. Many exiles in Europe do not want to become involved in opposition activities because they fear reprisals against their relatives in Iran. Many in the middle

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 11: C-372 Iran. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

class and the military in Iran fear that opposition to Khomeini would lead to a civil war where the leftists would be the final victors.

Bakhtiar, with small offices in Paris and London, appears to be the only exile leader with an established organization. Some Iranian businessmen have recently attempted to organize wealthy exiles to support Bakhtiar. An unconfirmed report of the establishment in September of a Paris Coordinating Group is the first sign of a coalition effort among exile groups. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is detailed material on Bakhtiar, Jam, and Nahavandi.]

Paris Coordinating Group of Iranian Oppositionists

There are reports that an organization composed of four different groups—the Iranian National Front, the National Democratic Front, the Mujahadin and the Fedayeen E-Khalq—has been formed in Paris, although a coalition of these four groups seems unlikely. The group calls itself Ittihad-e-Melli (National Union) and Bakhtiar is the nominal head. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The agreement of the four groups to form an organization is apparently still subject to ratification by each group. The groups will still have separate command structures and operate independently. The group claims it has received messages of encouragement from Shariat-Madari, Hosein Montazari, Mohammad Golpayegani and Sadeq al-Tuhani as well as having the support of some monarchists and bazaaris. They have no contact with the Arab minority in Khuzistan. [*portion marking not declassified*]

They see the principal obstacle to their success as being Khomeini's grip on the lower levels of the clergy and through them on the large number of undereducated and unemployed youth of Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The organization supports PLO self determination even though it has no contacts with the PLO. It favors autonomy status for Iranian minority nationalities and has sent financial aid to the Kurds. It has been unsuccessful in getting Tudeh party support. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Shadow Government

[*less than 1 line not declassified*] Iranian expatriates in Paris are attempting to form a shadow government and have chosen candidates for top government positions.² There is no information on whether these individuals have been contacted. The group claims high level

² See Document 20.

contacts with at least two Persian Gulf governments—one [is] Saudi Arabia. They have not approached major Western governments yet. No firm pledges of support have come from any governments.

[Omitted here is a list of proposed Ministers, a list of exiles and the countries within which they reside, information on Bakhtiar's London and Paris offices, and a list of former Iranian military officers residing in the United States.]

56. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Camp David, undated.

The longer the situation in Iran drags on, the more complex it seems and the more reluctant I am to try to offer advice. I lack a sure sense of what we should do as we weigh the lives of the hostages against several abstract principles against our country's interests after the present crisis is over. And although the principles involved are pre-eminent, they are also abstract and easily deferred in their application when the lives of 49 human beings are at stake.

Having established that I am not in a good position to offer advice, I do have some feelings in my gut that I wanted to pass on to you.

First, I agree strongly with your desire to bring this thing to a head. It seems to me that the passage of time makes the situation more difficult for everyone involved:

—The American people, who have been supportive to date, will soon begin to sour on the situation and we will see increased support for extreme measures from giving the Shah back to wiping Iran off the face of the earth;

—The passage of time will make it more difficult for you and Khomeini to find a satisfactory political solution to this problem;

—The passage of time increases the chance that the mobs will overrun the Embassy and do harm to the hostages and/or increases the chances that some of the students will take the situation into their own hands;

—The passage of time will take its toll on SALT II ratification; I do not believe that SALT II will be ratified unless we have a politically

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 11/79. Eyes Only.

satisfactory resolution of this crisis; I know that SALT II will certainly not move ahead in the present atmosphere;²

—The world community which presently supports us will begin to fall off given its heavy dependence on Mideast oil and their desire to avoid an international conflict;

—The crisis is taking a toll on your Presidency and your ability to lead. Politically, a protracted crisis will prevent you from doing the very minimal things that you need to do to win the Democratic nomination;

I don't have a sure sense of how it is done, but I would argue that there are many good reasons for trying to bring this thing to a head at the earliest possible date. Most of the Iranian/Moslem experts seem to agree that we should wait until after Ashura and the December 2nd Constitutional vote to take those steps. Again, this is a difficult decision, but at some point in time, you are going to have to take some risks and make some very difficult decisions, I believe that the risks and difficulty of those decisions will increase with the passage of time. (You should read the most recent cable from Laingen if you have not already seen it.)³

Secondly, I share your concern about the negotiations and the UN channel. I don't think that we have much choice but to try that approach, but I personally hope that it does not succeed. Despite our best efforts to explain and defend, I believe that we will be savaged politically for signing a document permitting a trial of the Shah by an international tribunal. Our participating in that exercise comes very close to violating the principles that we have adhered to throughout this crisis.

If those four principles are the basis for the safe release of our hostages,⁴ it will make it all the more important that we take some punitive steps against Iran. For the balance sheet will not be even, and the UN trial will be seized upon by our critics at home and abroad as evidence of our lack of strength and resolve.

Review with me the results of this crisis precipitated by Iran:

—The national humiliation of our country and its ability to protect our diplomatic interests;

—The crisis has required actions on our part—Iranian oil embargo and the freezing of assets—that will work a very specific hardship on our people and has had some adverse impact on friendly nations (like Saudi Arabia).

—Emotional wear and tear on our people at the Embassy. I saw a "terror psychologist" on television last week who said that a good

² Carter sent the SALT II Treaty and Protocol and related documents to the Senate for advice and ratification on June 22.

³ See Document 46.

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 47.

number of these people will have emotional problems for the balance of their lives because of the extreme strain on their emotions;

—I believe that Khomeini should be held indirectly responsible for the deaths of the two Americans in Pakistan; it was certainly the example of the Iranian Embassy that stimulated the Paks to overrun our embassy at Islamabad;⁵

—If there is not a successful political solution to this crisis, SALT II will not be ratified, and the cost of not having a SALT relationship with the Soviets will work an additional hardship on our own country not to mention the great threat to the cause of world peace;

If we are ultimately successful in getting our people back via the UN channel, the balance sheet will be far from even. I would argue that we have to do something that is measured and reasonable to meet domestic political pressures and to serve as a deterrent to others who might be tempted to test us in the months and years ahead.

If and when we get our people back safely, there will be tremendous pressure for you to do nothing. People who urge us to do nothing will use the Soviet threat as a primary excuse. But, if after such an outrageous act directed against us by another country, we are compelled to sit silent and not retaliate, then perhaps we really have become a helpless giant.⁶ There is certainly less respect at home and abroad than there should be for U.S. military and economic strength. We can certainly argue that our nation's cumulative strength is greatly underestimated but at some point that perception becomes reality.

I believe that a measured punitive act is absolutely essential to your own re-election and to America's image in the world. I don't think that the break in diplomatic relations is particularly relevant to the American people and that economic measures are difficult to explain and/or appreciate.

Thirdly, implied in all of this is the fact that we will probably not have good relations with Iran for some time to come. We will obviously have to be concerned about Soviet attitudes and actions in that area of the world, but we will have to accept the fact that it will probably be difficult to have good relations for some time to come. Even after Khomeini falls, his great legacy will probably be that he personally engendered an anti-American xenophobia that will remain among Ira-

⁵ On November 21, Pakistani protestors attacked the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, then broke into the compound, killing one Marine Security Guard. The riots may have been triggered by a radio address by Khomeini alleging that the United States was responsible for the occupation of the Grand Mosque in Mecca on November 20. President Zia ordered the Pakistani Army to rescue the trapped Americans. For documentation on the incident, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XIX, South Asia, Documents 376–388.

⁶ If we don't act in such a clear-cut example of international bad behavior, what would it take for our country to act? [Footnote is in the original.]

nians for a long time to come. We certainly have to be concerned about Iran post-hostage and post-Khomeini, but we should be realistic about what that means. I am sure that there are people in the middle class in Iran and persons with Western educations that deplore what Khomeini has done and is doing, but those people will be outnumbered by many times by the people whose religious zeal has resulted in a strong anti-American feeling.

I believe that some time soon you should spend several hours with the Iranian experts from State and CIA and talk about Iran post-hostage crisis. We have been focused almost exclusively on the day-to-day situation with the hostages and some of the decisions that you will have to make soon as relates to the hostages will have implications for us in terms of our long-term objectives in Iran.

Fourth, if possible and compatible with the best strategy for safely extracting the hostages, the application of one of the military options resulting in their release is much better than the application of the military options after their release. The best scenario would be that we exercise one of the military options and the hostages were then released. This would show American will and ability to act and would respond to the pressure for us to "punish" the Iranians for their actions. If we have to punish the Iranians after the release of the hostages (which I would strongly favor), world opinion might very well turn against us. At that point, I would say to hell with world opinion.

You know, Mr. President, it is difficult to be the richest kid on the block and also the most popular. As a people and as a nation, we desire to be loved and respected. As a result, we are neither. Looking at the great challenges which face our people in the future, it seems that at this point in time in our history it is much more important that our people have their self-respect and *some* respect from the international community. If we are not respected around world and at home, there is no chance for us to be loved.

57. **Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom) to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, November 24, 1979

SUBJECT

Condition of the Shah

Joseph Reed called again this morning to ask whether I had any advice for him to give to the Shah.

Reed said he had spent two hours with the Shah last night. He found him sad and dejected and looking worse than the medical reports suggested that he was.

He found him anxious to do whatever is necessary to help resolve the present impasse. He is prepared to move right away if that would be helpful and could, with difficulty, move before Tuesday. He can only walk short distances and any such move would have to be accomplished by the use of wheelchairs and helicopters.

If the Tuesday operation is successful, the logistics could be in place for the Shah to return to Mexico on Friday.² As before, the Rockefeller organization would arrange for the transportation and would turn to us for necessary liaison with the Mexican officials on formality.

Reed said the Shah is aware of how complicated his departure will be under the best of circumstances. He would like to do so with the utmost of secrecy and the least fanfare possible although he realizes this would be difficult.

The Shah expressed to Reed several concerns:

—over the security of his children and the possibility of their being kidnapped here in the United States;

—over the security of the Shabbanu, although he considers her in less danger than his two sons;

—facing up to the realization of the possibility of death from his cancer, concern over whether he would be allowed back into the United States for further treatment if that were necessary;

—whether if he returns to Mexico the Shabbanu and his children will be permitted to go back and forth between the two countries.

I told Joe that, as far as the movement of the Shabbanu and the children were concerned, we had already established that that was

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Misc: on Shah. Secret.

² November 27 and 30 respectively.

possible. I said I could not yet promise when an answer might be possible on the other matters that he raised.

David D. Newsom³

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

58. Memorandum from the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Tarnoff) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, November 24, 1979

SUBJECT

Seizure of Documents in Tehran

This responds to your November 22 memorandum to the Secretary.²

The attached paper³ summarizes the information available November 23 about the Tehran Embassy documents under Iranian control.

None of the working files of the Chargé, the Political Section, the Economic Section, the Defense Attaché Office (DAO), and Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) were destroyed.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran Cables & Memos 11-12/79. Secret; Sensitive. A handwritten note by Carter reads: "Zbig, Prepare to explain as best we can. C."

² Not found, but apparently the memorandum formalized Carter's request for information on the seizure of documents in a handwritten note on the Summary of Conclusions of the November 20 SCC meeting. His note reads: "Cy—summarize for me possible damaging documents seized in Tehran which may be revealed to world. Prepare explanation to be released when necessary." (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106) In a November 26 memorandum, Brzezinski asked Sick to "impress upon Hal [Saunders] the urgency of this matter." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran Cables & Memos 11-12/79).

³ Attached but not printed. In a note attached to another copy of this memorandum and report, Suddarth wrote: "Based on this memo, virtually *all* our business seems to have been compromised in the Tehran takeover. RS." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran; Captured Documents)

NODIS and EXDIS messages concerning the Shah, a telegram reporting a meeting with Yazdi and Bazargan, [*1½ lines not declassified*] and a State telegram and a State letter and memorandum concerning the Shah's possible admission into the United States were among the documents seized (the last three documents are mentioned in a November 21 article in the *London Times*).

Political and Economic Section files contain information concerning local sources, interviews with members of minority groups, and biographic data that could be used to damage innocent persons.

DAO files include material about U.S.-Iranian cooperation in making technical assessments of Soviet-origin military equipment. MAAG files record cooperation on military procurement matters that was continuing up to the time the Embassy was seized.

In brief, though some of the safes had not yet been opened when the last group of hostages was released, Embassy files now in Iranian hands can compromise many of those with whom we have dealt, and if disclosed or used as the basis for distorted stories can do incalculable damage.

Although virtually all CIA documents in the Embassy were destroyed, a safe containing Iranian, U.S. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] currency notes was seized by the Iranians.⁴ These will confirm Iranian suspicions about espionage activities conducted from the Embassy.

We do know that records relating to the recent [*less than 1 line not declassified*] survey were destroyed with the material in the Embassy's central files. We also believe that the material on the recent intelligence briefing of Entezam and Yazdi was destroyed.

As soon as officers recently returned from Tehran who are familiar with the DAO and MAAG files can be reached, we will provide a further assessment of the material in those offices that was compromised.

Peter Tarnoff
Executive Secretary

⁴ The CIA also assessed the possible damage of the Embassy takeover. Turner wrote Carter that he would "weigh additional evidence that we receive in an effort at least to know whether accusations that may be made in public trials are accurate." [*text not declassified*] (Memorandum from Turner to Carter, November 27; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/21/79–11/27/79) Bowdler and Precht also reviewed the damage and how to respond. (Memorandum from Bowdler to Newsom, November 28; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Intelligence Iran)

59. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 26, 1979, 9:15–10:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Harold Saunders

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Claytor

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti**

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan**

John Sawhill**

Treasury

Robert Carswell**

White House

Stuart Eizenstat**

Lloyd Cutler**

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

**Present for discussion of domestic issues.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Update.* Secretary Vance reported on efforts under way at the UN to get a Security Council resolution in the next few days which will call for the immediate release of hostages, a peaceful resolution of the problem and directing the Secretary General to report urgently to the Security Council.² All U.S. embassies in the region are being directed to begin quietly reducing the numbers of Americans who may be subject to further attacks. The situation is becoming increasingly dangerous as the Ayatollah focuses on “believers versus infidels.” The

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 106, SCC 210 Iran 11/26/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote “Zbig, J” in the upper right corner.

² Carter wrote in the left margin: “UNSC seems to be deliberately delaying action.”

announcement by the Kurdish Democratic Party that they are prepared to act in unity with Khomeini in the event of U.S. military intervention is perhaps indicative of greater support throughout the Arab world on that issue. (S)

2. *Energy*. DOE is conducting a survey of the oil companies to get a better fix on the gasoline production versus draw down of crude reserves. They will continue to report as the information becomes clearer. It would be premature to take the issue to the President at this point. The IEA meeting went well,³ but the IEA is probably going to ask the U.S. for more visible leadership, specifically some tough steps on the energy front, e.g., a move toward rationing or an increase in excise taxes on gasoline. (C)

3. *Iranian Assets*. There was considerable confusion in the international markets concerning Iran's intentions to meet their financial obligations. Thus far there has not been a cascade of seizures. It was the judgment of the SCC that we should not push the Export-Import Bank to declare Iran in default during the next few very dangerous days. The Bank would prefer to follow its usual procedure of trying to negotiate a settlement.⁴ (C)

4. *Iranian Exports*. State, Commerce and Treasury will meet today to review our position on exports of food and other commodities. Although we have taken a public position exempting food and medicine from the freeze, should we be in the position of pushing the unions and others to continue loading ships? This question will be reviewed tomorrow.⁵ (C)

5. *Immigration and Civil Rights*. There have been a number of complaints about the rights of Iranians being violated by being fired from jobs, refusals to serve them, etc. The SCC agreed that the Attorney General should let it be known that violations of U.S. law will not be condoned. (C)

6. *Public Posture*. Jody Powell will consult with State and provide for the meeting tomorrow a list of actions which we could promote to demonstrate U.S. popular solidarity with the hostages. Bruce Laingen, for example, has suggested that church bells be rung each day at noon,

³ The IEA Governing Board met in Paris November 16. At this meeting, the U.S. delegation urged the IEA to advance its scheduled January Ministerial level meeting to December prior to OPEC's December 17 Caracas meeting. The IEA agreed to meet December 10 to focus on oil import limitations. (Ronald Koven, "Acts by Key Allies Back Iran Oil Ban," *Washington Post*, November 17, 1979, p. A12; Steven Rattner, "Miller Cites Plans to Cut U.S. Oil Use," *New York Times*, November 24, 1979, p. 29) See also *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXXVII, Energy Crisis, 1974–1980, Document 244 and footnote 3 thereto.

⁴ Carter wrote "somewhat reluctantly" next to his approval of this item.

⁵ Carter underlined the phrase "pushing the unions," then wrote in the margin: "no."

and this seems to be catching on. A flood of telegrams to the UN or Iran was also mentioned. (C)

7. *Shah*. Iran intends to bring suit against the Shah. One suit will probably seek the return of his assets to Iran and the other will attempt in some fashion to bring him to account for crimes. We have always said they could resort to our courts, and there is no immediate decision required on our part. However, we may later wish to consider filing an amicus brief or otherwise intervening if the question arises about Iranian standing in our courts, especially while they continue to hold hostages. (S)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *International Court of Justice (ICJ)*. The SCC agreed that we should be prepared to request the ICJ for a finding on interim measures for protection and release of U.S. hostages. It is anticipated that the Court could act within a week to ten days. Going to the ICJ would complete a record of having exhausted all available remedies under international law. It does not deprive us of the right of unilateral action while the case is under consideration, although it may make certain actions more difficult. Under the terms of our treaties with Iran, they can renounce jurisdiction by the ICJ by simply sending a telegram; therefore, we should not reveal that this course of action is under consideration. All agreed that no approach should be made to the ICJ until 24 hours after the Security Council resolution, to avoid providing an excuse for Iran to delay on the grounds that the matter was under consideration by the Court.⁶

2. *AWACS Deployment*. A possible base has been identified at an isolated location in Egypt in the Eastern Desert. Two AWACS aircraft can fly non-stop from Oklahoma to Egypt. Refueling aircraft would be required from the Azores, four KC-135 tanker aircraft would have to be positioned at the Egyptian field, and support equipment would have to be brought in via 26 C-141 flights or 10 C-5 flights or a mixture of the two.⁷ The Secretary of State believes strongly that such a large movement would become known and could endanger the hostages in this period before Ashura. He felt that even approaching the Saudis concerning overflight rights or to get their reactions could be dangerous at this moment. Nevertheless, the JCS felt that we should take whatever steps are possible to expedite deployment of the AWACS in the event they should be needed. The clearance process and filing of flight plans

⁶ Carter underlined "prepared" and wrote "ok" in the margin next to the first sentence of this item, then wrote "Get my approval first" next to his approval of the item.

⁷ Carter underlined the phrase "via 26 C-141 flights or 10 C-5 flights" and wrote in the margin: "This seems ridiculous."

virtually insure that the movement will become public, and it requires some time to complete. It is doubtful that the planes could arrive before December 1 in any event. Building up a base capability in Egypt without the AWACS could be seen as more menacing than the AWACS itself. JCS will examine our options for review at the meeting tomorrow. (TS)

3. *Congressional*. Since a Congressional resolution on Iran is probably inevitable, the SCC agreed that we should attempt to get a resolution as favorable as possible. State and the White House will follow through. It was also agreed that a stronger position of opposition to the Hansen mission⁸ should be made public since he played into their hands and diverted attention from the basic issue. This could provide the basis for another round of criticism of the way our hostages are being treated. (C)

4. *Longer-Term Options*. Dr. Brzezinski reported that the CIA finding had been approved⁹ and they can proceed with propaganda and other actions provided for in the finding. The DCI will use its report to the President on additional options, which is due November 28, to explore longer-range alternatives. This will be considered at the SCC on Wednesday.¹⁰ (S)

⁸ Carter wrote "ok" in the margin next to this paragraph. Representative George Hansen (R-ID) traveled to Iran in late November, met with some of the hostages, later stating they were being treated well. The administration publicly rebuked his proposal for a congressional inquiry into the Shah's rule. (Edward Walsh, "President, Hill Rebuke Hansen for Iran Mission," *Washington Post*, November 27, 1979, p. A1) In his debriefing, Hansen argued that his mission was "a reasonable and responsible initiative," that he held the "strong view" that the students holding the hostages were not amenable to instructions from Khomeini, and that the students might release the hostages if Hansen's idea of congressional hearings into the Shah's misuse of U.S. resources was pursued. He also met with 19 hostages. (Memorandum from Atwood to Christopher, November 30; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800010–1202)

⁹ See the attachment to Document 54.

¹⁰ November 28. See Document 67.

60. **Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter**¹

Washington, November 26, 1979

1. *Meeting with Families of Embassy Tehran Hostages*—I met with about forty family members of Embassy Tehran hostages today in the Department. I assured them that the release and safety of their families is uppermost in our mind and that we will continue to work around the clock. I described in particular our current efforts at the United Nations to obtain their release.

Dave Newsom continued the session and spoke about our efforts to ensure regular visitation and proper care for the hostages. He also read a message to the families from Bruce Laingen praising the character and conduct of the hostages and urging patience and restraint. The tenor of the initial questions from the family members was disturbed and many were particularly forceful in criticizing the decision to admit the Shah. However, after they expressed their feelings and frustration, there was a general recognition of the need for patience and restraint aimed at securing the release of the hostages. The group decided to draft a public statement along these lines. They also indicated interest in having periodic meetings until the hostages are released, with the next one possibly scheduled following the December 2 Iranian referendum.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

4. *Iran*—Warren briefed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, more than 100 House Members, and Tip O'Neill today on the situation in Iran.² A good deal of interest in the activities of George Hansen was evidenced. Warren characterized them as unhelpful, and explained that promises of Congressional hearings on the Shah before the hostages are released undercut our efforts. Frank Church and Clem Zablocki both issued statements after the meetings to the effect that hearings would be considered only after release of the hostages.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14. Secret. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² See footnote 8, Document 59.

Deep concern was again expressed in the Foreign Relations Committee over the Soviet role. Jack Javits urged that we be in touch with the Soviets at the highest levels with respect to the situation. Questioning also centered on the Mecca incident and its impact on the internal situation in Saudi Arabia and on the US posture in the Islamic world. George Ball's interview yesterday inspired a number of inquiries on Henry Kissinger's advice.³ Several Members pressed for details on the decision to let the Shah in the country, and Warren outlined in some detail the humanitarian considerations upon which our decision was based. Members also wanted to know why it took so long for the Pakistani army to come to our assistance.⁴ Warren indicated that it was a matter of concern that we are studying, but pointed out that moving armies is frequently a time-consuming process.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis]

³ On NBC's "Meet the Press" on November 25, Ball stated that the Shah might not have been admitted to the United States were it not for the "enormously obnoxious" pressure exerted by Henry Kissinger. ("Report Kissinger Tells Shah to Stay, *Chicago Tribune*, November 26, 1979, p. 2) Carter wrote in the left margin of this memorandum: "The press reported that you met to 'soothe an angry Kissinger.'" The *Washington Post* reported that Vance met with Kissinger at the State Department on November 26 to "soothe" Kissinger. (Robert G. Kaiser, "Vance Briefing Aimed at Soothing Angry Kissinger," *Washington Post*, November 27, 1979, p. A6)

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 56.

61. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 27, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran: What Next?

I enclose today's SCC minutes.² As you will see from them, we appear to make useful current decisions, but it is extremely difficult to get the group to focus on any strategic goals or steps. I again tried to push the participants to reflect on the needed steps if our current "litigational" approaches fail. I asked, what will we do if the Security Council's resolution is defied? What will we do if the World Court's ruling is also defied? There simply was no predisposition to answer these questions.

As a result, we are locking ourselves into a litigational approach, which is fine if our strategy is to transform the crisis into a prolonged malaise. But we need to ask more directly whether that is what we want. More specifically, Iran poses for us three interrelated dilemmas:

1. How to get the hostages out;
2. How to get rid of Khomeini—or, in other words, how to save Iran for the West;
3. How to get on with the Moslem world.

What are the implications of the above and what are some of the contradictions between them?

Patience and Litigation

The easiest way might seem to be by peaceful means. We are trying that now. But it may not succeed. In the meantime, however, we might lock ourselves into a pattern which increasingly excludes the use of force. I can see us sliding already into the usual litigational mode to which there is no end and from which there is no easy extrication (because a peaceful solution is always around the corner). Meanwhile, our domestic support will gradually fragment—with some howling for military action and others engaging in a do-it-yourself diplomacy. Our international support is also likely to be dissipated in the context

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #211 held 11/27/79. Top Secret. Carter initialed the memorandum in the upper right corner.

² Attached but not printed. For Carter's handwritten comments on the SCC Summary of Conclusions, see Document 62.

of prolonged litigation, with more and more states focusing not only on the hostage issue but increasingly on Iran's alleged grievances.

If, in the end, we do get our hostages back through accommodation, we still run the risk of jeopardizing our electoral chances if the public perceives us as having been intimidated in some fashion. From every public contact I have had, I sense a strong desire for U.S. honor to be reasserted and for American power to be demonstrated. Moreover, the Moslem world, and especially those Moslem states most dependent on us, will become increasingly convinced that the United States can be coerced. This will make our friends more insecure and our enemies more assertive, and thus it will also jeopardize goal #3 (a respectable relationship with the Arab world).

A punitive post-release strike, in my judgment, will not correct the above deficiency. It will be seen by much of the world as a petulant and perhaps even cowardly act, and it would almost certainly precipitate an explosion in the rest of the Moslem world. (In this connection, it is useful to remember that Shi'as number 55% of the population of Iraq, 51% of Jordan, 55% of Bahrain, 51% of Oman, 25% of Turkey, and about 18% of Pakistan.)

The only acceptable outcome of the peaceful route would be some formula along the lines that we discussed at Camp David:³ release of our people concurrently with a UN discussion of Iran's other grievances, perhaps also accompanied by the Shah's voluntary departure. We could follow that by severance of all diplomatic and economic relations with Iran. We could then also quietly pursue objective #2 (getting rid of Khomeini), though he would be fortified in the meantime by what in Tehran will appear to have been a successful humiliation of the U.S. All in all, this particular outcome—if accomplished without humiliating conditions—still remains the least risky and the best possible one, all things considered.

The Risky Alternative

The other alternative is to increase pressure on Iran and on the international community, once we have had recourse to all the peaceful options. The best means to do so would be to blockade Iranian ports while announcing:

1. They will stay closed until our people have been released;
2. That massive and instant retaliation will follow any harm to any one of the hostages.

The above will involve a high-risk strategy. It could result in the forfeiture of the lives of the hostages. Nonetheless, such an action

³ See Document 51.

would be understandable to much of the international community, especially if the UN/International Court options were exhausted. I suspect that it would also prompt a less hostile reaction from the Arab world than a punitive post-release strike, since Moslems generally respect firm action based on clear legal/moral principle.

Such an action could also contribute to Khomeini's eventual fall. If he were to back down and release our hostages, he will have been humiliated. If he did not, the cumulative effects of the blockade as well as the punitive strike would encourage Iranian internal opposition, especially if we were to couple such action with more direct appeals to Iranians to overthrow his regime. Many Iranians are concerned that Khomeini is jeopardizing their chances to enter the 20th century as an independent and viable nation.

Finally, I believe that this course of action, though inevitably risky, would be politically more appealing. The public senses that our position is 100% correct on grounds of principle and that a strong reaction is justified. It would support it.

To conclude, I see us facing three possible outcomes:

1. A positive solution by peaceful means. If accomplished without too much humiliation, it is the best course of action, especially if followed by political/economic sanctions against Iran. We should know in a week if we can get it.⁴

2. Endless litigation, transforming the crisis into a prolonged malaise. This seems to me to be the worst outcome possible, for reasons already outlined.

3. The application of military pressure, which involves very high risks but which historically and politically is a preferable course to #2 above. Moreover, the paradox of the situation is that increasingly evident willingness to use military pressure may actually hasten a peaceful outcome, because it is likely to generate greater worldwide desire for a rapid termination of the crisis.

⁴ An unknown hand, presumably Carter's, underlined "in a week."

62. Editorial Note

In the Summary of Conclusions of the November 27, 1979, Special Coordination Committee (SCC) meeting (see footnote 2, Document 61), Item 3 under Political-Military Issues reads: "Dr. Brzezinski raised the question of whether we were getting ourselves locked into a pattern where our freedom of action was being chipped away while world support eroded for our position. All agreed that this was an important issue and that our overall strategy would be discussed at the meeting tomorrow." At the bottom of the page, Carter wrote:

"My present belief is that we should:

"a) Get strong condemnation from UNSC

"b) Get the Shah out of the country directly after Ashura (Sat or Sun) [December 1 and 2]

"c) Call publicly for embargo of *all* shipments of goods to Iran until hostages are released

"d) Seek Article 7 sanctions against Iran

"e) Follow up with mining of Persian Gulf ports; with statement that strong punishment will be inflicted if hostages are harmed.

"f) Be prepared to destroy refinery if any hostages are harmed."

Carter then added a note at the top of the first page of the Summary of Conclusions: "Zbig—Discuss my comments only in small group." (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Geographic File, Box 17) "Small group" is a reference to Aaron's interagency group.

The following day, November 28, Carter handwrote a note to Brzezinski that reads: "Zbig—In addition, of course, to specific steps outlined in yesterday's SCC minutes, we should do everything we can covertly to restrict Iran's credit & reduce all foreign commerce with Iran." (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10)

63. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 27, 1979, 2–2:20 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Secretary Cyrus Vance
 Secretary Harold Brown
 Admiral Stansfield Turner
 Zbigniew Brzezinski

After a review of the urgent cables from the British Embassy in Tehran, to the effect that our hostages might be dispersed,² it was decided:

1. Security Council session to go ahead at 3:00 PM as planned. The proposed statement to be approved this PM. The session to be resumed Saturday night after Bani Sadr arrives.³

2. We are to seek confirmation from our own sources as to whether our people have been moved to other locales in Tehran. ZB requested Vance to seek confirmation from the Iranians that all of our hostages are still alive.

3. The group approved a message from Vance to Bani Sadr requesting that all hostages be kept together and not dispersed because that heightens the danger to them.⁴

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House. At the top of the page, Carter wrote: "Zbig, J." Brzezinski initialed beneath the note.

² Telegrams 1242 and 1243 from the British Embassy in Tehran to the FCO, repeated to Washington, November 27. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/21/79–11/27/79)

³ See Document 66. The statement made by McHenry to the press following the Security Council meeting on November 27 is in Department of State *Bulletin*, January 1980, pp. 49–50.

⁴ The CIA found inconclusive evidence to confirm whether the hostages had been removed from the Embassy. (NFAC Spot Commentary, November 27; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/21/79–11/27/79) Vance's message to Bani-Sadr, transmitted in telegram 306448 to Bonn, November 27, asked for clarification of the reports and noted that "grave consequences" could result if the reports were accurate. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran Cables & Memos 11–12/79) Bani-Sadr told Ambassadors of the EC-9 in Tehran that he was trying to obtain a guarantee from Khomeini that there would be no trial and that he believed the hostages were still in the Embassy compound. (Telegram 1257 from the British Embassy in Tehran to Washington, November 28; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Nov 1979)

The group agreed that it would be dangerous for the Shah to leave the United States before this coming Monday AM.⁵

⁵ Carter drew an arrow pointing to the last sentence and wrote: “Earlier, if possible—He should leave as soon as possible after they cease whipping themselves. J”

64. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (McMahon)¹

Washington, November 27, 1979

SUBJECT

Documentation Support

1. Bill Bowdler brought over the attached messages from the Canadians.² These should be held very closely. They indicate that the agricultural attaché who used to be under Swedish protection is now under Canadian protection in Tehran.³ Bowdler would like us to look at quickly developing documentation for all six Americans under Canadian tutelage.

2. On the one hand, we can work U.S. passports with nonofficial associations. On the other, we can try foreign passports if we could find enough data to tell what cover these individuals might utilize. If you need help on this, only David Mark and Bill Bowdler are privy in INR.

Stansfield Turner⁴

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 5: DCI Turner—Eyes Only—Various Subjects. Secret; Sensitive. At the bottom of the memorandum, an unknown hand wrote: “Orig. hand carried to DDO in blue bag.”

² Attached but not printed.

³ In telegram 4982 from Stockholm, November 29, the Embassy reported similar information. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Nov 1979)

⁴ Printed from a copy with this typed signature.

65. **Memorandum From Paul Henze of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)**¹

Washington, November 27, 1979

SUBJECT

The U.S. and the Islamic World (U)

It disturbs me that the net result of our response to critical events in Iran and elsewhere in the Muslim world contributes exactly to *what our enemies most want to see*: we isolate ourselves from Muslims, mutual suspicions grow and permanent alienation sets in. Thus we will find it harder and harder to communicate with Muslims—because we reduce our opportunities for communicating. *If we do not stem this process, the Carter Administration will have left its successors a legacy that will require many years to eliminate.* (U)

Steps to protect Americans in Muslim countries from imminent attack by evacuating dependents and reducing staffs are probably unavoidable in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves, but I sense that we may be on the edge of a form of *bureaucratic panic*. The more we reduce presence in such countries, the less opportunity we have for communication with their governments and peoples on any level and the more opportunities there will be for suspicions and misunderstandings to grow. *Rather than demonstrating to the world that we break and run when under pressure*, we would serve our own interests better if we displayed a *stubborn insistence on staying in place*, asserting ourselves and *being ready to fight* (let the Marines shoot!) to defend our installations and our principles when challenged. (C)

Eleven hundred Marines to protect more than 150 diplomatic installations around the world is too few. *We need to double that number*. We still possess the most *advanced technology* in the world—we should announce a *new program to apply it to defense of our diplomatic establishments abroad*. Our information efforts are already too weak in most of these countries; our exchange efforts are oriented too much toward listening to others and too little toward telling our own story. The naive idealistic thrust of these programs which has become enshrined as a set of sacred principles in recent years should be reversed. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 11/78–11/79. Confidential. Sent for information. Copies were sent to Sick, Hunter, Bremont, Larrabee, Ermarth, Odom, Thornton, Funk, Gregg, and Griffith.

We are well on our way to being cast as anti-Islamic, anti-nationalist and “imperialist” in most of the Muslim world. Local demagogues find such tactics expedient, and their appetites are whetted every time we look weak. The Soviets cannot resist exploiting these opportunities. We deceive only ourselves if we take soothing words Dobrynin may utter to Marshall Shulman as evidence of real Soviet concern for our welfare in these countries. If we apply the “but-there-is-no-evidence” principle to judging what the Soviets may be doing to undermine us among Muslims and avoid looking for it, we delude only ourselves. We might serve our national purposes better if we reverted to some of the healthy suspicion that characterized our reaction to events such as the North Korean invasion of the South in 1950. (C)

The Soviets, who have been viciously oppressing Islam in their own territories for 60 years, aim to emerge from the present commotion in the Middle East with an enhanced image as protectors of Islamic nationalism. They will have to resort to some extraordinary acrobatics to get this point across in Afghanistan—but what has been happening in Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia has pushed Afghanistan far into the background. We can challenge Soviet misrepresentations and expose their own record successfully only if we equip ourselves with the means to do so. (U)

There is nothing irretrievable about our present predicament in the Islamic world. We survived commotion which was at least as severe in 1967 and again in 1973.² But our net image as a nation which defends its interests and protects those associated with it was a bit brighter then than it is now; and the Soviet effort to denigrate us was not so highly developed. We have neglected our defenses too long in this part of the world, and have slipped into a habit of defensiveness. We have become too apologetic about our own interests. This makes it difficult for our friends—who still outnumber our enemies in the Islamic world—to take any kind of action in our behalf. (U)

Bluster, military threats with little obvious rationale or substance behind them, retaliatory schemes contrary to our traditions, and punitive measures against minor or defenseless groups do us no credit as a great power. They will not help us achieve our goals in this important region of the world. Quite the opposite. (U)

In our approach to the Islamic World we need:

- to display a determination to stick it out and assert ourselves,
- to maintain embassies, cultural centers and other facilities and let everyone know they are going to be strongly defended,

² The 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

- to discourage unofficial Americans, businessmen, and others from packing up and running,
 - to accuse the Soviets of what we know—or suspect—they are doing, and expose their tawdry record toward Islam,
 - to get our story across in every way possible—by increasing outlets and expanding resources,
 - by showing the kind of determination and strength that will enable our friends to help us assert ourselves. (U)
-

66. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, November 27, 1979

1. *UN Security Council Meeting on Iranian Situation*: After consultations throughout the day which resulted in an agreed scenario,² the UN Security Council met this afternoon to hear statements by Secretary General Waldheim and the President of the Council (Palacios of Bolivia). Characterizing the conflict between Iran and the US as a grave threat to international peace and security, Waldheim said the US was deeply concerned with the seizure of the Embassy and the detention of diplomatic personnel “in violation of relevant international conventions.” He noted that Iran seeks the redress of perceived injustices and abuses of human rights by the previous regime. Waldheim said it would not be appropriate for him to make detailed proposals at this time, but that he was certain the parties want to see an end to the present situation. He appealed for maximum restraint and avoidance of any actions which could “further inflame the situation.”

The Council President then read an agreed statement in which he noted Waldheim’s letter of November 25 calling for an urgent Council

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14. Secret. Carter wrote “Cy, J” in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² A draft of the agreed-upon scenario contained the following five points: (1) that deliberations before the Security Council would begin November 27; (2) that simultaneously all U.S. personnel would be permitted to leave; (3) that the Secretary-General would establish an international commission to investigate allegations of human rights violations in Iran; (4) that the United States would recognize the rights of the Iranian Government to assert in U.S. courts its claims to assets frozen by the United States; and (5) that both Iran and the United States agree to abide by international diplomatic norms. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/17/79–11/20/79)

meeting and the Iranian statement of November 27 asking for a delay in formal deliberations because of Iran's holy days. He also read his statement of November 9 urging the release of the hostages and reiterated that appeal "in view of the serious threat to international peace and security." Stating that the Council would continue its efforts to find a peaceful solution, he adjourned the session without further statements until Saturday evening, December 1.

The response from Iran has been mixed. Bani Sadr has sent an official letter to Waldheim saying he will appear before the Security Council on Saturday evening. Khomeini meanwhile has begun strong attacks on the UN as a creature of the USG.³

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

6. *Shah's Health*: The senior attending physician for the Shah informed us today that the radiation treatments for the Shah's neck glands have been completed and that a non-surgical procedure to extract the gallstone was undertaken last night. Because the stone was too large to be extracted whole, the doctors attempted to break it up and remove it in pieces until excessive bleeding occurred. The extraction procedure may have to be repeated if large stone fragments remain. If additional extractions are not necessary, and there are no further complications, Dr. Kean believes the Shah may be able to travel "within a week."⁴

³ The Security Council held five meetings from November 27 to December 4. For a summary of the proceedings and communications, see *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1979*, pp. 308–309.

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "He should leave as soon as possible after Friday [November 30]. J."

67. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 28, 1979, 9–10:20 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher**
David Newsom**
Harold Saunders**

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Claytor**

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay**

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci**

Justice

Attorney General Benj. Civiletti**

Treasury

Robert Carswell**

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

Lloyd Cutler**
Charles Kirbo

NSC

Colonel William Odom**
Gary Sick

** Present only for first part of meeting.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *President's Views.* Dr. Brzezinski reported on the President's decisions from the previous day's meeting.² He supports the idea of Senator Mathias' proposal of a mail campaign. Jody Powell said that was being implemented. The President did not endorse the New York takeover of Iranian agencies; he agreed that demonstrations should proceed so long as Lafayette Park, the Ellipse and the Capitol were not involved. He agreed that we should maintain our position on payment of Iranian students. (C)

2. *Iranian Assets.* Litigation is picking up. In particular, we anticipate a major judicial challenge in London about the NIOC account of \$3

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #212 held 11/28/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" in the upper right corner.

² See Document 62.

billion held by the Bank of America. Treasury and Justice are taking steps to get counsel there, and Secretary Miller will be in London today for talks. A ruling could be produced within a few weeks. The Japanese are not being helpful on financial matters. They will be contacted with a more direct appeal for cooperation. (S)

3. *Iranian Credit*. State, Treasury and CIA will present options for the meeting tomorrow in response to the President's suggestion that we step up efforts to restrict Iranian credit access. (S)

4. *Immigration*. 20,000 students have been interviewed and the Attorney General believes that it is time for a high-level note of congratulations to the INS. A draft will be prepared. Guidelines for exemption in cases of humanitarian concern will be required by next week to prevent deportation of minority groups and other individuals put into jeopardy. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *International Court of Justice*. In view of the postponement of the Security Council session until this weekend, the Secretary of State recommended and the SCC agreed that it would be desirable to proceed simultaneously with our suit in the ICJ,³ subject to further discussion with the President later today. The Attorney General registered concern about the timing of an approach to the ICJ, that it might introduce an element of confusion into our various approaches, and that it could give rise to counter-claims and charges of intelligence activity. Secretary Vance said that those claims are going to be put forward this weekend in any event. (I feel you should know that this step will lock you into up to three weeks of litigation, making other alternatives more difficult.) (S)

The SCC then went into *restricted session* with only those principals who had been present at Camp David for a discussion of our overall strategy.⁴

Public Posture on Hostages. Before beginning the principal topic, Secretary Vance noted that the report of hostages being moved out of the embassy to other locations⁵ was probably going to leak soon since it was known in at least four capitals and rather widely in Washington. He proposed that we be prepared to respond quickly with a statement

³ Carter underlined "to proceed simultaneously with our suit in the ICJ," then wrote "ok" in the left margin. On November 29, the United States filed a case with the ICJ against Iran for violation of the principles of international law, for supporting the actions of those holding the hostages, and for "threatening to subject the hostages to trial." The application and the Court's response of November 30 are in Department of State *Bulletin*, January 1980, pp. 37–41.

⁴ See Document 51.

⁵ See Document 63.

which would say that we had heard this rumor, that we are checking it out, but that we cannot confirm its accuracy. We should also be prepared to state that we have sent a *démarche* to the Iranian authorities on this issue, and we may wish to background on the possible implications of this act in order to structure the speculation in the press. On one hand, it means less centralized control. On the other, it may fit together with information about mining the embassy walls, etc., as evidence that this is a measure to protect the hostages. State is preparing a statement which will make these points and reiterate that we hold the authorities in Tehran accountable for the safety of the hostages. (C)

Next Steps: (All of the following is Top Secret)

Dr. Brzezinski opened the discussion by noting that we may be facing a situation where Iran will continue to defy all of our diplomatic and international moves while gradually undercutting international and domestic U.S. support by focusing on U.S. intelligence activities. In the meantime, we will have locked ourselves into a litigation strategy which ties our hands. The President had asked the group to think about the following options, to reflect on them, refine them and discuss them with him later:

1. Seek strong condemnation of Iran in the Security Council;
2. Have the Shah leave the country this weekend. There is concern that Khomeini may at some point commit himself to trials if the Shah is permitted to leave the country;
3. Call publicly for the embargo of *all* shipments to Iran until the hostages are released, and ask other nations to support us in this;
4. Seek sanctions against Iran under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter;
5. Mine Iranian ports and issue a statement that strong punishment will be inflicted on Iran if any of the hostages are harmed; adding that the mining will be lifted immediately once they are released;
6. Taking of stronger reactions which have been planned in the event the hostages are harmed.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if we should not escalate the situation in a measured way as a means of bringing other nations into support for us rather than let the crisis subside into a condition of normalcy.

Hamilton Jordan observed that it was not only the President's political situation that was at stake but also U.S. national interests. He was surprised that the situation had not turned sour already, but he did not see how the country could go on for two or three months this way.

Secretary Vance agreed but noted that the question is what can be done to change the situation in an effective way without making it worse.

Hamilton Jordan said that once the Shah leaves, they will have to respond. With all that is going on, a lot might happen by next week.

We should not escalate until we have exhausted diplomatic remedies. Our interests will not be fully satisfied unless all the hostages are safely returned.

Secretary Vance observed that items 1–4 could be done without seriously threatening the hostages. The break point comes at mining.

Dr. Brzezinski and *Secretary Brown* said that the threat of mining could be used to get others to cooperate with us in bringing pressure on Iran.

Secretary Vance responded that, if that were done under Chapter 7 sanctions, that would be one thing. If not, it would be quite different. *Hamilton Jordan* added that the Soviets could veto sanctions, and that would mean the end of SALT II.

Each participant was then asked for his views.

Secretary Brown said the key was whether or not the hostages were directly threatened. If so, we should be ready to carry out severe actions. He agreed that a decision to mine would put the hostages under more serious danger. There was a 50–50 chance that some might be killed in response. The question is how long we can wait. Over time the chances of harm coming to the hostages increases and our ability to act declines. Items 1–3 could be done quickly.

Secretary Vance said it will take at least a month to exhaust available diplomatic remedies. He did not believe we would get the support even of many of our close allies on a blockade, noting that not one country was willing to join us in 1967 opening of the Strait of Tiran.⁶

General Jones said that the key was to keep world opinion and the Moslem world with us. Strong action could work either way depending on whether it was perceived as justified or not. He noted that his French counterpart recommended against the use of force as counterproductive in this situation. The French would probably not join with us in an economic embargo. If we mine harbors and some hostages are killed, we may be seen as guilty. We might consider mining only imports to start.⁷

Secretary Vance said that before mining we should get virtually all Americans out of the Moslem world.

Admiral Turner said the U.S. position was eroding, noting the events in Mecca and Pakistan. Those in Tehran are as convinced as we are that their position is righteous. If we get ahead of Khomeini, we risk

⁶ Egypt imposed a naval blockade on the Strait of Tiran on May 22, 1967, blocking all Israeli shipping through the Red Sea. President Lyndon Johnson tried unsuccessfully to get the Strait reopened.

⁷ Carter underlined “only imports” and wrote a question mark in the margin.

losing world opinion, yet we must stand up at some point. He had no answer as to when.

Jody Powell agreed with Harold Brown that the danger to our people increased over time, and our position at home is eroding. Time works against us and appears to work for Khomeini. He favored taking some action to reverse this situation. However, such action would not only put our people in danger but it was unlikely Khomeini would respond positively in the near future. We should know what we intend to do if any of the hostages are harmed. A rescue operation—even if unlikely to succeed—might be desirable. We should not go after Chapter 7 sanctions unless we think there is a good chance we will succeed. A Soviet veto would be undesirable.

Hamilton Jordan agreed, noting that other things we might do could also damage SALT.

Mr. Kirbo said that as long as we know our people are safe, the public will stay with us.⁸ If they pull people out of the compound, there will be rumors that they are being killed one at a time. We should not take drastic actions as long as we are fairly sure they are there. If that vanishes, it becomes very difficult. He was unsure about the Soviets. Cutting off supplies might do the job, but if the Iranians kill someone, we must kill someone. Khomeini was the only one he wanted to hit.

Dr. Brzezinski summarized the following points of agreement:

1. Any such act (mining or military) increases the danger to the hostages.
2. If any hostages are killed, we should react forcibly. Mining was not enough. (Our act should be precise, not indiscriminate.)
3. We should exhaust all diplomatic recourse.
4. We should take the first four steps now.

Secretary Vance agreed we should do points 1 and 2 on the President's list, but felt that we should not ask other countries for embargo until all diplomatic recourse has been exhausted. That will take three weeks to a month.

Secretary Brown said we should not wait for one thing: we should insist immediately—perhaps in the press conference tonight⁹—that there be daily visits to the hostages by neutral observers.

⁸ Carter underlined most of this sentence and made a checkmark in the margin

⁹ Carter held a press conference on November 28 at 9 p.m. in the East Room at the White House to address the situation in Iran. For the full text, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pp. 2167–2174.

Mr. Kirbo said he had heard nothing we could do to defend our honor without bad results and possibly getting us mired down over the long run.

Secretary Vance agreed.

Hamilton Jordan said that the hostages could continue to be held indefinitely while we do nothing.

Dr. Brzezinski added that in the meantime we can expect trials, intelligence documents and a shift of attention to U.S. illicit activities.

Secretary Vance said that he considered mining would produce harm to the hostages and he would not advise it as long as they are safe—even if trials begin. He did not interpret “interrupting commerce” as meaning mining necessarily. It could also be an embargo.

Dr. Brzezinski argued that without physical interruption, others would not join in.

Secretary Vance believed that the Security Council session would go on for a week or so and that negotiations would accompany it while Bani-Sadr was in New York. This might result in some new movement. He would like to have our case before the ICJ before Bani-Sadr presents his case in New York. *Hamilton Jordan* agreed.

Secretary Vance added that a threat of mining or military force could have exactly the opposite effect desired, i.e., it could turn many of our friends against us. He preferred a peaceful blockade to mining.

Secretary Brown argued that a blockade forced us to take the last act of sinking a ship whereas mining placed the burden on the ship that entered the mined waters.¹⁰ Mining was more passive than a blockade.

Secretary Vance reported that the Shah is unlikely to be able to travel before about one week.

All agreed that the discussion had been useful and would provide the basis for a discussion with the President.

¹⁰ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “I agree.”

68. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to President Carter

Washington, November 28, 1979

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 73, Presidential Advisory File, Middle East Box 6 11/79–2/80. Secret; Sensitive. 5 pages not declassified.]

69. Briefing Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Cooper) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, November 28, 1979

Iran; Proposals for Tightening the
Financial Noose; Thursday's SCC Meeting

The SCC will discuss ten options for broadening and toughening our financial actions against Iran. A brief evaluation of each of these proposals is attached at Tab A.²

The meeting will probably focus on the fourth, fifth and sixth options, which Bob Carswell and Tony Solomon believe would be most effective in increasing the pressure on the Iranians. These three options are basically a more detailed restatement of option 2, which would in effect extend the freeze to other major countries. The impact of these would ultimately be something like a *de facto* embargo on export to Iran from all major countries.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Cooper and Milam. Cleared by Precht.

² Tab A was not attached but is in Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Iran Update Nov 1979. For the options, see the attachment to Document 70. The Department of the Treasury informed a November 28 interagency meeting that it would back Options 4, 5, and 6 as putting the most pressure on Iran. As related by Ernst of the Office of Economic Research, CIA, these three options required the "active support" of the central banks of major allies and such support was "extremely unlikely at the present time." Ernst continued: "We do not believe that the ayatollah would change his position because of these measures which in any event would be viewed as extensions of US aggression." The options, however, would disrupt Iranian international trade and finance. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 11: C–372 Iran)

A cost benefit calculation for these options is not very favorable. As posed, the financial options involved considerable long-run costs to the international economic system and to individual countries. Achieving them will therefore impose great strain on the willingness of our allies to cooperate along these lines.

At the same time, we doubt they will be immediately understood by Iranian leaders except insofar as they represent a demonstration of solidarity among the key industrial countries.

The eventual impact of such actions will not be immediately apparent to those unversed in finance, and their full effects on Iranian trade will not appear for several months. The disruption will mainly affect urban dwellers, who are dependent on foreign foodstuffs and on foreign inputs for industrial and commercial activity.

There are other ways, and probably more effective ways in terms of their immediate impact on Iranian leaders, to demonstrate solidarity of other countries with the U.S. One would be a drastic coordinated reduction in the size of embassies in Tehran. Even stronger collective action would be a Chapter 7 embargo in the United Nations, on the grounds that the Iranian behavior represents a threat to the peace. Chapter 7 action would be a striking demonstration of global solidarity, it would put much more economic and political pressure on Iran, and at the same time, by virtue of being a sanctioned collective action, it would sharply limit both the perceived and actual damage to the international economic system over the longer run.

None of these actions, including financial options through six, will be easy to achieve. Tentative contacts suggest it will not be possible to engage the cooperation of financial officials alone on the financial measures suggested. Therefore, a high level and perhaps a high pressure political approach, will be required.

Our approach at the SCC meeting should be to clearly distinguish between our objective—to secure the hostages' release—and the many possible means to attain that objective. If it is decided that one of the means to this end is a demonstration of Western solidarity, then we should search for actions that will be most effective on the Iranian leaders and followers.

To the extent that the other financial options are seriously discussed, our approach should be the same. Several of the remaining options would have only a marginal impact on events (3a, 7, 8, 9). Options 3b and 10 would be regarded as a disguised political act. More generally, they would not impress the Iranian leaders and would require an unprecedented degree of cooperation from foreign central and private banks in taking hostile action against a customer. They would be impossible to enforce and, for the private banks, easy to evade.

In political terms, it is doubtful in the current mood that these economic measures would do anything but stiffen the backs of the Iranians. Our move to block assets on November 14 drew a swift reply from Khomeini, who regarded the freeze as an act of economic warfare. The announcement by Bani-Sadr that Iran would repudiate its debts was mainly triggered by the President's decision.³ By taking these actions at this time, we would reduce rather than strengthen or expand our influence with Khomeini and those Revolutionary Council members who count. There is also a question of timeliness since the actions could not be expected to produce *any* strong effects for three to four weeks, and the principal results will not come for months afterward, regardless of the outcome of the present situation.

³ See Document 30.

70. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, November 29, 1979, 8:45–9:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

Richard Cooper**

Harold Saunders

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

Treasury

Robert Carswell**

Anthony Solomon**

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Lloyd Cutler**

Stuart Eizenstat**

Charles Kirbo

NSC

William Odom

Gary Sick

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #213 held 11/29/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

Justice
Attorney General Benj. Civiletti**
John Shenefield**

** Present only for discussion of domestic issues.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Update.* The Secretary General plans to continue with the scheduled Security Council meeting on Saturday² night whether or not the Foreign Minister comes from Iran. The U.S. filed its case with the International Court of Justice this morning and we anticipate that the ICJ will meet next week. We have two low level reports that indicate the Soviets will not interfere if we should intervene in Iran. This appears to be a signal and is quite unexpected. (S)

2. *Economic Actions.* Treasury presented a paper outlining options available to us to increase the financial squeeze on Iran (attached). Option 4 would be felt immediately upon adoption by foreign central banks and would have a significant impact. Options 5 and 6 would not have any noticeable impact for months. There will be considerable resistance from the British and others to option 4, and it will be necessary to twist their arms rather hard to insure their cooperation.³ Our best argument will be that this action is preferable to the more severe military actions necessary to pressure Iran, which would damage allied interests in Iran far more. All agreed it would not be desirable to approach the allies on this issue until we are ready to make a strong case at the highest level. That point is most likely to occur after Iran has rejected a Security Council resolution. State and Treasury will prepare Presidential messages to be available by Saturday for consideration and decision by the President. In the meantime, Secretary Vance believes strongly that we should take no additional actions toward Iran until after Ashura and the meeting of the Security Council.⁴ (S)

3. *Iranian Assets.* A number of court cases are building up, especially in London, challenging the legality of the freeze of Iranian assets in foreign branches of U.S. banks. The principal case, involving the Bank of America, will probably be heard in London next week. We are likely

² December 1.

³ In the left margin next to the first three sentences, Carter wrote: "Take the maximum possible positions."

⁴ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and wrote in the left margin: "Be ready to move on Art 7 and calls for sanctions by individual nations."

to lose the judgment, although appeals can stretch the process out for several additional weeks. This fact is an additional argument for going ahead with Option 4 in the relatively near future, to avoid the impression that our position is unravelling. (S)

4. *Student Remittances.* Licenses have been issued for \$20 million in payments to Iranian students. Another \$20 million will be licensed next week. The program is about \$1 billion per year. All of this is new money being brought in for that specific purpose, consonant with the previous decision to license student remittances. (C)

5. *Japan.* Mr. Carswell will talk to the Japanese at a high level today and will make clear our displeasure at their lack of cooperativeness on financial matters regarding Iran. (C)

6. *U.S. Payments.* The SCC agreed that Treasury should issue licenses for about \$100 million in new Iranian money to pay U.S. creditors for exports shipped before the freeze went into effect.⁵ (C)

7. *Transfers out of Dollar Accounts.* Iran has offered to pay interest on a loan for which Chemical Bank is the agent, if it is licensed to be paid in Switzerland in other than dollars. The amount of this payment is about \$7 million. The SCC recommended that we insist on payment in this country in dollars as specified in the contract. We do not want to license moves away from the dollar, even though the company may not get its payment right away.⁶ (C)

8. *Immigration.* A total of 26,000 students have been interviewed; 20,650 are in status; 3,600 are technically out of status; 1,900 have been asked to provide additional information; 405 have chosen voluntary departure; 300 have requested asylum. There is some reluctance of many Iranians to choose asylum out of fear of retribution. An interpretation of INS regulations is being prepared which will specify the conditions for exception to deportation procedures in humanitarian cases.⁷ The legality of the original order will be tested in court next week; Justice feels that its legal position is good. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Hostages.* We will continue hammering away in every available public and private channel to get access by neutral observers to the hostages.⁸ (U)

⁵ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

⁶ Carter approved this item with a checkmark.

⁷ Carter underlined the word "exception" and wrote in the left margin: "We should be fairly strict."

⁸ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "We need to escalate P.R. It is not coming across at all."

2. *The Shah* now wants to leave and has asked us through intermediaries to make arrangements to go to Mexico. We approached the Mexicans at the Presidential level last night. Sunday is apparently the earliest date a transfer can be arranged, and more pressure on the Mexicans may be required. State is helping to arrange secure transport to the airport in New York. Secretary Vance took note of the President's concern that the move take place before Khomeini can lock himself into an ultimatum linking the treatment of the hostages to the Shah's departure. However, Secretary Vance does not believe the arrangements can be completed with the Mexicans before Sunday. (TS)

3. *Saudi Arabia*. Ambassador West is to see Crown Prince Fahd today to ask his views on the threat to Americans in Saudi Arabia. The SCC recognized that the possibility of a U.S. evacuation cannot be divorced from the larger question of U.S. strategic position in the region. Dr. Brzezinski noted that an evacuation could seriously destabilize the regime and undermine our strategic position in the entire region. It would be a signal to the Saudis that the U.S. is disengaging from the region—and that could have the gravest consequences for our vital interests.⁹ Accordingly, we should ask the Saudis to assure the security of our people (and *not* talk of evacuation), and we should even consider offering U.S. military assistance—including the 82nd Airborne if required—to insure the security of the Eastern Province, if the Saudis would welcome it. This question will be reviewed further after we hear Fahd's response. (TS)

4. *Reduction at U.S. Embassies*. Dr. Brzezinski raised the question of the impact of the reduction order, particularly in Oman which appeared to be quite secure. Secretary Vance said that he was not confident of the security of any of the smaller states in that area. It is only a handful of people being removed in any event, and he was inclined to let the order proceed despite a few squawks of protest. The President's meeting with American Moslem organizations next week will provide a useful forum to address the status of our relations with the Islamic states. (S)

5. *Espionage Charges*. We expect the Iranians to make a major case about U.S. espionage activities at the embassy in Tehran.¹⁰ In general, we would prefer to have that information come out in an international forum rather than in trials of our people. It is certain to be a major media event, and we will have to be carefully prepared in our responses. State and CIA are working on a strategy paper which will be ready

⁹ Carter wrote next to this sentence: "I agree." Regarding the U.S. concern about the safety of Americans in Saudi Arabia, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula, Documents 204 and 205.

¹⁰ See Document 58.

for tomorrow's meeting. The preliminary reactions of the SCC were to avoid any point-by-point defense of the charges, to claim that the information includes forgeries and suspect documents, and to avoid comment on specific allegations. (S)

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Department of the Treasury¹¹

Washington, November 28, 1979

ADDITIONAL OPTIONS FOR FINANCIAL MEASURES AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF IRAN

The following are a series of steps that could be taken in the financial area to interdict Iranian financial transactions. Options 4 through 9 (of which Options 4, 5 and 6 are potentially the most significant) could not be implemented without the wholehearted support of the government authorities of our key foreign allies. In our view, that support can only be obtained by forceful intervention at the political level to the effect that the assistance requested is necessary as part of the common defense of the Western alliance. In our view, the financial and central bank authorities will not act on their own because to act will cause difficulties and turmoil in their markets.

1. Continue the present policy of eliminating obstacles to setoff or attachment and maintaining neutrality as to whether defaults are declared and loans accelerated.

2. Encourage U.S. to declare defaults by Iran and vote for acceleration of their loans.

- We are currently somewhere between options 1 and 2 in our posture with the U.S. and other banks.

3. Have Eximbank publicly declare a default and accelerate its loans to Iran. [In addition, Eximbank could proceed to attach Iranian assets in a foreign jurisdiction.]

- This option would publicly reveal a U.S. decision on default and might be of some marginal assistance to U.S. banks and others in making setoffs or obtaining attachments.

¹¹ Secret. Brackets are in the original.

4. Request the key foreign central banks to advise their banks to proceed with calling defaults on Iranian loans and collecting by way of setoff or attachment.

- This option would have the effect of cascading defaults and loan accelerations. It would tie up all Iranian financial transactions for some period of time. It might be difficult legally for some of our allies.

5. Obtain agreement from the major purchasers of Iranian oil that they will only purchase, or facilitate the purchase of Iranian oil, through dollar contracts.

6. Obtain the agreement of our major allies to prohibit their banks from opening new non-dollar accounts for Iranian entities.

- Options 5 and 6 are complementary and over the longer run would serve to buttress the position of the dollar and the international monetary system.

7. Obtain agreement from foreign banks that they will not consent to Iranian requests to conceal the identity of any Iranian party involved in financial transactions.

8. Obtain agreement from foreign banks that they will not consent to any Iranian requests to modify existing transactions to eliminate any U.S. party.

9. Obtain agreement from foreign banks and other foreign parties that they will not consent to requests to delay completion of existing Iranian transactions.

10. Obtain agreement from our major allies that they would not guarantee any export obligations for Iran.

71. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, November 29, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran: Next Steps

Your press conference² has been enormously helpful in placing the issue in perspective, in reassuring the U.S. public, in dramatizing your personal leadership, and in keeping up front the central issue: the illegal detention of hostages.

In the meantime, we are proceeding with the UN Security Council debate and with the World Court case. What other steps ought we contemplate, in the event the Iranians are not accommodating? The table I gave you a week ago has a complete list of options,³ and I will not duplicate it here. However, I do want to outline a possible scenario, in the event that peaceful accommodation proves not to be possible. Khomeini's conduct suggests that he may not want any compromise or peaceful solution. Accordingly, you may wish to consider the following:

1. We obtain a positive Security Council vote—while refusing to debate Iranian charges as long as our hostages are detained. (Through the middle of next week—in progress.)

2. We press for a World Court ruling. (Anywhere up to about the third week of December—in progress.)

3. We go to our allies and ask them to join us in a financial and economic embargo of Iran—hinting to them that lack of support will leave us no option but to act militarily, a contingency they much fear. We should also consult with them at a high level, perhaps through a Presidential emissary.⁴

4. We request economic sanctions from the UN under Chapter 7.

5. You appear before the General Assembly to appeal for support in preserving international norms.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/28/79–12/4/79. Top Secret. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² See footnote 9, Document 67.

³ Not further identified.

⁴ The attachment on Giscard is relevant. [Footnote is in the original.] Not further identified. The Summary of Conclusions of the November 30 SCC meeting noted that "strongly worded letters from the President to the appropriate heads of state requesting their cooperation in calling Iranian defaults and other economic measures are being prepared." (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23)

6. We formally break relations, expel Iranian diplomats and demand the release of ours. (Immediately after 5 above, if rebuffed.)

7. We initiate some form of blockade of Iranian ports for as long as our people are detained and warn of more direct action if our hostages are hurt, or when our people are put on trial.

8. We have in readiness a series of military actions (not just one strike) if the Iranians respond to the blockade by harming our hostages selectively or sequentially, or if they harm them without our blockade.

9. In the meantime we reach an internal decision regarding future relations with Iran, including covert action.⁵

⁵ Brzezinski added by hand: “The above steps are basically familiar, but their sequence and timing needs to be determined.” Along the left margin on the first page of the memorandum, Carter wrote: “Pursue them all as options—”

72. Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Tarnoff) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, November 29, 1979

SUBJECT

Your Breakfast with the President Friday, November 30, 1979²

1. *The Shah's Departure*. As of this writing, we are considering how to react in light of Mexico's decision not to allow the Shah to return.³ Since Lopez-Portillo reportedly made the decision personally—probably on the advice of Foreign Minister Castenada who wants Mexico to play a larger role in the Third World—an appeal to Mexico is probably fruitless. The delay in the Shah's departure, although he will be medically fit to travel this weekend, adds a troubling element to a situation

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, President's Breakfasts 9/1/79 thru 12/31/79. Secret; Nodis.

² No minutes of the President's foreign policy breakfast meeting has been found.

³ In a November 29 memorandum to Vance, Newsom related that the Mexican Government had just informed Armao that it was unwilling to renew the Shah's visa. Newsom then identified Paraguay, Argentina, South Africa, Egypt, and Costa Rica as possible countries to which the Shah might travel. (Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, President's Breakfasts 9/1/79 thru 12/31/79)

in Tehran that is already highly charged by the advent of Ashura and the upcoming constitutional referendum.

Attached at Tab 1⁴ are some thoughts on alternate countries of residence that we may want to pursue with Armao.

We are also considering suggesting to the Shah that he return to Mexico since his visa does not expire until December 9. This will allow him to consider to ask for political asylum in Mexico, and it will permit us to help him check with other countries which might be willing to receive him. Although his visa is technically valid until December 9, we cannot exclude the possibility that the Mexicans, who have publicly discouraged him from returning for a short period, would actually revoke it if the Shah actually attempts to return there.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis]

⁴ Attached but not printed. See footnote 3, above.

**73. Paper Prepared in the National Foreign Assessment Center,
Central Intelligence Agency**

Washington, November 30, 1979

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 11/28/79–12/4/79. Secret. 4 pages not declassified.]

Options Identified

74. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 1, 1979, 9–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

David Newsom (left after 20 min.)

Harold Saunders

Defense

Robert Komer

JCS

General John Pustay

Justice

John Shenefield**

Treasury

Anthony Solomon**

CIA

Frank Carlucci

Energy

John Sawhill**

White House

Stuart Eizenstat**

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

**present for discussion of domestic issues

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Shah*. Mr. Eizenstat suggested that at some point, and in an appropriate context, we should consider announcing that we have no intention of assisting the Shah to return to power. All agreed that this could be a useful gesture, but the timing and formulation would be important. It will be kept under close consideration. (C)

2. *Partial Release of Hostages*. The question of the release of Laingen is academic for the moment since the Foreign Ministry is unwilling to provide assurances of safe passage outside the building. Concern was expressed on the effect on the hostages and the public of any impression that the senior officers were leaving the rest behind. (C)

3. *United Nations*. Work is going forward on the Security Council meeting for this evening. A draft statement was circulated by State.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #216 held 12/1/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the page.

Efforts are continuing to get as many nations as possible to speak on behalf of release of the hostages. The Soviets are being unhelpful by requesting that no meeting be held tonight. Mr. Newsom will raise with Secretary Vance the advisability of raising this directly with Dobrynin today. (C)

4. *Iranian Assets*. Mr. Solomon said that there is a noticeable erosion of our position on the assets frozen in U.S. banks abroad. An adverse court ruling in London may come within a matter of days. Mr. Solomon stressed the urgency of deciding on a course of action. The options are: (1) proceed to ask our allies to adopt financial sanctions of their own, which would then assure their intervention on our behalf in their own national courts; (2) ask our allies to intervene with their courts for a delay in judgment on the grounds that this is a sovereign matter between governments; or (3) we can begin taking steps to withdraw on the foreign freeze as gracefully as possible. (TS)

Mr. Solomon stressed that option (1), getting our allies to impose sanctions, will be very tough and will require extreme pressure, including threats to the allies that a failure to respond will adversely affect our overall defense relationship. He did not believe that a strongly worded letter from the President would suffice nor would the prospect that we might take some military action against Iran which would ultimately interrupt oil supplies. The British, in particular, were not concerned about Iranian oil. (TS)

The second option, getting allied governments to persuade the courts to stay a judgment, would protect our present freeze position but not place more pressure on Iran. The U.K. is the key since that is where Iran is presently challenging us in court. Mr. Solomon reported that the British told us informally that they wanted to stay neutral and avoid getting involved in the case. (TS)

The rationale for the third course of action would be that we have now determined that sufficient assets exist within the United States to cover prospective claims; therefore, there is no need to hold assets abroad. It would be seen as a retreat but perhaps less so than if the U.K. court ordered the freeze lifted. (TS)

Mr. Solomon stressed that option (1) would take very significant pressure at the highest level and should not be undertaken unless we were determined to follow through. Moreover, it was becoming increasingly difficult as each day passed. Mr. Komer noted that if we interfered with our NATO defense relationship, we would be threatening self-defeating action which might not be credible. [Note: The fact that the U.K. wants a decision in the near future that we will help modernize the U.K. deterrent does provide us with very significant leverage over this key country. Moreover, U.K. refusal to help could

make Congressional approval of a Trident sale problematic. This aspect was not discussed in the SCC. D. Aaron]² (TS)

Mr. Solomon urged a full presentation of this complex issue be made to the President at the first of next week. In the meantime, letters to heads of state are being prepared on a contingency basis for option (1); the political and legal implications of option (2) are being examined by Treasury, Justice and State; and a draft message to Mrs. Thatcher is being prepared by the NSC. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Espionage Charges.* In light of the announcement by the “students” that one American has confessed to CIA activities, the SCC agreed that our public posture for the moment should be limited to “no comment,” with emphasis on the fact that these individuals have been held under duress for a month. The final draft of a guidance statement on this issue will be circulated today for final approval. (C)

2. *Embassy Security.* State will coordinate with Defense about payment for security items now being airlifted to embassies in the Middle East. (C)

3. *AWACS Deployment.* Two C-141s are scheduled to fly into Cairo West (which is where U.S. aircraft normally land). Equipment will be offloaded and sent overland or in Egyptian air transport to the isolated base where the AWACS will operate. Eight additional C-141 flights are planned. Flights will be spaced to avoid drawing undue attention. (S)

4. *Naval Deployments.* A Soviet ship is trailing the *Midway*, but the *Kitty Hawk* has not been surveilled as yet. The Iranians launched a P-3 reconnaissance flight this morning for the first time. (S)

5. *Egyptian Comments on U.S. Military Action.* Roy Atherton has reported on the secure line from Cairo³ that Prime Minister Khalil is very concerned that any U.S. military action involving Egypt against Iran could appear to be part of a US-Egyptian alliance. He made clear that whatever President Sadat has promised would be done, but we should be sensitive to the need not to associate Egypt directly with any military attack. If some form of military action is required, he felt that a blockade would avoid the worst reaction. (TS)

² Brackets are in the original.

³ Atherton called Saunders on a secure telephone line, November 30. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #216 held 12/1/79)

75. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to President Carter¹

Washington, December 1, 1979

SUBJECT

The Dynamics of the Hostage Situation

Pursuing the diplomatic options and applying the pressure of world opinion to the Iranians is clearly the right approach over the next several days. The question of the Shah's departure from the U.S., the UNSC and ICJ proceedings, the religious fervor of Muharram, the Iranian vote on the new constitution, the continued international perception of the U.S. as the aggrieved party—all argue that it is too soon to move to "other means."

But as time goes on, the Iranians, and the world—though not the American people—are likely to begin to see the holding of the U.S. hostages as the natural state of things, rather than as an abomination. There may then be more international pressure on the U.S. to "confess our sins of espionage," and to promise amnesty to Iran, than on the Iranians to release the hostages. At home, the general support for our policy (strong pressure with peaceful means, holding military action in reserve) will begin to fragment. On one side there will be calls for extreme military actions, on the other for meeting some or all Iranian demands.

Your press conference of Wednesday evening² (the most effective of your Presidency thus far) has held the situation together for an extra week or so. Early in the week of Dec. 3, I believe it will be time to push our Allies and friends to adopt some of the strongest economic measures we can devise. Apparently action by the European and Japanese banks similar to our own—blocking, defaults, etc.—would soon have increasingly severe effects. But those countries correctly view such action as risky and painful to themselves. They will take it, if at all, only if they believe the alternative is military action by us that is even more risky to them in economic and political terms. We must be prepared to threaten such action.

If we cannot persuade them to take such economic and political action, or if it fails to secure release of the hostages, we will have to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran [Cables & Memos] 11-12/1979. Top Secret; Eyes Only. An unknown hand wrote at the top of the first page of the memorandum: "Bootleg non-paper."

² See footnote 9, Document 67.

consider military options very seriously. Our approach should be to make it painful to Khomeini to hold the hostages (so far it hasn't been painful—world public opinion doesn't bother him much), and prospectively much more painful to him if they are harmed. Then he may be pushed toward a face-saving solution (e.g., expulsion with or without a quick trial). Though many suggest blockade, mining of harbors through which most Iranian imports flow is clearly, to my mind, less risky and less escalatory. With mining, we need not stop ships with our own ships; our forces are there to be shot at only briefly; and ships which might be sunk must themselves take the last move that has that result. Mining is the mildest military action I have found. We are seeking others, for example various acts to demonstrate how we *could* damage Iran, but I doubt that we will come up with any that are effective without being at the same time more escalatory.

Mining, like blockade, is an act of war—though a bloodless act of war, like invading an embassy and taking hostages. There would be a real risk of upsetting our Allies, and a greater one of upsetting or even severely alienating other Muslim states in the Gulf region and elsewhere.

It could derail the negotiating process, such as it is, although it might also revive that process. And it would certainly increase the risk to the hostages—probably severely, for a time, though not as likely fatally so as a rescue attempt would do. But it would show we are not to be trifled with and that we will not accept a status quo that has some of our people hostage without corresponding pain to those who hold them hostage. It would avoid a situation that might otherwise drag on, where the U.S. is hurting and Iran—or at least the Iranian leadership—is not. Mining would—over a couple of months—affect the Iranian economy significantly. It would, by the implicit threat of further escalation, get the attention of Iranian leaders, and convince them we are not bluffing, much faster than that.

The question on which your advisers will probably divide is “when?” That judgment will turn on: our estimates of the likely course and outcome—both for the hostages and for perceived American standing in the region and elsewhere—of diplomatic negotiations that last for months; whether the hostages are put on trial; the outcome of UNSC and ICJ proceedings; the willingness of others to join us in non-military actions and the effect thereof on the Iranians; how well we think we can make our case to the moderate Muslim countries.

My own judgment is that we can go for a period of ten to fifteen days along the diplomatic/economic route, if it appears to be moving in a promising way, and if there is not evidence or grave suspicion that any hostages have been harmed. If strong economic measures against Iran are taken by our key Allies acting with us, that might give

us another week or so. But even then I do not think we can delay facing up to at least the mildest military actions for more than about a month from now.

Harold Brown

76. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, December 1, 1979

The Shah—We worked out the plans for the movement of the Shah to Wilford Hall Hospital at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.² Lloyd Cutler has gone to New York with Peter Tarnoff to present these plans to the Shah and get his concurrence.

The Group who will implement the plans in New York consists of a representative of State, Defense and the FBI. Arrangements are being made to take him from the hospital to the Marine Terminal at LaGuardia Airfield. The FBI will be in charge of that operation. The anticipated time of departure from New York will be tomorrow morning. The precise timing has been left to the implementing team who will be working out the details in New York. They will keep us informed here. In order to preserve security at Lackland, we will not indicate how many people will be coming but rather merely reserve the VIP Suite at the hospital.

Jody and Hodding have worked out a press release which will be issued at the time the flight is airborne.³ It will stress the fact that he has completed his hospitalization but needs a period of rest and recuperation, and that this will be done at a safe and secure location at the specified air base so as to provide adequate security. We will preposition a brief message to be delivered to each of the Governments in the area at the same time the announcement will be made here. This is necessary in order to prevent any misunderstanding as to what is

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14. Secret. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² Vance met with Brown, Christopher, Newsom, Webster, Caldwell, Powell, Cutler, Hodding Carter, West, Tarnoff, and Bremer on December 1 from 3:30 until 4:30 p.m. (Memorandum for the Record, December 1; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah December 1979, Vol. IV)

³ The full text of the press statement announcing the Shah's December 2 travel to San Antonio is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pp. 2191.

taking place. We will be notifying Bruce Laingen of this fact on the Telex at the same time the message is made. That message will obviously be read immediately by the Iranian authorities.

We are also making preparations for the necessary notification to the Leadership and the Congressmen from the area plus the two Texas Senators contemporaneously with the issuance of the announcement.

77. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 3, 1979, 9–10:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

Harold Saunders

Richard Cooper**

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

Energy

John Sawhill**

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**

Richard Solomon**

Robert Mundheim**

Justice

John Harmon**

White House

Hamilton Jordan

Stuart Eizenstat**

Lloyd Cutler**

Jody Powell**

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

**Present for discussion of domestic issues only

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 98, Meetings File, 12/1/79 SCC re Iran. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J," in the upper right corner.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Economic Sanctions.* Secretary Miller reviewed the three options:² (1) persuade our allies to take more stringent economic actions of their own; (2) persuade the British to intervene with their courts to stay a judgment; or (3) move to unfreeze the Iranian assets held abroad as gracefully as possible.

He felt that a letter to the heads of state would not be sufficient. It would be better to call them to Washington and invoke our defense alliance as persuasive leverage. Similarly, a public appeal to these states would be likely to backfire since there is little public support for stronger action. All of these countries foresee damage to their own interests if they act against Iran. Specifically, they are concerned about an oil cutoff (Japan gets 13% of its oil from Iran), disruption of their own investments in Iran (which are sizable for Germany especially), and instability of the banking system (a tender issue for the British). Our contacts to date reveal that they are opposed to any action. All agreed that an attempt, and failure, to get option 1 would be worse than not trying at all. The SCC recognized that the dollar was under severe pressure and that the failure of our allies to support us could unravel the situation not only to the detriment of the situation in Iran but also the strength of the dollar generally. It was agreed that Treasury would take another hard look at option 1 in a smaller group, including the possibility of the Export-Import Bank declaring Iran in default.³ (S)

Option 2 appeared feasible. Mr. Christopher suggested that option 2 should make clear that we intend to fight hard and with imagination to win the cases in British courts, even if the British refuse to intervene. Mr. Cutler strongly agreed and noted that British statements in the Security Council could be cited as evidence that blocking of assets was consistent with British public policy. The cases might be won if a stiff fight were put up. Even if they are lost, we can tie up the process for several months with appeals, which will keep the Iranian economic process in some turmoil, and that is to our advantage. We can strengthen our case by U.S. Government intervention in London. Mr. Aaron observed that we have the means to bring some real pressure on the British. All agreed that we should proceed immediately with option 2, as modified by Mr. Christopher.⁴ (S)

² See Document 74.

³ Carter neither approved nor disapproved the item. In the right margin, he wrote: "This is too weak—I'm more concerned about not trying than of possible failure. We're losing support now."

⁴ Carter approved the item with a checkmark and wrote in the right margin: "Prepare strongest possible move."

Option 3 was not recommended at this time, since it would tend to signal a retreat and could remove pressure on Iran.⁵ (C)

2. *The Shah*. Secretary Vance briefed on the contacts presently under way with two countries to provide refuge for the Shah. It will be several more days before the Shah is physically up to a long trip, and Mr. Cutler felt that there was no better than a 50–50 chance that we would be able to find him a residence abroad within the next week or two. All agreed that we should avoid getting ourselves into a public posture of forcing the Shah to leave or an undignified scramble to find him a place to live. Nevertheless, the SCC believed that on balance the Shah's departure would be more helpful than harmful to our chances of getting the hostages released.⁶ (S)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Kennedy Speech*. All agreed that Kennedy's comments attacking the Shah were factually exaggerated and very unhelpful.⁷ The President and the White House should not respond, but there were others who could make that point effectively. (C)

2. *Referendum*. The rather poor vote turnout thus far suggests growing opposition to Khomeini, particularly in the minority areas. We will have a better reading tomorrow.⁸ (C)

3. *AWACS*. Material is being moved into Cairo West and transferred to the isolated base in eastern Egypt. Secretary Vance continues to oppose deployment of the AWACS to Egypt.⁹

4. *Libya*. The SCC agreed that we should suspend relations with Libya. The American diplomatic staff would be reduced from 12 to 5, no consular duties would be performed, and our diplomats would work out of an Interests Section in another country's embassy. Depending

⁵ Carter underlined "not recommended" and approved the item with a checkmark.

⁶ After this paragraph, Carter wrote in the right margin: "Check specifically: Ambassador→Head of State, with a broader range of countries. This should already have been done!"

⁷ In a December 2 television interview with KRON-TV in San Francisco, Kennedy stated that the Shah "ran one of the most violent regimes in the history of mankind" and that he had stolen billions of dollars from Iran. (Television News Archives, December 3, 1979; *Time Magazine*, December 17, 1979) Kennedy also called for the Shah to leave the United States.

⁸ In the left margin next to this paragraph, Carter wrote: "This was not adequately mentioned in U.S. press. *Again*, Jody, State, etc. continue to do so."

⁹ In the left margin next to this paragraph, Carter wrote: "Expedite."

on the Libyan response, explanation and willingness to compensate, this can be reviewed later.¹⁰ (C)

5. *Next Steps*. The SCC tomorrow will consider a scenario for the diplomatic efforts over the next two or three weeks. It will also examine the longer range objectives and strategy of our relations with Iran. (S)

¹⁰ Carter checked the disapprove option and wrote in the margin: "Call Libyan Chargé in—give Khadafi 24 hours to reply satisfactorily to a Presidential demand. Then suspend (not break) relations." On December 2, the U.S. Embassy in Tripoli was attacked in what Vance called a "government-inspired demonstration." At the bottom of a December 3 memorandum to Carter from Vance, Carter wrote: "Cy—a) prepare to declare Iranian diplomats PNG. They can have either a bank or very small financial staff handle student money. b) prepare to inform European allies this week that after UNSC vote we will call for them to embargo trade with Iran and then (or simultaneously) seek sanctions thru UN. We will inform them in advance of any military action (or if you prefer I can send a separate emissary). J." (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14)

78. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 3, 1979

SUBJECT

Mid-Range and Longer-Range Strategy

A checklist and possible structure for your meeting on Tuesday.²

A mid-range negotiating strategy is not incompatible with a longer-range strategy aimed at replacement of Khomeini or other strategies which seek a fundamental change in the political situation. The *key decision* to be made is whether or not we will *place all our eggs in the negotiating basket* and let ourselves be carried along by events or whether we will consider *negotiations as one arm of a more activist strategy* aimed at transforming the situation.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran [Cables & Memos] 11–12/79. Secret; Eyes Only.

² December 4.

Next Several Weeks: Negotiations

—Security Council Resolution

—World Court meets December 10

—Syria, Arafat, papal envoy, and perhaps other mediation efforts now in train. Several personal missions (lawyers, doctors) going on.

—Secretary General may become more actively engaged in direct negotiations once the Security Council has acted.

—Chapter Seven economic sanctions could be sought as a follow-up to the Security Council action. This might be one way to bring our allies into the sanctions.

—Ghotbzadeh has suggested a Carter statement.³ Although his ideas are not acceptable, we might drop some acceptable language on his themes into speeches, statements and the like which could then be put together into a “package” and presented to Ghotbzadeh. This is essentially what we did with the first PLO effort. (This is Hal Saunders’ idea as a next step on the negotiating track—please protect.)

—Shah may leave, thus changing the situation further.

—The espionage campaign is bound to increase, and the students may go to trials—over the objections of Ghotbzadeh and others. This will force us to ratchet up our overt opposition. If we react with limited military action, that will derail or divert the diplomatic track.

—I heard today that the constitutional referendum will be put before some kind of Islamic Council on December 10. That may turn out to be an important date, but we have little information thus far.

The objective of the negotiating strategy should be to *build as much pressure as possible on Khomeini* and his cohorts as we can. They perceive the economic steps we have taken as quite significant, and any shortages of goods, unemployment, credit breakdowns, and simple economic foulups will probably be attributed to our efforts. That is just

³ Richard Cottam met with Bazargan and Ghotbzadeh on December 1. Ghotbzadeh suggested an eight-point statement for Carter, designed to give Ghotbzadeh “ammunition” for dealing with Khomeini. He would not, however, guarantee that the statement would lead to the release of the hostages. The eight points were: (1) U.S. recognition that the Shah’s entry into the United States had angered Iranians; (2) clarification that the United States had intended to admit the Shah for reasons of medical treatment; (3) reiteration of U.S. respect for Iranian sovereignty; (4) restatement that the United States would not interfere in Iran’s internal affairs with specific mention of the Mossadegh years; (5) reestablishment of cordial relations but with reduced U.S. Embassy staff in Tehran; (6) U.S. recognition of the Iranian right to recover property in accordance with U.S. legal procedures; (7) U.S. welcome of Iranian representatives to explain their position to the U.S. public; and (8) the absence of U.S. opposition to an international tribunal established to examine the Shah’s regime. (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, December 2; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 12/1/79–12/7/79)

what we want. If we can convince them that they are in a net with no way out, pressure will build rapidly to change the situation.

However, the *negotiating strategy is unlikely to be successful in itself*. They can potentially live with economic chaos for a prolonged period of time. Khomeini's support is the "rabble" which has been disadvantaged historically and which can survive at a level which the intelligentsia would find intolerable. If he can keep them minimally fed and full of glorious dreams, they will stay with him. He is their man.

Change is not likely to be evolutionary. Pressures are building for a new explosion which will come from dissaffected elements: the army, a disillusioned faction around Khomeini, a loose tribal coalition, a new strongman . . . perhaps all of the above. It could also come from the left, which is gaining strength but still far short of the kind of support needed for a direct challenge. Our objective should be to encourage forces which we see as desirable alternatives to Khomeini and help them to be ready to step in when the explosion occurs.

We cannot directly change the course of events, but we can nudge them in the direction we want them to go. Our nudges are likely to be ineffective, however, unless we are acting in an *agreed policy context with clear objectives and a degree of commitment which will lend consistency and purpose to our efforts*. Otherwise, we are going to find ourselves in the same position as last year when different sides of the policy house were speaking with different voices and fighting their battles in the press. We are edging toward that situation.

An Activist Policy

I outlined my ideas on this yesterday⁴ and will not repeat them here beyond a schematic:

—*Policy Decision*: We cannot work with Khomeini. A gradualist approach is futile in a revolutionary situation and only encourages the left.

—*Covert Action*. Must be a major effort. We need to build (or rebuild) a cadre of imaginative, effective talent.

—*Coalition Building*. Potential allies are everywhere. Our support, even if private and qualified, will speed them to do their own thing.

—*Military*. Our presence in the region is vital and effective. We must know when and how we will be prepared to use it in order to

⁴ In a December 2 memorandum to Brezezinski, Sick provided an assessment of the internal power situation within Iran. He argued that Iran faced a potential civil war that "offers almost no latitude for classic diplomacy" which was particularly "useless in trying to move Khomeini and the students." He thought Khomeini's position was also deteriorating. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 73, Presidential Advisory File, Middle East Box 6 11/79-2/80)

respond promptly to events. Non-violent shows of force, limited military actions, and rescue operations give us options to up the ante or seize the initiative when conditions are ripe.⁵

⁵ In his December 2 memorandum, Sick argued that “a direct military strike against Iran will work against us.” He suggested a show of force such as sonic booms over Qom in the middle of the night, and escalating military actions starting with mining Bandar Abbas. He urged that the United States not give up on a rescue operation as it is “the most effective and most readily accepted military action we could take.” (Ibid.)

79. Paper Prepared by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders)¹

Washington, undated

THE INTERNAL OPTIONS IN IRAN

The small group chaired by David Aaron has considered essentially two strategies toward the evolution of the internal Iranian political leadership.

Before one gets to either one, there is a debate over (1) whether we decide now that we can not live with Khomeini and should set as our objective his downfall or (2) whether we should assume that we cannot have much effect on this symbol of the revolution and concentrate on bolstering constructive forces which might emerge when it becomes apparent that Khomeini himself is incapable of running a country and has to be eased aside from decisions on managing Iran’s affairs.

In our meetings, two different approaches have been laid out:

1. One is referred to as the “southern strategy.” This approach involves providing support for certain expatriates like Bakhtiar and Gen. Djam, who might work with ethnic minorities in Iran and eventually try to set up a rival Iranian Government in one of those minority areas. The objective would not be the disintegration of Iran, because its integrity remains the best defense against the USSR. The objective

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 32, Iran Update 12/15/79–12/31/79. Secret. Attached to a December 3 memorandum from Saunders to Vance.

would ultimately be to rally so much opposition to Khomeini that new leadership could move into Tehran and take over. Clearly, this process would be difficult, if not impossible, to control, and the results might be quite different from our plans.

2. The other approach is to begin putting lines out to moderate leadership in Tehran and in the religious community with an eye to developing relationships which will put us in a favorable position when responsible elements decide to take more and more of the decision-making out of Khomeini's hands.

We need not view these approaches in either/or terms. We could set in motion the second option, holding in reserve consideration of the first. Both options present us with the same problem we have faced all along: There are no groups with sufficient strength and popular appeal to pose a serious threat to Khomeini. Those that we can deal with are fragmented and fearful. Thus, we will have to move with great caution and not expect early results.

[1 paragraph (5 lines) not declassified]

If one were to bridge this longer-term program—if one is decided on—and the present situation, the point would be that efforts in the present situation to demonstrate that Khomeini's government is not able to manage Iran's economic problems as long as Iran remains isolated from the rest of the world and in confrontation with us.

80. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter**¹

Washington, December 3, 1979

SUBJECT

NSC Agenda, December 4, 1979

Subject to your approval, I would propose to introduce the following agenda at the meeting:

1. Collective economic sanctions;
2. Additional political measures;
3. Escalating military/economic pressure;
4. Longer term political strategy;
5. Public posture;
6. Middle Eastern security.

This is a rather full agenda, and yet all the items need to be covered—and only decisions by you are likely to generate the needed action. I will try below to summarize as concisely as possible the basic options so that the discussion can move expeditiously. (In the morning, I will try to guide the SCC through a preliminary run on the above topics.) However, before doing so, let me register one central and strategic issue with you: *Is time working to our advantage or disadvantage?*

I am concerned over two trends: (a) the transformation of the conflict *from Iran vs. the international community into America vs. Islam*; (b) the erosion of support for us *among friends and non-friends*.

Recent attacks on our embassies, as well as various Middle East press comments (encouraged probably by very subtle Soviet insinuations), point in the direction of transforming the conflict into a wider assault on “corrupt and impotent” America. This is a dangerous trend. It could make our friends in the region run for cover and our allies increasingly to cut their own deals.

Perhaps I am wrong, but the issue is worth examining because whatever answer you give should drive our strategy. (Right now it is being driven by a diplomatic timetable.) My concern since a year ago

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57, NSC 023 Iran 12/4/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed “C” in the upper right corner of the memorandum. Saunders prepared a discussion strategy for Vance to use at the NSC meeting based on Brzezinski’s suggestions. (December 3; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah December 1979, Vol. IV)

has been that *a regional crisis is likely to develop as a result of the Shah's fall*. It could even become a *global crisis*. At our meeting yesterday² the Vice President said that the emerging confrontation between Islam and the United States, accompanied by European backsliding, could transform overall international and economic relations in a drastic fashion—and I fear he is right. Accordingly, we need to look beyond the hostage issue in shaping our broad strategy.

Specific Issues:

1. *Economic Sanctions*

Options:

(a) To ask our allies to adopt financial sanctions of their own. This would require a very major effort, including perhaps convening an emergency Summit meeting of the Seven. Solomon feels that something like this may be necessary because, otherwise, our allies will cut their own deals while the dollar will continue to decline.

(b) To ask our allies—notably Great Britain—to intervene with their courts for a delay in judgment on the grounds that the financial steps taken by us involve a sovereign matter between governments. This will work best with the UK, and the SCC, in general, leans toward this option.

(c) To invoke Chapter 7 of the UN. This could follow a Security Council vote, though support is not certain.

(d) You should also consider sending a top level emissary to consult with our allies.

2. *Additional Political Measures*

Cy envisages proceeding with the Security Council toward a resolution, and in the World Court toward a judgment. You might ask him what additional steps he envisages beyond these two. You have previously urged an expulsion of Iranian diplomats from this country.³ Is the time right to take that action?

In addition, you should explicitly review the possibility of a dramatic personal appearance by yourself before the General Assembly. A powerful speech, with the tone and substance much like your last Press Conference,⁴ could have a dramatic impact. It would also lay the ground for more decisive action.

² No record of a December 2 meeting has been found.

³ See footnote 10, Document 77.

⁴ See footnote 9, Document 67.

More generally, is it possible to adopt the more extreme collective economic sanctions (option 1(a)) without threatening more in the political/military realm? Are our allies likely to support us in what is to them a drastic economic measure if our political steps seem essentially litigious? There is general agreement that only fear of some unpleasant consequences is likely to get our allies to help us with the more drastic economic steps.

3. *Specific Military Preparation*

Should AWACS proceed to Egypt? Should the rescue option be reactivated and even some preliminary deployment undertaken? Both steps could be useful signals of our seriousness. Finally, should F-111's be sent to Egypt?

4. *Escalating Military/Economic Pressure*

If your conclusion is that time is not working in our favor, we could couple a request for collective financial sanctions by our allies with the threat—which we should only make if we are serious about it—to proceed with a direct blockade of our own. Alternatively, *we could begin to apply such a blockade ourselves (by mining)*, and simply ask for allied support for that step, rather than insist on an allied initiative in the economic area.

It is self-evident that any such step by the U.S. will raise the risks to the hostages. It will have to be accompanied by a credible threat to escalate military sanctions and by a prior decision to implement such escalatory steps if the Iranian response to mining is physical harm to any hostage.

I would urge you to consider such action only if you were prepared to reach the following two judgments:

- (a) That time is not working in our favor, and that
- (b) Khomeini needs to be brought down expeditiously.

This leads me immediately into discussion of the next point.

5. *Longer Term Political Strategy*

At least a portion of the government has operated for almost a year on the assumption that the U.S. could work with Khomeini. I believe that recent events have demonstrated that this was, throughout, a dangerous fallacy. We have to recognize that Khomeini is a dedicated enemy of the United States, for he sees the U.S. as a greater danger than even Marxism. To him, America is the embodiment of an anti-religious and corrupt West, which is all the more dangerous because its influence has been so pervasively felt in the changing Iranian lifestyles. He is determined to eradicate that influence at all costs and he hopes to do so by creating a far-reaching rift between the U.S. and Islam.

We will present specific options to you at the meeting after review by the SCC. [7 lines not declassified] We need to shape a coalition to defeat Khomeini; and we should orchestrate a propaganda campaign to help achieve that end.

To reinforce this strategy, we would have to maintain as many economic pressures on Iran as we can generate, both directly and indirectly. Once the existing fervor dies down, economic dislocations will make more modernistically minded Iranians think about the lunacy into which Khomeini has plunged them.

I have tried to raise the subject repeatedly in SCC meetings, but almost everyone shies away from reaching any firm conclusion on the subject. [4½ lines not declassified]

[1 paragraph (3 lines) not declassified]

6. *Public Posture*

The conflict is not with Islam. I have raised this matter at SCC meetings on more than one occasion, and I explicitly spoke to it at the Jewish Labor Committee convention. More important, and with far greater effect, you commented on it very eloquently in your last Press Conference, but the point needs to be made over and over again. It might be useful for you to reiterate that point and instruct all U.S. spokesmen to keep repeating it at every opportunity.

7. *Middle Eastern Security*

[Omitted here is information on Saudi Arabia, Oman, Somalia, and Egypt.]

81. Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, December 4, 1979

The Iranian Crisis: International Economic Fallout
[portion marking not declassified]

The US decision to block official Iranian monetary assets in US banks here and abroad coupled with Iran's technical default on several loans and its threat to blacklist the use of the US dollar have sent shock waves reverberating throughout the international community.² These measures have: (a) created confusion in the international banking system in its dealings with Iran, impeding Tehran's ability to import; (b) drawn the West Europeans, Japanese, and other allies reluctantly into the financial dispute and sent a few of them scurrying to capitalize on the situation; (c) raised concern among OPEC members over the security of their foreign assets; (d) led Iran and Libya to demand that OPEC unsheathe the oil weapon; and (e) raised questions about the future role of the dollar as an international reserve currency. *[portion marking not declassified]*

While much of the confusion in international economic circles would abate quickly once the crisis between Iran and the United States were resolved, the dispute has longer term implications for all parties involved. For Iran, the protracted hiatus in its international economic affairs will mean a downturn in coming months from an already depressed level of economic activity. Hence, while the crisis will not change the Ayatollah's mind set in the short run, over time it will have substantial political repercussions. Although OPEC members recognize the special circumstances of the US actions, the United States will find that OPEC members will intensify their efforts to diversify their foreign investment portfolios; if other countries block Iranian assets before the dispute is resolved, OPEC members will feel even more strongly that keeping their oil in the ground is the most prudent policy. As for the Japanese and the West Germans, they will have to deal with growing pressures to internationalize their currencies. A reduced role for the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 12/5/79–12/9/79. Top Secret; *[handling restriction not declassified]*. Sent to Carter, Mondale, Vance, Brzezinski, Brown, Miller, and Duncan under a December 5 covering memorandum from Turner.

² The *New York Times* reported from London on November 16 that Bani-Sadr was quoted in *Le Monde* as saying that Iran would no longer accept payment for its oil in dollars but would insist that payments be made in a basket of currencies consisting of the German mark, Swiss franc, and French franc. (Robert D. Hershey, Jr., "Reports on Freeze and Oil Hurt Dollar," *New York Times*, November 17, 1979, p. 6)

US dollar as a reserve currency would cause difficult adjustments in the near term, but could prove beneficial over the long haul to the United States. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Monetary and Trade Problems

Theoretically, the US order blocking Iranian monetary assets should not impede international economic transactions with Iran. In practice, however, confusion on the part of the Iranian banks and general uncertainty over the present situation among Western traders and bankers—largely inspired by intemperate and ill-chosen remarks made by high Iranian officials—are creating problems for all parties concerned. As a result, oil revenues continue to flow into blocked accounts, and some foreign companies and banks are unwilling to accept letters of credit (L/C) for exports to Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The reluctance of international bankers to open new lines of credit with Iran stem from fears of not being paid. In particular, the banks do not wish to comply with the Iranian requirement that L/Cs be drawn on Iranian banks. They are afraid that possible massive loan defaults by Iran would trigger blocking orders by West European governments, tying up almost all of Iran's official assets. Some of the L/Cs that are being opened apparently carry risk premiums. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Chaos in the Iranian banking system has made it difficult for Tehran to sort out trade financing problems; inadequate—sometimes conflicting—instructions are being sent to customers, branch banks, and correspondent banks. Lack of management and direction as a result of the flight of key personnel are largely responsible for the chaos. Indeed with careful management, the solution to the US asset block would be relatively simple: the Iranian government need only maintain deposits exclusively in non-US banks and cancel outstanding letters of credit that would channel money into blocked accounts. However, given the erratic behavior and uncoordinated efforts of Iran's government and banks, the process of establishing new, orderly relations with non-US banks is taking considerable time and depends heavily on assistance from foreign bankers and traders. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran-US Financial Dispute Spreads

Because of their dependence on OPEC oil, US allies are trying to remain neutral in the US-Iranian financial hassle while generally voicing support for release of the hostages.

[1 paragraph (9 lines) not declassified]

Western Europe and Japan

West European central banks and governments are attempting to maintain positions of strict neutrality on financial issues in the face of mounting difficulties. [9 lines not declassified]

A US bank may have beaten Bonn to the punch by obtaining a court order to seize Iranian government shares in the Krupp conglomerate. Fearing hostile reaction from Tehran, Bonn issued a strong disclaimer of any government involvement in the court order. The Ministers of Finance and Economics have publicly “deplored” what they view as the US bank’s interference in West German foreign policy. [*portion marking not declassified*]

While the *French* have voiced support for the US position on the hostages, they have attempted to keep commercial dealings with Iran outside the dispute. [*2½ lines not declassified*] Recent publicity surrounding a French move against Iranian assets taken a month ago may, however, draw Paris more directly into the financial tangle with Iran. At that time, French courts issued an order freezing Iran’s \$1 billion stake in the European uranium enrichment group, EURODIF. The French move stems from Iran’s failure to fulfill its financial obligations as a 10-percent shareholder in the Tricastin uranium enrichment plant in France. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[*2 paragraphs (17½ lines) not declassified*]

Other Non-OPEC

[*1 paragraph (9 lines) not declassified*]

Oil Producer Reactions

Although the major oil exporting countries recognize the special circumstances of recent US actions, the blocking of Iranian assets has raised a few apprehensions. These countries are especially concerned over the precedent being set by the blocking action since the US measure was tied to Iran’s attempt to withdraw its funds rather than to the seizure of the American Embassy, which most OPEC countries have at least privately condemned. [*portion marking not declassified*]

- *UAE* officials feel that the US move was misguided and will force a reevaluation of UAE foreign investment policies as well as those of other oil producers. [*3½ lines not declassified*]

- *Kuwait* has publicly commented favorably that the US move is a case of “extreme action, provoking extreme measures.” [*2 lines not declassified*]

- Although some *Saudis* are upset about the precedent set by the US action, [*1½ lines not declassified*] SAMA’s investment operations and policies remain unchanged.

- *Iraq*, because of its own confrontation with the Khomeini regime, has intentionally avoided criticism of US actions. In any event, Iraq has almost no assets in the United States; its foreign holdings are widely dispersed throughout the West and Communist countries. [*2½ lines not declassified*]

- *Venezuela*, the only non-Arab OPEC member with large foreign holdings, has expressed concern that the flare-up might create a rift in OPEC. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Only a few oil producers, notably the radical states of Algeria and Libya, sharpened their public anti-US stance in response to the US financial action. The Libyan delegation to the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in Tunis called for joint Arab reprisals against the United States. The Libyan initiative received only mild support from Syria and was soundly rejected by the conference. [*8 lines not declassified*]

Little OPEC Support for Iranian Initiatives

[*1 paragraph (10½ lines) not declassified*]

The Iranians have received no support for their request that OPEC discontinue the use of the dollar as the means of payment for oil exports. Acting in their self interest, the oil exporting countries seem unlikely to reject the dollar as a vehicle currency as long as it remains a principal currency for transactions by the rest of the world; they will need dollars to pay for their imports. Some would be especially reluctant to take actions that might be thought to have a long-term, adverse effect on the dollar, because more than half of their assets are dollar-denominated. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Longer-Term Implications of the Iranian-US Flareup

The following is our preliminary reaction to the longer-term impact of the Iranian crisis.

Impact on Iran

The financial and governmental confusion generated by the US-blocking of Iranian assets and by the threats of the Iranians to default on their external debts is having a seriously adverse effect on trade and other external relationships that will be felt for many months to come. In addition, skepticism about the government's ability and willingness to ensure personal security will slow the return of foreign contractors and technicians who are leaving the country. Overall, spin-off from the current crisis is undermining Iran's ability to supply itself while making imports more difficult. Hence, worsening economic conditions—including spot shortages of critical commodities such as food—are certainly in the cards. The worst of these problems, however, are a few months off. [*portion marking not declassified*]

While the economic downturn being brewed by the current crisis is not apt to change the Ayatollah's mind set in the short run, its political impact will be felt in the longer term. Most Iranians are willing to pay some price to ensure the success of the revolution, and for the time being many find the United States a handy scapegoat for most of Iran's problems. Nevertheless, before the current flareup in US-

Iranian relations, signs of discontent with the quality of economic management were apparent, especially among some of the staunchest backers of the revolution such as the Bazaaris and urban workers. These tensions are likely to grow in the next several months as a result of commodity shortages, accelerated inflation, and persistent unemployment. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Whether or not the strains generated by a deteriorating economic situation will crystallize into resistance against the Ayatollah's leadership will depend on several factors. Once the crisis with the United States is resolved the Ayatollah will have to find another focus of blame for his policy blunders. He will also have to select his future policy options gingerly, taking care to avoid extremist measures such as widespread wage and price freezes or forced return to the countryside, which would provide a focus for protest. Failure to follow an economic course that holds the promise of a better future for most Iranians would provide opportunities for the left and others to exploit. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Impact on Oil Producers

Over the long term, the US blockage of Iranian assets will cause other oil producing countries to reassess their asset portfolios. Oil producing governments are likely to try to continue diversifying their new investment as well as their existing assets away from the dollar and from US institutions, more closely matching their asset holdings with trade patterns. [*2½ lines not declassified*]

If other countries join in the blockage of Iranian assets, the trend toward reduced oil production in countries currently accumulating excess oil revenues will likely accelerate. Given the tight world oil supply-demand balance, even a small shift in production policies induced by the financial aspect of the US-Iranian crisis could have a significant influence on the oil market. At this juncture we have no indication that production policies have been changed. [*portion marking not declassified*]

It is important to note that a number of countries were already considering production cuts prior to the US-Iranian flareup, and that moves in this direction in coming months should not be construed as support for the Ayatollah Khomeini.

- [*3 lines not declassified*]
- [*7 lines not declassified*]
- [*8 lines not declassified*]

Implications for the US Dollar

The US blockage of Iranian assets has added to already existing concerns about the suitability of the US dollar as the major international currency. Yet, there is no other currency capable of assuming this role.

In addition, Swiss, Japanese, and West German banking officials fear the increased use of their currencies as reserve assets and settlement currencies. The Japanese, for example, strongly resisted US pressure in the early 1970s to further internationalize the yen. Wider use of the Swiss franc, yen, and Deutsche mark, would lessen the control of domestic monetary authorities, making money management more difficult. Unregulated Euro-markets in these currencies—now limited—would undoubtedly grow, as happened with the US dollar in the 1960s. If other developed countries continue to resist pressures for greater international use of their currencies, support for a broader role for the SDR in international transactions would likely grow. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Although other oil exporters have rejected Iranian demands that oil be priced and sold in other currencies, the issue is not a new one. Indeed, OPEC as a whole has been discussing for some time now the possibility of pricing its oil in a currency—or a basket of currencies—stronger than the dollar. If only Iran shifted away from using the dollar, the result would probably be a brief flurry in exchange markets. If all oil were suddenly priced and sold in other currencies, however, the one-time drop in demand for dollars would be dramatic and adjustment problems could be severe. World oil trade at current prices is now running at the tremendous level of something more than \$250 billion a year. If the value of the dollar takes a plunge, however, so does the value of OPEC assets worldwide. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Over the longer term, the strength of the US dollar will essentially be determined by fundamental economic factors, such as the US inflation rate, current account balance, and the general health of the economy. Thus, any erosion in the status of the US dollar as a reserve currency would not cause serious long-term damage, provided it occurs on a gradual basis—a process that OPEC countries have a strong interest in assuring because of their large dollar holdings. Providing the change in the international currency regime is a gradual one, the dollar over the longer run might benefit. Such a move would give the United States greater control over monetary policy and an enhanced competitive position. [*portion marking not declassified*]

82. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, December 4, 1979, 2:45–3:50 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The President	CIA
The Vice President	Admiral Turner
<i>State</i>	<i>White House</i>
Secretary Vance	Zbigniew Brzezinski
Deputy Secretary Christopher	Hamilton Jordan
<i>Treasury</i>	Jody Powell
Secretary Miller	Lloyd Cutler
<i>Defense</i>	Charles Kirbo
Secretary Brown	David Aaron
Deputy Secretary Claytor	NSC
JCS	Gary Sick
Chairman Jones	

MINUTES

The President opened the meeting, noting that it was an important meeting and that he wished to review his present thinking on the circumstances in Iran. The most serious question is how to handle the status quo. The domestic situation is okay, and he was not nervous or impatient about U.S. public support. He was concerned that our world wide posture could begin to deteriorate.² The time when we could get by without the help of our allies is past. The British, Germans, French and others must face the fact that they must decide either to help us actively or to stand aloof as the financial world chipped away at our position. Potential adversaries would begin to coalesce if they saw our common purpose wavering. The Soviets thus far have been seemingly helpful out of fear of aggravating us, although lately there was reporting about some bad press statements. Incidents in Libya and Kuwait were disturbing, and Saudi Arabia had been inflicted for the first time in the President's memory with serious internal disruption.³ World opinion is on our side thus far, but the danger that it may decrease is

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 2, NSC Meeting #023 held 12/4/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

² See Document 81.

³ For the incident in Libya, see footnote 10, Document 77. For the disruption in Saudi Arabia, presumably the attack on the Grand Mosque, see footnote 5, Document 43.

growing. Lopez Portillo of Mexico has been critical of our economic measures.

Begging others will not help. We must be pragmatic and take into account other nations' interests in Iran so long as they stay with us. If he were Schmidt, for example, he would try to stay out of this as long as possible. But if Schmidt had to choose between Germany's relations with us on economic, military and political areas as opposed to their temporary interests in Iran, he would choose the U.S. Some economic matters must come to a head. If we cannot depend on others, the President wanted to know it. He wanted to insure that the status quo hurts Khomeini. He felt that Khomeini was benefiting from continued trade and diplomatic presence. The presence of our naval forces was a major factor in his reticence to do damage to the hostages.

We must act carefully, not lash out in a way that would embarrass us. We should leave no peaceful stone unturned, but we must have our allies on board—which they are not. The President had outlined his ideas in his comments on the SCC notes each day. No timing had been established yet for next moves. There was one thing he feared, that the status quo would be established on a permanent basis. Domestic support will not last. He had deliberately withheld some actions to have them in reserve. We do not know if they have moved the hostages. It is time to inform our three major European allies about the options we may take in the future. Eventually we will have to draw the line, through Chapter Seven sanctions and trade by our allies with Iran. It will be good to know their attitude. The President did not fear a rebuff if we are in the right and have a good case. We have worked to try to find a way out, but we have found no flexibility from Khomeini except for the release of the 13 hostages.⁴ In that case he chose only women and blacks to try and divide the country. We need to find a place for the Shah to go.

Dr. Brzezinski proposed discussion in the first, larger half of the meeting first of internal economic steps, then the status of political negotiations, and additional sanctions against Iranian diplomats. We should also discuss how to respond to Mexico. On economic matters, Secretary Miller could speak on possible collective actions—either a full embargo or cross default—as well as the status of court proceedings in London and the special problems with the French.

Secretary Miller said he had some good news. One case involving Citibank in London had resulted in an important legal step. The judge had ruled that all of these separate cases should be consolidated, and that they dealt with such grave matters that they deserved full prepara-

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 35.

tion. He did not intend to hear the cases until after Easter. This was a hearing by Judge (Goff?) in chambers. He wanted to ascertain American interest in intervening in the case. We have counsel in London and are preparing a response. Bank Markazi had raised no objection. Our objective will be to hold to that calendar.

The President said that was the best news he had heard for some time. He wondered if they could have their case prepared by Easter.

Mr. Cutler responded that they would be prepared by Easter to go till the following Easter. This was a very good start.

Secretary Miller said he would not review the status of the New York cases. The next area was the French where the Iranians were seeking an order compelling transfer of funds. Our officials have sought a delay on the grounds that this is a grave matter which requires consultations. Should the Ambassador go to the Prime Minister? (The President said yes.) We will now be able to point to the British court ruling that this is not just a standard case of commercial law.

The President asked about Volcker's position.

Secretary Miller said he now agreed, particularly since it was becoming very clear that Iranian withdrawals would have left our banks high and dry.

The President said he should tell that to the German Banks.

Secretary Miller then turned to the question of getting multilateral cooperation. The first step should be triggering cross default provisions to protect their own claims against Iran. This must not be just U.S. banks. This step is the easiest to do. It does not require a government decision to impose sanctions, but it would be very effective and would support the dollar. If instituted by the Germans, Japanese and others, the Iranians would have trouble finding a place to put their money and it would force them into using dollars.

The President asked what would prevent the Iranians from isolating us, since they had excellent relations with all of the other countries.

Secretary Miller replied that what was binding was the \$15 billion of liabilities and the fact that they had their cash spread around in such a way that they would have extreme difficulty meeting claims quickly without moving money into the U.S. This option would make it more difficult to do what they are doing now, i.e., demanding that others pay them in currencies other than dollars and holding out the bait of substantial new deposits to cooperative banks. It would certainly hold them off for one or two months at least.

Secretary Vance asked whether we should also approach Italy, the Netherlands and Canada.

Secretary Miller went on with his explanation that loans were syndicated among many banks. If loan A was called, it was then proper

to call loan B and so on. Declaration of default by the Export-Import Bank would reinforce this process some, but not add much since most American loans have already been triggered.

Secretary Brown noted that the trick is to get other countries' banks to join in.

The President asked whether it takes action by the heads of state.

Secretary Miller replied that it differed by country. The French own the banks, so it is a government question, whereas in Germany the banks are private. However, it requires a head of state decision since without that kind of political judgment the banks will not do it. It is not a legal decision, it is policy. It will not be easy to get. He suggested proceeding in steps. First we should approach the various advisors through emissaries with written instructions. They should brief but not pull out all the stops. That would be premature until we have softened the turf. Treasury and State representatives should go to the UK and France, another team to Germany and Switzerland this week. There should be a Presidential message saying they are coming.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if this message should preview economic sanctions? We would be using up a lot of ammunition on this initial step.

Secretary Miller said that the tougher message should be carried by Vance, who will be going to Europe for the NATO meeting.

Secretary Vance agreed.

The President agreed, noting that Vance should sit down with each of them for an hour or so. They must know the seriousness of the situation and the seriousness with which we regard their reluctance to help. In the letter he should say that Vance was coming later.⁵

Dr. Brzezinski said Vance should make the point that the only alternative to multilateral economic actions was unilateral action by the U.S.

Secretary Vance said the implications of an embargo were very serious. We must think how it would be received in the Arab world. The reaction could be violence in spades. It would be viewed as the Western Christian world ganging up on the Islamic world.

Secretary Miller said there were serious implications about continued oil delivery.

Mr. Cutler wondered about the legal ability to proclaim an embargo.

⁵ The draft letter is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #219 held 12/5/79. The NAC Ministerial meeting was held in Brussels December 13-14.

Secretary Vance said the alternative was to seek sanctions at the UN. That way it would not be just the West, but an international body. There was the possibility of a Soviet veto.

The President could foresee calling for sanctions and unilateral acts by our allies at the same time. Public opinion will work for us. He noted that Sadat and Clark were ready to go an extra mile. The others were not so sure.

Secretary Vance said that he thought it would be better to reverse the order. We should call for Chapter Seven sanctions and ask them to join in. Get a debate in the Security Council, especially if the World Court's order has been ignored.

Dr. Brzezinski said that Secretary Vance's idea had merit. We want to avoid a clash between Islam and the West. We want to build collective responsibility, which we could do by calling on the UN, even if there were a veto, which he hoped the Soviets would avoid.

The President said he did not want a six month debate which would leave the hostages there until after Easter.

Dr. Brzezinski said we could seek Chapter Seven sanctions next week.

Secretary Vance said he wanted to review briefly up to 20 steps which are available to us from now on. Some we are already taking, others would be helpful if the negotiations do not go well.

The President returned to the question of the teams and said they should go directly.

Secretary Miller noted that there was not much time, since pressure on the dollar was growing. The Europeans would be tough, that was why he wanted the teams.

Dr. Brzezinski summarized that the teams would go immediately, that Vance would go early next week,⁶ and that a Presidential message would go tomorrow.

The President said the message should simply say that the teams were coming and that Vance was coming. It should not pressure them.

Secretary Vance noted that we were completing our Security Council action. Now we will be bringing together a number of strands which will hopefully bring the release of the hostages.

The President wondered if we should tighten up more in the United States to bring more pressure on Iran.

⁶ Cooper and Solomon visited Bonn, Zurich, and Bern December 6–7. Carswell and Vest visited London, Rome, and Paris on the same dates. (Memorandum from Vance to Carter, December 5; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 15) Vance traveled to London (December 10), Paris (December 10–11), Rome (December 11–12), Bonn (December 11–12), and Brussels (December 12–14).

Admiral Turner suggested that we might wish to encourage trade unions around the world to join with our own unions to boycott Iranian shipping.

Secretary Miller said that Iranian commerce is well contained for the moment. There is virtually nothing moving from the U.S. to Iran.

Secretary Brown agreed that it was a trivial trickle. Some corn was moving from the West Coast.

Admiral Turner noted that another step would be to have Navy ships interrogate all ships bound for Iran. This would not interfere with shipping, but it would raise insurance rates and increase apprehension about shipping to Iran.

Secretary Miller noted that Lloyds has already quadrupled insurance rates and declared Iran a war zone.

Secretary Vance noted that we need to generate additional pressure on the trial question. We need more public demands that there will be no trials.

Mr. Powell noted that the tickers were very heavy with news that there will be trials. That is an important question today. It has a short fuse.

Secretary Vance said we should go to various countries and have them weigh in.

The President said this concerned him. We need to get our timid allies to speak out. We must let them know what we would do if there are trials. He knew that the group was more timid than he was. We should get the EC Nine.

Dr. Brzezinski interjected a reminder that we had told them before what we would do.

Secretary Vance noted that the Ambassador of Sri Lanka has received a commitment for favorable action from the Iranians and he proposes to go to Tehran with a representative of the Secretary General. The Secretary did not know if the Ambassador had overstated Ghotbzadeh's position. We can also ask for a freeze on military shipments. He could do this while he is abroad, as well as getting in touch with the Pakistanis, Turks and others who have been approached.

Admiral Turner noted that a Pakistani delegation is scheduled to go to Iran soon.

Secretary Brown said he would be seeing the Turks soon and would raise the issue.

Secretary Vance said we should pursue our case in the World Court. They will meet on Friday or Monday.⁷ In addition, we should

⁷ December 7 or 10.

continue with our channels through the UN, the PLO and others to seek release of the hostages. A representative of the Secretary General should leave for Tehran tonight or tomorrow. Crown Prince Fahd has asked Arafat to go. We have been in touch with Arafat. We called him today from Beirut. Arafat is timid about taking any action until he has an assured result, but Fahd has said to push him on the plane if necessary. In addition, there are possible intermediary efforts by Assad of Syria and Demirel of Turkey. Nothing will be lost if they can be persuaded to go, although he was not too sanguine about their prospects. President Zia of Pakistan has asked to talk to our Ambassador about this. Should we agree? (The President said sure.) We are also working on the departure of the Shah. Chapter Seven sanctions are available as well. These are all steps we should pursue.

The President asked for comments.

The Vice President observed that with the religious holidays over and the vote on the constitution behind us,⁸ if there is going to be a change we should see it soon. Our time runs out fairly rapidly. We should find some way—through Arafat to Ghotbzadeh to Khomeini perhaps—to tell them this is it. We have kept our tempers for thirty days. We need to know if they are going to start to move. We need to know if it will be another six months. We now see ourselves in an entirely different interval than before.

Mr. Jordan noted that the easiest course for the Iranians each morning was to say that they would wait till tomorrow. It is in their interest to prolong the situation. They keep world attention focused on their grievances and they are not paying a high price.

Mr. Powell asked to raise a new point. If they are not suffering and simply maintain the status quo, should we start to ratchet up? Should we wait for a few days to see while we prepare to heat up the situation? What posture do we want to be in and how long are we willing to stay in this new period? There is some public expectation that the next few days may provide an opening. We have a few days to see if something develops.

The President said that we cannot stand for the status quo to perpetuate itself. Thus far we have been balanced in our actions. We have lucked out in several instances by acting in the nick of time. We have to get our allies with us or tighten up ourselves. He sensed that in the past few days the support of our allies has been waning, and he feared that our adversaries would assess our weakness which would

⁸ The new constitution came into force on December 3 when the voting in the referendum concluded.

cause them to come together. We cannot abide keeping the hostages tied up for another six weeks or six months.

Mr. Jordan noted that we had hoped the vote on the constitution would bring things to a head. He thought there was no option but to get the hostages released.

Secretary Vance said we do not know the answer. We cannot be assured of a positive outcome. A fellow was just back from Tehran where he met with Ghotbzadeh and others.⁹ According to him, Ghotbzadeh badly wants a settlement. The Revolutionary Council wants a settlement. But they cannot affect Khomeini and the students. The Revolutionary Council is 100% against trials, and trials would be a defeat for them. Negotiations may prove to be a dead end.

The President said they need to know that we cannot stay on this road indefinitely. There is no immediate crisis at the moment. We need not act today. We need to strengthen ourselves.

(At that point the meeting was reduced to the statutory members of the NSC.)

⁹ Richard Cottam; see footnote 3, Document 78.

83. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, December 4, 1979, 3:50–5:05 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
State
Secretary Vance
Defense
Secretary Brown

White House
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57, NSC 023 Iran 12/4/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room.

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After the meeting reduced itself solely to the statutory members, Dr. Brzezinski noted the previous discussion of diplomatic and economic steps and outlined the proposed agenda for this portion of the meeting.

—The military steps that might be required;

—The longer-term political actions which we might take regarding the Khomeini Government; and

—Our future military posture in the region.

Before turning to this agenda, Secretary Vance reported on an oral message to the President on Iran from President Brezhnev.² He said that the first two-thirds of the message was all right and that the last third was about what could be expected from the Soviets. He explained that it had been given to him by Dobrynin over the phone. Dobrynin has been called home for consultations and Secretary Vance would meet with him on Wednesday, December 5 and review both Iran and SALT.

The President noted that the Soviets had taken a very negative line in TASS. He said the private assurances about their position were of no help. Secretary Vance indicated that he would pursue this issue vigorously with Dobrynin. The Vice President added that a continuation of the Soviet press line will kill SALT.

Turning to the agenda, Dr. Brzezinski said that the principal issue is the relationship between the military and diplomatic steps and the economic measures which we had under consideration. He noted that we had sent the message to the Iranians concerning holding trials of our hostages³ which foreshadowed certain steps that we would take to interrupt commerce with Iran.

More specifically, Dr. Brzezinski noted the decision of whether to deploy the AWACS, whether to deploy F-111s and whether to revitalize planning for rescue operations which had become dormant. Separate from these deployment decisions, he added, were action decisions

² The oral message stated that the Soviet Union held "a clear and unequivocal position," "consistently stand[s] for a just settlement of the conflict to mutual satisfaction of both sides," has told the Iranian leadership to release the hostages, and hopes the United States appreciates this Soviet effort to relax tensions. The Soviets counseled restraint, particularly should the United States adopt means "which are far from a peaceful resolution of the conflict." At the top of the paper, Carter wrote: "This is b.s. J." (Dictated by Ambassador Dobrynin's Assistant, December 4; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23, Iran 6/75–12/79) The full message is in telegram 312888 to Moscow, December 4. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Box 54, Country Chron File, USSR 12/79) Telegram 312888 is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union, Document 236.

³ See Document 41.

including several possibilities which Harold Brown would be prepared to present.

In this connection Dr. Brzezinski said we should consider how to address these measures with our Allies to encourage their help on the economic measures discussed previously in the NSC meeting.

Finally, Dr. Brzezinski said there was the question of timing: is time on our side or is there a continuing erosion in our position internationally? He concluded by suggesting that Harold Brown brief the NSC on the military options which he had under consideration.

The President indicated that he first would like Secretary Vance to respond to a question he had asked earlier: what should the U.S. do if the Iranians institute trials. He said that he was at ease about our military preparations and he felt that Khomeini was ill-at-ease. He said the Ayatollah knows that we can blockade Iran, that we can destroy the refineries at Abadan and that we can take out their aircraft and airfields. He noted that we had reached a consensus on the nature of these options within the government but that he would decide when they might be implemented.

On the other hand, there was no consensus on the possibilities that were available to us short of these military actions. He thought that as soon as the Security Council finishes its action and the International Court of Justice renders its decision, the U.S. should proceed to ask for mandatory sanctions in the UN Security Council and call for other countries to join us on a voluntary basis. He said he was not certain exactly when economic sanctions should be applied, but it was clear that if the Iranians start trials, the U.S. should move forward on sanctions. He recalled that we had already informed the Iranians that we would seek to interrupt their commerce if they tried the American hostages.

Secretary Vance said he had no problem with calling for sanctions but he opposed the mining of harbors to achieve an interruption in Iranian commerce.

The President explained that he was not in favor of mining harbors as soon as the trials start as long as the Allies have joined us in imposing voluntary economic sanctions and the Security Council is debating in good faith the possibility of mandatory sanctions. However, if this effort is not successful, he reserved the right to mine Iran's harbors. He said he wanted Prime Minister Thatcher, President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt to know that this is an option that we have, and that we are prepared to exercise, if economic sanctions do not work.

The Secretary of State said that he agreed with the President but was against mining.

The Vice President asked whether the concept was that if the Iranians start trials we would immediately move to sanctions and mining.

The President replied “No.” We would call for sanctions, but since Security Council debate could go on for weeks, we would accompany this with a call for like-minded countries to join us immediately in applying voluntary sanctions.

Dr. Brzezinski said that if the latter is effective, that would be fine. But if not, we would come to a crunch.

Secretary Brown said that it is quite important what we say to our Allies. If sanctions are called for, but will not be imposed by the International Community or by our friends, it may be necessary to go to unilateral action.

Secretary Vance said that in that case we should be sure to be clear that we are talking about mining and not bombing.

The President agreed that we should make clear we are considering mining or blockading. He added that he would feel better if Thatcher, Giscard and Schmidt understood that this is a likely prospect if appropriate actions through UN sanctions do not materialize. He added that irrespective of UN action, if they kill a hostage, that is a different situation. He noted, however, that if that happens, a step such as bombing might lead to the killing of the other 49.

The President said that his worst period was earlier when the Iranians might have killed the Marine they had captured and we had thousands of Americans in Tehran against which the Iranians could retaliate. He concluded by saying that we should agree on what we will do if trials take place.

Dr. Brzezinski summarized that without trials we would pursue economic sanctions at a slower pace. Secretary Vance agreed that that was the right approach.

The President said that Hodding Carter and Jody Powell should explain what we mean by the economic steps that had been discussed earlier in the meeting. He said they should hone down their arguments and be prepared to make a clear presentation. The Secretary of State said that the concept of cross defaults was not that complicated once it was explained.

The Secretary of Defense said that the real issue is how we can go down the negotiating path without making it harder to use non-negotiating methods. We will confront the argument that if we have gone a month without the Iranians harming the hostages, why not continue to refrain from action.

Dr. Brzezinski said that there are military options that involve additional deployments rather than operations. Secretary Brown said that we already have enough forces deployed to carry out the options we have under consideration.

The President said his approach was to never let the situation freeze up. We must keep taking steps. He said we must not let this

become a “normal” situation. We are really skating on thin ice with the American public. The Secretary of State said that one action we could take is to move the Shah to a permanent home. The President agreed.

Dr. Brzezinski said that there were deployment actions, like positioning AWACS in Egypt, that also might be undertaken.

The Secretary of State opposed deploying AWACS to Egypt. He said that we will be pursuing the negotiating track with the Secretary General, with the PLO and others. He thought that the deployment of AWACS to Egypt would put a big obstacle into this track. He thought it would only serve to get the Iranians to rally around Khomeini and toughen up again just when we were hoping to induce them into a more accommodating stance. He said it simply did not make sense to move the AWACS in at this time.

Secretary Brown said that there were considerable difficulties in Libya at the moment and that the movement of the AWACS to Egypt could be related to Libya as opposed to the Iranian situation.

Dr. Brzezinski said that we have followed the two-track approach in this crisis—increasing military preparations and pursuing negotiating efforts. He said the political negotiations will be going forward and that the deployment of AWACS will demonstrate that the military track is moving forward in case negotiations should fail. Secretary Vance disagreed. He said he thought it would block negotiations. Harold Brown recalled that this was what the Secretary of State had thought if a second carrier were moved into the Arabian Sea.

The President said that he did not agree with the Secretary of State. He said that the use of American planes in this situation is a real possibility and we need to prepare for it. He recalled that he had turned down proposals to deploy a third carrier to the region or to put Marines into the area. But he thought the reaction to AWACS would be no worse in Iran than to the two-carrier deployment and that he would feel better if the AWACS were there in case of a conflict.

The Secretary of Defense said that we could get the AWACS there in a short period of time. The President responded that he thought he had decided to do this ten days ago at Camp David. Secretary Vance responded that he had not been a participant in that decision. Dr. Brzezinski recalled that the decision had been taken in connection with the Defense Budget meeting⁴ and that immediately thereafter, when the Secretary of State had learned about it, had registered his concern.

⁴ The meeting at Camp David to discuss the Defense budget took place on November 24 from 10:03 a.m. to 1:10 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

The President concluded by saying that he did not agree with the Secretary of State and that Harold Brown should go ahead and put the AWACS into Egypt.

The Secretary of State asked who should be notified and when. Secretary Brown said that the Egyptians would obviously be notified. The Secretary of State added that our European Allies should be notified as well.

The President asked for the status of the deployment. Secretary Brown said that the AWACS can be in Egypt by Friday.⁵ He added that we can refuel from Mildenhall and not the Azores and so we need not inform the Portuguese. It would therefore be possible to deploy the AWACS on a quiet basis.

The President said that he had no aversion to people knowing about it. Secretary Brown said that it was best to pursue the quiet track and then notify people after we land the AWACS in Egypt.

[1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

The President asked the Secretary of State for his opinion about discussing this issue on a private basis during his visit with Prime Minister Thatcher, President Giscard and Chancellor Schmidt. The Secretary of State thought this was a good idea. He said we have not thought through who are the best people to support and we should obtain our Allies' thinking. The President indicated that he was particularly interested in the views of Thatcher and Giscard on General Djam and Bakhtiar representatives. The Secretary of State added that we need to do more analysis for a successful operation.

The Secretary of Defense said that we could not wait forever for a perfect analysis. We have links into the opposition and we need to exercise them in order to get more information on its capability. The Secretary of State responded that as the Vice President once observed, the U.S. has a poor record in carrying out such operations and therefore we need better information.

Dr. Brzezinski said he agreed that more information is desirable. He thought that we should talk to the Germans as well. But he recalled the French dictum that to get engaged is to see.

The President said we do not want to do anything until Cy gets back. He suggested that Stan Turner promptly provide CIA's best assessment of potential successors to Khomeini for Secretary Vance's use. Dr. Brzezinski thought that in addition the Secretary could explain

⁵ December 7.

the program we have in mind.⁶ The President said that we should get the Allies thoughts rather than lay out a U.S. plan. He also thought there might be a possibility that the French could help provide us information on the Iraqi position and their intentions in this situation.

The Secretary of State said that Dick Cooper had been in contact with oil company officials operating in Iraq. They were all convinced that the Iraqis will invade Iran's oil fields.

[Omitted here is information on regional security.]

Turning to the question of a permanent location for the Shah, Secretary Vance outlined the situation:

In Argentina, Videla has said "the negative generally outweighs the positive." The price they want is for the United States to lay off on human rights and to say nice things about their government. They also want the Shah to invest his fortune in Argentina. The President commented that we certainly could congratulate them on their hospitality.

The Secretary said that in Austria, Kreisky is waiting for Arafat's reaction on the consequences to the hostages should the Shah relocate there. The President asked what Kreisky had in mind. Secretary Vance replied that Kreisky does not want to be responsible for the deaths of the hostages. The President replied that Kreisky could write a letter in advance disclaiming responsibility. Secretary Vance concluded that we will learn soon what the Austrian reaction is.

South Africa wants a request from the Shah in order to consider seriously the possibility of granting him asylum. The Shah has said that he does not like South Africa because they are racists. We are in touch with his people to say that this response is not satisfactory. We understand that the Shah told Peter Tarnoff that he would go to South Africa but that the Shahbanou does not want to go there.

Continuing, the Secretary said that Guatemala too would accept the Shah but they too want a big price. Tonga has volunteered asylum, but the Shah has said he does not like islands. There is even the possibility of Ireland. A church leader in Iceland, speaking on behalf of the Government, has said that he might come there. We have asked our Ambassador to Iceland to assess that possibility. Finally, we know that Paraguay will take him, but he will not go there. Costa Rica has said in the past that they would take him, but we do not know what their

⁶ In a December 4 memorandum to Vance and Turner, Brzezinski wrote that when Vance talks to Thatcher, Schmidt, and Giscard, he should "seek their views on the possibility of supporting an alternative to the Khomeini government in Iran. In particular you should ask for their assessment of alternative leaders and rival groups within and outside Iran as well as the most effective strategies for supporting them." (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23, Iran 6/75-12/79)

present position is and we are concerned that it would be impossible to protect them there.

Dr. Brzezinski said that Guatemala sounded best. The President asked about Panama. Secretary Vance replied that the Panamanians have not made their position clear.

The Secretary of State said that they were trying to get more responsible people to Texas to work on the Shah's staff. The current key-staff person, Robert Armao, was not helpful and we are trying to encourage Jackson to get more directly involved.

The Secretary asked whether the President had seen the analysis of how long the Shah has to live. Dr. Brzezinski said that the CIA estimated 6–18 months, but he noted that this was an analysis by a doctor who has not been directly involved in the Shah's case.

[Omitted here is information on SALT II.]

The President then asked about the Iranian diplomats and measures that might be taken against them. Secretary Vance said that PNGing the Iranian diplomats might lead the Iranians to decide that they can do whatever they want with our hostages. However, if we must do something, we should cut down the number of Iranian diplomats and restrict their freedom of movement. He said it was important to keep a handful in this country to service the students. Moreover, in the end, we may want to trade a mutual break in relations as part of the final resolution of the crisis.

The President said that by PNGing he meant he wanted to kick out all of those except those who are needed to take care of the students. Secretary Brown said that if the number of Iranian diplomats was cut in half, that would be a help. The President observed that when we take this action, the American public's reaction will be—are they still here?

[1 paragraph (4½ lines) not declassified]

The President asked what is the least number with which the Iranians could operate? Secretary Vance replied five. The Vice President asked whether anyone has asked us to remove them; whether there has been any political pressure on this score. He said that he had not sensed that it was a point of irritation with the American people.

The President responded that he wanted Khomeini to know that the situation is deteriorating. He thought that they feared a break because they worry about not being able to defend themselves against Iraq. The President said that he wanted to tighten the noose that Khomeini had tied around his own neck. He asked why it was necessary to keep open any consulates.

The Secretary of State replied that they were the only ones who could deal with the students. Dr. Brzezinski asked why the banks cannot do it directly. The Secretary of State said that the consulates give the money to the banks to give to the students.

The President asked the Secretary of State to get answers to the question of how the money to the students is distributed and on the number of Iranian diplomats that must remain in the country. He said Khomeini must think that the situation cannot be serious if we are still doing diplomatic business as usual. [4½ lines not declassified] he wanted to see if the banks could handle the students.

The Secretary of State said that Mr. Farhang, the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy, wants to go back to Tehran to see Khomeini before taking the job as head of the UN Mission in order to tell him what a mistake the holding of the hostages has been. If Khomeini still wanted him to take the UN job, then he would come back and do so.

The President asked the Secretary if he could get in touch with Khomeini if he wanted to communicate with him. The Secretary replied that we can do it.

The President asked about Lopez Portillo's comments and what we were doing about Mexican reaction to our freezing of assets. The Secretary of State said that he would be seeing the Mexican Ambassador the next day.

The meeting then adjourned.

84. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 5, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Treasury

As the result of the NSC meeting today,² it was agreed that the following strategy should be pursued with respect to increasing economic pressure on Iran for the release of American hostages.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23, Iran, 6/75-12/79. Top Secret. At the top of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "ok, but prepare with Cy more detailed instructions for my approval. Let's send the msg from me to leaders immediately. Let me see text. J."

² Reference is to the December 4 NSC meeting. See Document 82.

The U.S. will seek support from the Governments of Britain, West Germany, France, Switzerland and Japan to encourage their banks to declare cross defaults against Iranian deposits.

Teams of Treasury and State Department officials will be dispatched immediately to these countries to explain our approach.

At the same time the President will send messages directly to the leaders of these countries explaining our general strategy and informing them of the arrival of the U.S. teams. The Secretary of State will follow up with Prime Minister Thatcher, Chancellor Schmidt and President Giscard during his trip to Europe next week.³

The Presidential letter and the Secretary of State's presentation will make clear that we are asking for this support in order to forestall the necessity of taking more drastic action. The Secretary in particular should make the following points:

—The U.S. is prepared to call for Chapter 7 sanctions in the United Nations and accompany this with a request to our Allies and friends to voluntarily implement a trade embargo against Iran.

—The President will decide when to take this step, but should the Iranians try any of the American hostages, the U.S. will immediately call for Chapter 7 sanctions.

—To the extent that the debate on Chapter 7 sanctions is going forward in a positive way and we receive effective allied support for implementing voluntary economic sanctions on trade with Iran, we will not take direct unilateral measures to interrupt trade with Iran. However, the Secretary should make clear that should this not prove to be the case, the President reserves the right to act unilaterally to interdict commerce with Iran by other means. The Secretary should be explicit in spelling out what means might be employed.

Zbigniew Brzezinski

³ A note in the margin by Carter reads: "Ask cut off of military spare parts, etc."

85. Memorandum From the Special Assistant for Counter Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency (Kalaris) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, December 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran—Balance Sheets

I don't think there is anything new in what I have to say in the balance sheets. The stark presentation, however, leads to the conclusion that our long-term national interests call for decisive military action.

a. Gains/Losses in pursuing present direction for the following three months:

Gains for the U.S.:

—It will permit economic measures we are taking to have their impact on Iran.

—It will probably ensure that hostages are not executed.

Losses for the U.S.:

—It will not secure the release of all the hostages.

—It will compound the chaos that prevails in Iran and will give determined and organized groups, such as the Tudeh, an excellent opportunity to gain influence to the long-range detriment of the Western world.

—It will give opportunity to Khomeini to fractionize Western world public opinion.

—It will give Khomeini opportunity to gain support in Moslem world.

—It will affect adversely our image and influence in the third world and in particular the Gulf states.

—It could lead to the disintegration of Iran with dire consequences for the region.

—It can adversely affect our relationships with key Western allied nations and Japan.

b. Gains/Losses in pursuing a military solution:

Gains for the U.S.:

—It might save the lives of some of the hostages.

—It can restore a sense of stability in an area which is highly volatile.

—It will seriously undercut OPEC.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 12, Folder 60: George Kalaris/EA/DCI/Memo Chrono. Secret.

—It will bring a degree of order back to international relations.

—It will enable Iranians to sober up and decide on their future in a rational manner, thus preserving the integrity of Iran.

Losses for the U.S.:

—It will accelerate temporarily anti-U.S. actions in other Moslem countries.

—It might bring about Soviet intervention and a splitting up of Iran.

—It will offer the Soviets and other leftist elements a propaganda leverage against the U.S. for a certain period of time.

George T. Kalaris²

² Kalaris signed “George” above this typed signature.

86. Memorandum From the National Intelligence Officer for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Horelick) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner and the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, December 5, 1979

SUBJECT

Vance-Dobrynin Conversation

1. Dobrynin has been recalled to Moscow for 10 days for consultations and is leaving today. Because of his imminent departure, Secretary Vance called Dobrynin in this morning to protest this morning’s *Pravda* article by A. Petrov on Iran.² [portion marking not declassified]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 12: C–372. Secret; Sensitive. Sent through Clarke. A copy was sent to the NIO for warning.

² The *Pravda* article by A. Petrov states that, while contrary to the Vienna Convention, the hostage situation had to be understood in the historical context of U.S. actions toward Iran; that the United States was preparing to use force; that Israel had offered its services for this and that the Pentagon would use bases in Egypt; and that Kennedy and Young supported the extradition of the Shah. The article included a warning from Brezhnev against any outside interference in Iran’s internal affairs. According to an INR analysis, the article’s byline implied high-level Foreign Ministry approval but was essentially “an exercise in waffling” since it omitted an earlier statement by Brezhnev that U.S. military intervention was an infringement of Soviet national security. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Europe, USSR and East/West File, Box 56, West Europe Country File, Iran 11/79–7/80)

2. Two days ago the Soviets advised us in an oral note that they had made a *démarche* to the Iranians urging the release of the hostages and expressed the hope that the US would continue to act with restraint in this matter.³ [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. Secretary Vance said that the US appreciated the cooperation of the Soviet Union in some matters pertaining to Iran and took note of the Soviet *démarche* to Iran several days ago. But the Secretary went on to say that the Soviets were now undercutting this kind of useful behavior with the Petrov article.⁴ [*portion marking not declassified*]

4. Dobrynin replied that he had not seen the article but from what he had been told it probably reflected anxiety in Moscow about reports of American preparations to take other measures. He said that military action by the US would create a situation in which the question would be raised about possible Soviet involvement. The Soviet side would want very much for that question not even to be raised. [*portion marking not declassified*]

5. Secretary Vance said that the President would exhaust all diplomatic means to resolve the issue, but that if any harm were done to the hostages that would create an intolerable situation. Dobrynin said that he understood that harm to the hostages would represent a kind of threshold for us (Although Vance was not unconditional or explicit on this point, it would not be unreasonable for the Soviets to infer from what he said that if the hostages were not harmed, the US would not resort to military force—ALH). [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. Dobrynin asked Vance if the US agreed that Khomeini may be looking for a face saving way out. Vance said that if that were the case, we had indicated that we would be prepared to work out something with the Iranian authorities (The context in which Dobrynin asked this question did not seem to suggest that the Soviets had their own source of information on Khomeini's desires for a face-saving solution, but seemed rather to suggest a speculative line of inquiry intended to probe US willingness to compromise rather than employ force—ALH). [*portion marking not declassified*]

7. SALT—Dobrynin said that Vasev had reported to Moscow that the Administration would not push for SALT ratification. Vance said he was conveying to Dobrynin a decision by the President that the Administration would indeed push for SALT ratification and would

³ See footnote 2, Document 83.

⁴ In the reply to the Soviet message, the United States included a formal complaint about the article. The U.S. message was transmitted in telegram 315754 to Moscow, December 8. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 12/5/79–12/9/79) It is printed in *Foreign Relations*, vol. VI, Soviet Union, Document 237.

convey the treaty to the Senate in January (The implication intended may have been that the Soviets indeed did still have something to lose by exploiting Iran against us as in the Petrov article—ALH). [*portion marking not declassified*]

Arnold L. Horelick⁵

⁵ Horelick signed “Arnold” above this typed signature.

87. Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs (Maynes) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, December 6, 1979

Iran: Future UN Strategy

With the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution,² we have achieved four things:

—Both through the resolution and the accompanying statements by a cross-section of the international community we have established that Iran is totally isolated internationally.

—Waldheim has a strong mandate; from his statement to the Council it is clear that he intends interpreting his mandate broadly and is open to innovative ideas. He is awaiting an initial response from Iran.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Maynes and Helman. Concurred in by Saunders. A handwritten notation at the top of the memorandum reads: “DDN—Urgent.”

² On December 4, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 457. The resolution called upon Iran to release the hostages, called upon the United States and Iran to resolve peacefully all remaining issues, urged both to use “utmost restraint in the prevailing situation,” and requested the Secretary-General to “lend his good offices for the immediate implementation” of this resolution. (Department of State *Bulletin*, January 1980, p. 51) Waldheim informed the Security Council that he had talked with Ghotbzadeh and “sent a personal message” to Khomeini urging release of the hostages and offering to go to Iran. (Telegram 6335 from USUN, December 22; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Dec 1979) Waldheim’s letter to Khomeini is in telegram 6298 from USUN, December 20. (*Ibid.*)

—Some members of Iran’s leadership find it possible to interpret the resolution in a positive light.

—The Non-Aligned clearly are on record with Iran’s leadership that they cannot argue publicly in favor of Iran’s revolution as long as Iran continues to hold hostages.

Looking ahead over the next few weeks, I suggest that we work along a two-track strategy:

1. We should allow Waldheim, the Non-Aligned and other interlocutors to continue to apply pressure on Iran’s leadership. We should say nothing which would diminish the credibility of Waldheim’s diplomacy. In this regard, we should do everything we can to prevent press leaks about plans to “punish Iran.” Instead, our public visible effort should be directed at encouraging, reinforcing and cooperating with Waldheim’s diplomacy. It is only if we are seen to be pursuing honestly this track that we can have some hope of succeeding on the second track.

2. We would develop the second track leading to an effort at sanctions gradually. Thus, we would not jump immediately to Article 41 sanctions as some statements from the White House suggest. Rather we would first wait until the Iranians have rejected the current resolution (which we must hope they will not do). We would next move to have the Security Council formally declare a threat to the peace under Article 39.³ We would then await another Iranian response before proceeding to Article 41. In all of these steps we must recognize that only actual direct threats to the lives of the hostages are likely to induce the Council to consider seriously the grim prospect of sanctions against a country as important as Iran. For this reason, even when we invoke Article 41, I would argue against full sanctions. We should start with items which are serious for Iran but not dangerous for others. A cut off in air traffic is an example. In preparation for this we should quietly begin to plan on steps leading towards implementation of our policy, initially letting our friends know what we have in mind and seeking support in principle for invoking Chapter VII. While the fact that we are holding such discussions with other governments will become known, that in and

³ Article 39 in Chapter VII of the UN Charter states that after determining the existence of a threat to international peace, the Security Council would ask member states to implement measures as noted in Articles 41 and 42, as appropriate. Under Article 41 such measures included “complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.” Article 42 states that should the Security Council find Article 41 to be inadequate, “it may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action may include demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces” of member states. (“Imposition of Chapter VII Sanctions on Iran: Substantive and Procedural Aspects,” undated; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #231 held 12/17/79.)

of itself would probably stimulate others to work harder to assure the success of the track one approach. We could respond publicly to any rumors that we obviously are reviewing all contingencies in an effort to ensure the availability to us of all the remedies contained in the UN Charter.

In your discussions with our Allies during the trip, I recommend that you review with them this two-track approach, and seek the following in addition:

—Support for the two-track approach.

—Agreement in principle that Chapter VII and sanctions will have to be invoked if Iran does not release the hostages in a reasonable period of time or if it formally rejects the decision of the International Court of Justice.

—Agreement to join us (preferably in New York) to engage in contingency planning on sanctions and their application. We would be willing to provide a working paper.

88. Memorandum From the Inspector General, Central Intelligence Agency (Waller) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, December 6, 1979

SUBJECT

Soviet Attitude Toward Iran

1. I am attaching a paper² which represents an effort to analyze the Soviet attitude and strategy toward Iran.

2. In today's issue of *Pravda*,³ the Central Committee of the Soviet Union accused the United States of "crude military and political pressure" against Iran. It described the situation as one which "*threatens to become one of the most serious international incidents since World War II.*"

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 12: C–372. Secret. Sent through Carlucci.

² "Analysis of Soviet Position Regarding Iran," undated; attached but not printed.

³ Presumably a reference to the A. Petrov article; see footnote 2, Document 86.

3. The attached paper concludes that direct military intervention in Iran by the U.S. would provoke retaliatory intervention by the USSR and create a situation potentially more damaging to U.S. policy than that which faces us now. It also concludes that Soviet tactics will, for the time being, call for support of Khomeini. The Tudeh Party will accordingly continue its popular front stance in support of Khomeini.

89. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci) and the Deputy Director for Operations (McMahon)¹

Washington, December 7, 1979

SUBJECT

Conversation with Dr. Brzezinski, 6 December 1979 [*portion marking not declassified*]

1. I discussed the covert action situation and Secretary Vance's trip and my concerns over it. I made it clear that we were in no position to decide with whom or how we would go about such a covert action. He understood that but will be looking for something more specific if, after Secretary Vance comes back, we decide to go ahead. I worked hard to persuade him there wasn't much more specific that we could do and we needed flexibility to establish contacts and their confidence in us. *We might be thinking, however, of what we could write that would be supposedly more specific, e.g., [less than 1 line not declassified] initial people we would contact until we saw where that led us* (that was attached as an annex to the proposal but we could spell it out a little bit more including where they were and something about how we would make contact—*[less than 1 line not declassified]* with Bakhtiar, for example). In short, *Dr. Brzezinski feels he'll need something with a little more teeth in it to get the President on board.*

Among other things, I think *we should be very lucid in stating that this is an effort to gain contact with these people so that we can assess what they are doing and what their potential is* and so that we can gain their confidence. *We should then state quite precisely what level of commitment*

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 5: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Various Subjects. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

we are going to give to them so that they will feel it worthwhile talking to us, [1 line not declassified] but indicate we need a lot of latitude on it depending on what turns up. Overall, I think we just need to discuss the art of entering into such a covert action in a tutorial sort of way, interleaving it with the specifics of money and names. [portion marking not declassified]

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Stansfield Turner²

² Turner signed “Stan” above this typed signature.

90. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, December 7, 1979

1. *Briefing of Hostages’ Families:* Your appearance today at the meeting with the families of the hostages was greatly appreciated, as I am sure you could tell. We found the families understanding of the difficult circumstances and supportive of our actions. They were very appreciative of the job that Dave Newsom, Hal Saunders and Hodding Carter did in answering their questions. Many of them remarked afterwards that your willingness to spend so much time with them in the afternoon convinced them of your determination to get our people out of Tehran. They particularly appreciated your expression of restraint.²

2. *Permanent Residence for the Shah:* Following our approach to him yesterday, the South African Ambassador responded this afternoon that Prime Minister Botha wants us to know that he will consider the matter very seriously over the next several days. He will probably

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14. Secret. Carter wrote “Cy, J” in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² Carter, Vance, and other officials met with the families of the hostages at the Department of State on December 7. No official record of the meeting was found, but the press reported the families’ comments and reactions. (Molly Ivins, “Hostages’ Relatives Relieved After Briefing,” *New York Times*, December 8, 1979, p. 6, and Margot Hornblower, “Families of the 50 Hostages in Iran Converge in Washington,” *Washington Post*, December 8, 1979, p. A10) After the meeting, Carter addressed employees in the lobby of the State Department. For text of his remarks, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, p. 2205.

want to consult with some of his cabinet colleagues and expects to have a reply for us by the middle of next week. I asked the Ambassador to express our appreciation to the Prime Minister, and urged that the South African government make a positive decision as soon as possible.

We have also gotten a reliable report that General Torrijos is prepared to issue an invitation to the Shah. The Shah had indicated that he preferred not to go to Central America but we have told one of his representatives that he must seriously consider Panama in light of Torrijos' putative invitation. Torrijos apparently explained that the offer to the Shah was unconditional and that he would be able to provide adequate security. If other alternatives fail, we will push the Panama alternative hard.³

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

³ Carter wrote "good" in the left margin. In a December 6 memorandum to Vance, Christopher summarized the status of negotiations for the Shah's possible refuge in nine locations. Saunders traveled to Austria to discuss the potential consequences of the Shah's moving there, and Jackson visited South Africa for discussions. Egypt remained willing to take him. Guatemala refused the Shah's visa request, and Christopher categorized Taiwan as a "non-starter." Argentina, Tonga, Iceland, and Paraguay refused. (Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, President's Breakfasts 9/1/74 thru 12/31/79) On a December 5 memorandum from Vance, who stated that Steve Oxman would be the point of contact with the Shah at Lackland, Carter wrote: "The Shah's servant should stop having press conferences. Tell the Shah not to announce that he has decided not to go to this or that country. He should keep his mouth shut & find a place to go. J." (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14)

91. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 10, 1979, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Claytor

JCS

Admiral Thomas Hayward

General John Pustay

CIA

Frank Carlucci

Energy

John Sawhill**

Justice

John Shenefield**

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**

Robert Mundheim**

Anthony Solomon**

White House

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

Lloyd Cutler**

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

**Present for domestic issues only.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Public Statements.* Dr. Brzezinski relayed to the SCC the President's concern about the stories that are beginning to appear about U.S. plans and other insider speculation. The record to date of maintaining the confidentiality of SCC discussions and of the Administration speaking with one voice has been very good. It is very important that any briefings or backgrounders be coordinated in advance. Jody Powell is the proper point of contact. The Vice President commented that unauthorized briefings and the usual business of building up credit with particular reporters was unjustified and unpatriotic. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, SCC Meeting #224 held 12/10/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

2. *Japan.* Dr. Brzezinski briefly reviewed his meeting with the Japanese Ambassador,² in which he had noted the rather weak UN statement and efforts by Japanese financial institutions to circumvent our restrictions on Iran. The Ambassador had agreed, noting that his country was very selfish, and promised to carry the message back. The Ambassador said he was certain the Prime Minister wanted to cooperate. (S)

3. *Economic Steps.* Mr. Solomon and Mr. Mundheim reported on their discussions in Europe. Surprisingly, the Swiss appear to be the most cooperative. They want any action taken to have the appearance of private actions by banks rather than a formal act at U.S. request, but they say they are prepared to act and will inform Solomon on Wednesday. Whatever action the Swiss take will be observed very quickly in the market and will have a desirable effect. The Germans were more reluctant, although they raised some "private" counterproposals stopping short of cross default. The Germans are evidently prepared to instruct their banks to declare default on Iranian loans within 24 hours of a missed payment, to accept no new deposits from Iran in currencies other than dollars, and to instruct their oil companies to insist on payment only in dollars.³ The Italians have many loans to Iran but few assets; they also have problems with oil deliveries and their large presence in Iran. They probably will have little effect on the situation. The British were very hostile to the idea of cross default. They would prefer to take measures which are directly linked to the holding of hostages and which can be lifted quickly once the hostages are released. They fear that cross defaults will get out of hand once begun and be difficult to unravel. The British tend more toward a government freeze or blocking of assets to complement our own actions. They were also not enthusiastic about intervening with the British courts. The French were neutral and cold.⁴

All agreed that there was reason to be hopeful. The ground had been prepared for Vance's efforts, and if the Swiss in fact begin to move it could begin a cascade of actions by other European banks. Mr. Solomon of Treasury and Mr. Cooper of State will follow up on the

² Memorandum of conversation, December 7. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 34, Memoranda of Conversation 9/79-12/79)

³ According to a December 10 memorandum from [name not declassified] to Turner, CIA analysis indicated that the Swiss and the Germans were not as cooperative as the meeting discussion indicated. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R: Executive Registry Subject Files (1976-1979), Box 14, Folder 12: C-372 Iran)

⁴ Carter wrote in the left margin: "Push hard. We will go public if necessary to encourage European help."

implementation and the inevitable negotiations which will follow the Vance mission. (S)

4. *Oil Purchase*. Secretary Miller reported that Treasury had been requested to license purchase of Iranian oil at a contractual price of \$16 per barrel by a Japanese company which is half owned by U.S. companies. The SCC agreed that such a purchase at a low price would be in our interest and that such a license should be issued.⁵ (C)

5. *Iranian Diplomats*. State will call in the Iranian Chargé, Mr. Agah, today and notify him that the Iranian embassy in Washington should be reduced to 15 people and the consulates reduced to five persons each, for a total representation of 35 people.⁶ An announcement will be made by State. State will reexamine the question of closing one or more consulates entirely. (S)

6. *Immigration*. A total of 46,000 Iranian students have been interviewed thus far, of which 37,000 are in status. Fewer than 1,000 have chosen voluntary departures; the remaining 8,000 or so face deportation hearings. Many of those will choose asylum or plead extenuating circumstances. Justice is preparing a public announcement on the status of the program within the next few days, which will be coordinated with Jody Powell. (C)

7. *IEA*. According to preliminary reports, Lamsdorff is resisting our efforts at import quotas and tough controls. He told Mr. Solomon that the IEA meeting was going to produce nothing meaningful. We will have more detail when Secretary Duncan returns. (C)

8. *Espionage Tribunal*. State, CIA, Defense and Mr. Cutler are to consult on the best approach to deal with charges of U.S. interference in Iranian domestic affairs which we could anticipate coming out of a tribunal. State is extending its White Paper to cover the period since Mossadeq. In the first instance, all agreed that we would focus on abuse of the hostages and the fact that convening such a tribunal while they are being held was an additional form of abuse. If the hostages are released, interest in the tribunal will decline. Mr. Cutler will take the lead in examining legal steps we could take to obstruct participation in such a panel by respected American or European figures.⁷ (S)

⁵ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

⁶ On a December 6 memorandum from Vance, next to an item suggesting that Iranian diplomatic and consular representation in the United States could be reduced from 188 to 35, Carter wrote: "This is *excessively generous*, but ok. Have them cut to these numbers. You didn't say what they can do re student funds without the consulates. How do they take care of students in Miami? LA?" (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14)

⁷ Carter wrote in the left margin: "I want an *excellent* White Paper. Post-hostage inquiries and criticisms must be assessed immediately & accurately."

Political-Military Issues:

1. *AWACS*. For the moment, the AWACS will remain in Europe for several weeks. Talks are continuing with the Egyptians, but it is clear that their idea was for the planes to come only prior to a U.S. action. They may be amenable to some other form of cooperation. Secretary Brown is to write Mubarak. It was considered unwise to send a Defense emissary such as David McGiffert until a decision has been taken on the military cooperation program for Egypt. (S)

2. *Huyser Mission*. Because of the Shah's book,⁸ as well as a political effort by certain individuals, attention is being focused on the Huyser mission as having permitted the collapse of the Shah's regime. This is not receiving heavy attention at the moment, but it will be quite important in the post-mortem following the hostages' release.⁹ For the moment, all agreed that it sufficed to take the position that Huyser's mission was to hold the military together so it would be intact for whatever moderate government was likely to emerge after the Shah's departure. His objective was to smooth the transition and keep the army from falling apart. (S)

3. *U.S. Strategy*. Dr. Brzezinski drew attention to the story in the *New York Times* this morning¹⁰ suggesting that our strategy of exerting pressure on Iran in favor of a more moderate leadership was not working. Instead, the country is being polarized and pushed toward the left. Should we continue on the same path or should we force the issue to a head by a real jolt at some point? The Vice President agreed that we needed to take stock of our position and consider whether our strategy had any real prospect of achieving the release of the hostages. We should consult the most expert views available, not only in our government agencies but also in the academic community and among our allies. Mr. Carlucci observed that most expert opinion was agreed on the fact that Khomeini did not yield to pressure and that it promised to be a long process. All agreed that the question was fundamental and that a high-level review should be conducted as soon as Secretary Vance returns from his consultations in Europe. One of his objectives was to seek their best judgment on the evolution of events. (S)

⁸ The Shah's memoir, *Answer to History*, was published in 1980. Excerpts appeared in London on December 7 and were subsequently reviewed by FBIS. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah, Memos)

⁹ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Detail in White Paper." General Robert Huyser visited Iran in January 1979. Documentation on this is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. X, Iran: Revolution, January 1977-November 1979.

¹⁰ Presumably a reference to an article by John Kifner, "Impasse Over the Hostages," *New York Times*, p. A1.

92. Telegram From the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State (Oxman) to the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Tarnoff)¹

Lackland AFB, Texas, December 10, 1979, 0316Z

0553. For Tarnoff only from Oxman. Subject: Meeting With Shah, Dec 9, 1979. (S)

1. (S) I just met with the Shah for 45 minutes and told him the result of country number 1.² He had not heard from Bill Jackson (and was quite perturbed that he had not) and therefore I was breaking the news to him. It appeared to be quite a blow to him. I stated the great lengths to which we had gone to persuade the leader of country number 1. Citing Hal's special trip, the fact that Jackson accompanied him to that country, and the over-arching high-level phone contact.

2. (S) I said that President Carter remained fully committed to the proposition that it is essential to find an alternative country for the Shah. I said we will continue to press at the highest levels and will continue to need Shah's assistance in these efforts.

3. (S) The Shah was or purported to be incredulous at the position taken by the leader of country number 1. I said that that leader had, from the first, feared for his standing in the Arab world and particularly among the Palestinians, if he should accept the Shah. I said he had sought the views of Arafat, among others, who had confirmed his initial fears. "First Lopez-Portillo and then the leader of country number 1," the Shah said. He claimed that this caving in to pressure meant that the regime in Tehran was actually gaining something with its outrageous tactics. "Where will this stop?" he asked.

4. (S) I said there are other possibilities and that it is essential to focus on them. I said we would know more about country number 2³ by mid-week and that setting it aside for the moment, it was important to focus on possibilities in this hemisphere. He said, "like what?" I mentioned country number 3,⁴ our new country number 5,⁵ and the Bahamas. I also probed whether he had considered approaching Lopez-Portillo about extending his visa on a temporary basis. He said the

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah December 1979, Vol. IV. Secret.

² Austria.

³ South Africa.

⁴ Country number 3 not identifiable.

⁵ Panama.

latter was beneath his dignity and again expressed amazement, bitterness, and sorrow at Lopez-Portillo's turn around. He was contemptuous of the Bahamas. He was negative on number 3 and 5 as well as on country number 2—in part on the grounds that these are places where “people go to hide”. I said there are no ideal solutions in a situation like this and pointed out the important distinctions between number 3 and number 5. He listened carefully to this and seemed uninformed about number 5. When we come to making the strong pitch on number 5, I could make effective use of some talking points from the Department, explaining the character of that regime, its standing in the hemisphere and in the Third World, and its relationship with the United States.

5. (S) The Shah raised the question of Switzerland but seemed to feel it is a non-starter.

6. (S) The Shah was very indignant at a comment which he said Andrew Young had just made to the effect that the Shah should go to country number 2 where he could “join his fellow fascists and racists.” Without commenting on this alleged remark, I said it was important not to rule out country number 2, even if it is the Shah's last choice.

7. (S) The Shah's wife had raised Canada with me this afternoon in a conversation reported septel,⁶ and I explained to the Shah that it would not be possible. He said the Canadians will do what the British do. He expressed interest in Australia and New Zealand, but dismissed them on the grounds that they too would simply follow the British. If either of these is a possibility, please advise.

8. (S) The Shah brought up the question of an international commission “to try me and America”. He expressed his contempt for it, he said that if it goes ahead, he would have to defend himself. He said the regime in Iran would presumably present documents covering the 37 year period of his reign and that in defense he would have to call witnesses, even including perhaps former Presidents of the United States. I said that whatever may eventuate with respect to an airing of charges, there was no relationship between this and finding another country in which he can reside. He agreed with this. I assume he was trying implicitly to point out the possible risks to us in the international commission approach. I expect him to raise this again and request

⁶ As reported in a telegram from Oxman at Lackland AFB, December 10, 0015Z. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah December 1979, Vol. IV)

guidance on how you would like me to respond to his comments in this area.

9. (S) The Shah appeared very despondent when I left. He said, "I guess we can wait a few more days to see what happens." I said that while the news about country number 1 is disappointing, it was only one of a number of possibilities and that we must press ahead on the remaining ones.

93. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to Secretary of State Vance and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 11, 1979

SUBJECT

Direct CIA Contact with Shahpour Bakhtiar

1. On 8 December, an officer of this Agency established direct contact [*less than 1 line not declassified*] with Shahpour Bakhtiar.² An indirect channel of communications between Bakhtiar and this Agency had previously been arranged in late August, but recently Bakhtiar, because of the critical situation in Iran, reiterated his request for a personal meeting with a CIA officer.

2. During the one and one-half hour meeting with our officer, Bakhtiar said that he believes any viable future government must be slightly left of center and must include elements of the far right and far left in order to control them. He believes Khomeini has three months remaining at most and, as a result, he has been making strenuous efforts to put his organization together. Bakhtiar contended that while it may appear [*less than 1 line not declassified*] he is not doing much, he has in fact made a lot of progress. Specifically, he professes that:

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 5: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Various Subjects. Secret; Sensitive. Brzezinski and Turner agreed to show this memorandum and Kalaris's December 5 memorandum (see Document 85) to Carter, but not to Vance. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 15, Folder 42: DCI/DDCI/Memrecs/Memos/Agendas of Brzezinski/Aaron Meetings)

² At the top of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "Bakhtiar is a dangerous contact if he should imply any US complicity (Kuwait)—be very careful. C."

a. He has been assembling a "staff" in Tehran to plan for his return. Among the members are military officers who can mobilize large groups upon which he can call for support in time of need.

b. He is planning to return to Khuzestan in about a month if his planning permits.

c. He has established contact with Admiral Madani, Governor of Khuzestan Province and Commander of the Iranian Navy. [3 lines not declassified]

d. He has links to [less than 1 line not declassified] prominent Iraqi Kurdish factions, the [2 lines not declassified].

e. The National Front now completely supports him, and he considers this a solid political development. Karim Sanjabi has allegedly been thrown out along with others who oppose Bakhtiar.

f. His staff in Tehran is now operating a small portable FM station broadcasting cassettes of his speeches.

g. The Iraqis have offered him support in exchange for an agreement that he would not oppose their absorbing Kuwait. Bakhtiar believes that he can make this deal now but subsequently when in power in Iran ignore the part of the bargain concerning Kuwait.

h. [4 lines not declassified]

We lack corroborating evidence that would either confirm or deny that Bakhtiar has made as much progress as he avers. We will continue to check on his actual state of progress.

3. Our officer was also told that Bakhtiar is concerned about his contacts with General Gholam Ali Oveisi, former commander of the Shah's army. While Oveisi is a highly competent officer and would be very useful to Bakhtiar, he feels that Oveisi's contacts with Princess Ashraf and supporters of the Shah could cause trouble, and he emphasized that he wants nothing to do with the former royal family. [2 lines not declassified]

4. Our officer then asked Bakhtiar exactly what he wanted from the United States Government. Bakhtiar replied as follows:

a. He would like us to influence other governments to support him. He would like favorable media coverage. He would like us to encourage some governments [less than 1 line not declassified] to provide financial support.

b. He would like us to try and keep the Shah and his supporters from becoming involved.

Bakhtiar said that time is critical because Khomeini will soon fall, creating a political vacuum that must be filled. He said that he is prepared to move and that if he gets the necessary financial support he has a reasonable chance of succeeding. While Bakhtiar's requests for assistance are modest, we believe from other information that he feels without US support behind him, and without direct US guidance, he has little chance of success. He has said that while he would willingly accept material assistance from other nations, the "brainpower" must come from the US.

5. I recommend that we obtain SCC and Presidential approval of the covert action finding which is attached [4 lines not declassified].

Stansfield Turner³

Attachment

Presidential Finding⁴

Washington, undated

Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, As Amended, Concerning Operations in Foreign Countries Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection

I find the following operation in a foreign country is important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this finding to the concerned committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and to provide such briefings as necessary.

SCOPE

IRAN

DESCRIPTION

Conduct propoganda and political and economic action operations to weaken and disrupt the Khomeini regime; make contacts with Iranian opposition leaders and interested area governments in order to establish a broad, anti-Khomeini front capable of forming an alternative government.⁵

³ Printed from a copy with this typed signature.

⁴ Secret; Sensitive.

⁵ A handwritten note by Carter reads: "Zbig, Change wording to let it be positive—pro-US & pro-democracy. J."

94. **Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)**¹

Washington, December 12, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran—Next Steps

The situation in Iran is building toward an explosion. Khomeini must take most of the responsibility for that, but our firm stance in the hostage situation and particularly our military presence has given heart to some who would not have been willing to stand up otherwise. Although an explosion of the internal situation is not without its risks to our interests and to the lives of the hostages, it is nevertheless true that the present impasse can be broken only by some significant change in the internal power structure of Iran. In a revolutionary situation, change is unlikely to occur peacefully or incrementally. The building pressures must therefore be regarded as an opportunity.

The Constitution

I continue to be persuaded that the central issue is the constitution. Not only does the constitution define the future shape of Iran and spell out in some detail what the revolution was about, but it has acquired special significance as Khomeini's personal life testament. Very much in the sense of a biblical prophet, Khomeini is driven by a dominant inner vision—an idea to which he has dedicated his life. The peculiar expression of clerical rule under a sort of philosopher king (which is how Khomeini must see himself) is the outcome of a lifetime of cloistered thought in medieval settings. It is his divine destiny and he is willing to risk everything to achieve it.

His technique has been very simple. At each turning point Khomeini has identified a tangible enemy which could rally public unity and deflect criticism. In the late summer, the enemy was the Kurdish rebellion and the threat of Soviet involvement. He used that as an excuse to proclaim himself commander in chief, to close down the press, to terminate all opposition political activity, and to attack the Soviets and their minions. At the same time, he packed the membership of the Council of Experts and, while people were distracted, mandated

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran: Non Meetings Hostage Crisis 11/79–12/79. Secret; Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

them to systematically gut the liberal draft constitution and replace it with a document more to his liking.

As the Kurdish problem wore on, it lost its crowd appeal. The attack on our embassy came along just as he faced the next great test of the referendum. He may or may not have engineered it, but he has exploited it to the limit. Recognizing this, we anticipated a change once the referendum was over. We may have been right, for there are clear signs of a new willingness on the part of many in Tehran to get this monkey off their back. But the process is complicated by the power struggle that is raging just below the surface and by the unexpected demonstration of weakness by Khomeini in the referendum itself. Despite heroic efforts to whip up religious and political frenzy, he could manage to get only 70% of the eligible voters to back his version of the constitution—and that is by his own count.

The Emerging Opposition

Khomeini is aware that the longer he waits to implement his ideas, and the more people have an opportunity to think about [what] they mean for Iran, the less likely they are to accept his vision of an ideal Islamic state. So he intends to cram it down their throats while he still has the power to do it.

But the referendum was a curious watershed. Instead of demonstrating strength and sustaining momentum, it brought a sizable opposition out of hiding for the first time and forced them to realize that they had to act soon or not at all. Shariat-Madari is the key. Previously he had kept his own counsel, but the referendum was too much for him to swallow and he began to speak out. That gave heart to others. Khomeini has lost his aura of invincibility. When he left his house to call on Shariat-Madari, he admitted to vulnerability for the first time. When the Imam himself is perceived as fallible and vulnerable, it is the beginning of the end.

Iranians everywhere seem to sense this tidal change. The coffee-house chatter is beginning to turn into serious purpose. As you know, I am in personal contact with several senior Iranians who have considerable networks of influence. Within the past week, one of these men has identified high level channels directly to Admiral Madani in Khuzestan and to Shariat-Madari. For the moment, [2 lines not declassified]. But the moment of truth is at hand.

The Need for a Decision

If Shariat-Madari, Madani, and others who share their abhorrence of a theocratic dictatorship under Khomeini—and who may potentially be willing to risk their lives to oppose it—if they are to move, they are going to need more than kind words of reassurance from us. They do

not want—in fact they fear—any direct action on our part which would make them appear to be imperialist tools. However, Khomeini's henchmen are ruthless, the left is seeking an opportunity to assert itself, and they badly need evidence of support.

The Saudis are contributing through Bakhtiar. The Iraqis have made an offer. The forces of moderation in Iran are now coming to us.² If we merely equivocate, they may go ahead on their own; but we must realize that the absence of any policy decision on our part is going to make them more cautious and increase their proclivity to look for allies among the radical opposition. This is not a situation where outcomes are neatly predictable. However, the general trend of events is clear.

If we sit on our hands and refuse to establish the beginnings of an operational relationship with those who hold the only promise of a moderate future for Iran, we must recognize—and accept responsibility for the fact—that we are prolonging Khomeini's rule, the continued polarization of extremism on the left and right, and the likelihood that the left will increase its strength and legitimacy. We are coming to the point where no decision is in fact a decision.³

At this stage, what is required is a clear decision that we cannot accept Khomeini as the arbiter of our future relationship with Iran. We must be willing to recognize that the longer Khomeini remains as the supreme power in Iran, the more likely we are to have a takeover by radical elements of the left. We must be clear in our own minds that the risks of an early breakdown of authority and struggle for power are less than the risks of prolonged manipulation by Khomeini which will eventually lead him into a coalition with the left and with the Soviets in order to maintain himself in power.

What is required is a quiet signal through available channels to the people who are beginning to act that we support their efforts and will quietly back them up through political efforts and with some financial support. We can put limits on our support, but we must declare our intentions.⁴

The very act of decision will free us to talk operationally with the Saudis and other friends in the region. It will give us the basis for a serious relationship with the Iraqis—[*less than 1 line not declassified*]. It will provide an order and structure to our actions. In short, it will provide a policy rudder to guide us through a dangerous and tumul-

² This sentence was underlined. In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Who? When? How?"

³ The second half of this sentence was underlined.

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "This needs to be expanded & clarified."

tuous time. Without a decision we are merely adrift and prey to the currents of the moment.

It is in our deepest national interest to see a moderate government of the center emerge in Iran, a government which expresses the national aspirations of the Iranian people for independence and sensible economic development.

We can leave that to chance or we can help the Iranian nationalists who are beginning to act. It is time we made up our mind.

95. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State and the White House¹

Brussels, December 13, 1979, 1334Z

Secto 12022. Eyes only for Dr. Brzezinski and Mr. Christopher From the Secretary. Subject: Memcon With Foreign Minister Francois-Poncet.

Following is conversation of December 10, 1979 at the Quai d'Orsay with Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Jean Francois-Poncet.² The subject was my talks on Iran (and NATO communiqué). Other participants: M. Bruno de Leusse, Secretary-General, MFA; M. Jean-Claude Paye, Director, Economic Affairs, MFA; M. Henri Servant, Deputy Director for the Middle East, MFA; Ambassador Arthur A. Hartman; and Richard N. Cooper, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs.

The Secretary began his presentation by saying that he wished to outline the current negotiating situation on Iran, the history of our contacts and the current status of these exchanges.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Vance NODIS Memcons 1979. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² Vance was in Paris December 10–11. For the itinerary of his European trip, see footnote 6, Document 82. The talking points for his trip, which were personally edited by Carter, are in Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1979. Vance's trip was discussed at the December 6 SCC meeting. In the left margin of the meeting notes, beside Item 2, "Vance Trip," under "Domestic Issues," Carter wrote: "Make talking points complete & detailed for benefit of all of us." Beside Item 1, under "Political-Military Issues," Carter wrote: "I do not want to be hostage to European views." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 17, Meetings File, SCC Meeting #221 held 12/6/79)

First, after the passage of the UN Resolution in the Security Council,³ Waldheim got in touch with the Iranians to see whether he, Waldheim, should send someone to Tehran or whether they would send someone to New York. Waldheim thought of sending Rafiuddin Ahmed, his Chef de Cabinet. As an alternative, Ghotbzadeh said he would prefer that discussions continue with the man he planned to send as Iran's new representative in New York. This man's name is Mansour Farhang and he was the Cultural Attaché in Washington after the revolution, but really no. 2 in the Iranian Mission in Washington. The Secretary said that he knows that Farhang has always opposed the taking of the hostages and has argued strongly with his own government that this would only isolate Iran from the rest of the world. [1 line not declassified] For example, we know that when he was asked to take the job in New York, he said he would do it only if he were allowed first to return to Tehran and talk to the Revolutionary Council and go to Qom and talk to Khomeini. He only decided to take the job, he has said to his friends, when these conditions were accepted. He has said that he wanted to convince the people in Qom that the Shah would never be returned by the United States.

Our current information on the hostage situation is ambiguous. There seems to be a move to assemble what has been referred to as a "grand jury," which will examine US policy from 1953 to the present and "investigate the crimes of the US". Farhang has reported that the question of trying the prisoners is "dead." Our view is that if he gets to New York, it will be a plus rather than a minus.

Waldheim has also authorized the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka to pick up again in Tehran talks he had on the way to the US and continue those discussions, once again looking toward the specific proposal of getting in to see the hostages themselves and verifying their condition. Waldheim is no longer considering sending his own representative to Tehran at this time.

Second, today we have gone into the World Court asking that they grant us immediate interim relief by ordering the release of the hostages. We assume that Iran will boycott this proceeding and ignore its results. We will then face a situation in which Iran will have refused to obey a Security Council resolution and a World Court order—thus totally flouting international opinion.

Third, we have been attempting to use the PLO. The Secretary said that he had been in almost daily contact with Arafat, who had been very helpful on gaining the release of the first thirteen hostages. We continue to work this channel and exchange views. There is still some

³ See footnote 2, Document 87.

possibility of Arafat going to Tehran, but he is hesitant to go if he is not likely to succeed. Fourth, we have been in contact with a number of Islamic leaders—heads of state—who have expressed a willingness to go to Qom and see Khomeini directly. We have also got members of the Islamic clergy to weigh in, but unfortunately not senior Shia leaders.

That is the sum and substance of our contacts. We expect an Arafat decision in the next two or three days and he has been pressed very hard by Prince Fahd, plus the Islamic Council.

The Secretary said he would like to discuss military options in a smaller group and thus did not wish to say anything more than that we had placed adequate forces in the area and that he felt this was a useful step. We intend to pursue and exhaust all peaceful means, but we cannot allow the situation to continue indefinitely as it is and, in effect, freeze the status quo. We believe there is only a small chance of the steps already taken having an effect, so therefore we have added economic pressures as the main element, along with our diplomatic activities.

In that area, we will soon face the question of Chapter 7 sanctions. We cannot sit by and see the Security Council and the World Court ignored. The world must recognize that this indeed constitutes a threat to the peace and, therefore, Chapter 7 would be appropriate. We hope and expect the support of the world community and, of course, particularly of our friends and allies if that action becomes necessary. In the meantime, we would like to have international actions to help with the economic pressures we have already begun. The time for collective action is now. We know that even the economic action that we have taken thus far is beginning to hurt because we know that one of Farhang's instructions will be to get the removal of the freeze on assets. Therefore, we know they are having a negative impact. The Secretary then turned to his discussions with Prime Minister Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Carrington.⁴ In those discussions, it was agreed that the best way to support our actions would be for our allies to join us in freezing Iranian assets. This would be the most direct means and it would be related directly and solely to the hostages. Thus the freeze could be lifted if the hostages were released. Second, another means could be used short of a total freeze, which would be to invoke the cross-default clauses in outstanding loans. The Secretary said that such steps were necessary to make our action effective in putting on pressure for the release of hostages and also to prevent any undermining of the

⁴ As reported in telegram Secto 12007 from Paris, December 10. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790569–1090)

dollar by the Iranian authorities. He asked Dick Cooper to explain these measures in more detail.

Cooper explained the cross-default situation. He said that these clauses existed in one way or another in most of the loan agreements and permitted any participant in a loan to call for immediate repayment if evidence of a default on another loan was presented. We are not certain of the situation in all cases, but we do know that Iran is currently in default to American banks even though our freeze would have allowed them to continue payments under those loans. We carefully drew our regulations on blocking in order to permit such repayments and they could have been made to Chase and others. We know that these clauses exist in most of the international consortia loans. We are not sure whether the French are participants in these. If they are, the clauses could be used to trigger cross-defaults. This would snarl up even further the Iranian payment situation. The attraction of such a course of action would be that it would not require government action, but rather private or public advice to banks that they invoke these clauses. It would give the right signal and bring home to Iranian authorities that others are as concerned as we are over the taking of hostages and threats to the international monetary system.

The Secretary said that the British were leaning toward a general freezing action. They were checking their law to see if there was a legal basis. At first, the UK Treasury thought there was not a legal basis, but we have presented an opinion to the Prime Minister from a top British lawyer saying that under a 1947 act the Treasury can freeze assets. There is as yet no firm British Government decision, however.

The Secretary went on to say that the firmer and more tangibly we and our allies and friends act today, the more likely we will be able to get the hostages out and prevent a situation from developing in which military means might have to be used, which, of course, would lead to unpredictable and certainly serious political and economic results. He wanted to state quite clearly, however, that if any of the hostages were harmed, we would have to react and he would discuss the various possibilities for our action in a smaller group at the end of the meeting. If we want to avoid that situation, now is the time to act.

The Secretary said he wanted to speak for a moment about the situation with respect to the Shah. He said that his treatment had been completed and that he can now travel. He wants to find a place where he can stay indefinitely. There seemed to be two realistic possibilities at the moment. One was Panama and the other was South Africa, where his father had lived for some time. Although Sadat continues to hold open his offer of refuge in Egypt, no one thinks that this is a good idea since it would present a real danger to Sadat and open up a whole new set of issues.

The Secretary said that there was another area he would at least like to flag. We all need to look at the longer-term options. It was certainly possible that Khomeini might not endure. We had to see what are the real alternatives. We very much appreciate the exchanges of views that have already taken place and we think it would be a good idea to continue these exchanges about future developments. For example, are you in touch with any of these forces and how do you evaluate them? We know that none of them seems to be perfect, but on the other hand, some may be worse than others. Should we try to influence the situation or not? We ought to put these things on the table.

Francois-Poncet said that the Secretary would be getting an authoritative response from the President at dinner in the evening. We could be sure of French Government sympathy and support. They have been looking at the various alternatives. Legally, on the question of the freezing action by US banks, there was every chance that a court would decide that the US could not apply its order to American banks in France. They recognize that this decision would have importance, but their researches had led them to the conclusion that on the straight legal point, there could be no doubt about how the case would go. They were, however, looking into the question and also the possibility of delays. He said that they would also look at the question of outstanding loans, the possibility of a French freeze and the cross-default clause situation. They would have to examine French law to see if there was a basis.

Francois-Poncet said that they had great understanding for the situation that we face and they recognize that this is of concern to all of us. What is at stake here is the whole international order. We should be in no doubt about their basic philosophy. "We want," he said, "to take the most effective action and to help avoid reactions in other parts of the world." He wondered whether Chapter 7 action might not be the next step. If we decided to move in that direction, France would have a positive attitude and that would then give them the legal basis for action on their part. The problem as they saw it now was that they needed some UN decision as they did, for example, in the case of Rhodesia. He then made a side reference to the Mozambique situation in which the "no answer" was a "yes answer." He said they would continue to look into the legal situation.

Francois-Poncet went on to say that there was a link here to the internal Iranian situation. Was it disintegrating and how fast? We don't want to do anything that would prevent this disintegration, e.g., taking action that might unify internal forces and, therefore, we had to weigh that against the bad effects of inaction. Clearly, international action is most desirable. In answer to a question, the Secretary said that he had been in contact with Dobrynin on the Soviet response. He had

specifically put to Dobrynin, who has now returned to Moscow, the question of whether the Soviets would veto a Chapter 7 action in the Security Council. He had in fact said to Dobrynin that we would assume the Soviets would not veto, and Dobrynin had replied that he would have to check this in Moscow.⁵

The Secretary said that he would like to discuss another aspect of the economic situation, namely, the effort of the Iranians to open new accounts and thus get around our blocking action. Dick Cooper explained in some detail the variety of means which this was taking. He had been surprised at the slowness of the Iranians in moving to get either new accounts in dollars or other currencies set up to make their payments. They were beginning to get cooperation from others and this was giving a mixed signal to the Iranians. What they were seeing on the economic front in many cases was business as usual. We know that it is being interpreted this way because, for example, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that certain British, French, Austrian and Japanese banks have cooperated and that the Iranians are concluding that, therefore, their governments are "with us." It was important to eliminate this ambiguity. The Iranians are attempting to handle normal trade by the creation of new accounts, sometimes using coded numbers or false names. Francois-Poncet said that, as we knew, the French were not taking any more oil than they had normally from Iran and wondered what we wished them to do—not pay at all or only pay in non-dollar currencies or to open new accounts, the French should refuse. Then the Iranians will begin to get the right signal.

The Secretary said that the lower level reaction in the Federal Republic was that they will insist on dollars and not allow any payment in Deutschmarks. Jean-Claude Paye said that he knows there has already been a request to pay in Deutschmarks in one case. Francois-Poncet concluded that perhaps this is something that should be discussed in the "four-power meeting" in Brussels later this week.

[1 paragraph (11½ lines) not declassified]

Both Cooper and the Secretary said that there were important risks to the international monetary system and, therefore, it was important to proceed. He has asked Mr. Carswell to go to Japan. We have already talked to the Germans, British, Italians and Swiss⁶ and he would be

⁵ Vance and Dobrynin met on December 5 (see Document 86) but apparently did not discuss Chapter 7 action.

⁶ Vance met with Okita on December 10 in Paris. (Telegram Secto 12020 from Brussels, December 12; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840171-0028, P840171-0028, P840125-1129) Vance met with Genscher and Schmidt on December 11 in Bonn, and with Pertini and Cossiga in Rome on December 12. (Telegrams Secto 12023 and Secto 12024 both from Brussels, December 13; Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Vance NODIS Memcons 1979)

seeing the Japanese Foreign Minister immediately after this meeting. The Secretary said that the Japanese had behaved abominably. They had bought between 20 and 30 million barrels of oil—almost all that we had freed up—at an average price of about \$40. The Japanese claim that Japanese firms had violated MITI instructions, but we know also that firms have used coded accounts and that Japanese banks have agreed to this. The government had also advised about ten days ago that the Japanese banks should not call any loan. The Secretary said that this was not only business as usual, but actually taking advantage of the situation. Francois-Poncet said that this confirms their information and that it was very disturbing. It makes others look ineffective.

Cooper said that the question is really a psychological one, since we know that the real economic effects of our actions will only come much later.

Francois-Poncet said that they too had information that Iran was worried about these measures. We could count on full collaboration from the French. The question was when and how, and particularly getting the necessary international basis from the Security Council. The Secretary said that even pending such sanctions, he thought that it ought to be possible to take action because we have a clear case that international law is being flouted. Paye thought that, in France at least, only in the case of war could action be taken without that international sanction.

Francois-Poncet concluded that we need, as he had said to the Ambassador the other day, to have more exchanges of information in order that all of us can act intelligently. He recognized the necessity to act to put pressure on Tehran and also to meet US domestic pressures, but we also need to exchange our assessments. For example, he had received a telegram yesterday (this is the one we were shown by Giscard that evening) giving the assessment by their Ambassador, who is a good man, of the measures as seen from Tehran. The conclusion was that pressures could be counter-productive in the current situation. He recognized that that was only one view and, of course, it was a view from the point of view of someone right on the spot in Tehran and he was not sure it was a balanced appreciation. Therefore, we had to have continuing exchanges. The Secretary said he agreed and wished to express appreciation for all the French had done, both in giving us information and in trying to be helpful in Tehran.

(There followed a discussion by the Secretary of military options with only Francois-Poncet and the Ambassador present.)

The meeting concluded with Francois-Poncet alone as he raised several questions with respect to the NATO communiqué.⁷ He said

⁷ For text of the NATO communiqué issued on December 14, see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1980, pp. 20–22.

that his first problem was that from the French point of view they had no difficulty in talking about the necessity to modernize TNF, but they would have a problem of linking that with arms control discussions. Therefore, it was very important that the two parts of the communiqué be clearly separated. The French would only associate themselves with the general parts of the communiqué, leaving for the other members of NATO to discuss and agree on TNF and arms control.

A second difficulty was with our desire to include Iran in the communiqué. Here Francois-Poncet suggested that a better way would be to have a separate statement by the fifteen Ministers on the occasion of their getting together in Brussels. He thought that this would give it added importance and avoid the NATO tag to such a position. (The Secretary agreed to this proposal and the Ambassador passed it on to NATO).⁸ Francois-Poncet also said that there would probably be the usual difficulty finding Middle East wording, but that they would find something.

On the question of arms control in general, Francois-Poncet said that it was important for us to continue discussions on our approaches to these problems—this was later picked up by the President. The Secretary said that he had said in his Berlin speech, being read by George Vest, that we thought the French proposals on arms control were useful and should be pursued. End Memcon.

Vance

⁸ The declaration on Iran issued by the Ministers attending the NATO meeting is *ibid.*, pp. 53–54.

96. Report Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

No. 1293

Washington, December 13, 1979

IRAN'S POLITICAL PROSPECTS

Key Judgments:

—Khomeini is in a serious period of testing, as some of the regime's weaknesses grow and may be tending to get out of control.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800009-0568. Secret; Noforn. Prepared by Grummon. Approved by Harris.

—But the Khomeini regime and the Islamic republic seem likely to continue for at least the next 6 to 12 months, despite such problems as the insurrection in Tabriz.²

—During that time, the regime will face increasing problems, chiefly as a result of the need to assert full control over the country and to improve the economy.

—Implementation of the regime's ill-defined policies continues to be chaotic and is unlikely to improve significantly.

—When Khomeini dies or is incapacitated, he will probably be succeeded by a strong religious leader, a coalition of secular opposition forces, or a combination of a moderate cleric and some of the more moderate opposition leaders.

—No single element of the opposition or a coalition among them can be identified as the likely eventual successor to the present government.

—There is little chance for the left to assume power in the near future.

As the Iranian revolutionary regime approaches its first anniversary, it faces mounting problems. The current situation is highly fluid and in particular will be affected by the ultimate resolution of the US Embassy hostage situation.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The strength and legitimacy of the Khomeini regime rest on:

- religious authority;
- Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary charisma;
- mass support;
- abundant money;
- the opposition's weakness; and
- the outside world's tolerance.

But the regime does have weaknesses which have been increasingly evident:

- collapse of the broad coalition which overthrew the Shah;
- lack of institutions; it is a government that relies on individuals, chiefly Khomeini himself;
- limited experience in running an effective government;

² During the previous week, thousands of Azerbaijanis in Tabriz marched in support of Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari who was critical of the new constitution. Demonstrators also took control of local government buildings and the central government's radio and television stations. (Pranay Gupte, "Thousands of Azerbaijanis Parade in Tabriz to Support Their Ayatollah," *New York Times*, December 8, 1979, p. 6)

—lack of full control over important sub-centers of power such as the students occupying the US Embassy and the ethnic and tribal minorities in Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, Khuzistan, and Baluchistan.

The hostage crisis was originally a welcome opportunity for the regime to reassert its strengths in the face of mounting weaknesses. As it is developing, the crisis may actually have demonstrated a weakness, i.e., inability to control the hostages' captors.

Thus, Khomeini's government is in a period of crucial testing. The situation is not out of control, but the trend is clearly in that direction.

The Islamic Government and Its Tasks

How much is accomplished over the next 6 to 12 months toward building institutions for the Islamic republic will determine its longevity. If little or nothing is accomplished, the relative strength of the opposition forces will be greatly increased.

A significant amount has already been accomplished. The adoption of the constitution in the referendum sets the institutional shape of the Islamic republic. Elections for president and parliament will be held soon. Clerics and their allies will be the chief victors.

But what the new government's policies will be is not much clearer now than when Khomeini first proposed an Islamic republic. In theory, the regime seeks the elimination of Western cultural and social "dominance" and its replacement by Islamic values. Khomeini has been particularly interested in dismantling the Western-inspired legal apparatus. In general, though, the government must undertake a major effort before its policies will be fully defined.

Two other tasks require urgent attention. One is the economy. We know little about what an Islamic economy would be. Iran's leaders have suggested that all relationships which are not "beneficial" will be eliminated, without defining that key word. It will certainly involve a realignment of all international contacts, with a strong emphasis on self-dependence. The regime probably will curtail consumer imports and may be prepared to embark on fairly radical land and agricultural reform programs. Oil income will, of course, continue to be the essential ingredient to make the economy run.

Even though economic policies may not be clear, the problems are. The food supply in the coming months is uncertain, unemployment is growing, and business and relevant government activity are stagnant. From what can be inferred from government policy, it appears unlikely that these difficulties will be improved soon. Prolonged failure to make progress in the economic realm would spur discontent with the regime.

The other area where government action is needed is the reassertion of central authority over and the depoliticizing of ethnic and tribal minorities. Historically, Iran has always had strong centers of decentral-

ized power. The Shah's firm control over the country during most of the 1960s and 1970s was an exception to the general rule. With the Shah gone, rival power centers are reasserting themselves. The Azerbaijanis have now joined the Kurds in actively pressing Tehran for autonomy.

Khomeini, given his many problems, has no chance for the present of reestablishing firm control over all elements of Iranian power. Thus, the key question is whether he has the flexibility to reach necessary compromises with other competing power centers—the tribes, the left, the ethnic minorities. Khomeini's experience and style so far indicate a complete lack of flexibility. Consequently, his chances of reimposing full authority or of reaching a *modus vivendi* with these dissidents are not good. Maintaining central government control will, thus, remain a major problem.

The Opposition

During this difficult time, the government will be faced by pressure from four different directions by forces that would like to see the replacement of the Khomeini regime.

Ethnic and Tribal Minorities. The minorities seek as much decentralized power as possible.

—The largest group is the Azerbaijanis under Ayatollah Shariat-Madari. Their recent seizure of power in Tabriz, demanding changes in the constitution to permit greater autonomy, will be difficult for the government to handle. The Azerbaijanis have a powerful, recognized leader and widely shared grievances.

—The Kurds, of course, are continuing to fight for greater autonomy as well, although they lack the heavy weapons necessary to be able to consolidate control over the urban centers in their area.

—The Arabs are quiet now but are capable of causing trouble again.

—Elements of the Qashaqai and Bakhtiari tribes are armed.

—The Baluchis have ambitions but have not done much to accomplish their aims.

Individually, none of these groups can overthrow the regime, but they present it with a great challenge which must be met if Tehran's authority is to be countrywide. This becomes a chicken-and-egg problem in which the minorities are not likely to accept terms until a strong government insists on them, but a strong government is not likely to exist until the minorities give up their opposition.

The Left. Iran's leftist forces are not prepared to assault Khomeini frontally. Instead, they ride his coattails where they can and strengthen their own position for the longer run. They are already represented in several key places: the student movement, the oil workers, the fedayeen movement, the PLO's activities.

Three leftist organizations are particularly significant:

—*Fedayeen-al Khalq*: These secular Marxists have broken with Khomeini. Their activities are illegal, their headquarters has been raided and closed, and their leaders are underground. Individual members may be associated with the Embassy occupation. They may have connections with the Kurdish rebels.

—*The Tudeh (Communist) Party*: This party, now open and legal, supports Khomeini and carries on various activities, such as organizing meetings and publishing a newspaper. Its membership strength is unknown, but it was quite small during the Shah's period.

—*Mujahiddin-al Khalq*: These Islamic Marxists during the summer became estranged from Khomeini. Like the fedayeen, they were attacked and criticized. They have not gone underground, however, and are trying once again to win Khomeini's support.

Many observers have suggested that if the Khomeini regime collapses, power will fall to the left. But the latter so far is not sufficiently organized or strong to assume power. For the longer term, the left breeds and grows on troubles and turmoil. If, however, there is real political power in the left's future, it is a distant future.

The Military. The Shah's once-vaunted armed forces remain shattered. Personnel is at about half-strength; equipment suffers from lack of use; spare parts are in short supply. Competing armed groups, such as the Revolutionary Guards, exist in many key locations. The officer corps is well aware that the troops are more responsive to the religious leaders than to military commanders. Thus, for the present, the armed forces are not a potential source of anti-government activity.

They do, however, contain important resources for the future: a tradition of backing strong leaders, an established institution in a country where there are few, and some remaining leaders of intelligence and ambition. The military could eventually be a force of real political significance, but first it must decide where it is politically. With the loss of the Shah, the armed forces lost their *raison d'être*, and a new one has not reappeared.

The Moderates. Most of Iran's moderate, secular leaders (including those of the National Front) are in hiding or exile. They have been almost eliminated as participants in the current political process leading to the establishment of the Islamic republic. They will have little or no representation in the new parliament. What remains of their strength is among escapee groups, chiefly that of Shahpour Bakhtiar in Paris. But Bakhtiar is only beginning to organize and seems to understand that his problems far outnumber his realistic hopes.

Thus, none of the opposition groups is likely to wield much power in the coming year or so. Their weakness is one of Khomeini's main strengths.

A nascent cooperation among some of these opposition groups is, however, developing. It involves Bakhtiar, other moderate secular

figures, some escaped senior military officers, and elements among the tribal and ethnic minorities. This is a coalition with precedent in Iranian history, and so it is possible to imagine its assumption of power some day.

Prospects

This survey of the political scene suggests four general developments that are possible over the coming months:

1. *The Islamic republic under Khomeini moves haltingly to implement its ill-defined policies.* This is the most likely possibility for the next 6 to 12 months. Khomeini remains Iran's essential figure. No alternative leader or group exists. A significant amount of the forward thrust from the revolution still exists, the constitution and its institutions are about to come into being, oil money is still flowing in, and the masses are still on Khomeini's side. These considerations should suffice to keep the leaders of the new republic in power.

But problems will mount. As noted above, the economy and the minorities need urgent attention. Many members of what remains of the armed forces are increasingly unhappy and frustrated. Iran has still not found a comfortable place on the international scene. Khomeini's rule to date has given no indication that he and his associates will be able to move rapidly and effectively to solve any of these problems. Thus, the unhappy opposition will surely grow. The question is: how long will the regime's basic strengths continue to outweigh its mounting problems?

2. *A coup.* It is possible to imagine a coalition developing among some of the opposition groups—Bakhtiar, the moderate secular figures, minority leaders, and a few senior military officers—in an effort to seize power. But the opposition groups which these leaders represent lack wide popular support or means to appeal to the lower-class masses that form the base of Khomeini's power. Such a coalition would be united chiefly by opposition to Khomeini, and that would not provide sufficient unity to overcome the underlying mistrust and rivalries between the constituent factions. It is not likely, therefore, that this broad grouping could act effectively enough to take over.

3. *The greatest threat to the regime is simply that it could collapse under the weight of its problems.* This might happen if the government lost visible control over events. The Embassy's captors might even emerge as an alternative power center as a result of the hostage crisis. Insurrection in Tabriz could spread to all of Azerbaijan if Shariat-Madari were to depart Qom and openly lead the rebellion. That could facilitate successful Kurdish action against the regime. The government's inability to handle ethnic dissidence on a broad scale coupled with economic reverses and maldistribution of food would severely undermine the

regime's support. However, Khomeini still retains much charisma, and none of these problems has yet gone past the point of no return.

4. *Khomeini dies or is totally incapacitated.* When Khomeini's hand is no longer at the helm, the Islamic republic will have lost the man who has held the revolutionary cause together. His departure will not, however, bring an end to either the republic or the revolution. The momentum of the revolution, the strategic placement of his associates, the new constitution, and the dominance of religious figures in the new parliament and cabinet will give some shape to the successor regime. Khomeini's assassination would add uncertainty, but the basic religious framework of the government would still be a major factor in determining the future.

Khomeini's death will most likely be followed immediately by the creation of an informal coalition of the most senior religious and governmental figures—held together at first by their desire to protect their power and the revolution. The Council of Guardians, the president, a few senior clerics, and one or two top military figures would keep the country going. But such a coalition would not last for long. It would contain too many ambitious men and too many political and religious schisms.

As this informal coalition began to split, several successors would be possible:

—One strong man could emerge to dominate the apparatus, but not with the stature of Khomeini. Ayatollahs Beheshti and Montazeri, Admiral Madani, and Foreign Minister Qotbzadeh would be leading possibilities.

—A religious, but anti-Khomeini, coalition. This could be under the overall religious leadership of Ayatollah Shariat-Madari, but with day-to-day power in the hands of secular figures, such as Bakhtiar or Madani.

—A traditional coalition of opposition forces: National Front (Bakhtiar, former Prime Minister Bazargan, and Hedayatollah Matin-Daftari), tribal leaders (Qashqais and other Bakhtiaris), and some moderate bazaar and religious figures.

A broad coalition would make the most sense in terms of Iranian tradition and centers of power. But the pull of the Khomeini revolution would probably be too great for at least a while for such a clear break from the dominance of the religious establishment to occur. Thus, the first of the above possibilities would be the most likely one to follow the initial informal coalition of Khomeini's followers.

97. **Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹**

Washington, December 14, 1979, 9–9:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti**
John Shenefield**

Treasury

Robert Carswell**
Anthony Solomon**

Energy

John Sawhill**

White House

Stuart Eizenstat**
Hedley Donovan
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

** Present for domestic issues only.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Immigration.* The District Court has not yet acted on the order staying the interview program. A ruling is expected today or, at latest, tomorrow. If the court rules against us, we can go immediately to the Chief Justice and possibly simultaneously ask for Congressional action. Legislation has been prepared on a contingency basis. (C)

2. *World Court.* A ruling is expected tomorrow, and the indications are that it will be favorable. Judging from past performance, the decision may not be unanimous, and we will need to be prepared to deal with an explanation of the order. The Attorney General will brief on the order as soon as it comes out. His statement is being prepared on a contingency basis and will be coordinated with Jody Powell. (C)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #229 held 12/14/79. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

3. *Economic Steps.* We still do not have detailed reporting on the talks conducted in Europe by Vance and Cooper.² Cooper delayed another day for further talks with the British Foreign Office and will not return until late this afternoon. The fragmentary reporting which we have received indicates that the four foreign ministers agreed that they would support a U.S. move to invoke Chapter Seven sanctions as well as a number of lesser independent actions. Our understanding of the nature of these independent actions is sketchy. However, we know that they stop short of cross-default or freeze of Iranian assets. If our understanding is correct, they would be effective in supporting the dollar (by insisting on oil payment in dollars, refusing to accept non-dollar deposits by Iran, etc.) but would not apply significant new pressure on the Iranian government and economy. It is unclear whether these ideas merely constitute a European counter-proposal to our more ambitious request or whether they were accepted as an agreed package. Dr. Brzezinski strongly reiterated the urgent need for an options paper from Treasury outlining the maximum and minimum strategies available to us and how those strategies might fit together with a request for Chapter Seven sanctions. Treasury has delayed examination of the options pending Cooper's return, but Dr. Brzezinski argued that regardless of what was accomplished in Europe, the President must be informed on what actions are available to him at this point and what kind of pressure might be required. Mr. Solomon therefore will prepare an analysis of the various economic options.³ An SCC meeting will be held tomorrow morning to discuss the options with Vance and Cooper after their return. The SCC was informed that the press stories indicating a decision to go for Chapter Seven sanctions remain as one option among several that are under serious consideration. (S)

4. *Circumvention.* [*less than 1 line not declassified*] certain banks in Germany, France, Canada and Switzerland have been actively assisting Iran in circumventing the effects of the freeze. [*2½ lines not declassified*] Treasury and CIA will work out the details and proceed immediately.⁴ (S)

² See Document 95. Cooper's reports on his discussions with German and Swiss officials are in telegrams 6981 and 6984 both from Bern, December 7. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N79009-0709 and P840140-1513, N790009-0715)

³ Memorandum from Solomon to Brzezinski, December 14. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 35, Institutional File, 1000s-1300s 2/79-3/79, 12/79)

⁴ Carter approved the item with a checkmark and initialed in the margin. On December 12, the CIA requested and received NSC staff concurrence, provided by Gary Sick, that a proposed propaganda campaign [*text not declassified*] to seize Iranian assets was consistent with the November 24 Presidential Finding. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 11/79-12/79)

5. *Islamic Statement.* The draft Presidential statement about Islam was provided to Hedley Donovan who will consider when and how it could best be used to avoid appearing contrived. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

98. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 15, 1979, 9:15–10:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

Harold Saunders

Richard Cooper**

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

Energy

John Sawhill**

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti***

John Shenefield**

** Domestic issues only

*** Domestic issues and Shah

**** Present only for discussion of Shah

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**

Anthony Solomon**

Robert Mundheim**

White House

Stuart Eizenstat**

Lloyd Cutler**

Jody Powell

Hedley Donovan

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

Jerry Schecter****

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #230 held 12/15/79. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues

1. *Economic Steps.* Secretary Vance and Mr. Cooper reported on the discussions with the Europeans. The acceptability of various steps differs from country to country because of legal and policy problems. It was felt, however, that it is not necessary for all of our allies to adopt exactly the same posture. Dr. Brzezinski asked State to prepare a matrix which will show the position of each country on each of the prospective actions.² (S)

Secretary Vance reported that when and if we come to the point of requesting sanctions under Chapter VII, the Europeans are pledged to support us. We will have to decide whether to go for complete sanctions or in stages. We can initially request limited sanctions, e.g. denying military credits and military equipment deliveries; a second stage could be a selective trade embargo, excluding food and medicine, and termination of mail and rail links, which would involve removal of foreign nationals; the third stage would involve a total embargo. By Monday,³ State will be prepared to discuss options regarding resort to Chapter VII and the pros and cons of various strategies. Based on the discussions Monday, a recommendation will be prepared for the President. All agreed it would be premature to make a recommendation until we see what the reaction is to the World Court ruling. The European allies, however, have agreed to go ahead with sanctions if Chapter VII is defeated by Soviet veto in the Security Council. (S)

State and Treasury will today prepare and send cables to the European allies which clarifies and ties down the specific commitments they have made. This will be necessary before the European finance officials meet on Monday. On Monday, follow up messages jointly from Secretary Vance and Secretary Miller will request immediate implementation of the measures as agreed. It was agreed that no immediate steps would be taken with regard to Belgium, the Netherlands and Canada until after the Europeans have had their meeting on Monday.⁴ (S)

A separate cable of instructions will be prepared for Mr. Carswell, who is on his way to Japan. These instructions will outline the various steps which the Europeans have agreed to and request that the Japanese accept those steps plus a few technical elements which are applicable

² In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Prepare for UNSC sanctions. I prefer maximum trade interruption." The matrix was discussed at the December 17 SCC Meeting; see Document 102.

³ December 17.

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "all ok."

only to Japan. The instruction will set forth what we are asking the Japanese in very clear form and request that these be implemented directly. The Japanese will also be advised that sanctions under Chapter VII remain a possible next step.⁵ (S)

2. *World Court*. The ICJ order is expected today.⁶ State will see that VOA picks this up and broadcasts the text of the order in Farsi to Iran. (C)

3. *White Paper*. State recommended and all agreed that we should not proceed with a formal statement of our position for release in the form of a White Paper. In the past, such documents have provided a target for all to shoot at and have promoted, rather than discouraged, dispute. Instead, State proposes to collect the necessary information and provide position papers on particular issues which can be used as required. It will not be our intention to release a single document, however. The documents will be held in the White House.⁷ (S)

4. *Lawyers for Tribunal*. Lloyd Cutler has been working with a group of 40 lawyers who are preparing themselves in the event counsel is required for Americans on trial in Iran. At this point, they are relying primarily on the *New York Times Index* and other unclassified sources. State is making available some open source information. It was agreed that press guidance should be prepared for discussion at the Monday meeting. We wish to avoid any moves which would lend legitimacy to a trial in Iran,⁸ while recognizing the rights of Americans to legal counsel.

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Shah*. Press guidance had been prepared by Jody Powell for the Shah's departure to Panama this morning.⁹ The guidance was reviewed and approved by the SCC for use as soon as Panama makes its announcement or when the story breaks. Congressional leaders were briefed this morning and a circular is being sent to all posts alerting them to possible demonstrations or reactions. Mr. Cutler reviewed the

⁵ As recommended in a memorandum from Platt to Brzezinski, December 18. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107)

⁶ The ICJ unanimously ruled December 15 that Iran should restore the Embassy to the United States, that Iran should release all hostages and provide them with diplomatic protection, and that neither country should take any action that would aggravate the situation. Argumentation before the ICJ and the court's ruling are in Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1980, pp. 40–53.

⁷ Carter approved the item with a checkmark and wrote in the margin: "ok, but I want it complete for our selective use."

⁸ Carter underlined this sentence to this point and wrote in the left margin: "important."

⁹ For the December 15 White House statement on the Shah's departure, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, p. 2251.

U.S. commitments flowing from the discussions with the Shah and his representatives.¹⁰ We have agreed that: (1) the children can remain in the United States for schooling and the FBI will continue its liaison with those providing security; (2) the Shahbanou will be permitted to visit the children here from time to time; (3) the Shah will have access to U.S. medical facilities in Panama as required; the Shah's doctors have advised that the necessary [operation] can be performed in Panama; one of the U.S. doctors worked in Panama for seven years; (4) the U.S. will provide transportation and assistance for a medical team to visit Panama for the operation as required. The deposition required in the legal case brought by Bell Helicopter can be taken in Panama. (S)

2. *Palestinians*. The PLO representative in Tehran has made a proposal which will be delivered to Congressman Findley today about a delegation to Tehran which could result in release of the hostages. State will follow up. (S)

[Omitted here is information on Afghanistan.]

¹⁰ The report of the meeting with the Shah's representatives is in a memorandum from Oxman to Christopher, December 18. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 12)

99. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) and the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Bowdler) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, December 15, 1979

SUBJECT

Extraction of the Six Americans From Tehran

The Canadians have conveyed to us their great nervousness and sense of urgency about taking decision on their houseguests. Essentially, the Canadians have two concerns:

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Data on Hostages. Secret; Nodis. Sent through Newsom.

—What are U.S. plans for removing the six?²

—What should Canadians do if there is an uprising in Tehran and the Canadian premises are threatened by a mob? What steps should be taken if the story breaks in the press? The Ambassador wants guidance as to whether he should turn the six into the Foreign Ministry, the compound, or a third embassy.

On the first question, the CIA continues to examine feasible alternatives as to the best plan for extracting the six. Although these details have not been worked out, new American passports have been prepared for them in false names. These can be dispatched by Canadian or other special courier once a decision is reached on a specific cover story which will enable the last details to be added to the passports. We can then send instructions by cable providing details on identities and plans for movement out of Tehran.

The chief problem at CIA is that none of the alternatives is without serious risks. CIA has devoted most of its efforts to a plan [*1½ lines not declassified*] and they are examining implementation arrangements in great detail. [*3 lines not declassified*] CIA has been unwilling to use a journalistic cover because of prohibitions in that regard on the agency. However, we think that the same prohibitions need not apply to American diplomats requiring exfiltration in these circumstances and we believe this means should be considered. At any rate, we will work closely with CIA to resolve these issues within the next few days.

In the meantime, we suggest that we tell the Canadians that we are urgently addressing the question of exfiltration, and we would welcome any specific recommendations that Ambassador Taylor might have. We could also send him a few questions that we need to have answered.

On Taylor's second concern, we propose that we advise him in the event of danger to the six or a press story that his first preference be to move them to the Foreign Ministry. If that is not possible, he should surrender them to the Swiss Ambassador on behalf of the Red Cross. If you agree with these alternatives, we should brief the Swiss Ambassador here, advising him that we consider this step unlikely, but requesting his assistance in arranging for emergency care.

We would like to discuss these issues with you to receive your guidance.

² See Document 64.

100. Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Status of Hostages

[1 paragraph (2 lines) not declassified]

1. The following conclusions about the condition of the hostages held in the American Embassy in Tehran are based on psychiatric debriefings of released hostages as well as general knowledge about how individuals react to similar captive situations.

2. Although bound, occasionally blindfolded, and kept in semi-isolation, the hostages on the whole are likely to feel they have been fairly well treated. They have been fed regularly, kept clean and warm, and most importantly have not been killed. Since this treatment compares favorably to their probable expectations and/or fears, their perception is therefore one of good treatment.

3. The actual mental or physical condition of any one hostage will vary depending on his prior mental and physical state, his character, and his individual idiosyncrasies. The captive experience is extremely traumatic, and each individual will respond to this trauma according to his own resources. After over a month of captivity, these hostages have probably developed rather stable adaptive mechanisms, so that as time goes by one would expect relatively little change from their current behavior.

4. During any hostage-taking incident one can expect the adaptive mechanisms of both the hostage and hostage taker to lead to what may initially appear to be a paradoxical alliance between them. When people are together, especially under stress, relationships develop among them; similarly, hostages and hostage takers begin to form relationships that tend to unify them into a group. The interests of both the hostage takers and the hostages are served by giving in to the hostage takers' demands; therefore, the hostage takers and hostages are natural allies. Also, as a means of coping with his helplessness, the hostage often unconsciously identifies with the more powerful hostage taker.

5. In this particular incident, there is inferential evidence that the captors are attempting to systematically influence their captives.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 12/8/79–12/18/79. Secret. Sent under a December 16 covering memorandum from Turner to Vance, Brown, Jones, and Brzezinski, on which Turner wrote: "I commend it as one basis for planning for the return of the hostages."

Following a period of sensory deprivation, the released hostages were subjected to intense propaganda just prior to their release. All of these factors result in the captors' ability to heavily influence the thinking of the hostages. (Although "brainwashing" has been used to describe this process, this term is subject to misuse and probably best not be used. There is not at this time enough hard data to conclude that the hostages are being subjected to the treatment suffered by a number of former prisoners of war. At any rate, many of the effects herein described would occur without any systematic treatment.)

6. The effects of being held hostage vary from individual to individual and will vary in one individual over time. In a large group one might witness everything from complete rejection of the hostage taker to total sympathy with him. In general, however, one should expect to hear favorable statements made about the captors, particularly with respect to treatment. In most cases the hostage and/or the released hostage will say that he was well treated. Upon release, each of the 50 hostages must be treated as an individual case and evaluated with respect to his psychological condition. A reasonable period of time (possibly several days) should be provided to a released hostage prior to any media exposure.

7. In considering official responses to statements that may be made by some of the individuals currently in captivity, two conditions must be considered. The first involves statements made during captivity, including those that may be made during a "trial". These should be discounted with words to the effect that statements made under coercion need to be analyzed for distortion. The second condition is that of the released hostage. Responses to statements made by released hostages should be to the effect that anyone held in captivity is bound to be heavily influenced by his captors, and any statements should be interpreted in that context.

8. It should be emphasized that despite comments that may be made by released hostages, one should not jump to conclusions and question their loyalty. In spite of the heavy influence brought to bear on them as well as their natural inclination to sympathize with their captors, there are few, if any, cases in which a hostage becomes a defector or traitor. In general, one should avoid extreme comments on how the hostages have been treated. Although psychiatric effects can be expected to occur following captivity, the effects of such trauma will vary in duration, and some released hostages may do quite well; thus, general statements predicting psychological damage should be avoided.

101. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, December 16, 1979

SUBJECT

Decision on the Negotiating Strategy for Iran

Because of the movement of events, we need in the next 24 hours to pull together (1) the substance of a precise US negotiating position and (2) the choice of negotiating tracks.

Events are moving ahead as a number of our negotiating tracks have suddenly come alive again:

—Farhang is meeting here in Washington over the weekend with a number of his American “advisors” to talk about the international tribunal and, presumably, how it leads to the release of the hostages. He sees Waldheim at 3:00 p.m. on Monday.²

—Henry Precht has asked to have a talk with Farhang, with no response yet.

—We are talking with Richard Falk and Roger Fisher, who are both talking with either Farhang or Rouhani.

—Congressman Findley is considering what to do about a proposal from the PLO that he lead a delegation of private Americans to visit the hostages and talk with Iranians about grievances. This proposal seems to be a result of the Iranian offer to allow a humanitarian visit to the hostages and a variant of the idea discussed when Hansen was in Iran to create a forum in which the real representatives of the American people could hear Iranian grievances.

—Now that we seem to be getting a new proposal from the PLO representative in Tehran, we can still go back through our channel in Beirut.

—Swiss Ambassador Lang has a channel to Ghotbzadeh. Ghotbzadeh’s complaint about the condition of Iranian students in the US is pending, and we could send a response along with other proposal through Ambassador Lang.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Miscellaneous Documents. Secret; Eyes Only. Sent through Newsom.

² December 17.

—Hashemi in London is in touch with his contact in Qom and says they are having “encouraging” meetings. We have the opportunity to put any scenario we devise through that channel as well.

The key substantive issue now that the Shah’s return to Iran has been removed from the negotiating agenda is the relative timing of a hearing for Iranian grievances and the release of the hostages. This was one of the issues on which the Waldheim/Salamatian negotiations foundered. Now the Iranians are trying to put together a forum for their hearings and seem to be thinking of releasing a number of hostages before long but at the same time seem to be thinking about holding a few of them to appear before their international tribunal.

Our basic position has been negative on the tribunal on grounds that it would prolong Iran’s illegal action in holding hostages and delay their release. We repeatedly stated that once all hostages are released Iran can have a hearing in any reasonable forum. The problem now is that our position may not be sufficiently nuanced to allow for the possibility of a scenario in which some preliminary steps toward a tribunal could be connected with the release of the hostages.

Specifically, the questions arise as to whether we should encourage or discourage private Americans from responding to invitations to participate in the tribunal and whether we should discourage something like a Findley visit to Tehran which might lead to the release of some of the hostages.

We obviously want to bargain hard for the release of the hostages before a tribunal begins. A proposal such as the one included in our longer memo yesterday³ may have to include willingness to have some group—whether a UN group or a group such as that proposed for Findley—engage in some kind of hearing on Iranian grievances.

The next issue is whether we are prepared to let such a group go without assurance that it will be able to bring hostages back home with it. A third issue is whether to allow any group to go if it can only bring a small number of the hostages home with it.

³ Not found.

102. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 17, 1979, 8:45–9:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

State

Warren Christopher

Harold Saunders

Richard Cooper**

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

Robert Dean***

Energy

Secretary Charles Duncan**

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti**

John Shenefield**

**Domestic Issues Only

***Afghanistan Only

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**

Anthony Solomon**

Robert Mundheim**

White House

Hamilton Jordan**

Jody Powell**

Stuart Eizenstat**

Lloyd Cutler**

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

Thomas Thornton***

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Economic Steps.* A message was sent out on Saturday clarifying our understanding of the various steps which the allies will implement on a voluntary basis.² We should have reactions from the various capitals today. Once those reactions are in, a joint message from Secretaries Vance and Miller will be sent requesting immediate implementa-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² Apparent reference to telegram 323610 to capitals of the EC-9 nations, December 16. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790578-0281)

tion. That message will be prepared for Presidential review today, in anticipation of its being sent tomorrow. State has prepared a matrix showing our present understanding of what the allies are prepared to do. A copy is attached.³ (S)

State also prepared a paper on the steps available to us in invoking Chapter VII sanctions through the UN. A copy is attached.⁴ The SCC was briefed on the President's interest in taking the necessary preparations to move on Chapter VII if and when a decision is made and the President's preference for seeking maximum sanctions. The SCC did not believe that seeking Chapter VII sanctions would provide an excuse for delay of action by the allies since they already seem prepared to proceed with limited voluntary steps but will be reluctant to go beyond those measures in any event without Chapter VII authorization. We will wish to consult in advance with the Soviets⁵ since a veto could have serious implications for SALT, as well as preventing sanctions. We should seek Soviet abstention, if support is not possible. Mr. Cutler suggested that we move immediately to get a finding by the SC on Article 39⁶ that the Iranian situation constitutes a threat to the peace, since the Soviets may be willing to support that. State pointed out that a call for a finding under Article 39 is, in effect, a call for sanction and should not be undertaken until we are prepared to follow through with the entire program.⁷ (S)

The SCC agreed that it would be useful to wait for several days⁸ before invoking Chapter VII in order to see the outcome of allied decisions on voluntary steps, effects of the ICJ ruling, reaction to the Shah's departure, and the results of consultations between the new Iranian Ambassador to the UN, Mansour Farhang, with the Secretary General. In order to sustain momentum, it would probably be useful to be prepared to proceed with Chapter VII on about Thursday or Friday.⁹ Once the decision is made, the SCC recommended seeking steps 1 and 2 of the State paper (denial of military sales and credits, interruption of normal air, rail, post and telecommunications links, and a selective embargo except for humanitarian items), but stopping short

³ The undated matrix, "Financial Actions Allies are Willing to Take (as of December 14, 1979)," is attached but not printed.

⁴ Not attached, but see footnote 3, Document 87.

⁵ Carter underlined the word "consult" and the phrase "with the Soviets" and wrote in the margin: "We'll go ahead in any case."

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 87.

⁷ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "I prefer 39 & 7 together, not sequentially."

⁸ Carter underlined the word "several" and wrote in the right margin "not too long."

⁹ Carter underlined the word "Thursday" [December 20] and wrote in the left margin: "Thurs ok."

of a total trade embargo which would involve extended debate and possible failure in the UNSC.¹⁰ (S)

In order to maintain the public appearance of momentum, it will be necessary to publicize in some form the types of actions which our allies have agreed to undertake. Some will not object; others will wish to keep their advice entirely private. The SCC recommended that State contact the countries involved and determine what they would be willing to announce publicly. Depending on their reaction, we will probably want to do a careful backgrounder to get out the whole story. This can be linked to intelligence information on the decline of shipping into the Persian Gulf, to increase the appearance of effective disruption of trade. We would expect to do the backgrounder by Wednesday.¹¹ (S)

2. *Presidential Views.* Dr. Brzezinski briefed the SCC on the President's comments on the notes of Friday's meeting.¹² The President approved the proposed strategy on the White Paper (that the information be collected and papers prepared, but not to publish a formal document) but asked that the internal documentation be complete for selective use. Approval was granted for leaking information about certain banks' circumvention of restrictions on Iranian assets. At this point, however, there appeared to be no flagrant cases to be exploited. (S)

3. *Trials.* The President noted that it is important that we do nothing which would lend legitimacy to any trials of the hostages by Iran. The question of the lawyers preparing legal support for the hostages will be raised at the meeting tomorrow. (C)

4. *French.* The Iranian case against U.S. branch banks in France has been refiled. The SCC agreed that Giscard should be reminded of his assurance to Vance that this case would be tied up in the courts and not be subject to an early court decision. (S)

Political-Military Issues:

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

¹⁰ Carter underlined the phrase "except for humanitarian items" and wrote in the left margin: "define narrowly." He approved this item with a checkmark.

¹¹ In the left margin beside this paragraph, Carter wrote: "My guess: better for them after move in UN on sanctions." Wednesday was December 19. Carter approved this item with a checkmark.

¹² See Document 97.

103. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 17, 1979, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

The President's Meeting with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Kingman Brewster
Ambassador at Large Henry Owen
George Vest, Assistant Secretary of State
Robert D. Blackwill, NSC Staff Member
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher
Lord Carrington, UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Sir Nicholas Henderson, Ambassador to the U.S.
Sir Robert Armstrong, Secretary to the Cabinet
Sir Michael Palliser, Permanent Under Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Sir Frank Cooper, Ministry of Defense
Michael Alexander, Private Secretary to the PM
George Walden, Principal Secretary to the Secretary of State

The President began by saying how delighted he was to have Prime Minister Thatcher in the United States. It was a thrill to have her visit him in the White House. After noting that he and the Prime Minister would have a few moments at the end of the general meeting to discuss sensitive matters, the President expressed the deep gratitude of the American people for the help that Mrs. Thatcher and her people had given us during the Iranian crisis. Securing the release of the hostages was the all-consuming concern of the American people. The President noted that the U.S. had gained the almost unanimous support of the world community in seeking to obtain the release of the hostages, but the UK had especially been in the forefront of those who had been assisting us. That UK role in the crisis; the President said, filled him with admiration. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

The Prime Minister said that she assumed it would be appropriate to talk first about Iran so that the UK could know our minds in order

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 12/8/79–12/18/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

to respond in effective ways as quickly as possible. She had been asked about Chapter Seven sanctions against Iran this morning in a TV interview and had, of course, said Britain would support the U.S. in such action. It could never be otherwise. But it would be helpful if she knew the President's mind on timing for next steps to increase the pressure on Iran. (S)

The President responded that he would be brief since Mrs. Thatcher no doubt had been following the crisis in detail. Lately we had been reasonably encouraged. Initially the Iranian authorities had said that the hostages would be tried individually as spies. That theme had gradually diminished which was a good sign. The U.S. was prepared to use naval forces if the situation demanded it but certainly wanted to avoid such action. The President said that if there were public trials, the U.S. would interrupt commerce with Iran as had been made clear to the UK, France, the FRG, Italy, and to Khomeini. If any of the hostages were executed, we would reserve the right to take more forceful action. The President said he prayed that that would not be necessary and repeated that there were some hopeful signs. He said it was his sense that Khomeini had decided that holding the hostages was counterproductive. The President continued that Panama's courageous act in accepting the Shah had also helped after Lopez Portillo had pulled the rug out from under us having given a firm commitment to take the Shah as late as the morning that Mexico announced the reverse. (S)

The President said that Khomeini seemed to be shifting toward a multinational tribunal approach—not a trial but the equivalent of a grand jury. This was quite a change from Iran's original position but it was hard to know how much control Khomeini had over the students. In a showdown, the President said, Khomeini could probably prevail, but Khomeini no doubt wished to avoid just such a showdown. The President noted that three of our people in Tehran at the Foreign Ministry, including Bruce Laingen, had been able to communicate with us. Laingen had felt that the departure of the Shah would help in defusing the crisis. Indicating that we must do everything possible to prevent the Iranian crisis freezing into a status quo, the President said that later today he would know more precisely the time schedule for our next steps to increase the pressure on Iran. He would discuss this privately tonight at dinner with the Prime Minister. Secretary Vance added that both Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh and the Iranian Chargé had said that the Shah's departure would be an important first step in beginning the process to free the hostages. (S)

The President then noted that Sadat had always been forthcoming with respect to providing a home for the Shah, but we did not favor this solution to the problem. It would produce difficulties for Sadat in

the Arab world and could be seen in Iran as a step by the Shah to get close enough to reassert himself into Iranian affairs. (S)

The Prime Minister asked for our view of the process of a general trial. What were the Iranians trying to accomplish? How long would it last? Was it designed by them as a way out of the crisis? If the answer to the last question was yes, the Prime Minister thought the U.S. attitude should be to assist the Iranians in finding a face-saving device which did not at the same time humiliate America. (S)

The President responded that we knew very little about what the Iranians had in mind concerning the Tribunal. He hoped Khomeini was looking for a way to save face, but he guessed there was very little rationality in Iran about the idea. The President said he thought that the Iranians knew we would punish their country if their action so warranted. But it was our hope that Iranians would not call the hostages before the Tribunal, even as witnesses. Our position would be to continue to do nothing which would endanger the safety of the hostages, but at the same time not lend any dignity or authenticity to the proceedings. (S)

Indicating that he would like to make two points, Dr. Brzezinski said there were a number of specific financial steps our friends could take before a Chapter Seven finding was adopted at the United Nations. Now was the time to take those steps. With respect to the Tribunal, Dr. Brzezinski noted we were witnessing a struggle for the future of Iran. A major actor in this struggle was a group dedicated to using the crisis to permanently sever links between Iran and the U.S. and between Iran and the West. This highly destabilized situation raised an important longer-range strategic question. How could we influence the course of events in Iran so as to minimize the danger that it would gradually assume the role of a satellite of the Soviet Union, an evolution which events in Afghanistan did not make any less likely.² (S)

In response to Dr. Brzezinski's first point, Lord Carrington said that experts from France, Germany and the UK had agreed last week in Brussels after the Quad meeting that it would be much easier to take specific financial steps after a Chapter Seven finding at the UN rather than before. Lord Carrington then asked how long the U.S. would wait before taking further positive action against Iran. A matter of days, the President responded. Secretary Vance said that he guessed that the Iranians did not know what they wanted to do with the Tribunal. Mrs. Thatcher observed that this Iranian uncertainty and confusion made a quick trial highly unlikely and could also produce humilia-

² In the left margin next to this paragraph, Carter wrote: "(ZB said he interjected this when it became clear the talks were going to stay general only.)"

tion for the hostages in Tehran. She said that, as she understood it, the U.S. would neither oppose the Tribunal nor support it. (S)

The President responded that in public we would oppose the Tribunal stressing that it had no legitimacy and no relevance to the central fact that Iran in holding the hostages was violating every norm of international behavior. At the same time, we recognized that the Tribunal could be a way to the hostages' release. We had asked nations not to participate in this kangaroo court, but it was a delicate balancing act. The President added that if we do go for sanctions, we would like the UK unilaterally to impose them immediately rather than waiting for what could be a lengthy UN debate on the subject. Mrs. Thatcher wondered what sanctions we would be asking for at the UN. The President replied that he would decide this during the course of the day, but stressed that we would probably move in the UN before the end of the week. It was nearly inevitable. Mrs. Thatcher asked whether a naval blockade would be part of our action. Noting that such action posed some difficulties, the President said he would discuss this with her privately. In closing the discussion of Iran, Prime Minister Thatcher repeated that it would be easier for Britain to take certain economic and financial steps against Iran after a Chapter Seven finding rather than before.³ (S)

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Mrs. Thatcher said it was her impression that the U.S. public did not know how helpful the PLO had been during the Iran crisis. Observing that this was not the case, the President said that the positive PLO role had been much in the press. Secretary Vance added that all members of Congress knew we had been in touch with the PLO although they did not know the specific role the PLO had played in the crisis. The President said that we would wait until the next tranche of land was returned and the ambassadorial exchange occurred in January before taking a stronger lead in the Middle East negotiations. There had been indirect communication with Arafat on the hostages and Israel knew this. (S)

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

³ Following their meeting, Carter and Thatcher spoke from the South Grounds of the White House. Carter thanked Thatcher for the "strong and unequivocal support" on Iran. She, in turn, stated that "when the United States wishes to go to the Security Council for further powers under chapter seven, Great Britain will be the first to support him in his endeavors." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979, Book II, pp. 2259-2260*)

104. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 18, 1979, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Charles Cogan

Energy

John Sawhill**

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti**
John Shenefield**

Treasury

Secretary William Miller**
Anthony Solomon**
Robert Mundheim**

White House

Jody Powell
Stuart Eizenstat**
Frank Moore**
Hedley Donovan
Lloyd Cutler**
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

**Domestic issues only

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Economic Steps.* Dr. Brzezinski asked about the status of the Vance-Miller letter which was to be completed the night before.² State

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote at the top of the first page: "Zbig—Convene an NSC mtg at 8:00 a.m. (breakfast). J."

² Carter placed an "x" after the first sentence and wrote in the margin: "As of 12:18 p.m. still unable to [illegible—extract?] it." Carter approved the Miller-Vance letters to Germany and Japan on December 19. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 12/10/79–12/31/79). The letter to Genscher and German Finance Minister Matthoeffler was transmitted in telegram 327192 to Bonn, December 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790585–0566) The message to Okita and Japanese Finance Minister Takeshita was transmitted in telegram 327191 to Tokyo, December 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D790585–0736)

and Treasury said they had worked on it but they were not aware of the status. They said that in the absence of a clear decision by the Europeans on each issue, the letter will call for the allies to “agree and implement” the recommended voluntary steps. They said the letter would be provided within one or two hours for the President’s approval. Dr. Brzezinski briefed the group on the President’s comments on yesterday’s notes.³ Regarding the possibility of a Soviet veto of Chapter VII sanctions, he said we would go ahead in any case. The President indicated that he would prefer going for Article 39 finding at the same time as sanctions. We should not wait too long to proceed. Thursday⁴ was okay. Any exclusions from the trade embargo (e.g. food, medicine, etc.) should be defined narrowly. (S)

Mr. Solomon noted that Iran’s only real vulnerability was on food, but that was probably not feasible to include in the embargo for a number of reasons. Mr. Newsom wondered about mail for the hostages. Mr. Aaron pointed out that it could be provided by diplomatic pouch of a friendly power. (C)

The President approved a backgrounder on Wednesday to publicize the types of actions our allies have been willing to take. It was the President’s guess that the allies would be more willing to make their actions public after we had asked for Chapter VII. Mr. Eizenstat noted that the President had mentioned to the leadership breakfast that we were prepared to go to the UN to ask for an embargo to enforce UNSC decisions. There is a good possibility of leaks. (S)

State will follow up the decision to move ahead. Don McHenry will begin consultations in New York, a message will be sent to appropriate capitals, and we will consult with the Soviets. All agreed we should protest strongly to the Italians about their intention to permit licensed helicopters to go to Iran in the next five days. At the same time, State and Defense will review the possibility of revoking the licenses.⁵ (S)

The group reviewed briefly the results of the talks with the British.⁶ It appears they agreed to all the governmental actions we requested (short of a freeze, which they said required new legislation), but they have gone back to London to try and reverse the negative positions of the banks on those items which would involve only official government “guidance.” It is evident from intelligence that we may find it extremely difficult to get the necessary nine votes in the Security Council. Don

³ See Document 102.

⁴ December 20.

⁵ Carter underlined the words “revoking the licenses” and wrote in the margin: “Expedite.” He approved the item with a checkmark.

⁶ See Document 103.

McHenry is somewhat more optimistic than his West European counterparts, and we will not know just where we stand until consultations are well under way. The situation could be made much worse if Cuba gets a SC seat. All agreed that we should redouble our efforts in opposition to Cuban election, stressing that a vote for Cuba is a vote for Iran.⁷ (S)

2. *Public Posture.* Today is Unity Day. Is there something more we should do or say? Jody Powell noted that the joint communiqué with the British will come out today.⁸ If it is perceived that we cannot get full British cooperation on voluntary steps with Prime Minister Thatcher in Washington, the credibility of allied support will collapse. There is generally a sense of relaxation in the U.S. public and in world opinion, some of which has been generated by our own statements reflecting optimism. The SCC discussed a possible statement by the Vice President or Jody Powell which would focus on the renewed Iranian calls for trials. We could state that trials would be regarded as a grave provocation for which Iran would bear full responsibility. A firm restatement of our previous policy might be desirable at this point. Jody Powell will coordinate with State about the wording, timing and location of such a statement. State cautioned that a Swiss report indicates that Khomeini has already agreed that there will be no trials, despite what is being said publicly. Our statement should be carefully worded to avoid disrupting that.⁹ (S)

3. *Trials.* Lloyd Cutler will convene a small group to examine the question of how we can tread the line between protecting the legal rights of the hostages while not legitimizing Iranian trials. The SCC noted the President's comment that it is important to lend legitimacy to any trial of the hostages.¹⁰ (C)

Political-Military Issues:

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

3. *Strategy.* Dr. Brzezinski noted that [*less than 1 line not declassified*] we may not be able to get Chapter VII sanctions in the UN. Are we on the right path? As time passes, our posture might appear increasingly flabby. We need to ask if we may be inoculating the Iranians against our pressure at every stage, and they might be adjusting to it as they go. We did jolt them at one point by indicating flatly that severe

⁷ Carter approved this item with a checkmark.

⁸ For text of the December 18 White House statement on Thatcher's visit, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1979, Book II, pp. 2267–2268.*

⁹ The statement was issued on December 18. See *ibid.*, pp. 2268–2269.

¹⁰ Carter inserted and double underlined the word "not" between "important" and "to lend."

measures would follow certain actions on their part. That warning appeared to be credible, but now it seems to have worn off and they are convinced that we are unwilling to pursue non-peaceful options. Secretary Brown noted that if the UN does not support us on sanctions, we will be worse off since there will be a question of whether our cause is just and stronger measures are justified. Mr. Aaron and Jody Powell, on the contrary, felt that going to the UN established a record of exhausting all peaceful remedies. Dr. Brzezinski said that our statement should make clear that sanctions are the last *peaceful* remedy but that other remedies are not excluded if that fails. That will pressure others to support us. General Jones added that there are a number of minor military steps, e.g. SR-71 overflights, which would underline our ability and willingness to turn to other options. Mr. Newsom argued that Ambassador McHenry should be given 48 hours to sound out attitudes in the SC. Secretary Brown warned that one outcome of the SC debate might be to get a resolution opposing the use of non-peaceful means.¹¹ Mr. Christopher observed that we could get a message back to the Iranians through the Swiss channel that our patience is running out. Mr. Donovan pointed out that we might succeed in getting Chapter VII sanctions then find that it produced no results while tying our hands from taking more vigorous action. (TS)

4. *Covert Action.* Dr. Brzezinski introduced the two papers (Plan A and Plan B) previously prepared by Stan Turner. Plan B was more modest. [3 lines not declassified] Secretary Brown said that Plan B was a logical first step toward Plan A. If we were not willing to go that far, we were abdicating our ability to influence events. [7½ lines not declassified] Dr. Brzezinski interpreted it to mean that we were opposed to a Khomeini-controlled regime, without specifying what type of government would emerge. We want a government we can work with, that is all. Mr. Christopher said he was prepared to support Plan B, but he found Turner's description somewhat difficult. The SCC reviewed the wording of the specific proposed finding and agreed that it should be rewritten to be more in conformance with Plan B. A meeting would be held later with the Attorney General and OMB present to examine the finding officially. (TS)

¹¹ Carter underlined the words "opposing the use of non-peaceful means" and wrote in the margin: "We would veto."

105. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, December 18, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran: Our Strategy for the Next Phase

I enclose the SCC minutes for today.²

You will see from them that the question arose whether we are retaining sufficient momentum. My own gut feeling, supported by Jody and Harold, is that we are locking ourselves into a litigational pattern which may make it more difficult for us to bring the issue to a head and which may also cause us gradually to lose domestic support. We could ultimately find ourselves in a position in which we may need to escalate and yet the public may not be prepared to support us.

This is related to a more perplexing question: What does it take to jolt Khomeini into recognition of the fact that the release of the hostages is necessary? By moving step by step we are "inoculating" the Iranians against the consequences of their actions, without really frightening them. There is no doubt in my mind that your very forceful message that was sent after the Camp David NSC had the desired effect.³ Since then, however, the Iranians may have concluded that we are so committed to a negotiated solution that they can stall the process indefinitely.

Finally, to obtain international support, we may also need to remind the international community that the only tangible alternative to international solidarity is unilateral U.S. action. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] we may have trouble in the UN getting support for Chapter VII. We are more likely to obtain such support if our friends become convinced that the only alternative to tangible international support is unilateral U.S. action which may indirectly affect them as well.

Since next week may see a number of key people going away on their holidays, I would recommend that you hold a strategy meeting, (a formal NSC) to review and approve our strategy for the next two or three weeks.⁴ The previous meetings in which you personally took

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #232 held 12/18/79. Top Secret. At the top of the first page of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "Zbig—What is the UNSC count as determined by our UN delegation?"

² See Document 104.

³ See Document 52.

⁴ See footnote 1, Document 104.

charge were critical to continued momentum and to keeping the initiative in our hands.

(A singular example of what happens when your leadership is not directly asserted is the U.S.-U.K. communiqué. You might remember that I tried to get the British to support us tangibly while you were in the Cabinet Room.⁵ This was then left to Cy and Carrington to negotiate. Page 2 of the enclosed U.S.-U.K. communiqué indicates what was omitted.⁶

⁵ See Document 103.

⁶ Not attached. A December 14 memorandum from James Rentschler of the National Security Council Staff to Aaron contained a draft paragraph on Iran for use in a jointly approved press statement to be released after Thatcher's visit. It stated in part that Carter and Thatcher "agreed that they would use every means at their disposal" to obtain the release of the hostages and "agreed on the need to apply economic measures" that would isolate Iran and would direct their respective financial institutions to take appropriate action. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 11-12/79) For Carter and Thatcher's post-meeting comments, see footnote 3, Document 103. For the final press statement, see footnote 8, Document 104.

106. Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, December 18, 1979

SUBJECT

The Next Approach to the Iranians—Message to Ambassador Lang

Attached is the message to Ambassador Lang revised after our discussion last night.² It is designed to reflect an overall effort to shock the Iranians into movement.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret; Eyes Only. Copies were sent to Christopher and Newsom. According to Saunders, the briefing memorandum was prepared for the December 19 SCC meeting, which was subsequently cancelled. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure, November 1979-May 1980," *American Hostages in Iran*, p. 108)

² Attached but not printed. The message more fully explains the mechanism for implementing option two as described in this memorandum. The message bears no indication that it was approved.

As I said then, we now have two options on the diplomatic front in attempting to advance efforts for the release of our people in Tehran. These assume continuing separate efforts on Chapter VII and military preparations.

—The first option is to let the Iranians continue to grapple with the problem of finding a mechanism for gaining a hearing of their grievances and eventually expelling our people.

—The second option, recognizing that the Iranians may not be able to develop a concrete approach, is to make a specific suggestion to them on how the gap between their position and ours might be bridged.

The argument for the first option is that the Iranians themselves do not know what they want and are not ready to consider serious specific proposals. Any U.S. effort to put forward a compromise would risk our looking as if we are weak or dissipate our effort.

The argument for the second approach is that the Iranians are trying to devise a solution which includes parading Americans at a tribunal, while our interest is to focus their thinking on a solution which would get our people out first while simultaneously giving them some assurance that their grievances can be heard.

If we are trying to develop the second option, we would need a mechanism that brings together in the same exercise assurance of the immediate release of our people and a beginning of establishing the forum for airing Iran's grievances. The precise mechanism could be a delegation under UN auspices or a delegation which would prepare for eventual Congressional hearings. Whatever the sponsorship, the key point is that the delegation would go to Iran to prepare for later hearings on the understanding that it would return to New York or Washington with all of the hostages and continue preparations for hearing Iran's grievances.

Attached is a draft message to Ambassador Lang incorporating the approach in the second option above, as we discussed it.

If this message to Lang were approved, a decision could then be made whether to share this idea with Waldheim and whether to communicate it to the PLO.

107. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, December 19, 1979, 8–9:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The President

State

Secretary Vance

Defense

Secretary Brown

CIA

Admiral Turner

JCS

General Jones

The White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

MINUTES

Secretary Vance reported on discussions with Secretary General Waldheim and the new Iranian delegate Mansour Farhang.

The notion is being floated that there will be no trial, but that the hostages will have to appear before a “grand jury.” Thought is also being given to a six-person UN delegation going to Tehran. Waldheim is not prepared to send the group unless the hostages would be released.² Waldheim would also like more time than Thursday for the U.S. to move on sanctions.³ We expect at present the U.S., U.K., France, Norway, Portugal, Belgium, and Gabon to support us.

The UN ambassadors would prefer for Salim to go to Tehran. The President said that we would probably get nine votes in that case and we must not let a Soviet veto stand in the way. Sanctions must be

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 98, Meetings File, 12/19/79 NSC and SCC (Cancelled) re Iran. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House. At the top of the page, Carter wrote: “ok as amended. J.”

² According to telegram 6237 from USUN, December 19, Farhang also told Waldheim the grand jury would replace a trial and asked that he have a few days to get a response from the Iranian Government on the idea of a UN delegation. McHenry noted his own opposition to a UN delegation. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Dec 1979)

³ Thursday, December 20. According to telegram 6236 from USUN, December 19, Waldheim was “taken aback” at the U.S. decision to proceed with securing Security Council agreement to sanctions against Iran. He wanted to give Iran time to respond, and stated that “if Washington wants to take the responsibility for proceeding without waiting, he would have to decline continuing his own efforts.” McHenry told Waldheim that he was unimpressed with Farhang’s position. (Ibid.)

substantive. If that doesn't work, we can always close the harbors. The Secretary of State then outlined the scenario whereby we will wait until Friday⁴ before going for sanctions, and if Salim goes to Tehran we would wait for next week.

The President noted that other countries are more likely to go along with us if they see the entire enterprise as a UN effort and not as a U.S. effort.

Admiral Turner pointed out that Iran is Khomeini and that we are in for a protracted process. What alternatives do we have once the present plans have been exhausted? The Secretary of State said we could go for partial sanctions, then make them stronger, then blockade.

The Secretary of Defense noted that a series of military steps have been developed if the process spins out for a longer period of time. We will need to replace the *Kitty Hawk* with the *Nimitz*. We could fly some B-52s over the carrier group; we could fly the aircraft from the carriers up the Straits of Hormuz or the Gulf; we could overfly Iran with an SR-71; we could deploy a marine amphibian unit; we could deploy F-111s into Egypt; we could also take some direct steps such as electrical disruption or blockade.

Brzezinski noted that in the initial phase we mixed peaceful steps with military actions. This gave us credibility. Now the impression exists that military action is out. We need to keep the military option and diplomacy in tandem. But what military actions would suffice later on? We may need sufficient force to push Khomeini out of power in order to get a solution. The Secretary of State noted that steady action may be more effective than flashy action. In response the Secretary of Defense cited our Vietnamese experience as "inoculating" the other side. Jordan noted the possibility of waning public support.

The President said that we have to bring the issue to a head. It involves not the U.S. vs. Iran but the world community vs. Iran. Accordingly, we should

—let Waldheim⁵ know today that we will seek sanctions;

—announce that action on Friday and make a strong presentation of our case to the effect that we are seeking to carry out the mandate of the Security Council, and maybe the Secretary of State himself should make the presentation;

⁴ December 21.

⁵ After "Waldheim," Carter inserted: "and the members of the Security Council (heads of government)."

- ask for specific sanctions probably by Wednesday of next week;⁶
- force the issue to a head.⁷

In the meantime, it is OK for Salim to go as soon as he can.

There was some further discussion of disruption of shipping to Iran (foreign ships in Iranian ports have dropped from about 50 in November to 30 now); about the need to gradually build up our forces, and about not letting the military option become dormant.

The Secretary of Defense then asked for approval to replace the *Kitty Hawk* with the *Nimitz*; for E-3 flights over the Straits; and to explore the possibility of their landing in Saudi Arabia. This was approved.

⁶ December 26. Carter moved the last part of the previous point into this one and deleted “maybe.” After his changes, the third point reads: “—ask for specific sanctions probably by Wednesday of next week and the Secretary of state himself should make the presentation.”

⁷ Carter changed this point to read: “—subsequently force the issue to a vote.”

**108. Memorandum From Secretary of Defense Brown to the
President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs
(Brzezinski)¹**

Washington, December 19, 1979

SUBJECT

Force Posture During the Holiday Season (U)

1. (U) The purpose of this memorandum is to confirm our discussions of 19 December 1979 regarding force posture and response times during the holiday season.

2. (TS) Training for the rescue option is scheduled to be completed with a full-scale rehearsal on 21 December 1979. Following successful completion of this rehearsal, combined training would be suspended until about 7 January 1980 to provide the Delta team, Ranger and helicopter personnel with an opportunity to return to their home bases

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 12/10/79–12/31/79. Top Secret. A stamped notation at the top of the memorandum reads: “ZB has seen.”

for the holidays. Each of these groups will have a reassembly plan which will provide us with the capability to reconstitute the rescue force within 24 hours. As a result, our reaction time for the rescue option would be extended by a like amount of time.

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Harold Brown

109. Editorial Note

In late December 1979, Panama and Iran cooperated to establish a new channel between Washington and Tehran for negotiations on the hostage crisis. This channel was slow to develop, but from early on it appeared to have the backing, on the Iranian side, of the Ayatollah Khomeini and the active engagement of Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh. On the Panamanian side, it had the full support of President Aristides Royo and at least the acquiescence of Panamanian Military Leader General Omar Torrijos. Neither Secretary of State Cyrus Vance nor President Jimmy Carter initially supported the channel. However, creation of this channel introduced as emissaries two lawyers, Christian Bourguet and Hector Villalon, both of whom were in close cooperation with the Iranian revolutionary government, and who would play an extremely visible role in hostage negotiations early in 1980.

Within days of the Shah's December 15 move to Contadora Island in Panama, Iran requested his extradition. Panamanian President Royo telephoned U.S. Ambassador Ambler Moss to inform him that Khomeini had given his approval for an Iranian representative to travel to Panama and negotiate a face-saving means of extraditing the Shah and freeing the hostages. Moss, who felt the Shah would panic on hearing this plan, wanted urgent instructions. It should be noted that, although the telegram refers to the Iranian Prime Minister, that post was empty; the reference is presumably to Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh. (Telegram 10253 from Panama, December 18; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148–2166) Royo insisted that Panama would not agree to any extradition but wanted to help free the hostages. (Telegram 10306 from Panama, December 18; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 60, Panama 6/79–1/80)

On December 19, Royo received a message through contacts in France that Ghotbzadeh had also proposed a coordinating committee

of Iranian, Panamanian, and U.S. high-level representatives to discuss "the manner in which the hostages might be liberated." Royo wanted to know what the United States thought of this proposal. (Telegram 10324 from Panama, December 19; *ibid.*) After consulting with Vance, Moss informed Royo that "the proposal had all the earmarks of a scheme to try to negotiate for the extradition of the Shah in return for the prisoners' release." Vance, he told Royo, thought that the "plan would be very counterproductive." (Telegram 10330 from Panama, December 19; *ibid.*)

However, Ghotbzadeh apparently had developed a specific plan. He told Professor Richard Cottam on December 21 that the Revolutionary Council had developed "a settlement scenario in which several things might appear simultaneously." This involved the extradition of the Shah, some form of examination of the Shah's crimes and U.S. policy toward Iran through perhaps a Senate-House Committee, and the coincidental release of the hostages alongside this Committee's operation. (Memorandum for the Record, December 21; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation) Royo told Moss that a representative of Khomeini would be arriving in Panama December 24 and that his presence was to be kept "completely secret." Moss countered with the information that Ghotbzadeh's position was "shaky," implying both his belief that Ghotbzadeh was the representative and that he would be unable to deliver on any negotiated deal. (Telegram 10422 from Panama, December 21; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840171-0384 and N790010-0290)

The Iranian representatives who subsequently appeared in Panama were Bourguet and Villalon. "The more important delegation," Royo told Moss, "probably would not come." The two lawyers brought an extradition request which Royo announced Panama would "consider," meaning "request and study as if it were a complaint filed in court." (Telegram 10540 from Panama, December 28; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number]) Royo told Moss, Bourguet, and Villalon that Panama would "not hand over the Shah under any circumstances but would be willing to accept and consider an extradition request as a 'face-saving' device providing the GOI put itself into conformity with international law by releasing the hostages." The lawyers then returned to Iran with this message. Royo, who believed the "face-saving" concept had to be handled in person, intended to send Marcel Salamin to Tehran. (Telegram 2 from Panama, January 2, 1980; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870108-1063)

Moss told Royo that Salamin's trip to Iran was "very bad news," and there was serious concern in Washington that the Panamanian-

Iranian communications were “interfering in the processes we have in motion to free the hostages.” Royo decided Salamin would wait in an intermediate location until after the upcoming visit of Secretary-General Waldheim to Iran. (Telegram 13 from Panama, January 2; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870108–1068) For information on Waldheim’s trip, see Document 128.

110. Record of a Special Coordination Committee (Intelligence) Meeting¹

Washington, undated

The following discussion by the SCC(I) on December 20² was approved by the President. The SCC(I) considered a proposed new finding regarding intelligence operations regarding Iran. Discussion centered on the operative description of our objectives in contacts with groups opposing Khomeini’s regime. It was agreed, that these contacts were intended “to encourage interactions that could lead to a broad, pro-Western front capable of forming an alternative government.” This wording was considered to be consistent with the decisions taken at the NSC meeting the previous day.³ The DCI noted that he needed a finding which would permit him to respond to the kinds of questions we are getting from Bakhtiar, *viz*: What does the U.S. think of General Oveissi? Should Bakhtiar link up with him or not? Is the Shah in contact with Oveissi? What does the U.S. think of General Ansari? Are we prepared to assist Bakhtiar in getting funding from the Saudis via Egypt? All agreed that the Congress would support a finding such as that proposed, although there was a risk that it would leak at some point. Dr. Brzezinski noted that this group should be kept informed of any actual expenditures of funds and what they were intended for. The DCI will draft general guidance on the use of funds. [2 lines not declassified] Secretary Vance pointed out that the finding represents a major step. It indicates that this group has made a decision to bring groups together to bring down Khomeini. Secretary Brown pointed

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Subject File, Box I026, Iran Finding 27 Dec 1979. Top Secret; Sensitive. Brzezinski sent a copy to Turner under a December 27 covering memorandum.

² The Summary of Conclusions is in Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107.

³ See Document 107.

out that we are proposing to encourage actions which "could" lead to an alternative government. Dr. Brzezinski said that this finding also had contingency value since Khomeini may fall and we will need to be able to support an alternative grouping. The SCC(I) unanimously recommended that the President approve and sign the attached finding. (TS)

On December 21, the SCC agreed⁴ that together with the background and discussion of the issue as approved by the President, the finding provided the necessary authority to proceed with the necessary actions. All agreed that the finding did not indicate that we anticipated that Khomeini's regime could be transformed into a "responsible and democratic regime." [2½ lines not declassified]. The President's approval of the notes would be important in dealing with the congressional committees. (TS)

Attachment

Presidential Finding⁵

Washington, December 27, 1979

Finding Pursuant to Section 662 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, As Amended, Concerning Operations in Foreign Countries Other Than Those Intended Solely for the Purpose of Intelligence Collection

I find the following operation in a foreign country is important to the national security of the United States, and direct the Director of Central Intelligence, or his designee, to report this finding to the concerned committees of the Congress pursuant to Section 662, and to provide such briefings as necessary.

SCOPE

Iran

DESCRIPTION

Conduct propaganda and political and economic action operations to encourage the establishment of a responsible and democratic regime

⁴ The Summary of Conclusions is in Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107.

⁵ Secret; Sensitive.

in Iran;⁶ make contacts with Iranian opposition leaders and interested governments in order to encourage interactions that could lead to a broad, pro-Western front capable of forming an alternative government.

Jimmy Carter

⁶ The original draft of the finding reads: "Conduct propaganda and political and economic action operations to support opposition to Khomeini's radical regime." Carter struck the text and wrote above it: "Conduct propaganda and political and economic operations to encourage the establishment of a responsible and democratic regime in Iran." (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107.

111. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 21, 1979

SUBJECT

Iran—[*less than 1 line not declassified*]

[*2 paragraphs (13½ lines) not declassified*]

Azerbaijan has approximately 10% of the population of Iran. In addition, approximately one-third of the entire Iranian population is of Azerbaijani origin. This extended population dominates the bazaar in Tehran and is heavily represented in the officer corps. Their spiritual leader is Shariat-Madari, who provides the most potent potential symbol of legitimate opposition to Khomeini in all of Iran. The Azerbaijanis border on Turkey and are Turkic-speakers; the border is a sieve. Azerbaijan is the acknowledged "leader" in revolutionary movements. It led the way in 1906, and the Tabriz riots were the first major event

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran [Cables & Memos] 11–12/79. Secret; Sensitive.

signalling the downfall of the Shah. The people tend to be politically aware, activist, and tough fighters.

[1 paragraph (12 lines) not declassified]

As we examine our options under the new finding,² I recommend that we give this strategy more attention than it has received to date.³

² Attached to Document 110.

³ At the top of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote: "GS. The 2 are not incompatible. I like this. Feed it into your covert action/milit.group."

112. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, December 21, 1979

SUBJECT

NSC Weekly Report #122

1. *Opinion*

Difficult Choices in Iran. Let me just add the following to our discussions this morning,² because I know that this matter is very much on your mind.

(1) It may well be that Khomeini cannot be moved by economic pressures in which case military action, which is merely an extension of economic pressure (blockade or mining), will not move him either. In the meantime such action could provoke widespread international reactions against us and thus be self-defeating.

Because of that, we need to consider military actions which contribute to his downfall, and thus secure the release of hostages as a consequence of attaining the other objective: his downfall. I have set up a very small, tightly held group to see whether we could somehow mesh covert political action designed to create an alternative to Khomeini

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 35, Subject File, Iran [Cables & Memos] 11-12/79. Top Secret. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" in the upper right corner.

² Carter held a breakfast meeting with Mondale, Vance, Brown, Jordan, Donovan, Cutler, and Brzezinski from 7:30 to 9:09 a.m. on December 21. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No record of the meeting was found.

with a series of military steps which contribute to that end. In other words, our military options would not be primarily either punitive or designed to apply economic leverage but would be more deliberately geared to attaining a political objective.

(2) In that connection, I will think further about some forms of military action which give us more direct bargaining leverage. Khomeini is not entirely immune to military threats, as we already know because he apparently was influenced by our very secret threat of November 23.³ You felt strongly today that taking the islands⁴ would be the wrong course of action, and you may well be right. My only point was that we ought to think of some military steps which have the effect of imposing a protracted humiliation on Khomeini, which can only be terminated through the release of our hostages. Taking some territory, such as the islands, might have that effect; perhaps mining would also; in any case, as above, I will be seeking to define for you some military options which reinforce our political strategy rather than being either retaliatory or merely an extension of economic pressure.

(3) With regard to Iraq, in addition to the military aspects that we discussed this morning, I have checked with Cy Vance, and he agrees with the notion that it might be useful for Jim Schlesinger to pay a personal visit to Iraq early in 1980 and to engage the Iraqi leaders in a wider discussion. I am so informing Schlesinger.

2. *Vance-Brown-Brzezinski Luncheon*

Cy, Harold and I reached the following decisions at our weekly luncheon today:

—*DOD Proposals for Improving Covert Action*: In response to a proposal from the Department of Defense, we agreed to establish a screening committee to review, expedite and stimulate better covert action proposals. The Committee will meet prior to SCC meetings and will be authorized to return inadequate proposals to CIA for revision if it deems them inadequate for SCC review. The committee will be composed of David Aaron, Robert Komer and Ronald Spiers. (S)

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

³ See Document 52.

⁴ At the bottom of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "We need to list everything that Khomeini would not want to see occur and which would not incite condemnation of U.S. by other nations. Iraqi seizure of the islands is the best example I could come up with. J." The reference is to Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands. In a January 4, 1980, memorandum to Brzezinski, Hunter wrote that there were two separate questions: "whether to seek seizure of the islands; and *who* is best to do it. The answer to the second question will have implications as serious—if not more so over the long-term—as the answer to the first." He argued that any Gulf state was preferable to Iraq. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 46, Iraq 1/79–2/80)

113. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, December 24, 1979

SUBJECT

Covert Action and U.S. Military Contingency Planning (S)

The meeting with CIA, Defense, and State, on the compatibility of our military contingency planning and our covert action planning, took place on Saturday morning, December 22.² David asked for the following options to be developed:

[4 paragraphs (6 lines) not declassified]

5. Political consequences of seizing the oil region in the south, in particular, what would it take to hold the oil, denying its production and sale by Tehran and Khomeini's government?

6. [less than 1 line not declassified]

CIA is producing a paper on five of the six points. I and Defense were to produce something on the fifth point, holding the oil fields. (S)

Putting the Khuzestan Oil Fields in "Trust."

Occupation of the oil producing region in the south could be done one of four ways:

—*Iraqi Invasion.* This might take them away from Tehran, but the Iraqi hand on the oil spigot would not be easy to control. The other adverse political implications for the Persian Gulf littoral states makes this something to be prevented, not encouraged.

—*Admiral Madani Turns the Region Away from Tehran.* If Admiral Madani, whose power in the Khuzestan region seems strong, were to abandon appearances of support for Khomeini's regime, this would certainly take the oil away from Khomeini and give us some chance of influencing the internal developments in Iran. No one, however, seems to believe Madani can be brought to do this.

—*U.S. Invasion of the Khuzestan Region to Control the Oil.* This, of course, is not remotely within our military capability, even if we drew

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 11/78–11/79. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System.

² Turner's briefing material for the December 22 meeting is an untitled December 21 paper. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1)

half our troops from Europe to execute the operation. Furthermore, 90 days would be required to begin to position three or four divisions in the region. This option is wholly unrealistic.

—*Mine or Blockade Oil Shipping from Iran.* This can be done. It is very cheap. It can turn off the oil spigot. In time it would dry up Iranian hard currency credits. It would also hurt the Japanese and the Europeans who might become less than publicly supportive of the scheme as they anticipated the inflation and decline in expected economic growth forced on them by this action. (S)

David appears convinced that putting pressure on Khomeini is the way to make him yield, and Gary Sick argued that the cut-off of oil production brought down the previous regime. Thus, cutting off oil exportation would put pressure on Khomeini, encourage his domestic enemies, and push the neutral Bazaar elements into opposition. (S)

Conclusions

—The only effective way to stop the oil exportation is through blockading or mining. Our military capabilities can give us this option with some warning and preparation time.

—Precisely what impact cutting of oil exports will have on Khomeini and the hostage situation is unclear.

—The only way to force significant disruption of the Iranian economic interaction with the West seems to lie in stopping the oil flow. If that is desired because other measures (UN Chapter VII) fail, blockading becomes attractive.

—The mining or blockading option could become an important step for supporting other actions—such as the Azeris in the north, that cannot be determined now. (S)

114. Memorandum From Secretary of the Treasury Miller to the Special Coordinating Committee and the National Security Council

Washington, December 22, 1979

[Source: Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 33. Secret. 7 pages not declassified.]

115. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 22, 1979, 9–9:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

UN

Ambassador Donald McHenry

Defense

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Clayton

JCS

General David Jones

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Justice

John Shenefield

The White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
Stu Eizenstat
Lloyd Cutler

Treasury

Secretary William Miller
Robert Carswell
Anthony M. Solomon

NSC

Gary Sick
Colonel William Odom

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Economic Steps.* Dr. Brzezinski relayed the President's views that a senior official should be prepared to travel to Europe after the holidays or sooner to follow up on various economic steps.² Mr. Solomon reviewed the positions of the various European states at this point. The French and British are now unanimously opposed to the default mechanism and there is no way we can budge them since they are convinced that they would bear legal responsibility for any losses suffered by their banks in carrying out such government instructions. Although the Swiss have briefed their banks to be punctilious in declaring defaults, they are prohibited by law from attaching assets of the Iranian Central Bank even if an organ of the Iranian Government defaults, so the actual effect will be very slight. The French and British

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #236A held 12/22/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Before new year."

are making a key issue over their demand that the agreed steps be conducted with no publicity, although they are well aware that leaks are possible. The package of technical steps, however, is now virtually complete, and Mr. Solomon saw no requirement for a U.S. representative in Europe. The SCC discussed this and agreed that initial follow-up on the package of economic steps could be handled by cable, but that it would be desirable to have a senior representative in Europe to be available for close consultations and to deal with the kinds of questions which are certain to arise during the announcement and debate of economic sanctions in the UN, which will start about next Wednesday.³ The SCC recommended that a follow-up cable be prepared by Treasury and State seeking final implementation of the agreed economic steps, but that, unless circumstances warrant otherwise, we would plan to send someone to Europe on about next Wednesday to follow through and deal with technical questions associated with Chapter VII sanctions. All agreed Mr. Solomon would be the most appropriate candidate.⁴ (C)

2. *UN Sanctions.* The President wants the allies to begin to impose sanctions at the time when the sanctions are initially requested at the UN, probably in mid-week.⁵ Secretary Vance said that the Europeans were planning to implement the technical steps on oil, bank deposits and the like; many of these were already being implemented. He wished to raise with the President the broader subject of when and how our allies can implement Charter VII sanctions. The list of the sanctions which we would request is still not fixed. Ambassador McHenry noted that it would be far preferable to have the UN resolution “emerge”

³ December 26.

⁴ Carter approved the item with a checkmark. On Sitrep #102 by the Iran Working Group, December 23, Turner circled a paragraph on economic sanctions and underlined the clause that states that sanctions would “mean major difficulties and dislocation in the Iranian economy,” and the clause that notes that the effect of sanctions would be “as much psychological and political” since Iran’s economy was “fairly resilient.” In the margin he wrote that “this is becoming a key issue—was debated by SCC Sat [December 22]. This formulation is poor—the 2 underlined portions are almost contradictory—we should attempt to help here.” (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81M00919R, Executive Registry Subject Files (1976–1979), Box 14, Folder 13: Iran)

⁵ On December 21, Carter announced his intention to ask for an early meeting of the Security Council to impose international economic sanctions on Iran. He also quoted part of a Christmas carol written by Henry Longfellow in 1864 to express his desire for peace and goodwill. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1979*, Book II, pp. 2277–2278) In telegram 330500 to USUN, December 22, the Department transmitted the text of a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting “that the Security Council meet at an early date to consider the measures which should be taken to induce Iran to comply with its international obligations.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council)

from a round of consultations so it appears to be the result of consensus—even if everyone knows that the U.S. is the real author. Secretary Vance and Ambassador McHenry intended to consult immediately following the SCC meeting to decide on the list of specific sanctions which we would demand. This list will be prepared and circulated later in the day for comments before being sent to the President as an agreed recommendation by the SCC.⁶ The ambassadors of the nations represented on the Security Council are being called in to State today to make a firm request for their support for our efforts in the UN. They will not be briefed on the precise details of our proposed package, however, since questions remain about the desirability and legality of interrupting communications, for example. Dr. Brzezinski cautioned the SCC that the list of sanctions should be as stringent as possible. The President did not want us to look like a bunch of puffs. (S)

3. *Iranian Diplomats*. State will follow up on the President's order that the Iranian diplomats who have been ordered to leave the country should get out. (C)

4. *Iranian Monetary Transfers*. Secretary Miller briefed the group on a series of proposed Iranian transfers of accounts from European and Japanese banks to alternative accounts of Libyan and Algerian banks. Some of these alternative accounts would in fact be held in Japan or France. It is doubtful that the allies would be willing or, in some cases, able to interfere with this type of transaction. Nevertheless, the SCC agreed that going to the allies on this issue would underline the fact that we are monitoring Iranian activities closely and would keep them alert to their commitments. It was agreed that Secretary Miller would send a message to the appropriate finance ministers. (S)

5. *Unblocking Assets*. Secretary Miller circulated for SCC comments a paper outlining procedures and options available to us in unblocking Iranian assets should that prove necessary or desirable at some point in the future. (S)

6. *Public Posture*. State will be in contact with the various clergymen and religious groups which may be involved in visits to the hostages over Christmas. They will be briefed to insist on seeing all the hostages, to take their time and not rush through a visit, and to protest publicly in Tehran if they are prohibited from fulfilling their objectives or if the

⁶ Brzezinski sent the Summary of Conclusions and the operative paragraphs of the proposed UN resolution on Chapter VII sanctions to Carter on December 22. He noted that the latter "has been checked and approved by all agencies." Carter initialed his approval and made comments on the text of the operative part of the resolution. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #236A held 12/22/79) The resolution was to call for a complete embargo on Iran by all nations in the areas of trade, finance, business transactions, and arms.

hostages are not well. We will continue to focus on the fact that the hostages have not been seen for nearly a month by any outside observers.⁷ (C)

7. *Australia*. Mr. Solomon noted that, in his view, the economic steps which we have taken to date do not really bring effective pressure to bear on Iran. The Iranians are making \$1.5 billion per month on oil sales above and beyond their import requirements, so they are well equipped to find alternative sources.⁸ [12½ lines not declassified]

8. *Meetings*. The group agreed that no further meetings would be scheduled until Wednesday, December 26, at 9:00 a.m. unless there was some special need. (U)

⁷ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “good—try to prevent their becoming propaganda tools for Khomeini.”

⁸ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “Be *firm* with Australia on this.”

116. Memorandum From Acting Secretary of State Christopher to President Carter¹

Washington, December 24, 1979

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

4. *Iran*. The Swiss Ambassador in Tehran, who saw Ghotbzadeh again Sunday,² reported that Ghotbzadeh seemed not to know what to do next. He felt we had to wait for a few days for further movement. He confirmed arrangements for the pastoral visit to the hostages that seem generally consistent with our other information. The Ambassador's personal impression is that the Iranians are organizing a show around the visiting clergymen.

The Italians have expressed on behalf of the other EC-9 countries their concern for their communities in Iran when steps are taken in the UN toward a sanctions resolution. They and the Japanese feel that the Iranian Government and mobs in the street may react against any embassies or communities that support us on the sanctions issue. We

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 14. Secret. Carter initialed “C” in the top right corner of the memorandum. Carter was at Camp David December 21–28.

² Sunday, December 21.

will try to give these countries a timetable for our work in New York as soon as the picture is clarified.

There are repeated rumors that two or three hostages may be released in the next day or so. Thus far we have nothing very tangible to give us hope on this score.

We have just had an authoritative report that Arafat has been in touch with Khomeini by emissary. According to the emissary, the thinking in Qom is that there will definitely be a trial of American policy at which the hostages would be present. No harm would be done to them and they would go home after the trial.

5. *London Meeting.* With respect to the secret London meeting with associates of Khomeini and Admiral Madani which you approved yesterday,³ Hal Saunders is now making plans to fly to London Thursday night for a Friday meeting.⁴

6. *Australia.* The Australian Cabinet agreed to support the U.S. to the fullest extent possible on Iran, but decided to continue existing plans for food shipments to Iran, principally wheat and mutton. Very recently, the Iranian Government food purchasing agency asked the AWB for an additional 400,000 tons of wheat. To try to head this off, I am writing to Peacock stating that while we appreciate the importance of food exports to Australia, I hope that nothing will be done that would seem to lessen the impact of measures being taken officially and unofficially in other countries. I pointed out to him that the U.S. would see any substantial increase in Australia's food exports to Iran or the extension of government credits or insurance to underwrite such shipments as falling in this category.

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

8. *Sanctions in the UN.* Based on responses to your message to the leaders of Security Council member states and our talks with Ambassadors here, we have the following preliminary assessment of the mood in the Council. (We will know much more after we get reactions to our specific "operative paragraphs".)⁵

—Great Britain, France, Norway, Portugal: While we will get some questioning of specific measures or language embodied in the resolution, we expect the full support of our allies.

³ Carter, who was at Camp David on December 23, spoke to Christopher on the telephone from 5:24 to 5:30 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No record of the discussion has been found.

⁴ December 27 and 28.

⁵ A message from Carter to heads of government of Security Council member states asking for support of the U.S. resolution on economic sanctions on Iran was transmitted in telegram 327895 to multiple posts, December 20. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840163-1578, P840163-1579, N790010-245)

—USSR/Czechoslovakia: We believe Brezhnev's response⁶ was designed to discourage us from proceeding with sanctions or perhaps to cause us to whittle them down to a minimum. We do not feel the response must be read as foretelling a Soviet veto, but we will have to work hard on the Soviets. The Czechs will do as the Soviets do.

—China: China's response was encouraging. We hope we will have their affirmative vote or, at a minimum, an abstention.

—Bolivia: We have a positive response and should be able to count on Bolivia's support.

—Jamaica: Reaction was non-committal. Jamaicans will look to other non-aligned on the Council before deciding whether to support sanctions. We put them on the borderline between yes and abstain at this point.

—Kuwait: We do not have a definitive response, but it will be difficult to gain Kuwait's support given their geographic location and internal situation. We will have to work hard on them even for an abstention.

—Bangladesh: Somewhat more favorably inclined than Kuwait. We will be helped by the work of Bangladesh's good ambassadors here and in New York. But the most we can probably expect is an abstention.

—Gabon: Initial reaction has been good. France can help us with Gabon.

—Nigeria, Zambia: These are important non-aligned countries and we must have their affirmative votes. We have some reason to be encouraged, but it will take our best efforts.

⁶ Brezhnev's reply to Carter's message is in telegram 27895 from Moscow, December 24. (Carter Library, Plains File, Box 6)

117. Memorandum for the Files¹

Washington, December 25, 1979, 4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Conversations with Clerical Delegation and Bruce Laingen

In two conversations this afternoon with the clerics and one talk with Bruce Laingen after his two hour conversation with them the following paragraphs summarize their activities to date.²

The clerics spent five hours in the compound and in three separate services believe they saw 43 individuals (Howard saw 21 persons, Coffin 16, Gumbleton/Duval 6). The persons whom they saw and whom Bruce Laingen could identify are listed in the first column of the attached.³ The clerics also received from the captors 33 personal messages. Where these messages identify other Americans, they are listed in the second column. In our last conversation with the clergy, they had not yet completed their analysis of the names and lists and so the information on the attached is necessarily incomplete.

The clergy asked that we not pass any messages to dependents about their contacts with the hostages. Instead, they would like this information to come from the New York office of the clerical group. The clergy also asked that we not refer to our contacts with them in press briefings.

The clerics will attempt in subsequent contacts with the students to clear up the discrepancy between 50 and 43 hostages.⁴ They will

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Dec 1979. Secret. Drafted by Constable. Attached to the December 27 Iran Update memorandum from Newsom and Saunders to Vance sent on December 26.

² The clerical delegation was composed of Rev. William Sloane Coffin, Rev. William M. Howard, Jr., Bishop Thomas C. Kelly, and Bishop Thomas Gumbleton. (David Pearce, "State Dept. 'Welcomes' Move To Allow Visit by Clergy," *Washington Post*, December 22, 1979, p. A18) The clergy, who left for Iran on December 23, were invited by the Iranian Government to meet with the hostages for Christmas services. ("Three Clergymen Invited To Visit Hostages," *Chicago Tribune*, December 23, 1979, p. 2) In Iran they were joined by Cardinal Etienne Duval, the Archbishop of Algiers. (Doyle McManus, "4 Clergymen Meet, Pray with Hostages," *Los Angeles Times*, December 25, 1979, p. OC1) For the statement issued by the clergy on their departure from Tehran, see *New York Times*, December 26, 1979, p. A16.

³ Attached but not printed.

⁴ The seven hostages not seen by the clergy were "tentatively" identified as Belk, Metrisko, Queen, Blucker, Ahern, Daugherty, and Kalp. (Memorandum for the Record, prepared by the interagency working group, December 26; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Dec 1979)

attempt to see all 50 before departing. They will raise this subject in their meeting with Ghotbzadeh on December 26.

The clerics say there has been no discussion of the release of the hostages. They also say that there was no indication in any of their conversations on the compound that any of the hostages had been held in another place.

The clergy told Bruce Laingen they had been impressed by the resilience and courage of the hostages they met. Some were angry about their conditions, others were depressed, but their spirits seemed to improve during the meeting with the clergy. Apparently several of the hostages are in a rather bad psychological state. Bruce did not want to give their names over the telephone.

At least one hostage, John Limbert, apparently declined to give his last name to the clergy. We identified him through his reference to his dependents.

118. Summary of Conclusion of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 26, 1979, 9–10:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor
Robert Komer

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

Treasury

Anthony Solomon*
Robert Mundheim*

White House

Stuart Eizenstat*
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron

NSC

Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

Energy
Secretary Charles Duncan*
(Justice not represented)

*Domestic issues only

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Hostages.* We are confident that our list of the hostages is accurate within one or two names. Fifty hostages is the best estimate, although it is conceivable that there might be another private individual who happened to be in the embassy at the time of the takeover whose name has not yet surfaced, or even that someone escaped and is in hiding. The clergymen visiting the embassy on Christmas had a number of different lists of numbers of hostages actually seen, but it is certain that they saw no more than 43 hostages, perhaps fewer.² We will be able to tie this down more firmly once they have been debriefed. A student at the embassy last night on the telephone referred to 50 hostages. State will prepare a chart showing the most recent evidence we have about each of the hostages since the takeover occurred. It would not be advisable to base a public initiative too heavily on the clergymen's visit until we have a better understanding of what they did and who they saw. We also wish to insure that the private nature of the clergy visit is understood. These men were chosen by the Iranians, they had no official status, and we have no control over what they may say on their return. Secretary Vance will talk to the clergymen as soon as they return. (S)

2. *Economic Steps.* Treasury will prepare an updated matrix for the President showing what each of the allies has agreed to and what steps are actually being implemented. We have full agreement on all items of the package except government guidance to private banks about Iranian defaults. Full implementation will begin on December 27, although the French say they will not complete their guidance to their banks until January 2. On the issue of public disclosure, the allies agreed that if and when leaks occur, the government would officially confirm that "measures of cooperation" had been implemented, without being specific. In some ways, a non-specific statement is preferable since the actions are primarily technical and would not have major public impact. France has insisted that it wants to say only that allied

² See Document 117.

consultations were undertaken. Treasury will lean on them heavily today and State will assist as required to bring them in line with the others. All agreed that a backgrounder would be desirable on Friday,³ placing emphasis on the less sensitive areas of cooperation which support the dollar (paying only dollars for oil, etc.) but indicating that a package of steps had been accepted. (S)

3. *Chapter VII Sanctions.* The resolutions will not be presented to the UN before Friday or Saturday, after more consultations are completed. Secretary Vance will make the presentation to the Security Council in person to dramatize its importance. The SCC discussed at some length the President's decision that we ask the allies to begin implementing sanctions from the moment we ask for them at the UN. The group agreed that the allies would be extremely reluctant to take such action without a vote in the UN, and our initiative could well be perceived as a quick failure. By comparison, the SCC believed it would be much better to put our allies on notice at a high level, at the time we make our official presentation, that we would expect them to institute sanctions if the UN should fail to act. That would give the allies a strong motivation to work hard for a successful vote in the Security Council. The SCC agreed that, with the President's approval, Secretary Vance will prepare a strong Presidential message along these lines for tomorrow's meeting.⁴ (S)

4. *Emissary to Europe.* The SCC agreed that our efforts to get agreement from the Europeans on technical steps had been successful and the follow-up did not require a high-level official present in Europe. Although the SCC had previously recommended a visit to Europe by Tony Solomon, it now appears that the issues which will need discussion with the allies relate primarily to political decisions surrounding action on Chapter VII, rather than detailed discussions with finance ministers. An alternative would be to send a high-level Presidential emissary for talks with heads of state. Secretary Vance wanted to reflect on the desirability of such a mission. He will make a recommendation to the President this evening.⁵ (S)

5. *Iranian Diplomats.* The Iranian diplomats affected by our departure order have been removed from the diplomatic list. They have 30 days to take care of their personal arrangements, which are complicated by the fact that some of them are married to American citizens or are themselves American citizens.

³ December 28.

⁴ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

⁵ In the left margin, Carter wrote "not done."

Political-Diplomatic Issues:

1. *AWACS.* The aircraft will take off from Egypt at 5:00 p.m. EST today. There will be no announcement of the flight. The Egyptians now indicate a strong interest in joint training exercises with the AWACS on about January 4–5. Although the JCS had originally planned to send the AWACS to Germany shortly after the flight this week, they now propose letting the AWACS remain in Egypt for joint training in early January, followed by a movement to Germany. After the visit to Germany, the AWACS can either return to the U.S. or extend the visit, depending on the situation at the time.⁶ (S)

2. *Intelligence Actions.* Admiral Turner said that the Agency is increasing its contacts with various Iranian figures. It was still too early to identify a group of opposition figures who might coalesce into an effective opposition to Khomeini. Rumors about Madani's opposition to Khomeini are so widespread that the DCI wonders how long he will be able to maintain his present position as governor of Khuzestan and head of the Iranian Navy. As contacts increase, the Agency Iran Task Force will meet with the David Aaron group to examine political implications and possibilities of next steps. Admiral Turner emphasized that this process of feeling out possible opposition figures takes time, and we should not expect results in a few days. Mr. Carlucci added a note of caution that our push for sanctions on Chapter VII is convincing many of the Western governments to reduce their representation in Tehran. [2½ lines not declassified]

3. *Shah.* The latest blood test indicates that the Shah's health is deteriorating. A team of doctors will fly to Panama today to examine him and determine what the next steps should be. A transfusion is the minimum expected, and further surgery may be required. Secretary Vance felt that the Shah's condition was becoming dangerous. The Panamanians want any medical treatment to be performed in Panamanian hospitals, rather than U.S. facilities. The team of doctors is aware of this and will make a recommendation. (S)

⁶ Carter approved this item with a checkmark.

119. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 26, 1979

SUBJECT

[less than 1 line not declassified] Iran (S)

My brief acquaintance with CIA's planning and inclination, which occurred at David's meeting on Saturday with CIA, State, and Defense² leaves me worried about what we are able to do and what we may want to achieve. The meeting on covert planning and military support had a tone of urgency, a tactical tone, *[2½ lines not declassified]*.

[3 paragraphs (25 lines) not declassified]

The northern tier objective, it should be added, is highly compatible with the "Saudi-centric" approach to Persian Gulf security, the approach we are following in acquiring bases in Oman and Somalia. In fact, our improved military presence in the Gulf is an essential precondition for restoration of Turkish-Iranian-Pakistani security cooperation.

Turkish Interests. *[1 line not declassified]* in putting together a new centralizing regime in Tehran which is not anti-Western. They do not want to see the Kurds unleashed as a fragmenting force. Both of these interests are sufficiently coincidental with ours to provide a basis for U.S.-Turkish cooperation, *[less than 1 line not declassified]*. The Turks, however, will undoubtedly want to extract a price in U.S. military support and economic aid.

Pakistani Interests. Zia and Khomeini are both religious conservatives and opposed to Baluchestani independence or autonomy. Zia offers us unique access to Khomeini, a credible Moslem ruler speaking of common Iranian-Pakistani interests in preventing what the Soviets are doing in Afghanistan. To take advantage of this connection, however, we must change our policy toward Pakistan significantly. That can be done more easily than many at State and Defense believe.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 10/78–12/79. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System. At the top of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote to Aaron: "DA. Where do we stand? ZB."

² See Document 113.

Next Steps

We must find a way to relax the arms transfer restrictions, even if that means going to the Hill for an exception or a change in the law. [1½ lines not declassified] Once it is clear to Zia that we are prepared to move in that direction, that we will accept the damage to our relations with India, then we may find him willing to begin covert action, even before we have delivered arms.

As we make decisions on covert action, it seems critical that we make them toward the proper end: restoring the “northern tier,” not only gaining the release of the hostages. We should make intelligence approaches at the highest level in Pakistan and Turkey for discussions about the future of Iran.

The PRC on Pakistan this week,³ of course, could be the forum for recommending one of these steps along with significant changes in our overall policy toward that State.

³ The PRC met on December 27 to discuss Pakistan and the situation in Afghanistan. See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union, Documents 102 and 103.

120. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, December 27, 1979, 9–9:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor
Robert Komer

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin
Civiletti*
John Shenefield*

Treasury

Anthony Solomon*

White House

Lloyd Cutler*
Zbigniew Brzezinski

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

JCS
Admiral Thomas Hayward
General John Pustay

NSC
William Odom
Gary Sick

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

Energy
Secretary Charles Duncan*

*Domestic Issues Only

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Japan.* The Japanese have requested our guidance on their forthcoming negotiations with Iran on oil. Thus far the Japanese have held firm at \$28.50 per barrel, and they have indicated that they are prepared to stay with that price for the moment if Shell and BP do the same. The SCC agreed that we should ask the Japanese to hold firm at \$28.50 and that we were contacting the British to inform their companies to do the same. Secretary Duncan felt that if this price can be sustained for another week or ten days the market price may soften. We will also remind all parties of the agreement to pay only dollars for oil. (C)

2. *UN.* Secretary Vance mentioned that he had briefed the President this morning on the UN scenario. Plans now call for Vance to make the formal presentation to the Security Council on Friday evening or Saturday morning, aiming at a vote on Monday before the composition of the Security Council changes.² State is preparing talking points for the President to use in telephone calls to heads of state of Zambia and Nigeria, who are wavering. A strong Presidential message to other members of the Security Council will also be available this afternoon. One proposal which has promise is for the Security Council to vote sanctions to take effect within ten days or so after the vote, allowing time for Waldheim to continue his mediation efforts in the interim. Don McHenry feels that this might buy us an extra vote or so, and the SCC thought it was an attractive idea. Secretary Vance noted that the timetable we have proposed may not hold, and it should not be discussed publicly. (C)

3. *Economic Steps.* The economic steps taken by our allies should begin to leak within the next several days. Treasury will insure that the leaks are accelerated without making it appear that they come from U.S. officials, which would be a breach of faith. Once the leaks have begun to appear, the allies are to confirm that “measures of coopera-

² December 28, 29, and 31. See Document 128.

tion" have in fact been agreed upon. The French have not yet formally agreed to this, but Vance has sent a message to Giscard³ and believes that the French will agree. (C)

4. *IMF.* Mr. Solomon alerted the SCC to the possibility that the Saudis and others may vote against us—or at least abstain—on the question of whether or not our freeze of Iranian assets is permitted under the IMF Charter. The reason for the Saudi and Arab position is that Egypt made the same argument about paying interest to Saudi Arabia after the Arab cutoff of funds. Although this may be somewhat embarrassing to us, Mr. Solomon was certain that we have the necessary votes to win in the IMF. (C)

5. *Hostages.* State has prepared a chart showing when each hostage was seen or contacted since the takeover of the embassy.⁴ This is extremely sensitive, since it tends to identify particular individuals as suspect. A single copy was made to be attached to the notes of the SCC meeting. The seven missing hostages include [*less than 1 line not declassified*] four Foreign Service Officers. There is one hostage, a Mr. Blucker who was on temporary duty to Tehran as an economist, who has not been seen or heard from since the first day of the takeover. The fact that the students today claim that only 49 hostages are in custody—as opposed to our firm count of 50—is worrisome from that perspective. Hodding Carter at the noon briefing today will make clear that any confusion about the total number of hostages is not confusion on our part but rather because of the poor information coming out of the students⁵ and others in Tehran. Secretary Vance will meet with the American clergymen for half an hour after their return. (S)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *AWACS.* Dr. Brzezinski informed the SCC that the President had approved the proposal from the previous meeting. The AWACS flew yesterday as scheduled and will return to the base in Egypt today. (S)

2. *Intelligence Finding.* Dr. Brzezinski noted that the intelligence finding as revised and approved by the President would be sent to the President for signature today. The finding is attached, with the President's comments and changes incorporated.⁶ (S)

3. *Covert Action.* The SCC agreed that the small covert action subcommittee would meet on Monday⁷ to review options. The entire ques-

³ Not further identified.

⁴ Attached but not printed. In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Examined & returned."

⁵ Carter underlined the word "students" and, at the top of the first page of the memorandum, wrote: "Zbig—Please do not call them students—otherwise ok. J."

⁶ See the attachment to Document 110.

⁷ Monday, December 31.

tion of how we will proceed will be reviewed by the entire SCC next Wednesday. (S)

121. Draft Annex B (Intelligence) to JTF Oplan I-80 (Operation Rice Bowl)¹

Washington, undated

[Omitted here is Section 1 on Mission, Background, and Concept of Operations.]

Section 2: Situation

D. (TS) Guard Force Distribution²

(1) (TS) Compound Internal Security. The situation in the compound has now settled into a routine with demonstrations periodically staged outside the chancery/motor pool gate on Takhte-Jamshid Blvd. Crowd size varies from 50–75 curiosity seekers to several thousand at lunch/prayer time or when announcements go out via the radio and the local public address system.

(A) (TS) Security of the hostage areas is maintained by 125–150 personnel. Based on observations by a knowledgeable released hostage, personnel within the compound are made up of several factions in approximately the following proportions:

Actual Students	60 percent	80–90 personnel
Fatah Trained Militants	10 percent	12–15 personnel
Pasdaran	15 percent	20–25 personnel
Student Leadership Cadre (including university/religious leaders)	5 percent	7–9 personnel
PLO Advisors	3–5 percent	5–7 personnel

Note:³ PLO Advisors are probably only present during the day and in the evenings when strategy meetings are being held. The actual

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–07–0002, Records of J3/DDSO, Box 8, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, I-93, Rice Bowl Annex B (Intelligence) JTF Oplan I-80. An unknown hand wrote at the top of the page: "DOI: As of late Jan 80. Drafted in late Dec 79."

² An unknown hand struck through "Guard Force Distribution" and wrote "Enemy Forces (Embassy)" above it.

³ An unknown hand struck through "Note."

students function as personal guards of the hostages and as propagandists and ideologues trying to indoctrinate the hostages. The PLO function as observers, advisors, and propagandists. The Fatah trained militants supervise security, interrogation, and document exploitation. The Pasdaran, besides providing external security, maintain a presence within the compound, primarily providing sentries. Within the buildings, the students typically carry pistols or G-3 rifles. Those on duty outside typically are armed with G-3 rifles. Guards carrying rifles have not been observed carrying any spare magazines for their weapons.

(B) (TS) The number of personnel present seems to vary according to the occasion and day of the week. Other factors being equal, the number of personnel in the compound drops on Thursday and Friday (the Islamic weekend, when some leave to visit families). The number rises again on Saturdays and Sundays when there are typically a lot of meetings held, according to a released hostage. There is another reduction when some members of the occupation force (students) leave the compound to attend classes.

(C) (TS) Guard force distribution is estimated as follows with a day/night duty ratio of 60/40.

Amb residence 10-14

DCM residence 8-12

Servant quarters 12-16

Consulate 8-12

Chancery 8-12

Staff cottages 18-20

Warehouse 8-12

Interior perimeter 10-12

(D) The general pattern of guard positions within a hostage location is 1-3 guards per room. The guards seem to favor positions in doorways vice protected corners. Outside hostage locations, single sentries walk beats which generally parallel building walls and extend the length of the building protected.

(E) Within the compound several defensive construction measures have been noted. The athletic fields have been blocked to helicopter traffic with parked cars and 6-8 foot stakes which have been driven into the ground. Anti-helicopter stakes have also been placed on the roof of the warehouse building. The probability exists that mines or demolitions have been positioned around the athletic fields. One hostage mentioned trip-wires connected to bells or other noise makers in his debriefing statement, and other hostages have mentioned hearing buzzers before people entered their area, possibly as part of a warning system of some sort. The students have installed additional lighting and loudspeakers in several locations. They are reportedly using some

of the security systems in the compound, which include closed circuit television, alarm systems, and electronic door locks. Three base station radios; in the Ambassador residence, the Consulate, and the chancery are probably used to control security activities in and around the compound. In addition there are believed to be at least three rooftop observer positions in the compound which are probably manned at night. The locations are motor pool roof, chancery roof, penthouse of Ambassador's residence.

[Omitted here is the remainder of Section 2 on Situation, Section 3 on Intelligence Activities, Section 4 on Assignment of Intelligence Tasks, and Section 5 on Miscellaneous Instructions.]

122. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, December 28, 1979, 10 a.m.–12:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan

PARTICIPANTS

The President

JCS

The Vice President

General David Jones

State

White House

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Defense

Jody Powell

Secretary Harold Brown

David Aaron

CIA

NSC

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Gary Sick (joined at 10:50 a.m.)

MINUTES

The President convened the National Security Council and it was agreed that we would begin by discussing the situation in Afghanistan since it would be important to communicate today with our European Allies.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57, NSC 025 Iran/Afghanistan & Pakistan 12/28/79. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

[Omitted here is discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan. For portions on Afghanistan and Pakistan, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XII, Afghanistan, Document 107.]

Secretary Vance reviewed for the President what is happening with respect to Iran. Ambassador McHenry joined the meeting. The EC–9 nations have begun a drawdown of their personnel in Iran, including their nationals. As a whole, they believe that an affirmative vote for sanctions in the UN will subject them and their nationals to danger in Tehran, including a possible takeover. The UK is now removing nearly all of its people, and the French, Germans and Italians are considering a move. The ambassadors of the EC–9 in Tehran are going to Qom today if they can, or else will approach the Revolutionary Council. They will weigh in on the new circumstances in Afghanistan and try to persuade the Iranians that the Soviet actions are the real issue. They will argue that Iran should settle the problem with the U.S. and begin to focus on the real danger. They will deliver this as a message from the European Community.

Ambassador McHenry said that consultations at the UN have been proceeding over the past several days. In addition, there will be an informal meeting of the Council this afternoon and a formal meeting tomorrow morning. We need to have a resolution by tomorrow if we are to have a vote on Monday² and avoid the change in composition which will occur at the New Year. The present group is better since we have long worked with them on this issue. There are potential difficulties associated with a delay; for one thing, if the Cuba-Colombia dispute over seating is not resolved, we could have a 14-member Council. Although there is no question of the legality of functioning with only 14 members, it does raise political question. We would lose the Bolivian vote, and we would still need nine positive votes. The French would be in the chair. It is doubtful that the Soviets, Czechs or Kuwaitis could vote for any resolution based on Chapter VII sanctions. They may be willing to imply such support if they can change the resolution to a lesser first step with sanctions to follow, but he believed that this was merely tactical and we would not in the final analysis get those three. Indications are that the Soviets would abstain.

The Norwegians, British, Portuguese and French are prepared in principle to be supportive, but at least the British and French have suggested changes in the description of sanctions which are extensive enough to require some time to work out. He did not believe this could be worked out this month. The British changes would provide no automatic default on existing credits, approval of credits for items, e.g.,

² December 31.

food, disagreement over the extra-territoriality (i.e., whether or not U.S. laws can be applied to U.S. firms in third countries), and the applicability of sanctions to a joint venture company in which five tankers fly the British flag and five fly the Iranian flag.

A third group of countries are the non-aligned, who are trying to find a two-stage approach. Instead of immediate sanctions, they would propose formalizing the Secretary-General's mediation efforts, calling on him to visit Tehran and warn them that if they did not act by a given time, the Security Council will impose sanctions. This may be attractive to the Soviets, Czechs and Kuwaitis, but he thought not. Bangladesh may be in the same position as the Soviets, but it is not entirely clear. The Bangladesh ambassadors in New York and Washington have urged us to press the President of Bangladesh at a high level to cooperate. Nevertheless, he thought that Bangladesh would abstain.

It will take a number of days to get agreement on the list of sanctions, which will put us into January. With a high expenditure of political capital, including personal intervention by the President by telephone, he thought we could get nine votes after the first of January.

The President summarized the membership of the Security Council as three groups composed of: (1) Soviets, Czechs and Kuwaitis who will oppose sanctions and probably abstain; (2) the Norwegians, British, French and Portuguese who will support us; and (3) Jamaica, Bangladesh, Gabon, Bolivia, Nigeria, China and Zambia.

Ambassador McHenry said after January 1, Nigeria will be replaced by Nigeria [*Niger*], Gabon by Tunisia, Kuwait by the Philippines, Czechs by East Germany and Bolivia by an empty chair.

Dr. Brzezinski thought that we would come out about the same.

Ambassador McHenry thought he could possibly get more votes by going to a two-stage process in which we would continue to get sanctions while also meeting desires for an interim period. The resolution would deplore the failure of Iran to comply with the UN, direct Waldheim to go to Iran by a given date, and state that if the hostages had not been released by a certain date the Security Council would take action under articles 39 and 41.³ We would need the interim period in any event to negotiate sanctions, and this would put that period to use.

Secretary Vance said the British had dumped these changes on us suddenly yesterday.

The President wondered if we could get them to back off?

³ See footnote 3, Document 87.

Ambassador McHenry said the British first called and said they had some “minor changes,” but when he saw them later he realized they were not minor at all. They subsequently indicated that they could not support sanctions unless all three of the changes outlined previously were included in the resolution.

The President thought that would be good, but it should not delay our preparation of the second vote on sanctions. We need to get the British and French on board.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered how sure we were of getting a favorable second vote.

Ambassador McHenry said it would still require a Presidential effort.

The President said he was ready for that.

Dr. Brzezinski said he was worried about the public perception. We had planned to ask our Allies to impose sanctions even if the vote failed at the UN. Would it not be better to go for sanctions and at the same time to make an approach to the Iranians about the Afghan situation. He did not think the U.S. public expected a vote immediately.

Mr. Powell disagreed. He said a vote was expected very soon and this would be seen as a classic case of legislative impotence if we could not deliver.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered still if we would be better off to go for sanctions directly.

The President said he thought it was more important to get something before January. He noted that the Iranians had in any event refused to meet with Waldheim.

Ambassador McHenry agreed and noted that a two-stage process was a way of getting around the red herring that somehow Waldheim could produce a solution. Waldheim had called him at midnight the night before about a call he had received from the Pakistani Ambassador relaying a message from the Pakistani Foreign Minister in Tehran. The Iranians had reiterated the view that they did not want to see the Secretary General right now. The Pakistanis wanted his reaction to a proposal that the Secretary General go to Iran with the advance understanding that nothing would come of it. Would that help, defuse the situation? Ambassador McHenry had told Waldheim that we would not buy that, and Waldheim agreed that it did not sound like a good idea.

The President said he was not embarrassed to get a positive vote on Monday which would give Waldheim a week to arrange release of the hostages and provided that at the end of that time the Security Council would be committed to act on articles 39 and 41.

Mr. Powell observed that the story would still be that we did it because we did not have the votes to win.

The President said it was a rational approach, not a great victory.

The Vice President said there was a great deal of feeling in the UN that the Secretary General approach should be played out.

Ambassador McHenry said that the West has often used this very same approach on many other issues. The only difference in this case would be the commitment to a vote and specification of a date.

The President asked how sure he was of getting twelve votes.

Ambassador McHenry said he would have to work hard, but he thought we could get it. Maybe even the Soviets would be embarrassed enough to vote for it.

The Vice President agreed that was the way to go.

Mr. Powell said that if we get down to a week or two and cannot get what we want this way, we will get great pressure to act unilaterally. The difference is between getting the pressure in one week or two.

The President said he had watched what Beheshti said on TV. He was under the impression that Beheshti was one of the more reasonable members of the Revolutionary Council. He said flat out that there would be a trial of the United States, not the hostages, and that the hostages would be released whether guilty or not.⁴ If we had to face public pressure for strong unilateral action, he would rather face it on January 6 rather than January 1. He noted that when we talked to Giscard on the phone yesterday, he had been quite evasive when asked if France would impose sanctions in the event sanctions were voted down in the Security Council.⁵

Secretary Brown noted that they were all getting more cautious as they listen to their bureaucracies.

The President said he hated to shift gears and start working on Niger and others that had not previously been involved.

Admiral Turner said he did not believe that sanctions would get the hostages back. There are three groups we are working with: the Revolutionary Council; the kidnapers; and Khomeini. We had had some success in getting our message through to the Revolutionary Council. There is no way to get through to the kidnapers. He still thought that Khomeini could work his will on the students, so the question was how to impact on him. He wondered if the correct

⁴ Apparent reference to Beheshti's comments at a December 27 meeting with reporters in Tehran. (Edward Cody and Michael Weisskopf, "Iranians Seek Testimony, Release of U.S. Hostages," *Washington Post*, December 28, 1979, p. A1)

⁵ Carter, who was still at Camp David on December 27, talked to Giscard on the telephone from 11:20 to 11:27 a.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No record of the discussion was found.

approach would not be a combination, playing off the Afghan theme and offering some kind of concession at the same time.

The President said that the concessions we had drafted previously were still available. He thought Dr. Brzezinski was right—Khomeini would like to see all Western influence in Iran ended. Any military action by us would simply play into his hands. He would say, "We would have a great situation here in Iran if it were not for the American mining, or bombing or whatever." He guessed that Shariat-Madari and Beheshti and perhaps others have influence on Khomeini as potential alternatives to his rule. Khomeini is not so solidly in power as to be able to ignore the Revolutionary Council entirely. As far as he knew, Bani Sadr was the only officially announced candidate for President of Iran.

Secretary Vance said there were some indications that the Iranian Government was more coherent now with the Revolutionary Council under Beheshti. He has shown himself to be careful and strong. He has never put himself in the position of having his position immediately reversed.

The President noted that the students are now reported to be forming a coordination committee with the Revolutionary Council. On the UN resolution, he would like the triggering device to be the release or non-release of the hostages. We need a vote by the first of January. If Secretary Vance did not mind, would he please go up to New York. The President was prepared to help.

Secretary Vance said the real problem for the British was the question of the five ships with Iranian flags. The extra-territoriality question is one that we will not be able to resolve. It has been a problem for years.

The President wondered if we could not find language which would permit the operation of those ships.

Secretary Vance said we should be able to come up with something. He noted that the British were backing away from their position on credit because of the position taken by their Treasury.

The President said the British were the only obstacle.

Ambassador McHenry said he would want to study the proposals the French had put to us only this morning.⁶ (Ambassador McHenry then left the meeting.)

⁶ As reported in telegram 6374 from USUN, December 28, the French queried the U.S. position should any of the hostages be sentenced or imprisoned and proposed that sanctions be applied on concrete acts rather than across the board. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800003-0430)

Mr. Aaron (who reentered the meeting at this point) reviewed for the President the schedule of his phone calls to Schmidt, Thatcher, Giscard and Zia.

[Omitted here is discussion on Afghanistan and Pakistan.]

Secretary Vance mentioned that he would see the clergymen who had recently returned from Tehran. He would tell them that they cannot release the names of all the hostages. There was nothing we could do to keep them from releasing the names of the 43 they saw, but we must absolutely prevent release of the other seven. It could risk their lives.

(The President left at 12:01 and the meeting ended after a brief review of the various messages which were under preparation and their status.)

123. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 28, 1979, 1:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Rev. William Sloane Coffin
Rev. Howard
Bishop Gumbleton
Under Secretary Newsom
Assistant Secretary Saunders
Deputy Assistant Secretary Constable
Henry Precht

SUBJECT

Meeting with Clergymen Who Visited the Hostages

The clergy briefed the Secretary for an hour on their Christmas visit to the hostages in the compound. They found the hostages physically well although some were under obvious stress. The students holding the compound were rigid, obsessed with the crimes of the Shah, and unyielding on all points, both procedural and substantive. In their other contacts with Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh and some religious leaders, the clergy found an almost universal insistence on the return of the Shah and deep emotion over the injustices suffered during the Shah's regime. Ghotbzadeh and other Western-trained Iranian officials were more flexible but experiencing obvious difficulties

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 8. Secret; Sensitive.

in finding a solution acceptable to Khomeini and the students. Reverend Coffin was critical of American policy and urged statements which would "transcend" the present stalemate and respond to the Iranian need for understanding of their grievances. Reverend Howard did not believe that any dramatic proposals by the U.S. would yield results. All three agreed that additional U.S. pressures through sanctions would only harden the Iranian position.

I. *The Hostages*: The three clergymen believe they saw 43 hostages: Mr. Howard saw 21, Mr. Coffin 16 and Bishop Gumbleton 6. They were not allowed to take any notes and therefore have had to work on identification from memory and scanning of pictures. They found the hostages in good physical condition but some were showing obvious signs of stress. The two women were in especially good spirits and were very pleased to see each other after a month's separation. Some remarks by various hostages led the clergy to believe that they were resisting or defying their captors in small ways. The presentation of the message read by Plotkin was obviously staged and two of the hostages took pains to tell Bishop Gumbleton so. One hostage, Joe Hall, came in rubbing his wrists and seemed almost disoriented, although his spirits picked up during the evening. Ode was described as "cranky" and complained about the lack of fruit, all of which Coffin interpreted as a sign of psychological health. One hostage noted that while they had been treated well they were subjected to "a lot of interrogation." Coffin noted that captivity was particularly tough on the Marines who were supposed to be guards rather than guarded. Golacinski noted to one of the clergy that the hostages were being "treated like animals." The clergy believed that the experience of the Christmas service was a tremendous lift for the hostages and the results were worth the manipulation which accompanied it.

II. *The Students*: Coffin described the students as in complete control, intelligent, tough, with a religious conviction best described in terms of fervor and intensity, not charity. Coffin compared them to American students of the 60's but felt they were more personally controlled and had a greater sense of purpose than their American counterparts. Coffin said he had argued that their holding of the hostages was in complete contradiction to their stated purpose of defeating Carter and would only result in his re-election. He found it impossible to put that kind of message across to them. They were totally absorbed with the Shah's crimes and with their conviction that the U.S. could extradite him. Their organization was thorough, and they noted that even police were disarmed before they were allowed to come in the compound. The clergy described the difficulties they had in arranging services as they desired. They found the students absolutely rigid and unwilling to negotiate any changes in their pre-arranged plans, which they justi-

fied in terms of decisions made by the “security committee.” The captors whom they met all appeared to be genuine students, although some of them, particularly the numerous armed guards, appeared to be very young. Coffin described one as a student of electrical engineering named Mohammad. He was deeply moved by the Christmas services and even took notes on Coffin’s sermon. Bishop Gumbleton thought that the students did not occupy quite as commanding a role as Coffin ascribed to them. He said that the students had not wanted the clergy to come and that Ghotbzadeh had arranged this through Khomeini. He also noted that, in the controversy over the numbers, Ghotbzadeh after talking to the clergy may have played a role in persuading the students to acknowledge that some hostages had not been seen.

III. *Other Meetings:* The clergy had a long meeting with Ghotbzadeh and found him genuinely interested in finding a solution. He and others whom they talked with seemed to feel that the holding of the hostages was an embarrassment, but nevertheless felt very strongly about the Shah’s crimes and the need for the U.S. to recognize their grievances. The clergy also met with a group of religious figures where they again found very deep feelings about the Shah’s crimes and an insistence that the U.S. could easily arrange the Shah’s extradition from Panama.

IV. *U.S. Policy and Outlook for the Hostages:* Reverend Howard was persuaded that, barring some unforeseen development, the hostages might be there a very long time. All three believed that the U.S. and Iran are approaching the problem from totally different perspectives and seem unlikely to find common ground. Howard also noted the problem of reaching Khomeini and the students. He noted that it meant nothing to the students when the clergy argued with them that they would look bad in the eyes of the world if the clergy did not hold the services. Their ideas were fixed and rigid. Reverend Coffin argued that the U.S. needs to find ways to hear the legitimate grievances of the Iranians who had suffered under the Shah. All three clergy believed that economic sanctions against Iran would only harden the position of Iranians and make matters worse. Howard said it will “move them to martyrdom.” Howard also argued in contrast to Coffin’s position that any dramatic proposal offered by the U.S. would only lead the Iranians to believe that the holding of hostages was yielding results and would not lead to their release. Without specifying a specific formula, Howard felt that we should look for some way to make small gestures from our side which might produce a change in Iranian thinking.

V. *Public Statements on the Hostages:* After considerable discussion, the clergy appeared to agree that they would only release the names of the hostages if the families agreed to their doing so. Coffin appeared

to be concerned that the USG would somehow manipulate the question of the discrepancy in the numbers in a way that would escalate tensions. It was pointed out to Coffin that the students have now admitted that there are 49 hostages and that the clergy did not see all of them. The discrepancy question is now narrowed to one hostage. The Secretary suggested that the clergy say that they had seen 43 hostages and had given the names to the Department and talked to the families. The Department would note that there were 50 hostages on the compound and that clarification has been requested from the Iranians. The clergy appeared to accept this formulation.

124. Memorandum From the Director of the Policy Planning Staff (Lake) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, December 28, 1979

This memorandum suggests possible steps to be taken on Iran, covering the three tracks we have been pursuing:

- pressures on Iran;
- public statements on our position; and
- private approaches.

It draws on a number of thoughts suggested by Dave Newsom, and is based on a meeting he held with Iran experts from various bureaus and with Dr. [*name not declassified*]²

It does not look at Iran in the context of our concerns on Afghanistan. We should, however, in making decisions on our military posture—and on our longer term relations with Iran—bear the Afghanistan angle in mind.

The course we have been pursuing in Iran has positioned us very well, both domestically and in international opinion. We have shown

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Diplomatic Strategy for Iran. Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. In a December 28 covering memorandum to Vance, Lake noted that Newsom, Tarnoff, Constable, and Raphael had “gone over this and generally agree.” Copies of the covering memorandum were sent to Christopher, Newsom, Saunders, Tarnoff, Raphael, and Constable.

² Memorandum from Newsom to Lake, December 26. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Miscellaneous Document)

the right combination of firmness and discipline. We have made Iran an international issue. Going for UN sanctions is logical and potentially the most effective next step.

As you are all too aware, however, our national strategy has thus far foundered on the rocks of Khomeini's personality and the near anarchy in Iran.

In thinking about next steps, therefore, it is important that we keep looking at the situation not only in terms of what makes sense to *us* (and our public and friends abroad), but also what might move Khomeini. I always find it easy to slip into assumptions and reasoning based on what we would do were we in his shoes.

Experience of past weeks suggests that:

—Actions and statements conveying strength are respected. But threats and signs of impatience do not help.

—The prospect of physical attack on Iran or Khomeini himself tends to make him more obdurate. He *is* vitally concerned, however, about the future of the revolution and Iran's integrity as a nation. Good relations with the U.S. are not an important factor for him. But his and his circle's concerns about U.S. mischief making in Iran are probably sincerely felt. The Revolutionary Council, but not Khomeini, is concerned about international opinion.

—We are not in a "negotiation," and most likely cannot enter into one with Khomeini. We should not think of strategy in those terms. Our concessions will simply be pocketed and taken as signs of weakness, not taken as signs of good faith or reciprocated.

—The hope has to be that, at some point, he will simply make the decision that conditions require the release of the hostages, and order/persuade the compound captors to do so.

—Our double task is thus a complex one:

a) to create the kinds of pressures that have meaning for him and will make him look for such an out; and

b) *without seeming to plead or concede*, make it clear that if the hostages were released, some of his concerns could be met.

As suggested below, I believe we are doing better in the first task than in the second.

I. Pressures

We continue to have a range of *external pressures* we can exert with increasing force against Iran, although we will soon have undertaken most of those on our earlier list.

A. *Diplomatic*: We can *progressively restrict Iranian diplomatic and consular activity in the U.S.*³ through closing some or all of the consulates, concluding by breaking relations. The continued Iranian diplomatic presence in the U.S. has two major roles: to provide assistance to Iranian students in the U.S.; and to communicate public and private views and messages both to Iranian officials and to the hostages. While closing the consulates and/or severing diplomatic ties may effectively signal our growing impatience to Iranian moderates and to Khomeini, breaking relations also could cut off one communication channel, could aggravate the student captors and could undermine the efforts of Iranian moderates.⁴

A break in diplomatic relations could be important symbolically. We might want to use it later, however, if there is a worsening of the hostages' situation and at a time when we may want other governments to intensify their pressure through a parallel severing of diplomatic ties. Severing diplomatic ties now or in the immediate future could also deprive Iran of one element of a face-saver in the final resolution of the crisis. At this point in the stalemate we may instead want to advise Agah to look for a protecting power, without giving him a deadline. This move would underscore our growing impatience without incurring the costs of an actual break in relations.

We could send a visible *emissary to Iraq* to consult on regional developments. This may serve to increase Iran's concern about its own security and feed the reservations of those in the Revolutionary Council and around Khomeini as to the impact on Iran and on the revolution of Khomeini's policies. Our interests would in any event be served by a further effort to strengthen our dialogue with Iraq, even if this does not lead to normalization of relations.

B. *Economic*: Beyond the economic measures we are now taking with our allies, and beyond limited UN sanctions, we could:

1. Move to intensify pressure on Iranians in the U.S. by *eliminating the present assets freeze exemption for students*. This might be welcomed by the public but may also be open to challenge in the courts. Indigent students might be forced to stay in the U.S. and fall back on local

³ On December 29, Carter sent a handwritten note to "Cy and/or Warren" that reads: "Push to legal limits the *immediate* expulsion of Iranian diplomats in accordance with my previous directions. J.C." Copies were sent to Powell and Brzezinski. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 12/10/79-12/31/79) For Carter's earlier directives, see footnote 10, Document 77 and footnote 6, Document 91.

⁴ In a December 26 memorandum to Carter, Vance outlined the pros and cons of breaking diplomatic relations with Iran and suggested that the United States wait to see the results of the Security Council vote on Chapter VII sanctions. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800011-1018)

welfare programs, becoming an increased burden on domestic program budgets.

2. *A comprehensive U.S. embargo on food to Iran* would signal a further toughening of U.S. policy but may have a relatively minor impact on Iran at this time. Iran appears to have found alternate sources for much of the food we had been providing, although the cost to Iran of relying on alternative supplies is likely to be high. U.S. success in persuading other countries (Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Japan) to halt food shipments in the absence of UN sanctions relating to food would be uncertain. A food embargo would also hit poor Iranians and could lead to retaliation against the hostages—both physically and in denial of adequate food.

3. Alternatively, we could ourselves, or perhaps through the UN, impose a *selective food embargo*, focusing on items such as meat (25% imported), edible oil (80% imported) and sugar (50% imported) which would impact primarily on the middle class, not the poor, and would thus be easier to defend; would emphasize the decline in living standards for a major component of Khomeini's support, the Bazaar merchants; and would be relatively easy to monitor in view of the limited sources of supply of these goods (except for sugar). The U.S. has been the principal supplier of edible oil; Australia, New Zealand, and the Bloc provide meat, and sugar comes from a variety of sources (but not the U.S.).

4. *We could also ask the Security Council to impose the widest range of economic sanctions* against Iran, including food and medicine exports to Iran and all exports from Iran except oil. While such a boycott on trade would bring severe pressure to bear on Khomeini, we are unlikely to get such extensive sanctions through the Security Council.

5. *We could impose an indemnity on Iran* of some large amount of money per hostage per day, as long as they are held. We could seek such an indemnity either in the next few weeks as part of a campaign of increasing pressure on Iran, or we could wait until the hostages were released and impose the indemnity as a punitive measure.

Seeking the indemnity payment from blocked assets as part of a pressure campaign has certain advantages: it would receive widespread U.S. public support and it would place direct financial pressure on Iran which would mount as long as the hostages were kept; it is a highly visible step which is easily publicized through the media, including VOA. On the other hand, Khomeini and the students so far seem unmoved by the various financial measures we've taken and may thus be unmoved by the imposition of an indemnity payment.

6. An international *boycott of Iranian oil* would severely impair Iranian sources of funds. The consequent shutting down of most of Iran's oil pumping capacity might in some instances permanently dam-

age Iran's oil production capacity. The impact on the Iranian economy and the future recovery of Iran would be serious. This might bring home to Khomeini and the students the costs to the revolution of the present policies; but it would also be damaging to the international economy. An international oil surplus in the next two months might make possible a reallocation of crude oil and facilitate gaining international support for a boycott, but it would be very difficult to achieve under any circumstances. Success would depend on the cooperation of other major OPEC producers in not shutting down production or increasing prices. If Iran decided to sell its oil below the general market price in an effort to break a boycott, it would be difficult to sustain any common front we might manage to create and severe tensions could be created in relations with several of our key allies and third world states.

7. A *naval embargo* of shipments to and from Iran would enforce not only an oil boycott but all trade sanctions and intensify economic pressures on Iran. It would provide visible evidence of U.S. power which could have a major impact in Iran—both in reminding the ordinary Iranian of U.S. strength and in emboldening those who oppose Khomeini's policies, including the military, to attempt more direct action. An embargo would probably be welcomed in the U.S. At the same time, it could be difficult to enforce, given the heavy commercial traffic in the Gulf and Arabian Sea; could result in tense exchanges with other countries whose commerce was affected; and potentially could lead to a military confrontation with Iranian or other naval forces which might attempt to force a blockade. It might also galvanize Iranian nationalism against the U.S., including the military.

While I cannot judge this in technical terms, there are a number of advantages to mining the harbors and perhaps channels rather than imposing a blockade with our ships.

C. Political

1. We could intensify current efforts to *convey the message that Iran is being weakened by its present policies*. Aside from VOA, we could ask cooperating governments, particularly those in Middle Eastern countries and Europe, to include this theme in radio broadcasts in Persian and Arabic. The object would be to strengthen internal doubts in Iran as to the wisdom of holding the hostages and confronting the international community. We could urge all cooperating governments and groups to seek to convey the same message directly to Khomeini through every channel of communication available.

[1 paragraph (18 lines) not declassified]

D. *Military*: Finally, there are the whole range of *military options* which are not reviewed here. One early measure could be a *display of force* but without the actual use of weapons. This could include high-

level, high-speed reconnaissance aircraft (such as the SR-71) which would be audible and reflect a U.S. presence to citizens of Tehran; or a fly-over of Iranian territory by a large number of naval aircraft to symbolize U.S. power. The display of force could imply an imminent U.S. intention to *use* force and thus jeopardize the safety of the hostages. It could also increase Khomeini's intransigence. It could, however, bring home to the Revolutionary Council that the U.S. has enormous power and that U.S. patience is wearing thin, and thus reinforce the views of those in Iran who are urging Khomeini to find a quick face-saving way out. The display of power would be welcomed domestically but, if we did nothing more, it could actually add to an impression of impotence.

II. *Conditions for Release*

Out of a proper concern that we stand firm on principle and avoid making concessions that convey weakness, we have not been able to give the Iranians a very clear notion of what would happen if the hostages were released.

Iran (primarily the students and Khomeini) has made three basic demands: the return of the Shah, the return of his assets, and a condemnation of the Shah and the United States for past "crimes" against Iran. Two other issues are also raised: U.S. intervention in the current affairs of Iran and whether U.S. policy after the hostages are released will be one of reconciliation or retribution.

Except to say that the Shah will not be returned, the *United States* has not tried to answer these demands with any specificity. We have said that the courts are available to address the question of the Shah's assets and that we will not stand in the way of an airing of Iran's grievances, once the hostages are released. Our fundamental position remains that the hostages are the issue and their release must precede any discussions. We have avoided commenting on post-hostage policy, except by inference in our accepting language on restraint in both the UNSC and ICJ resolutions.

Now is a good time to convey a fuller message. The Revolutionary Council seems to be moving towards a consensus on the need to resolve the crisis. Khomeini himself may have made encouraging noises to McBride.⁵ And if there is a gap between a Security Council vote and the time sanctions come into force, the Iranians should know our position as they ponder their course of action.

⁵ Sean McBride, former head of Amnesty International, met on December 23 with members of the Revolutionary Council. (Edward Cody, "Captors Set Festivities for Hostages," *Washington Post*, December 24, 1979, p. A1)

If we decide to address Iranian concerns more fully we need to a) define our position and b) find a way of conveying it that does not also convey a weakening of our position.

Bearing in mind the concerns listed on page two, I suggest you consider the following approach.

A. Our Position

We cannot, in any way, condone the involuntary return of the Shah, from Panama or elsewhere.

This leaves five issues:

- A hearing on the “sins” of the Shah and the U.S.;
- Trials of the hostages;
- The Shah’s assets;
- U.S. intervention in current Iranian affairs; and,
- Our future relations.

On the first three, we must not appear to accept the principle of hostage trials or our culpability for past events in Iran. Nor should we imply that, once the hostages are released, we can wipe the slate clean in our relations with Iran.

Within these constraints, however, the following message could be passed to Khomeini and members of the Revolutionary Council:

“—No one should doubt American unity and resolve on this issue.

—But the elements of a resolution of the crisis are available. It is *certain* that if the hostages were released, the U.S. would:

- Cooperate with the Secretary General in the simultaneous formation of, and subsequent work of, an international commission ‘to investigate allegations of grave violations of human rights and other illegal acts in Iran’ under the Shah. (Note: Ideally the commission should also investigate violations under Khomeini, but this is a non-starter.)

- Also cooperate with Congressional hearings on U.S. relations with Iran. The U.S. would grant visas to representatives of Iran who wished to present their case at such hearings.

- Continue to recognize the right of the Government of Iran to assert in U.S. courts its claims to assets which, in Iran’s view, have been illegally taken out of Iran by those connected with the former regime, as well as Iran’s claims to all other such assets as might later be transferred to the United States. The U.S. would not interfere with this process and would to the extent possible support it by providing information in accordance with U.S. laws under the Freedom of Information Act. The U.S. would not interfere with an attachment of funds but would indicate, if requested by the court, that such a measure was appropriate. The U.S. would also assist with accounting actions in other countries as appropriate.

- When the hostages have been released, the U.S. would lift its freeze on all Iranian assets held overseas by U.S. entities and all assets in this country with the exception of central bank funds. The latter

would remain frozen pending settlement of claims between the Governments of the United States and Iran.

- Assuming the Government of Iran would likewise agree, the U.S. would abide strictly by the provisions of the Declaration of Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and by the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

- [Flatly guarantee that the U.S. will not intervene in Iran's internal affairs.]⁶ Guarantee that there will be no military reprisals if the hostages are released.

- Agree to meet with Iranian officials in any appropriate forum to seek a resolution of all issues between us. It would be clear that while the U.S. would be prepared to hear Iran's grievances, the United States would present its grievances as well. U.S. relations with Iran will inevitably suffer from the events that have taken place. The U.S. and Iran can try to limit the damage and perhaps begin to build for a better future, once the hostages are released.

- [The U.S. would not maintain formal diplomatic relations with Iran, but would agree to the establishment of a joint commission with Iran under the auspices of a protecting power. The joint commission would review bilateral differences, including such issues as settlement of claims, disposition of the ICJ action, spare parts for military equipment purchased by Iran, commercial relations, etc.]

—This is an opportunity Khomeini should seize. It is unclear whether, more weeks down the road, this would still be the U.S. position.⁷

—Every day that the crisis continues, and the situation in Iran erodes, foreign perceptions of the revolution in Iran erode as well.”

The method of conveying such a position is as important as the position itself. If portrayed as concessions in advance of knowledge the hostages would be released, the hands of the Revolutionary Council might be strengthened, but Khomeini would still be likely simply to conclude that we were weakening.

However, a combination of carefully drawn public statements and direct approaches would have a chance of getting to him.

B. *Private Approaches*

The purpose of an approach would be to get across to Khomeini the point that there is a way out for him, if he seizes it. It need not be to initiate a negotiation. And, to avoid giving Khomeini an impression of the U.S. as demandeur, I believe the message should not be directly from us.

⁶ These brackets and those in the paragraph below are in the original.

⁷ An unknown hand struck through an additional point following this one: “—No one should doubt American unity and resolve on this issue.”

I would suggest, therefore, that a non-American of standing in Iranian eyes (McBride? al Madhi?)⁸ be asked by Waldheim (not by us) to see Khomeini, Beheshti, and other leading members of the Revolutionary Council. He should make it clear that he has an important message for Khomeini himself. Of course, if Waldheim himself goes to Iran, he could convey such a message.

Alternatively, an American with standing in Iranian eyes, either a clergyman or a prominent private citizen, could deliver such a message. The advantages of having an American transmit our views would be that the message would have greater credibility in Khomeini's eyes. (Khomeini is more likely to be responsive to a clergyman than to a private citizen.) The disadvantage of having an American deliver our message is that the more the message is specifically American, the more we appear to be the demandeur. For this reason, I believe a non-American is far preferable.

To support such an approach, we could make a greater effort to ask concerned Europeans to seek out their own channels to Iran and especially Khomeini to emphasize, on their part, the grave danger to Iran and to the peace of the area of the prolongation of this conflict. The French, for example, might approach Benjadid to suggest a renewed Algerian/Muslim/Arab effort to talk with Khomeini. Now is the time for us to pull out all stops in getting to all the members of the Revolutionary Council that we can, with a special focus on Beheshti.

We could also make a special effort to encourage Islamic representatives to get to Khomeini or those about him. The emphasis in such messages should be on the damage Khomeini is doing to his own revolution and the opportunities he is providing for the left.

C. Public Statements

Such a private approach could be reinforced by a calculated series of public statements by US officials.

These public statements should not concede any points in advance of a decision that the hostages will be released—for example, by simply ruling out interference in Iran's internal affairs. They should avoid specific threats as well as characterizations of the Iranian position on specific issues, which almost automatically produce denials. And, while never in any way granting the legitimacy of trials or tribunals, they should not focus primary attention on the kinds of general "investigations" the Iranians are hinting at. To do so may only lock the Iranians in. I believe it is better, tactically, to focus our pressures on the main issue of release, and to belittle non-trial "investigations" as charades.

⁸ Possible channels are being reviewed for you today by NEA. [Footnote is in the original.]

Our statements could emphasize themes of strength and the implicit advantages of release, along the following lines:

—The holding of hostages is the central issue; there cannot be a resolution of other issues without their release.

—This is far more than an issue between the United States and Iran. A principle of deep concern to every nation is involved. But the United States reserves the legal right, and indeed responsibility, to take necessary unilateral actions in defense of its citizens and international principles.

—The United States is prepared to seek a resolution of all issues between it and Iran, once the hostages are released.

—With the hostages' release, the way will be clear for Iran to present simultaneously its grievances in any appropriate international forum.

—The restraint of any nation cannot be limitless when its people are held captive and humiliated. The U.S. will continue pressures against Iran and continue to expect international support for those pressures until the hostages are released.

—The United States does not exclude restoring good relations with Iran. Our relations with Iran will inevitably suffer from the events that have taken place. But we can try to build a better future, once the hostages are released.

CONCLUSION

Strictly in terms of the hostage situation, the best policy might be one of very slowly escalating pressures while events within Iran demonstrated to Khomeini that the hostage situation diverts from rather than assists the process of consolidating his revolution. But we do not have that kind of time. The effect of Iran on other issues including SALT; the danger that the international community could get used to the idea of the hostages' being held there; the onset of the primary season here; and the well-being of the hostages . . . all argue for trying to resolve the situation more quickly.

I therefore believe we should move relatively soon after Security Council action to further pressures, perhaps including:

- Advising Agah to look for a protecting power (now);
- Seeking to send an emissary to Iraq (now);
- Studying now a selective food embargo (for use in ten days to two weeks); and
- Intensifying efforts (now) to convey the message that the revolution is being weakened. This should be coupled with emphasis on the dangers to Islam of the Russian action in Afghanistan.

I also believe that we should convey now the kind of message outlined above. It might not work. Rational calculations are difficult

about an irrational situation. But, if conveyed in the manner suggested, I don't think we would lose anything by trying. And whatever happens, we might later feel remiss not to have made such a move at about this stage.

**125. Handwritten Note From Director of Central Intelligence
Turner to Secretary of State Vance¹**

Washington, December 29, 1979

Cy—

Because the imposition of sanctions appears to be such a watershed, I did some brainstorming with our analysts on other approaches to securing release of the hostages. Attached is a 1¼ page think piece—it's all policy and your business—accordingly I drop it with you and let it go at that—

Stan

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency²

Washington, undated

Breaking the Logjam

Objective:

- Secure timely release of all hostages.

Means:

- Secret negotiations with key Revolutionary Council members (Beheshti and/or Ghotbzadeh). This meeting to take place with foreknowledge of Khomeini.
- Use individual with acceptable credentials (e.g., Prof. Richard Cottam).

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret; Sensitive; NoFORN. The editor transcribed the text from the handwritten original.

² Secret; Sensitive; NoFORN.

US Position:

Emissary to go with the understood authority to propose a solution.

- Opening

- US not enemy of Islam or Iran

- Note that recent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan makes it more imperative for both US and Iran to resolve crisis

- Iran needs to be in a position to stand up to the USSR, and to possible Soviet subversion among the Kurds, Azerbaijanis, and other minorities

- The US wants to be in a position to help—but cannot while US diplomats are held hostage

- We recognize that Iran may feel committed to some sort of trial or tribunal. Obviously the US cannot welcome, approve, or condone any such Iranian action. But if it can be completed quickly and all hostages pardoned and released immediately, the US is willing to:

- defer final action on UN sanctions

- make no attempt to block the holding of a trial or tribunal

- US would agree to the following:

- US prepared to issue a statement along the following lines:

- US reiterates respect for Iranian sovereignty and the right of the Iranian people to determine their own destiny

- US recognizes the right of the Iranian government to attempt to recover property it claims in accordance with American legal procedures

- US recognizes the Islamic Republic of Iran as the sole legitimate representative of the Iranian people and accepts the decision by the Iranian people to end the rule of the Pahlavi dynasty

- US refer to former Shah only as Mohammed Reza Pahlavi

- US willing to delay seeking of sanctions, which are not to the benefit of the world community, if there is prospect for speedy resolution of crisis

- Suspend deportation of Iranian students

- Not stand in way of International Tribunal to review record of Shah

- After the release of the hostages the US will seek arrangements whereby Iran can secure spare parts through third parties to allow Iran's military to defend Iran from armed threats to the Islamic Republic. In this regard the US takes particular notice of recent Soviet activities in Afghanistan.

Sought from Iran:

- Speedily convene Tribunal

- Release of all hostages and guaranteed safe exit

- Agreement to enter into dialogue to determine US-Iran future relationship

126. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, December 29, 1979

Under Secretary Newsom met with Swiss Political Counselor Simonin at noon on December 29. Mr. Newsom gave Mr. Simonin a message for Swiss Ambassador Lang in Tehran. Mr. Simonin in turn provided Mr. Newsom with a copy of a cable from Ambassador Lang.²

Mr. Newsom reviewed with Mr. Simonin the message for Ambassador Lang. Mr. Newsom pointed out that in regard to Ghotbzadeh's complaint that the U.S. was not publicly responding to "positive" Iranian moves, the national mood in the U.S. is such that it is difficult for the USG to comment favorably on anything short of the release of the hostages. Mr. Newsom emphasized our need for a list of the hostages in order to straighten out the confusion about the number being held. Mr. Newsom told Mr. Simonin, for his information only, that the clergymen who visited the hostages had not been able to come up with a precise list of the 43 that they met with. Mr. Newsom underlined the importance of the point that the USG is not seeking to claim a victory over Iran or to suggest Iranian weaknesses. The U.S. media tends to see everything in terms of winners and losers, and we cannot control this. Mr. Newsom said that he realizes that our request that Ambassador Lang try to make sense of the confusion among the Iranian leaders is a tall order, but that we would very much appreciate any input that he might have.

Mr. Simonin asked if the U.S. could offer any further clarification of statements by the Panamanian President on extradition of the former Shah.³ Mr. Newsom said that in our view, President Royo is playing a risky game. Royo has made it clear to us, and presumably the former Shah, that Panama does not intend to extradite the former Shah to Iran. Royo seems to think, however, that he is playing a useful role as far as the release of the hostages is concerned by saying that Panama will carefully consider an extradition request by Iran. Royo has not wanted to imply that the former Shah will in fact be extradited if the hostages are released. General Torrijos has given us firm assurances that the former Shah will not be extradited.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret. Drafted by Clement.

² The December 30 message for Lang is attached but not printed. The cable from Lang is not attached.

³ See Document 109.

Mr. Simonin asked whether Iran could put any pressure on Panama. Mr. Newsom replied that they could possibly try to put some pressure on Panamanian-flag vessels, but that most such vessels were not owned by Panama. Mr. Simonin asked whether Ambassador Lang could be informed on the Panamanian aspects. Mr. Newsom said that it would be all right to inform Ambassador Lang for his own background information that the U.S. did not consider the extradition of the former Shah from Panama to be a possibility.

127. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, December 30, 1979

SUBJECT

CIA Paper

On December 12, 1979, you sent CIA a series of questions about Soviet actions in Iran and the Middle East.² I find little of substance that is not included in other reporting and analysis.³ You may wish to skim the first 15 pages. The estimative answers to questions beginning on p. 16 are worth reading. They clearly conclude that the Soviets are unlikely to intervene directly unless there is a complete disintegration of Iran or the emergence of an anti-Soviet central regime.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 43, Subject File, Iran Reference Material 12/79. Secret. A stamped notation on in the upper right margin of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

² In a December 12 memorandum to Turner, Brzezinski wrote: "It is time for us to start thinking about how we will be responding to Soviet attempts to capitalize on our difficulties in Iran." He asked Turner for his "best answers" to a series of questions. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Iran 12/8/79–12/18/79)

³ At the bottom of the memorandum, an unknown hand wrote: "For example, the attached report 'Soviet Efforts to Benefit From the US-Iran Crisis,' (see tics on second page of key judgments)." The December 1979 paper is attached but not printed.

128. Editorial Note

On December 29, 1979, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance addressed the United Nations Security Council, asking that it adopt the U.S. draft resolution for economic sanctions against Iran. (Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1980, pages 67–68) After several days of deliberation, the Security Council adopted Resolution 461 (1979) on December 31 by 11–0 votes, with Bangladesh, Czechoslovakia, Kuwait, and the USSR abstaining. The resolution deplored the continued detention of the hostages, contrary to Resolution 457 (1979) of December 4, and called for their immediate release. The Council took note of Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim's readiness to go to Iran, and the resolution requested him to intensify his efforts and report back before the Council met again on January 7, at which time it would review the situation and decide, "in the event of non-compliance with the present resolution, to adopt effective measures under Articles 39 and 41 of the Charter of the United Nations." For a summary of the Security Council's proceedings and the text of Resolution 461, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1979, pages 310–312.

Earlier that day, Waldheim met with Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, who presented him with a five-point statement approved by President Jimmy Carter and Vance. The five points were: 1) the release of all hostages prior to the convening any international tribunal; 2) U.S. agreement to work out in advance of the hostage release an arrangement for Iranian airing of grievances; 3) no U.S. objections to any Iranian suits in U.S. courts to recover the Shah's assets; 4) U.S. acceptance of the current Iranian state and non-interference; and 5) U.S. willingness to solve all differences between the two states once the hostages are released. Waldheim was to take the points with him on his trip to Iran. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure, November 1979–May 1980," *American Hostages in Iran*, page 108; Vance, *Hard Choices*, pages 398–399) No other copy of the five-point statement has been found.

Khomeini "reluctantly agreed" to Waldheim's visit. Iran would not invite him but would acquiesce to his visit. (Telegram 334170 to the Secretary's delegation in New York and the White House, December 31; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840125–1201, N800001–0165)

Waldheim left for Iran on January 1, 1980.

Formal and Informal Negotiating Channels

129. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 1, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran—Next Steps

The SCC on January 2 will need to examine the covert action program being worked up by CIA and the diplomatic/economic strategy we intend to pursue over the coming weeks. The *first objective* of the SCC meeting—and the NSC meeting to follow—should be the establishment of a *policy framework* with clear objectives which are agreed at the highest level. The *second objective* should be to insure that the package of proposed *overt and covert actions* are *mutually reinforcing and consistent with the policy objectives*.

U.S. Objectives

We have two principal objectives: (1) the release and safe return of the hostages; and (2) “to encourage the establishment of a responsible and democratic regime in Iran.”

Although we have tended to regard these as separate, in fact they are two sides of the same coin. Khomeini is not going to accept the political costs of giving up the hostages until he is persuaded that continued holding of the hostages is more costly to him than giving them up. That means that Khomeini must see his internal power base eroding, with the risk of losing control over the revolution. No other argument or scheme is going to tempt him to change his mind.

Our strategy, therefore, must concentrate on making the present situation as costly politically as possible for Khomeini and his followers. We can do that by maintaining maximum pressure on Iran through a diplomatic-economic offensive, combined with a vigorous covert action program which undermines Khomeini's effective control.

We should beware of various proposals which would have us make a new set of offers or concessions to Khomeini as a face-saving device. These will not work and could make things worse, rather than better.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 73, Presidential Advisory File, Middle East Box 6 11/79–2/80. Secret; Sensitive. A stamped notation in the upper right margin of the memorandum reads: “ZB has seen.”

Khomeini has all the face-saving devices he needs, and he will use them when he decides to pay the political price. He can use Waldheim, the PLO, Syria, Algeria, or any number of other intermediaries who are waiting anxiously in the wings with visions of being tapped as the "savior" of the hostages. He has no shortage of stratagems available to him domestically, including the possibility of a quick trial and expulsion of the hostages, or any number of other schemes combining maximum U.S. humiliation with the freeing of the hostages. What is lacking is the will to use one or more of these possibilities.

We should not underestimate the effectiveness of the steps we have taken to date. Despite the brave rhetoric of Khomeini and the Iranian media, the leadership and much of the population is aware of the isolation of Iran, the damage to the reputation of the revolution, the economic complications for Iranian companies and individuals, the threat of shortages of key parts and basic necessities, the stagnation of the economy, and even the danger of U.S. military intervention. None of these is so severe that it is likely to reverse the course of events in the immediate future, but the cumulative effect is visible in the high-level infighting among Khomeini's followers, the increasing readiness of individuals to criticize the present leadership, and outright insurrection in key areas of the country. We must not permit ourselves to become victims of Iranian propaganda. Our most effective weapon is holding firmly to a course of steady and persistent pressure.

That course may be frustrating to us when it fails to yield immediate results, but it is the only realistic option available to us which is likely to produce the desired outcome. We must grit our teeth and persevere.

Diplomatic/Economic Options

The following is a list of actions available to us at present:

1. *Sanctions.* We must continue to press with all our resources for a UN vote on sanctions and effective implementation of its provisions. The sharp reaction to the threat of sanctions in Tehran is the best indicator of their unwillingness to be only the second nation in recent history to have been branded an international outlaw. The fact that the economic effects will be slow in coming should not mislead us about the psychological impact. The practical complications for ordinary Iranians in terms of travel, credit, imports and routine communications should also not be underestimated.

2. *Drawdown of Foreign Personnel.* There is considerable alarm in Tehran today as word spreads about the withdrawal of personnel from foreign embassies and commercial representatives. We should encourage this and try to accelerate it. A limited military show of force, e.g. overflights, could be quite effective in helping some nations make up their minds.

3. *Boycott of Iranian Products.* A unilateral U.S. boycott of all Iranian products, e.g. carpet and agricultural goods, could be helpful in keeping world public attention focused on our seriousness of intent and could raise more public concern in Iran about our ultimate intentions.

4. *Break Relations.* We may be approaching the moment when this would be an effective gesture. Announcement of a break in relations on January 7 as we approach the next UN vote could help dramatize our seriousness.

Covert Action

CIA will present a paper to the SCC summarizing their views. It will focus on the following basic questions:

1. Should we focus on maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran or should we stimulate regional/tribal opposition to Khomeini? The paper recommends that our *strategic* objective should be to preserve Iran's territorial integrity, but that *tactically* we must capitalize on regional and tribal opposition. This means walking a narrow line, but it is not impossible. In our contacts with opposition groups, we should make clear our interest in a united Iran.

2. Should we choose a single opposition leader or cooperate with a variety of possible leaders? In fact, there is no single leader in sight at the present time capable of overthrowing or replacing Khomeini. We must keep a number of lines out and capitalize on developments.

3. What groups or leaders appear most promising? The CIA paper examines the obvious candidates. [9½ lines not declassified]

4. What is the impact of a covert action program on the fate of the hostages? The more effective pressure we bring to bear on the regime in Tehran, the quicker they are likely to come to the conclusion that the hostage issue is an unproductive sideshow which must be ended.

In addition, the CIA presentation will consider the value of possible military or paramilitary action in promoting political change. The following six areas of interest were identified by David Aaron's group:

1. [1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]

2. [1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

3. [1 paragraph (1½ lines) not declassified]

4. *Direct cooperation with Iraq.* The Iraqis do not like Khomeini, but they also wish to avoid a return of U.S. influence in Iran. They have been very coy thus far. If we are to get their cooperation, we will have to offer them something more substantial than the promise of "talks" or emissaries. This needs more study. Could David's group examine this in greater detail and report back to the SCC?

5. [1 paragraph (5 lines) not declassified]

6. *How can a limited military action, e.g. a blockade, be made to work for us, rather than uniting the country against us?* The elements of such

a plan include a heavy dose of propaganda, plus some careful advance planning/consultation with political opposition groups.

Timing

The evolution of political events in Iran continues to be dominated by the constitution. The next key event is the election of a president on about January 25. I have two observations:

—We should encourage the political opposition groups with whom we are in contact to boycott the presidential elections. If they attempt to run their own candidates, they will merely fail, while lending legitimacy to the election process. By boycotting, they probably cannot prevent the election of a candidate of Khomeini's choice (which may be some nonentity subject to Khomeini's personal control), but they can maintain a strong position of objecting to the legitimacy of the entire process, thereby strengthening their own hand for rejecting the outcome.

—The fortieth day after Ashura, known as "Arba'in," falls on January 19, just prior to the presidential elections. We should use whatever influence we have with opposition groups to promote open resistance to Khomeini's rule and the proposed constitution on that occasion. If something dramatic could be arranged, e.g. the departure of Shariat-Madari from Qom to the holy city of Najaf in Iraq, it could detract from the election process and spark increased resistance to Khomeini throughout the country.

130. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 2, 1980, 9–9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
Warren Christopher

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron (from 9:25 a.m.)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" at the top of the page.

Defense
Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Clayton

NSC
Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick

JCS
Admiral Thomas Hayward

CIA
Frank Carlucci

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

A restricted meeting of the SCC was called to discuss covert action with respect to Iran. Mr. Carlucci opened the meeting by circulating a paper entitled “Covert Action in Iran,” which is attached to these notes as Tab A.² The SCC discussed the following elements of the paper:

1. *Maintaining the territorial integrity of Iran versus stimulating opposition [less than 1 line not declassified]*. The SCC recognized the danger of cooperating with and assisting regional separatist groups while aiming at preserving the territorial integrity of Iran. [1½ lines not declassified]. Dr. Brzezinski noted that the continued rule of Khomeini would in any event lead to the division of the country and a takeover by the left. We prefer a unified, anti-Soviet Iran; but a divided Iran is preferable to a unified, pro-Soviet Iran. All agreed with the formulation developed in the paper [2 lines not declassified] making clear that our objective is not separatism.³ (S)

2. All agreed with the paper that there is not a single leader identifiable at present and that we should continue to work with all potentially viable opposition groups. (S)

3. [7 lines not declassified] Secretary Vance wondered about the status of Shariatmadari—was he under house arrest in Qom? [5½ lines not declassified] Dr. Brzezinski wondered if we should encourage Shariatmadari to move. Secretary Vance said we want to have him safe. He would certainly be safer in Tabriz or in Najaf than in Qom. Ideally, Shariatmadari could announce a pilgrimage to Najaf; but thus far he has avoided such direct actions in opposition to Khomeini. Mr. Carlucci said [4½ lines not declassified]. SCC concurred.⁴ (S)

4. *Impact on the hostage situation*. Mr. Carlucci said that stimulating opposition groups served to distract Khomeini from the hostage issue.

² Tab A, December 31, is attached but not printed. Sick summarized the paper in his memorandum to Brzezinski; see Document 129.

³ Carter approved items 1 and 2 with checkmarks, then initialed in the right margin.

⁴ Carter indicated neither his approval nor disapproval of this item. He wrote in the left margin: “I think Bakhtiar is politically *dead*. He’s the Shah’s man. A Beheshti or Shariatmadari is our probable best hope. On PR broadcasts we should point out that S. is in virtual house arrest.”

It was a close judgment call whether this helped or hurt the hostage situation. He tended to believe that it may make it worse. However, we should recognize that Khomeini is already convinced that we are supporting Bakhtiar and others—on the basis of information captured at the embassy, among other things. So our efforts in this regard do not really change his perspective of our role. Secretary Vance noted that we should tell Bakhtiar either to shut up or have his water cut off. [1½ lines not declassified] Dr. Brzezinski noted the tremendous impact of government support on emigre organizations—they place great importance even on limited shows of support. Mr. Carlucci agreed that it is a dilemma; however, we *do* want to achieve the psychological effect of stimulating their action through our support. Mr. Carlucci added that we will “not be dealing with boy scouts” in this operation. [5 lines not declassified] Secretary Brown noted that the magnitude of our efforts should be governed by what we really know about what we are trying to do. At the moment, we are only starting and do not have as much information as we would like. We must wait and see how it goes. Dr. Brzezinski asked if we were in touch with Iranian military leaders; do we have an inventory of the military leaders who remain from the previous regime? Secretary Vance said we would be in touch today with someone in New York who is reputedly in contact with Admiral Madani. Mr. Carlucci noted that [less than 1 line not declassified]. We do not have an inventory of present military leadership. Our information is scanty, but we are trying to build it up. Secretary Brown said he had directed contact with a group of Iranian naval officers who are in this country as a purchasing mission, but he was not aware of what had come of this. Mr. Christopher said we should be focusing on the labor organizations in the oil fields. Mr. Sick noted that Hassan Nazih, former head of the NIOC, was now out of the country, and we should have contact with him soon. He probably has the best understanding of the possibilities there. [5½ lines not declassified] Secretary Vance agreed that we need more information before moving to that stage.⁵ (TS)

The SCC then turned to the second CIA paper (Tab B)⁶ which addresses various options developed by the small subcommittee chaired by David Aaron. Mr. Carlucci noted that operations such as those discussed in this paper were of a different order of magnitude from the political action options discussed above and would require substantially more resources. Mr. Aaron noted that these had been identified as possible contingent actions for consideration. This was

⁵ In the left margin next to the last sentence of this paragraph, Carter wrote: “I agree.”

⁶ Tab B, an untitled and undated paper, is attached but not printed. Annex A to this paper describes various tribal groups in Iran.

not an action proposal at this point, although we may wish to take some preliminary steps to develop such a capability. The following elements of the paper were discussed:

1. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Secretary Brown wondered if this did not represent a second or third step to follow the political action program. He noted that we were starting from zero [*7 lines not declassified*] Secretary Vance said he wanted to register a major reservation about the desirability of such operations. He did not think it was feasible, and the American people's reaction would be split. [*2 lines not declassified*] Dr. Brzezinski said that such action was certainly premature at this point. [*12 lines not declassified*] Mr. Aaron agreed that there was a question of the money and time needed to develop such a capability. [*2 lines not declassified*] Secretary Vance said he would not object to building up our stocks of military and other equipment which we can provide in support of covert action programs, [*1 line not declassified*]. Secretary Brown disagreed; we should start building it up and not deny ourselves the capability to act at some future stage. Dr. Brzezinski noted that the alternative to this kind of capability may be direct U.S. military involvement. We may need this option. The SCC agreed that the minutes should reflect a unanimous view that the first option in the paper was premature and that views were divided on [*1½ lines not declassified*]. The President would want to reflect on this question. (TS)

2. [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. Dr. Brzezinski noted that options 2 and 5 could be combined, i.e. that [*less than 1 line not declassified*] could be combined with a blockade for maximum effectiveness. Dr. Brzezinski urged that a plan be developed along these lines. A blockade would be the last U.S. option short of bloodshed, and this could help make it more effective. Secretary Vance wondered whether we are talking here about building up a capability or actually taking a decision to proceed with this option. Mr. Aaron said that his group had been tasked to develop options relating to possible military involvement. Option 2 in this paper was seen as a potential alternative to a direct U.S. military strike against Iranian targets. Although he agreed that 2 and 5 could be combined, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] could also be useful as a means of demonstrating loss of political control, even if there were no blockade. Mr. Carlucci said that we presently [*1½ lines not declassified*]. Our available assets are fully committed to the Delta operation.⁷ If we changed their mission and began working toward this objective, perhaps something could be put together within several weeks. [*1½ lines not declassified*] Developing such a capability [*less than 1 line not declassified*] would be a longer term proposition, and [*less than*

⁷ A reference to the plans for a potential hostage rescue mission.

1 line not declassified] which are only now beginning are the necessary first step in any event. Secretary Vance noted that there is no requirement to [*less than 1 line not declassified*] in order to proceed with this option. The SCC agreed that pursuing [*less than 1 line not declassified*] was the appropriate action for the moment.⁸ (TS)

3. *Contacts with Iraq*. All agreed that this was already being pursued. (S)

4. *Seizure of oil fields*. Mr. Aaron noted that the objective of this option was to examine [*5½ lines not declassified*]. The SCC noted that the examination revealed that such an effort would require direct action either by us or the Iraqis, and the prospect of Iraqi control of the oil fields was not significantly more attractive than Khomeini's control. Secretary Vance suggested that this option be put on hold.⁹

5. *Blockade*. Dr. Brzezinski noted that this had been covered in the discussion of option 2 and that we should go ahead with planning.¹⁰ (S)

The SCC then took up a series of brief items:

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

7. *Strategy*. Dr. Brzezinski noted that Iran will be the first topic on the agenda of the NSC meeting this afternoon. At that time, the President will want an update on our present status and the items discussed here this morning. However, the central question will be how we can continue to exert pressure on Iran after we get sanctions (or do not get sanctions) next week. (S)

⁸ Carter underlined the phrase "pursuing [*less than 1 line not declassified*]" and wrote "no more" in the left margin next to the Approve line, on which he placed a checkmark.

⁹ Carter double underlined the word "hold" in the last sentence, then placed a checkmark on the Approve line.

¹⁰ Carter indicated neither his approval nor disapproval of this item, but he initialed in the right margin.

131. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, January 2, 1980, 1–3:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran, Christopher Mission to Afghanistan, SALT and Brown Trip to China

PARTICIPANTS

The President	CIA
The Vice President	Deputy Director Carlucci
<i>State</i>	<i>White House</i>
Secretary Vance	Zbigniew Brzezinski
Deputy Secretary Christopher	Hamilton Jordan
<i>Defense</i>	Lloyd Cutler
Secretary Brown	Jody Powell
Deputy Secretary Claytor	David Aaron

MINUTES

The President began by saying that the NSC would first discuss Iran and Pakistan and then reduce the membership to the statutory members for a more private session.

Dr. Brzezinski said that the Secretary of State would update the Council on the Iranian hostage situation and, time permitting, there should be a discussion of our longer term strategy towards the Iranian Government.

The Secretary of State said that we had a successful vote on Monday in the UN Security Council² and that since that time we have been working with others to clear up the language of the resolution on sanctions. He thought this would be completed by the end of the day.³

The President asked what the prospects were for the approval of the sanctions resolution. The Secretary of State replied that he could not guarantee nine votes. He said that we had eight certain votes, but not nine. The Secretary of Defense pointed out that there will be new members on the Council. The Secretary of State responded that we would gain the vote of the Philippines who were coming on the Council,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

² December 31. See Document 128.

³ The draft sanctions resolution is attached to the January 6 Iran Update memorandum from Saunders to Vance. The draft asks that all states impose trade sanctions against Iran and notes French and British objections to the resolution. (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Jan 1980)

but we would lose Gabon. Niger will replace Nigeria and he thought that we will probably have their support if the French will help us. He said we will lose a vote on Bolivia since there is still an impasse over whether Cuba or Colombia will get that seat. He added that the Eastern Europeans, East Germany and Czechoslovakia, will, of course, be of no help.

With the Europeans and ourselves, we have five votes. If you add Niger, that is six; the Philippines, that is seven. He said Zambia is questionable; however, Manley will stick with us and that will make eight votes. However, we could not be certain until we have the text of the sanctions resolution in front of the delegates.

The Secretary of State thought the big question was whether the Chinese would stay with us. In his judgment, if we have nine votes, China will join us; but if China is to be the ninth vote, we could have some difficulties.

The Secretary of Defense asked what the chances were that Secretary General Waldheim would say that we should keep negotiating rather than voting sanctions. The Secretary of State responded that Waldheim is likely to say that there has been some progress and that there should be a few more days permitted to see if diplomacy could achieve more substantial progress. The Secretary of State confirmed the Secretary of Defense's assessment that therefore the vote on sanctions might stretch a few days further, but not for several weeks.

The President asked whether there had been a report from Waldheim. The Secretary of State said no. Indeed, we still do not know if he will be seeing Khomeini. In any event, he did not believe that much would come out of the Waldheim visit.

The President agreed. He doubted whether the Iranians wanted to resolve the crisis at this stage.

The Secretary of State said that he believed the Afghan situation is the only thing that might change the attitude of the Iranian authorities. The Iranian Government has made two statements critical of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and they have indicated that this is supposed to be a signal of the congruence of their view with that of our own.

The Secretary of State noted that the Saudis were interested in putting together an Islamic Foreign Ministers meeting and the Secretary of State said that he had encouraged the Saudi Foreign Minister in that regard. He concluded by saying that it is clear that the Iranians see the Soviet move into Afghanistan as a threat. This is where we must place the weight of our argument.

In response to a question as to the contacts we have with the Iranians on this, the Secretary of State said that we were in contact with them through the Swiss.

The President asked if there was any further comment on Iran.

The Secretary of State said that Hal Saunders is meeting with people in New York who are purporting to represent members of the Revolutionary Council. He added that he was meeting with a specific individual here in Washington who had come for this meeting. He did not wish to mention his name; but he said he was a person with real influence.⁴

The President said that what the Iranians tell Waldheim privately will be significant. They are in a position to keep open the possibility of a resolution of the crisis. However, he said he had no reason to be optimistic.

The Secretary of State added that Arafat is probably going to Tehran in the near future. The President asked whether Arafat will condemn the Soviets on Afghanistan. Dr. Brzezinski replied that Arafat will follow the lead of the other Arab countries.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

⁴ Saunders met with Hashemi in New York on January 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P860159–1187) Vance met with Sadiq al-Mahdi, who had just returned from Iran, on January 3 and 4. (Telegram 2947 to Khartoum, January 4; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800010–0113) Saunders offers a detailed account of these informal meetings in Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure,” *American Hostages in Iran*, pp. 102–104.

132. Telegram From the U.S. Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State¹

New York, January 6, 1980, 0126Z

49. Urgent for Secretary Vance from McHenry. Subject: Iran: Conversation With Waldheim on his Visit to Tehran.

(Secret–Entire text)

1. Waldheim asked to see me after this morning’s (Jan 5) Security Council meeting² to discuss his visit to Iran. As Waldheim left the

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Jan 1980. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. An unknown hand wrote in the upper right margin of the telegram: “Good further background.”

² The Security Council was meeting to discuss Afghanistan.

Council chamber for his office he engaged in a highly emotional exchange with Amb Naik (Pakistan). Waldheim was still worked up when we began our conversation. Probably only Mrs. Waldheim would believe how emotional and angry he was.

2. Waldheim began with sharp criticism of Naik, Pakistan FM Shahi and all others who offered him advice without knowing what they were talking about and with only the objective of getting a piece of the action. Shahi had misled him, had told him that he would be welcome and received by the Revolutionary Council and Khomeini. Instead of a welcome he had barely managed to escape with his life.

3. Waldheim then went on to describe the harrowing scene at the cemetery. He recalled that for a brief period he [was] left alone in the car with an angry mob outside and made it to the waiting helicopter by directing the non-English speaking driver down a sidewalk and between rows of tombstones. In Waldheim's view the demonstration was not accidental [and] consisted of hystericals who had been bussed to the cemetery even though his appearance was unexpected (the visit, although previously scheduled, had been publicly cancelled after an assassination plot was discovered.)

4. On his visit to the Revolutionary Council, Waldheim said he was forced to walk 200 yards in darkness through a threatening mob. On his departure the mob knocked Ghotbzadeh to the ground while pushing Waldheim ahead alone.

5. With regard to his discussions, Waldheim said he spent most of his time listening to Iranian charges against the United States. He said he found an unreasoning hatred against the United States and against the United Nations, which the Iranians believe to be under American control.

6. Waldheim said that all of the familiar names were present at the Revolutionary Council meeting. The Council was made up of well-meaning but naive and powerless men. Only Khomeini exercised power; but Khomeini's power was certain only if he took no action which might meet with the opposition of the "students" at the Embassy. The "students" were "a state within a state." Khomeini is a weak fanatic who refuses to do what he can to save his country from an abyss.³

7. Waldheim said that he saw no hope for progress toward release of the hostages and, given the chaos in Iran, was concerned for their safety. In the circumstances, President Carter had an extremely difficult decision to make. Sanctions would have no effect and were even wel-

³ The word "weak" is circled and, in the right margin of the telegram, an unknown hand wrote: "weak? A different assessment from ours."

comed by Ghotbzadeh—who Waldheim thought genuinely sought a settlement.⁴

8. Waldheim said that he had discussed a commission of enquiry but the Iranians were naive about such a commission. They expected it to be appointed next week, to submit its conclusions within one week and have the General Assembly or the Security Council order implementation of the conclusion. Only then, presumably if they agreed with the conclusions, would the hostages be released. In Waldheim's view this was an impossible approach and even if acceptable, contained no guarantee that the "students" would agree to release the hostages.

9. With regard to his report Waldheim said he would state that Iran was not prepared to release the hostages at the present time; however a commission of enquiry may help to defuse the situation, while the search for a peaceful solution continues. (We are datafaxing to IO bootleg—rpt bootleg—draft of Waldheim report.)⁵

McHenry

⁴ Waldheim met with Carter and Vance from 5 until 7:30 p.m. at the White House on January 6 and repeated much of this information. Carter told Waldheim that he would neither accept an international tribunal, try the Shah, nor allow Iranians to receive funds before the hostages were freed. He also insisted that he did not want to delay economic sanctions. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, pp. 109–110; Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pp. 478–479; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 485) No official record of the meeting has been found.

⁵ The bootleg version is attached to the January 6 Iran Update memorandum from Saunders to Vance. (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Jan 1980) Waldheim reported on his trip to the Security Council on January 6. For a summary, see *Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1980, p. 309. Waldheim's report is in telegram 63 from USUN, January 8. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council)

133. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 7, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran

I spent Sunday afternoon² in New York for a four-hour meeting with my Iranian contact. One part of the discussion involved various operational matters which I have already dealt with through Frank Carlucci's shop. Specifically, [name not declassified] is to meet with Bani Ahmad in Paris tomorrow morning. This will be our first direct operational contact with the Shariatmadari organization, and if it is successful it can lead us to a series of contacts with people who are engaged in more than talk. I am particularly hopeful that [name not declassified] will soon establish contact with Hassan Nazih. Nazih is apparently considering returning to Iran in the near future. Moghadem Maragei, the other key Azerbaijani leader, is now reported to be in Kurdistan in hiding, after his office was ransacked by Khomeini followers.

Most of the time was spent in an exchange of views on the general political situation and a discussion of the ideas he is putting together on a possible long-range strategy. The essence of his concept is as follows:

—It is pointless to try to pretend that Khomeini never happened. Rather, it is essential to accept the positive accomplishments he has made (given dignity and sense of purpose to lower classes; reversed trend toward materialism; injected sense of moral values; given sense of purpose to Shia Islam; reduced expectations of Iranian society) and build on those while rejecting the many negative aspects.

—We should do nothing to interfere with Khomeini's self-discrediting actions. We must avoid making him into a martyr at all costs.

—Among the various groupings that now exist, there is no likely leader who can replace Khomeini. In fact, to search for a single leader is an error. Shariatmadari carries his own "Islamic" baggage which would be troublesome in a post-Khomeini Iran. A military dictatorship, in a replay of 1953,³ will only set the stage for another round of repres-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/1/80-1/10/80. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation on the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

² January 6.

³ A reference to the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, who was replaced by Fazlollah Zahedi.

sion, revenge, and collapse. Bakhtiar is hopeless. At the present time, the great weakness of opposition politics is that each one of them sees himself as the future President/Prime Minister and all of their actions are related to that vision. Hence, no cooperation.

—The alternative is to articulate a set of broader principles on which all these groups can agree—at least in part. The objective is to define the shape of the Iran of the future in terms which Khomeini cannot reject out of hand but which are recognized as very different from a narrow Seventh Century Islamic state which Khomeini represents.

—He believes that such a set of principles could be built around the concepts of national sovereignty, rule by law as provided under the 1906 Constitution, and a willingness to face problems directly rather than sweeping them under the rug. The objective should be a political system which is responsive to the people, a social system which lets national groups and religious minorities live “more comfortably” within the society, and an economic system which promotes more equitable distribution of national wealth and its products. He believes that the concept of a constitutional monarchy should not be discounted, although that certainly does not mean the return of the Shah. He notes that the Iranian people throughout their history have killed 126 kings, but they always come back to the need for the institution. They are now doing to Khomeini what they did to the Shah.

—As a first step, he would discuss privately with key opposition leaders some of these ideas and see whether they could be persuaded to accept some or all of them *as their own*. Ideally, he would like to have these same general ideas appear as spontaneously as possible from a number of different political sources.

—Later, after the basic ideas have been introduced, he is putting together a list of about 200 Iranians inside and outside the country who could jointly sponsor a new political movement based on these principles. If the moment can be captured, he believes that this will propel the political situation in a new direction and outflank the left in two ways: (1) by providing an alternative to a leftist-dominated program; and (2) by coopting many of the leftists’ most appealing arguments.

—This new political movement could provide a rallying point for the various opposition groups in which they could express their particular concepts within the context of a political system, rather than referring everything to specific individuals.

He is confident that he can identify 200 individuals from various interest groups who will be absolutely clean. I encouraged him to proceed with constructing such a list and to try his hand at a political manifesto which would summarize the basic principles he wishes to

promote. I suggested that he take the Iranian New Year (Now Ruz) on March 21 as a hypothetical starting point for such a movement and work backwards to see what steps would be required operationally to set such a process in motion. I suggested that Now Ruz would not be a bad name for such a political movement. He thought that was a good idea.

This man is not an idle dreamer. He is a hardheaded, even ruthless, pragmatist. But what he is developing in a careful and systematic way is nothing less than a new structure of Iranian politics. In its breadth of vision, it is far more attractive than the traditional games being played by Bakhtiar, Oveissi and company.

The bottom line, of course, is whether or not he can deliver. He has demonstrated convincingly that he has excellent connections with the various key opposition groups. He has personally provided us with the best contacts we have with Madani and Shariatmadari. I suspect that his list of 200 key individuals will be imaginative and useful.

It is increasingly clear that he sees himself as the key element in preparing such a program, selling it to the various opposition groups, and organizing the new movement. In order to do so, he will have to come out of his closet of security and involve himself directly with the various political groups and leaders. He says that he has no ambition for political office and that he intends never to return to Iran. I take that with a large grain of salt. Even if he believes it now, the appeal to someone as dynamic as he is would become almost irresistible if such a movement caught fire.

If and when he comes out of the closet and begins serious organizational efforts, he will increasingly come to rely on us for security and direct support. At this point, I see no reason not to encourage him to develop his ideas. The kind of list he proposes would in itself be invaluable for us. But he is a shrewd bargainer, and we must expect to start hearing more explicitly what the price will be for us. That moment may not be far away.

134. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 8, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Pakistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
David Newsom

Defense

W. Graham Claytor
Robert Murray*

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay*

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Frank Carlucci

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti*
John Shenefield*

Energy

John Sawhill*

Treasury

Secretary William Miller*
Robert Mundheim*

OMB

James McIntyre*

White House

Jody Powell*
Lloyd Cutler*
Hedley Donovan*
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Henry Owen*

NSC

William Odom
Gary Sick
Thomas Thornton*

*Not present for discussion of intelligence items

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

4. *Hostages.* The President has asked for more publicity on the role of the kidnapers and terrorists, pointing out that they are apparently in charge of policy. Gary Sick will work with State to compile a list of instances where the kidnapers reversed other authorities in Tehran.² The list will be provided to Jody Powell. New urgency has been given to this question by the possibility that Bruce Laingen may be turned

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 107. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" in the upper right corner.

² Precht sent the list to Sick in a January 8 memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 1/10/80–1/10/80)

over to the kidnappers. In particular, the Spanish have reportedly been told by Ghotbzadeh that he will probably be unable to resist the request that Laingen be turned over. One way to counter this is publicity. (S)
[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Intelligence Issues:

1. *Exfiltration.* The restricted group briefly reviewed the status of our people who are in hiding in Tehran. The Canadians believe that as long as they can maintain an open embassy, our people are safe in their custody. The Canadians are worried about the risks of an attempted exfiltration. Much has been accomplished on the planning side partly as the result of Peter Tarnoff's trip to Canada. We have prepared both American and Canadian passports for their use. The Canadians prefer that American passports be used. The Canadian ambassador in Tehran will have the final say on this. A message is being sent to our people in Tehran via the Canadians.³ (TS)

2. *Delta Team.* There was a brief discussion of the present status of planning and training of a possible Delta Team operation.⁴ General Jones had spent most of Saturday in Fort Bragg reviewing the training. Admiral Turner said that they had had people inside the embassy compound but not inside the areas where the people are actually being held. He continues to believe that all the hostages are at the embassy, but he cannot prove it. The level of vigilance at the embassy appears to be tapering off somewhat. General Jones felt that the risk of a rescue operation was somewhat less today than it was before. The biggest risk is that our preparations would be picked up before we could act. There will be a more detailed discussion of this after the regular SCC meeting tomorrow. (TS)

³ A copy of the note was attached to a January 3 memorandum from Tarnoff to Vance and presumably discussed with Carter at the Friday, January 4, foreign policy breakfast. The note states that the United States and Canada agreed that the six Americans would be provided with Canadian non-official passports and that Canada would close down its Embassy in Tehran right before the exfiltration to avoid reprisals. (Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980) Turner described the details of this and other options in a January 9 memorandum. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1: C-372)

⁴ In its planning stages, the rescue operation envisioned a helicopter movement of Delta force into Iran, followed by a night attack on the Embassy in Tehran. Once rescued, the hostages would be moved to an isolated airfield southwest of Tehran, previously secured by U.S. Army Rangers. The Delta force, the Rangers, and the hostages would be flown by MC-130s to a third country, and the helicopters would be destroyed on site. (Paper prepared in the Department of Defense, "Concept of Operations," November 27; Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 6 Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, Miscellaneous Intelligence Files G597-605)

135. Letter From H. Ross Perot to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Dallas, January 8, 1980

Dr. Brzezinski:

My associate has returned after spending thirty-six days in Tehran.

The situation surrounding the hostages is unstable and unpredictable. Anything can happen. Theories, opinions and estimates about what is most likely to happen have little value.

Turmoil and confusion in Tehran make it feasible to infiltrate and maintain an unconventional rescue team inside the city, as we did last February.²

Vehicles, weapons, and other equipment can be acquired in the city.

My associate is willing to go back in to assist the team. Other reliable Iranians can still be recruited to assist the operation. There is the possibility of getting aid from dissident groups of Iranians—but only if the team is in Tehran to organize such activity through carefully selected Iranians.

The cornerstone of our presentation to the CIA and Department of Defense on the seventh day of capture was to put a rescue team into position in Tehran—

—A U. S. based rescue team is of no value.

—A rescue team located in a nearby country is of some value.

—A team in Tehran is of great value. It can react quickly to events, an important asset, since most events are outside our control. The only delay would be the short time required to send aircraft to a pickup point.

While waiting in the city, the team members will get an invaluable first hand feel for the actual conditions in which they will have to operate. The rescue plan will be improved as a result of experience on the streets.

I am told that the team and its leaders are superb—this is all that matters. As I reflect upon the capabilities of this team, the present conditions in the city, and contrast this team to our inexperienced

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 1/80. No classification marking.

² In February 1979, Perot financed the successful rescue of two Electronic Data Systems (EDS) employees imprisoned by the Iranian Government in a contract dispute. The rescue occurred amidst a prison break during the chaos of revolutionary upheaval in Iran.

group of amateurs, I am convinced that the team will succeed, if we will—

—Give the team leader the resources, responsibility and authority to get the job done.

—Give the team a clear mission, without a list of restrictions, that effectively limit or freeze the plan.

—Give the leader on the ground the freedom to alter the plan, based on actual conditions, since the situation is changing daily, or even hourly.

—Get the team into position quickly.

—Resist the temptation to over-control the team from Washington.

Some senior people are overreacting to the possibility of failure. Guessing at the odds of success is meaningless, except to make other senior people comfortable enough to approve the mission. Preparation, positioning, judgement, timing, execution and good luck will determine the outcome.

For those who require an indication of the probabilities of success—there is only one way to get a meaningful forecast. Talk with the team leaders who will be going in on the ground. No one is more sensitive about success than the men who are going to be shot at. If they believe the mission plan is sound, and if they are free to use good judgement in executing it, that is the best advance indication we can have.

The organization weaknesses we discussed in our first meeting still remain. Everyone working on this project should report to one person. Departmental jealousies, arguments over roles and missions, turf disputes, etc. should be dealt with firmly. A large part of the total effort on this project is still wasted in these nonproductive areas. This is inexcusable when you consider that fifty lives, plus the lives of the rescue team members, are at stake.

The United States has completed its peaceful efforts to free the hostages through the U.N., World Court, Waldheim visit, and intermediaries from other countries, all without success. The Russians have taken Afghanistan, further destabilizing the Middle East. Today, Khomeini announced that he is going into seclusion for fifteen days. If he isolates himself from contact with the students at the compound, this introduces a number of new variables for consideration.

The probabilities of using the rescue team are increasing, and yet a team is not in place in Tehran, or in a nearby country. In contrast, we put a team into Tehran in twelve days after first consideration, and kept it hidden for thirty-five days.

The real test of advice on a mission involving possible loss of human life is—are the advisers willing to go on the mission? I will repeat the offer I made five days after the hostages were taken—“If our government feels it should not field a rescue team, because of the

problems throughout the Middle East, our group will, if requested by the United States—

- organize a rescue team
- put it into position while negotiations continue
- wait for an opportunity
- rescue the hostages, if necessary, and escort them to safety.

Please consider this letter personal, and safeguard it from any disclosure to the public, Defense, State, CIA, or other members of your staff. The contents are yours to use as you see fit, without revealing the source.

Let me know if I can be of assistance to you.

You have my support and best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ross Perot³

³ Perot signed “Ross” above this typed signature.

136. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 9, 1980

SUBJECT

Formal U.S. Position on Iran

You may have the information at Tabs A and B,² but if not you should be aware of it. At Tab A is a spread sheet prepared by State and discussed on January 4 with the President. It lays out the positions taken or recommended by the various real or would-be interlocutors

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 1/80. Secret. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: “ZB has seen.” An unknown hand wrote “WOW!” above the stamp. Sick wrote at the bottom of the page: “(Hal Saunders provided this information in confidence).”

² Tab A is attached but not printed. Tab B is attached and printed as Document 137.

with Iran.³ The key item is the fourth column which expanded the previous U.S. position to be more forthcoming. That position was approved by the President and was prepared in a paper at Tab B. The position paper was given to Waldheim on January 7 and has also been sent to Sadiq al-Mahdi in London for his possible use.

The present channels of contacts being pursued by State are the following:

1. *Waldheim*. He is authorized to use Tab B in whatever efforts he may wish to undertake.

2. *Hashemi*. He is reputed to be the intermediary for a Reza Pasimideh who is said to be the son of Khomeini's older brother. Hal Saunders recently met Hashemi in New York, and he has agreed to try to set up a meeting between Hal and Pasimideh. Reportedly, Khomeini's brother has sent the Ayatollah a note asking his blessing on this, and all concerned are waiting for the reply before going ahead.

3. *Sadiq al-Mahdi*. He recently visited Tehran. As a highly respected Moslem leader, he has the kind of credentials necessary to get attention there. After his trip, he met with Vance⁴ and Vance found him impressive. He has proposed the possible terms of a settlement as outlined in the last column of the spread sheet.⁵ He is now in London and will be returning to Tehran with the position paper in Tab B to see what he can do.

4. *PLO*. They are milling about. Arafat is eager to be the one who finally succeeds in freeing the hostages. He has been holding off going to Tehran until he is convinced he will succeed. So far no dice.

I have qualms about Tab B. It goes rather far in meeting some of the Iranians' requirements, although there is nothing in it which would be more than embarrassing to us. If we were involved in a serious negotiating process, this would be a reasonable offer. However, we seem to be negotiating primarily with ourselves. People go to Tehran, listen to various officials who speak only for themselves, then come back and ask us to meet hypothetical demands with absolutely nothing

³ The spreadsheet compares McBride's position; Hashemi's position; the U.S. position, as given to Waldheim; possible expansions of the U.S. position; and Sadiq al-Mahdi's position. According to Saunders, Vance asked him to prepare this spreadsheet. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, p. 106) The discussion with Carter presumably occurred at the January 4 breakfast meeting; see footnote 3, Document 134.

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 131.

⁵ According to the spreadsheet at Tab A, al-Mahdi proposed that the United States defer sanctions unless the hostages were harmed, avoid extradition of the Shah, agree to an investigation into Iranian grievances against the Shah, approach the Shah to return his assets to Iran to be used for humanitarian purposes, and "turn over a new leaf" in its relationship with Iran.

coming from the other side. I am afraid we will find ourselves taking a starting position in any *real* negotiations that should have been our final position; we will then feel compelled to give away still more to demonstrate good faith.

137. Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, undated

US POSITION

1.) The safe and immediate departure from Iran of all US employees of the Embassy in Tehran and other Americans held hostage is essential to a resolution of other issues.

2.) The US understands and sympathizes with the grievances felt by many Iranian citizens concerning the practices of the former regime. The US is prepared to work out in advance firm understandings on a forum in which those grievances may subsequently be aired, so that the hostages could be released with confidence that those grievances will be heard in an appropriate forum after the release has taken place. The US will not concur in any hearing that involves the hostages. The US is prepared to cooperate in seeking through the auspices of the UN to establish such a forum or commission to hear Iran's grievances and to produce a report on them. The USG will cooperate with such a group in accordance with its laws, international law and the Charter of the UN.

3.) The US Government will facilitate any legal action brought by the Government of Iran in courts of the United States to account for assets within the custody or control of the former Shah that may be judged to belong to the national treasury of Iran by advising the courts, and other interested parties, that the US Government recognizes the right of the Government of Iran to bring such claims before the courts and to request the courts' assistance in obtaining information about such assets from financial institutions and other parties.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 1/80. Secret. In the upper right corner of the paper, an unknown hand wrote: "Approved by President and Secretary after their review of column 4 of the spread sheet. Given to Waldheim 1/7 and sent to London to be faxed to Sadiq al-Mahdi." For the spreadsheet, see footnotes 2, 3, and 5, Document 136.

4.) Once the hostages are safely released, the US is prepared to lift the freeze of Iranian assets and to facilitate normal commercial relations between the two countries, on the understanding that Iran will meet its financial obligations to US nationals and that the arrangements to be worked out will protect the legitimate interests of US banks and other claimants. The US is prepared to appoint members of a working group to reach agreement on those arrangements.

5.) The United States is prepared to appoint a representative to discuss with Iranian representatives the current threat posed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and to recommend to their government steps that the US and Iran might take in order to enhance the security of Iran, including the resumption of the supply of military spare parts by the United States to Iran.

6.) The US Administration is prepared to make a statement at an appropriate moment that it understands the grievances felt by the people of Iran, and that it respects the integrity of Iran, and the right of the people of Iran to choose their own form of government. The United States Government recognizes the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the legal government of Iran. The US reaffirms that the people of Iran have the right to determine their own form of government.

138. Memorandum for the Record by Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, January 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation with Dr. Brzezinski, 9 January 1980 [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

4. I then delivered my paper on possible resolution of the hostage issue.² I emphasized that the main line of action in it that was somewhat

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings with Various Officials and Subjects. Top Secret; [*handling restrictions not declassified*].

² Paper prepared by the Director of Central Intelligence, “The Hostage Situation,” January 9. Turner wrote that early release was unlikely, that Khomeini held the key to their release, and that economic pressure would have a negative effect on the situation. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/1/80–1/10/80)

different was an approach to Muslim authorities. I pointed out that I had orally raised this with Secretary Vance just after New Year's. I mentioned the two points in the memo that [*less than 1 line not declassified*] had both said similar things.³ Dr. Brzezinski generally agreed with this but asked how we identified the leaders we should approach. I said that we could not really identify them; we should have a shotgun approach and send somebody like Hal Saunders on a major tour to explain:

- a. Our estimate of what happened in Afghanistan;
- b. Our policy of patience with respect to Iran and the hostages; and
- c. The fact that there were limits on our patience and that military action might eventually ensue.

Dr. Brzezinski asked me to be ready to raise this at the SCC in the morning.⁴ [*portion marking not declassified*]

5. With respect to the hostages, I also recommended that we renew the public relations campaign that he had once organized whereby a major US figure tackled a different topic almost every day. I said access to the hostages was a very important one at this time and one that we should not have let drop completely. He agreed with me and again asked that I be ready to raise this in the SCC tomorrow morning. I also stressed the importance of getting access to the prisoners by any group of people in order to gain more intelligence about their location. [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. I then reviewed [*1 line not declassified*] the collection effort we had made against the hostages and their environment [*less than 1 line not declassified*].

7. With respect to the rescue operation, I told him I thought a 50 percent probability of success was optimistic. I thought the use of the carrier was the only way to improve the surprise element. If we were going to do that, we should start flying carrier aircraft sorties up into the Gulf now and then in a short time send the carrier a little way into the Gulf, withdraw it, and then a number of days before any effort send it all the way up in the Gulf so as not to tip our hand. I further said that I thought the 25th was too early a date and that the plan around Naim was too fuzzy and they needed more time to sort that one out properly. He asked me to get together with Dave Jones and

³ [*Names not declassified*] agreed with Turner's position that the United States should try to influence Khomeini through Islamic leaders chosen by a "shotgun approach." (Ibid.)

⁴ Turner raised the issue at the January 11 SCC meeting. Powell stated his agreement with Turner, and Aaron offered to put together a small interagency working group under the NSC Staff to examine themes and issues highlighting the U.S. public posture. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #249 held 1/11/80)

talk about the carrier plan and see if I could get them working on it. [portion marking not declassified]

8. I asked if we had a plan as to what we were going to do if there were executions. He indicated yes—bomb. I said I hoped that they had really thought that one out; I didn't think it was a good response. My preference would be:

- a. Mining;
- b. Alert and mobilization efforts for deployment of a ground force to the area—something that couldn't happen for some time but would be a very clear threat;
- c. I said I thought that bombing had no great advantages in terms of doing damage and putting pressure on Iran, and it would highly inflame Muslim world opinion against us. (I'd like at some meeting of a small group to get someone to do (quickly) a paper on what we see as the alternative responses to execution of any hostages and their pros and cons.)

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether I had any intimation that this was a more likely prospect. I said only the FBI intelligence report of yesterday which had not come through.⁵ [portion marking not declassified]

Stansfield Turner

⁵ Not found.

139. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 10, 1980, 9–10:10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Pakistan

PARTICIPANTS

State
Warren Christopher
Harold Saunders
Richard Cooper*

Commerce
Secretary Phillip Klutznick
Homer Moyer*

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains Files, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

Defense

W. Graham Claytor
Robert Murray

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Justice

John Shenefield*

Energy

John Sawhill*

Treasury

Robert Carswell*

OMB

James McIntyre*

White House

Lloyd Cutler**
Hedley Donovan
Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
Henry Owen*

Vice President's Office

Denis Clift*

NSC

Colonel William Odum
Gary Sick
Thomas Thornton

*Domestic Issues Only

**Domestic Issues and Shah

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Emissary.* Richard Cooper will depart for Europe by this weekend and be prepared to begin discussions with the Europeans on Monday.² Some of the preparations for these discussions are dependent on the outcome of the sanctions vote on Iran in the Security Council. Specifically, we must decide whether to ask the allies to impose the full body of sanctions³ defined in the resolution. A number of them lack the legal basis for taking such action in the absence of UN authorization. (S)

2. *Sanctions on Iran.* Dr. Brzezinski expressed his concern that our economic/diplomatic approach against Iran is running out of steam. Even if sanctions are approved by the UNSC, how will they be applied, how will they affect the Iranians, and what effect if any will they have in getting the hostages released? If we do not get the sanctions, the allies will be reluctant to impose sanctions unilaterally and the Iranians will conclude that the international leverage against them has been reduced. How much time would it take for economic sanctions to have an effect? There is little time left on the political side, where our efforts are being perceived to have failed. (S)

² January 15. His mission was to consult with European allies on a coordinated response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Should the Soviets veto the Iranian sanctions vote, Cooper was to consult on ways to impose sanctions despite the veto. A statement of his mission's purpose and a January 1 discussion paper for economic sanctions on Iran is in Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980.

³ Carter underlined the phrase "whether to ask the allies to impose the full body of sanctions" and wrote "yes" in the left margin.

Mr. Christopher said it would be difficult to get the nine votes. The key nations are Zambia, Tunisia and China. Calls are going out from the President this morning. If we get the nine votes, there is no certainty whether or not the Soviets will veto. The chances of a Soviet veto have noticeably increased. However, if we get sanctions, we should press ahead with implementation. If we fail, it will be a blow, and we must work hard to get our allies to assist us in keeping up the pressure. Economic pressures, withholding of spare parts and the like have an effect on the Revolutionary Council, but they do not have much effect on the students⁴ or Khomeini. (S)

The present state of the Iranian economy is rather pitiful. The imposition of sanctions would be felt immediately in terms of its psychological and political impact. Some say it will merely stiffen their backs, but that is far from certain. The economic effects will be slower in coming, but will impact on their ability to maintain their military forces. Admiral Turner added that it will also affect the oil sector and manufacturing due to lack of spares which are running down. CIA has examined the effects of sanctions, but they would take another more detailed look at the implications.⁵ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski noted the ability of the Rhodesian whites to withstand sanctions for ten years. Even if sanctions are voted, this precedent will be cited to undermine our public credibility. We need the means to counter this. Admiral Turner said that a study would not provide the kind of ammunition which could effectively counter those arguments. Secretary Klutznick observed that there was also a question of how many nations would choose to impose sanctions, even if voted. Mr. Cooper replied that our first priority would be the major Western European allies plus Japan and Canada. That covers most of the commercial relations and spare parts on which Iran relies. Our second priority would be the smaller European states, and third priority would be the Third World—largely for show. (S)

Mr. Christopher agreed that we need to have a contingency plan on how to proceed if there is a veto. It will require a lot of arm-twisting on our allies. Perhaps we will need a team of emissaries to go out to the major nations. State will start work on developing such a team, possibly including prestigious private individuals, and directed at Western Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada and the ASEAN nations.

⁴ Carter circled the word "students" and wrote "They're not" in the left margin.

⁵ Turner sent the January 10 paper, "Economic Sanctions Against Iran," prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, to Brzezinski that afternoon. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1: C-372 Iran) Turner had provided Carter, Mondale, Vance, Brown, and Brzezinski with a January 4 paper entitled "Free World: Trade Ties with Iran." (Ibid.)

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if it might be desirable to take some dramatic act, e.g. having the President appear before the General Assembly. He was concerned that we have done nothing serious to intimidate the Iranians since late November when we did intimidate them. They now discount our efforts. Khomeini must be brought face to face with the unpalatable alternatives. Mr. Christopher said they had looked at the General Assembly option, but we would want to be certain we could get two-thirds before we tried it. Also the UNGA has no enforcement authority. (S)

3. *Iranian Students.* Mr. Claytor outlined the present situation. There are 227 Iranian trainees in this country, 216 of whom are in flight training. Another large group is in ROTC at various universities. Our objective has been to maintain their good will toward the West, but the lack of actual flying is having the reverse effect. Morale is going down and the Air Force is worried about possible incidents. The British have the same problem and are following our lead. The Congress will probably raise this again when they reconvene. He proposed a deadline of February 1 or the end of the semester, as appropriate, for terminating training. The students would have the choice of seeking asylum if they wished to remain. The political attitudes of these students have not been systematically surveyed. Many of them are afraid to talk. We know that many of them were pro-Shah, that many are anti-Khomeini, and a few of them are pro-revolution. Dr. Brzezinski noted that facing them with this choice forced them to burn their bridges and could make them return to Iran bitter with the U.S. He thought that would eliminate a possible useful asset. At some point it might be useful for them to return to Iran in uniform as a group. If this is not a domestic issue, which it does not appear to be at present, and if their presence has no bearing on the fate of the hostages, he would prefer no change. General Jones said that on training grounds it made no sense to keep them here, but if there was a political judgment that it was useful, they could continue. All agreed that the students should stay put for the moment.⁶ (S)

4. *Iranian Assets.* Mr. Carswell noted that private companies are beginning to attach the new funds which we licensed to be brought in to pay salaries and operating expenses of the staffs of NIOC, Iran Air and other Iranian companies with personnel in this country. The staffs are a mix of Iranians and Americans. Unless we take action to prevent these attachments, these organizations will close up and return home. Is this what we want? Mr. Sawhill noted that the NIOC personnel have continued to maintain a dialogue with us and he thought it was useful

⁶ Carter indicated neither approval nor disapproval of the item and wrote in the right margin: "What do the students prefer to do? Ask them with a confidential questionnaire."

to have them here. All agreed that we did not have to take a decision on this until after we see what happens with sanctions at the UN. Depending on that vote, this action might be included as part of a package. The issue will be reviewed again on Monday. (C)

Political-Military Issues:

1. *Shah.* We have reports that he wants us to locate a different country of residence for him.⁷ What are our responsibilities? Mr. Christopher noted that the complaint was registered by the Shah's staff, specifically Armao, who has been plagued by poor relations with the Panamanians. It was not clear whether this request came from the Shah or from Armao and others. The Shah may want to move off the island, and he might be happier doing that, or perhaps he would feel less bilked by the Panamanians. Our information indicates that relations with Royo and Torrijos are at least superficially good. We need to take a hard line.⁸ Until the hostages are released, we have no capability to find another residence. The Shah is going to have to learn to live in a country where he is not king. He was unhappy in Morocco, in the Bahamas, in Mexico and now in Panama. We have no alternatives available. It was agreed that Lloyd Cutler and Mr. Christopher will talk to Armao when he comes to Washington this weekend and see what can be worked out. Dr. Brzezinski noted that the Shah might pick up on the President's statement to congressional leaders that, in the event of a threat of extradition, the President would accept the Shah back to the United States. However, this situation appeared to be more of a case of being dissatisfied with his accommodations. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

4. *Senate Select Committee.* Mr. Aaron noted that there are reports that the SSC on Intelligence had requested declassification of the CIA analysis on the effects of permitting the Shah to return to the United States. Admiral Turner said he was unaware of this, but no action would be taken without a high level review. (S)

⁷ As reported in telegram 6660 from Panama, January 7, Armao described to Moss a long list of difficulties faced by the Shah and his entourage in Panama. He wanted Jordan's and Cutler's assistance in moving the Shah from Panama as soon as possible. Moss recommended no U.S. involvement, not least because the Shah "has no where else to go." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 60, Panama 6/79-1/80)

⁸ Carter wrote in the left margin next to this sentence: "Minimize our involvement."

140. Editorial Note

In December 1979, the Carter administration ordered the preparation of three documents on Iran during the hostage crisis, referred to in combination as the “White Paper.” (See Document 91.) The first document is a mostly unclassified Department of State study prepared by the Office of the Historian, “A Brief History of United States Policy Toward Iran, 1941–1979.” This study was presented to the Deputy Director of the Policy Planning Staff Paul Kreisberg under a December 15 covering memorandum from Historian David F. Trask. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 43, Subject File, Iran Reference Material 12/79) The President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, forwarded the study to President Jimmy Carter on January 10, noting that it was “factual,” and “without either justification or analysis of key policy judgments.” Carter wrote at the top of this memorandum, “Zbig—This is not very helpful to me. I need our decisions recapitulated—i.e., options given to Shah, Huyser’s function, etc. J.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/1/80–1/10/80) The reference is to General Robert E. Huyser, Presidential Envoy to Iran, January 1979.

The second document is a 70-page January 10 classified paper, “A Brief Overview of the Iranian-U.S. Relationship, 1941–1979,” prepared by an interagency working group. It was cleared by the Director of the Policy Planning Staff Anthony Lake, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, and the Iran Desk Officer Henry Precht. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Study of US-Iran Relations)

The third document is a summary of the major documents on 20 important issues, “Survey of U.S.-Iranian Relations,” transmitted to Brzezinski in a January 29 covering memorandum from Lake. Lake noted that the summary “includes most of the materials we would need in preparing to present our case on what has happened in Iran to the Congress, our public, or others, if and when we decided to do so.” He also noted that the work on the White Paper was not complete due to lack of access to the documents of major government agencies and from previous administrations. (Department of State, Executive Secretariat FOI Files, Lot 88D276, Binder, and memorandum from Tarnoff to Christopher, February 21; Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980)

141. Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State¹

Paris, January 11, 1980, 1241Z

1142. For Secretary From Ambassador. Subject: French Ambassador's Conversation With Ghotbzadeh.

1. (Secret-Entire text)

2. Foreign Minister Francois-Poncet called me to say he wanted to show me a report of a conversation his Ambassador in Tehran had had with Ghotbzadeh. The report is classified for the President and FonMin only, but Francois-Poncet has high regard for the Ambassador and wanted you to know its content.

3. According to the report, Ghotbzadeh opened the conversation by referring to status of Bruce Laingen, stating that the less said on this subject the better. For this reason Ghotbzadeh had submitted the students' demand² to the Ayatollah and in his judgement "things would stay as they are." Very confidentially, Ghotbzadeh told the Ambassador Ayatollah Khomeini had written to the students in this sense.

4. Ghotbzadeh emphasized his desire to resolve the crisis which was poisoning the atmosphere. In this context he discussed the Waldheim mission which he considered to have been highly successful. In his view the mission was to enable the SecGen to understand Iranian opinion and the crimes of the Shah's regime. Ghotbzadeh praised the "courage" of Waldheim. Because the mission was for information purposes only it had been better for Waldheim not to meet Khomeini. However, Waldheim had met with the full Council of the Revolution. They had discussed the possibilities of a "package deal" involving the presentation of the Iranian case before the UN General Assembly, the establishment of a UN commission of inquiry, and the liberation of the hostages. These were all linked and there was to be no precondition. In Ghotbzadeh's view, the UN General Assembly offered the only possible line of retreat from the present situation for each side.

5. The French Ambassador considers that Ghotbzadeh does want to get out of the present impasse. Ghotbzadeh spoke calmly and confidently but appeared irritated by the diplomatic corps' various *démarches* and criticized the "indiscretions" of the press, particularly

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Jan 1980. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² The students holding the hostages had demanded that Laingen be moved from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

American. For this reason he said he was keeping his distance from reporters.

6. The French Ambassador speculates that Ghotbzadeh is a candidate for the Presidency and that to strengthen his position may play on his ability to resolve the crisis. In the Ambassador's view, Ghotbzadeh may have reached an agreement with Khomeini, the Ayatollah retreating from the scene over the next two weeks and leaving Ghotbzadeh free to seek a solution to the crisis.

Hartman

142. Telegram From the U.S. Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State¹

New York, January 12, 1980, 0731Z

124. Subject: Iranian Approach on Hostages Question.

1. (S–Entire text).

2. In telephone conversation with Amb McHenry (arranged on confidential basis and placed by Bangladesh Amb Kaiser) at 5:30 pm Jan 11, Iranian Amb Farhang urged a delay in the SC vote on sanctions² until a commission could go to Tehran and work out package deal that would result in release of hostages.

3. After apologizing for “playing hide and seek” with McHenry, Farhang said he had shortly before had a good conversation with his FonMin who had met with Khomeini and discussed the possibility of a package that would involve a commission going to Iran. Ghotbzadeh reported that Khomeini had approved completely, and Farhang said that Ghotbzadeh sounded more optimistic than he had ever heard him.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Jan 1980. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the telegram reads: “Newsom has seen, Jan 12 1980.”

² On January 11 the United States submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council calling for economic sanctions against Iran. (Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1980, p. 70) The Security Council met January 11–13. See Document 147.

4. Farhang described the proposal as follows:³ A commission would be formed and sent to Iran; meanwhile action in the SC would be postponed. The Commission would return after a week in Iran and there would be a “symbolic” resolution adopted by the General Assembly that would “recognize” the Iranian grievances and claims to assets removed from Iran by the Shah. Once this resolution were adopted, the hostages would be released.⁴ Farhang expressed the view that the situation in Iran was more favorable for a solution than ever before. It was important to delay any action in the SC on sanctions, as there were elements in Iran that wished to exploit it. It was a war of nerves.

5. Amb McHenry pointed out that the proposal was vague and did not guarantee immediate release of the hostages. Moreover, there were procedural problems, as the GA was not in regular session and could not be convened easily. The current emergency session, he noted, had been called under a very special procedure following a veto in the SC.⁵ He saw other practical problems. Once the commission were formed it would have to arrive at conclusions regarding the claims to assets. Moreover, in order to delay action in the SC on the basis of such a proposal it was necessary to have confidence in the authority of those making the proposal. He was afraid the FonMin did not have the necessary authority. It appeared to us that only Khomeini and/or the group holding the hostages had the necessary authority.

6. McHenry suggested that it would be useful for Farhang to work out a package proposal with the SYG and then have it announced as having been approved by Khomeini. In the absence of something tangible we could not pull back from our sanctions proposal. Otherwise those in Iran who opposed the GOI policy and had been predicting its adverse effects would be undercut. Pointing out that he had in the past several times persuaded his govt to delay action, McHenry said he had difficulty now in convincing himself personally that further delay was warranted.

7. McHenry said he would inform Secretary Vance of the proposal and fully protect the confidentiality of Farhang’s direct approach to him. He repeated that he saw both substantive and procedural problems with the proposal, however. Moreover, if the commission idea

³ According to telegram 127 from USUN, January 12, Farhang told Waldheim that Iran would release the hostages as soon as the UN recognized the legitimacy of Iranian demands for the return of the Shah and his assets. Waldheim suggested to Farhang that a UN Commission of Inquiry might be the vehicle to achieve this end. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80)

⁴ An unknown hand underlined this sentence and, in the right margin, wrote: *[text not declassified]*.

⁵ The General Assembly was meeting in emergency session to discuss Afghanistan.

were to be followed, in present circumstances some kind of authoritative statement from Iran would be required in order to delay SC action on sanctions.

8. McHenry also informed Farhang that he had passed to SYG Waldheim on Jan 7 a detailed six-point package covering all aspects of the problem.⁶ If Farhang had not received it, he should ask Waldheim about it as it was a complete and forthright statement of our position. He had reviewed it with Third World SC members Jan 10 so they would understand the extent to which we have gone in seeking a solution to this problem.

McHenry

⁶ See Document 137.

143. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran

[1 paragraph (1½ lines not declassified)]

—We have just seen the first blink from the Iranian side. The “blink” is not the arrangement proposed to Waldheim, but the fact that Khomeini has for the first time apparently engaged himself in searching for a way out of the crisis. [2 lines not declassified]

—Whatever plan Ghotbzadeh may have discussed with Khomeini probably did *not* focus primarily on the United Nations as the key element. [5½ lines not declassified]

—[1 paragraph (7 lines not declassified)]

¹ Source: Carter Library, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 1/80–3/80. Top Secret; Codeword. A stamped notation at the bottom of the memorandum reads: “ZB has seen.”

—Another possible channel [*less than 1 line not declassified*] is the PLO and Arafat. Arafat is expected to visit Tehran in the near future but has been waiting until he had some indication that his visit would result in something substantial.

—The “new plan” which was conveyed to Waldheim by Farhang was in fact nothing more than a clarification of what Waldheim had been told in Tehran. Specifically, it provides that a Commission of Enquiry be formed by the UN, that it travel to Iran for investigation of the Shah’s crimes, after hearings of several weeks it should return to the UN and report to the Security Council and/or the General Assembly. Following that, the SC or GA are to vote a resolution expressing the legitimacy of Iran’s grievances. At that point, Iran would be prepared to “start” releasing the hostages, before the resolution had been implemented. The only new element in all of this is the fact that Khomeini has apparently blessed it. However, the fact that Ghotbzadeh was unwilling to put it in writing may mean that Khomeini’s approval is less than absolute.

Despite the brave rhetoric in Iran, I believe they are beginning to feel the many pressures on them. Kurdistan is very close to declaring its independence, the tribal areas in the south are in turmoil, and the situation in Azerbaijan is assuming the proportions of a major revolt which is dangerously close to civil war. At the same time, Khomeini and others are probably much more troubled by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan than they are willing to show in public. The prospect of being branded an international outlaw by the UN is unattractive, and this has been made much more striking in the minds of those in Tehran recently by the series of messages they have received from Third World nations pleading with them to change their position.

In my view, the moment is coming soon when they will conclude that the hostages are a liability rather than a benefit. One possible signal to that effect was the visit of the students to Qom several days ago. There has been absolutely no mention of the results of that meeting in any public media in Iran, which suggests to me that the students and the Ayatollah were not entirely in agreement or that they could not establish a common plan for next steps.

I expect the real movement, when it comes, through some channel other than the United Nations. I think in the UN they are merely playing for time, trying to avoid imposition of sanctions. I suspect that the real bargaining—which may not be too distant—will be accomplished through the PLO or some other channel which is untainted.

I strongly believe we should press ahead with the vote on sanctions. If we start a process of delaying at every new report which emanates from Tehran, we will lose credibility, and our support will start fading. We could, however, proceed with the vote on the understanding that

implementation will take some time and that continuing exploration of the “new” negotiating position can proceed in the interim. That would keep the pressure on Tehran while not losing what momentum we have left.

I do not think the Soviet veto is totally negative for us. We can—and should—attack it as an indication of Soviet interest in creating a series of compliant states on their southern border even if that requires gross violations of international law. In the Afghan case they used aggression. In the case of Iran, they are willing to ignore the rules governing immunity of diplomats, counter to the will of a clear majority of the nations on the Security Council.

144. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter, Secretary of State Vance, and the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, undated

Please find attached summary notes on my discussions today with the Panamanians. Also, several documents which I had translated pertaining to the extradition of the Shah from Panama.²

There are no other copies of this document.

Attachment

Summary Prepared by the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan)³

Washington, undated

Summary of Notes from Trip

Warren Christopher called me early Saturday morning to advise me that the President thought that the trip to consult with the Panama-

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 35, Iran-Shah Panama. Top Secret.

² Not attached.

³ No classification marking.

nians at the request of General Torrijos was worth while.⁴ I returned to Washington, was briefed by Henry Precht on the status of our negotiations with the Iranians through the Secretary General and prepared to take off for Panama City to see Torrijos.

I called Torrijos to tell him of my plans but was informed that after a night's sleep and some additional thought, the General was worried that my coming to Panama might be noticed and alarm the Shah as there was a large press contingent covering the country since the Shah's arrival there. For that reason he said that it would be better for him to meet me halfway or to send a "personal representative" who could convey to me "the very important message" that had prompted his Friday night call to me. He said that he was also worried that his absence from the country might be noticed so that he was generally inclined not to go himself. We agreed to meet at 3 o'clock at Homestead AFB. I got there by three, checked in with Warren to see if there were any new developments, made a few calls to Iowa and spent some time reviewing the materials that the State Department had given me.

The Panamanians arrived about 4:30. There were three persons in the group: my old friend Gabriel Lewis, the Panamanian Ambassador to the United Nations⁵ who hardly spoke during the three hours we spent together and Marcel Saliman (sp?) who was the person who did most of the talking. At the outset Gabriel pulled me aside and said that Marcel was very close to Torrijos and very shrewd. Gabriel said that while he is "too much of a leftist for me" that he had great credibility among the students in Panama and had been instrumental in representing Torrijos with the Sandinistas.

I stated at the outset the posture that I was in—that I had conveyed to the President the request of General Torrijos that I fly immediately to Panama to receive some news about the hostages. That because of the President's friendship and respect for General Torrijos, he was anxious to honor his request that I come to Panama. I also told them that I was involved only on the periphery of our foreign policy process as related to Iran and the hostages and had been even less involved in recent weeks due to the pressures of the campaign. I told them that I was authorized by the President only to listen and report back immediately the information that they had and that I could neither speak for the President nor make decisions. I told them that I intended to listen, ask questions and take very careful notes, and that the essence of what was said would be passed on directly to the three of you.

⁴ Saturday, January 12.

⁵ Jorge Illueca.

They began by presenting me with the English version of the formal request of extradition for the Shah from the Iranian government.⁶ They said that now it was publicly known that such a request had been made, and in spite of their public statements that they did not intend to extradite the Shah, they had a legal process which could not be ignored; that if they attempted to ignore it, it would only play into the hands of the students and leftists in Panama who were using the Shah's presence in Panama to try to bring down the government and Torrijos.

I prepared myself for a long discussion about the Shah and the problems that he was causing the Panamanians, but from that point on the entire conversation focused on the hostage situation and their hope that this new information might be helpful to their early release.

Marcel began by giving me a detailed chronology of the past couple of weeks. He said that in late December two men presented themselves in Panama as representatives of the Iranian government. They presented letters from the Foreign Minister requesting the formal extradition of the Shah from Panama. They also issued a verbal invitation for the Panamanians to send back to Iran with them a personal representative to meet with the Foreign Minister. The Panamanians sent Marcel and Romulo Escobar back to Iran with them.

The two men—who I will call Mr. X and Mr. Y⁷—now live in France and are longtime friends of Mr. Ghotbzadeh. Mr. X has known the Ayatollah Khomeini for ten years. He practices law in France. Mr. Y is an Argentinian who was formerly associated with the Peron government. He also is a longtime friend of the Foreign Minister.

Traveling with these two men, the Panamanians traveled to Iran, arriving last weekend. They had four separate meetings with the Foreign Minister. The other two men accompanied the Panamanians to these meetings and seemed to Marcel to be on very close terms with Ghotbzadeh. Their meetings with the Foreign Minister took place right after the Waldheim visit so Marcel has some information and reports on Ghotbzadeh's attitude that are interesting and possibly relevant.

They met with the Foreign Minister on Sunday, January 6th from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and later that same day from 8:00 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. On Monday, January 7th, they met with the Foreign Minister from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and later that afternoon from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. They made much of showing me their schedules, appointment books, etc., to convince me that they had seen the Foreign Minister and had spent this much time with him. Based on all that I saw and heard, I believe that they did. Marcel also took copious notes of those

⁶ See Document 109.

⁷ Mr. X is Christian Bourguet; Mr. Y is Hector Villalon.

meetings and read from them to me, saying that "Ghotbzadeh said . . ." and "the Foreign Minister told me . . ."

Instead of trying to retrace chronologically what was said at each meeting, I will try to relate the essence of their meetings and discussions with the Foreign Minister. I made comments throughout the presentation in an attempt to clarify different things that were said to the Panamanians and also to draw Marcel out.

Marcel said that at the beginning of the first meeting the Foreign Minister said that he wanted to explain to them the background on the embassy takeover. He said that the plot to overthrow the American Embassy was an "American conspiracy" involving Rockefeller, Kissinger and others who had a dual purpose: First, to create an international crisis that would undermine the Ayatollah's efforts to establish an effective and strong Islamic Republic; and second, to create a crisis of great magnitude for President Carter that would lead to his political defeat and would result in the election of a Republican that was controlled by Kissinger and Rockefeller who would work to have the Shah reinstated as the leader of the Iranian people.

The Foreign Minister said that because of the "American plot", everyone was now in a very difficult position. He said that the Panamanians were respected throughout Latin America and the Third World, but their acceptance of the "criminal Shah" at the insistence of the United States had done great damage to their image in the world. He said that President Carter was in danger of losing his Presidency if he did not successfully resolve the hostage situation. He said that the Ayatollah was in a very difficult position in Iran—he said that while he and Khomeini had no hope or desire to recover the Shah, that the students had become an increasingly powerful and difficult group with which to deal and that some way had to be found to resolve the crisis that did not make it appear that Khomeini had given in to U.S. pressure. He said that the Ayatollah had resorted to trying to substitute students totally loyal to him for the "regulars" holding the hostages, but that once inside the compound they all behaved the same way.

Ghotbzadeh talked quite frankly about his own political plans, but often invoked Khomeini's name to suggest that the future of the Islamic Republic was in the hands of both men, not just Khomeini. He said the greatest threat to their "moderate" position was the sanctions vote which was presently before the Security Council. He said that if the vote was taken and the United States was successful in obtaining the necessary nine votes, that this would make it much more difficult to resolve the hostage situation at an early date. Also, he said that the Soviet veto which was anticipated on the sanctions vote would be a tremendous propaganda victory for "Communist elements in the compound and in Iran". (I interrupted here to point out to Marcel that

there was a tremendous difference in the unsuccessful attempt of the Security Council to impose sanctions and the actual imposition of sanctions. Marcel said that he understood and had pointed this out to Ghotbzadeh whose response was that it was the “political action of the vote itself” which would be troublesome for he and Khomeini to deal with.)

Ghotbzadeh went on to talk about the importance of trying to find some solution before the elections on the 25th of January. Marcel reported that he expressed repeatedly his concern about this date and that the only conclusion he could draw was that it was perceived by the Foreign Minister as something that was critical to his own chances of being elected President.

The Foreign Minister said that there were three ways to resolve the present crisis: the death of the “criminal” Shah, the potential of the Waldheim channel or the potential of a new channel of negotiation with the Panamanians.

The Shah’s Death. Ghotbzadeh said that before the Waldheim mission, it was widely believed by Khomeini and many members of the Revolutionary Council that the Shah’s illness had been exaggerated. He said that no one could understand the paranoia that existed in Iran about the Shah’s being returned and reinstated by the United States. He said that Waldheim had brought a medical report (Marcel had the impression that it was a written medical file) that convinced the key people on the Council that the Shah was a “dying man”. He said that the Shah would not die quick enough to satisfy he and Khomeini, but that the Shah’s death was a certain way to break the impasse.

The “Waldheim Channel”. The Foreign Minister said that “more was accomplished by the Secretary-General than is known publicly” and that there were problems but that the Waldheim visit had been “worth-while”. He said that with the consent of the United States, the Secretary-General could put together a package which contained three basic elements important to he and Khomeini. First, that Sean McBride would have to be involved in whatever tribunal was established to investigate the crimes of the Shah. Secondly, that while they did not want or expect the Shah back in Iran,⁸ the General Assembly had to recognize the right of the Iranians to seek the legal extradition of the Shah from Panama. And finally, that once the tribunal with McBride was set up

⁸ Ghotbzadeh said that in the early days of the embassy takeover, they had dreamed of the return of the Shah, but that if he returned now, it would be an even greater problem for he and Khomeini as the country would be torn apart by the emotion and chaos caused by his return and the very different views as to what should be done with him. [Footnote is in the original.]

and the right of Iran to seek extradition was recognized, the American hostages would be released.

The "New Panamanian Channel". He said that the third possibility was the "Panamanian channel" which was opened by the visit of the Panamanians to Iran. He said that they recognized the great pressure that Panama was under from the United States to accept and protect the Shah. He said that he and Khomeini realized that it would be impossible for them to extradite the Shah. He said that his own lawyers had researched the Panamanian law and found six separate legal arguments that would prevent the Panamanians from actually extraditing the Shah. But, Ghotbzadeh argued that it was the "principle of extradition" that was important to he and the Ayatollah. And that if the Panamanians could begin the legal process of extradition, that would be enough for the Ayatollah to go [to] the students and insist that they release the hostages.

Ghotbzadeh said that he wanted to go to Panama to personally deliver the papers of extradition. He said also that he wanted to meet with me (Jordan) secretly as I had two of the three important relationships—a relationship with President Carter and General Torrijos, but not with him (Ghotbzadeh). He said because of the Waldheim trip and the upcoming elections, he did not know if there was time for such a mission now.

It is late—almost 4:00 a.m.—and I need to wrap this up and give you some thoughts and recommendations.

I was skeptical at the outset about Marcel and his visit to Iran, but the more I heard the more realistic and plausible it all sounded. Specific things that Ghotbzadeh said to him all seem to reinforce things that we had heard through other channels.

The larger question relates to the fact that for better or worse, the Iranians have opened a channel of communication with the Panamanians.

At best, I think you could argue that the Iranians did this consciously to have a second channel open to them to pursue in a serious way negotiations leading to the release to the hostages and/or to reinforce the contacts that they are having with Waldheim. At worst, and much more likely, the Iranians have made contact with the Panamanians to see if they can use the leverage of the unrest in Panama and their (Torrijos') relationship with us to soften our negotiating posture on the critical questions. You might speculate that while the UN channel might be producing enough for Ghotbzadeh to live with, it was not enough for the Ayatollah, and the Foreign Minister is hoping to move the thing further along with the Panamanians.

This contact between the Panamanians and the Foreign Minister is both an opportunity and a potential problem. To the extent that we

can coordinate between the Waldheim channel and the Panamanians, we can reinforce the UN package on the critical question of “the right of the Iranians to seek legal extradition”. If we fail to coordinate with the Panamanians, we risk their taking some unilateral action that undermines the UN effort, destroys our bargaining posture with Ghotbzadeh and scares the Shah to death.

Now that the Panamanians are involved in this process, we have little choice but to treat them seriously and keep them generally informed. If this present negotiation appears to have a real chance for success, it is equally important that we brief the Shah, as he will become nervous as stories about his “extradition” appear in the Panamanian and international press. It seems that at the point and time that our latest position is seriously considered by the Iranians, Lloyd Cutler and/or myself should fly to Panama to reassure the Shah. Or, to quote Gabriel Lewis, “he should be a part of this conspiracy”.

When I returned tonight, I contacted Harold Saunders and was debriefed by him. He said that one thing that we might do to involve and also utilize the Panamanians would be to give them tomorrow a general report on the recent proposal that was sent to Iran,⁹ and that since a critical element of it involved the principle of Iran being able to “seek the legal extradition of the Shah”, we might encourage them tomorrow to contact Ghotbzadeh directly, tell him that they are ready to play a role in the resolution of the crisis and ask him to accept the most recent UN proposal which contains the language on extradition that is important to them.

Mr. President, there is a lot more I could tell you, but believe that this covers the major points. I will be at home tomorrow and will be glad to help further in any way possible.

⁹ In telegram 10588 to Panama, January 13, the Department sent the language of the proposal the United States provided to Waldheim on December 12, which the Secretary-General conveyed to Farhang. The proposal suggested a three-step process for ending the crisis: adoption of a Security Council resolution which recognized the legitimate right of Iran to seek extradition and the return of the Shah’s assets, the establishment of an international Committee of Inquiry to investigate allegations of human rights abuses under the Shah’s former regime, and the simultaneous Iranian release of all hostages. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870108-1032) U.S. officials drafted the proposal language in an effort to more precisely define the sequence and timing of the included elements, which Iranian officials recently had suggested to Waldheim. (David Andelman, “Security Council Again Delays Vote on Iran Sanctions: Only Confirmation is Awaited,” *New York Times*, January 13, 1980, p. 11)

145. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Cottam/Ghotbzadeh Conversation

PARTICIPANTS

Henry Precht, IWG
Richard Cottam, University of Pittsburgh

Cottam reached Ghotbzadeh early this morning after considerable difficulty. The conversation was hard to follow as Ghotbzadeh insisted on speaking in "code."

Ghotbzadeh insisted that it was possible to reach a settlement before the Iranian presidential elections. In fact, he thinks a settlement would assure him of victory. He believes he has Khomeini's backing in reaching a settlement. In the past, "85 different people" in Qom were telling Khomeini how to handle the crisis. Now he (Ghotbzadeh) is "in control." Cottam interprets this to mean that Khomeini nods affirmatively when Ghotbzadeh puts an idea to him.

Ghotbzadeh's principal point was that he had great confidence in Waldheim and was anxious that we allow Waldheim to set the pace for a settlement. Our pressure for sanctions was making it very hard for Ghotbzadeh to maneuver. We should listen to Waldheim, the Iranians were taking their lead from him. Cottam said he had the impression that Waldheim was developing proposals which included a delay on the vote on sanctions but we were not listening to Waldheim and the effect was to restrict Ghotbzadeh's freedom of maneuver. Ghotbzadeh said he had complete confidence in Farhang who spoke for him.

A second principal point was Ghotbzadeh's emphasis on extradition from Panama. Cottam said he questioned him sharply asking him whether extradition was a realistic consideration or just something in Ghotbzadeh's mind. Ghotbzadeh replied that he was very confident of what he was saying because he had spoken directly to Panamanian leaders. Nevertheless it was not clear to Cottam whether Ghotbzadeh was talking about extradition or an extradition trial. Ghotbzadeh made two comments to Cottam on Panama. First, all the Americans have to do "is to give Panama the green light and they will go ahead as planned." Second, perhaps the U.S. should send "the same man" down there to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 1/11/80-1/31/80. Secret; Sensitive. Copies were sent to S, D, P, NEA, Cogam (CIA), and Sick (NSC).

discuss the crisis with Panama. There was no indication who this might be.

I asked Cottam whether the Panama track seemed an essential part of Ghotbzadeh's plan. He said it clearly was but it did not seem to be linked in timing or substance to the UN activity. There plainly had to be some movement in Panama, possibly for an extradition trial, for Ghotbzadeh to succeed.

Cottam asked Ghotbzadeh about the linkage between Afghanistan and the hostages and whether an argument could be made to Khomeini that once the hostage issue was over, Iran could assume a world role in opposing the Soviets. Ghotbzadeh said Afghanistan was still important to him and others on the Revolutionary Council but it was not an effective argument with Khomeini. Ghotbzadeh had gotten into some trouble within the "party" because of his strong statement on Afghanistan.

In closing, Ghotbzadeh reemphasized that he was very positive on Waldheim who he thought was handling the crisis well. It could be ended in ten days if we relaxed on sanctions.

146. Letter from the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Bayh) and the Vice Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Goldwater) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 14, 1980

Dear Mr. President:

On January 9, the Select Committee on Intelligence met to discuss with the Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Mr. Frank Carlucci, the purposes and details of two covert action programs for Iran and Afghanistan which you had approved on December 27 and 28, 1979.² This extraordinary meeting of the Committee was convened

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 98, Meetings File, 1/14/80 SCC re Iran. Top Secret; Sensitive. In the upper right corner of the letter, Carter wrote: "Not their role to make policy. J."

² For the finding on Iran, see Document 110. For the finding on Afghanistan, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XII, Afghanistan, Document 107, footnote 6.

during a recess because of the urgent nature of these programs and their far-reaching consequences.

As a result of the meeting, the Committee is of the view that the decisions to seek an alternative government in Iran and to send increased support to the Afghan tribal groups in Afghanistan, in different ways, mark a crucial turning point in U.S. foreign policy.

The Committee decided that it is necessary to understand the overall strategy of the United States before a fully reasoned judgment can be made concerning the wisdom or efficacy of the covert action programs for Iran and Afghanistan. Some members were of the view that they did not understand how these programs fitted into an overall strategy. Indeed, the political action program was described by the CIA as only a part of a larger policy on Iran. It is clear, however, that such a significant decision to seek an alternative to Khomeini will set forces in motion which the United States will not be able to control fully. Although there is no present intention of supporting opposition groups with military assistance or in any way encouraging the use of violence, both of these may result because of movements now underway. Because of these concerns, the Committee intends to invite Secretary of State Vance and Secretary of Defense Brown to meet with the Committee in the near future to discuss with the Committee how these covert action programs in Iran and Afghanistan fit in with our broader foreign policy.

All of the members of the Committee, without exception, fully support the desire of the Executive branch to work for a stable, pro-Western, democratic Iran. The Committee is cognizant of and sympathetic with the Administration's frustration in dealing with the Revolutionary Council and the Ayatollah Khomeini. The Committee is, of course, fully in support of efforts to obtain the release of American hostages held by Iranian students at the American Embassy in Teheran. Some members, however, were concerned that the risks attendant to this covert action program could place the hostages in greater jeopardy.

[1 paragraph (27 lines) not declassified]

Another point of view which was expressed, urged the development of stable long-term alternatives to the Khomeini government through friendly third parties such as Turkey. It was argued that Turkey and the United States have a number of common interests in working towards a more stable friendly Iran. Further, it was argued involving Turkey in such an effort could lead to more support from Congress, to better, more stable relations between the U.S. and Turkey, as well as a stronger Turkish government.

The Committee requested the Intelligence Community to keep it advised of the steps taken in this project. It is the particular desire of the Committee that it should be advised of the principal figures and

groupings that are being considered for such a future government and wishes to be assured that the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, as well as those with long experience in the political affairs of Iran, have been consulted. Also, that you and your principal advisors have carefully reviewed the nature of contacts, any obligations entered into, and the long-term consequences of such relationships.

The covert action Finding regarding Afghanistan was developed before the Soviet invasion and overthrow of the Amin government, although final action on the Finding was not completed until after those events. Members of the Committee noted that the level of assistance envisaged in December was not likely to suffice in the face of Soviet arms. If the Afghan rebels are to hold out successfully then it would seem necessary to provide more arms appropriate for use against Soviet helicopter gunships, if not against jet fighters. On the other hand, if it is in the interest of resistance groups over the long run, they may be better served by refraining from premature offensives against Soviet troops rather than giving more arms to disorganized and independent groups which may only invite their tragic slaughter.

Some members of the Committee suggested that the United States pursue a policy of *overt* support for the Afghan resistance groups emphasizing regional cooperation and involvement. The extremely delicate relations between India and Pakistan were discussed. Some members emphasized the need for the United States to show in a public manner its ability to take useful action in the interests of Moslem states. On the other hand, the Committee understands the problem posed by the reluctance of Pakistan and other Moslem states to be publicly identified with the United States or to provide the Soviet Union with explicit confirmation of their role in support of the Afghan rebels.

In conclusion, the Committee is of the firm view that covert action may be an adjunct but is not a substitute for coherent U.S. policy and strategy toward the Middle East, South Asia or the Soviet Union. There is a deep concern that covert action should not be relied upon to salvage almost impossible situations, for this often results in operations which are themselves unlikely either to succeed or to remain covert. It is for these reasons that the Committee believes it should closely follow the development of these programs.

The Committee valued the opportunity to discuss with the CIA the details and consequences of these two crucial programs. The Committee is mindful that the Congress has undertaken to share responsibility for such programs. This responsibility is most effectively met when the full facts and circumstances are considered in a season when consultation and advice can be exchanged. The Committee recognizes that we have entered into a very dangerous time and we want to assure you

of our intention to work with you in a responsible way to strengthen our nation's interests.

Respectfully,

Birch Bayh
Chairman

Barry Goldwater
Vice Chairman

147. Editorial Note

On January 13, 1980, the United Nations Security Council voted on the U.S. draft resolution proposing economic sanctions on Iran (Resolution S/13735) that the United States believed was required by Resolution 461 of December 31, 1979. (See Document 128 and footnote 3, Document 131.) The vote was 10 in favor, 2 against (the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union), and 2 abstentions (Bangladesh and Mexico). China did not participate. The resolution thus failed due to the Soviet veto.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Donald McHenry stated that the Soviet veto was "a cynical and irresponsible exercise of its veto power. The motive behind it is transparent. The Soviets hope that, by blocking sanctions, they can divert attention from their subjugation of Afghanistan and curry favor with the Government and people of Iran, who are among those most directly affected by the Afghan invasion."

McHenry added that the United States "has already instituted measures designed to exert economic pressure on Iran, as envisaged in the vetoed resolution," and that these measures would be applied "firmly and vigorously" until the hostages were released. McHenry then urged member states to join the United States in the "application of meaningful measures against the continued holding of the hostages in defiance of international law." The text of the draft resolution and McHenry's statement are printed in Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1980, pages 70–71.

A January 14 White House statement reiterated that the Soviet veto was an "act of political cynicism." "The Soviet Union can keep the Security Council from acting now on Iran—but they cannot block the determination of members of the international community that terrorism and lawlessness must be dealt with firmly. Over the next several days, we will be working with other nations who uphold the principles

of the United Nations and who seek a peaceful end to the crisis in Iran, to carry out our obligations under the Security Council resolution of December 31 and to implement the sanctions. At the President's direction, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher is now in Europe to discuss our actions with our European allies." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 79–80) Christopher and Cooper traveled to Brussels, Bonn, Paris, London, and Rome January 14–16. Christopher met with the North Atlantic Council in Brussels on January 15.

In a June 13 memorandum to Brzezinski, Muskie, Brown, Christopher, and Aaron, White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler wrote that Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin had told him that the Soviets had reached an internal decision to abstain on the Iranian sanctions vote, but shortly before the vote, "and without consultation," the United States had "issued a strong attack on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. He said they then had decided to cast their veto." (Carter Library, Records of the White House Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 8)

148. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 15, 1980, 9–10:05 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

David Newsom

Dean Hinton

Harold Saunders

Defense

W. Graham Claytor

Robert Murray

JCS

General David Jones

General John Pustay

Treasury

William Miller

Robert Carswell

Agriculture

Robert Bergland

White House

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

Stuart Eizenstat

Lloyd Cutler

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" in the upper right corner.

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner

Justice
Benjamin Civiletti

Energy
John Sawhill

Vice President's Office

Denis Clift

NSC

David Aaron

Colonel William Odom

Gary Sick

Tom Thornton

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Cooperation with Allies.* Mr. Newsom reviewed the results of Mr. Christopher's consultations in Europe thus far. In general, the prospects of imposing sanctions on Iran do not look promising. The British are taking a firm line that they lack the legal authority to do it, and it is also evident that they do not believe politically that the sanctions will be effective. State is working on a spread sheet of what the allies are doing and what they are likely to do—both on Iran and with regard to the Soviet Union.² (S)

Treasury will circulate today draft regulations on our own legal steps on sanctions. Mr. Christopher believes that publication of our own regulations could be marginally helpful to him in his efforts with the Europeans. The group discussed the desirability of including extra-territorial scope in our own regulations. This is a sensitive point with the Europeans and is likely to bring us into direct conflict with them if we attempt to extend our own regulations to cover the activities of U.S. subsidiaries abroad. A committee composed of Treasury, State, Commerce and Agriculture will meet today to analyze the effects of actions by U.S. subsidiaries on sanctions and the steps we can best take to increase the effectiveness of our own actions.³ (C)

The SCC generally believed that our best approach would be to call in the principal companies and inform them that it is U.S. policy to deny shipments to Iran and that we will publicize activities by U.S. subsidiaries which are not consistent with that policy. Mr. Claytor felt

² The spreadsheet, "Economic Measures Related to Iran and Afghanistan: Draft #1—January 15, 1980 AM," is attached to a January 15 memorandum from Tarnoff to Brzezinski. Under headings "Afghan Trade Measures" and "Informal Measures," the spreadsheet was divided into columns labeled "US Action," "US Request," and "Foreign Reaction." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P800026-1153)

³ Carter wrote in the right margin beside this paragraph: "Be aggressive. Europeans need US pressure." The sense of the January 15 meeting was that foreign subsidiaries of U.S. firms be excluded from the regulations for sanctions against Iran because to include them would raise old issues with U.S. European allies on the influence of U.S. multinationals on their domestic economies and politics. The meeting attendees also determined to postpone any decision until Christopher and Cooper weighed in. (Memorandum from Odom to Brzezinski and Aaron, January 15; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Agency File, Box 22, Treasury Department 3/79-3/80)

that this would be 90 percent effective and would avoid the confrontational aspects of attempting to extend the reach of our domestic regulations. (C)

Secretary Miller noted that the sanctions are showing results in at least some cases. He cited a request from the National Iranian Gas Company which is “desperate” to purchase \$3.5 million in equipment which is necessary to keep a \$1.7 billion project going. We are, of course, not going to agree, but Treasury is asking for additional information to try to identify the project and the precise type of equipment which is needed.⁴ (C)

2. *Economic Warfare*. Mr. Aaron noted that Henry Owen is heading a small group to do an analysis of how we are equipped to conduct economic warfare. We need more coordination in this area. The group will be in touch with the various agencies, with the objective of having some results which can be presented to the President within the week. (S)

Secretary Bergland agreed that it would be useful to call in the major U.S. grain traders and warn them about cooperating in trading activities in third countries which would circumvent our policy. He said that this would only be effective if he could threaten to publicize any untoward activity on their part. The SCC agreed that publicizing such activity would be entirely consistent with our policy and he should not hesitate to so inform the grain traders.⁵ (S)

3. *Congressional Strategy*. With Congress coming back next week, the public attention to our actions on Iran and Afghanistan will increase sharply. Mr. Aaron asked that State complete the work on the aid package for Pakistan and have it ready to go at the first of the week. By the end of this week, we should begin a systematic briefing of returning members of congress and key staff aides.⁶ State and NSC will work closely together on this. (C)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

6. *Public Posture*. The working group which met yesterday under Jerry Schecter to examine possible themes to use in our public positions has tasked several areas of research. CIA is preparing a paper on the background and identities of some of the student kidnappers which can be used publicly. State and CIA are also doing a paper on the vulnerability and isolation of Iran and their deteriorating economic situation in the face of economic sanctions. CIA is doing a paper which

⁴ Carter wrote in the right margin beside this paragraph: “Block other sources if possible.”

⁵ Carter wrote “do so” in the right margin beside the last sentence of this paragraph.

⁶ Carter wrote “good” in the right margin.

will examine the chronology of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the actions the Soviets have taken thus far on Iran with the Tudeh Party, past involvement with the Kurds and Azerbaijanis, etc. The theme would be that the Soviets are the real enemy of Iran and that they may be preparing to move there next. Another CIA paper will examine the persecution and exploitation of Moslem minorities in the Soviet Union itself. There was a discussion of how to play the story regarding the presence of Soviet troops on the Iranian border with Afghanistan. It was agreed that we could publicly note that we are aware of Soviet forces deployed in that area, including some elements along the border directly. We would not speculate on the objectives of these forces. (C)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

149. Memorandum by the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of State (Oxman)¹

Washington, January 15, 1980

SUBJECT

MEETING WITH SHAH'S REPRESENTATIVES

1. Lloyd Cutler and I met today at the Metropolitan Club with Robert Armao, advisor to the former Shah of Iran, and William Jackson, the former Shah's attorney. Armao and Jackson had requested the meeting for the purpose of discussing certain aspects of the Shah's stay in Panama. The meeting lasted from 1:15 p.m. until 2:40 p.m.

2. Armao returned from Panama on Sunday, Jan 13, 1980. He had been there with the Shah continuously since the Shah's arrival in Panama on December 15, 1979, except for an 8-day period over Christmas. Two of Armao's assistants—Mr. Mark Morse and Mr. John McMurray—have also been in Panama for most or all of the period since December 15.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: Vol. 5, the Shah, Panama Jan–March 1980. Secret; Sensitive. In the upper right margin, an unknown hand wrote: "DDN—FYI."

3. Armao began by complaining that Ambler Moss' cable reporting Armao's recent meeting with Moss,² had been leaked, and had led to unfortunate press stories about the Shah's dissatisfaction with conditions in Panama. Armao claimed that an ABC representative, who was in Panama in connection with the David Frost interview of the Shah,³ told him that the cable had leaked to ABC's bureau in Washington. Armao said the Shah was very upset by the news stories that resulted from this alleged leak. Armao requested that our meeting today be kept completely confidential.

4. Lloyd responded that he doubted very much that the cable had been leaked and that of course our meeting today would be kept confidential.

5. Armao asserted that the conditions under which the Shah and his party were living in are generally unsatisfactory. He said all of their phone calls are listened to by Panamanian security personnel. (The phone system the U.S. Government had helped install is still in place, Armao said, but it is a VHF radio phone and therefore is not secure). Further, Armao complained that the bills that have been presented to him by the Panamanian security personnel are excessively high and that when he complained about them, the security personnel have, in general, rudely rejected his questions and requests. He asserted the security personnel, from the lowest to the highest levels, have been "nasty" to him and the other Americans in the Shah's party. He conceded that the Shah and his wife have been treated extremely cordially in all respects by all of the involved Panamanians.

6. Armao seemed particularly upset that the Panamanians had recently prevailed upon the Shah to travel to Panama City at 10:00 pm at night for the purpose of staying overnight at the Panama Hilton before looking at houses around Panama City the next day. Armao claimed he had insisted on accompanying the Shah but that his request had been rejected. He conceded that the Shah ultimately decided that he would go alone.

7. Armao claimed that Col. Noriega, the head of the Intelligence Service in Panama, had complained to the Shah about Armao and his two assistants. They were agents of the State Department, were disloyal, were security risks, and ought to be asked to leave. Armao asserted that Noriega has been trying to drive a wedge probably because he

² See footnote 7, Document 139.

³ Portions of Frost's interview with the Shah in Panama aired January 17. The Shah attributed his ouster from power to two U.S. oil companies, to an international conspiracy to increase oil prices, and to personal betrayal and intrigue by close friends and Huyser. He also rejected allegations his regime engaged in torture. (Dusko Doder, "Shah Calls Ouster Part of a Scheme To Lift Oil Prices," *Washington Post*, January 18, 1980, p. A1)

thinks that with Armao out of the way no one at the Shah's party will complain about the bills and other financial issues. Armao said the Shah told Noriega that he could not do without Armao. Noriega then dropped the issue, according to Armao.

8. Armao's other complaints included the following:

—the hotel bills for the security personnel are inflated and these personnel are charging various luxuries to the Shah's account;

—a large number of expensive items (such as silver flatware) have been ordered for the house, without consultation with Armao or the Shah, and the bills have been presented to Armao;

—the hotel bill has included a charge of \$10,000 for two small "shacks" on the property where the Shah is staying (Gabriel Lewis property), even though these structures have no apparent connection with the hotel;

—Armao's access to the Shah has been impeded.

9. Bill Jackson said that in addition to these annoying "local problems" on Contadora, there was the more troubling issue of whether Torrijos intended to extradite the Shah.

10. Lloyd said that as to the "local problems" it would make sense for the Shah to raise them with Torrijos or President Royo, since his relations with them, according to Armao, are excellent.

11. Armao interjected that the local problems seem to have gotten very much better in recent days after he had brought some of his complaints to the attention of General Torrijos' doctor (whom Torrijos had made available to the Shah for medical consultation). Moreover, Armao went on, now that he has left Panama and intends to stay in New York for some weeks, he thinks the friction with Noriega and his personnel will diminish considerably.

12. On the issue of extradition, Lloyd stated that we do not see any risk of Torrijos allowing extradition to occur. Not only is it not legally possible, in view of the absence of an Extradition Treaty between Panama and Iran, but it would be contrary to the assurances we received before the Shah left for Panama. Lloyd noted that President Carter had recently said publicly that he would not permit the extradition of the Shah. Armao conceded that Royo had told the Shah that Panama would deal with the Iranian extradition request in accordance with Panamanian legal procedures, and would then deny the request.

13. The larger problem, Armao said, is that "we simply cannot trust Torrijos". Jackson said he agreed, that the situation was "insecure" and that "somehow there has got to be another place" Armao complained that of the 80 security personnel assigned to the Shah, the overwhelming majority are blacks who are not literate. Lloyd noted that our original understanding was that the Panamanians would pro-

vide all three rings of security at the outset, but that the Shah was free to bring in his own private security personnel as the inner ring whenever he wished. Armao said Col. Giambini (the Iranian Colonel who is the Shah's principal security advisor) has advised against doing this, since the private personnel would be Americans and there would be friction between them and the Panamanians.

14. I said that the problems troubling Armao seemed to arise for the most part from an excess of security caution by the Panamanian security personnel. I said it is understandable that they do not want to run any risks with respect to the Shah's safety. Armao conceded that "the security is excellent".

15. Armao said there is another major problem on the horizon. He explained that in three weeks the Shah must go into a hospital for tests. General Torrijos' doctor had said it would not be politically acceptable in Panama if the Shah were to go to the American Military Hospital (Gorgas) rather than the leading Panamanian hospital in Panama City (Piatilla). Armao said Gorgas is clearly preferable, with superior facilities and staff. I asked whether there are objective reasons why the Shah's doctors from New York would be able to function more efficiently and effectively at Gorgas. Armao said there were such reasons, and I urged that these reasons be used in discussion with the Panamanians so as not to injure their pride. Lloyd suggested the possibility of dividing the tests between the two hospitals or some similar approach.

16. With respect to the Shah's medical condition, Armao says the size of the Shah's spleen has diminished somewhat and that his "blood count" is holding reasonably stable. He said that the prognosis for the Shah is that his cancer could at anytime metastasize and lead quickly to death. The doctors' best guess, Armao said, is that the Shah has perhaps another two to three years, but they readily concede that the period could be much less.

17. Armao said that the Shah's wife is extremely unhappy in Panama. He noted that the visit of the Shah's children over the Christmas vacation went extremely well and thanked us for assisting on the travel arrangements.

18. Armao asked whether the Afghanistan crisis may have led to a change in Chancellor Kreisky's unwillingness to accept the Shah. Lloyd said he would guess not. Jackson asked whether there is another country to which the Shah could go. Lloyd said we knew of none and that we had certainly checked throughout the world. Jackson said, "we want to get the Shah out of Panama as soon as possible", but acknowledged that no other possibilities appear ripe at this time.

19. Armao reiterated that he did not trust Torrijos. He said that deep down, he worries that "they're trying to get their hands on the

Shah's 'billions'". He said that while no one has specially asked the Shah to invest in Panama, Gabriel Lewis has offered the Shah financial advice, and he suspects that the Panamanians will become more specific over time.

20. Lloyd said he would review the points that had been made with Hamilton Jordan.⁴ He reiterated that his instinct was that the Shah should raise the "local" problems with Torrijos and/or Royo, or even Lewis.

21. Jackson asked what the USG's position is on the "Waldheim proposal" concerning a tribunal to hear charges against the Shah and the United States. Lloyd said we are prepared to go along with some such formula provided the hostages are released before any tribunal begins its proceedings. Jackson inquired as to the legal foundation for any such tribunal. Lloyd responded that the Secretary General has authority to appoint committees or commissions to look into various matters or interests, and that the only nation in a position to object to any inquiry into its internal affairs (Iran) was unlikely to do so.

22. Armao raised two housekeeping problems. He said the private security personnel protecting the Shah's children in the U.S. need a special radio frequency. Lloyd asked that Armao put this request in a letter and said we would pass it along to Henry Geller at Commerce. Second, Armao asked for the status of the visa applications by family members or individuals in the Shah's entourage. Jackson cut in to say that Rocky Suddarth on David Newsom's staff and John Dean in Jackson's office were handling these matters and that everything seemed to be in order.

23. Lloyd concluded by saying that we would stand by the commitments we had made in Texas⁵ and that Armao and Jackson should let us know what they would like us to do. Armao responded that the Shah does not want us to raise any of the foregoing problems with the Panamanians. Armao said he wanted to emphasize this point to us. Lloyd said we would not do so unless Armao requested it. Armao said that it might be helpful if Hamilton Jordan could ask General Torrijos on the phone "how things are going" with the Shah. Armao said there was nothing else that he or the Shah want us to do at this time. Jackson also said that "we" (i.e. the Shah's representatives) are going to look quietly into alternative countries, but did not ask our help.

24. Armao and Jackson said they were very grateful for the opportunity to meet with us and would be back in touch as the situation develops.

⁴ See Document 144.

⁵ See Document 98.

150. Memorandum for the Record by Henry Precht, Iran Working Group¹

Washington, January 15, 1980, 3:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Richard Cottam Conversation with Farhang and Ghotbzadeh

I asked Cottam to explore with Farhang and Ghotbzadeh whether they thought there were still opportunities to move towards a settlement in the light of the vote on sanctions and the presidential campaign in Tehran.

Farhang was very pessimistic. He told Cottam that the improved atmosphere that had been created with Waldheim's visit was smashed by the vote on sanctions and would have to be recreated. Perhaps if an investigating team were to go to Tehran the atmosphere could begin to improve.

Farhang said that the American problem was that we were rational. An additional complication was Waldheim who shared our views and was not forceful in presenting the Iranian point of view.

Another difficulty was our failure to understand that a "package deal" was not possible. We would simply not be able to devise a complete agreement and present it to Khomeini for approval. Khomeini doesn't think in terms of trade-offs or bargaining. Cottam agreed with me that we might be able to work out a package deal with the Revolutionary Council, but in doing so we would have no assurance that Khomeini would buy it as a package. It might have to be presented to him by the Council in stages.

Farhang thought that nothing could be accomplished in Iran until after the elections. Bani-Sadr was the front runner and he would be prepared to seek a solution. During the period until the elections the only useful thing the US could do was to reduce the level of rhetoric and try to control the press. The ejection of the U.S. press from Iran would be helpful.

Farhang said that a French and an Argentinian lawyer were working on extradition in Panama.² The Iranians were clearly thinking of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Precht and cleared in S/S–O. Copies were sent to S, D, P, NEA, Sick (NSC), [name not declassified] (CIA), and the Iran Working Group.

² Villalon and Bourguet.

a trial, not actual extradition. They hoped the U.S. would not block their plans. He offered to give Cottam further details later.

Farhang summed up saying that U.S. impatience on sanctions had destroyed the atmosphere. The issue of the timing of release of hostages and the wording of a resolution could have been worked out if Waldheim had been more forceful in presenting Iranian views. Those two issues should not have proved to be obstacles in reaching a settlement. The U.S. must realize, however, that in any deal there would be a large element of risk that it might be rejected by Khomeini.

Ghotbzadeh's mood was completely different from Farhang's. He told Cottam that the crisis could be solved in one week. It would not be solved at one swoop, but there would have to be movement day by day. Cottam said it was clear that Ghotbzadeh was counting on a settlement to advance his own presidential ambitions. Cottam asked what the U.S. should do. Ghotbzadeh replied that he was sending letters to European countries. He hoped the U.S. would help assure that the replies were favorable. Cottam speculated that the letters might request the Europeans to hold off on sanctions. If the Europeans agreed to do so there might be another opportunity for pushing for a settlement with Ghotbzadeh.

Cottam asked Ghotbzadeh about plans for Panama extradition. Ghotbzadeh merely said we are "continuing with that." He did not seem particularly interested in Panama in this conversation. The conversation, which had taken Ghotbzadeh out of one meeting, ended when he was called away to something more urgent. He clearly wanted to continue with Cottam and said he would telephone him later.

COMMENT: Cottam and I speculated that presidential politics may influence the views of Farhang and Ghotbzadeh. Ghotbzadeh seems to be counting on a settlement to the crisis on his terms to advance his fortunes. Farhang, who strongly dislikes Ghotbzadeh, may be just as happy to see the opportunity for a settlement deferred until his favorite, Bani-Sadr, is elected president.

151. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 15, 1980

RE

SITUATION WITH THE HOSTAGES

I didn't really state to you in a completely frank way either my own assessment of the situation as relates to Panamanian involvement in the hostage negotiations or all of the things that were said to me.² I understated what was said to me because I questioned whether it was true and it sounded too self-serving.

Let me give it to you straight. Ghotbzedeh made no bones about the fact that he wanted to go to Panama to "act out the extradition charade" as soon as possible. He said that he had two specific motives: to obtain some good publicity for himself before the national elections and also to meet with me (secretly of course) on the subject of the hostages.

I discounted in my own thinking and in the report that I sent you a lot of what was said to me about both my own role in this matter and the significance of the contact between the Panamanians and the Foreign Minister. I attributed a lot of this to Ghotbzedeh's despair that his own campaign is not going well and he is looking for some way to dominate the news and get favorable attention this last week before his national election. And, of course, we don't know if this talk of going to Panama and meeting secretly with me is something that he wants/hopes to do unilaterally or something about which Khomeini has general knowledge. Also, when told about all of this and particularly the "critical role" that the Panamanians described to me, I strongly suspected that they were simply trying to flatter me.

So, my inclination to discount quite a bit all that I heard as relates to my own role in this and Ghotbzedeh's desire to meet with me personally was offset by Hal Saunders' attitude and by the memcon of Richard Cottam's conversation with the Foreign Minister³ in which he confirmed that he had seen the Panamanians, that he thought that they were an important channel and that we should send the "same

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 1/80. Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² See Document 144.

³ Document 145.

man" down there. At that point, I began to take all that I had heard about the Panamanians and even my own role in this a bit more seriously. Both Hal Saunders and I agree that we have no choice but to keep the Panamanian channel open and nurture it. As he says, the UN channel could close up or something could develop in the Panamanian channel—"we have pursued vigorously and seriously leads that were on the surface much less substantial than this one".

Probably Ghotbzedeh will not be elected and we will be dealing with an entire new cast of characters. Even if he fails to win the election, there is always the chance that Khomeini will insist that he continue as Foreign Minister and/or as the person to try to resolve the hostage situation.

Even if we assume on the frontend that nothing will come of the Panamanian channel, it is in our own interest to keep them generally informed and involved as they have one very critical piece of the puzzle—the Shah.

The few times that I have been actively involved in foreign policy matters—the Panama Canal Treaty, the Mideast arms package, the Middle East, etc.—I have bent overboard to operate in tandem with the State Department, usually with Warren Christopher. But I got the distinct impression from Cy on my latest trip that the Panamanian contact was not serious, that he is suspicious of Torrijos and that the whole thing was resented because it had been done out of here and by me. In reaction to that, I got Ambler Moss involved, passing a message from you to Torrijos through him. Cy insisted that I restate in that message the fact that we assumed that we continued to have their firm commitment not to extradite the Shah.⁴

My only point in telling you all of this is that there is absolutely nothing to be lost by keeping the Panamanians generally informed and involved in this process. I don't have the time or inclination to fool with this, but it is going to require someone at a high level treating it in a serious way. To date, that has not happened.

I have spent a lot of time in the past few days thinking about the hostage situation. I really haven't given it much thought in human terms for the past few weeks. I know that it is a heavy personal burden for you and Cy. I have no wife or children, and should the time come that you needed someone to take considerable personal risks in pursu-

⁴ Jordan had given Carter's message to Moss by telephone, and Moss then relayed the President's message to Torrijos and Royo, January 13. Torrijos dictated a "note verbale" in which he expressed Panama's desire to be more involved in UN deliberations and reiterated his promise that the Shah would not be extradited. (Telegram 352 from Panama, January 14; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870108-1025; N800001-0663) The text of Carter's message is not repeated in the telegram.

ing any of these leads or possibilities, I would be willing to do it. I have thought about this a lot and am serious about it.

Please return this to me in an envelope.

152. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 16, 1980, 9–9:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran and Pakistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
David Newsom
Dean Hinton

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
Graham Claytor

CIA

Frank Carlucci

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

Treasury

Secretary William Miller
Robert Carswell

Energy

John Sawhill

Justice

John Shenefield

Agriculture

James Williams (Deputy Secretary)

White House

Jody Powell
Lloyd Cutler
Hedley Donovan
Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

William Odom
Gary Sick
Thomas Thornton

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Iran Sanctions.* The President approved the recommendations of the SCC on January 14 to issue a declaration on U.S. sanctions to be adopted against Iran, drawing authority both from the UNSC vote and the emergency economic powers.² Treasury said they were prepared to issue the regulations immediately, but had held up at Mr. Christopher's

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² The Summary of Conclusions is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 98, Meetings File, 1/14/80 SCC re Iran. Reference is to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, passed on October 28, 1977.

request that the regulations not be issued until after his return from Europe this evening. The SCC agreed that it would review the regulations and the declaration at the meeting tomorrow, probably for issuance later in the day. The one remaining issue of contention within the government is the extent of extraterritoriality to be built into the regulations.³ (C)

2. *Iranian Assets.* The President also approved the SCC recommendation that Treasury be permitted to immunize from attachment new Iranian funds brought into the country to cover the obligations of companies such as Iran Air, NIOC and the Iranian Shipping Company. Treasury will proceed.⁴ (U)

3. *Economic Warfare.* Dr. Brzezinski noted that he had asked Henry Owen to head a small group to examine what is required to carry out the kind of economic warfare in which we are increasingly engaged. The group will be asked to make its initial report to the SCC on Friday.⁵ (S)

4. *Cooperation by Allies.* Secretary Vance circulated a spread sheet showing the various actions in the economic sphere which we have taken, what we have requested of our allies, and what their response has been. The paper is attached.⁶ At this time, the foreign response must be treated as preliminary since it does not have the benefit of Warren Christopher's talks in Europe except for the indications we have received from message reporting. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if the U.S. should do something more dramatic to galvanize the allies into action. Secretary Brown observed that, in his view, the Europeans might take actions together but not separately. Their public opinion was out ahead of the governments themselves, and we could perhaps shame them into doing more. He cautioned, however, that taking some public action without an assurance of results could hurt more than it helps by dramatizing the absence of European cooperation. This could then be exploited by the Soviets.

³ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Europeans a disappointment on Iran & Afghanistan—We must maintain leadership. We should push in every case to the limit that is practical. Even if allies are discomfited."

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "What about Japan? See *NY Times* p. 1 & *W. Post* A19." The articles covered Japan's decision to oppose the imposition of economic sanctions against Iran and the USSR, and its fear of retaliatory oil cuts if it sided with the United States. (Reference is presumably to Henry Scott Stokes, "Japan Indicates It Would Not Join In Trade Curbs on Iran and Soviet," *New York Times*, January 17, 1980, p. A1, and Dusko Doder, "Europe, Japan Warned By Iran About Sanctions," *Washington Post*, January 17, 1980, p. A18)

⁵ January 18.

⁶ The spreadsheet, "Economic Measures Related to Iran and Afghanistan: Draft #2—January 15, 1980 PM," is attached but not printed. For Draft #1, see footnote 2, Document 148.

Dr. Brzezinski agreed that this should be the number one item⁷ on the agenda of the SCC tomorrow, once we have the benefit of Mr. Christopher's report. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski added that the French are uncharacteristically apologetic about their position, while the British seem prepared to be cooperative on the Soviet issue. Secretary Brown wondered if we could ask their cooperation on Indian Ocean security measures. Secretary Vance noted that we have had some indications of interest, but that the British would not wish to make any decisions on this until Lord Carrington returns from his visit to the Gulf. (S)

Secretary Vance felt that nothing which was currently under way on the negotiating front should prohibit us from pressing ahead with economic sanctions. He noted that a recent message from Bruce Laingen via one of the ambassadors in Tehran argued the same way.⁸ It was the judgment of the group that there was merit in keeping up the pressure on the economic side. However, Secretary Miller noted that the Iranian Central Bank has now gotten its house in order and is being punctilious in its interest payments, so the prospects of loan default provisions have, in fact, been overcome. The Iranians need no new credits because of their substantial oil revenues, so our pressure on credits is also having little or no effect. We must be realistic in understanding that our own embargo efforts will have very little practical effect unless we get the cooperation of at least the major industrialized states. Secretary Vance said that we had understood from the outset that the psychological impact of sanctions would be more important than the economic impact. Secretary Miller observed that the psychological impact is likely to be reversed if and when the story gets out that Iran is proceeding on a business-as-usual basis. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski reported the President's comment on the notes of yesterday's meeting that we should be aggressive and that the Europeans need U.S. pressure.⁹ Secretary Miller noted that he will be meeting with five of the European finance ministers in the near future, but it

⁷ Carter underlined the phrase "number one item" and wrote in the left margin: "I agree."

⁸ A January 15 message from the British Embassy in Washington transmitted the text of telegram 3 from Tehran, January 14, for passage to the Iran Task Force at the Operations Center. Telegram 3 is the text of a message given by Laingen to Lang "for transmission to Iran Working Party." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel) In a memorandum to Vance, Brzezinski wrote that after reading this telegram, Carter agreed "on the importance, psychologically as well as tactically, of moving promptly with unilateral sanctions with the broadest possible allied support." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80)

⁹ See footnote 3, Document 148.

was only a high, political-level decision which would have any real effect. Dr. Brzezinski observed that, on the basis of some talks he had yesterday, the one thing which seems to get their attention is the risk of U.S. unilateral action. We can also publicize instances in which U.S. companies and perhaps other countries are evading or circumventing our policy. He noted that the President had concurred with the SCC recommendation to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to publicize offenders, noting that we should "block other sources if possible" on grain transfers. Mr. Cutler noted that Luther Hodges was conducting a survey of major U.S. companies to see what their overseas operations were likely to be and to make our policy position clear. Secretary Miller felt that we would find most American companies already in compliance with the policy and prepared to be cooperative. Secretary Vance cautioned that we should be very careful about publicizing unhelpful actions by other countries since we could create the impression that our policy is not working. (S)

5. *Implementation Group.* Dr. Brzezinski noted that much of the effort of the SCC recently had been occupied with questions of implementation of economic policies. It was essential to have close coordination on these issues, but in the meantime we should also be thinking about our longer term strategy and next steps. He proposed that a separate Implementation Coordination Group be formed which would meet in parallel with the SCC. This group could look at public posture, the nature of the sanctions, and how to put teeth into our efforts. The group should include State (Warren Christopher), Defense (Graham Claytor), Treasury, CIA, and NSC (Henry Owen). Secretary Miller offered to host the meetings at Treasury. (It was subsequently decided that the first meeting should be held at the White House.)¹⁰ (C)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

¹⁰ At their first meeting, the group discussed their mandate, whether the SCC would take economic decisions without the guidance of the Implementation/Coordination Group, and economic issues related to Iran and Pakistan. (Minutes of SCC Implementation/Coordination Group meeting, January 18; Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 108)

153. Memorandum From the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Bremer) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, January 17, 1980

SUBJECT

Your Breakfast with the President Friday, January 18, 1980

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

6. *Iran.*

(a) *Status of Sanctions.* Chris and Dick² found two causes for the European reaction on sanctions: (1) With varying degrees of emphasis, they argued they could not impose sanctions under their existing law and that going to parliaments would be difficult; (2) they questioned the efficacy of economic sanctions at the present time and the advantage this might give the Soviets. All indicated, however, they would continue informal financial and oil measures. And Genscher has now told us that the Germans have decided to impose on their own a range of sanctions.

Dick Cooper recommends we should not press for full implementation of the UN sanctions resolution. In the end, we will not succeed; and we could generate considerable ill will in the process, at a time in which we need to reinforce and demonstrate our solidarity. Dick also believes, however, we can enlist European cooperation in an embargo on exports of manufactured goods (excluding those related to outstanding contracts) if we are willing to push hard enough. If we decide to push ahead with this, we will need to mount a major negotiating effort encompassing Japan, Canada and the smaller European countries as well as the major European countries, and encompassing for political reasons some Third World countries as well. The last point is especially important to the French.³

(b) *Study of Soviet/U.S. Options.* You may wish to tell the President that the Department has begun an urgent, but extremely close-held, study of possible Soviet options for intervention, political and military,

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980. Secret; Sensitive. A stamped notation in the upper right corner reads: "CV."

² Warren Christopher and Richard Cooper.

³ Tab 2, "Economic Measures Related to Iran and Afghanistan: Draft #3—January 16, 1980 PM," is attached but not printed. The spreadsheet is appended to a section of the memorandum dealing with allied reaction to Afghanistan.

into Iran and of possible U.S. countermeasures. A draft of the current outline is attached at Tab 4.⁴

7. *Panama and the Shah*. The two Panamanians—Gabriel Lewis and Rory Gonzalez—are on their way to Tehran following their meeting with Ham Jordan and Hal Saunders Wednesday.⁵ There have been press stories each of the last two mornings indicating exchanges between Royo and Ghotbzadeh, although Royo has not publicly acknowledged that the subject is the extradition of the Shah. In two recent conversations, Dick Cottam has expressed his concern—without our having referred to the Panamanian track—about the increasingly “desperate quality of Ghotbzadeh’s actions.”⁶ Cottam also specifically cited Ghotbzadeh’s desire to begin the extradition trial of the Shah before the elections and his anger that the Panamanians want the hostages released first. Ghotbzadeh said the hostages could be released only after the trial started. Cottam pointed out that Ghotbzadeh is uncertain whether he will have any role in the new government if Bani-Sadr is elected.

It looks as if chances are less than even that the Panamanians will be able to bring off the release of the hostages in this pre-election environment in Iran if they hold to their position. Even if Ghotbzadeh were prepared to try, other Presidential candidates might block him if it seemed he would reap political benefit from that step. Our only course at the moment on this track is to wait for further word from the Panamanians, who will be in Tehran over the weekend.

[Omitted here is information unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

⁴ Tab 4, draft outline, “Possible Soviet Military Moves in Iran,” January 13, is attached but not printed.

⁵ According to Jordan, he, Saunders, Precht, Turner, Sick, and Kirbo met with Lewis and Gonzales in the White House Situation Room on January 16 from 7:30 until 10 a.m. Jordan conveyed to the Panamanians America’s “strong desire” to begin negotiations. Lewis stated that Panama would bow out once negotiations between Iran and the United States had begun. The two Panamanians then left for Paris to meet with Villalon and Bourguet, and from there to Iran. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 110) No other record of this meeting has been found.

⁶ Memorandum of conversation, January 17. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80)

**154. Record of a Special Coordination Committee
Implementation/Coordination Group Meeting¹**

Washington, January 17, 1980, 10 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

<i>State</i>	<i>Energy</i>
Warren Christopher	John Sawhill
Richard Cooper	<i>Justice</i>
Deane Hinton	John Shenefield
<i>OSD</i>	Nelson Dong
W. Graham Claytor, Jr.	Larry Simms
William Perry	<i>Agriculture</i>
<i>Joint Chiefs</i>	Jim Williams
Lt. Gen. Pustay	Howard Hjort
<i>Treasury</i>	<i>White House</i>
Robert Carswell	David Aaron
<i>Commerce</i>	Henry Owen
Homer Meyer	Lloyd Cutler
<i>DCI</i>	Barbara Bergman
[name not declassified]	David Rubenstein
[name not declassified]	<i>NSC</i>
	Tim Deal

Christopher reported on his recent consultations in Europe.

[Omitted here is material on Christopher's consultation on Afghanistan.]

On *Iran*, Christopher said on the whole he was disappointed. The UK will continue to halt all military sales. The British do not accept our proposal that we should proceed "as if" the UN had voted sanctions. They simply don't have the legal authority. But they will continue to do what they have in the past, including informal measures in the banking [sector?] about the desirability of sanctions. The British Embassy in Tehran questions their utility. The Italians will follow the other Europeans, are sympathetic to our position, but concerned about their people. Schmidt understands our "as if" concept and is inclined to cooperate on trade and banking measures *if* Germany has the legal authority. But the Germans doubt the efficacy of sanctions. The French will not be helpful publicly, but are likely to continue banking measures and to prevent military sales. The other allies will not do more than they have in the past. Enforcement of sanctions will only be possible

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 154. Secret. The meeting took place in Room 305 of the Old Executive Office Building.

on an informal basis. Our efforts on Afghanistan have to some extent eclipsed those on Iran. (S)

Cooper summarized: the UK and France have juridical problems. They needed the UN sanctions in order to take national action. The allies generally doubt both the efficacy and political wisdom of sanctions. They will continue to cooperate on an informal basis, and, if pressed, might institute a selective trade embargo. The EC mechanism might furnish the juridical umbrella they all need; the French do not favor this approach. (S)

Christopher noted that his trip was untimely in that it coincided with the UN vote. Still the allies were reviewing their laws. We should continue our efforts but try to keep the debate private. Aaron stressed the President's desire that we emphasize to the allies the importance we attach to these issues. We should stick to the line that our allies are considering appropriate measures, that we are in continuing consultation, and that we are urging them to do what they can. He said that the President was unhappy with European efforts to date. He wants us to push them to the limit, even if uncomfortable and costly. Further, the Japanese must understand that we are upset by their lack of cooperation. We should communicate that point to them before it becomes a domestic political issue. (S)

[Omitted here is material on Pakistan.]

The group then briefly discussed procedures for future meetings. It was agreed to meet daily at 10:00 a.m. (U)

155. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 18, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
David Newsom

Defense

Deputy Secretary Graham Claytor

CIA

Frank Carlucci

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

White House

Jody Powell
Stu Eizenstat*
Denis Clift**

NSC

David Aaron
Gary Sick
William Odom
Thomas Thornton**

* Present for Items 1 and 2 only.

** Not present for final item.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The meeting was largely devoted to a review of where we stand on Iran at the present time and what immediate options are available to us.

1. *Elections.* At the moment, Bani Sadr and Madani appear to be the two strongest candidates. CIA does not believe that Ghotbzadeh has any significant support or national appeal. It is still very possible that Khomeini will identify some other candidate as his personal choice or that the election date will be delayed or both. The signs of in-fighting and chaos within the ruling group are not abating. Much of the apparent “movement” in recent days is probably due only to Ghotbzadeh’s effort to bolster his personal position by a public relations coup of some sort. (S)

2. *Sanctions.* Mr. Christopher felt strongly that nothing which is happening in Iran provides any basis for us to relax our pressure on the Europeans and others to institute effective economic sanctions. We may only be able to get 50–70% of what we would like, but that would still be helpful. The German announcement of support today

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 108. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed “C” in the upper right corner.

was helpful and should lend support to our efforts. The stories (e.g., Gwertzman in the *New York Times*)² which suggest that sanctions are a lost cause should be corrected. Secretary Vance will be seeing the British Ambassador today, and a message from Vance to Carrington may be required to keep up the pressure on the British. The Japanese are primarily concerned about the security of their oil supply, and they are asking again for access to Alaska crude. The Implementation group will look into this, recognizing that we were previously unsuccessful on the Hill. (S)

3. *Military Options.* Mr. Aaron suggested that it might be useful to increase our military activity enough to make the point that we still have other options. This could give the allies an incentive to look harder at economic sanctions as the lesser of two evils. The SCC discussed possibly increasing the level of our naval patrols in the Persian Gulf, possible flights by carrier aircraft into the Persian Gulf, and possible SR-71 overflights of Iran. Mr. Newsom said that any military activity which appeared to be directed against Iran would be a mistake in this period just prior to the elections since it would only tend to heighten the anti-US feeling and unite people behind Khomeini. Instead, he thought it would be preferable to conduct some kind of military operation which could be explained and understood in the Afghanistan context but which would also send a signal to Iran. (S)

General Jones suggested that a B-52 flight into the Indian Ocean to surveil Soviet naval units might be appropriate. The aircraft could fly out of Guam on a long round-robin trip without landing in the area. They could surveil Soviet units and could also link up with the carrier forces in the region. Such a mission could be flown on Sunday and become known on Monday.³ The only obstacle would be the request for overflight clearance from Thailand. In order to avoid premature announcement of the flight, the clearance request would be submitted as a C-5; however, we would go privately to the Thais through our Ambassador and inform them of our intentions and get their approval at the political level. Such a flight would be seen as a major new development by the nations in the region. The Indian reaction would be negative, but the strength of their feeling would depend on how close the aircraft came to their shores.

The SCC unanimously recommended a flight by two B-52s, and the JCS began work immediately to get the clearances in the event the flight was approved. State checked with Secretary Vance immediately

² Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Plans Embargo on Iran on its Own as Allies Shun Idea," *New York Times*, January 18, 1980, p. A9.

³ January 21 and 22.

after the meeting, and he supported the recommendation, on condition that the Thais were informed in advance and approved. (TS)

_____ Approve a flight by two B-52s to the Indian Ocean on Sunday, January 20, conditional on prior approval by Thailand and staying a good distance away from India.⁴

_____ Disapprove

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

8. *Covert Action*. A restricted group heard a brief report from Mr. Carlucci [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. Some new meetings have been held in the past several days, but no report was available yet. Mr. Newsom summarized the questions which are expected in the House Committee next week.⁵ They are interested in the timing of the decision to provide lethal weapons to the insurgents and whether it predated the Soviet invasion. Mr. Carlucci said the date of the Finding⁶ came after the Soviet invasion and we do not discuss with them the details of our decision-making process. There will be questions about the amount of money involved, the nature of the Huyser mission,⁷ and whether the elections in Iran may make any covert action program unnecessary. Mr. Carlucci and Mr. Saunders will work together closely, and in general Mr. Carlucci will lead in responding to the questions in order to avoid getting drawn into a lengthy discussion of policy issues which are outside the purview of the Intelligence Committee. (TS)

⁴ Carter approved this option with a checkmark, initialed "J" beneath the options, and wrote in the right margin: "all but 1st para."

⁵ House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

⁶ See *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XII, Afghanistan, Document 107, footnote 6.

⁷ See footnote 9, Document 91.

156. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 18, 1980

SUBJECT

U.S. Reaction to Possible Soviet Military Intervention in Iran

I see possibly three strategies for dealing with a Soviet military move into Iran in the near future;² none of them are very attractive:

1. *Rapid Escalation to a "CRICON" (Crisis Confrontation).*

We can follow the traditional pattern of 1962 and 1973 of escalating rapidly to the nuclear level and then negotiating de-escalation to a status quo ante-CRICON. You will recall that Kissinger told Sam Huntington and you in the early days of this Administration that we can no longer follow this strategy in light of the Soviet strategic force buildup. The Soviets are in much better shape to maintain domestic cohesion and implement mobilization and civil defense measures required for a credible crisis posture. I find it extremely painful to admit, but we are forced to recognize the strategic and political implications of the new military balance. The PRM-10 CRICON paper, in retrospect, is sharply to the point.³

2. *Contain the Conflict within the Region.*

This strategy would require some upgrading of strategic forces alert levels, but its major military component would be projection of U.S. ground forces and air forces into the region. The only feasible deployment would be as a defense of the Saudi Arabian peninsula. That is what we are "organized" to do and therefore most likely to do successfully. We would have to evoke a Saudi invitation. The next

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 12/79-3/80. Top Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. This memorandum is also printed as Document 258 in *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union.

² In a January 16 memorandum, Welch, Bremont, and Utgoff of the National Security Council Staff informed Brzezinski that they thought a Soviet invasion of Iran could not be stopped without the use of nuclear weapons and that the best U.S. reaction to an invasion was to occupy the southern oilfields or occupy southern Iran in concert with Iraq. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 1/80-3/80)

³ PRM-10, "Comprehensive Net Assessment and Military Force Posture Review," February 18, 1977. (Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Boxes 28-31)

steps would involve combining military efforts with other states such as Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, and Israel, if they were willing. By remaining on the western side of the Persian Gulf, we would avoid an early direct engagement between U.S. and Soviet ground forces in which we would be defeated. To make our deployment credible in the weeks and months to follow, a major conventional force mobilization in the U.S. would have to occur. Follow-on deployments up to field army in size, i.e., several corps, might soon be required.

The response of our allies in Europe and Japan would be critical. They might abandon us.

This strategy could lead to at least four outcomes which are unattractive. *First*, a stalemate and a prolonged period—years—of large U.S. force deployments in the region facing Soviet forces in Iran. *Second*, a stalemate followed by erosion and forced withdrawal. We could find ourselves with large forces deployed in an environment which is politically hostile, i.e., our allies are equivocating in Europe and our allies in the region prefer accommodation to the Soviets than war together with us against the Soviets. *Third*, direct conflicts between U.S. and Soviet forces in the Euphrates Valley could lead to a general war, including Europe (Berlin, a Soviet limited offensive into Germany with peace overtures to France, *et alia.*) *Fourth*, a direct U.S.-Soviet ground force conflict in which the U.S. is defeated and unable to sustain a regional presence.

3. *A Strategic Retirement followed by a Major Long-Term U.S. Buildup.*

We would not project U.S. ground forces into the region. We would encourage local ground forces, i.e., Iraqi, Pakistani, and any other volunteers, to move into southern Iran to establish a defensive line north of the oil-producing areas. We would provide some sea- and land-based air to deter or defeat Soviet air. We would be prepared to retreat if the regional forces could not hold. Meanwhile, we would begin a major military reconstruction program at home and a long-term buildup. We would ask the same of our allies in Europe and the Far East.

Some version of the second alternative is the maximum strategy we could prudently pursue. We would put less strain on the Alliance and improve the long-term buildup possibilities by some version of the third strategy.

The course of action which is both *feasible* and probably *most attractive* to you is a rapid U.S. force deployment (possibly including some NATO forces) into the Saudi Arabian peninsula with the aim of dividing the region down the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf *without* combat between U.S. and Soviet forces.

157. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State and the White House¹

London, January 20, 1980, 0028Z

1314. Eyes Only for the President, Secretary Vance, Dr. Brzezinski From Jordan and Saunders. Subject: Meeting With Panamanians.²

1. Secret–Entire text.

2. Summary. We met all morning with our Panamanian contacts and one of the French lawyers with whom the Panamanians have been dealing and all afternoon also with the second who had just arrived mid-day from Tehran.³ The morning conversation focused on the dynamics of the present situation in Iran. The afternoon talk concentrated on efforts to find a resolution. Both seemed straightforward in stating the authority for their talk—the concurrence of Ghotbzadeh and three other members of the Revolutionary Council but not of the Council as a body. We explained clearly why it is necessary to have a scenario that begins with release of the hostages. They explained why the political situation in Iran makes it possible only to proceed in stages so as to prepare public opinion. Privately we concluded that some scenario combining some elements of both approaches—including early release of the hostages—might be necessary, but we told them we had no authority to go beyond our present position. They had no authority to present any new position from Tehran. On the basis of our conversation, they called Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh from the residence. He clearly regarded our coming here as a significant signal and recognized the need to demonstrate Iran’s own seriousness. Our two French contacts decided to return to Tehran and, at our urging, to tell Ghotbzadeh that the most serious signal he could send would be to designate someone to negotiate directly with us. End summary.

3. Following are the most interesting points that came out in the conversation.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Jan 1980. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. A handwritten note at the top of the page reads: “DDN [Newsom]—URGENT.”

² The meeting took place the morning of Saturday, January 19, in London at the home of Deputy Chief of Mission Edward Streater. According to Jordan, he and Saunders reported the meeting to Carter and Vance on their return to Washington late Sunday evening, January 20. (Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 114–118)

³ Rory Gonzales, Gabriel Lewis, Hector Villalon, and Christian Bourguet. Bourguet arrived mid-meeting. Bourguet and Villalon are referred to as the “two lawyers” or “French contacts.”

4. The two lawyers involved had been close to the Iranian exile group for some time, particularly to the Khomeini group in Paris during the revolution. One is himself a political exile from Argentina. The other is a lawyer with human rights interests. He is a partner of Charon, with whom we were in touch earlier, and has been associated earlier with Amnesty International. Both probably have financial interests with the Iranian Government. The one who had just come from Tehran said he had seen Ghotbzadeh and Habibi (spokesman for the Revolutionary Council). He says what he presented is also backed by Chamran and Tabatabai. Ghotbzadeh did not see, but spoke to Khomeini's son (Ahmad) and son-in-law. The Frenchman believed Khomeini is aware of the contact. He said he could not repeat not say the Revolutionary Council as a body was aware of our meeting, although some members are. We believe he had these contacts, but it is apparent that he is mainly representing a small group of individuals including Ghotbzadeh.

5. The discussion focused in almost separate segments on two main elements of a possible settlement.

A. On extradition, the lawyer just in from Tehran began by saying that the release of the hostages would have to await a final decision in the Panamanian courts on the extradition of the Shah. When the Panamanians present made clear the Shah would not be extradited and when we eventually turned to other elements of a settlement, he indicated that it might be enough if progress was being made on the other track (below) and for the extradition proceedings to have begun. But he never fully retreated from his initial description of Iran's position. (He did state that the Council did not expect or want the Shah back.) In this discussion, the Panamanians made it clear they would cooperate on extradition only to the extent that beginning extradition proceedings might contribute to creating an atmosphere in which the hostages could be released.

B. On the formation of an international commission, Ghotbzadeh has either misunderstood or misrepresented what they "agreed" with Waldheim when he was in Tehran. The Iranians apparently chose to believe that the international commission would be formed shortly after Waldheim's return to New York. They say they are still waiting. Ghotbzadeh's version of what they told Waldheim is this: Waldheim would form the commission, and the Iranians would respond by saying they accept the principle of releasing the hostages. After the commission reports, the hostages could be released. We explained our position that the hostages should be released simultaneously with the appointment of the commission but our recognition that there might have to be a series of steps by which each side tested the other's readiness to move toward a settlement.

6. Following our conversation, they called Ghotbzadeh from the residence. The Foreign Minister was reluctant to have a direct conversation but realized the need for him to demonstrate their seriousness. The two lawyers are going to Tehran Sunday.⁴ We said that it would be useful for Ghotbzadeh to say publicly that the Iranian Government wants an early peaceful resolution of the hostage problem but more important it would be a sign of seriousness if he would designate someone to negotiate directly with a U.S. representative. They agreed to urge continuation of the dialogue in this way. If that is impossible, we said contact through a third party is better than no contact at all. If they decide to designate a negotiator, they will send his name through today's channel and have him contact Hal.

7. Among the interesting points of general information raised were these:

A. Ghotbzadeh reports that a decision is now being considered on delaying the date of the Presidential election, and a decision will be made by Sunday night. One reason is that, with Farsi dropping out of the race, the Islamic Party wants a chance for a new candidate to have time to campaign.

B. The central political contest in Iran is between the religious elements and what they called the "European group," i.e. those like Ghotbzadeh who were with Khomeini in Europe. They described the takeover of our Embassy as designed by Ayatollah Khalkhali and his followers to force the revolution toward the religious right. Khomeini had countered by introducing all political elements into the compound to the point where even Khalkhali no longer saw advantage in keeping the hostages.

C. The Frenchmen reported that in the recent meeting between Khomeini and representatives of the captors, Khomeini told them that Laingen would not be turned over to them and that they had to begin preparing themselves for resolution of the hostage problem. Khomeini is reported to have told them he did not want anyone hurt because the honor of their nation is at stake.

8. The general and specific information provided by the two Frenchmen either reinforced our own analysis and information or shed new light on some dimension of the problem in Iran. And while there is good reason to believe that the Frenchmen's primary personal relationship is with Ghotbzadeh, their political and financial interests and their history of working with the group that had been in exile with Khomeini would leave them in the posture of wanting to help resolve the crisis regardless of who is elected President. If someone other than Ghotbza-

⁴ January 20.

deh is elected President, these men could still play a constructive role in communicating with the government.

Brewster

158. Memorandum From Robert Blackwill of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 20, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran, Afghanistan and the Allies (S)

At a moment when the need for American leadership and Allied solidarity has seldom been more manifest, we are in danger of convincing the Europeans and the Japanese that in these dangerous times our Kamikaze instinct is more refined than our strategic acuity:

—We threaten to take military action against Iran when we have no evidence it would help free the hostages, and when it would do much to get the Soviets off the Afghanistan hook with the Moslems. (Can you imagine the Security Council and General Assembly debates after we dropped the mines?)

—We continue to press for Allied sanctions against Iran as if we believed that after the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan an even more destabilized situation in Iran would be in our interests and not in Moscow's.

—We minimize to European dismay the effects of an Iranian oil boycott of Europe on our Allies and on the world economy.

—In short, we give every sign that the 50 hostages are more important to us (and to the President's reelection prospects) than effective resistance to Soviet imperialism in Southwest Asia and beyond. (S)

The effect of this in Europe has been to breed cynicism and to revive doubts at the highest level about the capacity of the Carter Administration to protect Western interests and to meet the Soviet challenge. In my judgment, Warren Christopher's obvious inability to respond to these concerns in Europe last week was an embarrassment to him and to the Administration. Schmidt tells the Spanish the U.S. does not understand the Middle East. Thatcher snaps at Christopher

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran 12/79–3/80. Secret; Outside the System. Sent for action.

and Carrington tells the Turks sanctions against Iran will not work. As a piece in the German press said on Friday, "even though he publicly calls him his friend, Schmidt's doubt in the leadership qualities of the most powerful man in the Western world have increased rather than declined. On this point, Schmidt sees eye to eye with French President Giscard d'Estaing." (S)

Much of this on the Europeans' part is sharply self serving. They are dependent on Iranian oil. Schmidt does want to protect FRG relations with the East. Giscard does want to maintain an independent stance and France's special relationship with Moscow. Thatcher does think she understands the Soviets far better than Jimmy Carter, and the Tory banking community in Britain is opposed to sanctions against Iran. Nonetheless, our inherently conflicting objectives—to weaken Iran and to strengthen regional opposition to the Soviets—give the Europeans the perfect excuse to dismiss our entreaties for coordinated action *against the Soviets*. (S)

What to do. First, we should not publicly rule out the use of force against Iran because that threat may have some utility in the Revolutionary Council. But we should send the most private Cabinet Line messages to Thatcher, Schmidt and Giscard telling them that we have drawn the proper strategic conclusions about the relationship between the hostages and Afghanistan, and that as long as our people in Tehran are not harmed, we will not use military force against Iran because we recognize that this would gravely undermine Western efforts to make the Soviets pay for the invasion of Afghanistan. And, although we cannot suddenly reverse ourselves on Allied sanctions against Iran, we should certainly not get into a fight with the Europeans over this, a fight which would lessen the likelihood we can get them to address the strategic implications of Afghanistan. (S)

My Sunday paper has just hit the porch and I read John Goshko's story² that we are privately softening our position on Iran because of Afghanistan. Perhaps somebody should tell Warren Christopher and the Allies. In my judgment, the President's comment on *Meet the Press* yesterday that Afghanistan and Iran are interrelated³ was not specific

² John Goshko, "Stance on Iran Softening in Face of Soviet Threat," *New York Times*, January 20, 1980, p. A1.

³ During his January 20 appearance on *Meet the Press*, Carter stated: "There has been, obviously, a new element introduced into the Iranian hostage crisis in recent weeks with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. My belief is that many of the responsible officials in Iran now see that this major threat to Iran's security and the peace of Iran is becoming paramount, and that there will be an additional effort on their part to secure the release of the hostages and remove the isolation of Iran from the rest of the civilized world." He went on to say that Iran should begin to strengthen itself "against the possible threat by the Soviets now addressed toward them in Afghanistan." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980-81*, Book I, p. 113)

enough to meet Allied concerns since he also said we would press ahead with sanctions and wanted the Allies to do the same. Would you like me to do a draft message trying to sort this out to Thatcher, Schmidt and Giscard?⁴ (S)

⁴ There is no indication that Brzezinski approved sending the message.

159. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 22, 1980

In the next several months, you will shape, define and execute a new American foreign policy that will not only set the tone for U.S.-Soviet relations for the next twenty years, but will largely determine whether or not our country will play an effective role as the leader of the Free World and, in that way, diminish the possibility of nuclear confrontation. We live in a more dangerous world today than it seems we have lived in since the Cuban missile crisis.

For you to pursue this new policy and to execute the decisions that you must make, it seems to me that you have to be relatively unrestrained both politically and substantively. For that reason, it seems that we must have two very high priorities over the next 30–45 days.

First, we need to eliminate Kennedy from the political race so that you will not be preoccupied with the campaign nor restrained politically from doing whatever is necessary to meet the Soviet challenge. You will need to have the time to focus on this problem and the flexibility to make decisions that will be unpopular with some of the elements of the Democratic Party—the registration decision is a good case in point. Also, if we wrap up the nomination, it will give us more time to prepare for the general election and pull the party together for a tough general election campaign.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 1/80. Eyes Only. Presumably this is a version of the 5-page memorandum Jordan recalled as approved by Vance, Brzezinski, and Carter on January 23. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 125)

This means that we need to make an all-out effort to beat Kennedy in both Maine and New Hampshire. I will be working with Kraft and Strauss² on this. It will not be easy but can be done.

Secondly, and a much more difficult goal is to find some way to resolve the hostage situation in the next 30–45 days so that we can begin to build a relationship—however tenuous—with the Iranian government that undermines Soviet influence in the country and discourages Soviet military intervention.

I would not want to imply in any way that you, Cy, Zbig or the excellent team that has been working on this matter have not done everything humanly possible to obtain the safe release of the hostages. Our position which was developed at the Camp David meeting³ was correct both substantively and politically. Based on my own recent involvement in this matter and discussions with both the French contacts and with Professor Cottam, I have concluded that the situation does not exist now nor will it exist in the near future whereby the hostages are released simultaneously with the other steps we are willing to take. For that reason, it seems to me that we have to at least consider taking some risks in obtaining their release that were neither feasible or advisable before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This is not to suggest that we have to abandon any of our basic principles, but that we are going to have to consider modifying our tactics.

The substantive gap between the Iranians and ourselves is significant. The internal political situation is so fragile and fluid that no present or future leader of the civilian government will be able to agree in advance to the simultaneous release of the hostages. Rightly or wrongly, they will argue that to create the proper political atmosphere for obtaining Khomeini's blessing for the release of the hostages, there must be some actions taken that can be used with Khomeini and by Khomeini as evidence that he has won the battle with "the U.S. imperialists."

If this analysis is correct, it would mean that we would need to develop a scenario that included the early release of the hostages after some steps that tested each other's seriousness of purpose. I doubt very much if Ghotbzadeh or the future leadership of the government would be able to agree in advance to a scenario that had Khomeini's blessing. Professor Cottam says that Khomeini does not think or operate in that way.

² Tim Kraft resigned as Carter's campaign manager in September 1980; Robert Strauss replaced him.

³ Presumably a reference to the November 23, 1979, meeting; see Document 51.

This would mean that through direct or indirect channels we would have to develop a joint scenario with the risk that it would not be successful and presumed on the front end that the steps that we took would create the proper atmosphere for Ghotbzadeh, or Bani Sadr or Beheshti to go to the Ayatollah and say that, “we have won, and it is time to let the hostages go”. The great risk would be that Khomeini would reject their plea and we would be back at square one having used up most of our bargaining chips.

Such a scenario would only be useful if we had good reason to believe that Khomeini himself is looking for a way out. If he is not, then the risks would not be worth taking.

If this was done, it would have to be done in a way that did not appear to Khomeini or to the others in the Revolutionary Council as a sign of U.S. weakness that could then only invite a possibly harder line.

If you are interested in pursuing this possible course of action, it would require you, Cy, Zbig, the Vice-President and others addressing several questions.

1. What would be the best scenario we could develop that did not undermine our nation’s principles, but at the same time sends a positive signal to the moderates in the Revolutionary Council that could be used effectively with the Ayatollah for the release of the hostages?

Let me give you an example of the kind of scenario that might be developed:

Step 1. Statement by President Carter that “beyond the resolution of the hostage crisis, the United States desires to have a friendly relationship with the people and government of Iran”.

Step 2. Iran responds with a statement by either the Foreign Minister or new President that “the early release of the hostages is a goal of the Revolutionary Council”.

Step 3. UN resolution is introduced with U.S. support establishing a commission of inquiry.

Step 4. Statement from Iranian official that at the time that the commission completes its report, it will release the hostages.

Step 5. If step 4 takes place, U.S. supports UN resolution. If it does not, U.S. vetoes resolution in the Security Council.

Step 6. Commission of Inquiry is set up with a ten day limit on its activities. Travels to Iran to receive testimony.

Step 7. Commission completes report and on agreed upon date, issues report simultaneous with announcement from Iran that the hostages will be released within twenty-four hours.

Step 8. At the time the hostages are put on plane, the Panamanian government announces that it has received formal request of extradi-

tion and that it will be referred to their Attorney General in accordance with Panamanian law.

As I wrote this, I was just thinking out loud. It would probably be better to use the Panamanian “card” earlier and also to build in additional steps and gestures to safeguard this process. But, it is my opinion that some scenario like this will have to be worked out before our people are freed. I believe that U.S. public opinion would support our taking such a chance although it would look bad if we failed.

2. If such a scenario is developed, what is the best way to present it—through Waldheim, the PLO, direct contact or other means? Since there are several parties involved—the Panamanians, the United Nations, etc., it seems that we would have to make a decision as to how to present this.

3. Thirdly, and of critical importance, when would we present this?

A basic decision would have to be made as to whether or not it would be best to pursue this during the run-off or after the election of a new President.

Assuming that Ghotbzadeh does not make the run-off—and you can see from the attached “Memcon”⁴ that he no longer thinks that he will—a critical question would be whether or not the contacts that we have had with him could be transferred to the new leadership. We should do what we can to encourage Ghotbzadeh to transfer these contacts to the new leadership. This could also be a way that he could keep himself involved and possibly ingratiate himself with the new leadership.

Another thought is that if Ghotbzadeh is a lame duck, possibly he and/or Khomeini would be willing for him to take the heat for resolving the hostage situation.

I am just thinking out loud, but it seems after your State of the Union Address, you should spend some time with Zbig, Cy and his excellent team talking these things through. I strongly believe that we do need a new approach that is inherently risky for both our country and for you politically.

Also, you should review the attached “memcon”.⁵ Our trip was taken seriously. I hope that we are not undercutting Waldheim’s credi-

⁴ Not attached. Reference is to a January 22 memorandum of conversation in which Ghotbzadeh told Cottam that he “had no chance to win in the elections” and that “he was sick and tired of being Foreign Minister and he wanted out as soon as possible. He would remain, however, until the hostage crisis was ended.” Cottam noted that it was his impression that Ghotbzadeh “was counting exclusively on the French channel to Jordan.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation)

⁵ Not attached, but the meeting was reported in telegram 1314 from London, January 20. See Document 157.

bility with Ghotbzadeh, but Hal Saunders and Cottam report that he has been down on Waldheim for the past several days for some reason.⁶

⁶ Jordan added the following handwritten postscript: "I remain willing to go to Iran if that is ever necessary. Also, shouldn't we inform Waldheim of this?"

160. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State¹

Panama City, January 23, 1980, 0510Z

678. Dept Please Pass to White House for Hamilton Jordan. For Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Asst Sec Saunders. Subject: Iranian-Panamanian Contacts.

1. (C–Entire text)

2. Summary: President Royo, with concurrence of General Torrijos, promised Ghotbzadeh this evening² that early tomorrow morning he would send the GOI a cable agreeing to receive formal extradition request from GOI, stating that the Shah was "under the care of the Government of Panama and that his movements are subject to prior approval by the security forces of the country" (i.e., stopping short of the words "under arrest"). Royo will add a paragraph stating that now it is up to the GOI to comply with international law and to release the hostages. The decision to take these steps was made following indications received through the Panamanian Ambassador in Paris that they would aid in the release of the hostages. Gabriel Lewis and "Rory" Gonzalez, recently back from Paris, concur that the calculated risk was worth taking. The Shah will be briefed tomorrow morning and assured that he will not be handed over. Royo and Torrijos asked that I visit the Shah to indicate that we are aware of the plans. End summary.

3. I was called to General Torrijos' home at 7:30 p.m., where he, President Royo, V.P. De la Espriella, Gabriel Lewis, "Rory" Gonzalez, and Col. Noriega (Intelligence Chief) were meeting. They explained that at 3 this afternoon Ghotbzadeh telephoned Lewis saying that he wished to speak to Royo to request that Panama take certain measures,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 60, Panama 6/79–1/80. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² January 22.

i.e., to arrest the Shah and to initiate the extradition process, Lewis said he would call back in three hours as he had to locate Royo. He asked Ghotbzadeh that, if Royo were to agree, would this help in the release of the hostages, and Ghotbzadeh replied affirmatively.

4. Following this call, Col. Noriega spoke with the PN Ambassador in Paris, who had been in communication with Tehran and had been told that such steps were necessary "to prepare the Revolutionary Council" (ie, for release of hostages). He also reported that Ghotbzadeh was sending an "intermediary" to Paris early Wednesday morning,³ who could then travel to Panama at the right moment.

5. Following this conversation, the PN Ambassador to Paris called Ghotbzadeh and said that Royo was presently in a meeting with his top advisers considering the matter.

6. Royo called Ghotbzadeh at approximately 6 p.m. (I heard the tape which was made of the conversation, held in English; Ghotbzadeh's voice was not always intelligible.) Royo said he agreed to receive the request for extradition of the ex-Shah. He said the GOP would initiate procedures for extradition when it received the formal documents required by Panamanian law, i.e., copy of the Iranian order for arrest, documents evidencing crimes, and applicable laws of Iran. Ghotbzadeh asked repeatedly whether Shah would be arrested, whether he could say order for arrest was issued, etc., and Royo ducked the question each time. Royo stated only that the Shah was "in a safe place," that he was "well protected by our security forces," etc. He promised to send Ghotbzadeh a telex early Wednesday a.m. confirming the agreement. Ghotbzadeh indicated he would make such communication public and said: "I believe what you are doing (word missed) toward a peaceful solution to the problem." Royo said: "I hope our response under international law can be a help."

7. Royo and Torrijos discussed the telex Royo should send early Wednesday (Royo promised Ghotbzadeh it would be sent by 7:30 a.m.). He said that it would consist of three paragraphs: in the first he would state that the Shah was under the "protection and care" of the GOP and that "his movements were subject to previous authorization of the security forces of the country." The second para would state that the GOP was prepared to receive the formal extradition request, and would describe the documents required under PN law. The third paragraph would appeal to the GOI to release the hostages and say, in effect, that he hoped the example of Panama's fulfilment of the law would help the GOI take measures to free the hostages and bring about respect for international law. The implication at least would be that the GOI's

³ January 23.

compliance with international law would determine Panama's further action, Royo said.

8. Torrijos said that Col. Noriega would go to Contadora to brief the Shah on these developments. He and Royo asked that I go to Contadora later in the morning to let the Shah know that we were familiar with the Panamanian plans.

9. I pointed out that Panama was giving away the only two cards in its hand without any assurance of results. My argument did not prevail, however, in the face of all those present who insisted that it was the right moment for a calculated risk. They seemed to have confidence that Ghotbzadeh would perform and that even if he were not elected President, that he was in such high favor with Khomeini that he would wield great power.

10. In a post-meeting phone conversation with Lewis, I said I thought it unfortunate that Royo had given in so quickly without putting together the whole deal and coordinating with us. Lewis gave a verbal shrug of the shoulders and said it was important now to make sure Royo's telex was carefully drafted so that it did not make any commitments as to the arrest and that it show clearly that Panama's intention is to work to free the hostages. He agreed that he would not have committed himself to send the cable but felt it was too late in view of Royo's promises.

11. I arranged with Royo to meet with him at 6:45 a.m. in his office and that he would not send the cable prior to such time, so I could advise him of any information received from Washington tonight.

12. Hamilton Jordan informed me at about 10:30 p.m. that he was very concerned about timing and felt Royo's telex would be a great mistake. He said to tell Royo that as a result of the weekend trip, President Carter had ordered a complete review of our negotiating posture and had said we should work with the Panamanians.⁴ He asked that I try to stop the telex to Ghotbzadeh and get Royo's representatives to Washington. He said to tell Royo that Ghotbzadeh was on his way out politically, had told a contact of ours he could not win the election, and had made many unkept promises to us. Perhaps the telex was a good idea for later, but we had to coordinate. I said that if necessary I would call him from Royo's office.

13. Lewis called the PN Ambassador in Paris about 11:45 p.m. He learned that the French intermediary had not yet arrived from Tehran but would be in shortly. Lewis asked that the intermediary call him no later than 5 a.m. Panama time so that we could have his overall assessment prior to my meeting with Royo. Lewis quoted the intermedi-

⁴ See Documents 157 and 159.

ary as having said previously that he would be willing to meet with U.S. officials (he said Hamilton Jordan) any time. I told Lewis the question of a timetable for any action plan was of major concern to us, as well as an assessment of the chances of success based on conversations with different leaders.⁵

Moss

⁵ According to the *New York Times* Tehran radio reported Ghotbzadeh spoke by phone with Roys regarding extradition. ("Panama tells Iran that the Shah is in Its 'Care' but Not Under Arrest," *New York Times*, January 23, 1980, p. A1)

161. Minutes of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 23, 1980, 10:35–10:55 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Peter Tarnoff

Defense

Robert Komer

JCS

General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Justice

John Shenefield

OMB

John White

White House

David Aaron

MINUTES

David Aaron chaired the SCC meeting which was briefed by Admiral Turner on the operation to exfiltrate a half-dozen Americans from Tehran. Admiral Turner noted that, since this was not an intelligence collection operation, a Finding was necessary under Hughes-Ryan.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 38 Serial XX—Sensitive, 1/80–3/80. Top Secret; Extremely Sensitive; Eyes Only. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 2, Document 44. No record of a Finding has been found.

Mr. Aaron noted that it would be our intention not to inform the Committees until we had concluded that there was minimal risk from any leak. Thus, we would not inform them in advance as has been our practice under the requirement to provide “timely” notification.

Mr. Aaron also noted that the Finding would provide authority for the CIA to be helpful in effecting the departure from Iran of our hostages at the U.S. Embassy. He noted that this was not presently contemplated but that we should have this authority should swift action be required at some future point.

The members of the SCC concurred in the Finding. The Justice Department, in particular, agreed with its terms.

The Committee then discussed how the exfiltrated Americans will be handled so as to minimize the possibility of leaks which could adversely affect the hostages or the Canadian Government which has cooperated in their safekeeping until now.

General Pustay agreed to ascertain a military base in the United States to which the Americans could be sent following a few days’ R&R in Zurich. Relatives of the Americans could be permitted to have telephone contact and perhaps even visits. However, all these arrangements will have to be worked out once the Americans have been gotten out of Iran, since their views will obviously have to be taken into consideration.³

³ In a January 24 memorandum, Tarnoff suggested that Vance inform Carter that “the plan to exfiltrate the six Americans at the Canadian Embassy is now underway” and that they should all be out of Iran between Saturday, January 26, and the beginning of the following week. Tarnoff added that the six would go first to Europe while the Canadians closed their Embassy in Tehran. “Canadian cooperation has been excellent,” he concluded. (Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980)

162. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 24, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran

We are approaching a new point in our relationship with Iran where some fundamental choices must be faced. Our basic dilemma can be defined as follows:

—With the Soviet threat to Iran growing more explicit (and given our new level of commitment in the area) we will have a greater interest in propping up *any* anti-communist regime in Tehran, and there will be a growing inclination to try to fashion a cooperative relationship with the Khomeini regime after a new president is elected;

—But the very presence of the Khomeini regime lends itself to continued collapse of the society, the danger of civil war, and the very real risk that the left will capitalize on the foibles of the present leadership to strengthen its position for a takeover from within.

The questions we must ask ourselves at this point are:

1. Is the Khomeini regime salvageable? Is it capable of evolving over time into a government which provides even the minimal level of internal stability and self-defense capability?

2. Is the risk of a communist takeover in Iran greater from an actual Soviet intervention, or is the greater risk an internal growth of leftist power?

3. How can we simultaneously seek to get the hostages back, bolster an anti-communist regime, and strengthen Iran's capability to resist a possible Soviet intervention?

In my view, the regime in Iran is perilously close to total collapse. Khomeini is committed to an unrealistic vision of a pure Islamic society, but he is leaving the organizational work to God. He is an old man, physically unwell, and totally lacking in any practical sense of how to manage anything, let alone a major nation. The people of Iran were thrilled at his leadership in bringing down the Shah, but fundamentally they do not share his vision. As time goes on, the gap between his image and the reality of governmental chaos have become increasingly

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/11/80-1/31/80. Secret. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

apparent, and his support is waning. His hospitalization will reinforce the sense of uncertainty and drift. It will remind everyone of his mortality and the absence of any structure to provide continuity if he is incapacitated.

The process of seeking alternative to Khomeini's leadership was already well underway, and it is gaining momentum daily. The Kurds will not be reconciled with him. They have learned they cannot trust him and they are naturally inclined to grasp such moments to assert their own nationalistic aspirations. Azerbaijan is simmering just below the level of full scale rebellion. It is only the uncertainty of Shariatmadari's status—and the possibility that he might be harmed—which restrains them from even more overt opposition. Khomeini has met their demands with naked force and contempt. They are not going to be wooed back into his fold. The other tribes—Qashqai, Baluchi, Khuzistan Arabs—recognize weakness when they see it, and their open opposition to the central regime is the best evidence of how they view the prospects of the present regime.

The regime itself is a collection of second-rate, venal, power hungry, self-centered, inexperienced and disreputable individuals. There is not a good mind or a good idea in the lot. The power struggles which at first were hidden beneath a superficial unity have now emerged into public view. One of the current rumors in Tehran is that the Forgan assassination group² in fact does not exist at all—it is the invention of the ruling mullahs for their own political assassinations. No one in Tehran today believes that Ayatollah Taleghani died a natural death. Rather, he is considered to have been too much of a rival to Khomeini and was quietly dispensed with. The fact that these rumors have credibility is unmistakable evidence of the decay of the revolutionary elite.

People have seen mullah rule, and they are appalled. Khomeini's son-in-law is rumored to be exporting large amounts of money to Swiss accounts. The level of bribery and corruption extends from the lowest level (where the local mullahs and komiteh members "borrow" cars, furnishings and bank accounts of their opponents) to the very top. Nothing in the performance of the present regime has given any basis for encouragement about the future.

Khomeini insists on retaining all power to himself. He makes pronouncements and expects them to be carried out according to his vision. When things go wrong, he fires those most directly involved—or those who have been fingered by the members of his court. As a result,

² Purported to be a religious extremist assassination group that followed the teachings of Ali Shariati. The leader, Akbar Goudarzi, reportedly was arrested January 8. (Report by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, February 1, 1999; www.unhcr.org)

everyone shuns responsibility and all the “officials” of the government and the Revolutionary Council spend all their waking hours (and probably their nightmares as well) scheming about how to maintain Khomeini’s personal support. This is about the best we can expect so long as Khomeini is alive. Ironically, if he dies, the game will return to square one and it will be every man for himself.

In the meantime, the left is organizing itself. The Tudeh Party expects Khomeini’s imminent collapse and is positioning itself to inherit as much of the wreckage as possible. If the present chaos drags on, the left will continue to ingratiate itself with Khomeini as one of the few reliable bastions of support, and he will be forced to rely on them more and more heavily.

The presidential elections will probably change very little. The election will be boycotted by major sections of the population, and the remainder will probably split according to personalities. Any president, even if elected by a genuine majority, will find himself in the same position as poor old Bazargan—and the new president’s fate is likely to be about the same. Khomeini will not brook real independence, so the new president will either have to be a total rubber stamp or he will have to set about building an independent power base. The latter is more likely, but it is also dangerous to the health—politically and otherwise.

The threat of internal collapse and the emergence of the left as the dominant power strikes me as much more imminent and likely than an actual Soviet military intervention. Any prolongation of Khomeini’s faltering regime only increases that risk. Our objective should be to hasten the downfall of the present regime. We need not do much actively, for it is falling of its own weight. But we should beware of taking tactical steps in the context of the Soviet invasion which artificially breathe new life into the present leadership and give the Iranian public the false impression that there may be more there than meets the eye.

They are troubled by sanctions. We should use that weapon, and reinforce it with some hype and propaganda. It undercuts the credibility of the mullah rule and it puts pressure on them where they feel it—in their domestic support.

We should continue with our contacts with dissident groups. Our objective should be to encourage those groups who have real influence—particularly those in Azerbaijan which stand between Tehran and the USSR and who have the manpower, talent and political determination to provide some kind of alternative regime. They also have an invaluable religious asset in Shariatmadari, and a network of fellow Azeris in key positions throughout the country, including the military.

We need not delude ourselves into thinking that we can mastermind a counter coup. That would be both infeasible and historically

foolish. But we can quietly promote some degree of cooperation among various key groups and assist them to communicate among themselves.

We can also help to promote political ideas which promise Iran something more than the obeisance to personality. Where is a program? Who has any political ideas which go beyond just getting themselves elected to the highest possible office? If there are such people or such ideas, we should make sure they get the widest possible exposure.

We need to build an alternative to the left. Obviously we cannot do this ourselves, but more and more Iranians are thinking exactly this way, and we have some ability to reinforce it through intelligent propaganda and selective support. Although this appears to be a long-term strategy, it may in fact develop much more quickly than we think if the present regime simply folds up—as it may. If nothing else, the clear acceptance of that objective as a policy goal would provide a structure to our thinking about the future of Iran which is now lacking.

163. Summary of a Special Meeting¹

Washington, January 24, 1980, 4:30–5:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Iran Strategy

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President

White House

State

Hamilton Jordan

Secretary Cyrus Vance

NSC

Harold Saunders

David Aaron

Defense

Gary Sick

Secretary Harold Brown*

Graham Claytor

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

*Only present for first few minutes

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 10. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote “Zbig, J” in the upper right corner.

SUMMARY

Per your instructions, we met to review our Iran strategy.² We reviewed the key channels which are now being used: the United Nations; the PLO, which may be useful again in the future; the Sudanese Sadiq al-Mahdi; Professor Richard Cottam who talks directly with Ghotbzadeh; Swiss Ambassador Lang in Tehran, who has access to key individuals for relaying messages; the Egyptian journalist Heikal; and the French lawyers who will see Ham and Hal Saunders again tomorrow.³ All agreed that we should keep all of these channels open and exploit any others which may become available. However, none of them have any immediate prospects of producing significant movement toward release of the hostages.

The key problem remains that we do not have an authoritative individual with whom we can negotiate. The elections this weekend may produce someone who will be willing and able to take more direct action. Some believe that once the new President is elected, Khomeini will accept a less active role and turn over greater authority. However, this may not occur until after the legislative elections in late February, and there is considerable skepticism that it will happen at all. The French lawyers told Ham that a new President will immediately be faced with a challenge from the clerical elements on the Revolutionary Council and will be unable to take independent action. The French lawyers felt that the runoff period after the preliminary balloting this weekend may provide the most promising window for a U.S. initiative, by approaching opposing candidates with a U.S. plan.

Three basic strategies were examined, which are not mutually exclusive:

1. Accept a high-risk strategy in which we agree to take a series of steps unilaterally, with some corresponding steps by the Iranians to confirm acceptance at each point. This would mean we would have to give up our present position of demanding release of the hostages as a starting point. We would have to be willing to play some cards without real assurance that the hostages would be released at the end

² Brzezinski told Turner the meeting was necessary because he was "having difficulty keeping it together." (Memorandum from Turner to Carlucci, McMahon, and Cogan, January 24; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977-1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings with Various Officials and Subjects) In a January 23 note sent to Brzezinski for this January 24 meeting, Turner wrote: "Iran is rapidly crumbling, the left is making advances, "the hostage issue is forcing us to cause Iran to crumble and not to give help, advice, support, etc.," "the time is coming when timely resolution of the hostage crisis will be in the national interest," and "a rescue attempt may be the only avenue open to us." (Ibid.)

³ Villalon and Bourguet; see Document 164.

of the procedure. The objective would be to give moderate elements sufficient ammunition to go to Khomeini and try to persuade him that the Americans had been defeated and the time had come to release the hostages. The French lawyers and Cottam believe this is the only strategy which will pay off.

2. Focus our attention on getting the hostages out of the embassy and out of the custody of the militants. If successful, this would undercut the militants' political leverage and eventually make it easier for the government to decide to release the hostages. Our tactics would be to focus on the condition of the hostages and the need to move them to more adequate quarters with better care, for humanitarian reasons. They have shown themselves to be sensitive to such arguments in the past.

3. Focus primarily on the Islamic Conference and the Islamic states as a means of getting through to Khomeini.

There are mixed views about the usefulness of pursuing sanctions aggressively. Some believe that the threat of sanctions merely stiffens the back of the regime and weakens the bargaining position of the moderates. Others think that the sanctions are taken very seriously in Iran and that they create domestic political pressure to find a settlement. All agreed, however, that pushing sanctions before the election and before the Islamic Conference meeting would be counterproductive.⁴

We recommend proceeding as follows:

—First, we will focus on the forthcoming Islamic Conference as a means of getting our views across to the Iranians from a group of states and leaders who would be credible in their eyes. State is actively pursuing this.

—Second, State will develop a series of alternative negotiating strategies which we might use after the Islamic Conference and after the initial balloting for President. These will be reviewed at a subsequent meeting.⁵

—Third, we will collect and examine names of private individuals who might be able to organize a global effort drawing attention to the plight of the hostages on purely humanitarian grounds. A non-American with leftist credentials would probably be ideal, if we can find such a person and persuade him to undertake the effort.⁶

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “[illegible—Push?] for very firm sanctions, but minimal publicity.” The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held an emergency session in Islamabad January 27–29 to discuss the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan.

⁵ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “Expedite, to me.”

⁶ In the left margin, Carter wrote: “Andy OK.” Reference is to Andrew Young. In a February 6 memorandum, Brzezinski informed Carter that Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley was sending a team to Algeria to pave the way for a Young visit to Iran should Carter so decide. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 2/80)

All agreed that we should not make any concessions unilaterally until we have an authoritative interlocutor on the Iranian side. That will almost certainly not occur until after the elections. In the interim, our present negotiating position should be maintained.

164. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Meeting with B and V—the French-based lawyers Friday, January 25 in Hamilton Jordan's office

V said he and B had been very impressed with the seriousness and honesty of the presentation by Jordan and Saunders in London.² This allowed V and B convincingly and strongly to defend the U.S. position in Tehran. They had argued that while Iran's point of view had to be listened to, international standards of human rights came first. V and B asked for a sign of similar seriousness and honesty from the Iranian side. (Ghotbzadeh had Richard Cottam call Hamilton Jordan to endorse the talks V and B would have with us.)

V said that on arriving in Tehran they had a four hour meeting with Ghotbzadeh, which was adjourned to allow him to report to the Revolutionary Council. They reconvened with him at midnight to hear the Council's reaction. There were three decisions:

—Henceforth the only negotiator for Iran would be the Foreign Minister. All information on the crisis should be conveyed to the Minister, not to members of the Council. (In effect the Council is taking itself out of the decision chain.)

—The Foreign Minister will immediately report all developments to Khomeini and keep him thoroughly informed in a timely fashion.

—The two leading candidates for the Presidency—Bani Sadr and Habibi—would be kept fully informed of developments by the Foreign Minister until the runoff elections were held. B had later briefed each of them.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Precht. The meeting took place at 12:30 p.m. in Jordan's office at the White House. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 131)

² See Document 157.

Subsequently, V and B were informed of other decisions by the Council.

—The militants will no longer be allowed to express their views to the press. This decision was taken on the evening of January 24. Thus far we are not able to confirm whether or not it has been effectively implemented.

—The Council guaranteed absolutely the security of the hostages. The Council would take further steps to assure that the hostages would not be harmed. (This decision was taken because V had raised the possibility that some disgruntled militant might try to deepen the crisis by harming one of the hostages.)

—The U.S. should attempt to prevent Iranian students in this country from making statements which damage prospects of a settlement. For example, some students had said that whatever happened to the Shah the U.S. itself was the real enemy. (We commented that the Iranian Embassy in Washington was more troublesome than students and perhaps the Foreign Minister could direct the Chargé to cease harmful propaganda activities. B agreed to do so.)

—Finally, because Ghotbzadeh believed that the U.S. wanted some American correspondents to be allowed to return to Iran, the Iranian government would soon permit on a selective basis the return of correspondents who would not be “biased.”³ These correspondents would be asked to pledge that they would not interview the militants.

V and B gave us their analysis of the Iranian political situation, which they said was shared by Ghotbzadeh and members of the Revolutionary Council: The seizure of the Embassy had been a move by the religious extreme right—somehow backed by the Soviet Union—to provoke a crisis. They had, in fact, succeeded in bringing down the Bazargan Government and in later forcing out Bani Sadr. But within forty hours of the seizure Khomeini had moved to thwart their plans. He had dispatched the Ayatollah Khoeni a loyal supporter plus contingents of Palestinians, Kurds, Libyans, left-wing Iranian youth and also other religious students to dilute the authority of the group that had organized the seizure. Subsequently, these groups left the compound. (We doubt the involvement of these groups. The significance is that the Revolutionary Council believes that the militants are hostile to the Khomeini regime and that Khomeini recognized this and moved to take charge of the operation on the compound by inserting his own people.)

³ Iran expelled all U.S. journalists on January 18, on the grounds that their reporting was “biased.” (“Tehran Says Reporting is Biased,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 1980, p. A1, and James Yuenger, “Tehran will expel U.S. journalists,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 15, 1980, p. 1)

The next move of the religious right was to try to manipulate the elections in their way. Khomeini, whom B described as a master political leader, had again thwarted the hard-liners by eliminating their candidate, Farsi, as well as the candidate of the extreme left, Rajavi. The students had then eliminated Admiral Madani. That left two candidates trusted by Khomeini in the field, Bani Sadr and Habibi. B, who knew all of the Iranian revolutionaries in Paris, had the highest regard for Habibi. He described him as very solid, a man of principle, culture, moderation and dedication—a man without enemies and probably Khomeini's favorite. Because the religious right had lost their candidate they were forced to back Habibi. That assured him a victory but would not make him beholden to them. It was Khomeini's plan to take the position of "religious guide," dealing only with general policy questions and leaving the details of running the country to the President. B anticipated that the next stage of the struggle for power after the Presidential election would be a fight between the religious right and the secularists for the control of the Majlis and the Prime Ministry and cabinet positions.

In an aside B described how Habibi had been the principal author of the draft constitution which Khomeini had accepted. Later Khomeini agreed to submit the draft to a constitutional assembly when Bazargan demanded that as part of the democratic process. As Khomeini feared, the religious right dominated the assembly and redrafted key articles of the constitution to their liking—seeking to impose the theocracy which Khomeini did not want.

The scenario for ending the hostage crisis which Ghotbzadeh and possibly the Revolutionary Council appeared to have worked out with B and V follows:

Waldheim acting on his own authority will appoint a commission of inquiry, chaired by someone like Sean McBride. The U.S. will oppose the commission on technical grounds. Our opposition is essential, if the commission is to be accepted in Iran, particularly by the militants.

The commission will have as its purposes the inquiry into Iranian grievances and, secondly, into the conditions of the hostages. After a week's investigation the commission will report its findings to the Iranian government. The findings concerning the hostages will describe their inhumane treatment and the commission will recommend the hostages be released. This part of the report will be transmitted to Khomeini who will recognize that, although the taking of hostages was an acceptable form of pressure on the United States by Iran, the conditions under which the hostages are held are not acceptable in terms of Islamic standards. Khomeini will then order the hostages released to the Iranian government which may remove them to a prison. V believes it essential that there be an intermediate stage in which the

hostages are held by the Iranian government; he does not think the militants will agree to release them to us. It will also be important for Iran to make a clear distinction and disassociate the militants from the government.

The commission's report on Iran's grievances will be communicated to the world at large and presumably to the UN. This portion was not clear to B and V. It was not certain whether Iran would require a resolution by the General Assembly or some other formal action. Ghotbzadeh said no resolution was necessary but that is in doubt.

Sean McBride would have an additional role as the negotiator of the precise stages for ending the crisis. He would help settle the bilateral problems such as the freeze of assets, form of relations, recovery of the Shah's assets, etc. The Iranians shared our view that a high-level contact between us was necessary, but could not have direct links during the very sensitive period of the next 30 days before the new government is in place.

The hostages would be released on the eve of a religious ceremony which the Iranians will organize in Tehran to mark the 1500th anniversary of Islam. V and B could not specify the exact holiday that would be used for this commemoration, but they thought it was in the latter part of February. They thought they could give us the date Saturday.⁴ Khomeini's act of releasing the hostages would thus be a religious gesture witnessed by the many religious figures who would be invited to the ceremony.

V said it was agreed in Iran that the hostage issue should be settled within the next thirty days before a new government took office. It was anticipated that Ghotbzadeh would remain as Foreign Minister and would be charged with handling the hostage crisis during this period.

Meanwhile, the Panama track would be proceeding along predetermined lines. B and V intended to go to Panama in the next day or so to appoint a Panamanian lawyer to represent Iran in pressing the extradition case. The Panamanian government will be asked to issue a formal order to the Shah to place himself "at the disposal" of the government during a 60-day period in which the extradition evidence from Iran might be presented. V thought that this would be an easy matter to arrange with the Panamanians.

In general B and V described themselves as "almost very optimistic" in dealing with an extremely difficult situation.

⁴ January 26.

165. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

As I told you, Secretary Vance has taken the position that he does not want to hear the tape of the Waldheim meeting with the Revolutionary Council² or hear [read] the transcript. You may want to defer reading the transcript until you confer with him.

I believe that even if you don't read it, it is important that you know what actually happened.

Let me begin by saying that I know that the Secretary-General was trying to identify with the Iranians, appear neutral in his role as Secretary-General and create an atmosphere that might result in progress on the hostage issue. He also was under a certain amount of pressure due to the fact that his life was in danger several times.³

Having said that, let me make these observations:

1. The Secretary-General did not present on behalf of the world community the view that Iran was in violation of international law. This should have been stated in a tactful way during his meeting with the Revolutionary Council.

2. He tried to identify with the Iranians at the expense of representing the world community.

3. Because he did not clearly state the U.S. or United Nations position on the situation, the members of the Revolutionary Council were left to draw their own conclusions about where things stood.

4. The tone of Waldheim's remarks was apologetic, defensive and at points obsequious. There is no way that the Council—particularly the religious, non-secular members—could have concluded that they were dealing with either a strong man or a strong organization.

Consequently, while recognizing the critical role that the United Nations and the Secretary-General have to play in resolving the crisis, I believe that you should consider reading the transcript just so that

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 1/80. Eyes Only. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "Ham. J."

² According to Saunders, to establish their credentials, at the January 25 meeting (see Document 164), Bourguet and Villalon presented Jordan with a cassette tape recording from Ghotbzadeh of Waldheim's meeting with the Revolutionary Council at the beginning of January in Tehran. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, p. 119)

³ See Document 132.

we will not be dependent on Waldheim doing any heavy negotiating for us.

My French friends and Cottam have said a number of times that the Foreign Minister was frustrated and disappointed that nothing had happened as a result of Waldheim's trip. That must be because he left the impression that he was sympathetic to their cause and imprecise about what would have to happen on both sides. As a result, Waldheim probably has less credibility with them because they will have concluded that Waldheim left Iran convinced of the justice of their own cause and was blocked by the U.S. from following through.

Enough on that, but I hope that you will keep my harsh comments private.

Because the issue that we are dealing with is so important and sensitive, I want to make a few points:

1. Absolute confidentiality is essential. Most of the inter-governmental communications on this should be oral and limited to a very tight group.

2. My personal involvement on a continuing basis is important and essential in a couple of ways. First, it has been a signal of our willingness and seriousness to negotiate in a respectful manner. Secondly, it is important that someone with a political sense of things here and [in] Iran be involved on a continuing basis.

3. Hal Saunders and I should work on this as a team. He and I complement one another—he has an understanding of the area, the personalities, is an excellent draftsman and represents the Secretary well.

4. *If* we are able to put this thing together, it is going to be like one of those trick billiards shots where you have to hit five sides before the ball goes in the pocket. For this reason, we are going to need to put together the UN, Panamanian, etc., pieces together. For that reason, I will need to be involved in every part of the discussion and negotiations. This should not take much of my time, but is essential in terms of tying this thing all together. Right now, Hal Saunders and I are the only two people in the government who have a precise sense of both how this thing can be done and also how difficult and sensitive it will be.

So, at the risk of appearing immodest, I would suggest that you say sometime during the meeting today⁴ if we decide to go ahead that you want Hal Saunders and I to work as a team and that you want me involved in every dimension of the discussions to both keep you informed and to measure domestic political impact.

⁴ Not further identified.

Mr. President, I had a hunch last week that this might turn into something. Because of Bourguet, I am increasingly convinced that it can and will.

166. Memorandum From the Director for Operations, Joint Chiefs of Staff (Shutler), to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Jones)¹

Washington, January 28, 1980

SUBJECT

Conditions for Hostage Rescue Attempt

1. (TS) The attached paper by the JTF explores the factors affecting a decision to rescue the hostages. The summary on page 8 gives a good thumbnail sketch of the analysis.²

2. (TS) It appears to me that three external conditions can apply:

- a. Hostages secure. Negotiations continuing as at present.
- b. Hostages gravely threatened by current captors, other competing politically oriented terrorist organizations, or mob action during chaos.
- c. One or more hostages injured or killed.

3. (TS) The odds on success (60–70% in execution tempered by 15–30% possibility of disruption) do not appear to be high enough to warrant an attempt under current conditions. If we wait until hostages have been injured or killed, the pressure to act will be so high, and the situation in Iran so uncertain, that the odds for success would certainly be drastically reduced. The hard part will be to recognize a time of increased danger and to act accordingly. The team is continuing to refine plans to deploy, in particular to get to the shortest response time consistent with operational security. [4 lines not declassified]

Very respectfully,

Philip D. Shutler
Lieutenant General, USMC
Director for Operations

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–98–0064, Records of J–3 DDSO, Box 1, DOD Intel Experience (Iran Hostage Rescue). Top Secret; Eyes Only.

² The January 25 untitled paper is attached but not printed; the summary is printed as Document 167.

167. Paper Prepared by the Joint Task Force¹

Washington, January 25, 1980

HOSTAGE RESCUE

[Omitted here is the body of the paper (7 pages).]

6. Summary: The US team of men and machines is capable of performing the mission. Two important facilities remain undetermined: the drop-off point for Delta and a holding area for Delta in Tehran. Assuming satisfactory determination of these facilities, we assess the probability of the team's mechanical capability to complete the mission at 60–70%. We assess the capability of Iran to frustrate the mission at 15–30%. Although the future threat to the hostages is unpredictable we believe that certain indicators and events would enable the US to ascertain when the safety of the hostages becomes seriously jeopardized. The useful life of the US team cannot be protracted indefinitely. The existence of the force could be compromised and operational security lost at anytime. We are unable to predict how long OPSEC can be maintained, but judge it to be in the range of an additional two to six weeks. Effective strategic and tactical deception should enable the mission to be conducted without prior knowledge of Iran or Russia.

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–07–0002, Records of J–3 DDSO, Box 12, Iranian Hostage Crisis, unnamed folder. Top Secret.

168. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Iran—Alternative Negotiating Strategies

Over the next month a new political situation will evolve in Iran. The purpose of this memo is to take a look at a fresh approach to negotiating the release of our hostages in that period.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Diplomatic Strategy for Iran. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Drafted by Precht. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

The Time Frame

The time frame is set by the series of elections which began with the first round of the Presidential elections on January 25. Bani Sadr appears to be the winner. The Assembly elections are scheduled for February 15 but may be delayed until later in the month. The next step will be appointment of a Prime Minister by the President and the selection of a Cabinet by the Prime Minister, but none of them will have authority until approved by the newly elected Assembly.

During this transitional period, a major religious celebration is scheduled the week of February 10 to commemorate the 15th centennial of Islam and the anniversary of the Revolution. These dates could provide an occasion for releasing the hostages if the way is paved.

The new government will take office only when the Assembly sits and gives it a vote of confidence, presumably around the end of February.

Analysis of the Present Negotiating Situation

We have been frustrated until now by the absence in Iran of a firm decision to resolve the crisis and negotiating partners who could with authority negotiate with us directly or designate a particular intermediary to negotiate for them.

If the word brought by our French contacts is correct, Ghotbzadeh and the President-elect may now be receptive negotiating partners. We are told by our visiting French contacts that, before the election, Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council placed the hostage problem in the hands of Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh, who was to keep the President-elect and Khomeini informed. (A summary of the January 25 talk with the French contacts is Attachment 1.)² That may have changed with Bani Sadr's landslide victory. He may well decide to take full charge of the hostage crisis and impose his own views which may differ from the ideas of Ghotbzadeh. Therefore, our first task is to check with him any ideas on procedures and on a scenario.

In addition to our French contacts, other potential intermediaries are waiting in the wings.

Alternative Approaches

There are two views of how the release of the hostages might be negotiated:

Approach 1: The first is reflected in our approach to date and in the position given to the Iranians by Waldheim on January 12

² Attached; printed as Document 164.

(Attachment 2).³ Until now we have concentrated on ending the crisis by seeking to arrange a package in which (1) all elements of the package would be firmly agreed in advance and (2) release of all hostages would take place simultaneous with initial gestures toward the Iranians.

Approach 2: More and more, we are hearing from the Iranians that Khomeini's way of operating makes it impossible to agree in advance on all elements of a scenario. They say it will be necessary to take several steps to begin changing the climate in Iran and then to go to Khomeini for agreement to release the hostages. They admit that he may reject that step; there is no way of assuring a positive decision in advance, so this approach would involve risks on our side. The Iranians would like the maximum in gestures toward them before beginning release of the hostages—for instance, completion of an international inquiry and the acceptance of its report. Our French contacts feel we should begin with the early steps in a scenario fully agreed but leave the later steps to be worked out in detail as we proceed. At the outset, we would aim only at a general understanding of the later steps.

If we are to consider seriously moving to an approach like the second above, the issues for us are: (1) how far we can proceed before insisting on release of the hostages; (2) what means we can build into a scenario for testing at each stage the Iranians' ability to respond to our moves so we don't give away too much without a response; and (3) how we can justify each step to the American public since this approach would alter some of the strong positions we have taken previously.

Channels for Communicating

Our French contacts have suggested agreeing on an international figure, for example Sean McBride, to play the dual role as head of a commission of inquiry and as intermediary. They recognize that Sean McBride may not be acceptable to us and are prepared to try out other suggestions on the Iranians. In my view, Sean McBride is not the right person because he is too committed to his own ideas and is not likely to listen well to our concerns. I will be talking to Waldheim about other possibilities. The French contacts would be willing to assist in implementing the scenario.

The full range of potentially active channels includes the following:

—*The Panamanians and their French lawyers.* The Panamanians complicate this channel and have stumbled badly, but they have wisely taken themselves out of our most recent discussions. We probably can decouple them to a substantial degree from our talks with the French-based lawyers. The Frenchmen have two advantages. They have access

³ Attached but not printed. See footnote 9, Document 144.

to Ghotbzadeh and Bani-Sadr and they are trusted by the Iranians. Although we cannot be entirely sure they are trustworthy, they have already provided evidence that Ghotbzadeh is willing to deal with them. They are workmanlike, and one of them from a human rights background seems to have a genuine personal interest in a solution and in the long-term success of Iran's Revolution.

—*The PLO*. There are two lines: (1) through Arafat and (2) through a senior official close to the PLO representative in Tehran who has offered mediation. The PLO has excellent access to Khomeini, but they are hesitant to commit themselves until the conditions for settlement are almost perfect. They are now talking of February 15. They are also very self-interested and slow in communicating results of discussions. We do not know the extent of their influence with key Revolutionary Council members.

—*Richard Cottam*, Professor at Pittsburgh, is excellent in learning Ghotbzadeh's views and in communicating ideas from us. But communications via telephone and Ghotbzadeh's "code" are not efficient for active negotiations.

—*Waldheim* is not entirely trusted by the Iranians. He will inevitably play a role in implementing and possibly in working out the final details of a settlement because there seems to be a growing consensus that the commission of inquiry will be appointed by the Secretary General.

—*Mohammed Heykal*, renowned Egyptian journalist who is writing a book on Khomeini, is in London awaiting word from Hosain Khomeini (grandson) on a date to come to Tehran. He has received one message from Khomeini inviting him to come as soon as Khomeini leaves the hospital.

—*Sadiq al Mahdi* is a religious leader and the former Sudanese Prime Minister who visited Iran in the late fall and is ready to go back when told by the Iranians that the time is ripe.

—*Mansour Farhang*, Iranian Ambassador at the UN, is apparently trusted by Ghotbzadeh but said to have better ties with the chief presidential candidates. He is not above putting his own interpretation into the negotiations.

—*Delegation from the Islamic Conference*. We hope they will act to persuade the Iranians but we cannot expect them to negotiate on our behalf.

—*Swiss Ambassador Lang* has been excellent at communicating with the Iranians in a timely fashion, but using him as a negotiating channel might jeopardize his usefulness in humanitarian support.

A Possible Scenario

The substance of our negotiating position remains as you approved it to be given to Waldheim January 13 (Attachment 3).⁴ The issue is how to construct a series of steps which can lead to the release of the hostages and to a resolution of those U.S.-Iranian issues which must be resolved.

We would operate on the assumption that it continues to be desirable to have a variety of approaches to the Iranians, especially Khomeini if he is well enough. A number of contacts tell us that no one can ask Khomeini to do something; it is necessary to create a situation which he analyzes as ripe for a certain step. Several prominent figures are already planning visits to Tehran. As part of this process, various visitors to Iran would concentrate on two points: (1) the need for a decision to release the hostages or at least to remove them to more humane conditions in custody of responsible authorities; (2) the need to help publicly in Iran to change the climate of opinion. These people would not have a mandate to negotiate on our behalf. Most of them are already in the process of trying to go to Tehran. They would include:

—Any representatives of the Islamic Conference who decide to approach the Iranians.

—Mohammed Heykal can meet with Khomeini if he is well enough and the captors in our compound as well as with Bani Sadr.

—Andy Young could also presumably see both.

—Sadiq al Mahdi would go with significant Islamic credentials and can see Khomeini.

The following steps are an elaboration of Approach 2 above, taking into account suggestions made by our French contacts. They are developed as a controlled set of steps so each step contains a move by each side and the process can be stopped before the next step begins if Iran does not do its part.

—*Step 1* would be a combination of moves designed to confirm with President-elect Bani Sadr as well as with Ghotbzadeh that an agreed channel for managing a scenario exists and that a decision has been made on both sides to make a series of reciprocal moves that could lead to a resolution of the current problem:

—Ghotbzadeh has responded to the Jordan/Saunders trip to London by sending the French lawyers to Washington with tangible evi-

⁴ Attached; printed as Document 137.

dence of good faith. The Iranians also regard your written message to Congress as a positive step on our side.⁵

—To establish the channel, at least in the next stage, we could send a message via Cottam to Ghotbzadeh from Hamilton that we have taken the Washington talks with the Frenchmen seriously and are sending a message to Tehran with them. They could also carry a letter from Hamilton.

—To establish the procedure we could send a message via the Frenchmen to both Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh that we are prepared to begin a series of reciprocal moves. We would start by removing our objection to Waldheim's appointment of a commission of inquiry *provided* Ghotbzadeh (a) will ask Waldheim for a commission "to hear Iran's grievances and to help achieve an early end to the crisis between the U.S. and Iran" and (b) will assure Waldheim in writing that the commission will, in the course of its investigation, meet with each of the hostages.

—Since we would be changing our position to allow the commission to go to Tehran and begin work before release of the hostages, we would need to be able to say publicly that the commission is going on a fact-finding mission to Tehran to hear Iran's concerns, to meet with each of the hostages, and to report on the present situation to the Secretary General. We would object publicly to any contact with the hostages for interrogation in connection with the inquiry. We would say it remains important for us to determine the well-being of each of the hostages. The Iranians, of course, would play the appointment as a victory and the visit to the hostages as part of the inquiry into Iran's grievances.

—We would need to assure ourselves that Waldheim is prepared to cooperate with us on this basis. I would send Hal Saunders to see Rafi Ahmed and perhaps go to talk with Waldheim myself. We would need to assure that Waldheim puts a responsible person in charge of the commission and that Waldheim has some agreed control over the limits within which the commission will operate. We would want to work with him on its terms of reference. Because the Iranians have stressed that U.S. objections on technical grounds to the creation of the commission would enhance its credibility in Iran, we would have to work this out with Waldheim.

—*Step 2* would bring the commission of inquiry into being only when the Iranians had made their formal request to Waldheim under *Step 1*:

—Waldheim would announce appointment of the commission. He would act using his good offices authority and referring to his talks

⁵ For the "evidence of good faith," see footnote 2, Document 165. The reference to Carter's written message is presumably to Carter's January 21 State of the Union message to Congress. In it, Carter wrote that the United States had "no basic quarrel" with the Iranian revolution and that the threat to Iran came not from the United States but from Soviet action in the region. He also wrote: "We are prepared to work with the government of Iran to develop a new and mutually beneficial relationship" once the hostages are freed. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980-81*, Book I, pp. 163-164)

in Tehran and to the Iranian request. Before making his announcement, he would have to select a chairperson and agree on the timing of the commission's report and its terms of reference. The mandate would insure that the commission would remain a fact-finding mission as contrasted to a judicial tribunal.

—Iranian authorities would announce in the name of the Imam (with assurance that the captors in the compound will acquiesce) that the commission will have Iran's cooperation in seeking a resolution of the crisis and will meet with all the hostages individually.

—The commission would not leave New York until the Iranian announcement had been made.

—*Step 3* could involve consolidating and restraining Panama's position on the extradition proceedings. This is already underway. Since this was Ghotbzadeh's ploy, Bani Sadr may not be interested. We have no interest in it. But if some movement is necessary, the following moves may serve Iranian needs and limit the risks:

—Iranian authorities would state that they will seek extradition within the framework of Panamanian law.

—Iran would appoint a Panamanian attorney to participate in the extradition proceedings.

—The Government of Panama would ask the Shah to "place himself at the disposal of the Panamanian government." The Shah would not be arrested.

—The legal proceedings would then drag out without result.

—*Step 4* would focus on the commission's work in Tehran:

—While the commission's movements will be public, the commission would hold discussions privately in Tehran. It would go to the compound as early as possible to review evidence with the captors and to meet with each of the hostages privately, ostensibly as part of the inquiry but primarily to determine the condition of their confinement and their health.

—The commission (1) would announce that it is ready to return to New York with its report to the Secretary General on Iran's grievances and (2) would report to the Revolutionary Council, which would pass the report to Khomeini privately, that the conditions of the hostages' confinement are inhumane and that no report to the Secretary General will have credibility if these conditions are not changed.

—Khomeini would have the hostages transferred to a hospital under the shared custody of Iranian authorities and representatives of the commission.

—The commission would not take its report to New York until the hostages had been transferred from the compound.

—*Step 5*: report and release.

—The Commission would report to the Secretary General two days before Iran's religious celebration, which is scheduled the week of February 10.

—The commission could recommend that the U.S. and Iran form a joint U.S.-Iranian Commission to resolve outstanding issues between

the U.S. and Iran, including lifting the freeze on Iran's assets and resolving claims. The recommendation could stipulate a period within which work should be completed.

—Khomeini would "pardon" and expel the hostages in connection with Iran's religious celebration.

—The U.S.-Iranian talks would not start until the hostages are released.

While key Iranians would know the entire proposed scenario, we would have to start not knowing that they could deliver in the end. But each step has built into it a step that the Iranians would have to take before that step is completed or the next step taken.

One other factor could figure into the above scenario. If it seemed useful at some point, we could delay implementation of economic sanctions.

Monitoring and Negotiating the Detailed Scenario

Implementing this scenario would require someone on the ground in Tehran to reach an understanding on the scenario as an objective, to keep it on the tracks, and to make necessary adjustments as it evolves.

The Chairperson of the Commission would have to be involved, but someone else would also have to be involved. We would also need rapid communication.

To begin with, I think we should send our French contacts back to Tehran with the above scenario refined to reflect your views. If Bani Sadr agrees to proceed, when the commission goes to Tehran we would have to set up quick communication with the Frenchmen or, more likely, station one of our own people—with Bani Sadr's agreement—in the Swiss Embassy in Tehran or in a place like Paris or Kuwait with quick access to the Frenchmen.

Recommendation: That you approve our exploring the possibility of reaching an understanding with the Iranian authorities on a scenario along the lines of the above.⁶

⁶ A handwritten note on the first page reads: "Note: This approach approved in principle by the President Jan 28." As Saunders later recalled, once Carter approved, he and Vance went to New York on January 28 to brief Waldheim. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, p. 122)

169. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 28, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran—Next Steps

The strategy developed by Hal Saunders and Ham Jordan² is an intelligent and cautious outline of an approach intended to maximize our very limited access and leverage. It is unlikely in the extreme that the scenario will in fact play out in the way it is supposed to, but the key is not the validity of the scenario, it is the fact that we have concrete proposals to put before Bani Sadr (and Ghotbzadeh) which will draw them into a substantive negotiation process. We are justified in taking some calculated risks to get such a process going, but we should do so with our eyes open. So let me start by listing the grounds for skepticism:

—The political analysis by the two Frenchmen was dead wrong. They expected Habibi to win the election as a result of maneuvering by the “master political leader” Khomeini. This was their view as late as last Friday.³ There is a persistent element of wishful thinking throughout their analysis. I suspect that their scenario is cut from the same cloth.

—If the Frenchmen were right that Khomeini intended Habibi to win, then how is he likely to react to Bani Sadr's triumph? Probably by cutting him down to size as quickly as possible. If, on the other hand, the election went as scheduled, then our Frenchmen are not nearly as well plugged in as they would have us believe. Are they really in a position to work with Bani Sadr?

—The time scale is totally unrealistic. Step One (establishing the channel) must take at least a week. Step Two (setting up a commission of inquiry by the UN) can not be done in less than a week or ten days, knowing the speed of the UN and all the consultations and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 30, Iran 1/11/80–1/31/80. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote: “GS, Show to Ham & return to me.”

² See Document 168. Brzezinski sent a copy of the paper to Sick under a January 28 covering memorandum, asking for his assessment. Sick submitted this analysis to Brzezinski and a shorter one on January 29 recounting the meeting he had with Jordan at Brzezinski's request. He sent both memoranda to Aaron and Hunter under a January 31 covering memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 1/80)

³ Friday, January 25; see Document 164. Bani-Sadr was elected President that day.

preparations—including terms of reference—which would have to precede it. Step Three (the game with the Panamanians) is irrelevant. Step Four (hearings by the commission in Tehran) is allotted a week, but almost certainly could be accomplished no faster than two weeks or more. Step Five (commission report to the UN with a simultaneous resolution and release of the hostages) would add at least another week, which almost certainly puts us into March. Yet Step Five is supposed to take place during the week of February 10. That is simply impossible.

—The scenario being proposed sets up Ghotbzadeh as the goat. He is designated as the sole negotiator or point man. That probably suits his *amour propre*, but it also leaves him increasingly exposed as the logical fall guy when the knives come out in Tehran—as they will. It bothers me not at all to contemplate Ghotbzadeh's sacrifice in a noble cause, but I doubt if he will stand still for it. He is crafty and very much concerned with his political skin. He is not going to give Bani Sadr the perfect excuse to fire him after first destroying his relationship with Khomeini. A double cross is virtually inevitable at some point.

With those cautionary notes in mind, I believe this strategy is worth pursuing, but with some precautionary modifications:

—We should view Step One as the process of smoking out the new political relationships in the post-election environment. Therefore, we should establish a concrete test which will require a real decision from Tehran without tipping our entire hand from the start.

—The memo indicates that “key Iranians would know the entire proposed scenario,” presumably from the start. I do not believe we should spell out the entire scenario at the beginning, but only indicate that we are prepared to proceed with a series of concrete steps (unspecified) once a reliable channel of communication has been established.

—In Step One, we should ask that a reliable interlocutor from our side be established in Tehran—or near Tehran if that is preferred—before we can proceed. We should identify an American (Cottam?) or a third country national to establish himself in the Swiss Embassy or some other location with good and reliable communications to pursue the negotiations. They may wish to suggest an individual, and we should be flexible.

—If *both* Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh can agree on this, we would have some indication that the process had promise. If they cannot agree, we would have a better idea of what to expect.

—Only after a mutually agreed interlocutor was in place should we undertake detailed discussion of a scenario. By then we would have some tangible evidence that practical decision-making was possible on the Iranian side, and we would have removed the negotiations from

the hands of well-meaning (but possibly naive) intermediaries. They would have committed themselves to no specific concessions, but we would be assured at least of direct control of our own side of the talks.

With that modification, I think we should proceed as soon as practicable to open the dialogue.

170. Letter From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to Christian Bourguet and Hector Villalon¹

Washington, January 30, 1980

Dear Mr. Bourguet and Mr. Villalon:

First, let me say that I have both enjoyed and benefitted from the meetings that we have had over the past two weeks in London and Washington. Because they were informal and conducted privately, these meetings were helpful to me in understanding the situation that presently exists in Iran.

As friends and supporters of the Revolutionary Movement in Iran, you have been forceful and effective in outlining to me the concerns and grievances of the Iranian people. Based on your presentation and these discussions, I have come to understand the depth of the concerns of the Iranian people.

At the same time, you have been both patient and attentive as we presented the views of our own country. I am sure you now understand that we look forward to the day when we can have a relationship with the government and people of Iran based on equality and mutual respect.

When you return to Iran, I hope that you will convey to President-Elect Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh that our government is prepared to work with the government of Iran to resolve the present crisis quickly on an honorable basis and is prepared to proceed toward its resolution through a series of reciprocal steps.

I believe you to be men of great integrity and intellect whose only interest in this matter is to see the present problems between Iran and the United States peacefully resolved. On behalf of our government, I

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 1/80. No classification marking.

would be pleased if you could continue and expand on this informal dialogue.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Jordan
Chief-of-Staff to the President

171. Memorandum for the Record by Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, January 30, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation of 29 January 1980

1. We talked about the Canadian Six operation² and I gave some details on how that went. There was obvious pleasure at the success of this operation. [*portion marking not declassified*]

2. I discussed the other hostages and, in connection with this, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] I urged more attention be given to the plight of the hostages in our public releases. [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. I then expressed my concern that, despite our hopes, Bani Sadr's election did not necessarily mean that he would be able to take charge and work a release for the hostages. I felt that we needed to have a rescue operation capability on standby for situations such as the killing of some hostages, a prolonged stalemate for all of them, or the release of most but continued detention of the others for an indefinite period of time. I said that the key risk in the present operational plan was loss of surprise. I had rather good confidence once the rescue force reached the walls of the Embassy compound. The weak points were the number of aircraft that had to surreptitiously enter Iran and the capture of the airfield at Nain. I pointed out that's why we wanted to

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings With Various Officials and Subjects. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

² On January 29 the six Americans hidden by the Canadian Embassy in Tehran left Iran through the Tehran airport under false identification provided by the Canadian Government. The Department's briefing of the press on their escape and on the closing of the Canadian Embassy in Tehran on January 28 is reported in telegram 25394 to Ottawa, January 29. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800051–0921)

fly our aircraft to look for a substitute landing place. I thought the probability of discovery was low, with the highest risk being danger of crackup on landing. That is one reason we want to do it in full moonlight. Our next opportunity, then, would be the end of February. [*portion marking not declassified*]

I urged that we continue to plan for this and that the Defense Department be encouraged to continue their planning. I pointed out that our exploratory flight, among other things, might just prod the Defense Department into finding still some different solution to this part of the problem. There was agreement that we should continue and the Defense Department should continue, and that there would be a Jones/Turner briefing on this sometime in a couple of weeks—well before a decision on the TWIN OTTER operation for the end of the month had to be made. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Stansfield Turner³

³ An unknown hand signed for Turner above his typed signature.

172. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, January 31, 1980, 9–10:10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
Harold Saunders
Richard Cooper

Defense

W. Graham Clayton
William Perry

Commerce

Secretary Philip Klutznick
Homer Moyers

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski**
David Aaron***
Joseph Onek*
Hedley Donovan

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 99, Meetings File, 1/30 and 31/80 SCC re Iran. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "David, J" in the upper right corner.

JCS
General John Pustay

CIA
Frank Carlucci

Treasury
Secretary William Miller*

Justice
Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti*

Energy
John Sawhill*

Agriculture
James Williams*

*Domestic Issues Only

**Departed at 9:30 a.m.

***Chaired from 9:30 a.m.

Stuart Eizenstat*
Henry Owen*

NSC
Colonel William Odom
Gary Sick
Thomas Thornton

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Domestic Issues:

1. *Sanctions*. Dr. Brzezinski reported that the President will sign the Executive Order on sanctions against Iran.² It will be handled without fanfare and simply published in the *Federal Register*. We will inform the allies and ask them for acts of solidarity. We will not twist their arms.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Secretary Miller noted that the regulations as now drafted call for U.S. subsidiaries abroad to be included in the Iran sanctions. He thought this would create problems with a number of our friends who are concerned with the extraterritoriality question. For example, Ambassador Brewster in London reported yesterday that the extraterritoriality issue would cause problems with the UK. There was some discussion about the pros and cons, and the SCC agreed unanimously that the provisions should be removed from the regulations and that this would be consistent with the President's decision not to expend political capi-

² In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Monday ok." Monday, February 4. According to an undated memorandum from Cutler to Carter, which transmitted a draft of the Executive Order and the related Report to Congress, Cutler wrote: "Because of possible adverse reaction from our allies, the SCC decided not to apply the sanctions to the *foreign subsidiaries* of U.S. companies not engaged in banking. The sanctions would, however, apply to the foreign subsidiaries of banks." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Iran 3/80) As to whether the announcement would be low-key, Carter wrote, in the left margin of the Summary of Conclusions of the January 29 SCC meeting: "We should impose them & let it be known that they have, in effect, already been in effect." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, SCC Meeting #263 held 1/29/80) Carter signed Executive Order 12205 on April 7. See Document 246.

tal with the allies on this issue. The effect of removal would be that subsidiaries of American corporations abroad would not at this time be involved in the sanctions against Iran.³ (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

5. *Iranian Oil*. The Department of Energy reported that it is their understanding, particularly on the basis of talks with Shell executives, that the problem of declining oil production in Iran is not so much a need for drilling to reduce water in the wells as it is morale, labor, and mismanagement. The Iranians have not requested drilling equipment, so the decision to provide it or not is moot. Secretary Miller said he had quite a different story from Exxon who has requested a license for spare parts on oil drilling equipment⁴ and who claims that there is a critical situation. It was agreed that Energy and Treasury would get together to try and get the true story and report back to the SCC. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

³ Carter approved the item with a checkmark, underlined the phrases “American corporations abroad” and “in the sanctions against Iran,” and then wrote in the left margin: “Legally, no—strong persuasion, yes.” Aaron relayed this Presidential decision to Vance, Miller, Brown, Civiletti, Klutznick, Duncan, and Turner in a February 1 memorandum. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 99, Meetings File, 1/30 and 31/80 SCC re Iran)

⁴ Carter underlined the phrase “a license for spare parts on oil drilling equipment” and wrote in the margin “no.”

173. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, February 1, 1980

1. I asked this morning for a brief meeting with Ghotbzadeh which was immediately granted, although my colleagues have waited several weeks for an appointment. (I think that he values these contacts because they are businesslike and always brief.) Ghotbzadeh received me with a somber and detached air that eloquently expressed his miserable score of 38,000 votes, that is 1/4 of 1% of the electorate.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 8. Confidential. The text is a typed copy of the Swiss telegram from Tehran bearing no identifying number or time of dispatch. All subsequent messages from Lang went by this channel.

2. Having read the message (our appeal to limit the reaction to the Canadian affair),² he erupted, saying that the conduct of the Canadian Government was scandalous and that the affair risked blowing everything up at a time that he was making slow but sure progress. Not only did they commit illegal acts, but, moreover, they claimed victory and the government sent congratulations to the Canadian diplomats. This affair is going to have disastrous consequences for the hostages. (His remarks correspond more or less to the press conference that he gave yesterday morning. Swiss journalist Hottinger was there.) I told him that the affair was unfortunately exploited by the mass media. Ghotbzadeh immediately contradicted me, saying that it was not true. The Canadian Government had exploited the affair for reasons of internal politics.³ There had been a declaration by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I gave him some information then to show him how the press had behaved reasonably, quite differently from what he believed.

He remarked that if only there had not been this publicity and these governmental declarations that obliged him to make a violent counterattack.

3. While agreeing completely with him on the need for discretion and silence that was broken by the mass media, I put to him some arguments recalling what he had said in his press conference. What would he have done in the place of the Canadian Ambassador if he were faced with the following questions? What was the status of the six in Iran? Clearly, they were diplomats living on Iranian territory with the agreement of the Iranian Government and therefore enjoying privileges and immunities which would permit them to leave the country. What would you have wanted them to do? That they should go politely to ask the students on the compound with whom Ghotbzadeh himself has had little evidence of cooperation? Would anyone have given them passports and their personal effects? Should the Canadian

² In telegram 25212 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran, January 29, the Department asked Laingen to inform Ghotbzadeh that the United States was "concerned that the press story could be misinterpreted by those occupying our Embassy and that it could have adverse consequences in Tehran for a speedy resolution to the crisis. Therefore, we hope that the Government of Iran will take whatever steps possible to minimize adverse publicity and reaction in Iran that might negatively affect the prospects for an end to the crisis." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800051-0234)

³ Bourguet and Villalon had explained to "Ghotbzadeh that Canadian politics lay behind the affair, implying that the U.S. was being manipulated for political purposes by the Canadian Government." Ghotbzadeh promised to try and control Iranian public pressure and asked that the United States do the same. (Memorandum for the Record, January 30; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 1/80)

Ambassador have asked for a meeting with the Revolutionary Council to request exit visas for the six to leave the country inasmuch as he did not have their papers? What would have been the position of Ghotbzadeh or the Revolutionary Council in terms of internal politics if the request had been made? An impossible situation, a true dilemma that the Canadian Ambassador and probably every Ambassador would want to avoid. It was necessary to find a way out which I imagine required creating identities which did not correspond to reality. But Ghotbzadeh himself and other Iranians pursued by Savak, didn't they benefit from Syrian, Algerian and other passports which did not correspond to reality? What was the answer to this problem? Ghotbzadeh did not, of course, respond directly to my questions but said, "But at least they should not have made publicity and cries of victory over there." In that he is, this time, completely right.

The American telegram is in this sense very good but the evil has been done. It is necessary, however, to avoid from the American side all expressions of joy and of victory. They should be restrained and the six should take into account that the 50 and Laingen and his two colleagues remain in Tehran.

Ghotbzadeh was as always very correct and agreeable with me. I asked him how he saw the development of the situation, knowing well that the political campaign had absorbed him. "I can't see it very clearly," he said. It is necessary to wait to see what will be the reaction of the Canadian affair. (In this connection, we note that the students on the compound have been much more restrained and cool than Ghotbzadeh who might intend to use the affair for political reasons, while the students have said that the treatment of the hostages will not be harsher because of the affair.) On the results of the campaign, Ghotbzadeh said that he had not been able to do anything because he had dedicated himself completely to the question of the hostages. (In other words, he said that the U.S. is responsible for his defeat.)

174. Draft Message From the Department of State to the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹

Washington, February 3, 1980

1. We would be grateful if Ambassador Lang could deliver the two separate messages contained in this telegram to Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh and to President-elect Bani-Sadr or his associate, Salamatian. We very much hope this will give Ambassador Lang occasion for direct meeting with Bani-Sadr himself.

2. The first message is a statement of the U.S. position which was communicated to Secretary-General Waldheim by Secretary Vance for Ambassador Farhang early in January.² We are uncertain whether the statement reached Tehran. The last point in the statement would appear to be responsive to Iranian desires for an expression of the attitude of the U.S. towards the revolutionary government. (In the meeting with Bani-Sadr, Ambassador Lang might make specific reference to paragraph 6 in relation to Bani-Sadr's call for a U.S. expression of views towards Iran during his American TV interview on February 3.)³ Begin text: (insert from attachment) End text.

3. The second message presents information on Soviet military deployments relating to Iran. Begin text: In the current circumstances of tension in the Middle East and combat in Afghanistan, the American Government has tried to keep thoroughly abreast of the disposition of Soviet forces in the region. Besides following Soviet moves related to Afghanistan, there has been high interest in the status of Soviet ground and air forces adjacent to Turkey and Iran.

Until January, Soviet units in the Transcaucasus were essentially quiet with no change in their normal state of very low readiness for action. During January this changed.

Steps have been started to raise manpower and readiness levels for all of the approximately one dozen Soviet divisions stretched out between Tbilisi and Baku. A number of these units have begun training

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Box 8, Swiss Channel. Secret. Attached to a February 7 Summary of Report from Ambassador Lang on his meetings with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, drafted by Precht. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 2) The text is the cable as approved for the Swiss Embassy in Washington to transmit to the Swiss Embassy in Tehran. All subsequent messages to Lang went by this channel.

² Attached; printed as Document 137.

³ Bani-Sadr appeared on CBS's "Issues and Answers" on February 3. No transcript of this interview has been found, but it was summarized in Graham Hovey, "Bani-Sadr Firm on Iran Demands," *New York Times*, February 4, 1980, p. A6.

exercises and elements of almost all of them seem to be out of their regular garrison areas. Air force units and the one airborne division in the Transcaucasus seem to be in a normal state. The same appears true for naval units in the Caspian Sea.

These Soviet moves should probably be interpreted as preparations for contingencies, rather than as signs of any decision in Moscow to undertake operations in the next months against Iran. However, the USSR remains worried about instability on its borders, especially now when it is engaged in war in nearby Afghanistan. It probably wants to be ready to take any action that it deems necessary in the light of future developments in northern Iran or in the Persian Gulf region. There have been reports that the Soviets have not been willing to accept Iran's renunciation of those parts of the 1921 Iran-USSR treaty which give to the USSR certain rights of military intervention in Iran. Can the GOI confirm these reports, and if so, how does Iran interpret the Soviet position? End text.

4. We would like Ambassador Lang to deliver the following two-point message only to Bani-Sadr, or, if it is impossible to see him, Salamati. First, we have seen the recent article by the Egyptian journalist Heikal.⁴ We would appreciate knowing whether Bani-Sadr has been in recent touch with Heikal and whether what Heikal has to say coincides with Bani-Sadr's views. Second, we listened with great interest to the Bani-Sadr television interview.

We earnestly hope that we can move with great speed to resolve it; further delay serves the interests of neither Iran nor the United States and will make a solution more difficult.

⁴ Presumably a reference to Heikal's front-page article in the London *Sunday Times*. ("Egyptian Journalist Cites Progress in Hostage Crisis," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1980, p. A18)

175. Message From Iranian President Bani-Sadr Transmitted Through Egyptian Journalist Mohammed Heykal¹

Cairo, February 3, 1980, 1842Z

Heykal left London 2 Feb for Cairo where will remain until shortly before 26 Feb when will go Tehran to cover Iranian parliamentary election. Heykal remains willing act as go between USG and Khomeini.

2. Heykal has received following message from Bani-Sadr and Ahmad Khomeini, Ayatollah Khomeini's son. Bani-Sadr and Ahmad Khomeini understand that this message is for the USG, in fact Bani-Sadr asks that it be given directly to the President. According to Marwan, this message was delivered to Heykal in London by personal messenger from Tehran.

A. The U.S. hostage situation will be the first order of business after the new Iranian Government is formed on 26 February. (When asked why this could not take place sooner, Bani-Sadr said he could do nothing until Acting Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh has been removed from this job and given another. He said Ayatollah Khomeini has agreed to this removal.)

B. The condition of the hostages has greatly improved since the Iranian election. An Iranian medical doctor has been assigned to stay with them and care for them on orders direct from Khomeini.

C. Very shortly after 26 February, Asghar Moussavi-Khoeini, the link between the "students" and Khomeini, will make a public announcement that all of the U.S. hostages are henceforth under the direct control of Ayatollah Khomeini. (They are, of course, now; but this public statement will facilitate later negotiations.)

D. Within a very few days after Khoeini makes this announcement, the hostages will be removed from the Embassy and located in some unspecified neutral place in Tehran where U.S. medical doctors will be allowed access to them. Meanwhile, Khomeini will officially turn over negotiations on the hostages to Bani-Sadr.

E. The hostages will be allowed to leave Iran after the committee UN Secretary Waldheim appoints has met. Bani-Sadr insists, however, that this committee be "political" and not "administrative." That is, its members must be official representatives of their governments and not just individuals appointed by Waldheim. Bani-Sadr understands and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80. Secret; Sensitive; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. The transmission and routing information is missing in the original.

accepts that the Shah will not come to Iran nor appear directly before the Waldheim committee.²

F. Bani-Sadr appreciates the statements and actions of the President and the administration over the past two weeks, although he feels there have been too many different channels involved. He requests that the President continue not to apply sanctions and particularly requests that the administration and the U.S. media not depict him as a “moderate” and as having views which conflict with those of the “students.” He says to “forget about” his being a moderate.

3. Marwan said Heykal is optimistic that the hostages will be released in March. He thinks Bani-Sadr and others have a clear appreciation of the Soviet threat to Iran as a result of the Afghanistan invasion. Marwan also told [*less than 1 line not declassified*], although he (Marwan) was not supposed to pass this on, Heykal’s Sunday *Times* piece (ref B)³ was written at the direct request of Bani-Sadr.

4. Marwan will be in London through 6 Feb. (We have his onward schedule.) Pls advise what you wish transmitted back to Heykal by this route.

5. [Omission is in the original.]

End of message.

² Next to a line drawn beside paragraphs C, D, and E, an unknown hand wrote: “Bani-Sadr’s scenario.”

³ Not attached. See footnote 4, Document 174.

176. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 4, 1980

I hope that you will have a chance to review this before our 2:00 meeting on the hostage situation.² It may be a bit disjointed, but analyzes frankly the situation that we face.

Our objective continues to be to get the hostages out safely at the earliest possible date without having to take risks that are unacceptable. If anything, our objective has been modified since the Afghanistan invasion to include, "and in a way that does not jeopardize the possibility of a reconciliation of US-Iranian relations".³ Politically, I believe that we continue to have some flexibility on what we are able to do in the course of working toward the release of the hostages. The American people will tolerate a good deal more now than they would have before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan IF we have the successful resolution of the hostage situation.

Let me review briefly what we know for a fact and those things that we are not sure of:

1. *That in the final analysis, only Khomeini can insure the safe release of the hostages.* It is doubtful that Bani-Sadr can get the militants to release them and very, very doubtful that Ghotbzadeh can get them released.

2. That a large number of the Revolutionary Council—possibly all—see the need to resolve the hostage situation, and that this includes the clerics as well as the "European group".

3. That at least among the European group and other members of the Revolutionary Council, a clear consensus is emerging as to *how* the

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 2/80. Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter met with Vance, Aaron, and Jordan from 1:58 until 2:22 p.m. (Carter Library) In his memoir, Carter wrote that the purpose of the meeting was "to get an update on the Iranian response." "Apparently," he wrote, "Bani-Sadr is sending word to us directly that he wants to proceed with a resolution of the hostage question. His inclination is to wait until after the 26th of February, when he can put his government together. (He also said he wanted to get rid of Ghotbzadeh.) He [Bani-Sadr] does not want us to identify him as a friend of the United States or as a moderate. He wants to be known as a revolutionary protecting the interests of Iran against both superpowers' threats. We decided to maintain our multiple approaches to Iran." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 485) For Bani-Sadr's message, see Document 175.

³ The quoted phrase represents Jordan's perception of how the December 27 Finding had changed. See Document 110.

situation should be resolved. It recognizes that the Shah will not be returned, but places special emphasis on the international tribunal, the right of Iran to seek extradition of the Shah, to seek the legal recovery of his “stolen monies” and public statements from the United States that suggest that we are willing to develop a relationship which acknowledges both the “equality” of Iran and is based on “mutual respect”.

4. That political factors and personal animosity between Ghotbzadeh and Bani-Sadr have possibly resulted in a situation whereby although there is general consensus as to “how”, there is not a consensus as to “who” or “when”. Ghotbzadeh wants to do it quickly and be personally involved for obvious reasons, and Bani-Sadr prefers to wait until after he takes power (at least that is the message from the Egyptian which we need to confirm).⁴

5. That although Ghotbzadeh is personally unpopular, he probably has the support of Beheshti and other members of the Revolutionary Council who are against Bani-Sadr for other reasons. It is impossible to discern as to whether the support for Ghotbzadeh reflects a desire to resolve the situation quickly or whether they simply want to deprive Bani-Sadr of the personal satisfaction of resolving it when he takes over.

6. That while Bani-Sadr might not like Ghotbzadeh, he has let us know through two very direct channels—Mrs. Nobari and Ambassador Lang that we were to continue to deal with Ghotbzadeh, but that he wanted to be kept informed. He probably recognizes the reality of the situation, and while not liking it is reconciled to it.

7. That while the Foreign Minister is disliked by almost everyone, those same people recognize that he has a personal relationship with Khomeini that cannot be ignored or taken lightly.

It seems to me that the following is and should be our posture:

—That we should continue to pursue an early release of the hostages through Ghotbzadeh, but not at the expense of our relationship with Bani-Sadr.

—That we should keep Bani-Sadr informed of our activities.

—That if it ever became a choice of having to choose between Ghotbzadeh and Bani-Sadr, we would have to go with Bani-Sadr.

—That we should work to try to avoid that choice by a reconciliation of their views, in this respect the French contacts are invaluable.

—That to put Ghotbzadeh on “hold” now has a number of problems for us:

⁴ See Document 175.

1. We cannot make a conscious decision to wait until after Bani-Sadr takes office in late February to try to resolve the present crisis.

2. The delay also risks the chance that something could happen to Khomeini, who by all accounts will have to be personally involved in freeing the hostages from the compound.

3. That Bani-Sadr does not know what the political situation will be when he takes office. It could very well be that resolving the hostage situation will be more difficult for him then than it is for Ghotbzadeh now.

It might be possible through the French contacts and the political leverage of the Revolutionary Council to create a situation where Bani-Sadr has no choice but to tolerate/actively cooperate in pursuing a strategy of early release. In fairness to Bani-Sadr, he may think that only he will have the muscle and the influence to resolve the crisis, and that it is less a matter of who gets the credit but more a matter of who can pull it off.

Finally, you should read the enclosed Memcon from Cottam.⁵ Cottam says that Ghotbzadeh could not risk direct contact with us without the knowledge of Bani-Sadr, the Revolutionary Council and even Khomeini. He says that if we had an opportunity for direct contact, we would have to take advantage of it.

One final comment about our French contacts, particularly Mr. B. They are not the stooges of Ghotbzadeh. One preferred Habibi for President and the other Bani-Sadr. They have been dealing with the Foreign Minister because they have been told to by the Revolutionary Council and by Ghotbzadeh. They told me last weekend that if Ghotbzadeh tried to block them from seeing Bani-Sadr or the other members of the Revolutionary Council, they would "wash their hands of this matter".

The Iranian experts at the State Department who have seen a flurry of stories and hints coming out of Tehran and the UN think strongly that the French proposal which we were involved in has been seen and is being discussed and debated by different members of the Revolutionary Council. They assume that Bani-Sadr would have to be a part of any such discussion. All of the various stories coming out which contain precise details are generally compatible with the scenario that we jointly evolved.

⁵ Not attached.

Attachment

Press Guidance⁶

Washington, undated

PRESS GUIDANCE

Steps Toward Release of the Hostages

Present situation: Iranians State Decision to Form a Commission

- Iran: Revolutionary Council has decided that a commission of inquiry should be formed.
- NOTE: The scenario is not triggered until Iran sends pre-arranged request to SYG Waldheim. The SYG therefore has control over launching the scenario.
- U.S.: —No Iranian decision has been communicated to us nor, as far as we know, to the UN.
—If a proposal is made, we will state our position.
- U.N.: Provides no substantive response until a formal Iranian request along agreed lines is received.

Step II—1 and 2: Iranian Request that a Commission be formed.

Iran requests SYG Waldheim establish a Commission of Inquiry “to hear Iran’s grievances and to allow an early solution to the crisis between Iran and the United States” and states Iran’s desire to have the Commission speak to each of the hostages.

Alternatively: “. . . to investigate the grievances of both sides.”

- NOTE: This would trigger the scenario.
- U.S.: —The U.S. will discuss the Iranian request with the Secretary General. We will reserve our comments until we know what the terms of reference of the Commission will be.
—You have heard our position many times before. I need not repeat it.
—We support any steps by the UN that might lead to the release of the hostages while protecting essential international principles.

⁶ Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed “C” in the upper right corner.

177. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 6, 1980

Over ten days ago, you and Secretary Vance signed off on the proposal that we developed with our French friends.² Based on all that we have seen in the past 48 hours, we have good reason to believe that Bani-Sadr and the Revolutionary Council have accepted the bulk of our proposal. We are awaiting a response through the Swiss³ which we should get by mid-morning.

Once we agree to this scenario, we will have to live with it and had best all understand it and the accompanying risks.

A few points that should be made:

1. *This whole effort is foolish and suicidal unless you accept/believe that the leadership of Iran desires to resolve the hostage crisis peacefully.* I believe that they do, although no one knows the real feelings of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The indications from Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, and the Revolutionary Council are certainly positive in this regard. I am assuming that they will inform Khomeini at some point of their intentions and he will avoid responsibility for the plan (which might be an admission of a mistake) by taking the position that it is a decision which will have to be made by the Revolutionary Council and the elected leadership of the country.

2. While the scenario that has been developed is precise in terms of reciprocal steps, we have to realize the good possibility that Ghotbzadeh or Bani-Sadr will deviate from the scenario along the way for personal or political benefit. We should not forget that this whole

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 2/80. Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² See Document 168.

³ The Department informed Lang on February 5 that Bourguet and Villalon wished to communicate with the Department through him and queried Lang to determine whether Iran proposed any possible changes in the scenario and, if so, how to handle this. Lang was also given a copy of telegram 1314 from London (see Document 157). (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 2) Lang responded with a detailed response on February 6. (Ibid.) The Department then asked Lang to meet with Bourguet and Villalon on February 7. (February 6; *ibid.*) Lang met with Bani-Sadr and Salamatian on February 6, handing them the messages in Document 174, which they read "with very great interest." Ghotbzadeh stated that he placed the "highest price" on the report on Soviet deployments. (Summary of Report from Lang on his meetings with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, February 7; Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler, Box 2)

thing will be played out at a time when the election of the constituent assembly is taking place and while different forces in the country are vying for Cabinet positions, etc.

While I trust my French friends, there is no basis for trusting Ghotbzadeh or Bani-Sadr. Having sounded that caution, it is an encouraging sign that the early signals out of Tehran conform precisely with our plan—for example, the Revolutionary Council called for the establishment of a “commission” instead of a tribunal. This was a point that we made strongly with our French friends and that seems to have been accepted by the Iranian leadership.

3. Because we have been dealing through a third party, it is difficult to have a precise understanding of what is and is not acceptable behavior by both parties. The French have done an excellent job in conveying the concerns and problems of both sides, but there is no substitute for direct contact and understanding. In this regard, I fully anticipate this thing falling apart a couple of times and having to be put back together. Direct contact at that time (secretly) might be good and necessary.

4. We have to be firm from the outset in utilizing the leverage provided us in the reciprocal steps. Let me give you a specific and likely example. The political benefit to Bani-Sadr occurs on the front-end at the creation of the Commission and its travel to Tehran. The risk that we take is also on the front-end when we have to abandon the principle of “simultaneous action”. The difficult part of the scenario for Bani-Sadr will be the removal of the hostages from the compound to the hospital. So, if we began the scenario without nailing down a time frame, the Commission could travel to Tehran, Bani-Sadr could reap the political benefit and because of circumstances that we can not foresee at this time, Bani-Sadr could get cold feet and either not remove the hostages to the hospital or let the thing drag on for weeks. The American people will tolerate us taking some risks and a change in our position as long as progress seems to be taking place, but they will not tolerate very long delays. For that reason, we need to use—through Waldheim—the date for the establishment of the Commission to insure a time frame for the release. We will also work this point with our French friends when we meet with them this weekend.

5. Quite frankly, the only two people now that understand both the scenario in detail and its problems/pitfalls are Hal Saunders and myself. We need for the Secretary, the Vice-President, Zbig, the First Lady and you to understand it in some detail. For that reason, I would recommend that we have a very private session for 30–45 minutes to walk through the scenario.⁴ Not only so everyone will understand it—

⁴ According to the President’s Daily Diary, Carter met with Vance, Mondale, Saunders, Brzezinski, and Jordan on February 7 from 5:30 until 6:15 p.m. (Carter Library) No other record of this meeting has been found.

which is important—but also so that we take the proper public posture that takes into account the risks that we are taking but also does not undermine or complicate the scenario that we agree upon.

Since so much is happening today which may prove important and relevant to that discussion, possibly tomorrow would be better for a meeting.

178. Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 8, 1980

Based on both events of the past three days² and also the information that has been developed by our French friends, I believe that you can conclude that Bani-Sadr is taking on the militants for one or both of the following reasons:

—He cannot let their challenge to him go unanswered. If he did, whatever hope he has to be a strong and effective ruler of Iran would be sacrificed.

—“Taking on the students” has the support of the vast majority of the Iranian people. He probably considers his election victory a mandate for resolving the hostage crisis.

Because of political circumstances there and Bani-Sadr’s own personality (he is known for being impetuous), it could easily develop that he would see an immediate need to resolve the hostage situation outside of the scenario that we have been working on and that is presently being negotiated. It would seem to be in our own interest in furthering that possibility to give him the assurances that the various steps of the scenario which are politically important to Iran would take place anyway and that we would be reasonable in dealing with our other bilateral problems.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 2/80. Eyes Only. Carter initialed “C” in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² See footnote 3, Document 177. In a February 8 late afternoon message, Lang reported that the Revolutionary Council had accepted the scenario as altered by Bourguet and Villalon and that details of the alterations would come later. He also reported Ghotbzadeh’s complaints about *Newsweek* and *Time* magazine articles on the Canadian role in the escape of the six Americans. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 8, Swiss Channel)

For that reason, I have been searching for some way to reach out a friendly hand without either embarrassing him or compromising our own posture.

Possibly an oral message which could be given to him from you through the Swiss ambassador which would contain these elements or some combination of them:

- An expression of goodwill
- Mutual interest to resolve our differences
- We have agreed to reciprocal steps, but if the President ever decided to move unilaterally on resolving the hostage situation, we would proceed with the reciprocal steps agreed upon and be reasonable in resolving the other issues which are important to both countries
- If direct private contact with the President (Bani-Sadr) is ever desired, you would be willing to send an emissary to Tehran to meet secretly with him

There may be a different/better way to do this, but it seems that we need to reinforce whatever desire he may have to proceed to resolve the hostage situation.

179. Telegram From the British Embassy in the United States to the Department of State¹

Washington, February 10, 1980, 1712Z

Please pass following to Iran Task Force, Operations Centre, State Dept. Following received from British Embassy Tehran. Begins:

Secret. Fm: Tehran 100805Z Feb 80. To: Immediate FCO. Telegram Number 146 of 10 February. Info Immediate Washington.

MIPT: US Embassy—Laingen.

1. The Danish Ambassador was telephoned on Friday, and again yesterday afternoon² by Howland, one of Laingen's companions in the MFA. Howland was hurried and furtive and was clearly making the call clandestinely. He said that Laingen had been told officially that all his contacts with the outside world (but the Danish Ambassador is not sure if this includes newspapers and radio) were being cut in

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 1, Iran NODIS Cables Feb 1980. Secret; UK Secret; Nodis; Immediate.

² February 8 and 9.

retaliation for the Canadian affair.³ He would be allowed no letters, telex, telephone calls or visitors. Laingen asked in the first call that the US administration should protest against this treatment and, in the second call, that they should authorise him to request formally to be permitted to leave Iran.

2. The Danish Ambassador is naturally passing this on to the Americans through his channels (but not, I think, to other community colleagues here) and it is not for us to intervene. Nevertheless he and I have discussed the question. We wonder whether it would in fact be wise to make an oral protest. There is the problem of how the US authorities would have come by the knowledge on which the protest was based (though their own direct telex and telephone links with Laingen have presumably been cut off, which might be enough). It would be tempting, and perhaps more effective, to place restrictions on the Iranian Chargé and staff in Washington without explanation, except reciprocity. Nor are we sure what Laingen has in mind in making his second request, since it seems out of character for him to be ready to abandon his staff in the Embassy. We can only presume that he wishes to put the Iranian Government in the position of refusing his departure, thereby making clear that he is a prisoner. (Ghotbzadeh referred to him the other day after the Canadian affair as a hostage, drawing a distinction between him and the six Americans who escaped, a change from the MFA's earlier claim that he was a guest who was free to leave, although his safety outside the MFA could not be assured). If that is Laingen's intention he may have in mind that such clarification would strengthen the grounds for protest or, as a pure speculation, he might regard it as releasing him from his de facto (underlined) parole and freeing him to attempt an escape. Alternatively he might be courting removal from the MFA to the Embassy to join his staff.

3. I suspect that these restrictions are a piece of spite by Ghotbzadeh who, when he saw the press after the Canadian affair, was clearly very angry. If they were to be effective as retaliation, he would surely have to publicise them but he has not. Ghotbzadeh may well also have seen ill-judged and, I presume, untrue accounts in *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* suggesting that the Canadian Ambassador used visits to the MFA to study its visa and passport procedures. However Ghotbzadeh may well not last long under Bani-Sadr. It might be as well to wait a bit to see.

Graham

Ends.

³ Danish Ambassador to the United States Otto R. Borsch discussed Laingen's situation personally with Constable on February 9 and with Clement on February 10. (Memoranda of conversation; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 31, Subject File, Iran 2/80)

180. Telegram From the Embassy in Switzerland to the Department of State¹

Bern, February 10, 1980, 1923Z

781. Eyes only for President, Secretaries Vance and Christopher, Dr. Brzezinski from Jordan and Saunders. Subject: Scenario for Resolving Hostage Crisis.

1. S—Entire text.

2. We met our contacts two hours Saturday midnight and all day Sunday.² As a result, we believe we have an acceptable revised scenario (text below). The main lines are as you earlier approved³ with one addition—statements by Presidents Carter and Bani-Sadr. The changes primarily develop a more exact schedule of steps for establishing the Commission and a more precise description of events surrounding the end of the Commission's work and the release of the hostages. Although the exact time it will take to play out this scenario cannot be determined now, we have stressed that the period must be short, and it looks to us as if the scenario should be completed in something less than three weeks from today.

3. One important proposal outside the scenario below is that Jordan (with Saunders) meet secretly with Ghotbzadeh in Paris next Sunday.⁴ He is taking a trip to Athens, Rome, and Paris on official Iranian business of various kinds. The purposes of the meeting would be (a) to demonstrate good faith on both sides; (b) to confirm or refine the last stages of the scenario, hopefully to get Ghotbzadeh's agreement to direct release of the hostages rather than going through the intermediate stage of moving them to a hospital in Tehran; (c) to reach understanding on the contents of the two Presidential statements now added to the scenario; (d) to review any details on the remainder of the scenario. We recognize there are risks in such a meeting because it

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80. Secret; Nodis; Cherokee; Flash. An unknown hand wrote "advance copy" in the upper right corner. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² February 9 and 10. Saunders, Precht, and Jordan met with Bourguet and Villalon at the Bellevue Hotel in Bern. (*Crisis*, p. 150) Sick later complained to Brzezinski that he had been cut out of the Bourguet and Villalon scenario and his inclusion needed to be clarified in order to maintain his credibility. (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, February 11; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 2/80)

³ See Document 168.

⁴ February 17.

may leak, but we recommend that it take place in order to assure ourselves on the release of our people. It will be in the mutual interest of both parties to keep this secret. Since we have asked for direct contact and they have responded positively, it might be a setback if we shied away now.

4. We propose the following immediate steps:

—Jordan and Saunders would arrive in New York by 0900 Monday⁵ and see Waldheim as early as possible, with Secretary Vance if at all possible. (If this is approved, we hope the Secretary might call Waldheim Sunday and arrange this appointment secretly at Waldheim's residence.)

—Precht and interpreter would move to Paris as point of communication with our French contacts throughout the week and to arrange the Sunday meeting. Our contacts will be on the phone to Tehran from Paris daily, and direct communication may be essential in keeping this scenario on the tracks.

—It would be extremely helpful if Hamilton could call around midnight here (1800 Washington time) to determine whether or not to proceed on the basis of this message.

5. We want to emphasize that it is essential to do everything possible to limit knowledge on our side about the meeting next Sunday.

6. Begin text.

Revised Scenario

I. Principles and Procedures (no change from earlier draft)

The United States and Iran agree:

1. To accept the principle of the establishment of a scenario, the first stages of which would be defined precisely, and the subsequent stages would be defined in detail as events evolve;

2. To manage this scenario with the help of persons agreed to by both sides;

3. To proceed, within the framework of this scenario, by stages each involving reciprocal actions to be defined in advance;

4. That these points are intended to allow the earliest possible resolution of the present crisis by peaceful means.

II. Establishment of a Commission of Inquiry (changes show detailed sequence of events—all times below are New York time)

1. It is agreed in the approval of this scenario that the Secretary-General of the United Nations should establish a Commission of

⁵ February 11.

Inquiry to hear Iran's grievances and to allow an early solution of the crisis between Iran and the U.S. and that Iran desires to have the Commission speak to each of the hostages.

2. Monday night: Secretary-General Waldheim sends a message to Ghotbzadeh confirming his readiness to send to Iran within a week the Commission of 5–7 members which he discussed in Tehran early in January “to hear Iran's grievances and to allow an early solution of the crisis between Iran and the U.S.”⁶

3. Tuesday: Ghotbzadeh would respond by agreeing that the Commission should come to Tehran within a week and stating Iran's desire to have the Commission speak to each of the hostages.⁷

4. Tuesday night: The U.S. would remove its objections to the establishment of this Commission by a direct private communication to the Secretary-General.⁸ In that communication, the U.S. would state importance that Commission look into the grievances of both sides and work for early release of the hostages. At this time, the U.S. would take the following position publicly: The U.S. will discuss with the Secretary-General the concept of a Commission. The U.S. will reserve its comment until it knows what the terms of reference of the Commission will be. The U.S. has stated its position many times before and need not repeat it. While we have opposed the formation of a Commission under past conditions, we would support any steps by the UN that might lead to the release of the hostages while protecting essential international principles.

5. Tuesday night: Secretary-General Waldheim sends a second message to Ghotbzadeh which would (a) state briefly the purpose of

⁶ Waldheim confirmed to Ghotbzadeh his intention to establish a commission on February 13, reiterating the sentences in this step of this scenario. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 8, UN and Security Channel) A report of Waldheim's trip to Iran in January is in Document 132.

⁷ Ghotbzadeh fulfilled this step of the scenario in two messages. The first, February 12, informed Waldheim that Iran would accept the Commission “to make the inquiry about the crimes committed by the deposed Shah and the funds stolen by him and his family. On this basis the Commission will hear the American hostages as well.” In a second note of February 13, he acknowledged that his message had given rise to “erroneous interpretations,” and stated that the Commission “will have as its mission to examine the grievances of Iran and to allow a rapid solution to the crisis between Iran and the United States.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 8, UN and Security Channel)

⁸ On the basis of the exchange of messages between Waldheim and Ghotbzadeh, Vance reiterated the sentences in this step of the scenario in a February 13 message to Waldheim. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 8, UN and Security Channel)

the Commission as a fact-finding mission (not a tribunal) to help end the crisis and (b) recommend the membership of 5–7 for the Commission. In proposing the membership, the Secretary-General would propose Aguilar as Chairman plus 4–6 members, including (1) M'Bow (UNESCO Director), (2) Bedjaoui (Algerian PermRep at UN), (3) Petitti (former head of Paris Bar Association and Association of Catholic Jurists), (4) Martin Ennals (Amnesty International Secretary-General), (5) Abu Sayeed Chowdhury (former President of Bangladesh), (6) Daoudi (Advisor to President Assad of Syria) or Sabah el Rikabi (Head of Union of Syrian Bar Associations). If any of the proposed members is not acceptable to Iran, Iran could suggest that one or two be dropped.⁹

6. Between Tuesday and Friday: Either Bani-Sadr himself would confirm by phone to the Secretary-General or the Imam would issue a statement that he has authorized the Revolutionary Council to resolve the crisis.¹⁰ The Secretary-General would not proceed until he has received confirmation in one of these forms from Iran.

7. Friday at 1600 hours: The Secretary-General would announce establishment of the Commission and its purposes, including Iran's desire to have the Commission speak to each of the hostages.¹¹

8. After SYG Waldheim's announcement: The President of Iran would publicly present the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry as a success of Iranian diplomacy, would interpret the visit to the hostages as one of the elements in the investigation into Iranian grievances, and would state the desire of the Imam to see the Commission conclude its work rapidly. The Iranian President would instruct government administrations to place their documents at the disposal of the Commission.¹²

9. After the Iranian statement: The U.S. would state that the Commission is going on a fact-finding mission to Tehran, to hear the grievances of both sides, to meet with each of the hostages, and to report to the Secretary-General. The U.S. would object publicly to having the

⁹ In the right margin, an unknown hand wrote "D'Quello."

¹⁰ February 11–15. Waldheim received this confirmation on February 13 for the initial go-ahead and also announced publicly on February 19 that Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council had approved the Commission and invited it to Tehran. (Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 403–404)

¹¹ Waldheim made this required announcement at 12:30 p.m. on February 20. (Telegram Tosec 45792/10049 to Vance, February 20; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Box 1, Iran NODIS Cables Feb 1980) The announcement and Waldheim's press briefing were reported in Michael Weisskopf, "U.N. Commission Plans Interviews With All Hostages," *Washington Post*, February 21, 1980, p. A1.

¹² See Document 189.

Commission subject the hostages to interrogation in connection with its inquiry during any of its meetings with them.

III. Work of the Commission

1. The Commission would not leave New York for Tehran until the U.S. announcement above has been made. It would aim to begin work in Tehran early next week.

2. The Commission would hold its meetings in private and will receive evidence and documents to be submitted to it by Iranian authorities.

3. The Commission would visit the Embassy as soon as possible to meet with the hostages.

4. As soon as the Commission has concluded its work and drafted its report, it: (a) would tell the Revolutionary Council that the credibility of its report would be seriously limited unless the hostages are released immediately or at least moved from the compound to a hospital; (b) would inform the Revolutionary Council that it is ready to return to New York to submit its report to the Secretary-General.

IV. Final Stages:

1. Transfer of the hostages to the protection of the Government of Iran either in a hospital or in the Embassy compound after the “students” have left the premises. (Day number 1.)

2. Return of the Commission to New York. (Day 1 plus 1)

3. Submission to the Secretary-General of the Commission’s report which will contain findings and recommendations. Publication of the report as a UN document. The report would express *inter alia* the following principle as a recommendation to all governments:

—Governments should respect and facilitate within the framework of their internal laws the right of Iran:

(a) to file suits against the Shah, his family or associates on the basis of the grave presumption of any serious crimes set forth in the report;

(b) to file suits to recover assets which in the report are presumed to have been illegally taken from Iran by the Shah, his family or associates.

(Day 1 plus 2)

4. Release of the hostages and their departure from Iran. (Day 1 plus 3).

5. One hour after their departure, the SYG will release statements by President Bani-Sadr and President Carter both previously agreed by Iran and the U.S. and, before the Commission left Iran, deposited privately with the SYG.

(a) The Iranian statement will admit the moral wrong of holding hostages, express regret, promise to respect international law and affirm a desire to establish normal relations based on mutual respect, equality and international law.

(b) The U.S. statement will:

- (1) accept the principle stated in 3 above
- (2) express understanding and regret for the grievances of the Iranian people, including the widespread perception of U.S. intervention in Iran's internal affairs;
- (3) affirm the right of the Iranian people to make decisions governing their political future and the policy of the U.S. to respect that right;
- (4) affirm a desire for normal relations based on mutual respect, equality and the principles of international law.

6. Establishment of a Joint Commission to resolve all unresolved bilateral problems. (On a date to be determined by Iran and the U.S. within one month after day 1.)

Vine

181. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Our Options if the Soviets Intervene in Iran

I want to provide you with some anticipatory thoughts on our options for reaction if the Soviets intervene in Iran.²

Soviet activity and capabilities.

[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified] (TS)

Some *capability* factors are useful to hold in mind:

Approaches. [3½ lines not declassified] (see Tab A for a map).³ (TS)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Subject File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 1/80-3/80. Top Secret. Drafted by Odom. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80) Printed from an uninitialed copy.

² A February 5 DIA report, "USSR: A Military Option," concluded that Soviet troop movements in the Transcaucasus region meant the Soviet elite "will move" into Iran if the decision is made. (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 2 Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, 163-165 Perception Consideration)

³ Not attached to this copy. A copy of the map, attached to an Odom draft, is printed here as Tab A. On Odom's draft of this memorandum, after this sentence, Brzezinski wrote: "How many days in the 3rd arrow?" As shown on the map, the third arrow refers to a potential Soviet advance from Herat southward. Odom responded that 14-21 days was reasonable. (Memorandum from Odom to Brzezinski, February 18; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 2/80)

Timing. [1½ lines not declassified]

[3 paragraphs (4½ lines) not declassified]

Conclusion. [5 lines not declassified] (TS)

U.S. Options.

There are three major choices in response to a Soviet move into Iran:

1. [5 lines not declassified]

2. [7 lines not declassified]

3. [3 lines not declassified]

—*Fight in Iran.*⁴ [10 lines not declassified]

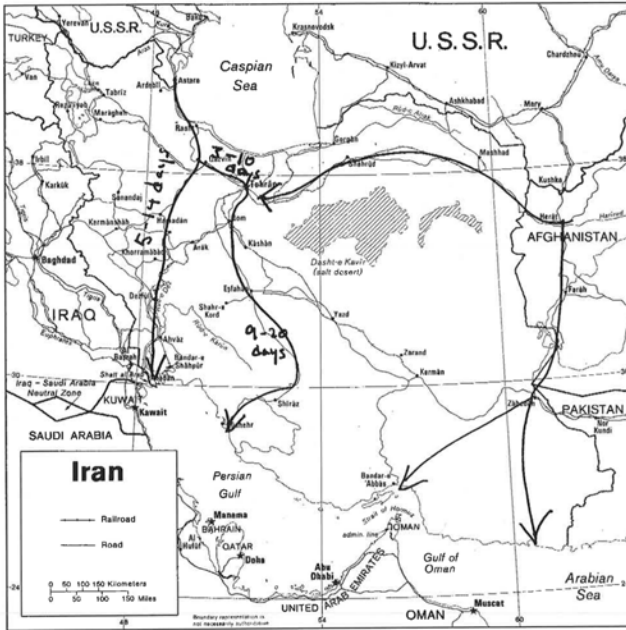
—[5½ lines not declassified]

[3 paragraphs (15 lines) not declassified]

⁴ From January 29 until February 9, Jones and Brown met with various congressional committees on the global military balance, emphasizing the growing Soviet ability to project power in the Persian Gulf region. Jones urged Congressmen to approve Carter's proposed military budget, which would give the United States the capability of rapid deployment of American forces into the region, including Iran and the Persian Gulf oil fields. Both Jones and Brown emphasized that this projection of U.S. military power could offset the Soviet advantage of proximity. (Norman Kempster, "Peril of Clash With Soviets To Grow, Congress Warned," *Los Angeles Times*, January 30, 1980, p. B5; Kenneth Bacon, "Defense Department Tries To Allay Doubt on Capacity To Defend Mideast Oil Fields," *Wall Street Journal*, February 1, 1980, p. 1; "Pentagon Sees Peril From Skeptics of U.S. Strength," *Washington Post*, February 9, 1980, p. A1)

Tab A

Map of Iran⁵



⁵ Secret.

182. Intelligence Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, February 13, 1980, 2326Z

COUNTRY

Iran/Iraq

SUBJECT

Reported plans by former Iranian Prime Minister Bakhtiar to attempt the overthrow of the Iranian Revolutionary Government [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

SOURCE

[*3 lines not declassified*]

1. [*1½ lines not declassified*] former Iranian Prime Minister Bakhtiar, the latter plans to launch an attempt, approximately in mid-March 1980, to overthrow the Iranian Revolutionary Government. Bakhtiar travelled to Baghdad from his exile residence in Paris to consult secretly with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn on Iraqi support for Bakhtiar's planned return to power. Bakhtiar voiced his confidence in his ability to return to power in Tehran with the support of loyal elements of the armed forces. The resistance leader said that Bakhtiar expects major political and military support from the Iraqi Government for his movement.

2. The leader said that he, along with representatives of three other Kurdish organizations, will meet in Baghdad, or a location nearby, on 20 February to coordinate military operations amongst themselves and the Iraqi Government in support of the planned coup by Bakhtiar. He identified the other expected representatives as Salah Mohtadi from Komola (Zaaman-e Zahmat-e Keshan-e Kurdistan—Revolutionary Organization of the Workers of Kurdistan), an unidentified brother of Sheikh Osman Naqshahandi, and Sheikh Eziddin Hoseini. The Kurdish leader indicated that he receives approximately 100,000 Iraq pounds (USD 300,000) monthly from Bakhtiar for support of 2,500 armed men in his organization. He said that he coordinates all matters related to this support and their military movements into Kurdistan from Iraq

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 2/80. Secret. Sent to the National Security Agency; Departments of State, the Treasury, and Justice; Defense Intelligence Agency; Secret Service; Federal Bureau of Investigation; National Security Council Staff, and White House.

with Barzani, half-brother of President Saddam and Chief of the Iraq Civilian Secret Service.

183. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, February 14, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation of 14 February 1980 [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

5. We then discussed the Iran finding.² I showed the list of the people we were building contacts with and described the idea of a substitute national front. I pointed out that this clearly did have some risk for the hostage negotiations but that was the nature of political action. We had to deal covertly with people who were unacceptable to the establishment which the government was dealing with overtly. We can't turn these people on and off like a spigot. There was recognition of this. I pointed out we were slowing things down. Though there was some risk that Bakhtiar was dealing with the Iraqis, we didn't think he was ready to move nor would any of them be ready to move without our energizing it. I pointed out that we needed to keep the overall effort going, however, because of the danger that a power vacuum would develop if Bani Sadr could not take hold.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings with Various Officials and Subjects. Secret; Eyes Only. Also sent to McMahon and Cogan and a copy was sent to the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia. The memorandum recounts Turner's meeting with Carter that day. According to the President's Daily Diary, they met from 11:01 until 11:35 a.m. (Carter Library) In another February 14 memorandum to Carlucci, McMahon, and Cogan, Turner reported that he had conveyed to Brzezinski on February 13 that his general purpose in meeting with Carter was "to get a better understanding of the President's concept of the covert actions we are presently undertaking and how committed he is to them." While discussing specifics, Brzezinski also told Turner that he thought the chances of the Twin Otter operation gaining approval was very slim but told Turner to raise the issue with Carter during their meeting. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings with Various Officials and Subjects)

² See Document 110.

There was a comment about how good relations with Bani Sadr had been, how he had lived up to what he had said thus far. I poured some cold water, however, on what the prospects were for Bani Sadr in the long run, especially with regard to the economy. [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. I then raised the possibility of the hostage negotiations going afoul for one of three reasons: (a) Khomeini would not come along; (b) Khomeini and Bani Sadr would demand more than the country could afford to give; and (c) left-wing militants would do harm to one of our hostages in the process of resisting their release. [*portion marking not declassified*]

7. I therefore indicated we ought to keep the rescue operation option open and recommended that despite the risks we proceed with an SOG operation at the end of the month in support of this. I said I would have to have a decision this week. I recommended we have a meeting with Dave Jones tomorrow. I was asked if there were procedures for periodic reviews of the status of our covert actions of this sort with NSC and State. I said we kept very close with State in particular on this and that we would set up procedures for some kind of periodic reviews as we went along. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Stansfield Turner³

³ [*name not declassified*] signed above Turner's typed signature.

184. Handwritten Memorandum From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Undated

I will try to divide this report into several sections:

- 1) Meeting with Mr. S
- 2) Future relations with Iran
- 3) Report on Scenario/Implementation
- 4) Draft statement
- 5) Where do we go from here?

Meeting with Mr. S:

Prior to my meeting, I asked that our French contacts meet with me to discuss how to handle Mr. S. We spent a couple of hours on this subject. Their joint recommendation was that I should regard his desire for such a meeting as an opportunity for Mr. S. to convey directly to the President the thoughts and feelings of the Imam. He said that Mr. S.'s presumption was that Carter did not understand the meaning of their revolution and that his meeting with me was a way to penetrate the "wall of people" responsible for the past 30 years of U.S. policy. Conversely, they suggested to me that I convey back to the Imam thru this man a sense of understanding and a desire to have a better relationship.

I showed them the letter addressed to me from the President containing the assurance on the scenario² and said that this would be very helpful with Bani-Sadr and Mr. S. as it could be used as a written promise to follow the scenario if an early release seemed desirable/feasible.

I met alone with Mr. S. for 3½ hours, during which we had a leisurely dinner. We started off by exchanging pleasantries. I kidded him that his face was better known in the United States than Walter Cronkite. He laughed and responded that while his face was well

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80. Secret. Jordan wrote this report on the plane from Paris to Washington following his meeting with "Mr. S," Sadegh Ghotbzadeh. The editor transcribed the text from Jordan's handwritten original. According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter met with Jordan and Vance upon Jordan's return, February 17, from 7:40 until 8:52 p.m. (Carter Library) No other record of the meeting with the President has been found.

² In a February 15 letter to Jordan, Carter wrote: "If, at any time, the Government of Iran desires to release the American hostages at an earlier date than called for in the mutually agreed plan, the Government of Iran has my personal assurance that the United States will abide by all the terms of that plan." (Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 2/80)

known, he was unable to accomplish anything. "Your situation is the opposite, Mr. Jordan, you are never seen publicly, but everyone knows that you guide the President in every decision."

I quickly felt at ease with him. I told him that I was honored to be able to meet with him and that I recognized the risk that he was taking.

He said, "if this meeting is known to the Communists in Iran, I will lose my job at least and possibly my head."

I told him that while great difficulties remained between our two countries, that I thought that it was important that we look to the future to determine how and when the U.S. and Iran could begin to build a new relationship based on the "new realities" of Iran and a better understanding of the past.

I told him that it would be terribly helpful for me and President Carter to understand better the origins of the revolution and the present situation. That while we had the desire to learn and to understand, we lacked a clear and direct presentation of their case and their view of U.S.-Iranian relations in a historical context.

This approach hit a responsive chord.

Mr. S. said, "Mr. Jordan, for the past three months and the past three days (his trip to Greece, Italy and France) all that I have heard about is the American hostages. I realize that the taking of the hostages was both a mistake for Iran and a violation of international law, but the great frustration of my people is that no one cares to investigate the circumstances leading to that action. I know that the hostages are of great personal concern to you and your country, but your desire to understand our revolution and grievances is a very encouraging sign to me and will be conveyed by me to the Imam."

He then, encouraged by me, launched into a 45 minute review of the history of U.S.-Iranian relations. He divided his discourse into three periods: 1900–1953, 1953 to 1978 and from Khomeini's landing in Tehran to the present.

Although certain things that he said were colorful and/or amusing, his litany of allegations was predictable. I was impressed by both the passion of his presentation and the sincerity with which he spoke, both about "the revolution" and the "Imam." His dedication to the Imam exceeds loyalty and approaches a mystical reverence difficult for me to comprehend. There is no question in my mind that it is real.

He was neither abusive or accusatory in his recital of Iran's grievances, but said it with a sense of sadness and regret that things between us had gone so far and were in such a mess.

At one point in the conversation, I asked him, "How do you evaluate President Carter? Do you see him in the tradition of American Presidents anxious to intervene in the affairs of other countries?"

He responded, "I believe that President Carter is a good man and well intentioned President who does not understand our history or our revolution. His sending you here is the first indication we have had that he wants to understand."

I then presented our case. I said that President Carter is the first American President in a generation who understands both the influence we have in the world, but also understands our country's limitations. I said that he was not an "interventionist" in the worst sense of that word, indeed, that he had resisted intervention and military action both during the time of the revolution and since the seizure of the Embassy. I told him that there were many people inside and outside of government who wanted the President to take unilateral action in late '78 and early '79, ranging from urging the Shah to "crack down" to direct U.S. military intervention. I told him that you rejected such ideas.

I told him that at the time of the capture of the embassy, public opinion supported extreme measures, including punitive military action, but that you had shaped and sustained a mood of restraint.

He acknowledged that these were sound arguments and said that as counterproductive as the sanctions had been, any type of military action or blockade would have resulted in the death of our people.

He then said, "Now, let's talk about the hostages, and I'm in a better mood to talk about them since you have heard our case."

He went on to say "President Carter wants the hostages out for the sake of those people and so that he can be re-elected—I want them out so that we can turn our full anger and attention toward the Soviet Union."

He then made some philosophical comments about the United States and Soviet Union. "While you have a better country, with certain values and a democratic system for your people, the Soviet Union does a much better job of marketing their ideology. I oppose communism because it is an ideology that lacks a moral basis. But the bottom line for Iran is that we will not be the pawn of the U.S. or the Soviet Union. If I am killed fighting for my country, I do not care whether it is a communist bullet or a capitalist bullet—either way I am dead." More on this in person.

We then got into a discussion of the scenario for release of the hostages.

*Point #1. I'll tell you about in person.*³

³ In his account of this meeting, Jordan wrote that one solution posed by Ghotbzadeh was for the United States to "kill the Shah." (Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 162-168)

#2. He believes that if we follow the scenario, they should be out in 2–3 weeks. More on this later.

#3. He went into great detail describing for me all the work that he would have to do with Bani-Sadr, the Imam and the Revolutionary Council to obtain their release.

#4. He has “complete faith” in our French contacts. They have his “power of attorney” in this matter although they would dispute that as overstating their influence.

#5. He claims that all 50 are alive. I questioned him specifically about Mr. M.⁴ He claimed no knowledge of this particular person but said that “All are alive.” More on this in person.

#6. We talked at length about the problem of obtaining release of the hostages from the compound. He said that he and Bani-Sadr “had a plan” which would work, but would probably have to involve the Imam personally. I told him that we had heard very specific rumors about suicide pacts among the militants which were of great concern to us. I asked him was he aware of these rumors and plans, and he laughed and said, “Mr. Jordan, don’t worry. We will get every one of your people out safely—we have more friends in the compound than you realize.”

I pressed him to explain, but he would not talk about it anymore.

I gave him the letter (which he asked me to entrust to Bourguet) and pressed him on early release of the hostages. He told me that he would “go back to Tehran, see the Imam and redouble his efforts” but that he thought it was more realistic to expedite the agreed upon plan than to hope to short-circuit it. He said that should they decide to move early on the hostages, they were “equipped” with President Carter’s written promise. He said, “tell President Carter that I will do my best.”

Future Relations with United States

As directed, I raised the subject of our relationship beyond the crisis. I told him that we would be anxious to try to build a new relationship but that the evolution of that relationship would be largely determined by Iran’s attitude. I told him after our hostages were released, that we could move quickly to solve problems such as freezing of assets, etc., but what kind of relationship did he envisage and at what speed could it evolve?

He replied that he had personally persuaded the Imam not to break diplomatic relations with the U.S. He said that it is easy to break

⁴ Presumably hostage Michael Metrinko.

relations, but very, very difficult to re-establish them. He mentioned Cuba as an example.

He said that within 6–9 months after the hostages are released, he would hope that a small group of U.S. diplomats could return to Iran. I mentioned here that it was going to be a very difficult decision for us to send people back to Iran given the present crisis. He said that he understood, but that our political presence was needed to counter Soviet activities. He said that he was anxious to use the excuse of a small U.S. diplomatic presence to reduce the Soviet embassy to a comparable size.

He talked about our future relationship almost exclusively in the context of the U.S. counterbalancing Soviet presence in Iran. At some point, I gave him (on a plain white sheet of paper) our most recent summary of Soviet buildup on the NW Iranian border.⁵ He loved it. He said, "I will wave this paper at the next meeting of the Council and tell everyone to get off their asses and prepare for attempted Soviet domination of Iran."

I made most/all of the points in the paper prepared for me by Hal.⁶ I will report orally on them.

To summarize, Mr. S.'s attitude in talking with me about future U.S.-Iranian relations seemed to be that now they have proven the strength of the Revolution to the United States, they are willing and anxious to teach the Soviet Union a lesson. He said that the Soviet Ambassador complained to him recently about his anti-Soviet statements and that he told him, "Don't complain to me while you have stolen Afghanistan and are assembling troops on our own borders. You will not have to fight us on the borders, but in every house and in every street in Iran, and we will prevail."

After our meeting, I commented to one of our French friends that while very pleased with the meeting, I was not certain that I had moved the process on time for release of the hostages forward at all. He said, "You are wrong. *If* he considered it a good meeting it will help you more than you will ever know."

He offered two interesting observations.

⁵ Not further identified.

⁶ Saunders's paper stressed the U.S. interest in the independence and integrity of Iran from Soviet control, separatism, or U.S. dominance; stated that the United States would "respect a genuinely non-aligned Iran" and wanted good relations with Iran; concurred in the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry; supported any Iranian legal action in U.S. courts; supported lifting of the Iranian asset freeze once the hostages were released; promised to work with Iran to resolve regional strategic problems; and requested that all 53 hostages leave at the same time. Saunders also requested that the scenario be further refined. ("Points to Cover," February 25; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 1)

First, he said that Mr. S. will see and use this meeting as a “psychological victory” with the Imam. He says that he will go to the Imam and say, “I met one of Carter’s top men. I convinced them of the evils of their past policies and taught them about our revolution. You have humbled the Americans.” According to my friend, this will score points for Mr. S. with the Imam and also help soften his attitude.

Secondly, by having established a “secret” relationship with an American official, his desire to end the crisis and his large ego will be reinforced. Also, he is a “rug merchant” who loves to bargain and trade. He says if he wants to do something for you, he will describe in great detail how difficult it will be to accomplish, then go off and do it quicker or better than you had anticipated.

I hope this is true as relates to the release of the hostages, because he told me in great detail all of the problems, but also saying that “only I can solve this.” We’ll see.

The final thing he told me was this:

“Please tell President Carter that I appreciate his sending you to meet with me. I will report to the Imam your attitude of friendship and your desire to build a new relationship.

Also tell President Carter that I hope he understands that the things I have said personally about him were said either in frustration with the U.S. or for domestic political purposes. I hope he understands.

Tell him that the strength and success of the Revolution will be a better ally against Soviet aggression than the Shah ever was.

And, finally, tell him that I will return to Tehran and redouble my efforts to obtain a quick release of the hostages.”

Conclusion

At best, Mr. S. is a deeply committed revolutionary, dedicated to the survival of that revolution and to the integrity and independence of Iran. His ego is enormous, but his devotion to the Imam is genuine. His commitment to the revolution makes the Soviet threat the dominant political concern in his life.

At worst, Mr. S. is a devious person whose only source of power is the Imam. Now that the Imam’s health is in question, he is engaged in a number of activities (hostage negotiation, anti-Soviet rhetoric, etc.) that he perceives as being in his own self-interest.

The truth about Mr. S. is probably somewhere in between, but either way, we should use his present attitudes to our own benefit.

Report on Scenario/Implementation

After four hours sleep, I awoke to what was supposed to be a brief review session with our French friends on the scenario.

It was the most difficult but also the most honest and possibly the most successful session that we have had to date.

I opened by saying that I had grown increasingly concerned during the week with some of Bani-Sadr's claims that President Carter had to "apologize," "admit the mistakes of the past" and enter a period of "self-criticism."

I said that we were prepared to do what we had promised to do last weekend in Switzerland,⁷ nothing more and nothing less. I told them that President Carter had personally authorized that we supplement his statement with certain things that he wanted to say, but I said that there should be no illusions on anyone's part as to what we would say and would not say. I said that President Bani-Sadr should know that we would not "apologize," that we would not "admit mistakes" nor do other things which we would consider a violation of principle. I told our French friends that we had taken seriously Bani-Sadr's private statement that he had no desire to "humiliate us." I told our French friends for us to say the kinds of things he had been calling for publicly would be humiliating and would not be said by President Carter.

I told them that as much as we cared about the hostages, the honor of our country was even more important. And that the hostages could stay in Iran another two months or ten months before we would agree to a scenario "apologizing" or admitting "guilt."

Our French friends argued that Bani-Sadr, while endorsing the scenario, had created a tremendous problem for himself and consequently for us all by claiming that the U.S. would apologize. They said that they felt certain that he would have to have some knowledge of what would be in the U.S. statement before he moved to free the hostages. We all agreed that exchange of statements in advance was a bad idea as was the deposit of advance statements with Waldheim. A possible compromise would be an informal arrangement whereby our French friends informally reviewed the proposed statements by each side to insure that they conformed with the principles agreed upon at Berne.

⁷ See Document 180.

185. Memorandum From Jasper Welch of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 19, 1980

SUBJECT

Soviet Union Moves into Iran

Last Friday Bill Odom asked me to meet with him, Marshall, and Fritz to review our thoughts on U.S. responses to Soviet moves into Iran.² Our conversation reached two conclusions with regard to current intelligence:

(1) Soviet readiness activities that we see are consistent with the Soviet policy of taking the maximum prudent steps that would not be so inflammatory as to trigger any additional U.S. response. (TS)

(2) That the Soviets do not see U.S. military activities in the Greater Persian Gulf as sufficiently hostile to warrant any Soviet reaction. (TS)

With regard to possible U.S. actions in the near term in reaction to a Soviet move upon Iran, our conclusions parallel quite closely those reached in a prior memo of January 16 (attached at Tab A).³ All felt that it would be appropriate for you to review that memo at this time. (TS)

There was one additional consideration not prominent in our prior memo, that is, the central role of inserting U.S. ground forces into Saudi Arabia. This is undoubtedly necessary either as an alternative to insertion into Khuzistan in the event that was tactically infeasible or as an adjunct to a Khuzistan operation to forestall Soviet airborne operations or an Iraqi move into Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. (TS)

We were divided on the wisdom of U.S. air attacks on invading Soviet forces, both as to its efficacy and the desirability of initiating

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 154. Top Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

² Friday, February 15. A CIA speculation on what motives and calculations "from the Soviet point of view" would lead the Soviet Union to cross into Iran concluded that, on balance, the decision to intervene would be more political in nature and that the Soviets would seek for lower-risk options of political influence than overt military intervention. (Paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "A Soviet 'Best Case' for Military Intervention in Iran, NFAC #1227-80," February 19; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1)

³ Tab A, a January 16 memorandum from Welch, Brent, and Utgoff to Brzezinski, is attached but not printed. See footnote 2, Document 156.

conflict versus emplacing U.S. forces at some point where the Soviets had not yet arrived. (TS)

Clearly, detailed military analysis is in order in all of these near-term options, however grim may be the prospects for a successful outcome.⁴ (TS)

⁴ Brzezinski drew a vertical line beside the last two paragraphs and wrote in the left margin: "What next steps? ZB."

186. Memorandum Prepared by the Iran Task Force, Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, February 19, 1980

SUBJECT

CIA Views on The Release Of The Hostages

If President Bani-Sadr orders the militants occupying the US Embassy to release the hostages we believe the militants will refuse to do so. The militants have repeatedly stated that they do not believe he has the authority or the right to make decisions regarding the hostage issue. In our judgment, only a direct order from Ayatollah Khomeini—probably in public—will persuade the militants to give up the hostages. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Even if Khomeini orders the hostages' release, there is some chance—probably less than 50 percent—that some of the militants will refuse to obey. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] there are some leftists among the Islamic fundamentalists holding the hostages. Bani-Sadr reportedly told a visiting Algerian delegation this month that he is concerned that one or more of the "Communist" captors will take precipitous action if the government orders the hostages released. [*portion marking not declassified*]

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 2 Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, B184-188, Executive Information Package. Top Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*] A February 20 covering memorandum from Major General James B. Vaught, attached to Tabs A-E, papers prepared in CIA, DIA, and JTF, states that these agencies had separately come to the same conclusion—that it is unlikely that the hostages would be transferred peacefully in the near future. Vaught stated that Carter should see the reports.

Government Forces

Bani-Sadr has said on several occasions that he would not use force to attain the release of the hostages. In his new role as commander-in-chief of the military the president has theoretical authority over a large number of forces in Tehran, however, that could be used against the militants. None are entirely loyal to Bani-Sadr and none are trained in the tactics necessary to storm the Embassy compound against determined resistance and free the hostages unharmed. [*portion marking not declassified*]

—Military units in Tehran consist of an under-strength infantry division, two armored brigades, a special forces brigade and one artillery group. At full strength this would amount to about 25,000 men but the actual strength is probably about half that figure. None of these units is garrisoned in the immediate vicinity of the US Embassy, although some military transport units and depots are located in the area. An armored brigade equipped with over 100 tanks is approximately eight kilometers from the Embassy. [*portion marking not declassified*]

—Revolutionary Guard forces in Tehran number approximately 5,000 personnel, divided into units of some 200 men. About 4,000 are garrisoned at the Sultanabad barracks in the northwest part of the city and 1,000 are located near the Majles building in the bazaar. The degree of loyalty of the Guards to Bani-Sadr probably varies from unit to unit. Some sources have reported that there are Revolutionary Guardsmen inside the Embassy compound cooperating with the militants. [*portion marking not declassified*]

—Police and gendarmerie units in Tehran have been extensively purged since the revolution. There are apparently only headquarters personnel from the gendarmerie in the city. Police are patrolling the streets but reportedly their morale and effectiveness is low. Few policemen would probably be willing to take the risk of participating in an attack on the militants. [*portion marking not declassified*]

We believe Bani-Sadr would resort to using these forces only in extremis—perhaps after an order from Khomeini had failed to effect the release of the hostages. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Bani-Sadr's most attractive option in this case would be to try to infiltrate loyal forces into the compound gradually in order to avoid a direct confrontation with the militants. Some press reports from Arab sources in Tehran have indicated that the government may already have begun this process, but we doubt that it has had much success to date. [*portion marking not declassified*]

We would expect the militants to resist forcibly a sudden government attempt to seize the Embassy in the absence of an order from Khomeini. At least some of the militants are probably sincerely prepared to be martyrs for the revolution. If Bani-Sadr decided to pursue a more gradual approach of cordoning off the compound, starving out the militants and gradually infiltrating their ranks, his ability to effect

the hostages' release would increase but would still be uncertain. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] there may be some fanatical Revolutionary Guards inside the Embassy who are prepared to execute the hostages in the event that any attempt is made to secure their release. [*portion marking not declassified*]

In sum, we doubt that the Iranian government's forces can secure the release of the hostages unharmed against the wishes of the militants. The compound is so large that it would be a relatively easy task to hold off a government rescue force long enough to kill all of the hostages. If some of the hostages have been moved from the compound as some reports have suggested, the government's task would be even more difficult.² [*portion marking not declassified*]

² Attached but not printed are five tabs. Tabs A and B are "A DIA Working Paper, Capability of the Government of Iran to Secure the Release of the Hostages," February 19, and a CIA memorandum, "CIA Views on the Release of the Hostages," February 19. Tabs C-E are papers prepared by the Joint Task Force: "Hostage Location/Situation Projects," February 16; "Analysis of 'Student' /Militant Options," February 9; and "Short Term Assessment," February 4.

187. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Paris, February 21, 1980, 9:20 a.m.

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER FRANCOIS-PONCET AND SECRETARY VANCE

France
Jean Francois-Poncet
Foreign Minister
Gabriel Robin
Political Director

United States
Cyrus R. Vance
Secretary of State
Arthur A. Hartman
US Ambassador to France

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

Vance said that he would like to discuss Iran for a moment. He said we had thought until the last couple of days that the hostages

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Jan/Feb/Mar 1980 Memcons. Secret; Nodis; Super Sensitive. The meeting took place at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Drafted on February 26, presumably by Hartman.

might be out in a couple of weeks, but some slippages are beginning to develop and it might stretch out. For the moment, he is assuming we will get the hostages out. If we do, what should our relationship with Iran be? He said in his own view he thought several things ought to happen. First, we ought to begin with a lifting of the freeze on assets and even that should begin in the overseas branches of American banks. We would allow that to proceed and then perhaps have a joint US-Iran commission unwind the remaining economic and assets problems. Second, we might then think of sending some military spare parts to them. Third, we would have to look at the whole economic relationship beyond that. It is in our interest to see that their oil operations continue. And, therefore, in a post-hostage situation, we probably ought to do something to help them with the resumption of drilling. And we might also wish to do something in technical assistance in agriculture. But, he said, as far as he is concerned, he would recommend that we take all our people out because he did not think that unless things changed seriously in the country, it would be safe to keep them there.

Francois-Poncet said that he would like to mention to the Secretary some aspects of his conversation with Ghotbzadeh.² He said he had given me the rundown on the conversation for use by my guest,³ but that there were several other things which occurred which might be of interest to the Secretary. Francois-Poncet said that he had begun with Ghotbzadeh by making a very strong pitch on getting rid of the hostages as a problem and freeing them in order that a more balanced relationship could be built with all the countries of the West. He assured Ghotbzadeh that until that happened, there would not be any relationship. They then went on to discuss the situation in the surrounding area and Ghotbzadeh said that he was very worried about what the Soviets were up to. He said his two greatest fears were that with Soviet help, the Tudeh Party was making headway and that the Soviets intended to make Baluchistan into a separate state. He then went on to say that Iran was determined to help get the Soviets out of Afghanistan and is already funding an effort to make Afghanistan a real hell for the Soviets. He said that there could be no reprisal that will stop Iran from doing this. On the other hand, they don't exclude some moves into the north by the Soviets. He apparently talked about pulling back, fighting separately in the villages and in the end saying Iran will be the same kind of hell for them that Afghanistan is.

² Ghotbzadeh was in Paris February 15–19.

³ Presumably the "guest" is a reference to Vance.

188. Letter From H. Ross Perot to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Dallas, February 21, 1980

Dr. Brzezinski:

Current negotiation efforts to free the hostages are directly dependent on Khomeini's health.

I have talked with heart specialists about Khomeini's condition. They believe death is probable and could occur within six weeks.

In this environment, the outlook for negotiations is bleak.

After Khomeini's death, the hostages will be in extreme jeopardy. Bani Sadr cannot control the students. Direct military intervention by Iranian armed forces against the students holding the hostages carries a greater risk than U.S. intervention by a trained rescue team.

Having a rescue team is of little value unless at least part of the team is in Tehran, and the remainder of the team is nearby, ready to react immediately to an opportunity. No one can predict when this opportunity will occur.

The lives of the hostages now depend on the failing heart of one old man. Our government should put the rescue team in position, including an advance unit in Tehran.

Best wishes in all of your efforts.

Sincerely,

Ross Perot

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977-1981), Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings With Various Officials and Subjects. No classification marking.

189. Editorial Note

In a February 20, 1980, message, the Iranians, in accordance with Step 8 of the scenario developed in Bern (see Document 180), sent a message to Secretary-General of the United Nations Kurt Waldheim agreeing to the Commission of Inquiry. The message deviated from the previously agreed-upon language. The message stated: "Now that

the wish of the Imam and the people of Iran regarding a study and investigation into the past interferences of the U.S. into the internal affairs of Iran through the regime of the deposed shah and with a view to establishing a tribunal to determine their treason, crimes and corruption has been accepted” the Commission was accepted. (Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure,” *American Hostages in Iran*, page 129)

As Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders later recalled, Waldheim’s Chef de Cabinet Rafi Ahmad had called him at 1:30 a.m. on February 20 to relay the Iranian message and to alert the Carter administration to the deviation from the agreed-upon text. Saunders then called Acting Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who consulted by telephone with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance in Bonn. Vance urged that the United States require Iran to stick scrupulously to the script. Saunders and Christopher relayed this information to President Jimmy Carter at a 5 a.m. meeting in the Oval Office at the White House. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, page 310; Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure,” *American Hostages in Iran*, page 129; Carter Library, President’s Daily Diary) Saunders recalled that Carter decided that the United States would accept the Iranian message and the Commission (Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure,” *American Hostages in Iran*, page 129) The original language, however, was reiterated in a White House statement, in which the United States agreed to the fact-finding Commission of Inquiry to hear Iran’s grievances, to allow an early solution of the crisis, and to speak with each of the hostages. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, page 356)

The appointed members of the Commission of Inquiry were Mohammed Bedjaoui, the Algerian Permanent Representative to the United Nations and former Minister of Justice; Andres Aguilar, the Venezuelan Ambassador to the United States, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, and former Justice Minister; Adib Daoudi, former Syrian Ambassador to India and the Benelux and key political adviser to Syrian President Hafez al-Assad; Louis-Edmond Petitti of France, a member of the International Commission of Jurists and a judge of the European Court of Human Rights; and Harry Jayewardene, member of the United Nations Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities and close adviser to his brother, Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene. Bedjaoui and Aguilar served as co-chairmen. (The UN Commission of Inquiry on Iran, February 29; Carter Library, White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler’s Files, Box 2)

The Commission members gathered in Geneva where they remained for 3 days as Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sadegh Ghotbzadeh sorted out technical arrangements. They arrived in Tehran February 23. Meanwhile, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini proclaimed

his staunch support for the students holding the hostages and announced that release of the hostages would be determined by the National Assembly in April after the scheduled February elections. (Telegram 49316 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 23; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800095-0822)

Hamilton Jordan recalled that he and Carter, Vance, Saunders, and Henry Precht consulted by telephone to determine what Khomeini's remarks meant for the Commission's success. Jordan and Saunders both wondered if Khomeini was even aware of the carefully constructed scenario. Later that day, Jordan received a message from Christian Bourguet, one of the French negotiators who helped develop the scenario, to convey that Khomeini could change his mind at any moment, to encourage optimism, and to allow the Commission do its work. As Jordan wrote in his memoir, Carter agreed "because we really had no choice." (*Crisis*, pages 179-181)

The Commission remained in Tehran from February 23 until March 11. Its members met with Ghotbzadeh, Bani-Sadr, and other members of the Revolutionary Council and visited revolutionary shrines and took testimony from SAVAK victims, Iranian jurists, human rights campaigners, and other Iranians. (Telegrams 50220, 50233, 50774, and 52037 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 24, 25, 26, and 27, respectively; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800097-0146, D800097-0838, D800098-0893, and D800100-1082, respectively) The students regularly rejected any visits by Commission members to the hostages or the Embassy compound. (Telegram 52956 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 28; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800102-0502.

On February 28, Revolutionary Council member Hajatolislam Akbar Hashimi Rafsanjani, speaking from the Tehran hospital where Ayatollah Khomeini was being treated for a heart condition, told the press that the Commission would visit the hostages within hours, accompanied by a senior Iranian official appointed by President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr. (Telegram 53028 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 28, National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800103-0027) The students prevented this visit over disagreements about how many Commissioners would make the trip to the compound and how many hostages the Commissioners could see. (Telegram 56992 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 2; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800108-1290) In a March 3 message, Swiss Ambassador to Iran Erik Lang reported that, according to French lawyer Hector Villalon, Khomeini "has indeed given the order that the visit should take place, but if I understand correctly he gave the order to the Revolutionary Council, to be executed by the Revolutionary Council, therefore he did not give the order directly to

the students.” The Revolutionary Council lacked the unanimity necessary to order the hostages released. Villalon counseled a wait-and-see attitude. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler’s Files, Box 2)

190. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 25, 1980

SUBJECT

Passive Displays

Some time ago I briefed you about a possibility that Ben Huberman and I were pursuing to create a large ominous cloud which could be deployed as a psychological display, possibly in connection with the use of carbon fibers or other techniques under development.² With your approval, DOD has conducted some initial tests which show that the creation of a large, stable cloud of foam particles is feasible.

We saw a short movie of the tests, which included the creation of a 500-foot long red cloud. Although the cloud was smaller and thinner than we would want, the technology is clearly available both for production and delivery. We are also assured that the cloud can be made phosphorescent.

Ben and I encouraged DOD to proceed with the manufacture of the necessary quantity of red, phosphorescent particles and to examine three alternative delivery systems: [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. We believe that the availability of this material is justified in the event we need a passive but striking demonstration at some point. It is not

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 2/80. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

² In a January 14 memorandum to Brzezinski on this subject, Sick suggested that a “non-violent trick” could have a “psychological effect.” Sick reported on two alternative technologies available, the deployment of a non-toxic and biodegradable “black cloud” made of a foam material that could hang over cities, such as Qom or Tehran, and the use of carbon and aluminum fibers to “create electromagnetic effects to disrupt power generation.” (Ibid.)

expensive and it can be used in many other applications—specifically anti-infrared screening or minefield marking.

Unless you object, DOD will proceed with additional manufacture and delivery testing to provide a quick reaction capability in the event it is needed.³

³ At the top of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote: “OK, but how would we use it?”

191. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, February 27, 1980

SUBJECT

Contacts with the Lawyers in Iran

Attached are two memcons reporting (1) a lengthy conversation with Villalon this morning and (2) the translation of a cable from Ambassador Lang.²

Some extracts from today’s conversation follow:

—Because of Ghotbzadeh’s inability to get along with the Commission’s co-Chairman, the two lawyers have been given a middleman role.³ They do not like this assignment and are attempting to get out of it. It is clear from our contacts with the UN that the co-Chairman would like to see them out of the process.

—The lawyers have criticized the Commission for its apparent rigidity in not yielding to Iranian requests to move around the city,

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 1. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Drafted by Precht.

² A record of the February 27 telephone conversation with Villalon is attached but not printed; the February 27 cable from Lang, not attached, is *ibid*.

³ Reference is to Chairman Aguilar. In the February 27 telephone conversation referenced in footnote 2 above, Villalon said that Waldheim had made every possible mistake which could be made, pointing to the fact that the Commission had involved itself directly in the matter of the transfer of the hostages from the compound, which was outside its role, and to Aguilar’s statements that the Commission’s goal was to “settle the crisis” as a means of pressuring Ghotbzadeh.

i.e., to give the appearance of a more active investigatory effort. Apparently the lawyers persuaded the Commission to split up and for separate members to take different assignments.

—As we know, the Revolutionary Council two days ago approved a visit by the Commission to the compound.⁴ Ghotbzadeh has experienced trouble in dealing with the captors. They offered to allow the Commission to see only some of the hostages. Ghotbzadeh today gave them an ultimatum demanding that all of the hostages be seen. If the captors refuse, the Revolutionary Council will send an open letter of protest to the Imam. The lawyers suspect that possibly 20 of the hostages are not being held in the compound.

—The Commission met with Bruce Laingen and his two colleagues today secretly. We have confirmation of this from the British.

—The transfer of the hostages to a hospital or other place has been approved “at the highest level.” Two intervening stages will be necessary, i.e., a visit to the compound and a partial report by the Commission (both steps envisaged in the scenario).

—Beheshti is described as making serious trouble for Bani-Sadr (this is contradicted by the apparent support of Beheshti on the Revolutionary Council for the scenario).

—Bani-Sadr is said to have persuaded Khomeini to give authority over the hostages to the new Parliament because Bani-Sadr and Khomeini were upset that Waldheim jumped the gun in announcing the Commission, and thus deprived Iran of the opportunity to declare a diplomatic success.

—The two lawyers are fully aware of our concerns about the lack of tangible progress. They continue to feel there is a strong commitment in the Iranian leadership to the scenario and Bani-Sadr as having told the Commission that he would adhere to the scenario “point by point.”

—Because of their role as intermediaries between the Iranians and the Commission, the lawyers are hesitant to promise that they can leave Iran for a meeting with us. They prefer to await developments over the next 24 hours. They suggest that possibly one of them could meet with one of us outside Iran.

The Lang telegram covers much of the same ground as the telephone conversation. In the cable, Lang is asked by the lawyers to urge

⁴ As reported in telegram 50233 to all diplomatic and consular posts, February 25. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800097–0838) In the February 27 telephone conversation referenced in footnotes 2 and 3 above, Villalon stated that a “grave confrontation” existed between the Revolutionary Council and the students, but the visit to the hostages was assured.

us to keep cool and avoid compromising public statements. There are several references to Khomeini's state of tension and impatience with the continuing crisis. The lawyers intend to work on Khomeini to accelerate the date of release, i.e., before the convening of a new parliament. Lang reports the lawyers' commitment to a series of reciprocal small steps, the same procedure outlined by Ghotbzadeh in his statement which appeared yesterday in the *Washington Post*.⁵

⁵ Michael Weisskopf, "Ghotbzadeh Says U.N. Mission Will See American Hostages," *Washington Post*, February 29, 1980, p. A1.

192. Summary of a Paper Prepared in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research¹

Washington, undated

IRANIAN AND U.S. POLICY AFTER THE HOSTAGE CRISIS

The attached paper, prepared by INR, discusses Iranian foreign policy in the post-hostage period. Its conclusions, assuming safe release of the hostages, are as follows:

—Regardless of whether President Bani-Sadr or one of his rivals eventually triumphs, the shape and content of Iran's foreign policy will be the same.

—Iranian foreign policy goals include non-alignment, economic self-sufficiency, the elimination of Super Power influence, and influencing governments in the region towards Iran's Islamic, populist and non-aligned outlook.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 110. Secret. The paper, attached but not printed, was prepared at Brzezinski's request for the February 29 SCC meeting. (Summary of Conclusions, February 22; Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14) The paper was based on a draft prepared by Grummon. (Memorandum from Grummon to Constable, February 25; Department of State, INR Records, Grummon Papers, Other Memos) His emphasis on Iran's goal of promoting radical Islam was softened in the final version printed here.

—Both Super Powers are viewed as malevolent forces bent on exploiting the region. The U.S., however, is still seen as the most dangerous threat to Iran, despite the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

—Iran will probably not give significant material support to foreign liberation groups in the immediate future. It will, however, encourage such groups to follow Iran's example.

—Iran's revolutionary ideas have unleashed a potentially significant force which could impair U.S. strategic interests. Those ideas should be considered in reaching any decision about how to protect U.S. influence in the region.

—The impact of Iran in the region will be conditioned by the ability of Bani-Sadr and his government to bring political coherence to the revolution, control dissident ethnic groups, and make some progress in economic recovery.

—An anarchic Iran will increase the danger of coup attempts and be a tempting target for external intervention and subversion, particularly from the Soviet Union and Iraq.

U.S. Objectives in Post-Hostage Iran

—Establishing the foundations for gradual movement towards an improved bilateral relationship.

—The preservation of an independent Iran with the ability to maintain its territorial integrity.

—Strengthened economic and political relations between Iran and the West.

—Containment of the Iranian revolution within its own borders.

—Increased Iranian differentiation in its perceptions of the relative U.S. and Soviet threats, and understanding of U.S. actions in the area to meet the Soviet threat.

—Stable relationships between Iran and Iraq.

Post-hostage Iran, as the paper suggests, will be extremely difficult for the U.S. to deal with. Even if the U.S. is able to overcome the domestic obstacles to rebuilding a relationship with Iran, the revolutionary government will continue to pursue policies vis-à-vis the U.S. bilaterally and regionally in the area which will impinge on our own strategic interests, e.g., clearing the area of all foreign presence, pressuring Pakistan to steer clear of a security relationship with the U.S., and reduced oil production.

In pursuing our objectives in Iran, we should work both bilaterally and through third parties, which may have to carry much of the freight, given the bilateral strains which are likely to persist. The bilateral relationship will be strongly affected by the degree to which the U.S. can be forthcoming on issues of importance to Iran, e.g., supply of

spare parts for military equipment, settling claims and attachments after assets are unfrozen, Iran's efforts to repatriate the Shah's assets, U.S. visas for Iranians (particularly students) and by the perception of U.S. policies in the region, e.g., Arab-Israel, defense relationships and the U.S.-USSR confrontation. Underlying these issues will be the question of "acceptance of the Iranian revolution"—an Iranian psychological need which we are unlikely to satisfy in the near term.

Steps the U.S. and Others Can Take

—Open a dialogue with Iran on outstanding bilateral issues, initially through the operation of a Joint Commission or indirect contacts.

—Work closely with the Congress and the press to create a climate in the U.S. which recognizes the strategic importance of Iran and enables the U.S. to disentangle post-hostage issues such as assets and release of previously purchased spare parts with a minimum of friction.

—Use the Joint Commission as a forum for a political dialogue on the Soviet threat and U.S. responses to it in the area, including our activities in the Gulf and with Pakistan. Exchange intelligence assessments on area problems such as Afghanistan.

—Encourage our allies to take a forthcoming approach to Iran on economic and political ties with Iran, including provision of military equipment and oil field technology.

—Make clear to the Soviets our interest in Iran's integrity and in non-intervention by external powers.

—Develop a dialogue with Iraq, either directly or through others, which emphasizes our mutual interest in a stable and secure Iran.

—Strengthen our relations with Gulf states in ways that lessen their vulnerability to revolutionary waves from Iran (e.g., dealing with corruption, meeting legitimate needs of ethnic minorities).

—Maintain discreet relationships with a variety of Iranians who might provide future leadership in Iran without encouraging their anti-revolutionary activity. Avoid contact with émigré groups that have little or no political future in Iran.

—Encourage the development of democratic forces in Iran that will permit groups favorable to us to survive.

These last points will have a critical impact on improvement in bilateral relations. It is important that we maintain access to possible alternatives to the present revolutionary structure in Iran. However, to the extent that the Iranian authorities believe that we are supporting these dissidents or potential dissidents, it will be virtually impossible to build a constructive relationship with the revolutionary government

or to diminish the deeply held Iranian conviction that we are opposed to the revolution.²

² A February 28 CIA assessment of the INR paper stated “we generally concur with the thrust of this analysis,” but added that CIA believed Khomeini would aid other Islamic revolutionaries in neighboring states both materially and financially. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 13) A paper prepared in CIA, “National Policy and Intelligence Considerations in Post-Hostage Iran,” February 21, argued that U.S. policy toward Iran after the hostage crisis should focus on an independent Muslim Iran as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism, and on major oil producer Iran’s participation in the Western economy. An addendum offered four policy options: 1) ignore Iran and have the U.S. defense line based on the Saudis, 2) back Bani-Sadr openly and offer Iran U.S. aid, 3) take a low profile and wait for the Iranians to “come to us,” and 4) allow and encourage NATO allies to take a greater role in Iran, especially in arms sales. (Ibid.)

193. Memorandum From the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Raphel) to Secretary of State Vance and the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, February 29, 1980

SUBJECT

The Shah and Panama

This afternoon from 3:00 to 4:45, Hamilton Jordan, Lloyd Cutler and I met with Armao and Bill Jackson to discuss the Shah and Panama. Armao had requested the meeting and began with the usual list of complaints about the Panamanian treatment of Armao, his associates and the Shah’s party. Armao offered considerable detail about what he purported to be pay-offs made to Panamanians, and various examples of how the Shah’s stay was made exceedingly uncomfortable. He and Jackson also highlighted what they saw as the Shah’s real fears of extradition to Iran. His presentation ended with the statement that the Shah, his family and he have decided the Shah has to leave Panama immediately and what would we do to assist.

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Personal Files of the Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 80D135, February Chron 1980. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.

In response to the question whether the Shah had other possible havens, Jackson replied that none seemed available. During the past three weeks, Jackson has tried Austria and Switzerland, both of which replied not now, and South Africa which said no. Armao asked what would happen if, hypothetically, some country offered the Shah asylum and he left Panama on his own before the hostages were released. We noted that the decision would obviously be his, but that any travel by the Shah before the hostages are released could considerably complicate our attempts to achieve their freedom.

After further discussion, it was agreed that we faced two immediate problems—discomfort at the hands of the Panamanians and the Shah's concerns about extradition. On extradition, we noted that we fully believed the Panamanian statements that he would not be extradited and we had no reason to think otherwise. On Panamanian actions inimical to the Shah's party, we offered to raise this issue in an appropriate way with the GOP, if the Shah so wished.

Hamilton then made the following offer: He would be ready to travel to Panama secretly next week to meet Torrijos. He is prepared to discuss two issues. 1. He will ask Torrijos again for reassurances the Shah will not be extradited. Hamilton noted this is likely to disturb Torrijos, but he would do it if it would make the Shah more comfortable. 2. If the Shah wants, Bill Jackson should send Hamilton a letter giving specific examples of cases of extortion, bribery and other kinds of mistreatment of the Shah's party. Hamilton will, without giving the letter to Torrijos, discuss the Shah's specific concerns with the General.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was understood that Jackson or Armao will be in touch with Hamilton on whether a trip to Panama was desirable. If so, Hamilton will go and raise the extradition issue and, if the Shah wishes, also the question of alleged Panamanian mistreatment of the party.²

At the beginning of the conversation, Armao repeated his threat to go public and criticize Panama and Torrijos. By the conclusion of the meeting, he had backed off and seemed willing to let the hostage scenario play itself out for several more weeks before saying anything publicly. Hamilton's offer to meet with Torrijos also helped mollify Armao.

² Jordan recalled that when he reported the contents of this meeting to Carter, the President stated that the Shah had his and Torrijos's word that he would not be extradited, adding, "I don't know what else we can do." Then Carter said, "Ham, you can tell the Shah that, as the President of the United States, I promise if the Panamanians try to fly him back to Iran, I will personally order the plane to be shot down. I was first startled, then I saw a grin creep over his face, and we both burst out laughing." (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 187)

194. Message from the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, March 3, 1980

Analysis of Political Situation

I have taken advantage of V's visit to compare my ideas and what I have learned about the situation with his to allow you to judge the situation and estimate possibilities for solving the crisis and consolidating the country.

1. We are unanimous on the following conclusion: there is no government. Legitimacy and the institutionalization of power which were slightly strengthened over the last few weeks are again in the process of being called into question by a combination of opposing and parallel forces.

2. By way of example, I would like to cite the discussion that my translator had a few days ago at the compound. It is instructive in more ways than one. His interlocutors (the "kids") told him that they would do everything they could to see to it that power did not become centralized, that power did not become stronger. It is thanks to the fact that there are many parallel forces (he said specifically about 20) in Iran that imperialism can no longer exert pressure on the country (that went especially for the United States but also for the Soviet Union). Look, they said, if Carter wants to pressure us, he can, what good does it do him to pressure Bani-Sadr, he only has a minute fraction of the power. If Carter wants to make a deal he will have to have the agreement of all 20 and that will be very difficult.

3. Such a vision is not merely that of the fundamentalists: the radical left, the Communists, the ethnic minorities all have an interest in this fragmentation of power which ensues from some endless destabilization which will allow the necessary conditions for bringing about the second revolution, whereas for others it means a chance to live under de facto local autonomy in the absence of any central power.

4. V, in his discussions with Bani-Sadr on the outcome of the elections, still observes optimism, but tempered optimism. Bani-Sadr realizes that he has very little chance of winning the kind of victory he did in the Presidential election, and foresees the religious fundamentalists winning quite a few seats. But he has worked out a new tactic to get together with the more powerful candidates to get their support

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Mar 1980. Secret; Sensitive. The document was found attached to a March 4 memorandum from Saunders to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update—March 5, 1980."

if elected and even to support some of them himself. Thus it can be expected that the parliament will not be as manageable as might have been thought at first. The fact still remains that the future cabinet will at least have the advantage of not being a dead weight, frightened, bogged down by inertia like the Revolutionary Council.

5. B and V have observed as we did long ago that the economy is increasingly paralyzed and that the country is literally living off its oil and according to what V has observed is not even selling it well. There is nothing on the horizon to trigger a takeoff of the economy. The crisis is responsible to a large extent but bogeymen and incompetents are also responsible. So the authorities, even Bani-Sadr, trumpet that it is the fault of the West, the West which is strangling Iran, is not sending it enough foodstuffs or spare parts. B and V are trying to dramatize this situation to wake up Bani-Sadr, Moïfar, and anyone else who has some understanding.

Let us not forget one important fact. Although Bani-Sadr is moderate in the political field, he will be less so in the economic field where he wants to apply theses which, to say the very least, have never been tried by fire.

6. The Imam, who is getting stronger, sometimes appears to regret having given Bani-Sadr too much power (cf. the demonstration) and seems to be playing a role which runs counter to national stabilization, by favoring the opposition forces in order to strike a balance. In this context, B and V are wondering whether Ahmed Khomeini, the son, might not be playing a two-faced game and while pretending to help Bani-Sadr isn't really playing the fundamentalists' game.

The Imam has really never given his total confidence to anyone. Recent history gives us several examples of this: elimination of Yazdi, then Bani-Sadr, benefitting Ghotbzadeh, etc., etc. The person who seems to have his greatest confidence—by his very nature!—is Ghotbzadeh. This is a happy circumstance to the extent that Ghotbzadeh has given himself body and soul to reaching a solution. V's question is how far will he go if he feels that the sands are shifting too much. To this jealousy and sensitivity must be added the aspect of the "folqar" which is now replacing the role of the "führer" that the Imam used to play.

7. Bani-Sadr now realizes that after having dreamed of overturning the imperial regime for more than ten years, the leadership obtained power without fighting, but especially without being prepared to take it. Aside from the unanimity on the question of overturning the imperial regime, there is total disagreement regarding the kind of system to be created, and this again adds to the total lack of structural organization.

8. Likewise, Bani-Sadr's method of government and work does not favor a change in the direction of strong leadership. Bani-Sadr is a thinker, a loner, who, like the Imam, does not trust anyone entirely. It

is really difficult to see how his relationships with the Ministers of his future cabinet will work. He prefers to surround himself with very young people whom, according to V, he treats very harshly even in the case of very competent people like Nobari of the Markazi Bank or the Bank's Vice Governor. Delegation of power is very poor as is the transmission of information and briefings in both directions. Bani-Sadr tends to entrust one question to Peter, another one to Paul, but Paul is not supposed to know what Peter is doing. This secrecy assumes incredible proportions. V found out very little and by accident that while dossiers were being prepared against the Shah by the Ministry of Justice or by the Markazi Bank, Bani-Sadr had organized a team which was secretly drawing up dossiers on the very same subject.

Like Bazargan, Bani-Sadr allows himself to be overwhelmed by a mob of supplicants, a kind of populism which is a luxury which the country really cannot afford under present circumstances.

Public opinion which did after all support Bani-Sadr rather massively did so without enthusiasm or fervor—you have to take into account abstentions and fall back votes which would have been given to a candidate like Radjavi. There are many members of the intelligentsia who consider that he won't last long, whence this attitude of "reserve" on the part of people who should be committing themselves. This is one more reason why the country still hasn't gotten off the ground.

9. Like ancient tragedy, the Imam is always playing the role of the *deus ex machina*, which means that so far a solution has always been found to the various impasses in which the country has found itself. The Imam is still the only one who can rally quasi general consent, since the opposition is still too weak to make its voice heard.

But this will last only as long as the Imam lives and is mentally sound—the day he dies if power has not been sufficiently consolidated, which is now the case as we have seen, chaos will surely ensue. Chaos indeed, although parenthetically in the Iranian brand of chaos a certain normalcy comes about by the force of circumstances, a trait which can be observed at a higher stage of development in Italy.

10. Conclusion. As can be seen this situation is more unsettled than ever. The approaching elections as well as the climate surrounding the attempt to solve the hostage crisis both are increasing this tendency even more. So far the President has been able to maneuver adequately but the question is not whether he will continue to maneuver well but rather whether the parallel powers will let him.

195. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, March 4, 1980

1. It is 2:50 p.m. B and V asked to see me to inform you urgently of an extremely grave development.

2. This morning as scheduled the "students" were at the Foreign Ministry at 10 o'clock.² As scheduled, the two Commission members Bedjaoui and Davoudi arrived at 11 o'clock.

2.a. As a dramatic gesture the students refused to meet the Commission members.

2.b. The students refused also to give a date for the Commission's visit. Thus we have a test of strength.

3. The Revolutionary Council is meeting in extraordinary session this evening at 5:30.

4. Ghotbzadeh, with the agreement of Bani-Sadr, is going to propose in these conditions that the visit take place this evening or tomorrow morning in order to force the students to accept the Council's ruling.

5. If the Revolutionary Council should refuse to go to a test of strength with the students then Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh jointly will propose that the Council submit its resignation to the Imam and all of the members should go to the Imam to tell him that it is either the students or us.

6. B and V are working hard this afternoon because if the test of strength takes place we should profit from it and after having forced open the door of the compound for the visit, we should move immediately to the transfer of the hostages as the intermediate stage.

7. B and V will insist strongly on this aspect.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret; Sensitive.

² According to telegram 58115 to multiple recipients, March 4, the students met with Bani-Sadr and four members of the Revolutionary Council late in the afternoon on March 3 but were unable to reach an agreement on a scenario for a visit to the compound. The telegram further noted that Reuter news service reported that the students insisted "that the Commission take testimony from the hostages regarding Iran's grievances against the Shah and the U.S." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800111-1201)

196. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, March 4, 1980

As Bourguet was leaving me, he telephoned Pettiti, who had been considering leaving. Bourguet begged him to remain. According to Pettiti, the members of the Commission were shaken by the showdown with the students and several of them would like to leave Iran. They are also quite concerned about the problem of their personal security because they see how things are going and also they believe that the actions of the students represent a real attack on the prestige of the United Nations.

Bourguet plans to be in touch with Bani-Sadr, with New York, and probably the State Department in order that New York will give the Commission an order to remain in Tehran.²

Lang's personal remark from his experience in Iran: Impasses and tests of strength all have a dramatic character but as in the auto traffic of Tehran, one believes that a person who tries to force his way through will provoke an accident but in most cases he ends up by giving way. On occasion it is the others who give way.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. Secret; Sensitive.

² In a March 5 memorandum to Brzezinski, Sick reported that Ghotbzadeh had visited the compound that same day and the Iranian students had "kicked him out." Ghotbzadeh was concerned for his physical safety and referred to the students as "those idiot communists." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran 3/27/80–3/31/80) Sick relayed that Bourguet and others had received death threats. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, pp. 314–315) Precht called Villalon to request that he tell the Commission members, especially Jayewardene and Pettiti, to remain through Friday, March 7. Villalon noted that Ghotbzadeh had made and Bani-Sadr would make the same request. Precht also emphasized to Villalon that it was imperative the hostages be seen. (Memorandum of conversation, March 3; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Iran 3/80)

197. Memorandum From the White House Counsel (Cutler) to the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan)¹

Washington, March 5, 1980

SUBJECT

The Shah

When I talked to Bill Jackson this morning, he advised me that the Shah's medical condition has worsened considerably. The local doctors now believe that he must have an operation to remove his spleen immediately. Dr. Kean is flying down to verify their conclusions. If they decide on the operation they of course want to go to Gorgas.² I have told him we will stand by our commitment to support his medical view.

If the operation occurs it may alleviate a number of our problems because the Shah will have to be at a house in Panama City for some time, and we may be able to turn over a new leaf by getting him away from the present unsatisfactory arrangements on the island.

I promised you would inform Ambler Moss immediately so that he can support Kean's view that the operation should be performed at Gorgas.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 6, Iran 3/80. No classification marking. Copies were sent to Brzezinski and Christopher. A typed note at the bottom of the memorandum reads: "[Dictated but not read]."

² On the question of where the splenectomy would be performed, the Shah and his entourage favored Gorgas Hospital in Panama City, which was managed by the U.S. Army. The agreements with the Shah for his stay in Panama included access to Gorgas for medical purposes. Torrijos favored Paitilo Hospital, also in Panama City. (Memorandum from Tarnoff to Vance, March 6; Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980) Brzezinski stated that the United States would not object to the Shah using a U.S. hospital provided that the Panamanians did not object. (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Sick and Pastor, March 7; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran 3/27/80-3/31/80)

198. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation¹

Washington, March 6, 1980, 8:45 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Rafi Ahmed, Special Assistant to Secretary General Waldheim
Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State, NEA

According to his counterpart in Tehran, Ghotbzadeh after this morning's meeting with the UN Commission stated that the Commission had successfully completed its work on the first part of its mandate. The second part of the mandate requires a meeting with the hostages. Because the Government had met resistance on this point, Ghotbzadeh had asked the Commission to stay in Tehran another 2–3 days.

Ghotbzadeh at that point said he could say no more. Very privately, however, he must have briefed someone in the UN entourage along the following lines with strong emphasis on total secrecy: The hostages will remain where they are. The turnover will take place tonight. The Revolutionary Council will meet late today to discuss details.²

Our two lawyers apparently told someone in the UN group that it would be better for the Commission not to go to the Compound before Sunday³ because the students might "leave something behind" (presumably booby traps). Nevertheless, the UN group is talking about a visit to the Compound on Sunday, partly because Pettiti is going to Paris and will be back Saturday. When and if they go to see the hostages, a team of doctors will accompany them.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Saunders.

² According to Saunders, the Revolutionary Council accepted the students' decision to turn over the hostages and the formation of a committee to work out details of the transfer. (Saunders, "Diplomacy and Pressure," *American Hostages in Iran*, pp. 131–132)

³ March 8.

Apparently Bani Sadr got approval from Khomeini for the Commission to visit the Compound.⁴ The reaction of the occupiers of the Compound was to issue this morning's statement.⁵

Ahmed asked his counterpart how the U.S. should react publicly. The advice from Tehran was that the U.S. should not comment. The U.S. should avoid referring in any substantial way to the statement by the occupiers.⁶

⁴ As related in telegram 59159 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 5, Khomeini gave his approval to Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh on the evening of March 4, but the students sought verification. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800113-0968)

⁵ In his memoir, Sick wrote that the "Muslim Student Followers of the Imam's Line at the Den of Espionage" issued a press release that stated, "What can one do when the officials and those who are in charge in the commission have accepted that whatever the commission wants must be done? We cannot bow to and comply with a view that we do not regard as being in line with the Imam's policy. But since those in charge of government always regard our methods as a factor contributing to their weakness—always speak of a government within a government—thus, we declare to the Revolutionary Council, in order to allay any misunderstanding, to take delivery of the hostages . . . from us to do with them anything they deem appropriate." (Sick, *All Fall Down*, p. 315) For the full text of the statement, translated by the BBC based on a Tehran radio broadcast, see *Washington Post*, March 7, 1980, p. A25.

⁶ Cottam reported that during a March 6 telephone conversation, he found Ghotbzadeh to be "exhilarated" at the turn of events. Ghotbzadeh told Cottam that the United States should treat the news in a "non-joyous" fashion. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation)

199. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, March 5, 1980

SUBJECT

Post-Hostage Iran

This issue is scheduled to be discussed this afternoon at the SCC Meeting on Security Framework. The State INR paper² provided for the meeting focuses very heavily on foreign policy of Iran. It takes the present political situation in Tehran as its starting point and then extrapolates what would happen if the hostage situation were removed as a consideration. In that sense, it is an accurate reflection of the current conventional wisdom. However, it does not pose the serious questions in a form which is sharp enough to permit policy decisions.

In fact, the *foreign policy of Iran* in the post-hostage period *will be determined* almost exclusively *by internal developments* in Iran. This may not be the moment for a high-level review of the sensitive and difficult policy choices which we will face, but the following is an attempt to spell out very briefly the kinds of approaches we might consider, the kind of operational decisions which we may be required to make, and some of the larger strategic issues which we will wish to consider.

Evolution vs. Activism

The State paper explicitly adopts an evolutionary approach. It takes the present system, structure, and personalities as its starting point and then considers how we can nurse it along toward *our desired objectives* of:

- A reasonably stable and unified Iran which is
- Strongly resistant to pro-Soviet subversion and external threats,
- Accessible to the West for political dialogue and economic development,
- Willing to maintain mutually beneficial contact with the U.S. on issues of concern to both countries, and
- Continued production of significant quantities of oil.

[1 paragraph (8½ lines) not declassified]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 1/80–3/80. Secret. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

² See Document 192.

Short Term Policy Issues

The following list attempts to identify the specific policy issues which will require decisions soon after the hostages are released. For purposes of discussion at the SCC, these could be regarded as *areas for possible contingency planning* by the various agencies.

Diplomatic Relations. State has already done quite a bit of work in preparation for the Swiss to take over as protecting power for us in Tehran, on the assumption that we will maintain diplomatic relations but no physical presence in Tehran. Alternatively, we could break diplomatic relations. Will we continue to grant student visas? Should we explore the possibility for direct contacts with the Iranian leadership on neutral territory? What does State mean by a "Joint Commission" which is mentioned in the paper?

Spare Parts. Will we continue to embargo the supply of spare parts? If this is not part of a hostage release package, what is our asking price to lift the embargo? Can we realistically expect our allies to continue the embargo once the hostages are out?

Oil. Will we be prepared to make spare parts and technical expertise available to Iran? Could we prevent it if we tried? Can we bargain our supply of parts and expertise in return for access to Iranian oil ports by U.S. tankers? Are we interested in attempting to resume purchase of Iranian oil?

Allied Projects. Will we acquiesce in a return to business as usual on the part of our allies? Could we prevent it if we tried? Is it in our interest to encourage the allies to rebuild a Western commercial presence?

Assets. How do we manage the unfreezing of Iranian assets? What problems do we foresee? How long will it take? What steps can we take in advance to facilitate management of this very complex problem?

Intelligence. [2 lines not declassified]

[1 paragraph (7½ lines) not declassified]

Longer Term Policy Issues

The following is intended as a thumbnail sketch of the kind of policy issues which we will have to address in terms of our basic foreign policy goals once the hostage crisis is off our backs.

CENTO Redux. A combination of mutual need and common vulnerability will tend to drive Turkey, Iran and Pakistan together. We will want to consider how we can best encourage that natural tendency and how we might best exploit it for our own interests. This will have to be seen as an important component of our relations with Turkey in particular.

Iraq will be a key factor, particularly if the tendency to intervene in the oil fields evolves into outright Iraqi expansionism.

USSR. The threat of Soviet subversion and potential direct military intervention in Iran will have to be dealt with in terms of our regional approach and in the context of our global relations with the Soviets.

[1 paragraph (9½ lines) not declassified]

Friends and Allies. We should project to the Europeans, Japanese and friendly states in the Gulf a sense of our objectives and a clear indication of what we expect of them and how we can cooperate for mutual benefit. The sooner we have a clear picture in our own mind, the more effective we can be in getting the kind of cooperation we would like.

Domestic

There is a vast range of problems associated with the integration of our domestic policy and our foreign policy on Iran. It is not clear who should be doing this thinking and when it should begin, but the domestic dimension should not be overlooked in our policy planning.

200. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 6, 1980, 9–9:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Peter Constable

Nelson Ledsky

OSD

W. Graham Claytor

White House

Henry Owen (Chairman)

Jody Powell

Lloyd Cutler

Hedley Donovan

NSC

Gary Sick

William Odom

Jerrold Schecter

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 110. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, C" in the upper right corner. Beginning February 9, the 9 a.m. SCC meetings on Iran met only on Tuesdays and Thursdays. (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Vance, Brown, Jones, Turner, February 8; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 18, SCC Meeting #264 held 1/30/80)

JCS
General David Jones
Lt. Gen. John Pustay

Justice
John Shenefield

Treasury
Robert Carswell

Energy
John Sawhill

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Iran Developments.* Secretary Vance informed the group that the U.S. public reaction to the reports that the hostages were to be turned over to the Revolutionary Council would be: "We have noted what has been said in Tehran and we are waiting to see what happens." No one should go beyond that statement. All agreed. (C)

2. *Iran Sanctions.* The SCC reviewed the status of sanctions on Iran as follows:

Military Spares. State and Defense reported that the embargo on sale of military spare parts was holding. [3 lines not declassified] In general, the anxiety on the part of the Iranians to find spares is evidence that the embargo is working. We are staying alert for efforts to circumvent the restrictions. (S)

Assets Freeze. Treasury reported that the freeze is holding. The Iranians are considering a counter-attachment of U.S. assets in Swiss banks, and we have retained counsel to attempt to block them. The situation will have to be played day by day. In France, a hearing on our freeze of assets in French banks is scheduled for March 17, but we are seeking a month delay. If and when the hearing is held, it is likely to go against us. [12 lines not declassified] Otherwise, Treasury noted that there are a number of tactical situations around the world which are being watched, and we are holding fast. Iran is putting pressure on Finland to repay \$38 million oil payment which was caught in the freeze. The World Bank is asking us to license payment of an Iranian loan which is coming due. In the UK, seven Iranian counter suits have been consolidated but will probably not be heard before summer or fall. There are 160 suits pending in the U.S., but consolidation proceedings insure that they will not be held for at least a month or longer. (TS)²

² In the left margin next to this paragraph, Carter wrote: "Keep strictest possible sanctions intact." Brzezinski passed on these instructions in a March 7 memorandum to Vance, Miller, Brown, Civiletti, Duncan, Cutler, and Jones. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 13)

Oil. Iranian production has been holding at just above 2 mbd. There has been a slight decline in exports in the early part of 1980, but that is probably due more to difficulties in contracting than to the floods, sabotage, breakdowns, and labor problems NIOC has been experiencing. Over time, these problems, including the lack of new drilling, will cause a decline in oil production, but it is not likely to be steep. The gas pipeline with the USSR is totally closed down, which may be an Iranian ploy in forthcoming price negotiations with the Soviets. (S)

Immigration. A total of 56,000 Iranian students were registered; 8,000 failed to register and are being pursued. Overall, since the restrictions were imposed, about 12,000 Iranians have left the U.S., including about 3,000 students. Approximately the same number of Iranians have entered the country during the same period since we decided not to prevent immigration. (C)

Overall Effect. Admiral Turner said that the sanctions have had only a marginal effect on the Iranian economic disarray, and keeping the sanctions in effect would continue to have a marginal effect. Secretary Vance said he was more optimistic. Although the economic effects of the sanctions had not been great, the psychological effect had been real, as demonstrated by the lengths Iran went to prevent sanctions being voted in the UN. Mr. Claytor agreed that knowledgeable people were worried about the effect of the sanctions in the long run. The short term effect was minimal, but over the period of a year there would be a significant impact in terms of spare parts and production capacity. Energy agreed. Mr. Cutler noted that Iran had gone from an excellent credit rating to one of the lowest, although that was due in large part to their own actions and economic disarray. (C)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

201. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting

Washington, March 7, 1980, 3–4:45 p.m.

[Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. 3 pages (extract) not declassified. A portion of this summary dealing with the Persian Gulf security framework is printed as Document 62 in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula.]

202. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, March 10, 1980

SUBJECT:

Conversation with Dr. Brzezinski, 7 March 1980 [*portion marking not declassified*]

1. I discussed my draft paper² for use in the Presidential briefing next week on needing to keep covert action, political action, and military action pressures available in Iran. He thought it was a reasonable thing to present to the President, but that if the negotiations were going exceptionally well it might be a good idea to postpone it. [*portion marking not declassified*]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files 1977–1981, Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings With Various Officials and Subjects. Secret; [handling restriction not declassified].

² Not further identified. The reference is possibly to an undated paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, “Covert Action in Iran,” which argued for two basic operational approaches: to encourage and lend support to Iranian moderates and anti-communists in Iran and the exile community; and to mount operations to weaken and discredit the Iranian left and the Soviet Union. The paper also points to Bakhtiar as having “the will and charisma” to lead a cohesive opposition movement. The paper notes his “excellent tribal contacts,” his support within the military, his staff in Baghdad and Tehran, his strong backing from Iraq, and the potential support from Israel and Turkey. Acknowledging the weaknesses of his movement, the paper suggests that the United States maintain contact with Bakhtiar, provide him with funds, and influence his planning for up to a year, at which time his movement may or may not be viable. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 13)

2. I discussed what we were doing in the Iranian covert action with respect to Bakhtiar. I gave him my estimate that we had a number of months in which we could drag this out without much problem. He agreed with the way in which we were proceeding and recommended that we not take too many details of these tactics up with the President until it became a “strategic decision.” I told him that at some point in the next month and one-half we were probably going to have to put up some more money to Bakhtiar for his organizational purposes, not for a coup. Brzezinski agreed that at that point we would need to go back to the President. [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. Let’s discuss. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Stansfield Turner

203. Editorial Note

The activities of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry in Tehran culminated in the events of March 7–11, 1980. On March 7, at 10:15 a.m., lawyer Hector Villalon notified Henry Precht, Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs, that the hostages would be transferred to the control of the Revolutionary Council on March 8. (Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80) Villalon called Precht again at 1 p.m. that afternoon to relay the following scenario: After the transfer of the hostages that night, the Commission would visit them on Sunday, March 9, at the Embassy compound (where they would remain temporarily). A team of physicians would see them immediately after the transfer, and the Commission would then make an official visit to the Foreign Ministry. “Some-time soon” thereafter the hostages would be moved from the Embassy compound to a government guest house. The Commission would leave Tehran on March 10. (Memorandum for the Record, March 6; *ibid.*) As noted in Iran Sitrep #245, this scenario did not guarantee the departure of the hostages from Iran. (Telegram 61042 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800117–0370)

The next day, March 8, Ghotbzadeh announced his intent to put this scenario into operation: As a representative of the Revolutionary Council, and acting under the Ayatollah Khomeini’s orders, he would take charge of the hostages and the compound and move the hostages to a secret location for questioning by the Commission members. The students in turn announced that they would turn over the hostages

after their physicals, but intended to remain in control of the compound in order to safeguard documents and files to prove Iran's case against the United States. Later that day the students, calling Ghotbzadeh a "liar," demanded that someone other than he represent the Revolutionary Council. (Telegram 62650 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 8; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800119-1050)

Meanwhile, Christian Bourguet and Villalon informed the Department that the Iranians insisted on establishing the joint U.S.-Iranian Commission, the last step of the agreed-upon scenario (see Document 180) before the complete liberation of the hostages. The Iranians also wanted to establish the principles of the Commission and an outline of its work, expecting it to meet in Switzerland. (Unnumbered telegram, March 9; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80) That same day, a Dr. Gharahi saw 43 or 44 of the hostages and informed the Department that physically the hostages were fine but that their mental condition was "not good." (Memorandum from Constable to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom, March 12; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Mar 1980) As Sick later recalled, President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr sent a personal message to President Jimmy Carter pledging that the hostages would be transferred to the custody of the government 15 days after the Majles election (March 14). (Sick, *All Fall Down*, page 318)

The next day, Sunday, March 9, the students announced that the hostages were ready for delivery to a representative of the Revolutionary Council between 1:30 and 8:30 p.m. EST, "provided he brings with him an official order from the Council." They rejected any visit by Commission members. The Revolutionary Council responded that the Commission "can meet the hostages, unless the students continue to oppose such a meeting, in which case, as they proposed, the hostages should be handed over and the Foreign Ministry should then be responsible for the procedure." Khomeini announced that he would not make a statement on the situation. (Telegram 63666 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 9; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800121-0876)

By March 10, no Commission visit had taken place, none was scheduled, and the hostages had not been transferred. Ghotbzadeh publicly expressed his anger at the students and demanded they "make a final decision" within 24 hours on the transfer of the hostages. (Telegram 63683 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800123-0493) That morning Khomeini met with the Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers (without Bani-Sadr) and announced afterwards that the

students should make their documents available to the Commission, that “the meeting with the hostages involved in compiling the dossier on the crimes committed by the Shah and the United States can take place for the purpose of their interrogation,” and that if the Commission announced its views in Tehran about the Shah’s crimes and U.S. interference in Iran’s affairs, “then a meeting with the hostages can take place.” Within hours the students withdrew their offer to transfer the hostages. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 3/80) The text of Khomeini’s statement is in FBIS 31, March 10. (Ibid.) See also Sick, *All Fall Down*, pages 316–317.

Given the turn of events, Carter met on March 10 with senior-level advisers and congressional leadership. As related by historian Richard Cottam to Ghotbzadeh, the administration’s mood was “pessimistic” but determined to pursue negotiations and keep the Commission of Inquiry in being. Ghotbzadeh agreed to keep Iranian statements from complicating efforts to keep the Commission operating. (Memorandum of conversation, March 11; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 35, Iran, Ghotbzadeh, Cottam) The meeting with congressional leadership is recorded in a handwritten memorandum of conversation, March 10. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 99, Meeting File, 3/10/80 President’s Meeting with Congressional Leadership)

In his memoir, Carter wrote that the “deranged” Khomeini had overridden the government and aborted resolution of the crisis. Carter found Khomeini’s demands to be “obviously unacceptable.” Quoting from the March 10 entry in his personal diary, Carter wrote:

“It [events] shows that the UN commission must return. And it also shows that there is no government in Iran other than the fanatics. . . . We’ll hold off breaking diplomatic relationships. We’ll impose economic sanctions as soon as the commission is clear of Iran. We’ll investigate the possibility of confiscating Iranian assets in addition to just impounding them. We should not attack Bani-Sadr and Ghotbsadeh, because they have indeed been the ones who have tried hardest to get the hostages out.

“. . . Vance called during lunch to say that the UN commission had been asked by Bani-Sadr to stay over until tomorrow night to meet with the Revolutionary Council to receive a proposal for a simultaneous statement on American and Shah abuse and an announcement that the hostages could all be visited by the commission. I told Cy, ‘Absolutely not!’ This was unacceptable to me. There’s no way to trust the Iranian government officials, because they can’t speak with any authority.” (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pages 498–499)

The Commission of Inquiry left Iran on March 11, 1980.

Break in Diplomatic Relations and the Rescue Mission

204. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 11, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President*

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Warren Christopher

Harold Saunders

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

JCS

General David Jones

Lt. General John Pustay

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Treasury

Robert Mundheim

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Lloyd Cutler

Hedley Donovan

Jody Powell

Henry Owen

NSC

Col. William Odom

Gary Sick

Jerrold Schecter

Thomas Thornton

*Present briefly at beginning of meeting

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by reporting the President's views that we should undertake a public relations campaign against Iran, that we should impose sanctions,² and we should build worldwide support for our position. The SCC reviewed the following next steps on Iran:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 99, Meetings File, 3/11/80 SCC re Iran. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² Carter underlined the phrase "should impose sanctions" and wrote in the margin: "assess only."

1. *Return to the Security Council.* Secretary Vance reported that Ambassador McHenry was doing a formal paper which would be available in the next 48 hours concerning the pros and cons of raising the Iranian issue in the UNSC.³ We need a report from the Commission to the SC which would report on their reasons for breaking off their efforts. It would not deal with the substance of the charges against the Shah, etc. The report could be done in either closed or open session. The Secretary General probably prefers a closed session report, at least initially.⁴ Secretary Vance will go to New York, probably on Wednesday,⁵ to meet with the co-chairmen of the Commission. We will also be in touch through intermediaries on Wednesday for an evaluation of the situation after the departure of the Commission. In Vance's view, the Commission idea is not dead yet, and going to the Security Council at this stage would only worsen the chances that it can be resuscitated. He recommended that we wait until we have been in touch with the co-chairmen, until we have had a report through the intermediaries, and perhaps until the election is held in Iran on Friday before taking any action. All agreed that we had about a week to ten days before public opinion would begin to demand action, and we should use that time to explore whether the Commission can be revived. (S)

The SCC recommended that we proceed with the report of the Commission to the SC, looking to the Secretary General in the first instance whether this should be in open or closed session. Based on that report and other contacts during the rest of the week, a decision would be taken whether to introduce a new initiative in the UNSC. In the meantime, Ambassador McHenry would submit a memorandum to the President concerning the nature, timing and advisability of such an approach.⁶ (S)

_____ Approve the above approach.⁷

_____ Expedite an approach to the SC.

2. *World Court.* Oral arguments are scheduled to be presented to the ICJ on March 17, leading to a formal decision by the Court condemning Iran's seizure of the hostages and ordering their return. The SCC agreed that the oral arguments should proceed as scheduled. This would be seen as some pressure on Iran but would not be the kind of

³ Not found.

⁴ According to telegram 1000 from USUN, March 18, Waldheim's briefing of the Security Council members on March 17 was informal, did not go beyond public statements, and did not include a Commission report. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800139-0258)

⁵ March 12.

⁶ No memorandum has been found.

⁷ Carter approved this option with a checkmark.

high-profile pressure which would be likely to upset efforts to put the Commission back on track. (C)

_____ Approve proceeding with oral arguments as scheduled.⁸

_____ Postpone oral arguments for two weeks or more.

3. *Break Diplomatic Relations with Iran.* State is preparing a paper which examines the pros and cons of a formal break in diplomatic relations. This paper will also consider intermediate steps which we could take to restrict the presence and/or activities of Iranian diplomats in the U.S. The paper will be considered at the SCC meeting on Thursday morning.⁹ (C)

4. *Impose Formal Economic Sanctions on Iran.* Mr. Cutler had prepared and circulated a draft of the sanctions which the President could impose.¹⁰ Secretary Vance felt that immediate imposition of sanctions could interfere with the contacts which are under way, and he recommended that it be withheld until after we had been in touch with the intermediaries on Wednesday. The Attorney General and Treasury noted that the formal imposition of sanctions was essentially a symbolic gesture, since the regulations already in effect have shut off all economic relations with Iran. Dr. Brzezinski said that he would prefer taking a number of steps at once, rather than dribbling it out over time, so he would prefer holding the announcement of sanctions until we were prepared to take steps on diplomatic relations, resort to the SC, and other possible steps. The SCC recommended holding off on any action at this time. (C)

_____ Approve holding off announcement for now.¹¹

_____ Proceed with announcement of formal sanctions.

5. *Message to Allies.* State was in the process of revising the Presidential message which had been prepared the night before, based on the announcements which the U.S.¹² and the UN had issued last night. The message will be available later today and will inform the allies that we are considering the imposition of sanctions and other steps

⁸ Carter approved this option with a checkmark.

⁹ The paper, "Possible Options for Changes in Diplomatic Relations with Iran," was attached to a March 13 memorandum from Dodson to Mondale, Vance, Miller, Brown, Civiletti, Cutler, Jones, and Turner. For the discussion of the paper at the March 18 SCC meeting, see Document 210.

¹⁰ Not found.

¹¹ Carter approved this option with a checkmark.

¹² On March 10, the White House issued a statement announcing that the Commission of Inquiry had suspended its activities for several days and would return to New York for consultations with Waldheim. The statement also noted that the Commission was prepared to return to Tehran "when the situation requires." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980-81, Book I, p. 455*)

and asking them to cooperate by holding fast on the informal measures embargoing military spare parts and other economic measures.¹³ (C)

6. *Confiscation of Iranian Assets.* Secretary Vance had grave doubts about taking this step, which was a major step toward a declaration of war and very difficult to reverse later. Henry Owen noted that it would be extremely sensitive for the oil-producing states. Dr. Brzezinski said that it would imply a degree of fatalism; the families of the hostages would no doubt see it as a declaration that we had confiscated Iran's assets while they had confiscated our diplomats. It implied that the process was over. The SCC agreed that Justice, Treasury and State would do a brief paper analyzing the steps which we could take and their implications, for consideration at the meeting on Thursday.¹⁴ (S)

7. *Other Measures.* Dr. Brzezinski asked the group to consider what will happen if the negotiating route using the UN Commission takes us nowhere. In effect, we are back to where we were six weeks ago. We are about to resume the strategy of pressure which we were following at that time. He wondered what effect our pressure had had thus far and what would be the advisability or effectiveness of more vigorous action, including a blockade of Iranian ports. Admiral Turner said that a blockade would not bring Iran to its knees unless we were prepared to block exports as well as imports. Secretary Vance agreed, noting that a total blockade would bring severe opposition from all of our allies since it would stop the flow of oil on which they are dependent. It would also increase the tensions in the area and the likelihood of renewed attacks on Westerners. The allies had shown great concern about this in his talks with them. Finally, a blockade would risk driving the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets, since that would become their major source of supplies. Consequently, he had grave doubts about that course of action. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski recognized the validity of these points, but noted that a blockade could also get the allies to line up with us more effectively in bringing pressure on the Iranians. It might be useful for them to recognize that there are unpleasant consequences in the event the crisis is not resolved. He was also concerned about driving the Iranians toward the Soviets, but there are many in Iran who would not want to see Iran move toward the USSR, and this might energize them to resolve the crisis. Under the present circumstances, they can have it

¹³ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Expedite." The message to the allies also recounted the history of the Commission's activities in Iran. (Telegram 65848 to Paris, London, Rome, Tokyo, Ottawa, and Bonn, March 12; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870111–1804)

¹⁴ The paper was discussed at the March 18 SCC meeting. See footnote 2, Document 210.

both ways and are not required to choose between us and the Soviets. If we can simply sit it out and get a resolution of the problem, fine; but he was worried that the Iranians were not willing to give up the hostages unless they face some difficult consequences. (S)

Henry Owen noted that the effect of cutting off Iran's 2 mbd. of oil would drive up prices, add to inflation, and create gas lines. Admiral Turner wondered exactly what we hoped to accomplish by our pressure. In the past several days, Iranian behavior had been vintage Khomeini, i.e. total unwillingness to compromise. The objectives which Khomeini takes seriously are: (1) to get the Shah back to Iran; and (2) to avoid seeing his dream of an Islamic Republic crumble out from under him. Secretary Brown observed that the most imminent danger to the survival of the Islamic Republic was a Soviet takeover, and he was unwilling to take that risk in order to scare Khomeini. Dr. Brzezinski noted that assertive U.S. action in the past had achieved results, and he wondered if the kind of lesser steps we were considering would have any real effect. (S)

Mr. Cutler noted that military action would be counterproductive by driving the Iranians closer together. Dr. Brzezinski said he did not agree that that would necessarily be the result. Being forced toward the USSR would be something they would regard as unpleasant. Secretary Vance said he agreed with Mr. Cutler and noted that the risks of any military action were very high. Admiral Turner said that Iranian reaction would be different to a passive form of military action, e.g. a blockade, as compared to the kind of reaction which could be expected from a destructive action such as bombing. (S)

The SCC agreed that a systematic assessment of the potential effects of a blockade was desirable on a very closely held basis. It was agreed that a paper would be prepared, with circulation only to principals, for consideration at the meeting one week from Thursday, i.e. March 20. CIA will examine the respective impact of a limited blockade and a total blockade on the Iranian economy. The NSC will examine the impact of a blockade on Western Europe and Japan. State will look at the effects on the Islamic world, on the allies, and the Soviets. Defense will examine the military risks.¹⁵ All understood the dangers of leaks, which could have a disruptive effect on our efforts over the next week, and this examination should be held as tightly as possible. (TS)

8. *Public Posture.* Secretary Vance will be backgrounding the press today. All agreed that we should take the position that serious problems have arisen but that we are not ready to write off the UN Commission

¹⁵ The papers were discussed at the March 20 SCC meeting. See footnote 2, Document 214.

entirely. We should hold out some slim chance, however slight. Vance will announce tomorrow that he is meeting with the co-chairmen of the Commission. Jody Powell said we should brief the editorialists and columnists on a background basis.¹⁶ He felt it would be useful to provide them some detail on the scenario for their own information but not for publication. Others felt that we should limit ourselves to confirming that the Commission was to see the hostages but not go into detail about what was to have happened after that. We should maintain that line at least until the end of the week after we have had the opportunity to follow up on our contacts. Admiral Turner will get out through his channels the line that the present Government of Iran is not following Islamic principles.¹⁷ (C)

¹⁶ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "I want key top editors briefed."

¹⁷ Below this sentence, Carter wrote: "and that real gov't authority is non-existent."

205. Paper Prepared in the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency¹

PA 80–10121

Washington, March 1980

Iran: Exporting the Revolution [*portion marking not declassified*]

An Intelligence Assessment

Key Judgments

Iranian leaders, including Ayatollah Khomeini and President Bani-Sadr, are ideologically committed to aiding other Islamic revolutionaries. The Iranians see their revolution as an example for other "oppressed" peoples and believe that the organizational and ideological techniques they developed to topple the Shah can be used by others.

Internal problems have thus far forced Tehran to limit its official support for other revolutionaries largely to propaganda. Even this rhetoric, however, has greatly alarmed some of Iran's neighbors, espe-

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Support Services (DI), Job 81T00208R: Production Case Files (1979–1980), Box 2, Folder 16. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. Prepared by the Iran Task Force and coordinated with the Office of Strategic Research and the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia.

cially those with significant Shia Muslim populations, such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Tehran's efforts to export its revolution have been complicated by the confusion that has marked all facets of Iranian politics since the fall of the Shah. Iranian leaders and groups often have acted independently of the government and have embarrassed the Foreign Ministry's efforts to maintain correct relations with Iran's neighbors.

If Iran's internal problems ease in the next year, Tehran probably will step up efforts to destabilize its neighbors. Bani-Sadr appears to be taking steps to increase support for unrest in Iraq and Afghanistan. Iranian support to Afghan insurgents could give the Soviets an excuse to intervene in Iran.

Iran's efforts to export its revolution are a threat to key US interests. US allies in the area would have reason to be nervous if the Iranians were to play a more active role. Iranian-supported unrest could lead to sabotage and strikes by oil workers, since Shias inhabit many of the oil-producing areas of the Persian Gulf states.

One year after the fall of the Shah, Iran's leaders appear more determined than ever to export their Islamic revolution to other countries in the Near East and South Asia. Although internal problems continue to limit Iran's ability to export the revolution, Tehran radio broadcasts a steady stream of propaganda every day to Iran's neighbors. The country's leaders—including Ayatollah Khomeini and President Bani-Sadr—often express their commitment to the liberation of oppressed peoples throughout the Muslim world. Khomeini, for example, said on 20 February:

I hope that (Iran) will become a model for all the meek and Muslim nations in the world and that this century will become the century for smashing great idols . . . O meek of the world, rise and rescue yourselves from the talons of nefarious oppressors; O zealous Muslims in various countries of the world, wake from your sleep of neglect and liberate Islam and the Islamic countries from the clutches of the colonialists and those subservient to them.

Bani-Sadr was quoted on 4 February:

Our revolution will not win unless it is exported. We are going to create a new order in which deprived people will not always be deprived. As long as our brothers in Palestine, Afghanistan, the Philippines, and all over the world have not been liberated, we Iranians will not put down our arms. We give our hand to deprived people all over the world. [portion marking not declassified]

Iran's revolutionary rhetoric and its actions in the last year have greatly alarmed its neighbors. The Arab states of the Persian Gulf region have been the most visibly disturbed. Iraq has initiated a program of aid to dissidents inside Iran in order to weaken the Khomeini regime

and prevent it from actively subverting Iraq's majority Shia Muslim population. [4 lines not declassified]

Ideological Basis

The leaders of Iran have consistently believed that their revolution should be a model for other countries in the region. Former Foreign Minister Yazdi commented right after the fall of the Shah's government in February 1979 that the monarchy's collapse signaled a "new era of Islamic struggle triggered by our revolution." [portion marking not declassified]

Khomeini, Bani-Sadr, Yazdi, and other Iranian leaders believe that their revolution was a triumph of Islamic values over the decadence of a corrupt, repressive, Westernized regime. They stress that the revolution was based on Islamic idealism—a spiritual awakening—which in turn led to the polarization of society between the enlightened masses and the corrupt elite. As a result Tehran's revolutionary lessons are not exclusively Iranian but common to all Muslim countries and even all Third World countries. [portion marking not declassified]

Iran's leaders argue—with some justice—that their revolution is unique in the modern history of the Middle East. Rather than seizing power through a military coup, they achieved their goal through the mass mobilization of society. Their people are first reminded of the virtues of Islam, which alienates them from their corrupt rulers. Armed with faith in Allah and the justice of their cause, this argument goes on, the people as a whole are ready to confront the regime. [portion marking not declassified]



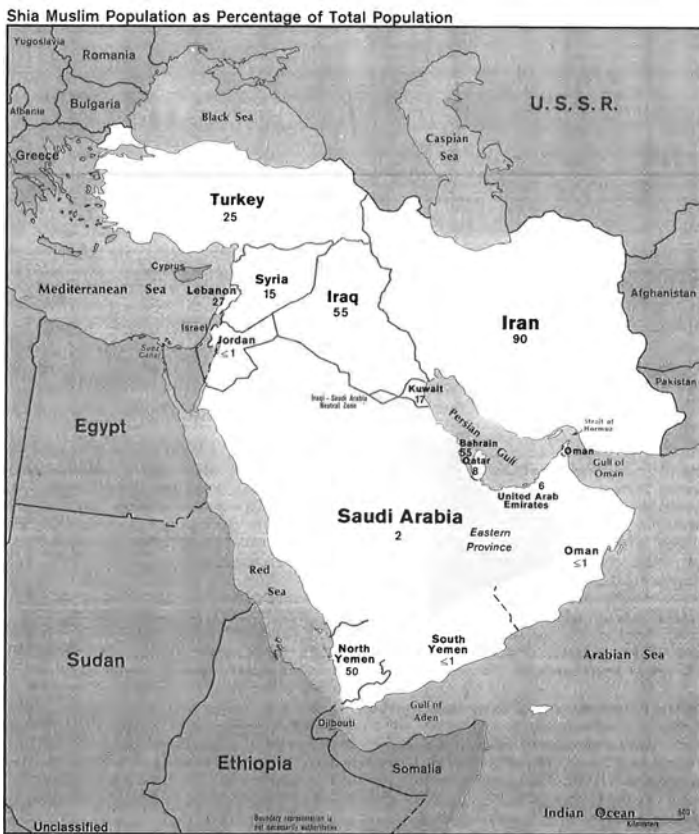
PLO chief Yasser Arafat, Ayatollah Khomeini's son Ahmad, and President Bani-Sadr expressing solidarity with the world's "oppressed" at the celebrations marking the first anniversary of the Iranian revolution.

The revolutionary leadership believes that if Iran fails to export its revolution, the country will be isolated in an unfriendly environment of hostile regimes. Most of these leaders are preoccupied with the example of Prime Minister Mossadegh's government in 1953, which,

they believe fell because it lacked allies against the United States and the United Kingdom. The survival of the Islamic Republic is closely tied, in this view, to the overthrow of pro-Western regimes in the Middle East. [portion marking not declassified]

Moreover, many Iranian leaders spent years in exile as leaders of the anti-Shah opposition during which they developed close ties with a broad range of Middle Eastern radical movements. Khomeini, for example, was one of the earliest supporters of Yasir Arafat's Fatah movement, and Bani-Sadr has long had close ties with the radical Lebanese Shia movement formerly led by Imam Musa Sadr. The Iranians clearly feel obligated to support their fellow revolutionaries. [portion marking not declassified]

Although the Iranians claim that their revolution should be a model for all Islamic peoples, actual support has been primarily given to other Shia Muslims in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan. This reflects Tehran's sympathy for its Shia brethren and the continuing potency of Shia-Sunni differences. [portion marking not declassified]



Most Iranian leaders, including Khomeini and Bani-Sadr, have been careful to say in public that Tehran has no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of its neighbors and that since a revolution is primarily a spiritual awakening, it must begin in the hearts and minds of the oppressed. As such it cannot be simply exported by Iran, and no quantity of external aid can act as a substitute for the mobilization of each nation's own internal forces. Nonetheless, the Iranians believe that they can teach other Islamic peoples the necessary revolutionary techniques and organizational theory. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran so far has provided mostly rhetoric and propaganda to other revolutionaries, safe haven for foreign dissidents, and a meeting place for radicals. In part, this reflects the ideological basis of their world view. It also reflects, however, the weakness of the central government in Tehran which has been preoccupied with consolidating its power and lacks the means to more actively export revolution. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Confusion and Ambiguity in Tehran

Although there is a broad consensus in principle among Iranian leaders favoring support for other revolutionaries in the area, some have argued that Iran should devote its attention primarily to its own problems and should not waste energy and resources on exporting the revolution at this time. Former Prime Minister Bazargan was often identified with this argument, while Iran's clerical leadership has generally been far more militant. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The collapse of the Bazargan government last November largely—but not entirely—removed the ambiguity in Iranian attitudes. Bazargan's successors in Tehran including President Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh are far more inclined to aid other revolutionaries than was Bazargan. They have spent years in exile working with other radicals, and their own political beliefs are much more radical than Bazargan's. [*portion marking not declassified*]

These differences in emphasis have been accompanied by uncoordinated actions typical of the confusion that has plagued Iran since the fall of the Shah. Iran's support for foreign revolutionaries has occasionally appeared to be less the work of the government than of individual Iranian leaders and groups. The militants who seized the US Embassy in November, for example, held a conference of liberation groups at the Embassy in January without the explicit backing of the government but with the support of Ayatollah Khomeini. One Iranian cleric last December recruited several hundred volunteers on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization without any authorization by the Tehran government. [*portion marking not declassified*]

But the government, inspired by revolutionary fervor, has progressively expanded Iranian contacts with a wide variety of revolution-

minded groups in the Middle East. Tehran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established an Office of National Liberation Movements, headed by Sodebeh Sodeifi, to identify revolutionary groups worthy of Iranian support. In late February, for example, Sodeifi visited Algeria and extended Iran's diplomatic recognition to the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic, the political wing of the Polisario Front. Tehran also has established contacts with dissidents in most Persian Gulf states, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the Palestine Liberation Organization. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iranian policy in the future is likely to put more emphasis on exporting the revolution. Some traditionalist Foreign Ministry officials and diplomats will argue for maintaining correct relations with Iran's neighbors, but their voices are not likely to have much resonance in Tehran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

In any case, Iran's militant Shia clergy will continue to press for exporting the revolution. Individual clergymen will support their favorite foreign causes. Given its weaknesses, the Tehran government has little ability to curb the clergy's activities, which have already included providing guerrilla training and some arms for foreign radicals inside Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

US Policy Implications

If the internal chaos in Iran persists in the near term—as seems likely—Iranian support for groups and causes inimicable to US policies and interests will continue to be limited primarily to propaganda and perhaps some increased financial backing. One press report indicates that Iran plans to provide \$14 million to liberation movements this year. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Even limited Iranian support and propaganda will unnerve US allies in the area and complicate US efforts to improve ties with Tehran. If Iran continues to find an audience among Shias in oil-producing countries like Saudi Arabia and Iraq, the chances for sabotage and strikes by oil workers will be great. [*portion marking not declassified*]

If Iranian leaders succeed in consolidating their hold on the country in the next year, the threat to neighboring regimes—especially pro-US regimes—is likely to increase. Iran could then devote more attention and resources to sponsoring subversion. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran's efforts to destabilize its Iraqi and Afghan neighbors also pose dangers for US interests. Increased tensions between Tehran and Baghdad threaten to disrupt oil production in the area, since many of both countries' facilities are located close to the border. If Iran succeeds in promoting increased Shia unrest in Iraq—the strongest Arab country in the Gulf—the threat to other countries in the area, especially Saudi Arabia, would be greatly increased. [*portion marking not declassified*]

A deterioration in Afghan-Iranian relations also could pose problems for the United States. While the United States might benefit from further deterioration in Tehran's already strained ties with Moscow, widespread Iranian support for the Afghan insurgency might give the Soviets an excuse to intervene in Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Appendix

Country Case Studies

Iraq: The Baathist Target

Tehran believes Iraq is its most promising target for subversion in the Arab world. Shias constitute approximately 55 percent of Iraq's population, but they traditionally have been ruled by Sunni Arabs who compose only 25 percent of the country's 12.5 million people. The Shias are concentrated in southern Iraq. Major oil pipelines, strategic installations such as the port of Basrah, and the Persian Gulf oil terminals are located in this area, and the southern oilfields depend heavily on Shia labor. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran has long had close ties with the Iraqi Shias. About 250,000 Shias of Iranian ancestry reside in Iraq, most near the two Shia holy cities of Karbala and Najaf. One of Iran's most respected clerical leaders, Ayatollah Khoi, resides in Najaf, and Ayatollah Khomeini spent 13 years in exile there. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Iranian leadership sees the Baathist regime in Baghdad as a militarist regime devoid of popular legitimacy and insufficiently Islamic. Khomeini doubtless recalls with some bitterness that Iraqi leaders ousted him from his Najaf exile in October 1978 because of their desire to keep relations with the Shah on an even keel. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Moreover, Tehran views the Iraqi Government as a threat to the Islamic Republic. Tehran is well aware that the Iraqis are supporting dissident groups in Iran, including the Kurdish, Arab, and Baluchi minority groups and is probably aware of former Prime Minister Bakhtiar's contacts with Iraq. Iran also recognizes that Iraq is its major competitor for influence in the Persian Gulf. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Since early 1979, the Iranians have provided some limited support to Iraqi Shia dissidents. This support primarily has been propaganda—leaflets and tape cassettes advancing Khomeini's views have circulated among the Shias calling for the overthrow of the Baathist regime. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iranian media have also focused on Iraq, making the Baghdad regime Iran's second major target of hostile propaganda after the United States. Tehran radio features a 45-minute daily program

directed at Iraq and highlighted by an anti-Iraqi commentary entitled "The Baath in the Dock." The main themes of Iranian propaganda are:

- Iraq secretly supports the United States and Israel against Iran.
- Iraq is fomenting sedition in Iran.
- Iraqi Shias are oppressed and should rise against the Baathist leadership.

The programs directed toward Iraq occasionally include messages from little known Iraqi dissident organizations supporting Tehran and attacking the Baathists. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iran also has provided some training and arms for Iraqi Shia dissidents. According to one account Iran had given military training to about 1,000 Iraqi militants by February 1980. There have been several small border clashes between the two countries, and some have probably been caused by dissidents crossing the border from Iran. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] a clash in mid-December was the result of Iraqi commandos raiding a Shia guerrilla center in Iran. [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

[*1 paragraph (8 lines) not declassified*]

Baghdad has assets of its own to counter Iranian support for the Iraqi Shia dissidents. Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has not hesitated to order Iraqi security forces to pursue Shia rebels, and his Information Minister said last June that "if there are those in Iraq who seek martyrdom, the government is prepared to accommodate them." Baghdad also seeks to exploit Persian-Arab differences and uses economic and welfare programs to improve the Shias' standard of living and loyalty. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Tehran's support for the Iraqi Shias also has been hindered by the Shias' traditional inability to unite. [*3 lines not declassified*]

Tehran will probably continue to provide propaganda backing to the Iraqi Shias and may increase direct assistance. Bani-Sadr probably will seek to prevent relations with Baghdad from deteriorating too far, however, because he recognizes that the Iranian military is far inferior to the Iraqis'. Iranian revolutionary leaders hope that limited support for the Iraqi Shias will keep Baghdad off balance, prevent Iraq from interfering in Iran, and ultimately create the revolutionary mobilization of the Iraqi masses necessary for the creation of an Islamic Republic to replace the Baathists. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Saudi Arabia

Tehran's relations with the Saudi monarchy have been predictably uneasy since the fall of the Shah. To many Iranians, the Saudi royal family shares many of the Pahlavis' worst characteristics—a pro-US regime that has embarked on a massive modernization program with-

out any significant effort to change the autocratic and backward political system. Moreover, Riyadh's claim to be a world spokesman for Islam because of its status as defender of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina irritates the Iranian leadership. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Saudi Arabia is next after Iraq as a major Arab target of hostile Iranian propaganda. Tehran has focused principally on the Saudis' close ties to the United States. An editorial on 11 December told Saudis that "oil-guzzling America is plundering your blood . . . and is crushing you with the arms purchased with your own oil money." It called on all Saudis to recognize that "an uprising against America is a divine duty." [*portion marking not declassified*]

Iranian propaganda also has called explicitly for the overthrow of the Saudi monarchy and has frequently broadcast messages supporting a little known Saudi dissident group called the Islamic Revolutionary Organization in the Arabian Peninsula. In one six-day period—31 January to 6 February—this group was mentioned at least four times by Tehran radio as upholding the banner of Islamic revolution in Saudi Arabia. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Iranians have focused their attention on the 150,000-strong Shia minority concentrated in the Eastern Province (about 3 percent of the country's population). Saudi Shias traditionally have been discriminated against by the predominant Wahhabi Sunni sect. In the Eastern Province they constitute about one quarter of the native population and have played a major role in the oil industry, amounting to between one quarter to one-third of the work force. Iranian propaganda has urged the Saudi Shias to strike and sabotage the oil industry to show solidarity with Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Tehran's appeals have had some success. Saudi Shias have rioted in the Eastern Province twice in the last six months, openly calling for the overthrow of the monarchy and expressing support for Ayatollah Khomeini. In late November during the holy days of the Muslim mourning month of Moharram, riots broke out in the largest Shia towns in the Eastern Province following pro-Khomeini demonstrations. Saudi security forces quelled them at a cost of 60 Shia lives. Rioting occurred again on 1 February during demonstrations marking the anniversary of Khomeini's return to Iran in 1979. In both cases the Saudi authorities concluded that many of the young Shias involved had been influenced by Tehran's propaganda. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is a picture of Iraqi, Afghan, and Palestinian delegates to a liberation conference in Tehran.]

There is some evidence of more direct Iranian involvement in the Shia unrest. One report in February indicated that the Saudis had intercepted a shipment of arms for the Shias that may have come from Iran. Last fall, Iranians making the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (the

Hajj) reportedly also visited Shia towns in the Eastern Province to preach the Khomeini line to the devout. The Saudis subsequently expelled several Iranian clerics. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Saudi Shias are too few in number and too isolated from the mainstream of Saudi society to overthrow the monarchy. Their strategic location and participation in the oil industry, however, give them the ability to pose a serious security problem for the regime. Tehran will almost certainly continue to support Shia dissidence in Saudi Arabia, even if diplomatic relations between the two countries remain correct. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Bahrain, Kuwait, and the Gulf States

Iran's relations with the small Persian Gulf monarchies also have been troubled by Tehran's support for Shia unrest. Iranian propaganda often has criticized the Gulf states for failing to support Iran against the United States. Government officials have stressed that Iran would like to maintain good relations with the Gulf states, but have also argued—as Bani-Sadr said in early February—that “we are not responsible for other peoples oppressed by rapacious and unpopular governments (in the Gulf) who are attracted by our deeds to follow our example.” [*portion marking not declassified*]

Tehran's attention has focused largely on Bahrain because about half of its population is Shia and because until 1971 the island was claimed as part of Iran. One Iranian cleric, Ayatollah Sadiq Rouhani, has been especially outspoken in his support for Bahraini Shias and on occasion has demanded the return of Bahrain to Persian sovereignty. Rouhani's statements had caused considerable embarrassment for former Prime Minister Bazargan's government and never appeared to have had full support in Tehran. Since the fall of the Bazargan government, Rouhani has continued to call for the overthrow of the regime in Manama, but it remains unclear how much support he enjoys among his fellow clerics. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Nonetheless, some Bahraini Shia dissidents and clerical leaders have made several trips to Tehran and Qom to meet with Iranian officials including Ayatollah Khomeini. Some have been arrested or expelled upon their return to Bahrain. Radio Tehran, moreover, has broadcast statements from the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain praising the Iranian revolution and appealing for support to overthrow “internal and foreign despots.” Antigovernment leaflets also have been sent to Bahrain from Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[1 paragraph (11 lines) not declassified]

The level of Shia unrest in Bahrain has been relatively low since last fall, and support for Ayatollah Khomeini has apparently fallen off because of the hostage crisis. Tehran probably will continue to try to

maintain correct but cool relations with Manama while giving some low-level support to dissidents. Individual Iranian leaders like Ayatollah Rouhani may be more active on the dissidents' behalf, and given the confusion in Iran, they will be able to do what they please. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Kuwaiti-Iranian relations also have been strained by the Shia revolution in Tehran. The US Embassy in Kuwait has been the target of several pro-Khomeini demonstrations that may have been organized at least in part by the Iranian Embassy. Kuwait has a Shia population estimated at approximately one quarter to one-fifth of the country. As in other Gulf states many Kuwaiti Shias are of Iranian background, and some are also Iranian citizens. [*portion marking not declassified*]

As in Bahrain, some religious leaders in Iran have supported Shia unrest in Kuwait. There have been several pro-Khomeini demonstrations in the country, and a major Kuwaiti Shia leader, Sayyid Abbas al-Mihri, was deported on 26 September along with 18 members of his family. Kuwaiti authorities have also recently arrested several Iranian Shias who were preparing to distribute antiregime and anti-US leaflets. In one arrest, the authorities discovered an arms cache. [*portion marking not declassified*]

The Iranian media, on the other hand, generally have been fairly favorable to Kuwait. Tehran radio promptly and favorably reported Kuwait's opposition to the foreign military buildup in the Gulf, the US decision to freeze Iranian assets, and the call for UN economic sanctions against Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Afghanistan—the Communist Menace

Iran has viewed the government in Kabul as a threat since the Marxist military coup in April 1978. Even before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, Iranian leaders were providing some support to insurgents opposed to the Kabul regime. The Soviet intervention has only increased Tehran's concern about the problem. The Iranians particularly fear that Afghanistan may be used as a base for subverting Iran, especially the Baluchi minority in southeast Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Tehran radio has broadcast a steady stream of attacks on the Marxist government, branding it an atheistic enemy of Islam and a tool of Soviet designs in the region. Several Afghan leaders have visited Tehran and Qom appealing for aid from the Iranians. Ayatollah Khomeini last August appealed to the Afghan people to "take a lesson from Iran" and "kick out" its Communist rulers. President Bani-Sadr has been especially outspoken and has often promised to provide aid to the rebels, including military training and arms, financial support, propaganda, diplomatic assistance, and even volunteers to fight with the rebels. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Substantial evidence indicates that since the revolution toppled the Shah in early 1979 Iran has been providing some limited support to Afghanistan:

- [3 lines not declassified]
- [3½ lines not declassified]
- [4½ lines not declassified]
- [2½ lines not declassified]
- [2½ lines not declassified]

[Omitted here is a picture of Afghan insurgents near Herat.]

There are now about 100,000 Afghan refugees in eastern Iran, and some are reportedly using the refugee camps near Zahedan and Mashhad to train militants and mount cross-border operations into Afghanistan. The border is more than 400 kilometers long and poorly supervised. Tribal groups like the Baluchis live on both sides of the border and have traditionally passed back and forth with ease. Smuggling is a major business in the area. [portion marking not declassified]

- [2½ lines not declassified]
- [2½ lines not declassified]
- [4½ lines not declassified]

Iranian aid appears to have had little impact on the Afghan insurgency. Although dissident tactics in Herat have at times been patterned after those used in Iran to bring down the Shah, there is no good evidence to support Afghan Government charges of direct Iranian involvement. The Shia Hazaras (Shias compose only 12 percent of Afghans) look to Khomeini for leadership, but their success in limiting government control to some towns is chiefly due to their own efforts and to the low priority Kabul has given to the Hazara insurgency. [portion marking not declassified]

[Omitted here is copyright information on the photographs.]

206. Memorandum for the Files¹

New York, March 12, 1980, 3:15–4:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Conversation with Secretary General Waldheim

PARTICIPANTS

UN
Secretary General Waldheim
Rafii Ahmed, Executive Secretary to the SYG
Diego Cordovez, Secretary of the Commission

US
Secretary Cyrus Vance
Ambassador vanden Heuvel
Arnold Raphel, Notetaker

Secretary Vance and the Secretary General met to discuss the Commission's visit to Tehran and consider where we go from here on the hostage issue. Waldheim led off the conversation by sharing some thoughts on "personalities" to give us an understanding of the dynamics of the Commission. It was obvious that Waldheim's impressions were based on extensive conversations with Bedjaoui. His assessment of the members of the Commission, their relative strengths and weaknesses, and the role they played in Tehran was in large measure a reflection of Bedjaoui's views.

Waldheim noted that Bedjaoui was "quite confident" that the issue would be resolved sooner rather than later. The special treatment Bedjaoui received from Bani-Sadr, whom he met with alone two times, obviously irritated the other members of the Commission, especially Co-Chairman Aguilar. Waldheim noted that Bani-Sadr and Bedjaoui had many affinities, both being "children of the revolutions." The Secretary General, as illustrative of the tensions within the Commission, explained at some length why the Commission left when it did. He noted that Bedjaoui wanted to stay one day more, as requested by Bani-Sadr and Qotbzadeh, on the assumption that the two Iranians could deliver on their promise to move the issue forward. The other four Commission members, especially Aguilar, were very skeptical, however, and insisted the Commission leave when it did. Aguilar went

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 2. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in Waldheim's office. Vance also met with all the members of the Commission after concluding his meeting with Waldheim. (Memorandum of Conversation, March 12; *ibid*)

so far as to say he would resign if the Commission chose to stay in Tehran.

Waldheim said that Bedjaoui characterized his fellow Commission members as follows: Aguilar was very outspoken, emotional and difficult to work with. He also did not understand the unusual political dynamics in Iran. Pettiti was deeply afraid from the beginning of the mission and his one overriding goal was to get out of Iran. Jayewardene was "very honest and nice but living in the clouds." Bedjaoui contended he had no political understanding and did not appreciate that in an unusual situation one must act unusually. He believed that Daoudy was honest, cooperative but ill for some of the time and therefore did not play an important role. Waldheim concluded his comments on the personalities of the Commission members by noting that the real problem was the Bedjaoui-Aguilar split.

On the substance of the mission, Waldheim said that on Thursday² everyone was quite optimistic. The students were ready to transfer authority for the hostages to the government. The Imam had received Bani-Sadr but refused to see representatives of the students. Over the next three days, however, something happened, and Khomeini changed his position saying the Commission would first have to issue a statement on Iran's grievances castigating the Shah and the American role in Iran.

Waldheim said that although we did not know specifically what happened in the three days, he and the Commission members pieced together the following: Waldheim believes the fundamental mistake made by Bani-Sadr and Qotbzadeh is that they did not arrange to transfer authority immediately upon the students' announcement on Thursday that they would give up the hostages. Instead there was a delay and on Friday, a holiday, the students organized demonstrations in front of the Embassy. On Saturday, Khomeini issued a statement which did not contain any mention of the transfer of the hostages. Monday morning, in an attempt to get reconfirmation of Khomeini's position, Qotbzadeh went to see the Imam and asked him to order the immediate transfer of authority. After the meeting with Khomeini, Qotbzadeh came to see the Commission members and was, for the first time, accompanied by Revolutionary Council Spokesman Habibi. The Commission members thought this was a disquieting change since Habibi had become a hard-liner on the hostage issue. Qotbzadeh told the Commission members that Khomeini would issue a statement on Tuesday which would demand that the Commission, before seeing all

² March 6.

the hostages, issue a statement condemning the Shah and American interference in Iran.

In an attempt to head this off, the Commission planned to see Bani-Sadr and ask him to tell the Imam that such a statement would be unacceptable. As the Commission members were leaving the hotel Monday morning to see Bani-Sadr, however, Khomeini's statement had already been made.³ According to Waldheim this was the final straw; most Commission members were angered and lost confidence in the word of their Iranian interlocutors.

When the Commission members met with Bani-Sadr, he said he disagreed with Khomeini's statement and suggested that the Commission stay on for one to two days to see whether the issue could be worked out. The Commission was adamant in its intention to leave and went to a meeting with Qotbzadeh to inform him that they would depart on Tuesday morning. Qotbzadeh told the Commission members that Bourguet had just called with a new formula and suggested the Commission stay on for 24–48 hours.

The Commission agreed that Bedjaoui could then meet alone with Bani-Sadr and Bourguet to discuss the new scenario, which was as follows: within 24 hours the Commission would (1) meet with the Revolutionary Council; (2) meet with the Imam, accompanied by Bani-Sadr; (3) issue a joint communiqué which would, *inter alia*, condemn the Shah and the United States; (4) see the hostages at the Embassy. The Commission responded that this was not acceptable. Qotbzadeh made one last attempt to turn the Commission around at 11:00 p.m. on Monday night, but the Commission remained firm and departed on Tuesday morning.⁴

The Secretary asked whether the Commission had completed work on the first part of its mandate. Waldheim responded that no report has yet been prepared. The Commission believes it has heard all it needs to and all that remains is to put the report together.

In response to the question of how we proceed, Waldheim said he had discussed this with Bedjaoui who noted that Bani-Sadr had told him that the matter would be settled soon—perhaps in ten days to two weeks (by March 21st or 22nd). Bani-Sadr implied it is not necessary to wait for the establishment of Parliament; he may be able to move after the first round of elections on Friday. This is predicated, however, on Bani-Sadr's expectation of strong support from the electorate. With this new mandate he could go to the Imam and get a favorable decision on the hostages. Bedjaoui therefore feels that the Commission should

³ See Document 203.

⁴ March 11.

perhaps return just before the 21st and arrange for transfer of the hostages over the Iranian holidays.

Waldheim's own view was that we should wait and see how the elections turn out and then look at setting a date for the return of the Commission. Waldheim closed the conversation by noting, a point later made by the Commission members, that in their last conversation with Qotbzadeh, the Foreign Minister told the Commission that it would be welcome back but not with the same composition. Both Bedjaoui and Aguilar said that this comment may have been a result of fatigue and discouragement on Qotbzadeh's part and a reflection of his own mercurial personality. They did not see it as a definitive Iranian request to change the makeup of the Commission. Both felt, however, that it was an issue that must be reviewed before the Commission makes plans to return to Iran.

207. Telegram From the Embassy in Switzerland to the Department of State¹

Bern, March 13, 1980, 0920Z

1455. For the Secretary From Saunders and Precht. Subj: First Meeting With B and V.

1. (S) Entire text.
2. Please pass to the White House Eyes Only for the President and Dr. Brzezinski.
3. Summary: Our initial meetings with B and V Wednesday² concentrated on their analysis of how the situation evolved in Tehran over the past 17 days while the UN Commission was there and, to a lesser extent, on how we move ahead from here. We will begin at breakfast Thursday to talk through how they see the next steps. In the near term, they believe it important that the Commission still visit the hostages, but they now see that visit taking place after the transfer of the hostages to government hands. They report both Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh as believing that transfer can take place within 7–14 days after the first round of the parliamentary elections March 14. They interpret the events of the past few days—despite our pressing the argument that

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 2. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee; Special Encryption.

² March 12.

the militants seem to have won—as reflecting a decisive turn in the tide against the militants, thereby setting the stage for transfer as part of the consolidation of governmental authority. Finally, we believe we now have reasonably firm indication that Metrinko is alive and physically sound. End summary.

4. During conversations from roughly noon to 8 p.m. Wednesday B and V appeared generally more optimistic than in our previous meetings or than would appear to us to be justified by recent events. While they are not willing to concede credit to Commission members, it seems apparent that any change in the actual situation in Tehran results from the continuing presence and pressure of the Commission in Iran. B and V believe the public mood is definitely turning against the militants and they cite recent statements by Ghotbzadeh, Bani-Sadr and Khomeini's elder brother, Ayatollah Pasandideh, as evidence that the leadership is now willing to attack the militants with Khomeini's approval and to guide public opinion against them. They give a positive interpretation to Khomeini's statement of March 10,³ suggesting that Khomeini was attempting to facilitate the work of the Commission—but could not appear to be less anti-American than normal in doing so.

5. B and V expect popular feeling against the militants to rise because of their attacks on respected revolutionary leaders, their efforts to confront the government and the widespread belief only Communists benefit from militant attacks. Khomeini does not approve such tactics and is bound to find ways to undercut the militants. B and V think Bani-Sadr will do well in the March 14 voting and believe this is the basis for his personal message to President Carter that the hostages will be moved to government control within 15 days if not sooner after the election.⁴ Last night Ghotbzadeh privately told B and V that he believed—but was not absolutely sure—that the transfer would probably take place within a week after March 14 vote. The margin of doubt that this would not occur was very small. B and V think Ghotbzadeh was completely honest and sincere in this statement.

6. We recognize that optimism may represent little more than the hope of our deeply committed friends and Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh. Nevertheless, we shall be exploring ways to attempt to bind the Iranians to the predictions in our conversations that follow. We shall attempt to work out a step-by-step scenario covering the 7–14 days after the elections as a basis for thinking about where we go from here in the light of the new timetable.

³ See Document 203.

⁴ Jordan recalled in his memoir that Bourguet said to him “we bring you a message from Bani-Sadr. He told us to tell you that the government will take control of the hostages within fifteen days. That is a promise from him to you!” (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 194)

7. B and V acknowledge that it is difficult to say where the scenario stands until the Iranians themselves decide to transfer the hostages. They believe it is imperative for Bani-Sadr to resolve this issue, and we should give him a little time to work this out, having brought the issue to a head. This has become primarily a domestic Iranian matter at this stage, and B and V do not recommend any action by us. They fear some outside actions would drive the Iranians together instead of allowing them further to isolate the militants. They believe a final scenario is needed to take account at the start of the fact that the transfer of the hostages should under present circumstances take place before the Commission's visit to the hostages. They urge a continued low-key posture in the US as long as possible.

8. The main element of the scenario discussed Wednesday, of course, was the future of the UN Commission. B and V believe the Commission must be maintained and must finish its tasks. Although they continue to believe that the Commission interpreted its mandate too literally and did not exercise the flexibility to take advantage of developments—at least a debatable point—they felt the Commission's presence was a positive factor. But B and V feel strongly that Commission members should not state publicly that transfer of the hostages is a precondition for the Commission's return. Both B and V agree, however, that transfer is, in fact, a precondition. They believe the Commission must fulfill its mandate by visiting the hostages after their transfer because the visit is important to government efforts to consolidate its grip on the situation and to reduce the power of the militants—both moves are essential in paving the way for release of the hostages. They also urge that the Commission should at least be organizing and assembling elements of its report. They recall that the original scenario⁵ envisioned the Commission telling the Council that it was ready to report but that no report would have credibility while the hostages were being held in intolerable conditions. B and V feel that some such statement—perhaps coupled with some comments on the grievances they have heard—will be important in strengthening the hands of the Revolutionary Council against those who may try to block eventual release of the hostages.

9. When the transfer of the hostages occurs, the current plan is that the 50 will initially be lodged in the Foreign Ministry. At that time they will no longer be known as "hostages", but will become "persons under the protection of the Iranian Government". It is possible that after 5–6 days the 50 may be moved to more suitable quarters, e.g., either on a military base or in a hotel. B and V have been thinking

⁵ See Document 180.

about an Iranian gesture which would send Laingen and Tomseth home at some early point. They were not particularly encouraged in this thought by Ghotbzadeh.

10. We spent some time discussing the joint US-Iranian Commission. B and V have not thought through how this should be related to the scenario but claim that Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, and Habibi at least see the advantages of such a body. They talked about its working before release of the hostages. We said we could see stating that such a Commission would be formed after the hostages' release, if we were absolutely sure of release, or an organizational meeting, but no substance could be discussed until after release.

11. B and V are convinced that the Swiss Ambassador's information on Metrinko is accurate. Ambassador Helman has been in touch with the ICRC which has reached the Red Lion and Sun's Dr. Gharahi who visited the Embassy on Sunday.⁶ (The Red Cross rep was to have accompanied him but arrived late.) Gharahi took careful notes on the hostages he saw, but notes were confiscated when he left the compound. Gharahi is certain he saw Metrinko who appeared in good condition and suffering no problems. We asked Amb. Helman if effort could be made to retrieve Gharahi's notes.

Vine

⁶ Dr. Gharahi saw the hostages on Saturday, March 8, Tehran time. See Document 203.

208. Telegram From the Embassy in Switzerland to the Department of State¹

Bern, March 14, 1980, 0125Z

1463. For the President and Secretary. Subj: Second Meeting With B and V Revised Scenario.

1. S—Entire text.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee; Special Encryption.

2. Please pass to the White House Eyes Only for the President and Dr. Brzezinski.

3. In order to focus discussion on how the situation in Tehran can evolve relating to the hostages and the work of the UN Commission, we developed the middle and final stages of the scenario as a basis for discussions in Washington, Tehran, and New York on how to proceed. You will have an opportunity to study the revised scenario in Washington Friday and Saturday.² V is planning to return to Tehran Sunday. One possible action for Friday is discussed below.

4. Begin text of revised scenario.

Scenario—Second Revision

I. Principles and Procedures

The United States and Iran renew their commitment to resolve the crisis between them through completion of the previously agreed scenario.³ The following is a suggested development of events in the days ahead:

II. Transfer of the Hostages (Objective: March 15–25)

A. March 15 or 16: Election results are announced.

B. March 16: V returns to Tehran with a personal message from Jordan to Bani Sadr⁴ which would make the following points:

—President Carter appreciates President Bani Sadr's message stating that the transfer of the hostages to the control of the Revolutionary Council would take place no later than March 25.⁵

—President Carter appreciated this direct communication and has asked Jordan to discuss with B and V agreed steps that could be taken to make possible an early end of the crisis between the two countries and also ask them to report to President Bani Sadr steps that the US has taken.

—The US is prepared to continue restraint in its public posture for a few more days, despite the increase in public pressure for it to adopt stronger measures.

—The US has urged the UN Commission to complete its work and to be prepared to return to Iran to do so in coordination with the Iranian authorities. Until the time is right, we have urged the Commission also to maintain restraint in its public posture.

—When the hostages are transferred, the US will regard that as a clear indication of President Bani Sadr's willingness to continue,

² March 14 and 15.

³ See Document 180.

⁴ See Document 209.

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 207.

through the series of agreed reciprocal steps, the process to allow an early end to the crisis, including release of all 53 Americans now held in Tehran.

—The US looks forward to a period beyond the present difficulties when we can build a relationship with Iran and its people based on equality and mutual respect.

C. March 15–17: The Commission would limit its public statements to an announcement that it is reviewing the material collected. But, in private messages to Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, the Commission would recall in particular that it will be unable to complete its report until it has seen all the hostages, and that it will be ready to return to Tehran as soon as the Iranian authorities indicate to it the date and the conditions under which the visit can take place. As the Commission discussed with Bani Sadr, it would suggest that the visit take place between March 21–25 and could ask the Foreign Minister to place at its disposal all the remaining documents it wishes to submit to the Commission.

D. Transfer of the hostages to the authority of the Foreign Ministry and of the Revolutionary Council.

III. The Return of the Commission to Tehran (Objective: March 21–25)

(The following would be agreed in advance by Bani Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, and the Commission.)

A. On arriving, the Commission would state: It has returned to complete its mission. It has asked the Foreign Ministry to place all remaining evidence at its disposal.

B. The Foreign Minister, as the Imam requested, would collect all remaining documents and enable the Commission to examine them.

C. The Commission would meet with the Revolutionary Council to set forth the facts invoked by Iran, to state that it indeed has received elements of evidence relating to these facts, and that within ____ days it will be able to present a report to the Secretary-General giving the findings and recommendations that it has been able to derive from the evidence presented.

D. The Revolutionary Council would make a statement on its meeting with the Commission.

E. The Commission would then visit each of the hostages under the conditions which the Commission will prescribe.

F. The Commission would make another report to the Revolutionary Council on the conditions of the hostages. It would also tell the Revolutionary Council that the credibility of its report would be seriously limited unless the hostages are released. It would ask Iran to set a date for releasing the hostages and would commit itself to publish its report on that date. (The simultaneity indicated in the last sentence is subject to review as the final stages are revised.)

IV. Final Steps (Objective: Ten days after transfer)

The previous scenario agreed to by both parties envisioned a final stage of reciprocal steps leading to release of the Americans held in Tehran.

However, the sequence of steps envisioned then has changed because in the new circumstances the Commission will return to Iran after the Revolutionary Council has taken custody of the American personnel. Because of recent developments, the final steps of the scenario agreed earlier seem no longer to be completely applicable. If that assumption is not correct, the US is prepared to abide by the previously agreed scenario.

If the final steps of the earlier scenario can no longer be followed, it is necessary for both parties to agree on the steps in a new final stage. In these new circumstances, the United States believes that the components of the final stage—including the report of the United Nations Commission, the statements of Presidents Carter and Bani Sadr, the establishment of an Iran-US joint commission to resolve bilateral issues, and the release of all 53 Americans—should be taken simultaneously. It is also the position of the United States that the release of the hostages should take place no later than 10 days after the transfer of the American personnel. End text.

5. The one possible action the Secretary might wish to discuss with SYG Waldheim Friday while members of the Commission may still be in New York is the possible message from the Commission described in para IIC of the scenario above. They could at least talk it over with a view to authorizing the co-chairmen to send it Sunday or Monday to arrive in Tehran shortly after the election results are available and when the US message arrives in Tehran Sunday.⁶

6. A draft of the message mentioned in para IIB of the scenario is being carried back to Washington Friday morning.

Vine

⁶ Brzezinski informed Carter that he thought it “doubtful that we can side-step” Khomeini’s public declarations against release of the hostages. He found the scenario to have “an unrealistic quality in not factoring in student resistance, the Ayatollah’s, the Parliament, etc.” and added “we will be setting ourselves up for another fall which will leave the hostages still in Tehran and could damage you seriously politically.” He concluded that Bani-Sadr is “stringing us along.” (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, March 14; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10)

209. Draft Letter From the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) to Iranian President Bani-Sadr¹

Bern, March 13, 1980

Dear Mr. President:

I am taking the liberty of sending you this personal and private message through our mutual friend, Mr. Hector Villalon. The only copy of this letter is in the possession of President Carter.

Because we have reached a critical point in the process of trying to peacefully resolve the differences which face our countries, I thought it was important that I convey my thoughts to you personally and in complete frankness. I would welcome your frank reaction to these suggestions.

I was pleased to receive your message of March 10th that the 50 American hostages would be transferred to the custody of the Iranian government within fifteen days.² I conveyed this message to President Carter, and he considered it an encouraging development.

I believe that we share a single objective: to put an end to the present crisis and to build a new relationship with your country and government based on equality and mutual respect. But quite frankly, the possibility of having such a relationship in the future will not be possible unless all our hostages (countrymen being held in Iran) are returned safely to our country at an early date.

From the outset, President Carter has pursued a policy of patience and restraint. He did this not only to insure the safe ultimate release of our hostages, but also to create an atmosphere after their release which would allow our respective governments to build a new relationship which recognizes the new realities created by the Iranian revolution. This continues to be our objective and our hope.

However, the atmosphere of restraint created and sustained by President Carter [cannot last forever] [is under heavy mounting criticism]. A growing number of political figures and journalists who have supported President Carter's policy of restraint are now advocating extreme measures [as a result of the Commission's departure from Tehran]. Despite this growing frustration, President Carter has not abandoned his policy of restraint. As soon as we learned of the Commis-

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80. Confidential. The editor transcribed the text from the handwritten original. Bracketed material represents Jordan's drafting alternatives. All brackets, except the last, are in the original. This letter is partially quoted in Jordan's memoir. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 195) No final signed copy of this letter or indication it was sent has been found.

² See footnote 4, Document 207.

sion's decision to leave Iran, President Carter called upon the American people and the Congress to be patient.³ He also conveyed to the UN Commission through Secretary-General Waldheim and Secretary Vance his desire that the Commission not abandon their work and be prepared to return to Tehran under the proper circumstances.

We believe that the process negotiated by Misterys Villalon and Bourguet represents an honorable way to resolve our problems. We are prepared to renew our commitment to that process, but must have evidence of your government's willingness and ability to [abide by that process] [carry out their commitments and abide strictly by that process.] The transfer of the hostages to the custody of the government would be⁴ important evidence of Iranian goodwill.

After we resolve the immediate problems, I can assure you that our government will adopt a reasonable attitude in resolving our numerous bilateral problems. Misterys Bourguet and Villalon have recommended the creation of a joint US-Iranian Commission as the instrument for dealing with these bilateral issues. We would be receptive to this approach and could see the Commission as the means for developing our future relationship.

Finally, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to communicate directly with you. We are aware of and appreciate your personal efforts to resolve this crisis in a manner that is fair and honorable to both countries. It is my judgment that time is working against us. [Time is of the essence.]

I look forward to meeting you someday when the problems are satisfied.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Jordan
Chief-of-Staff to the President

Attachment

Alternate Ending to Draft Letter⁵

Beyond the present problems, I can assure you that our government will adopt a reasonable attitude in resolving the numerous bilateral issues that we face.

³ For the March 10 White House statement, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1980-81*, Book I, p. 455.

⁴ Jordan wrote and struck out: "an appropriate gesture" here.

⁵ No classification marking.

Finally, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to communicate directly with you. Please know that we will do everything possible to bring an early and honorable conclusion to the present crisis. I hope that you will accept my frank analysis that time is working against us.

I hope to have the honor of meeting you some day.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Jordan
Chief-of-Staff to the President

210. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 18, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
Harold Saunders

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Clayton, Jr.

JCS

General David Jones
Lt. General John Pustay

Justice

John Shenefield*

CIA

Frank Carlucci

Treasury

Robert Carswell*
Robert Mundheim*

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Hedley Donovan

Joseph Onek

NSC

Gary Sick

Marshall Brent

*Present only for Items 1–3

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Iran: Seizure of Assets.* Justice reviewed briefly an options paper² concerning steps we would have to take to seize Iranian assets. One initial step we could take with no additional legislation and without the creation of a large legal mechanism would be a census of claims. The President could direct the Department of Treasury to conduct a census of private claims presently asserted against Iran, to identify the nature and amounts of claims. The SCC thought this would be a good step to take since it could be a useful and necessary prior step for seizing the assets or dismantling the freeze we have imposed. The signal could be played either way. However, this action by itself would probably not be effective in pressuring Iran, and the timing should be left open until we have decided on an overall approach. (C)

_____ Approve in principle a census of private claims, with timing of implementation left open for the moment.³

_____ Disapprove

Justice believes that it would not be desirable to take custody of Iranian-owned assets or to introduce new legislation authorizing seizure of Iranian assets. This would create a massive legal mechanism in the United States and would have very limited results. Moreover, the requirement of new legislation would involve Congressional hearings on Iran policy. State and other SCC members agreed that seizure of assets would have little practical value beyond the present freeze, and it did not appear worth the effort at this time. (C)

_____ Agree that assets should not be seized at this time.⁴

_____ Other

2. *Iranian Exports.* Treasury circulated a paper⁵ proposing that companies be required to contact the Office of Foreign Assets Control before making any exports to Iran, either to get a license or to get a written interpretation that a license is not required. This is simply a clarification of the regulations already in effect which would tighten up our control on all exports, direct or indirect, to Iran. The SCC approved this measure

² This March 12 paper, requested at the March 11 SCC meeting (see Document 204), is summarized in and attached to a memorandum from Saunders, Hinton, and William (Tony) Lake to Vance, March 17. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran Claims/Assets Litigations)

³ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the margin.

⁴ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the margin.

⁵ Not found.

but asked that it also be held pending completion of a full package of new steps.⁶ (C)

3. *Iran: Diplomatic Relations.* The Department of State provided six options for possible changes we could make in our diplomatic relations with Iran, ranging from a reduction of personnel through closure of the Embassy and Consulates and expulsion of all Iranian diplomats.⁷ State argued that we should stop short of severing formal diplomatic relations because of the problems this would create when we wish to reestablish relations at some point in the future. The SCC agreed, and recommended the following:

—Effectively cut Iranian representation in this country by half, halving the number of Iranian diplomats in Washington and closing two of the four Consulates.

—The New York Consulate will be closed, since its functions can be taken over by the Iranian UN Mission, and a second Consulate will be chosen after State reviews the comparative effects.

—The movements of Iranian diplomats will be restricted to cities where they are assigned.

—Publication and distribution of Iranian propaganda materials through the Embassy and Consulates will be prohibited.

—Constitutional provisions probably do not permit us to forbid public or media appearances by Iranian representatives in this country. However, we will monitor such appearances, and in those cases where we find the performance to be obnoxious or harmful, we will be prepared to declare that representative *persona non grata*. (C)

The Department of State and Justice will review the legal and diplomatic implications of these moves prior to implementation. (U)

_____ Approve in principle the restrictive steps outlined above.

_____ As amended.⁸

The SCC also discussed briefly the recurring story that 112 of the Iranian diplomats previously cut from the roster have not been located. Justice noted that the addresses were many years old. Some may have left much earlier, and others may simply have faded into the population. It was agreed that greater efforts should be made to insure at a minimum that those individuals who have been cut are not in fact continuing to work in the Embassy or Consulates. Justice agreed to follow up. (C)

⁶ Carter approved the item with a checkmark.

⁷ See footnote 9, Document 204.

⁸ Carter did not check either option but wrote in the margin: "Worse than nothing. We should be prepared to expel them all."

4. *Iran: Report to the Security Council.* Mr. Christopher briefed the SCC on the options of raising the Iranian question once again at the UN Security Council. Waldheim will talk to Bani-Sadr later this week, and we expect a speech by Khomeini on March 20. In the meantime, there does not appear to be anything to be gained by going to the UN. The most we could expect would be to get another resolution along the lines of the previous resolutions, and another Soviet veto. It is also possible that the resolutions would get watered down or that we would lose some votes on a second attempt. The SCC unanimously recommended against a formal UNSC resolution at this time. (C)

_____ Concur.⁹

_____ Go back to the UNSC.

5. *Iran: Other Sanctions.* Dr. Brzezinski expressed concern that we are being diddled along indefinitely by the Iranians. The Iranians obviously want to keep alive the illusion that the UN Commission will produce results, but in the meantime, we are beginning to look increasingly impotent. The polls indicate that the U.S. public is increasingly considering the Administration's policy a failure.¹⁰ We are universally praised by the international community for our restraint and patience; however, he wondered what really lies behind that praise. Dr. Brzezinski suspected that we are increasingly perceived as ineffective and indecisive. The convening of the new Parliament, which will probably not occur until May, will probably make the situation worse, not better. He wondered if the situation was not turning into farce. He proposed that we keep the UN Commission alive, but that we deliver a private, credible ultimatum to the Iranians and to the allies that if the situation has not been resolved peaceably and with dignity by April 15 we will take unilateral actions which will be highly disruptive to Iranian society. We would not specify precisely what we would do. This would break the present impasse in which the Iranians have every incentive to do nothing. Mr. Aaron agreed, but added that we need to take some action which will make our threat credible, since it is doubtful that the Iranians would believe us today. He suggested that we begin interrogating merchant shipping enroute to and from Iranian ports in conjunction with a private warning. (S)

Mr. Christopher said that this was a good point but he did not agree. If we issue a warning, we must be able to carry it out.¹¹ He did

⁹ Carter checked this option and initialed in the margin.

¹⁰ Carter underlined the phrase "the Administration's policy a failure" and wrote in the margin: "The polls are accurate."

¹¹ Carter underlined this sentence and wrote in the margin: "I agree."

not see this situation as unprecedented. In the case of the *Pueblo*,¹² we had waited far longer than this, and the risks associated with escalation at that time were less than they are today in the Gulf region. Perhaps the *Pueblo* affair was not one of the high points of American diplomacy, but we have to consider the problem we have today with the Islamic nations and their possible reaction to a blockade or similar use of military force. Secretary Brown noted the dangers of a Soviet reaction or of pushing the Iranians closer to the Soviets by our acts. Mr. Carlucci noted that our evidence indicates that the Soviets are making gains inside Iran through the Tudeh Party. He observed that our problem remained what it had been all along: how to influence Khomeini. He felt that Khomeini would not respond to this kind of pressure.¹³ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said he did not believe that this situation was comparable to the *Pueblo* incident which had involved a U.S. Navy ship on an admitted spy mission. He was not convinced that the Islamic countries would necessarily respond negatively. He felt that our continued lack of action was losing us prestige and respect. He recognized the validity of the possible Soviet reaction, citing Gromyko's speech this morning¹⁴ in which he had identified himself with the Iranians. Mr. Aaron disputed the CIA evaluation of Khomeini. At every point, Khomeini had taken extreme steps to assure his own personal security, and the Iranians had backed down quickly in the face of our warning on November 20.¹⁵ Khomeini wanted more than anything else to insure the success of the Islamic Revolution and he was not anxious to become a martyr. Secretary Brown cited a psychiatrist friend who observed that a man with a martyr complex seldom lives to become 79 years old. (S)

The SCC agreed that it was necessary to consider seriously the option of a warning and possible intermediate escalatory steps. This would be discussed again at the SCC meeting on Thursday.¹⁶ (S)

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan.]

¹² The U.S. Navy intelligence ship U.S.S. *Pueblo* and its crew were captured by North Korea in January 1968. After months of negotiations, the ship and crewmen were released in December 1968. For documentation, see *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XXIX, Part 1, Korea.

¹³ Carter wrote in the margin: "Consider: Imposing sanctions, seize assets, expel diplomats, escalate condemnatory rhetoric & be prepared to move on any or all."

¹⁴ At a dinner for visiting Hungarian Foreign Minister Frigyes Pujá in Moscow, Gromyko accused the United States of following a global policy of expansion and aggression and praised Iran for defending its national interests against U.S. threats and blackmail. ("Soviets rip U.S. 'deceit'," *Chicago Tribune*, March 18, 1980, p. 2)

¹⁵ Presumably a reference to statements by both White House and Department of State officials on November 20 and 21 that asserted that Iran would be held accountable if the hostages were harmed and raised the possibility of military action. (Josh M. Goshko and Edward Walsh, "Washington: Toughening Stance, U.S. Raps Khomeini For Stirring Turmoil," *Washington Post*, November 22, 1979, p. A1)

¹⁶ March 20. See Document 214.

211. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, March 18, 1980

SUBJECT

NSC Meeting

If I understood your approval correctly, the NSC meeting today—in addition to deciding several specific policy issues—is meant to accomplish a larger purpose: to infuse a renewed sense of direction and discipline into our foreign policy. (C)

You must have sensed, as I have, that in recent weeks there has been a loss of momentum and increasing uncertainty in our foreign policy. In large measure this is due to the mixed signals which you criticized in your notes to Cy and me.² I hope you will use the meeting again to establish in our foreign policy a more assertive tone and to insist on closer coordination. (S)

Insofar as the agenda itself is concerned, I would suggest that you use the meeting to accomplish the following:

1. *Iran*. Explore more systematically whether our negotiating strategy has a real chance of success and whether the time has not come for perhaps a more risky course, involving direct action;

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

NSC ISSUES

The following key issues and alternative actions need to be considered to give shape to our current foreign policy effort. (U)

IRAN

Two fundamental policy questions need to be addressed:

1. *Short Term*. Should we continue to pursue the negotiating track with Bani-Sadr as our sole strategy, consciously minimizing any words or actions which might disrupt that effort; or should we turn up the pressure of words and actions to build a fire under both the Iranians and the Allies to increase the tempo of their efforts? (S)

2. *Longer Term*. Should we step up our efforts to encourage alternative leadership and pro-Western presence to counter a growing Soviet effort to build a leftist infrastructure? (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 2. Secret; Sensitive. Carter initialed "C" in upper right corner.

² Not found.

The answer to the first question turns on the judgment of whether Bani-Sadr and his associates will be able to deliver more in the future than in the past, and whether he would be helped or hurt by increased U.S. pressure. *Any increase in pressure will have to be unilateral action by the U.S.* Our European Allies will refuse to go beyond the limited measures they have already adopted, on the grounds that this would only push the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets. Our own options are limited:

—We can take largely symbolic steps, e.g. imposing tighter restrictions on Iranian diplomats and imposing formal economic sanctions;

—We can move closer to a de facto state of war with Iran by breaking diplomatic relations and confiscating Iranian assets; and

—We can escalate direct pressure by a range of military actions, e.g. interrogating commercial shipping enroute to and from Iranian ports, overflights, interruption of power supplies by technical means, and blockade of imports and/or exports. (S)

The early results of the Friday elections³ suggest that Bani-Sadr is going to be sandwiched between an unruly pro-clerical Assembly on one side and by the clerical overseers and Khomeini on the other. Bani-Sadr is living on hope, and he will attempt to string out negotiations in the chance that something will turn up. Realistically, the odds appear very slim. Unless we take some firm measures which convince all parties that we will not stand still indefinitely, we can anticipate that the hostages will remain captive well into the summer. (S)

Limited military actions are likely to be most effective in persuading the Iranians and our friends that a political solution is urgently required. By dramatizing the risks of continued procrastination, it could strengthen the hand of those working for a solution. There are obviously risks involved in such a course. However, a carefully orchestrated program of increasing pressure is the only apparent alternative to simply leaving the hostages to the fate of internal Iranian politics for the foreseeable future. (S)

The longer-term issue of countering a leftist buildup in Iran is directly related to the hostage situation. Again, our options are limited, and the natural obstacles we could expect to face in a militant revolutionary environment are compounded by our concern for the welfare of the hostages. Nevertheless, this is a problem which cannot be ignored. We should begin immediately building our relationships with nationalist elements inside and outside Iran. This will not go unnoticed by the leadership in Iran. However, we are accused of doing this in any case, and the investment in human resources at this stage will be

³ The parliamentary elections took place on March 14.

one of the primary levers we will have to influence events over the longer term. This is an area where we can cooperate effectively with the French, Germans, British and others who fear the rising tide of Soviet influence in the country. (S)

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Western Europe, and Israel/Egypt Negotiations.]

212. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, March 18, 1980, 1:45–2:54 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Secretary of Defense Harold Brown
Deputy Secretary of Defense Graham Claytor
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff David Jones
Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Hamilton Jordan
David Aaron

MINUTES

The President began by saying that he wanted to try to keep the meeting short and not go into great detail, but he wanted a general discussion about what is taking place in our foreign and defense policies. It was his sense that the last two weeks were the worst since he has been in office. We are confronted by several important issues which are not directly related but which are tied together in terms of the overall posture of the U.S. and the impression that our country is making at home and abroad. The President said that after a general review this afternoon, he wished to get together again, perhaps at Camp David this weekend, after our subordinates have had an opportunity to clarify the issues and define the options.

The President's analysis of the current situation was as follows: at best we have a stagnant situation in Iran and Afghanistan, as well as

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 2, NSC Meeting #27 Held 3/18/80. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

in the Israeli/Egyptian peace talks. We have a deteriorating position, and perhaps worse, with our European Allies. Finally, our relationship with the Soviet Union is dormant and perhaps deteriorating as well.

On this latter point, the President said that he and President Brezhnev do not understand one another. The President said he does not know what Brezhnev's next step is and what he is aiming to accomplish. Perhaps Brezhnev is in the same position. Both of us, he said, must assume the worst of each other.

On Iran, the President said we need to increase our pressure. Although the latest election returns are favoring Bani-Sadr, the American people are getting sick of the situation. Indeed, the President said, he was sick of it as well. He thought that we had been quiet to the detriment of all concerned. We have been holding off criticizing the Iranians and taking direct action in order to create the most favorable circumstances for a settlement, but we verge now upon accepting the status quo. He said we could not sit still until May without placing greater pressure on Iran to take action to release the hostages.

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, the Middle East, and the U.S. Defense Posture.]

The President said that all of these issues are interrelated. He needed the top people in each of the agencies to get together to evaluate these problems and determine our options. The President said that he had to assert his own role and to improve at least the image of our performance in foreign policy. He thought that there are possibilities, ultimately in Iran, for success. He thought the naive European rush towards neutrality negotiations on Afghanistan needs to be dealt with. He said we need to increase public support for the Olympic boycott. He thought that Sadat's and Begin's visit will dramatize once again the importance of the Middle East peace talks and that this might offer a glimpse of hope.

[Omitted here is material on the Soviet grain embargo.]

As far as Iran is concerned, the Secretary of State said that there are a few steps, though not major, which can demonstrate that we are willing to tighten the screws without closing the door on negotiations. He said these had been discussed in the SCC this morning and that the President would get them shortly.

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, the Middle East, and the U.S. Defense Posture.]

The President proposed that the group get together to discuss some of these issues on Saturday.² Dr. Brzezinski said that we will go forward with these preparations.

² March 22. See Document 217.

[Omitted here is material on the Middle East]

Mr. Jordan inquired about Iran and the prospects for movement there. The Secretary of State responded that nothing is going to happen until we get further along in the election process. He thought the upcoming speech by Khomeini or Bani-Sadr, depending on who gives it, may prove something.³ Dr. Brzezinski added that if Khomeini is totally hostile in his speech, we ought to consider sending the kind of signal we did in November—that we will negotiate and we will do so in good faith, but that there is a deadline, beyond which the U.S. will take alternative actions if negotiations are not successful. Harold Brown added that we will, however, have to decide what we will do and that we will do it.

In this connection, the President noted a report by Cottam in his discussions with Gotzbadeh that the latter thinks the Islamic representatives being elected to the Iranian Parliament will want to end the hostage crisis.

The Secretary of State said we may see more in the speech, but there are some steps that we can take and are prepared to take that will not rip the relationship so badly that a peaceful solution is not possible. Dr. Brzezinski added that these steps are extremely modest and they are more for U.S. domestic consumption than they are to put real pressure on the Iranians.

[Omitted here is material on the Soviet Union, Afghanistan, and the U.S. Defense Posture.]

The President then concluded the meeting by instructing the group to discuss the question of follow-up and preparation of the meeting at Camp David with Dr. Brzezinski.

³ Speeches on March 21, the Persian New Year, by Khomeini (delivered by his son) and Bani-Sadr focused on the threat to Iran from the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Neither mentioned the American hostages. (Jonathan C. Randal, "Iran Warns of Threat by Soviets," *Washington Post*, March 22, 1980, p. A1)

213. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, March 19, 1980

SUBJECT

Gaming a Blockade

The following is a proposed sequence of events to put pressure on Iran. It is high risk, but the risks can be minimized.

1. Convey a very private warning to Iran that we are prepared to keep the door open for a negotiated peaceful settlement until April 15, but if a peaceful settlement cannot be arranged by that date, we will take unilateral action to disrupt Iran's economy. The allies should be informed as they were before. This should be done as soon as possible.

2. We could use the intervening time to build up the resources we would need to carry out the threat. However, we would probably have to do very little to build a sense of tension since the reaction of the allies and the inevitable leaks could be expected to have that effect. We could, however, begin a program of ship interrogation a week or two before the deadline if some convincing evidence of purposefulness were required.

3. My guess is that the Iranians would not just sit stubbornly and wait for the ax to fall. At a minimum, I suspect they would begin pressing the UN Commission to return, and the pace of the negotiations would speed up. There is no certainty, however, that the hostages would be released by the deadline. We could be faced with the need for a determination at the end of the period whether or not sufficient progress had been made to justify postponing action. A postponement would not necessarily be a failure if our pressure had succeeded in getting real concessions.

4. If we proceeded with the blockade, it should be a quick irreversible act of mining the key ports of entry. Soviet grandstanding would be reduced to bringing in minesweepers, but that would be a lengthy process. Iranian threats to cut off the Europeans would be an empty gesture since pressure on the Europeans could not remove the mines. We could not stop ship traffic through the Shatt al-Arab, but there are very few merchant shipping companies that would rush to the one available port. If we wanted to draw the line more firmly, we could technically interrupt power supplies in Abadan and Khorramshahr,

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14. Secret.

which would give pause to any adventurous merchant captains and would halt port operations at least temporarily. We should make clear that our blockade is aimed only at seaborne supply as a unilateral gesture. We should not attempt to stop air traffic or land traffic. The seaborne traffic is 75–80%, which is enough to make the point.

5. We should use the intervening time before the deadline to get in place the elements of the best rescue operation we can mount. This could be needed as a fallback if the Iranians begin threatening the lives of the hostages as bargaining leverage.

Anticipated reactions:

—*European Allies*. Deep concern, nervousness, strong opposition, and leaks suggesting that the U.S. risks stumbling into a Third World War. Although this will place additional strains on the Alliance at a difficult time, the shock and rumors should help to make the Iranians take it seriously, and it could inspire a fresh round of dedicated efforts by the Europeans to find a way out.

—*Japan*. Extreme nervousness. No action.

—*Soviets*. Increased propaganda about dangers of U.S. imperialist intervention. Efforts to draw Iran closer to its orbit. Increase in naval and air presence in the Indian Ocean. However, any actual military involvement or counteraction is not likely.

—*Islamic States*. They understand the dilemma, and we can help them understand our objectives and the limited nature of what we propose by careful preparation in advance. They will counsel against a blockade, but they will also renew their efforts to persuade the Iranians to be reasonable. The threat—or reality—of U.S. action will breathe life into the Iraqi efforts to get a charter opposing all Great Power intervention. There will be a growing tendency to equate U.S. actions with the Soviet actions in Afghanistan. The April deadline would virtually coincide with the scheduled Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference, which might lead to a new Islamic call for the U.S. to postpone action in order for them to consider possible solutions—not a bad excuse if we need one.

—*Oil*. The threat of a blockade and uncertainty about oil supplies will heat up the market as nations scramble to assure their reserves. Prices will go up and the spot market will thrive.

Risk Assessment. In my judgment, if we are prepared to carry through on our threat, and if we successfully convey that impression, we almost certainly will not have to impose a blockade. By energizing the Europeans and the Islamic states and the UN, a flood of new pressures will build up on the Iranians to do something. The hostage issue is not popular in Iran any more, and it will be difficult to whip up public emotion to a new frenzy on this issue. Even the Iranian man

in the street will have to ask himself whether it is worth risking his daily bread just to be able to hold 50 Americans who have become an embarrassment. Everyone will have a strong incentive to find a face-saving solution, and a way will probably be found.

Nevertheless, the stakes are high. The actual imposition of a blockade would color our relations with the regional states AND the alliance for a long time. If we prepared the ground carefully, the net result could be beneficial in establishing U.S. willingness and ability to protect our interests in the region. But if our actions are perceived as aggression or irresponsibility, it could do permanent damage to our relations with the Gulf states and others. *The alternative, sadly, is to resign ourselves to the reality of leaving the hostages where they are until at least mid-summer.*

214. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 20, 1980, 9–10:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

David Newsom
Deane Hinton
Harold Saunders***

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown*
W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

JCS

General David Jones*
Lt. Gen. John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti*

Agriculture

Dale Hathaway*

White House

David Aaron
Hedley Donovan*
Lloyd Cutler*
Joseph Onek*
Henry Owen

NSC

Gary Sick
Marshall Brement
Edward Fried**
Alfred Friendly, Jr.*

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 3/20/80 SCC re Iran/Afghanistan. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

Treasury

C. Fred Bergsten*

Commerce

Homer Moyer*

*Present only for discussion of items 1 and 2

**Present only for discussion of items 2 and 3

***Present only for first ten minutes

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

[Omitted here is material on the Soviet Union and the Olympics.]

3. *Possible Blockade of Iran:*² The SCC was then reduced to the small political-military group. Mr. Aaron asked whether it was the judgment of the group that to be effective, Iranian exports of oil would have to be blocked, or would it be enough to block imports into Iran? Secondly, if oil exports should be terminated either by blockade or Iranian retaliation, what would be the effect? Admiral Turner replied to the first question that, if all imports, including food, were blocked, it would have a significant impact on Iran's economy within two weeks. Blocking oil exports, however, would take nearly a year to have a major impact since Iran has sufficient monetary reserves to do without the revenue. It would be reasonable to expect Iran to cut off oil exports as retaliation for any U.S. blockade. About 80% of Iran's exports come in by sea, and the land and rail routes through Turkey and the USSR could not make up the difference. It would not be necessary to block ground and air traffic to have the desired impact. There were no real alternatives to seaborne trade. Mr. Aaron noted that there could be a political problem if Turkey and Pakistan actively helped Iran evade a boycott at the same time we are trying to get large sums of assistance for them. Mr. Sick suggested that we should make it clear from the outset that this was a unilateral U.S. action limited to maritime commerce, that it was not intended to interfere with other commerce, and that we believed that the naval interruption was sufficient to make the political point and to significantly affect Iran's economy. Henry Owen commented that Iran would probably cut off oil, which would raise the level of hostility in the U.S. and elsewhere; that in turn would draw

² This discussion was based on the papers requested at the March 11 SCC meeting (see Document 204). The CIA paper, "Economic Consequences of a Naval Blockade of Iran on Oil Importing Countries," March 19, and its attachment, "Iran: Effects of a Naval Blockade," are in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 3/20/80 SCC re Iran/Afghanistan. The undated paper prepared in the Department of State, "Iran: Effects of a Total or Import Blockade," is in Department of State, Records of the Secretary of State, 1977-1980, Lot 84D241, Presidential Breakfasts Jan/Feb/Mar 1980.

criticism on those nations which were helping Iran avoid the full effects of a blockade. (TS)

Mr. Fried said that, in many respects, this is the best possible time for a possible cutoff of Iranian oil. Iranian exports are down to only 1.5 mbd, world stocks are high, there is slack in the market, and demand is historically low at this time of year. Because of these factors, Kuwait and some other nations are planning to cut back production. Nevertheless, we are not likely to get out of it without a market reaction, and specifically a price increase. The market is very nervous, and the reaction to an Iranian cutoff would be to compete for remaining supplies in order to protect stocks as a hedge against future contingencies. He anticipated a possible price increase of \$5–10 per barrel, i.e., a 15–30% increase, which would represent an increase in the inflation rate of .75–1.5%. Admittedly, these were only rough estimates. It could be half that much. Since there is a good chance of a price increase late in the year, it might simply make that happen sooner than anticipated. The Saudis would certainly not increase their production. If they should decide to reduce production as a gesture against blockade of an Islamic state, that could be quite serious. More dangerous would be the reaction of Kuwait, Libya and perhaps others who might go ahead with planned cuts or even cut deliberately as a form of counter-embargo. Most of the effects would fall on Japan which relies on Iran for 10% or more of its total consumption. They would be entitled to trigger the IEA sharing mechanism. The actual amount of oil involved would be very small, but the IEA reaction would probably be internal acrimony. The Japanese would scramble to secure alternate supplies, again tending to drive up the price. (S)

Mr. Claytor said it would create hell in the Islamic world. Mr. Newsom said that, if the action was taken suddenly and without advance indication, it would have an adverse effect on the moderates in Iran. It would create a strong public reaction and inspire a new round of anti-Americanism which the hardliners would use to their advantage. However, if this could be relayed in secret in advance to the moderates, it might give them leverage to use in the in-fighting. If handled very carefully, a case could be made that this would improve the chances of getting the hostages out. We would have to be prepared to follow through, however. (S)

Mr. Aaron wondered what the effects would be if the threat had to be carried out. Mr. Newsom said that there would be a very strong reaction in Iran which, in the worst case, could lead the militants to start killing hostages. There would be massive demonstrations and a hellish month or so for us to get through. In the end, however, it could go either way. It could succeed, although it was a high risk. Admiral Turner said it was his judgment that the militants would be very

angry but would not kill the hostages. Khomeini would use it as an opportunity to rouse the masses behind him. It could also strengthen the position of Bani-Sadr and the moderates. However, it is not clear that the moderates would succeed in the resulting power play. We might be pressuring the weakest political element. (S)

Admiral Turner wondered if it would be possible for the U.S. to absorb the oil drawdown and make up the Japanese loss. Mr. Fried said that we would have to draw down stocks, and the price increases which would have to be imposed to reduce our own consumption by that amount would have to be very high, with substantial effects on inflation and growth. (S)

At that point, the meeting had to adjourn, with the understanding that this subject would probably be discussed further by principals over the weekend.³ (C)

³ In a March 20 memorandum detailing potential items for Vance to discuss at the March 21 foreign policy breakfast meeting with the President, Newsom provided Tarnoff with the main points of this discussion and concluded: "My impression is that there will be little support for the concept of a blockade at the breakfast meeting but that it will be kept alive as a contingency." (Ibid.) In a supplementary March 20 memorandum, Hinton wrote that Fried's analysis was "extremely bearish." He thought there was a "strong political case" for increasing pressure on Iran in order to send "an immediate message of resolve." (Ibid.)

215. Memorandum from the White House Chief of Staff (Jordan) and the Special Assistant to the Secretary of State (Raphel) to President Carter and Secretary of State Vance¹

New Orleans, March 21, 1980

We are waiting in New Orleans for a new plane to take us to Panama.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 12. Secret.

² In his memoir, Jordan recalled that, after receiving intelligence that the Shah planned to leave Panama, Brzezinski said to him: "Hamilton, Panama and the Shah are your specialty. I'm in charge of current leaders and big countries—you're in charge of former leaders and small countries." Jordan then made plans to travel to Panama. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 199)

Based on our conversations today with Dr. DeBakey and with Ambassador Ambler Moss, we wanted to convey our thoughts to you prior to your breakfast meeting and discussions.

Shah's Medical History and Present Condition: At the time of the Shah's departure from the States for Panama, he was experiencing an enlarged spleen. As this was a condition he had experienced before, his doctors decided to defer surgery. Over the last several weeks, the condition of his spleen has deteriorated and his spleen has enlarged to the point that his doctors consider the operation both necessary and critical.

At the recommendation of his doctors, Dr. DeBakey was contacted and retained to perform the operation. The announcement of the selection of Dr. DeBakey infuriated and insulted the Panamanian doctors who have been caring for the Shah the several months he has been in Panama. Representatives of the Shah in New York made background statements to the press which said that the Panamanian doctors were not competent or qualified to perform the necessary surgery. This immediately surfaced in Panama in the media and prompted an emotional and irrational response by the doctors that DeBakey could not operate at the Panamanian hospital. Ironically, most of these same Panamanian doctors were trained in medical schools in the United States.

At any rate, Dr. DeBakey arrived in Panama to find a very unpleasant situation. He found the medical staff at the hospital—on whom he would have to depend during and after the operation—resentful of his presence and almost openly hostile to him. His immediate reaction was to say that he would withdraw from the case, as his only interest was in seeing that the Shah received proper medical attention.

From all that we know, the reaction of the doctors was spontaneous and genuine and not stimulated by the government. However, once they took a public position of being opposed to DeBakey doing the surgery, the government did not attempt to reverse it. After a cooling-off period which took the good efforts of Ambassador Moss, Dr. DeBakey and the key Panamanian doctor met to resolve their differences. The Panamanian doctor was embarrassed at the situation that had been created and pledged a more cooperative attitude in the future. It was agreed by both doctors that a cooling-off period was necessary, and that a delay of up to two weeks was medically tolerable for the Shah.

Realizing that he might very well have to operate in the Panama hospital ultimately, Dr. DeBakey went to great lengths to make peace with the doctors. But he left Panama shaken by his encounters with them and concerned about conducting the operation in such a hostile atmosphere. DeBakey told us that one of the Panamanian doctors has reported to him that he has been offered \$1 million to kill the Shah.

Dr. DeBakey said that he had operated in 30 different countries in very unusual circumstances, but that was the worst situation he had ever encountered. Some or all of this was conveyed to the Shah by DeBakey, and he quickly hardened against having the operation in Panama. This probably stimulated the latest initiative to go to Egypt for the operation.

Meeting with Dr. DeBakey: In talking with Dr. DeBakey, we laid out for him all of the concerns which we see. We told him that we shared his interest in seeing that the Shah received good medical treatment, and we had the additional responsibility of the lives of 53 Americans being held in Iran. We tried to probe as to what new conditions—improvements—would be required before he would be satisfied to conduct the operation in Panama.

He talked very frankly and insisted that his comments be treated in total confidence. I assured him they would be treated in confidence.

He said that the Shah is a very sick man and that his condition is fragile. He said that his principal concern about Panama was not a concern based on medical facilities, but on the larger questions of authority and attitude. He said that the operation itself was not difficult or particularly risky, but that complications often arose in the post-operative period that could be serious and fatal. He said that someone had to be in charge, and that he could not tolerate a situation in the operating room or during the post-operative period when a decision he had taken was undermined or reversed by well-meaning Panamanian doctors. He said that he could operate in a tent with less risk than in a situation where his authority was not clear and a general atmosphere of hostility existed which might prejudice the care given his patient.

We asked if assurances were given by the Panamanians as to his ultimate authority, would he be willing to do the operation in Panama. He said that he would do the operation in Panama if he had to, but, based on his experience there and the hostility directed toward him by the medical staff, he would not believe or accept assurances if given by the Panamanians.

He said that he thought the brief delay in the operation would create a situation in Panama which would permit him to conduct the operation there, but that his professional medical advice to the Shah would have to be that he would be better off to go to Egypt or the United States for the operation. We pressed him as to the degree of risk.

He said that the risk of death to the Shah in ideal medical circumstances was in the range of 5 percent. He said that if the operation was conducted in the Panamanian hospital under the present circumstances, the risk would increase to the range of 10 to 15 percent. We asked if there were steps we could take to diminish that risk, and he said that all we could do was to obtain assurances from the Panamanians that he could trust.

His bottom line was and is that he is willing to perform the operation in Panama in partnership with the Panamanian doctors, but that his medical advice to the Shah would have to be that the surgery could be performed with less risk in some other country.

Options: As the Shah considers what to do, he has three basic options: for the operation to be performed in Panama (either in Paitilla or Gorgas), in Egypt, or in the United States. Each of the options carry heavy costs for us.

Panama—The Shah is extremely hesitant to have the operation performed in Panama and was traumatized by the events of last weekend when the operation was scratched. He has said he will continue following DeBakey's advice, and DeBakey has told us that his medical advice will be to operate in Egypt or in the United States, not in Panama. We do not believe that any other Panama-related alternative, such as the use of a French medical team, will now be acceptable to the Shah. The second possibility in Panama is to operate at Gorgas Hospital. The Shah would most probably find this acceptable. It would also mean we are somewhat less exposed than we would be if he came to the States for the operation. On the negative side, Ambassador Moss believes there would be a very negative reaction from the Panamanians with a real possibility of demonstration and possible violence at Gorgas. Also, the Panamanians told us that they will not allow the Shah to remain in Panama after the operation. This may be a bluff and, faced with an embarrassing departure of the Shah from Panama, there is a *slight* chance of developing a better Panamanian attitude at Gorgas. Also, after three or four weeks, we would be faced with the strong possibility of having to take the Shah into the States after the operation. The main attraction of Gorgas is that it would buy us three or four weeks delay, would be somewhat less disruptive to our continued attempts to gain the release of the hostages, and there would be less of a chance that the militants would take action against our hostages.

Egypt—Ambassador Moss and we believe that the Shah is ready to contact Sadat this weekend and ask for permission to go to Egypt. We all agree that this would be highly detrimental to Sadat's domestic and regional position and our own policy in the area. We assume that Sadat will stick to his invitation. If we are to avoid having the operation in Egypt, we should be prepared to hold out some alternatives to the Shah as early as tomorrow.

United States—The disadvantages of having the Shah return to the States for the operation are evident. Our overriding concern would have to be what actions might be taken against the hostages as a result of his entry. At a minimum, we have to accept the possibility of the hostages being held indefinitely, and we would have to contemplate the terrible thought of immediate violence being directed against them

as a result of the Shah's return to the States. On balance, in terms of our national interest, it is preferable to have the operation performed in the United States rather than Egypt.

Summary: The Shah has a terminal illness and is a dying man. Dr. Norman Rich, who accompanied us and who has worked with Dr. DeBakey and is an expert in this area, estimates that he has no more than one or two years to live. If you decide to allow the Shah to return to the United States for the operation on humanitarian grounds, I think it is important that he understand clearly the ramifications of his return to the States and accept some personal responsibility for a decision to return. Although we are not saying that this would work, we believe that if the Shah was confronted with the stark realities of the situation and the ramifications of each of the options, he might decide to ask Dr. DeBakey to perform the surgery in Panama.

We would suggest an approach to the Shah that is frank and acknowledge our willingness to receive him in the United States. We would use talking points along the following lines:

—The President understands that surgery may be necessary and is concerned that the surgery be conducted under conditions that are satisfactory both to yourself and to your doctors.

—If your doctors analyze the need for surgery to be both critical and pressing, we are willing to have you return to the United States for surgery. We are sure that you would want to know and understand our frank analysis of possible consequences of your return.

—We understand that another option is for surgery in Egypt. We believe that if the surgery were performed in Egypt it would have a very detrimental impact on Sadat's internal position, which is already precarious, and will increase his isolation in the Islamic world. The President would strongly prefer that, if you are convinced the surgery cannot be performed in Panama, it should be done in the United States rather than Egypt. The President is confident that you share this personal concern for President Sadat and wanted you to have the benefit of our own analysis.

—You should realize that the President of the United States believes, at a minimum, that it would prolong the detention of the American hostages in Iran and increase the chances of some immediate harm coming to them.

—We understand that Dr. DeBakey will perform the surgery wherever you decide.

—We realize the conditions in Panama are not as good as they might be elsewhere. We know that this is a difficult decision for you to make. You and your family are justifiably concerned about the chances of the success of the operation. You are faced with a very hard

choice of having to balance your legitimate personal concerns with humanitarian concerns that might emanate from a decision not to operate in Panama. The President wants you to know, with this background in mind, that the final choice is yours. We will respect and abide by any decision you make.

—If you decide to leave Panama for either Egypt or the United States, it will require at least several days of highly sensitive preparations and discussions. For that reason, we will go to great lengths to keep confidential even the possibility of your departure. Once you have made a final decision, we would ask for various reasons that it be kept in strict confidence until time for departure.

Final Thoughts: After your breakfast meeting, we would like to have your reaction to this proposal by telephone.³ If we decide to offer and the Shah exercises the option of returning to the United States, we should give the Iranians prior notice through our French lawyers. This might stimulate the government to take control of the hostages. It is certainly worth the risk. I would remind you that we have a commitment from the top elected official there to effect the transfer by the 25th.

(This memo was dictated in the middle of the night, so we apologize for not being lucid and coherent, but it represents our best thoughts and analysis.)

³ No record of a telephone conversation has been found.

216. Telegram From the Embassy in Panama to the Department of State¹

Panama City, March 22, 1980, 0812Z

2622. Senior Watch Officer, please arrange for following message to be sent to Camp David via SitRoom Eyes Only for the President and Secretary Vance. Subj: Conversation With the Shah and Empress.

1. For the President and Secretary Vance from Cutler, Jordan and Raphael.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 12. Secret; Flash; Nodis.

2. Cutler and Raphael met alone with Shah and Empress for 1½ hours evening March 21 on Contadora. Cutler described in detail the three options available to the Shah—operation in Panama, United States or Egypt. Cutler emphasized the very real and serious difficulties if operation were performed in either the States or Egypt and noted that many of these difficulties could be ameliorated if operation took place, under medically acceptable conditions, in Panama.

3. In response, the Shah was adamant in his refusal to have operation in Panama. He exhibited no flexibility, referred in highly negative terms to experience of last week-end,² and gave every indication his decision in this regard was firm. When we suggested that it may be possible to check again with DeBakey on this issue, the Shah responded that he had already spoken with the doctor, his strong recommendation was to have the operation elsewhere, and there was no need to check again.

4. The Shah was obviously undecided between the Egypt and US options. He noted that in strictly medical terms, it made sense to have the operation performed in Houston. In quote mental terms close quote, however, he would prefer to go to Egypt where he knew Sadat would welcome him. While discussing the Egypt option, the Shah tended to downplay any immediate threat to Sadat due to the Shah's presence. He noted that as long as Sadat were in power, there would be no danger of demonstrations or a hostile press, and Sadat would not have invited him if it were threatening to the Egyptian President.

5. The Shah added that whether he went to Cairo or the States, the stay would only be temporary until he had fully recovered from the operation. He made a point of contending that he believed he had some permanent options of places that would accept him for residence. When pressed, he mentioned Canada as a possibility, or quote some island somewhere close quote.

6. The Shah noted that before our visit, he had tentatively planned to depart Sunday for Cairo with the operation scheduled for Wednesday.³ He had agreed with Torrijos that when he left, whether for the States or Cairo, the departure would be public, amicable and friendly.

7. The meeting closed with the Shah noting that he wanted to think about his decision overnight, and we agreed it would be best to spend the night considering the various options. The Shah asked our view of what he should do—go to the States or Cairo. He asked if we could check with the President to see if we would want to make a specific recommendation to him as to which of the two places we would prefer.

² See Document 215.

³ March 23 and 26.

8. When discussing the US option, we noted that we would expect him to renounce his throne if he were admitted to the States for the operation. The Shah did not seem to be very concerned with the prospect. His response was that before the operation he could always announce he was renouncing his claim to the throne in favor of his son. In contrast, the Empress felt very strongly that he should not renounce the throne. She said that such an action would be a major disservice to his family and the people of Iran.

9. As incidental information, we understand that Princess Ashraf called the Shah just before our visit to note she had received the President's letter,⁴ and that she strongly recommended that the Shah go to Houston for the operation then travel to Egypt after he had recovered. We have also heard that the evening TV news in the States carried a report that it was rumored that the Shah would go to Egypt for his operation.

10. We believe it would be useful if we talked via secure line before the President speaks with Sadat. Consequently, if it is convenient, we will plan to call Camp David at 0830 in the morning your time. It would be helpful to have your views on whether we should, as the Shah suggests, give him our recommendation on whether he should go to the States or Egypt. Also, if you have any thoughts on the question of renouncing the throne, it would be helpful. Specifically, would it be sufficient for the Shah to renounce in favor of his son, or would we want him to only renounce the throne without mention of the Crown Prince.

11. We believe the Shah is truly ambivalent about what to do and if we gave him a specific recommendation, it could easily steer him in that direction. If we do not make a specific recommendation it would be a close call as to what he would do. We believe the Empress is leaning toward Egypt, whereas the Shah's specific medical concerns may make him lean slightly toward Houston.

Moss

⁴ Princess Ashraf's March 21 letter to Carter is in Carter Library, Plains File, Box 23, Iran 6/75–12/79. In his reply that same day, Carter wrote: "Our preference now is that he receive treatment under Dr. DeBakey's care either at Gorgas, the U.S. hospital in Panama, or in Houston, Texas." (Ibid.)

217. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Camp David, March 22, 1980, 10:45 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

JCS

General David Jones

The White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

Mr. David Aaron

Mr. Jody Powell

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

MINUTES

The President began by saying that he wished to bring the group up-to-date on the Shah and his spleen. The President had talked with Sadat² and been in contact with the Iranian negotiators. Our objective is to keep the Shah in Panama but the President did not believe we could do so. Sadat is willing to let the Shah come to Egypt, and felt very strongly about wanting to make that offer. Sadat insisted that it would not bother him politically. Dr. Brzezinski noted that that eliminates the second option (coming to Houston for his operation).

The President said he thought the Shah was willing to leave on Sunday³ and reported that Sadat is preparing to send an airplane to Panama for that purpose. The Secretary of State said that he had consulted with key Members of Congress and they all prefer the Egyptian option to the Houston option. Howard Baker, in particular, said he would help in any way that he could.

The President then said he would like to proceed with the briefing on the rescue operation. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff then

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² Carter talked to Sadat that morning from 8:41 to 8:47 a.m. No other record of the conversation has been found. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

³ March 23.

proceeded to give his briefing.⁴ The following questions and answers arose in the course of the briefing.

The President asked whether the seizure of the airfield at Nain⁵ was supposed to take place without the knowledge of the people in the town 10 kilometers away. The Chairman replied yes, that was the key problem and uncertainty associated with that part of the operation. He pointed out, however, that it would be a weekend and that in monitoring the activities around the airfield, it appeared that there was very little interaction between the town and the base on the weekend.

The Secretary of State asked what we know about the alleged mining of the Embassy. The Chairman replied that we have no evidence that any mining or booby-trapping has taken place. He said that in addition to talking to those who had been inside the Embassy, they have also debriefed the few hostages who have been released. None of them indicate that any such mining actually has occurred.

The Secretary of State asked what is the distance to the stadium from the Embassy. The chairman replied that it is about 100 yards. He explained that the street would be sealed off at both ends and the C-130 gunships would provide cover.

The Vice President asked whether the helicopters would be left behind. The Chairman indicated that they would be.

The Secretary of State asked how confident we were of the location of the hostages; whether they rotate them in different locations. The Chairman said that we are not sure and that uncertainty over the location of the hostages within the compound is a major factor. We believe that all of the hostages are still in the compound but we could not be certain. However, our best estimate is that the hostages are located in the buildings indicated in the briefing but the rescuers might have to go into all the buildings to search for the hostages.

Dr. Brzezinski commented that we will have to kill quite a few Iranians in this process and that there is a possibility that some Ameri-

⁴ Presumably Jones briefed from available material including an undated paper, "Concept of Operations," and a March 11 untitled survey of conditions at the Embassy. (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, I 102–103 Rice Bowl Concept of Operations, and Box 2, B 184–188 Executive Info Package) Also available was a March 11 "Military Options Matrix" that included the rescue operation. In its original form, this matrix had assessed such options as attacking the Abadan refinery, destruction of Iran's F-14 fleet, a naval blockade, mining of key ports, and seizure of Abu Musa and Tunbs Islands. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, [text not declassified]) Odom hand-carried the original matrix to Carter at Camp David on November 20, 1979. (Joint Chiefs of Staff History Office, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1977–1980*, p. 73)

⁵ A potential staging area in Iran between Yazd and Isfahan.

cans will be left behind. Thus, we need some threat to deter reprisals against whatever Americans might be left behind.

The Chairman commented that if we can get to the wall with surprise and if the Americans are in the compound, he had high confidence that we could get them all. However, some of them may be dead. Thus, while there was a possibility that some Americans could be left behind, it was more likely that Americans would be killed than left behind.

The Secretary of State asked how much time was required for the rescue operation. The Chairman replied that inside the compound we were aiming to complete the operation in 45 minutes, however, we were allowing up to an hour and a half.

Secretary Brown asked where is the nearest Iranian military installation and how well we could hold them off for this period of time. The Chairman replied that a few blocks away there is an installation with Revolutionary Guards. It is our estimate that they could mobilize a few hundred personnel in about an hour. To handle this, we would be placing our main reliance on the C-130 gunships. These aircraft provide tremendous firepower and this gives our team confidence that they can defend themselves. The C-130 gunships are very accurate, able to fire within 40 feet of our own personnel, they have up to 105mm cannons aboard and have incendiary ordnance called "mishmash" which will cause diversion and enormous confusion. The Chairman explained that we would, however, try to minimize the damage to the Iranians and would not fire into crowds unless it were absolutely necessary.

The Vice President asked what would happen if the Iranian Air Force is tipped off and they attack our C-130s.

The Chairman replied that there would be a gunship covering the Mehrabad airport, which is the main problem and where there are two F-4s kept on alert. The gunship would circle the field and keep Iranian aircraft on the ground. They would be able to break up the taxiway or shoot the aircraft before they took off.

Dr. Brzezinski commented that the rescue in Tehran is in fact the easiest phase of the operation. There were two more risky aspects to the operation. The first is getting the Delta team into town and hiding the helicopters. The second is the operation at Nain: sealing off the base for 26 hours without any word getting out that Americans are conducting a military operation. He was particularly concerned that in the assault on Nain, someone might get away, go into town and pass the word that they had been attacked by Americans.

The Chairman commented that his confidence level is someplace between that of Dr. Brzezinski and his team. The team is highly confi-

dent that they can conduct the operation. The Chairman said he was not highly confident but he was not as pessimistic as Dr. Brzezinski. We were, however, depending heavily on the inefficiency of the Iranians and upon the very relaxed atmosphere which we have found at the compound. The weakest part is getting into Tehran without tipping off the Iranians.

Secretary Brown commented that this was the reason Mr. Aaron had raised the question of whether the Soviets might be able to tip off the Iranians by monitoring the aircraft flights involved in the operation.

The Secretary of State said the biggest question is the danger to the hostages, the possibility that they would be killed in the course of the operation. The President commented that he was concerned about the Iranians somehow getting a tip off in advance. Dr. Brzezinski commented that there was no way to know if the Iranians might be tipped off.

The Vice President asked again about the possibility of dynamite booby traps in the Embassy. The President noted that the kidnapers had given as a reason for delay in letting the UN Commission into the Embassy the time needed to disassemble the booby traps. The Chairman said that we have no information that there are such booby traps apart from what the kidnapers say. The DCI commented that from a military standpoint, the first person over the wall might set off a booby trap and be killed but the second would get in.

The Chairman concluded by saying that he felt better about the viability of each of the parts of the rescue operation than he did about the whole system as an entirety. Making the parts fit together on time gave him the greatest concern.

Secretary Brown said that we have to look at the alternatives when weighing the risks of this operation. We have examined the question of a blockade and of mining. Both have very serious risks, including: possible retaliation against the hostages, achieving impact on the Islamic world, driving the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets, and creating severe difficulties for our Allies. Moreover, it is not clear that those actions would put pressure on those who need to be pressured to release the hostages. In sum, if we are concerned about getting the hostages out, the rescue operation is at a comparable level of risk and cost to the other military actions that have been proposed.

The President asked what he needed to decide in order to prepare for a rescue operation.

The Chairman replied he needed: 1) to send in two people to survey the Foreign Ministry, 2) to send in the Otter aircraft to explore the

feasibility of the alternative rendezvous site⁶ and 3) some early flow of support material to Wadi Kena. The latter would reduce the time required for initial activity. The Chairman added that we ought to realize that in five or six days we did not have to make a go decision but we would want to take a next step which is moving the airplanes actually involved in the operation. This is assuming of course that we want to go about April 4, which is the point at which the night becomes so short that we have to contemplate a three-day operation.

The President asked to be told again what the two men would do. It was explained that two military personnel, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] would go in by regular airline to reconnoiter the Foreign Ministry. They would find out about the security arrangements to see if they can get in easily, where they might drive their vehicles, check out where the helicopter might land and so forth. They would be in Tehran for three days and then come out.

The President asked why the people who are already in there cannot do this. The DCI said that the men inside do not have the tactical expertise to perform this mission.

The President asked if there was any objection to the two men going in and to the Otter operation. The Vice President asked what were the risks of the Otter operation. [*1½ lines not declassified*] Three men would go in to test the ground, drill core samples and so forth to make sure that the area would be suitable for the landing of C-130s. If we have problems, the three men will have documents indicating that they are on their way to Afghanistan. Even if they are found, it will be difficult to associate them with the situation in the compound. The greatest danger would come from the Otter not being able to restart once it had landed.

The Secretary of State said he had no objection to sending in the two military personnel but he felt very strongly that we should not proceed with the rescue operation at this point. The President said that he did not want to undertake a rescue operation unless there was no choice. He said he would rather wait a month and a half to get the hostages out than undertake an operation in which the hostages might be killed.

The Chairman pointed out that one problem was the fact that the nights were getting shorter which meant past early April it would in

⁶ In a March 21 paper, "Outline of Operational Concept," the CIA identified the Twin Otter mission as "a clandestine air penetration of Iran to locate and determine the suitability of an MC-130 landing zone for use in place of Na'in Airfield for helicopter refueling operations." It identified what would become Desert One. [*text not declassified*] (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1)

all likelihood be necessary to conduct the operation over three days. Mr. Aaron asked what was the sequence of events in a three-day scenario.

The Chairman explained that the movement of the helicopters into Tehran would take an additional day. Otherwise, the sequence would be the same. He said that they were looking at imaginative ways that we might still stick to a two-day scenario.

The Chairman also explained that he was not recommending that the rescue operation be undertaken on April 4. He was only saying that there is substantially lower risk than there was previously because we had practiced it and had developed what he thought was a good program. However, it was still very risky and as the days go by, it becomes more difficult because the nights are growing shorter.

The President asked whether there is any place on the beaches where we might refuel the helicopters. The Chairman said they had looked at these alternatives, including the possibility of putting an LPH all the way up into the Gulf. It still was not close enough to get the helicopters to Tehran in one jump. However, he said if we can find out a way to hide good fuel, then we might simplify the operation significantly. The problem, however, is how to get the Delta team in if we do not marry them up with the helicopters along with the fuel. They had looked at the possibility of infiltrating the Delta team and then supplying their weapons along with the helicopters. The Chairman said that this greatly simplified the operation but it did not appear to be very practical.

Mr. Powell said that if we will only do a rescue if we thought our hostages were going to be killed, how long would it take us to act. Secretary Brown said five to six days.

The President said it was his guess that the hostage-takers do not intend to kill our people. He also thought that they would be released over the next few weeks or perhaps even a couple of months. He said we do have some pressure points that we can apply to the Iranians. He said he would hate to embark on an action which would in all likelihood kill a large number of Muslims. He said there would be a reaction all over the Muslim world, even in Saudi Arabia. He said some hostages would in all likelihood be killed and of course there was always the possibility of a catastrophe. He said that at this point he saw no pressure to endanger their lives in this fashion. He said that as far as world opinion was concerned, there also was no great pressure to act. He said there was some chortling over the United States' embarrassment even among our Allies but this was not a sufficient basis to embark upon such a risky course of action.

Secretary Vance added that we would have to undertake this operation without telling our Allies and their people in turn might be the focus of Iranian retaliation.

The Vice President said that he was not against sending in two officers but he had questions about the Otter. He wondered whether it was really so crucial at this point. The DCI said that it was a low-risk operation but there was the danger that the plane will not take off. If that were the case, we could then go in later and pick them up and move them out, [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. Thus, he was not so concerned that his people would be immediately apprehended unless of course a truck carrying the wrong people came along.

Dr. Brzezinski asked if they would be armed. Admiral Turner said yes. The President asked how far it was from Tehran to this location. Admiral Turner replied 200 kilometers. The President said that's a long way [*less than 1 line not declassified*] to have to drive to pick them up. The Chairman said that whoever comes down from Tehran should come beforehand in order to position themselves in case we have some problems.

[*1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified*]

The President explained that this proposal had been under consideration for some time and asked whether it would not be desirable to go forward with it. There was general agreement to do so. Admiral Turner said he would start immediately and added that the mission could be turned off right up to the last minute. It was agreed that he would check with the White House prior to takeoff.

The President said he did not want anyone to leave the meeting with the impression that there should be momentum proceeding towards a rescue. He said he did not intend to mount a rescue operation unless he was convinced there was a risk of loss of life of the hostages and that that risk was imminent. As for our diplomatic strategy, the President wanted to escalate pressure on the Iranians and get our Allies to join us. The President said he had received a letter from Prime Minister Thatcher saying that the British will stay with us.⁷ Therefore, he wanted to proceed to consider expelling the diplomats, breaking relations, undertaking legal sanctions and any other options. He said he thought that breaking relations would leave a gap which might be difficult to close later but it is something we should consider.

The Secretary of State said there are some steps which are not very effective, but which would give an impression of some movement. First of all, there is the idea of compiling a compendium of the claims against Iran preparatory to legal action against the frozen assets. Secondly, we could expel the diplomats. He thought this would only have an effect in the U.S. It would make us feel better. It had little or no

⁷ Dated March 21. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 3/80)

downside risk but it would not do much to get the hostages out. Finally, there was the implementation of sanctions on a formal basis. That is as far, the Secretary said, as he is prepared to go. The President asked for Dr. Brzezinski's advice.

Dr. Brzezinski said that he favored going forward on the overt level with these actions because it was important to restore some momentum. But he also thought it was important to discuss the pluses and minuses of privately giving the Iranians a deadline. We should consider the following dates in determining such a deadline: the gathering of the constituent assembly and the Islamabad meeting.⁸ Taken together, this suggested that May 1 would be an appropriate date, after which we would tell them we would consider additional severe steps. He said he was concerned that if the deadline passes and we take these steps, we will get a worsening of the atmosphere but not get the hostages. Nor would we find our Allies doing very much to help us. Nonetheless, he thought it was important to think beyond the month of April in dealing with the hostage situation.

Secretary Vance said that he thought we could pursue vigorously the recommendation of the EC Nine Ambassadors in Tehran to break relations.⁹

The President saw justification of what Dr. Brzezinski was suggesting. He thought we should consult with our major Allies to encourage them to break diplomatic relations if we are not successful in securing the release of the hostages by a certain date. We should also explain to them that if we are not successful, we are prepared to go to other options, including the interruption of trade. The Allies must be aware that if they do not help us in a non-military way, then we will be left only with military options. In considering the military options, the President said he was much more attuned to the mining option than to a blockade because the latter would involve other countries in the Gulf including Iraq.

The President concluded that this approach would have a good effect on Schmidt.

⁸ The Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was scheduled to meet in Islamabad May 17–22.

⁹ On March 18, the EC Heads of Mission in Tehran and the Greek Chargé recommended that, given the need to uphold the principle of diplomatic immunity and the failure of the Commission of Inquiry, their respective countries should request from Bani-Sadr that he release the hostages. Failing that, they recommended that their Embassies in Iran close until the hostages were released. (Telegram 1951 from Copenhagen, March 21; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800154–0934) Saunders included this communiqué in the March 20 Iran Update. (Memorandum from Saunders to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom, March 19; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Mar 1980)

The Secretary of State said the suggestion of possible use of military actions will help encourage our Allies to take the step of threatening a break in relations and actually following through, but he thought military actions are not a good idea because of the effect on the hostages and upon the solidarity of the Allies as well as the Islamic world reaction. He also thought that a mining or interruption of trade would drive the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets.

The President asked the Secretary whether he wanted the hostages out next December or to mine the harbors. The Secretary said he would rather find another way, one that did not threaten hurting the hostages or US interests.

The Secretary of Defense said we ought to be sure what we are going to do once the deadline passes. We have several options: a blockade, mining and interdiction of their power supplies. The Secretary said that if we cannot convince ourselves we are going to do any of these things, we ought to be careful about threatening to our Allies that we would do them. Otherwise, we will look foolish and our credibility will be undermined.

The Secretary of Defense said that in looking at our options, he concluded that mining is better than a blockade. There is a risk that the Soviets would sweep the mines and then we would have to do the mining again and the result is that we might find ourselves in a confrontation with the Soviets. In any event, we would drive the Iranians toward the Soviet Union. The question we have to ask in considering mining is: Why are we doing it? Presumably to get the hostages out. But he was not at all sure this would result in getting the hostages out. From this standpoint, he thought a rescue is better than mining or a blockade. He allowed that it would kill hostages and Iranians but it was aimed at the kidnapers and not at the Iranian Government with which we would hope in the long run to have some kind of relationship. Mining, on the other hand, was aimed at the Iranian Government, which already wants the hostages out.

The President reminded the group that we had stated previously that the option of interrupting trade was open to us. Dr. Brzezinski said that we had conveyed that privately to the Iranians. Mr. Powell added, however, that this was the implication of what he had said publicly. Secretary Vance added that it had been conveyed to the Iranians through the Swiss. He explained, however, that he was not saying that we should not keep the option open. He was just saying that the more he looked at it, the worse it looked.

The President then asked but how are we going to get the EC Nine to follow through on the recommendation of its ambassadors? The Secretary said he had no difficulty in saying that if they do not stick with us on the Iranian crisis, we will do what is necessary and they

may find themselves in a much more difficult situation. Secretary Brown added but we wouldn't really mean it.

The President said the Allies have not done anything on Iran and he wanted to force them to break relations. They could then tell the Iranians that if the hostages are not released, they will cut their relations with Iran. He thought this would have a very important impact on the Iranians. Secretary Brown reiterated his doubts about going forward with a bluff.

Dr. Brzezinski said any action should take into account three audiences. First, our own domestic situation. The President interrupted to say that we do not have a problem yet on that score. Dr. Brzezinski said the second group were the Allies, who have to believe that we will act if they do not. The third group are the Iranians and there are three different categories in Iran: the Marxist radicals, who do not want to solve the problem; Khomeini, who is in the middle but against the United States; and Bani Sadr, who wants to solve the problem but is now unwilling to take any big risks to his own personal power and prestige to do so.

Therefore, Dr. Brzezinski concluded that we need enough pressure on the latter category of Iranians that they will take these risks. Our choices lie between creating real turmoil in the country or undertaking a rescue operation.

The Secretary of State reiterated that he was willing to use the threat of a blockade but he would not do it.

The President said that suits him fine, but he wants Schmidt to think that we will impose a blockade.

The President said he was not in favor of a deadline but he wants the Allies to take stronger action. He wants them to tell the Iranians that they will break relations and impose sanctions. We notified the Allies earlier that we were going to undertake sanctions¹⁰ but then we backed off. The Allies asked us to back off. Indeed, the Muslim countries asked us to suspend our action under the UN Security Council Resolution. Now Schmidt goes around saying he was ready to impose sanctions. The President thought that we would have to threaten the Allies in order to get them back to the earlier position. He would reserve the right to decide whether we actually go ahead with any mining or blockade.

The DCI said that it was the Agency's analysis that we cannot get the hostages out by negotiation. Bani Sadr is the only one who wants the hostages released and his power is waning. Indeed, he thought

¹⁰ See footnote 13, Document 204.

there was a fourth power center that had to be considered: the new Iranian Parliament. Once they get into office, the price will keep going up, as it has already.

The DCI added that if we want the Allies to go along with our actions, we must let them see that we have a plan for the future of Iran overall, not just for the hostages. They already think that we are giving too much weight to the hostages and not enough to Iran's strategic position. However, the longer the hostage issue goes along, the more there is a threat of a leftist takeover in the country. We must demonstrate to the Allies and to the Iranians that we are prepared to take action and that we want to end the hostage crisis because it is one of the principal vehicles whereby the left will come to power in Iran.

The DCI said that he agreed with Secretary Brown that our choices were either mining, interrogation of vessels, or a rescue. He concluded by saying that the humanitarian interest we have in the hostages is declining because of the increasing risks to our overall interests in the region.

The Secretary of State disagreed with the DCI's analysis of the prospects of a negotiated solution. He said the odds are not good, but we need more patience on the negotiating track. He said we do not know what the consequences of using force will be, so we have to pursue negotiations.

The Chairman said that if Admiral Turner was correct, then the rescue was the best way to go and far preferable to a blockade. However, he emphasized that he would not create any momentum towards a rescue in his preparations. The Chairman expressed concern about the impact on the Allies if our threats to act prove to be empty. However, he thought they might be willing to help on Iran because they do not want to take stronger action against the Soviets on Afghanistan. He then turned to the military options short of mining which were available to us. One was the interrogation of ships. That would look like a prelude to a blockade. Second, we could put an SR-71 flight over Tehran. Third, we could have carrier aircraft patrol the Persian Gulf. The trouble is that all of these steps soon become empty gestures. As for mining versus a blockade (which he preferred to call a quarantine since a blockade was an act of war), he felt that mining was better. But he added that we could not mine Khorramshahr, which is a port which is shared with the Iraqis and that port could expand to take up much of the slack. The Iranians could also shift to the Bandar-e-shahpur. Therefore, he was not at all certain that mining would work. [1 line not declassified]

[1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

The President said the only way we got our Allies on board the Olympics is to give them time. They are now feeling pressure from

the statements of Dr. Brzezinski and Bob Komer. They are also feeling pressure because they are not doing enough and their public opinion supports us on the Olympics. The President suggested two dates to trigger allied action: two weeks after the Majlis first meets or after the World Court ruling.

The President suggested that Allies, such as the FRG, could say that the United States has been patient and they (the Allies) have been patient; they want to be friends with Iran, and they want to help deter the Soviets. But if after a couple of weeks beyond the dates the President had indicated, the Iranians are still unprepared to release the hostages, they would simply have to break diplomatic relations and impose sanctions. The President said that if the Allies could be persuaded to take that position, he thought it would help quite a bit. He thought that this action would be sufficient to get the hostages released. Dr. Brzezinski asked why he thought that. The President replied because he thought a break in relations with all the Western countries and Japan would be extremely damaging, both politically and economically. It would affect Bani Sadr, Khomeini and Beheshti. Indeed, the President said he did not see any other real threat as tangible and as effective as that.

Dr. Brzezinski said to get the Allies to do this will be quite difficult. They will see in breaking relations a threat of a retaliatory oil cutoff. Therefore, we will have to be damn convincing that we will take action which could have the same result.

Admiral Turner said that he was skeptical that a break in relations would impact on Khomeini or the Iranian Parliament. It would impact on Bani Sadr, but he does not have the power to release the hostages. Admiral Turner said that he thought that Khomeini had reneged on the earlier scenario because he saw the secular authority of Bani Sadr gaining too much power.

The President was then handed a message which he reported as indicating that Bruce Laingen's wife had said that the hostage families were meeting on the possibility that the Shah might be returned to the United States for medical treatment. They opposed that.¹¹ Mr. Powell reported that the families do not want the Shah back in the country.

¹¹ In their March 22 letter, the hostage families wrote Carter that they had organized themselves into the Family Liaison Action Group and that they were "alarmed and outraged" by reports of U.S. involvement with the Shah, particularly Jordan's presence in Panama. The group felt that the United States "should in no way be negotiating, publicly or privately, on behalf of the Shah." The families were prepared to "object strongly and publicly" if the Shah returned to the United States or was treated in a U.S. military hospital "because we know such action will ruin what chances may be left for getting our people out of Iran." They also charged Carter with being "insensitive" to their feelings and those of the American people. (Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80)

Returning to the subject of Iran, the President said that a major immediate goal should be to get the Allies to commit themselves to breaking relations by a certain time. There may be other dates than the ones that he had suggested, but he did not see how we could get the Allies to commit themselves to such a course except by threatening other options that would have a severe adverse impact on them. We did not have to agree at this point on those options in order to go ahead on this track. Personally, the President said he was not so adverse to mining as some of the members of the [National] Security Council but that was a future decision.

The Vice President said that we were not under pressure politically to take drastic actions. In time our position will slip but it is not severe. There was no support in the country for any other course of action so we have political room to maneuver. We ought to use this time to push the Allies. The best way to do that would be to suggest that the alternative courses would be much more painful to them. The Vice President's personal view was that all the other options were excessive at this point. He felt the appropriate target date was after the Parliament had met.

Secretary Vance raised the issue of our own sanctions. The Vice President suggested that we should formalize them. The Secretary agreed. The President said that we should outline for the Allies a series of steps that would include the possibility of more serious measures. Then we might take the first step in order to persuade them of our seriousness.

The Secretary of State said he thought we ought to tell the Allies that we are taking the step of breaking relations and imposing economic sanctions, and we are putting them on notice that we will be pressing them to do the same. The President asked: Why not press them now? The Secretary replied that we would probably get a mixed bag in response. The President said that even if we know they would not do it, he had the feeling that it would be good to press them. They agreed in the UN to break relations and to impose sanctions. The Secretary of State replied that some of them backed off when the UN Resolution was vetoed,¹² saying they did not have a legal basis for imposing sanctions. The Secretary wondered whether we wanted to fight them on that issue. The Secretary of Defense observed that our Allies were saying that they cannot do sanctions without Soviet permission.

The Secretary of State asked nonetheless, do we want to get into that kind of fight?

¹² See Document 147.

The Vice President asked when the Iranian Parliament would be in place. The Secretary of State replied May.

The President said that we should send a message to our other partners about moving to break relations. It should make clear that we want them to invoke sanctions and, if two weeks after the Iranian Parliament meets the hostages are not released, we would like them to proceed. We should also tell them that we will go ahead with our own sanctions and that if these peaceful options fail we reserve the right to interrupt commerce to Iran. Therefore we would like our Allies to join us in threatening a break in relations so that these other options prove unnecessary.

The President said that even if Helmut Schmidt rejects this approach he wants Schmidt to know that we have asked for his support. At the same time, the President said he did not wish to impose a deadline nor schedule military operations.

The Vice President asked when we would expel the diplomats. The President replied right away. The Secretary of State said that we should tell them first but we could do it as soon as next Thursday.¹³ Dr. Brzezinski asked whether we were breaking relations or simply expelling the diplomats. The Secretary replied that we were expelling the diplomats. An actual break in relations would follow the meeting of the Iranian Parliament and the failure to secure the release of the hostages.

Dr. Brzezinski summarized the foregoing discussion as follows: we will ask our Allies to break relations on a coordinated basis following two weeks after the convening of the Iranian Parliament if the hostages had not been released; this message to the Allies would be accompanied by a statement that if this does not work, we reserve the right to interrupt commerce to Iran.

General Jones said that he could brief our Allies on our military options. Harold Brown cautioned that we should be certain not to give an impression which later would look like a bluff. The President asked that a message along the lines outlined by Dr. Brzezinski be coordinated for his review.

As for the possible briefing of the Allies, General Jones indicated that he could do this in May. Dr. Brzezinski endorsed the idea saying that it could reinforce our diplomatic message if it did not appear to be credible. The President also thought it would be useful to let General Jones provide his briefing before the Allies decide.

¹³ March 27.

The Secretary of State reported that the National Council of Churches was organizing a world-wide appeal for Easter release of the hostages. Moreover, they are also trying to organize services for the hostages.

Admiral Turner suggested that we push hard on the concept of more visits to the hostages. The Secretary of State endorsed the idea. Admiral Turner further suggested that we promote the idea of each of the hostages calling their families to verify that they were all right. The President thought that also was a good idea.

[Omitted here is discussion on Afghanistan, the Middle East, relations with the Soviet Union, SALT II, and Diego Garcia.]

218. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, March 24, 1980

The President has approved the following initiatives discussed at Camp David on March 22, 1980:²

—The proposal to proceed with imposing formal economic sanctions against Iran, to conduct a census of claims against Iran and to expel Iranian diplomats.

—The proposal to ask our Allies to break diplomatic relations and to impose sanctions by a fixed date, possibly two weeks after the convening of the Iranian Parliament. The Allies will be asked to convey their determination to do so to the Iranians. In making this request to the Allies, we should make clear to them that the alternative to this peaceful pressure on Iran is more direct military action which could create more difficulties for the Allies in their relations with Iran. A possible briefing by the JCS for allied military leaders on our military

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 1/80—4/80. Top Secret; Sensitive. A handwritten note at the top of the page reads: "dispatched 3/25/80."

² See Document 217. In another March 24 memorandum, Brzezinski informed Powell and Friendly that Carter agreed to appear on European television. He informed Miller that Treasury was to proceed with formal economic sanctions and conduct a census of claims against Iran and expel Iranian diplomats. He informed Brown and Jones to send two military personnel to reconnoiter the Iranian Foreign Ministry and to increase activity at Wadi Kena without developing momentum toward a possible rescue mission. [*text not declassified*] (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 1/80—4/80)

options in regard to Iran will be conducted if our initial discussions with the Allies indicate that it would be useful.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

Zbigniew Brzezinski

219. Editorial Note

On March 22, 1980, General Omar Torrijos, Military leader of Panama, informed White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan that the former Shah of Iran should leave Panama before Monday, March 24, when Iranian lawyers would file a request for his extradition. (Memorandum for the File, March 22; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Vol V: Briefing Book for the Shah, Panama Jan–March 1980, Egypt Jan–July 1980) Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff later wrote that Christian Bourguet had the extradition papers in Panama but was awaiting the arrival of an Iranian lawyer. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, page 319)

On March 23, the Shah left Panama for Egypt. In his memoir, Jordan recounted last minute negotiations with Bourguet and Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh. The latter promised to move the hostages to government control within the hour if the Shah were prevented from leaving Panama or landing in Egypt. Jordan, reluctant to believe Ghotbzadeh, yet unwilling to miss an opportunity, asked Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to delay the Shah's plane in the Azores. Although this was done, Bourguet informed Jordan that the Revolutionary Council refused the gambit. The Shah continued on to Egypt. (Jordan, *Crisis*, pages 223–227)

According to telegram 77415 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 24, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, explained to the press that the Shah was in Egypt in order to seek medical treatment. The militants holding the hostages in Tehran told Reuters, however, that the Shah's departure was of "no importance" as they would "only free the hostages when the Shah and his wealth were returned to Iran." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800149–0652)

In Egypt, the Shah underwent a successful operation to remove his spleen and was scheduled to begin chemotherapy within 2 weeks for his lymphoma, which had become more aggressive since its initial

diagnosis. Dr. Michael DeBakey led the operating team. The team was divided over the Shah's longevity, with estimates running from 5–10 years to mere months. (Telegram 7548 from Cairo, April 3; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980)

220. Message From the U.S. Government to Iranian President Bani-Sadr¹

Washington, March 24, 1980

Please deliver the following message from the U.S. Government to President Bani-Sadr:

Quote: Over the past four months, we have followed with great interest your statements to the Iranian people and in particular your principled position on the fundamental wrong involved in the holding of hostages. We noted your private personal assurance on March 10 that the hostages would be transferred to the control of the Iranian Government within fifteen days.² We hope that the transfer can be accomplished within the next few days. It is essential to give a tangible sign to their families and to the American people of the improvement of the condition of the hostages and that there is real movement towards a prompt resolution of the crisis.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, we want you to know now that, in the absence of such transfer by Monday,³ we shall be taking additional non-belligerent measures that we have withheld until now.

Our quarrel is not with the Iranian people, but some will unavoidably suffer hardship if your Government is not able to take the requisite steps to release the hostages.

We remain ready to discuss a resolution of the crisis through any channel you choose. We must have tangible evidence, however, that Iran is prepared to move towards a resolution of the problem in order

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 12/1/79–12/7/79. No classification marking. Typed instructions at the top of the letter directed delivery of the message as soon as possible via the French lawyers or the Swiss Embassy. At the top of the letter, Carter wrote: "ok. J."

² See Document 203.

³ March 31.

for us to explain to the American people why we are not taking additional measures. Unquote.

221. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, March 25, 1980, 9–10:10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran and Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Harold Saunders

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown

W. Graham Claytor*

JCS

Lt. Gen. John Pustay*

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner*

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti*

Treasury

Robert Carswell*

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Lloyd Cutler*

Ray Jenkins*

Henry Owen*

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift*

NSC

Gary Sick

Alfred Friendly*

*Present only for discussion of item 1

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Sanctions Against Iran.* Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting by noting that the President wishes to move expeditiously to implement the sanctions agreed at Camp David over the weekend. Consequently, it is necessary to inform the allies as quickly as possible. The three areas to be discussed are: (1) imposing formal economic sanctions; (2) expulsion of Iranian diplomats; and (3) conducting a census of claims against Iran. (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

Imposing Formal Economic Sanctions. The papers are prepared for the President to sign. It can be implemented at any time by a Presidential signature and subsequent publication of appropriate regulations in the *Federal Register*. Treasury raised the question of whether we should not proceed with the proposal approved at the March 18 meeting² to advise U.S. companies to seek a license or Treasury interpretation prior to any direct or indirect export of goods to Iran. This would permit Treasury to exhort companies to prohibit action by their subsidiaries, which is an extraterritorial limitation not included in the UN sanctions. The SCC agreed that, in the context of imposing formal sanctions, we would announce that we will ask U.S. companies to direct their overseas subsidiaries to respect the restrictions outlined in the sanctions and to discuss with Treasury any proposed exports by their subsidiaries before such exports are made.³ (C)

Timing of Announcement. It was agreed that the announcement of the entire package of sanctions would be made at a coordinated press briefing. The details will be worked out between Jody Powell, Hodding Carter and Alfred Friendly. The date of the announcement would be determined by the deadline which we convey to Bani-Sadr. Secretary Vance noted that we will probably be unable to get the message into Bani-Sadr's hands before Thursday. We should allow him sufficient time to act before proceeding. After some discussion, it was agreed that our deadline to Iran should be Monday, March 31, with the announcement to be made on Tuesday if they do not comply.⁴ (S)

Message to Bani-Sadr. The draft text of the message to Bani-Sadr was discussed and revised. The revised text was forwarded separately to the President.⁵ (S)

Sanctions by Allies. Henry Owen asked whether we should not ask the allies to impose sanctions, as we are doing. Secretary Vance replied that we had been through this at considerable length with the allies and we know they will reply that they have no legal basis for imposing such sanctions and could not get them through their parliaments. A UN resolution would be necessary to provide the necessary legal basis. Since we know they will not agree, we would be better advised not to ask. Mr. Cutler observed that a formal order by the ICJ might help in this regard. Secretary Vance said it might help a little, but that was still some weeks away.⁶ (S)

² See Document 210.

³ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the margin.

⁴ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the margin. He announced the sanctions on April 7; see Document 246.

⁵ See Document 220.

⁶ The ICJ met March 18–20 to hear U.S. oral arguments in the case brought against Iran concerning the hostages. See Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1980, pp. 36–60.

Census of Claims. Treasury said that the census could be initiated at any point, once a decision is made. (C)

Expulsion of Iranian Diplomats. Dr. Brzezinski asked how much time we should give the Iranian diplomats to depart the U.S. Mr. Saunders said that we should give them several days to get their affairs in order. He suggested a deadline of Friday after the announcement is made. That was acceptable to the SCC. Mr. Saunders added that we can probably expect a number of the diplomats who hold green cards to ask for permission to remain in the U.S. (S)

_____ Approve departure deadline by Friday (April 4) after the announcement.⁷

_____ Other.

Students. Treasury pointed out that they are currently licensing about \$10 million every two weeks for financial support of Iranian students in this country. That will be a problem once their consulates are closed. Mr. Saunders said that the Iranians will have to devise a method for supporting these students, probably through a protecting power. It was agreed that a working group chaired by State and including Treasury and Justice would meet to work out the details for handling the students. Secretary Brown noted that we have the additional question of Iranian military students training here. He believed that it was to our advantage to let these students complete their training, but this is likely to become a sore point again as it was in the past. [1 line not declassified] Most of the students express no hostility toward the U.S., and most of them say they want to return to Iran to help improve the situation. They are understandably keeping their heads down. We need to be prepared to deal with questions about their presence which are certain to arise. The SCC agreed that the Iranian military students should be permitted to remain to complete their training despite the sanctions.⁸ (S)

Seizure of Assets. Although there is no present plan to seize Iranian assets, draft legislation is being prepared in the event it is needed. (S)

2. *Message to Allies.* At this point the meeting was reduced to the restricted group, which reviewed the message to be sent to the allies informing them of our proposed steps on Iran. The message text was provided separately to the President.⁹ (S)

[Omitted here is material on Diego Garcia and Pakistan.]

⁷ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the margin.

⁸ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed in the margin.

⁹ The draft is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 3/80. See Document 223.

222. Editorial Note

On March 25, 1980, French lawyer Christian Bourguet stopped in Washington on his way from Panama to Iran. As White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan recalled, Bourguet had lunch with Jordan, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Henry Precht, and White House Counsel Lloyd Cutler. Vice President Walter Mondale stopped by briefly. Bourguet then met with President Jimmy Carter in the Map Room at the White House. This was the first time the two men had met. Bourguet told Carter that the departure of the Shah from Panama was "a turning point." The Iranians had originally thought the United States helped the Shah escape arrest in Panama, but now, he argued, this could be sold as a "victory" for Iran "in that it demonstrates that the Shah did commit crimes and is having to flee from justice to avoid paying for them." (Jordan, *Crisis*, pages 230–234)

During their discussion Bourguet admitted the hostage situation was frustrating. Carter responded: "Frustrating? Look at the spot I'm in! I am the President of a great country. Fifty-three people look to me for support week after week and month after month while we watch this comic opera in Tehran." The President continued:

"I don't see that there is any progress at all! We're in exactly the same position as we were four months ago. The hostages are suffering every day. We are a strong nation and we do not have to prove it, but our patience is beginning to look like a demonstration of cowardice of which we cannot be proud and which I will not allow to become a way of life. Something has to change." (Ibid.)

At Jordan's prompting, Carter quickly wrote a note for Bourguet to take to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini or President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr. The note stated that the United States wanted the captives released unharmed, would eventually want normal relations with Iran under the existing government thereby recognizing the results of the revolution, and wanted Iran to air its grievances through the International Court of Justice or through the media. (Ibid.) The President, Bourguet, and Jordan met from 2:52 to 4:20 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No other record of the meeting or of the note has been found.

223. Message From President Carter to Japanese Prime Minister Ohira¹

Washington, March 25, 1980, 2346Z

WH30387. Please deliver the following message to Prime Minister Ohira at the earliest opportunity:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

During the past 150 days that our diplomats have been held hostage in Iran, I have valued your support and advice. The actions that your country has implemented have helped to isolate Iran politically and to bring home to the Iranian leadership the high costs of their continued violation of international law. Notwithstanding the efforts that all of us have made, Iran continues to affront world opinion and has made no move towards release of our people or of improvement in their condition. Because of Iranian intransigence and the suffering of the captives, I have come to the conclusion that the time has come for stronger measures. Unless Iran moves before Monday² to show its goodwill and willingness to resolve the crisis by transferring the hostages to government control and improving their condition of detention, I will order the following additional measures:

—Implementation of formal economic sanctions against Iran as provided for in the UN Resolution;³

—A compilation by the Treasury Department of all claims against Iran, with the suggestion that we may move unilaterally to settle those claims out of blocked assets;

—The expulsion of all Iranian diplomatic and consular officers from the U.S.

We continue to need your active support and assistance. As a first step, it would be valuable if you would communicate now with President Bani-Sadr so that he might clearly understand the seriousness of the present moment and the consequences that will flow from continued Iranian intransigence.

The U.S. strongly hopes that you and our other close friends will let the Iranian officials know that in the event the above steps do not

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office File, Presidential Advisory Board, Box 73, Middle East, 3-5/80. Secret; Flash; Via Batman channels. The same message was sent to Giscard in telegram WH80368, to Thatcher in telegram WH80398, to Schmidt in telegram WH89365, and to Cossiga and Trudeau in telegram 79098 to Rome and Ottawa, all March 25. (All *ibid.*)

² March 31.

³ UNSC Resolution 461; see Document 128.

result in freeing the hostages by no later than two weeks after the Majlis convenes, and in any case no later than mid May, you will join with us at that time in complete and formal severance of all diplomatic relations with Iran. Without this kind of support from our close friends, the U.S. will have little choice but to undertake further and more severe unilateral actions.

It is important to keep the attention of the Iranians on the issue of releasing the hostages. While the departure of the Shah from Panama was dictated by medical considerations, his presence in Egypt has the effect of again removing the extradition of the Shah as a possible element in the arrangements for release of the hostages. We had sought to enable the Shah to have necessary surgery in Panama, but that proved impossible given his assessment of the medical circumstances there.

We will want to be in close touch with your government during the days ahead so as to share assessments of changing circumstances and to coordinate our actions in the most effective way possible. No one can dispute the fact that the patience of the American people during this crisis has been extraordinary. That patience will not endure in the face of further Iranian inaction. I trust you will agree that it is now time to bring home forcibly to Iranians the consequences of their illegal action.

Thank you again for your help during this difficult time.⁴

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

⁴ In his memoir, Vance noted that except for a positive response from Trudeau, the formal replies to the letter expressed strong endorsement of the U.S. diplomatic approach but counseled restraint. (Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 407) Giscard's response was transmitted in telegram 85716 from Paris, April 1. Schmidt's letter to Carter is in telegram 85936 from Bonn, April 1; and Thatcher's response is in telegram 86045 from London, April 1. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980) Trudeau responded March 31. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran 3/27/80-3/31/80) The Japanese Embassy responded March 26 that Japan was alarmed at the prospect of imposing more sanctions. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 64, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 1/80-3/80)

224. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

White Paper on Iran

I wanted to bring you up to date on our efforts to prepare for an eventual Congressional or other inquiry into U.S. policy and activities in Iran and to restate my belief that we ought not to prepare a simple White Paper.

In response to an SCC decision last December,² we collected and summarized in January the key documents available in each area of U.S.-Iranian relations since 1941. In addition, we prepared a lengthy, highly classified "Survey of U.S.-Iranian Relations," which, although clearly not a White Paper, covers the broad outline of U.S.-Iranian relations and details certain of their more sensitive aspects.³ This goes far beyond the initial short paper I understand you were given. The NSC has a copy of the "Survey" and a one-volume compilation of the summaries of key documents. We are holding the documents themselves and a substantial amount of useful backup material.

The NSC staff is reviewing certain of the important White House files to which we did not have access, to ensure that our inventory of key documents is as nearly complete as possible. Together, all of this material should provide us with the information we will need in responding to inquiries, preparing speeches in defense of U.S. actions, or presenting our case to the Congress through testimony.

I believe there are a number of serious problems inherent in preparing a simple White Paper on Iran:

—While supporters of U.S. policy toward Iran might at least initially welcome a White Paper, it is the detractors and the critics who would most carefully scrutinize the document and make it a target of their attacks. We would present a broad target for inquiry into nearly every action taken by the U.S. in pursuit of our objectives. In short, we could find ourselves decidedly on the defensive or having to adopt an untenable "we cannot go beyond what we have said" posture.

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1980–81. Secret; Sensitive. In a March 14 memorandum, Brzezinski pushed Vance for a speedy release of the white paper by March 18. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 1/80–4/80).

² See Document 91.

³ See Document 140.

—To be effective, a White Paper would have to be presented as an objective account of current and past policies. In portraying earlier problems, we could stimulate charges of having attacked previous administrations. To the extent the Paper fell short of complete objectivity, we could be open to charges, here and abroad, of “covering up” the acts of this or previous administrations.

—Past experience with White Papers, such as those on China (1949) and Vietnam (1965), is not encouraging. Regardless of how well they were prepared (the China White Paper, for example, was very well done), they became more of a liability than an asset. The Vietnam White Paper was clearly a minus in public attitudes towards our Vietnam policies.

—A White Paper covering the entire range of our policies with Iran could arouse serious concern in other states in the region, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan, that their confidential exchanges with the U.S. could be brought into the open at some point.

—We would have difficulty controlling the timing of its presentation; once it was completed, we could encounter FOI and Congressional requests for its release.

—Lastly, if issued before the hostages were released, a spirited public defense of U.S. policy in the form of a White Paper would almost certainly complicate our efforts to gain their freedom. Depending on how it were perceived, it could make still more difficult a face-saving solution for the Iranians, or strengthen those elements in Iran demanding other inquiries into U.S. actions in that country.

225. Message From the Swiss Chargé d’Affaires in Iran (Kaiser) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, March 27, 1980

(1) This morning, following a prolonged siege which enabled me once again to observe how strongly the President is assailed from all sides with various concerns, I personally transmitted the State Department message to Bani-Sadr² as you had once again urged me to do.

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Mar 1980. Secret; Sensitive.

² See Document 220. In the March 27 Iran Update, Saunders informed Vance and Christopher that Villalon strongly urged that the letter not be delivered. (Briefing memorandum, March 26; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Mar 1980)

Bani-Sadr responded very calmly and without the slightest sign of any emotion whatsoever, speaking partly in very general terms and reiterating statements that are already known. He clearly indicated his willingness to effect the transfer of the hostages provided the general situation, which had again become strained as a result of the recent events, made it possible for him to do so.

Regarding the U. S. communication, Bani-Sadr made the following comments:

(a) He had promised the transfer of the hostages on the condition that the UN Commission remained in Tehran, which, as is generally known, did not happen. The current situation had been complicated further by the former Shah's trip to Egypt.

(b) He is completely opposed to all attempts by the U.S. to dominate the world. This applies especially to the attempted domination of Iran. A policy aimed at independence requires the elimination of all ties establishing dependence. It is clear that the hostages are an impediment to such a policy. Bani-Sadr made clear that it was unnecessary for the U.S. to feel that it had to encourage or threaten him in any way in relation to his pursuit of his policy.

(c) Regarding the U.S. position on this matter, he noted that to date he had not yet been able to perceive one single sign of good will on the part of that side, be it on the issue of the Shah himself, or with regard to Iran's assets or to plots directed against Iran.

(d) The Shah's departure from Panama has created a new situation, and it is not clear to him what the presence of the ex-monarch in Egypt signifies.

He is determined to effect the transfer of the hostages to the control of the government. However, for that he needs time to review the entire problem in the light of the newly created situation. The procedure selected should be such as to avoid any damage whatsoever to his country. The general conditions must be such as to make such an action possible.

In the general conversation that ensued, I told Bani-Sadr of the mounting pressure put on the Administration by the U.S. public and briefly touched on the results of the primaries in Massachusetts and the trend in New York. The President replied that he certainly was not interested in causing problems for Carter since his opponent, Kennedy, was an even greater enemy of the Iranian revolution.

Asked about the prospects for Easter services, Bani-Sadr replied that GH was seeing the Imam today—it could be presumed that he would use the occasion to discuss the subject.

226. Message From the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires in Iran (Kaiser to the Department of State)¹

Tehran, March 27, 1980

(Text of letter intended for Khomeini and attributed to President Carter)²

Excellency:

I have read your message to the Iranian people dated March 21.³ I consider it to be a key document for the future of your country.

In that message you also defined your international policy choice. This concerns us. I agree that the peace of the world requires new relations between States, especially respect for the sovereignty of nations and the right of peoples to self-determination.

I wish to say to you that these two principles often expressed by you and by President Bani-Sadr are my principles, and we have proved to the world our decision to implement them, in Nicaragua, in Pakistan, and in the face of a probable threat to the sovereignty of Yugoslavia. I wish to say to you that my Government inherited a very delicate international situation—the product of another policy, of other circumstances which have led us all to commit errors in the past.

The great advantage of American democracy is that it has always been able to recognize or condemn its mistakes. We agreed to the Congressional Commission of Inquiry to clarify the truth of serious acts of American intervention such as in the case of Chile, and that Commission of Inquiry made very important decisions condemning that intervention and taking very important measures against those responsible for those acts. President Bani-Sadr has been informed by us that we are prepared to establish this Commission of Inquiry in the United States within the framework of a program which would allow the settlement of this crisis between our two nations.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, Iran 3/80. Secret; Sensitive.

² Jordan recognized that the letter took some material from the March 13 letter he had sent to Bani-Sadr. See Document 209. (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 242) In his memoir, Sick directly attributed Villalon as the author of this March 27 counterfeit letter, which was written in a misguided attempt to lessen the pressure coming from the United States, and noted that Villalon delivered the letter to Ghotbzadeh. "Although Ghotbzadeh apparently was aware of the dubious origins of the letter, he delivered it directly to Khomeini—without even briefing Bani-Sadr." Khomeini immediately published the letter. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, pp. 320–321) According to Jordan, Villalon called from Tehran on March 29, begging that the United States not deny the letter since Khomeini had released it; Saunders told him to "forget it," that the letter was "bogus." (Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 240–242).

³ Presumably a reference to the March 24 message; see Document 220.

We have also informed President Bani-Sadr of our great willingness to make a major effort and give the Iranian people the necessary satisfactions in order to solve peacefully the disputes between our two Governments. I can understand very well that the takeover of the Embassy of our country there could be an understandable reaction of the youth of Iran. But the situation has changed, and I have serious reasons to harbor doubts as to the true motivations of those who took over our Embassy.

Today this takeover is creating major problems for your Government and for mine. It has now become an element of discord which does not allow us to end the present crisis or to establish these new relations which you talk about and which we accept on the basis of equality of mutual respect. We are ready to recognize the new realities created by the Iranian revolution. This continues to be our objective and our hope, because in the final analysis I believe that we share a single objective—world peace and justice for all peoples. From the moment that the overthrown former Shah left the United States where he had been admitted for humanitarian reasons and for medical purposes, my Government decided not to intervene in these problems. The ex-Shah's departure from Panama was his own personal decision, and we were in no way involved with the negotiations he himself undertook with Sadat in order to find refuge in Egypt. We would like there to be no misunderstanding on that point: We opposed his return to the United States, we opposed his being treated in American hospitals and by American physicians. We conveyed to President Bani-Sadr all the information we had on the physical condition of the former Shah. I consider it to be essential to maintain the principle that these two problems should be kept totally separate. The crisis between our two countries must be resolved by the will and the capacity of our Governments to act in accordance with reality and in the interest of a serious future for our peoples. I wish to say to you that as soon as the immediate problem is resolved by the transfer of the hostages to the custody of the Iranian Government, we are ready to adopt a reasonable and friendly attitude in regard to our numerous bilateral problems. It has been recommended to us that there be established a Joint Commission as the instrument for dealing with those bilateral issues. We would be receptive to this approach and could see the Commission as the means for developing our future relationship. I would ask you to make a great effort to help me to resolve the crisis between our two countries in a manner which is fair and honorable for all. I am very grateful to you. Our peoples will be very grateful to you. I would note for you that in my humble opinion time and the true enemies of our respective political processes are working against us.

With my greatest respect,

signed: **Jimmy Carter**

227. Message From the U.S. Government to Iranian President Bani-Sadr¹

Washington, March 29, 1980

1. We would appreciate it if Ambassador Lang could see Bani-Sadr to make the following points:

Begin text.

—We have noted Bani-Sadr's reaction to our message of March 25 [24]² which provided him with our assessment of the urgency and seriousness of the situation and the need to take effective steps to transfer the hostages to government control by Monday, March 31. The time remaining is very short.

—We welcome Bani-Sadr's renewed assurance through Kaiser that the hostages will be transferred to government control.³ It is important that this happen without delay. In our analysis, political conditions in Iran and the United States will make more difficult—not easier—transfer at a later date.

—In a separate message, we summarized the changed reaction of U.S. political leaders and the public to the crisis with Iran.⁴ This negative attitude can be expected to become more intense in the weeks ahead if there are no positive developments

—With reference to Bani-Sadr's remark to Kaiser, we believe that the United States has, in fact, demonstrated good will towards Iran and Bani-Sadr. The establishment of the UN Commission is the most significant of such signs. In addition, during the past two months we have refrained from harsh statements against Iran and have tried to take into account Bani-Sadr's position. We tried unsuccessfully to have the Shah remain in Panama. On March 27, Secretary Vance agreed publicly to the preparation and publication of a historical white paper on the relations between Iran and the United States.⁵

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 36, Subject File, Iran Cables and Press 3/19/80–3/31/80. Secret. Drafted by Precht. Cleared by Jordan, Saunders, and Vance. Transmitted in a cable to Lang. According to the April 1 White House discussion, Bani-Sadr read parts of this letter during his April 1 speech. See footnote 3, Document 233.

² See Document 220.

³ See Document 225.

⁴ See Document 223. Public opinion polls in the United States indicated a "sharp decline" in public approval of Carter's handling of the crisis (from 63 percent to 49 percent), and rising impatience with the situation. (Telegram 82630 to all diplomatic and consular posts, March 28; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800162–0077)

⁵ During his March 27 appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Vance approved a proposal by ranking Committee Members, Senators Church and Javits, that the Committee issue a white paper on U.S.-Iranian relations. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Vance Backs Report on U.S. Ties to Shah," *New York Times*, March 28, 1980, p. A1)

—We remain willing to undertake a series of reciprocal steps and were interested in President Bani-Sadr’s remark on American television that the hostages could be released earlier than the convening of parliament under the right conditions and a “change in the U.S. attitude.” We would welcome any specific ideas in this regard.

—We have to point out to the President that the United States has scrupulously maintained its responsibilities at every step of the scenario. We are awaiting Iran’s readiness to take the steps that lie in its area of responsibility, specifically the transfer of the hostages. If done promptly, transfer of the hostages could open the way, we believe, to a rapid solution to the crisis. End text.

2. We hope the message can be delivered as early as possible on Sunday.⁶ If it is not possible to reach Bani-Sadr until after the meeting of the Revolutionary Council, the message should not be delivered.

⁶ March 30.

228. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, March 30, 1980

1. After receiving the message for BS,² I briefed V who judged, in view of its contents, that it was urgent for BS as well as Gh. Given BS lack of English and reliance on translators (who made mistakes), I immediately dictated a French translation.

2. At Gh’s behest, BS received me immediately.

3. His (BS’s) comments.

3.1 He admitted he had told Kaiser that a transfer of the hostages was possible,³ but he meant on condition that the commission continue its work. Now, the commission had departed, and, moreover, the Shah has been transferred to Cairo, and, according to his information, Kissin-

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 2. Secret; Nodis.

² See Document 227.

³ See Document 225.

ger had organized this move (re the US declaration that it had tried to prevent the departure of the Shah.)

3.2 The Imam did publish the messages from Carter.⁴ BS realizes this is not done, but it was done. (According to V by Ahmed Khomeini who found the text less harsh than message 155 which BS presented, in confidence, to the Revolutionary Council, but which Behesti hastened to show to the Imam.) Moreover, there is now a White House denial of the message.⁵

BS told me that the message which I transmitted to the Imam had an altogether different tone, much more conciliatory. I, therefore, had to say that we had not transmitted this message. BS was shaken and said, but Gh told me it was from you. I told him there must have been a misunderstanding.

To avoid all misunderstanding about the situation (based on messages received and reports from Washington), I took the liberty of saying that the White House was now under intolerable pressure and that the deadline of March 31 must be taken more seriously.

3.3 BS reaffirmed his position. The hostages are an issue which must be put out of the way. BS believes that US imperialism is the worst thing, but he realizes, as a militant, that the hostage affair is only a nuisance for the US, but very serious for Iran. We must free ourselves from it. I have no need of courage or threats to do so.

3.4 The US need only remain calm, have patience and avoid provocation. I, therefore, repeated with unusual insistence the seriousness of the situation which requires absolutely an Iranian gesture before tomorrow night in view of the great pressures on the other side.

I emphasized our "good offices" mission by which we have been doing our best to avoid the worst and recourse to escalation.

⁴ See Document 226.

⁵ On March 30, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Jody Powell explicitly had "denied that any letter existed" and that Ghotbzadeh had subsequently "denied the denial," saying that he had seen the letter and that the White House denial would "destroy any possibility of faith Iranians still have in anything the American government says or does." (Doyle McManus, "Iran Publishes and U.S. Denies Carter Message," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1980, pp. A1, A10, A11) According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter met with Ben Bradlee of the *Washington Post*, John Finney of the *New York Times*, Murray Gart of the *Washington Star News*, Jack Nelson of the *Los Angeles Times*, and Aldo Beckman of the *Chicago Tribune* on March 30 from 8:38 to 9:40 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found. In his memoir, Carter recalls that he briefed them on recent developments "and urged them to be responsible in their reporting. A severe renunciation of the so-called Khomeini message or a condemnation of Ghotbsadeh might very well undo the apparent move by the Revolutionary Council toward transferring the hostages." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 502)

BS told me he would see what he could do. You see we are organizing a religious service for Easter and envision the sending of a doctor from the Red Lion and Sun. . . (I personally fear that he will not have the power to do more. . .

4. Re point 5, Kaiser will tell you how to transmit it to Gh.

Gh is giving a press conference now and I think that the message to BS has become, for him, doubly welcome. He is going to try again to avoid the worst, but equally it will permit him to escape from the difficult situation he finds himself in with the message to the Imam.

I informed BS that a copy of the message had been transmitted directly to GH who held a press conference.

5. German

229. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, undated

I. Cottam/Ghotbzadeh Conversation—0730 EST—March 31

Cottam found Ghotbzadeh in a good mood. He said an announcement on the transfer of the hostages would be made tonight Tehran time. The actual transfer should take place tomorrow.²

Ghotbzadeh seemed offended by our dispute with him over the validity of the “Khomeini letter”.³

II. Lang/Villalon Conversation

Villalon told Lang that the hostages would be transferred not to the Foreign Ministry but to some other location where there were more suitable facilities for an extended stay. He said the “students” had proposed to the government that after the transfer they come to the

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversations. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted on March 31 by Precht. A handwritten note in the upper right hand corner reads: “Latest authoritative sitrep 9 A.M. Monday.”

² In his memoir, Carter quotes a portion of his March 30 diary entry that reads: “About 1:45, Cy reported that Ghotbsadeh had sent word to us that Bani-Sadr will make a statement tomorrow at noon Tehran time [4:30 A.M. in Washington], saying that the Revolutionary Council with Khomeini’s approval had decided to transfer the hostages away from the students to the government on Tuesday.” (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 502; brackets are in the original)

³ See Document 226.

new location with a group of Mullahs to celebrate Easter services with their former hostages. The government had agreed. This implied the students had accepted the idea of transfer.

Lang also reported they hoped ICRC could visit the hostages very soon. Villalon said that the students presently are willing to show only 49 of them. Metrisko who had been "very courageous and a real hero" would not be shown by the students. (The Swiss DCM here could not explain the apparent contradiction between transfer of all the hostages and refusal of the students to let the ICRC visit Metrisko. We should get a text of Lang's cable later in the day.)

230. Paper Prepared by the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹

Tehran, March 31, 1980

Meeting with Bani-Sadr

1. In view of the fact that my meeting took place with almost a two hour delay, I will convey the general climate in my next cable.² I want you to know that Bani-Sadr appeared to me to be at the end of his rope, he could hardly get his words out, was confused and imprecise. This forced me to ask him to repeat his words several times in a manner which was almost unpleasant.

2. Because of the capital importance of his message I took his words down as he was saying them.

3. Bani-Sadr, who had just left a meeting of the Revolutionary Council, told me the following:

The Council decided that we can ask for a change in the situation of the hostages in order to give the Americans more confidence than is really needed provided that they (the US) waits for Parliament to take the decision to release the hostages, which will take a while. Bani-Sadr tells me the Imam agrees, the students agree, the students have just left my office.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel. No classification marking.

² According to the March 31 paper prepared by Lang, Lang arrived at the Foreign Ministry at 8:25 p.m. Tehran time (11:55 a.m. EST). (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel)

4. Bani-Sadr is mixing up what occurred today and what occurred a few days ago and tells me that he spoke to the Imam's son who talked to his father and who also saw the students and convinced them.

5. Bani-Sadr states that two proposals have been worked out and that the students are prepared to accept them:

(1) The Council proposes to Bani-Sadr that he requests that the students place the hostages under control of the state. Comment: V et Cheron had forewarned me against joint control of the condominium (sic) kind (government, revolutionary council and students) therefore I asked Bani-Sadr to clarify if this was under sole control of the state excluding any other organization or parallel power. Bani-Sadr replied that yes this would be under the sole control of the state.

(2) Second proposal: the hostages would remain in the custody of the students, I stress "in the custody of", who would pledge to the state that they would completely improve their situation providing all of them with excellent and adequate housing conditions with total freedom of action within the compound and periodic visits of the Red Lion and Sun. The second proposal is designed to give the hostages all guarantees as to their safety and these guarantees would be checked periodically by the government.

6. I was so flabbergasted by the second proposal that I asked Bani-Sadr to repeat it three times and each time I told him that I could not understand the difference between the two proposals since safety, care, and comfort are in fact included in the first proposal since the hostages would be under the control of the government in whom the other side has full confidence. I had a hard time getting Bani-Sadr to speak clearly on this because of his condition of extreme fatigue. What I got out of him follows: he confessed that he is deeply perplexed as to the safety of the hostages during their transfer to governmental control. He worries over provocations and attempts against them particularly on the part of those he calls the "Russians". I am astonished and asked for clarifications, are there Russians in the compound? He says yes there are. I assume he is alluding to a group close to Tudeh.

7. V advised me to be extremely firm. I therefore spoke accordingly and stressed to Bani-Sadr the seriousness of the situation on the other side. I stressed that I had no mandate from anyone nor did I have any power but because of my dealings with my government and with my colleague in Washington I understood the present situation in the United States and the problem with which the President would be faced and I thought therefore that only a radical change and not simply psychological measures could be taken up by the other side. By radical change one must understand a total and final break of any contact between the hostages and their keepers the latter being replaced once and for all by representatives of the legitimate power that is to say of

the Iran Government. I pursued this same idea three times in different terms and until the end of our meeting.

8. I asked Bani-Sadr when a choice would be made between these proposals, meaning in effect become specific and be implemented and Bani-Sadr said that will happen tomorrow.

9. I asked Bani-Sadr what was the immediate followup on his part and he replied that while awaiting the reaction of the other side he is going to the Imam to get him to choose a solution. If the Imam agrees with the two solutions and tells me to make a choice, well then I therefore will have to analyze myself Bani-Sadr, the psychology of our people in tactical terms and I would choose two stages. The first stage would be the second solution to be followed after a certain interval by the first solution.

I told him one more time that this analysis was very good as far as it went but that a capital element was lacking: to know how the other side would take this.

10. Following V's advice who insisted strongly that he wanted a press statement I asked Bani-Sadr if he was going to make a statement to the press. I admit that V had showed me the advantages of it but what I had just heard caused me to think that a press statement would be counterproductive. I therefore did not object when Bani-Sadr told me that he would not speak to the press now but only as soon as a solution had been chosen. Either the Imam or Bani-Sadr himself would issue a public statement.

11. During the last ten minutes of our conversation which were extremely difficult because Bani-Sadr could barely get a word out—a condition he acknowledged himself—Sandjabi et Molavi came in and sat down at the table. I took advantage of this to repeat firmly and clearly what I believed to be the kind of solution the other side was expecting and I stressed the determination to see the hostages placed henceforth under the direct and sole control of the legitimate government of Iran.

12. Logistically speaking I don't know how President Carter will reply. I can reach Bani-Sadr at his office until midnight, after that time I have his private number but considering the condition he is in I wonder if a direct communication or a communication through B or V would not be preferable.

Lang

231. Record of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, March 31, 1980, 2:30–3:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Pres
Vance
Christopher
Brown
Claytor
ZB
DA
Jones
Turner
Cutler
Donovan
Powell
Jordan
Sick (notes)

The Pres opened the meeting by summarizing what had occurred with respect to Iran over the past 24 hours. Yesterday at about 2:30 we had heard from Ghotbzadeh via an intermediary that the hostages were to be transferred, at the decision of the Revolutionary Council, from the custody of the students to the Government.² Bani-Sadr was to make an announcement to that effect at 3:00 a.m. Washington time today. That, of course, had not happened. It was impossible to summarize all the delays and obfuscations which had occurred in the meantime today and all the messages back and forth. Bani-Sadr had evidently met with some of the student leaders, and the Revolutionary Council had just completed a 5½ hour meeting, after which they let it be known that their plan is to transfer the hostages.³ The President read to the group the message which had been sent to Bani-Sadr after the Camp David meeting of the week before.⁴ In addition to that message, which was sent to Tehran via the Swiss Embassy, there have been a number of messages back and forth through the Swiss which have informed the Iranians that we are not opposed to the Government of Iran and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 3/31/80 NSC re Iran. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

² See Document 229.

³ See Document 230.

⁴ See Documents 220 and 217.

other statements, but no one sent a message to Khomeini such as that which has been published in Tehran.⁵

Sec Vance noted that our reports indicate that, after 5½ hours of discussion about the modalities of making the transfer of the hostages to the Government, the Revolutionary Council reaffirmed its decision and that this had been agreed to by the students. Reportedly, Bani-Sadr was given two options: (1) for the Government to take over the Embassy and remove the students; or (2) to take joint custody of the Embassy with the students. We understand that Bani-Sadr has had a further meeting with the students and will make a statement tomorrow.

ZB pointed out that the meeting with the students took place earlier today according to Reuters. We also had private reports that Bani-Sadr had rejected the idea of joint custody.

Jordan said he was concerned that, according to the Reuters report, the students had no derogatory comments to make after the meeting, which may indicate that they cut a deal with Bani-Sadr.

CV said we were trying to confirm these reports through the Swiss. We have an open line with them.

ZB said we have a massive credibility problem. For example, Jim Schlesinger called him today and was convinced from the *New York Times* story that there had been a message from the U.S. along the lines publicized in Tehran. If someone as sympathetic to the Administration as he believes the Iranians, it means that the belief is widespread. With regard to next steps, if we go ahead with our sanctions at this point, we provide Bani-Sadr a perfect excuse to blame us for not taking the necessary steps to transfer the hostages.

Cutler asked if we had any indication that they intend to move the hostages out of the Embassy.

CV said no. Addressing the President, he said it was his view that to go ahead with the three items today would put us in an impossible position. We can wait until tomorrow. He would recommend against acting today.

Sec Brown said he agreed but wondered what we could do to clarify the confusion over the messages. Could we clarify what was in the message which was actually sent to Bani-Sadr?

The Pres said he had met last night with the editors of the *Washington Post*, the *Star*, the *LA Times*, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*⁶ and had told them flatly what had happened. They agreed to honor

⁵ See Document 226. The counterfeit letter was also published in full in the United States. ("Errors' in the past: Iran's Version of Carter Letter," *Chicago Tribune*, March 31, 1980, p. 2)

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 228.

the confidentiality of his words, but to improve the stories they publish to reflect the facts more accurately. There is another development. We have had good support from the European and Japanese allies who have weighed in with Bani-Sadr. The President had talked to Margaret Thatcher (who was with Chancellor Schmidt) and with Giscard yesterday. We also know that the Prime Ministers of Japan and Italy sent strong messages to Bani-Sadr. Giscard reported today that Bani-Sadr told the French Ambassador, "I don't attach too much importance to threats."⁷ But the action of all the allies, the President thought, had made a real impression. Bani-Sadr told us via Giscard that the hostages would be released at the time of the convening of the Majlis and that Khomeini had agreed to this, to avoid long debates on the subject. The Congressional leadership will be here within an hour, and the President intended to bring them up to date in the same way. He saw nothing wrong in informing them of the decisions we understand had been taken in Tehran, indicating that we would monitor developments carefully, with an announcement to be made tomorrow. He thought that would carry us over the night.

ZB said the President should read the message he had sent to Bani-Sadr.

Powell wondered about reading the text.

ZB said they already know the substance.

JP said that parts of it could be turned against us, e.g. the emphasis on American public opinion.

HJ said we are in a hell of a fix when the media believes the Iranians instead of us. We should weigh in officially with the Iranians that joint control of the hostages is unsatisfactory.

CV said we already have but we can do so again.

HJ said the speech at midday tomorrow will force Bani-Sadr to take a position.

ZB said we should be ready to move if the speech is again dilatory.

The Pres asked where we got this latest information.

CV replied from Bourguet. We were checking the information with the Swiss.

The Pres said he had jotted down some thoughts about a statement to the US people to the effect that we had been informed by top Iranian leaders that the US hostages were to be released from the militants . . . it was not yet official . . . we would see it as a constructive step . . . it was necessary to assure the safety and well-being of the hostages

⁷ As relayed in telegram 10455 from Paris, March 31. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P900077–1842)

. . . if these steps are not taken, we will take additional measures which we have not taken thus far . . . the NSC meeting had been held . . . and the President will make an appropriate announcement tomorrow.

CV said it would be a mistake to refer to it. They were not able to produce in the past. This could create another credibility problem for us.

JP said we need some basis for it.

CV suggested saying that the Revolutionary Council had met for 5½ hours, we have information that Bani Sadr will make a statement at noon their time and that the President will make a statement.

HB thought we should hold off for today, but if the decision is bad it will hurt us.

HJ said we will take a beating tonight if we do not go ahead. We can't make Bani-Sadr's statement for him. *They* say we are giving them no reason to make a statement.

JP noted that we had asked them for more assurance.

ZB suggested saying that the President met with the NSC to review the situation and that an appropriate statement will be made tomorrow. If we say what we are going to do, we give Bani-Sadr an excuse to back out.

LC said if we make a statement we should start with the gist of what we told Bani-Sadr, that there has been a meeting of the Revolutionary Council, we have no report, that we will wait until we hear the speech tomorrow. We cannot make a speech without referring to the confusion over the messages.

The Pres said that would be demeaning. We could indicate that reports from Iran say . . .

ZB said anything could happen today. The Pres could go on the tube tomorrow.

The Pres said we need to be able to tide over until tomorrow.

HJ suggested saying that we have reports from Iran that the Revolutionary Council has met and made decisions concerning the transfer of the hostages. We are also informed that Bani-Sadr will make a speech tomorrow, so the President will make an appropriate statement to the U.S. people tomorrow.

ZB wondered why we should say that. It will be disappointing if the results are not good. Why do we want to put out the story?

HJ said we would take a beating overnight.

DA suggested saying the NSC met to review reports . . .

HJ said if we do not announce our actions, we need to give the reason. The reason is that we have reports that the hostage question will be addressed by the Revolutionary Council tomorrow.

HB wondered about the so-called message to Khomeini?

JP said we should repeat our denial.

The Pres said he had discussed this with the five guys last night.

CV said the Swiss are prepared to make a further statement.

JP said the problem is that if we say there were no such messages, then the Swiss will say there have been messages from the President. If we say nothing for one day, people will be skeptical.

The Pres noted that the Swiss claim they did not know the content of the messages.

HJ said that is not true.

CV quickly read the second message which had been sent to Bani-Sadr,⁸ which welcomed his reassurances, noted the things we had done to improve the negotiating situation, that we had tried to make the Shah stay in Panama, that we had not objected to the proposed Senate Foreign Relations Committee study, and that the U.S. had been scrupulous in maintaining its responsibilities under the scenario and hoped that Iran would do the same.

HJ noted that this was the follow-up message sent on Saturday, March 29.

The Pres said there had been a stream of messages from the U.S. to Iranian officials using the UN, the French lawyers, the Panamanians, etc. They had described U.S. attitudes toward Iran and indicated we would not stand as an obstacle against Iran presenting its grievances. Ghotbzadeh said (in the so-called letter)⁹ that we understand why the militants took our hostages. The Pres had seen that for the first time in the text of the letter in the *New York Times*. Apparently, Ghotbzadeh had contributed a written answer, using bits and pieces of things we had conveyed and adding embellishments, then delivered it to Khomeini and Bani-Sadr. When the Swiss told Bani-Sadr, he was shocked. This was a Ghotbzadeh contrivance, perhaps in good faith and contrived to be helpful. Calling him a liar and going beyond our present statements could destroy his credibility—if he has any. He had explained this to the papers last night. Today we should repeat our position and read a statement. If there is nothing overnight from Iran, the Pres would make a statement.

HJ suggested 7:00 a.m.

The Pres said it should get on the morning talk shows.

HJ said we must say that joint control is not acceptable, then indicate that here is what we will do tomorrow.

⁸ Reference is presumably to the March 29 message; see Document 227.

⁹ Carter thought Ghotbzadeh was responsible for the “bogus” letter. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pp. 502–503)

LC said there were infinite possibilities of possible arrangements for custody of the hostages.

GC said that merely having some students in the Embassy was not so bad. It was their control which was important.

The Pres said Vance should talk to Waldheim.¹⁰

ST said we should be prepared if the Revolutionary Council gets into the Embassy they may not find 50 hostages. British Ambassador Graham was just back and talked to us in London. He had been in touch with Entezam in prison who had said that the militants control a section of the prison and there may be Americans in that section.

The Pres said it was the impression when the UN Commission was there that some hostages had been moved back.

HJ said we should maintain flexibility. If the Iranians renege, we should break diplomatic relations.

ZB said it is important that we reject joint control.

The Pres agreed. If the government was in control, we cannot specify exactly what arrangement will be adopted.

LC asked if the Pres wanted a 7 a.m. meeting.

The Pres said that Jody Powell and two or three others should meet with him at 5 a.m.

HJ said that if the news was bad, we could sleep late.

JP asked in the event of bad news, what would we implement regarding the Iranian diplomats.

WC said we plan to call in the Chargé and give him a diplomatic note ordering [that] the 15 diplomats here and 5 others from each of the Consulates were being declared PNG and must leave. State will work with Justice. We would plan loose surveillance of the diplomats between now and April 4. There were 35 diplomats in all. Under the diplomatic note we would be prepared to have 4 in Washington and 1 in each of the Consulates remain for an additional 5 days. We would identify those who could remain. Justice has asked that they be restricted to the Embassy and their homes and a 2-mile radius of the corridor between them. This would be civilized but firm. The diplomats could not claim to be students or have other status which would permit them to remain. The only way they could stay would be to request asylum.

¹⁰ After this sentence, Carter wrote: "If the transfer is made, the Commission could return to Tehran."

The Pres said he prefers to assign an extra 15–20 agents and be sure to get them out by Friday morning.¹¹ He did not want to find that half of them had vanished.

ZB noted that we could have tighter surveillance. We could have individual interviews with each diplomat, informing him of his responsibilities by the FBI or State. The police or FBI could take up positions in front of the Embassy and homes.

WC said Justice had suggested that a bus pick them up and take them to the airport. They were concerned about creating an incident.

ZB said each should be informed individually of his responsibilities and there should be some visual surveillance.

CV said they could increase the number of agents and tighten surveillance.

WC said we should let them make individual arrangements since they had to go to banks, etc. This entailed some risk, but they would be restricted carefully.

HJ said it was hard to be sensitive to their personal needs at this point.

ZB said to let an agent go with them wherever they needed to go.

WC said it would take a lot of people.

The Pres said it would only be for 3 days.

CV said State would get together with Justice and work it out.

The Pres said we should be humane, but he wanted them out. He asked if he needed to sign something to order the census of claims.

LC said it would use the same order as before and a new signature was not required.

The Pres said he was to brief Congress and would read the message to Bani-Sadr.

CV said to note that it was from the *U.S. Government* to Bani-Sadr and that this had been made clear to the Swiss.

ZB agreed that it was important that it be clear that the message did not come from the President personally. Also that there had been no message authorized from the President to Khomeini, whether oral or any other way. People believe such a letter was authorized.

HJ said the PRES should not reveal to Congress his suspicions about Ghotbzadeh. *LC* agreed.

The Pres noted that Senator Byrd had gone public after his briefing last Saturday.¹² This was not like him.

¹¹ April 4.

¹² March 29. Byrd stated in a news conference that Christopher had briefed him and other Senators on “new measures against Iran.” (Charles Mohr, “Iran Reports Conciliatory Message From Carter, but U.S. Issues Denial,” *New York Times*, March 30, 1980, p. 1)

WC said he could not explain it.

LC said that Congressional leaders should be told that when we get to the next steps, we will need Congressional consultations about imposition of IEEPA.

The Pres wondered if he should mention the question of stopping the \$4 million to the Olympics.

LC said that the chances of stopping it by legislation were slim. He had talked to Stevens and Byrd. However, it would depend on Byrd. It would probably be better to prepare a letter to the Olympic Committee and others signed by 88 senators and House members.

The Pres said we want to stop things, not people, from going to the Olympics. Rosalynn had asked if we could stop TV broadcasts of the Olympics. We can stop NBC.

LC said that use of the Export Administration Act was alright to stop NBC if it is not challenged in court. However, we cannot stop news or broadcast of events as news items. Most of the sports federations will go against us. We will work hard over the next few weeks to get a favorable outcome on the Olympics.

DA noted that if we are quiet, others will go against our position.

The Pres noted that NBC is giving us hell on this issue.

WC said the President should tell Congressional leaders what to say to the press after the meeting.

The Pres said the thrust should be that no one in the government sent a message to Khomeini or any apology.

HJ added that they should note that things were at a delicate stage and that the Pres is wise to act tomorrow rather than today.

232. Paper Prepared in the Defense Intelligence Agency

Washington, March 31, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 56, Outside the System File, Chron 4/8/80–4/18/80. Top Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. 3 pages not declassified.]

233. Record of an Oval Office Meeting¹

Washington, April 1, 1980, 5:07–6 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

PRES
VANCE
CHRISTOPHER
SAUNDERS
ZB
DA
SICK
POWELL
JORDAN

Mr. Christopher said we had a message from Swiss Ambassador Lang in Tehran that Khomeini was very hard in his speech.² Bani-Sadr indicated they are ready to transfer control of the hostages, but sets two conditions: first, the definitive release of the hostages could come only after the parliament meets; and second, that the U.S. refrain from any hostile act.³

The Pres said we could delay the imposition of sanctions since they have said they will transfer the hostages.

ZB said we have two options. First, we could say the Iranian response is inadequate and go ahead with the sanctions. Second, that the Iranians have accepted transfer of the hostages and therefore we hold off. He thought the latter could be justified. We could note that

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 100, Meetings File, 4/1/80 Oval Office re Iran. No classification marking.

² On March 31 on the anniversary of the revolution, in a speech read by his son Ahmad and released at midnight U.S. time, Khomeini stated that sending the Shah to Egypt was a betrayal of all Muslims, that Carter's apologies would not change anything (see Document 226) and that only the Iranian people and their elected representatives in the Majles could solve the problem of the hostages. The speech did not refer to the problem of transferring the hostages to government control and rejected the "so-called honorable solution" proposed by Carter. (Text and commentary attached to a memorandum from Aaron to Carter, March 31; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 3/80)

³ In the March 31 speech, Bani-Sadr talked about recent developments, noted that Kissinger was responsible for the Shah's move to Egypt, and read from Carter's March 29 letter (see Document 227). He also responded to Carter's letter as follows: "If the United States were to issue an official statement stating that it will undertake no propaganda concerning the hostages, make no claim, engage in no intrigue and voice no word until the Iranian Parliament comes into being and has taken a decision on the subject, then the Revolutionary Council would accept to take the hostages under its own custody." (Message from Lang to the Department of State, April 1; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update April 1980)

the Iranians have responded to the message sent to them on March 24,⁴ consequently our measures are suspended. We could ignore the conditions they set.

The Pres said it would be better to say that the President of Iran has said that the hostages will be transferred, therefore, we are delaying our actions until a certain time . . .

Mr. Powell said we could say the Iranians say they are ready to transfer the hostages. If they should release them by a certain time . . .

Jordan said we should be careful. It is clear that Bani-Sadr and others are under the gun and have little room for maneuver. We should not put them in a corner.

The Pres said we should acknowledge their decision.

ZB said we should indicate that it was the result of your (the President's) initiative.

Jordan said he thought we should not mention our message.

Saunders came in after being on the phone. He restated Amb. Lang's understanding of the Khomeini statement and Bani-Sadr's speech.

The Pres said we should restate that Iran has announced that the hostages will be released after the Majlis meets. Our statement could say that Iranian officials have stated that the hostages will be released when the Majlis convenes.

Mr. Christopher read a possible draft statement acknowledging the announcement of Bani-Sadr as a positive step, and acknowledging the Iranian Government statement that the hostage issue would be resolved when the Majlis convenes. There was also a statement at the end expressing unity with the families of the hostages.⁵

ZB said he was uneasy about making too positive a reading of the Iranian position. The President should take credit for the initiative. We should not read too much into their statement. Mention of the decision to be taken by the Majlis prompts a response from them saying that only the Majlis can decide the release of the hostages. We legitimize that position by mentioning it.

The Pres said we are dealing with a crazy group. Bani-Sadr and others are holding on by their fingernails. If we leave out any mention of the Majlis, they could come back to us and demand acknowledgement of their position. He felt it was necessary to mention it in our statement.

Jordan said the decision about the Majlis was already in the public domain.

⁴ See Document 220.

⁵ The draft was not found. See Document 234.

The Pres said we could do what John Kennedy did at the time of the Cuban missile crisis when he received two messages from the Soviets: take the best part of the message and ignore the other. We can couple the Majlis acknowledgement with a statement urging the earliest possible release of the hostages.

CV asked Jody Powell for his view about how to handle the Khomeini speech.

JP said ignore it.

ZB said he thought mention of the Majlis weakened the statement.

The Pres said there is no need to keep going around this. He preferred to say something about the Majlis. We could say that the hostages will be released when the Majlis convenes. That is in line with the messages we have received from Giscard.⁶

Aaron and Jordan said it would be better not to say that they will be released when the Majlis convenes. They have never said this publicly and it could prompt a denial from them.

Christopher proposed wording it that “the hostage issue will be resolved when the new Parliament convenes.” All agreed that this was the best formulation. All agreed to drop the part about unity with the families, etc.

ZB said we would be better off arguing the main point which is the *transfer* of the hostages.

DA wondered if we should say that the hostages will be “transferred immediately.”

The Pres said he had trepidation about saying more than Bani-Sadr had stated publicly. We should get the announcement out on the wires immediately.

JP wondered if the President should make the announcement on camera.

CV said it would be better for Jody to make the announcement.

The Pres said that this was good news. At least it is better than he had expected from what he read at 6:30 last night.⁷ (Saunders said that was starting from a pretty low base.) The Pres joked that Rosalynn had gone in the bathroom and thrown up when he read her what Khomeini was saying. He discussed briefly with JP what the effect would be in Kansas and Wisconsin if he made the statement personally.

JP said he did not like the idea of the President personally standing up and accepting conditions.

⁶ See footnote 7, Document 231.

⁷ Presumably a reference to Aaron’s memorandum on Khomeini’s speech. See footnote 2 above.

The Pres said we should give this the maximum positive twist. It gives Bani-Sadr what he asked for via the Swiss. He asked everyone in the room to make no statements. All statements should come through Jody Powell and Hodding Carter. There will be rapidly changing circumstances. We can expect Khomeini, Beheshti and others to say crazy things in the next few days.

CV said he would contact Senator Byrd and other key congressional leaders.

ZB asked how we respond to the question if we have accepted Iran's conditions.

JP said we would not address it.

The Pres said we should turn it around, i.e., that they accepted *our* conditions.

ZB suggested that on background we note that it was the President's message which set this off.

The Pres said we should ask Congressional leaders to exercise restraint over the next 24 hours. They can say it is a positive development.

ZB asked whether Kennedy and Reagan should be contacted to ask them for restraint.

The Pres said Kennedy was avoiding the issue. Reagan, however, is giving us hell. Last night he (the Pres) had called the three TV anchors (Cronkite, Reynolds, etc.) and had told them on background that we never apologized to Iran and that we never condoned the taking of hostages by the militants.⁸ He thought the news coverage last night reflected that. He wondered if he should call them again this morning. We could turn around the idea of conditions, to say that it was not we who had accepted conditions. He asked Saunders to thank Swiss Amb. Lang for his efforts.

⁸ Carter spoke to Walter Cronkite, John Chancellor, and Frank Reynolds in separate phone calls between 5:38 and 5:53 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

234. Editorial Note

At 7:20 a.m. on April 1, 1980, President Jimmy Carter addressed reporters in the Oval Office at the White House. He reminded them that his administration has been seeking a positive development in Iran, such as the transfer of the U.S. hostages to the Iranian Government. Carter stated: "If this action had not been taken, or is not taken, we were considering additional sanctions against Iran and had notified the Iranian government of that fact." (See Document 227.) Carter continued:

"This morning, the President of Iran has announced that the hostages' control will be transferred to the Government of Iran, which we consider to be a positive step. In light of that action, we do not consider it appropriate now to impose additional sanctions. We will monitor the situation very closely. We would like to see this positive development continue and our foremost consideration and our constant effort will be devoted to the hostages and their return to this country and to freedom."

After his statement, in response to a reporter's question on whether the United States had agreed to Iran's condition of no hostile action, no provocation, and no propaganda (see footnote 3, Document 233), Carter replied that the United States would maintain present trade restrictions and continue to hold Iran's assets. He repeatedly stressed the fact that the United States would not impose any additional sanctions. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 576–577)

Later that day, President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr told reporters that Carter's statement had failed to meet Iran's demands and that an official declaration containing U.S. acceptance of all the conditions had to be published. (Reuters wire, attached to a memorandum from Aaron to Carter, April 1; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 4/1/80–4/18/80)

After this announcement by Bani-Sadr, on the same day, Carter decided to call an NSC meeting "to impose all the sanctions, expel all their diplomats, collect all the claims against Iran, maybe prohibit any more people coming into this country from Iran—and to act without further delay." Carter recalled that within a few hours, Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh had said that Iranian demands had been met, implying that the hostages would, in fact, be transferred to government control. Carter then decided to let the situation stew for a few days until clarification was received from Tehran. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pages 503–504) No copy of Ghotbzadeh's statement has been found.

235. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, April 2, 1980

SUBJECT

Next Steps on Iran

There are two categories of additional steps which we need to consider: (1) interim steps which can keep the pressure up over the next 48 hours while we wait for transfer of the hostages; and (2) sanctions which can be used in addition to those we already have in our pocket.

Interim Pressure

1. Ask Allies to make a new démarche to Bani-Sadr stressing the importance of prompt action.

2. Private message through Swiss or other channels telling them we will be unable to hold off beyond Saturday morning.²

3. Message to selected Third World capitals (especially Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Algeria) informing them that we will have to proceed soon with the sanctions unless there is tangible movement in Tehran.

4. Preliminary consultations at the UN about possible new resolution condemning Iran, revival of sanctions in the Security Council, or some other move which they will hear about—even if we do not go ahead.

5. Sharply increase the VOA broadcast time in Farsi—even if only for a day or two. Fill the time with rebroadcasts of Christopher's statement on Afghanistan, indications of growing restiveness in the U.S., read editorials which call for more action, do updates on the U.S. military presence in the Arabian Sea, interviews with U.S. military figures about the U.S. presence.

6. Close an area of the Arabian Sea for a naval live firing exercise.

7. On the clandestine broadcasts, drop some rumors about U.S. intentions. [*3½ lines not declassified*]

8. Citing the TASS attack on the U.S., plant a story that the Soviets have sent a secret message to Khomeini telling him to resist the U.S. pressure and offering him their full support if he does. If the story is

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14. Secret.

² April 5.

good enough, it will feed the rumor mill and put the Ayatollah on the defensive.

9. Institute visible, spot surveillance of Iranian diplomats.

New Sanctions

Many of the above suggestions would also be useful in building an atmosphere of uncertainty in Tehran even if we go through with the sanctions. The following are some additional steps we can take if we decide to openly resort to graduated pressure tactics. The key word is *graduated*, since any package we invoke is going to be more effective if it is seen only as the first step and if there is real concern in Tehran that more stringent measures are seriously being considered.

1. *Tighten up Immigration*. We probably should do this anyway. Exactly what are the guidelines which INS is using to screen Iranians coming into the country?

2. *Students*. Can/should we toughen the limitations on renewal of Iranian student visas after this semester is over? Could we require written statements by school officials about political activities of Iranian students? Can we simply require that all student visas be formally renewed prior to beginning a new semester?

3. *Spot Interrogation of Merchant Shipping*. This would be a first step. It could be stepped up if desired, but a limited program could raise fears while being portrayed as normal maritime activity.

4. *Economic Transactions*. Can we ask the allies to privately ask their companies to deliberately slow down all financial and commercial transactions with the Iranians? This would not require legal steps, and each country could do it in its own fashion. It might even be attractive to them as an alternative to more severe measures.

5. *UN*. Any attempted new action against Iran at the UN is a two-edged sword. However, my guess is that the Iranians are not any happier about relying on the Soviet veto than we are—it shows how low they have sunk in world opinion. Merely undertaking some kind of effort will be seen as threatening by them, although it has a down side for us as well if we fail to gain as many votes as last time or force a new Soviet veto.

6. *ICJ*. Are we totally on hold at the World Court? Can we ask for them to accelerate their consideration of the case on the grounds that danger is increasing? When do we expect a final judgment? Will the judgment increase our ability to press the allies for sanctions?

7. *Diplomatic Representation*. We could renew pressure on our allies and others to reduce their diplomatic presence in Tehran, or, at a minimum, to communicate to the Iranians the fact that they see a dangerous situation developing which could require them to reduce

their presence. We would have to take some unilateral steps which would add conviction to their démarches.

A Negotiating Strategy

We cannot maintain our present posture of watchful waiting for more than a few days without losing credibility entirely. We must also not lose sight of the fact that the transfer of the hostages—even if successful—is not the end of the game. The final negotiation for release is still ahead of us and will be even tougher. We need to have cards in our hand for the next round which will give us some negotiating leverage—things we can give up or things which we can renounce doing—which will keep the negotiations from being focused entirely on U.S. concessions on matters of basic principle.

Even if we decide not to go ahead with tangible punitive acts, we need to create an environment of uncertainty and potential threat which will keep the Iranians focused on the immediacy of the problem and, if possible, for them to set deadlines for themselves. This is the necessary counterpart to the carrot we have been brandishing. We must have the private channels of communication, but we should also be doing things which raise doubt in their minds about our real intentions. Pure carrot is going to be ineffective without some stick in the background.

There are a number of things we can do which create uncertainty and even fear in the minds of Iranians but which we can blandly explain away as not our doing or as unrelated to Iran. We have been playing the game totally in the open. We should reach down a little into our bag of tricks.

I recommend a brainstorming session with the Agency, DOD, State and some selected members of the NSC Staff which would come up with a menu of largely deniable actions which could be orchestrated over a period of time to build pressure and tension. We were doing this for a while, but the effort ceased as the UN Commission took over. It is time to start some new systematic thinking about the end game.

236. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, April 3, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran/Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

David Newsom

Peter Constable

OSD

General David Jones

Lt. Gen. John Pustay

CIA

Frank Carlucci

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti

Judge William Webster

Robert Carswell

White House

David Aaron

Hedley Donovan

Lloyd Cutler

Jody Powell

Henry Owen

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift

NSC

Gary Sick

Alfred Friendly

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Iran Negotiations.* Mr. Newsom reported on the latest contacts through Villalon in Tehran.² He had seen Bani-Sadr who was to meet with the Revolutionary Council today. The firm intention is for a transfer of custody of the hostages to occur on Saturday.³ The precise details of the role of the students once the transfer has occurred is “a great mystery,” but Villalon says he has made it clear that a joint custody arrangement is unsatisfactory. Reportedly there are still issues to be resolved in Tehran on the question of transfer. The SCC agreed that we should not encourage undue optimism through our public statements since this could all come apart as it has so many times in the past. Our basic posture should be to acknowledge the positive signals which are coming out of Tehran but to restrict our comments to the

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote “Zbig, C” in the upper right corner.

² Memorandum of conversation between Villalon and Precht, April 3, 8 a.m. EST. (Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan’s Confidential Files, Box 2) Ghotbzadeh had informed Cottam earlier that a “transfer ceremony” was scheduled for April 5, but implied a transfer was not guaranteed because of the students. (Memorandum of conversation between Cottam and Ghotbzadeh, April 3, 7:30 a.m. EST; *ibid.*)

³ April 5.

fact that the situation is very fluid and no comments are desirable at this time. (S)

2. *Expulsion of Iranian Diplomats.* The Attorney General reviewed for the SCC the problems associated with expelling Iranian diplomats. The decision to grant them five days to depart, to impose close and visible surveillance, and to avoid disruptive incidents were inconsistent. A considerable number of non-diplomats are present in some of the facilities (perhaps more than 60 in the Washington Embassy, for example) and arms have been stockpiled. By allowing five days, we increase the chances that these individuals will organize incidents which could have an impact on civil order here and possibly on the hostages in Tehran. The need for close surveillance over a five-day period increases the diplomats [refusal?] to leave or a refusal of the airlines to accept them. (S)

The Attorney General recommended that we assume responsibility for removing the diplomats from the facilities and transporting them to the departure point. There would be an initial demonstration of U.S. presence, including individual notification of the requirement to depart, then less visible surveillance in the interim, followed by official escort to the departure point. He recommended reducing the period of delay to the minimum and no more than 24–48 hours. If there is substantial resistance, we would attempt to defuse it by negotiating methods rather than the use of force. (S)

Judge Webster seconded this recommendation. He noted that the FBI had located all but two of the residences of the diplomats involved. There is no evidence to date of any plan by the diplomats to run or attempt to escape. There are thousands of Iranian students in all of the cities where facilities are located, and demonstrations are a significant possibility. Recent reports indicate one case of an individual entering the Embassy with an AK-47 submachinegun. Another report indicates armed guards on the roof. There are Hanafi Muslims on the grounds of the Embassy with hand guns. There is one diplomat in Chicago who has been linked to the militants, and we would keep particularly close surveillance on him. However, we want to avoid a “Keystone Kops” situation where police cars converge on the Embassy and Consulates from all directions as the diplomats come to work in the morning. Three teams of two men each would be assigned to each individual, and this would be increased as the moment of departure arrives. Agents in each of the locations have been notified to make preparations, but detailed instructions have not yet been sent to avoid leaks. (S)

Mr. Aaron strongly supported the idea of reducing the departure time for the bulk of the diplomats to 24 hours from notification. This would cause personal hardship in some cases, but their personal effects could be handled by those who remained behind. The Department of

State preferred 48 hours, but eventually acquiesced to the 24-hour deadline. The Department of State will develop a plan for the exit of the diplomats from the country. The Defense Department will be prepared to provide transportation if necessary. (S)

_____ Approve 24 hour notice⁴

_____ 48 hours

_____ Other

It was also agreed that a Justice, State, FBI group would develop a plan for removal of diplomats. The plan could be reviewed tomorrow afternoon if required.⁵ (S)

The Attorney General noted that as many as ten of the Iranian diplomats may seek asylum here. Others, such as the Chargé in Washington, may apply for residence on the grounds that he has an American wife. Mr. Aaron said we do not want an expulsion which results in half the expellees staying here under various pretexts. He said we should be harsh in our interpretations of the rules. If the Chargé is required to leave under the order, he should go and then apply for residence from outside the country.

3. *Additional Sanctions.* Mr. Aaron noted that we need to consider measures which go beyond the three sanctions we had previously accepted. Those measures had been widely advertised and might be discounted in advance by Tehran. The Department of State circulated a list of possible measures they had developed for the discussion.⁶

Resolutions in the UNSC or UNGA. All agreed that any new condemnatory resolutions would fail due to the Soviet veto, and we might also lose support as compared to the past. However, this may become an option once the ICJ hands down a final ruling. That will probably be about a month. (C)

INS Tighten Up Examination of Iranian Students. The Attorney General said this was being done. However, the delay in deportation resulted from the requirements for due process. By utilizing all channels of appeal, the process could be drawn out for as much as two years. Another problem is confirming departure of those deported or choosing voluntary departure. We do not maintain INS presence at departure points. We have no established checks on departures from this country.

⁴ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and wrote in the right margin: "discuss at NSC mtg."

⁵ The paper prepared in the Department of Justice, "Operational Outline for Expulsion of Iranian Diplomats and Closure of Diplomatic Missions (Draft No. 1)," April 4, is in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 4/4/80 SCC re Iran.

⁶ Reference presumably is to the undated list, "Possible Further Measures Against Iran." (Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 2)

Mr. Aaron said the airlines are supposed to report departures to INS, but the Attorney General said they often fail to do so. The SCC agreed that the Attorney General should crack down on the airlines to insure that they fulfill their reporting obligations. With that data, we can determine what further steps might be effective.

Revoke all Iranian visas and Revalidate only for those who have no residence or business connection with Iran. Mr. Newsom noted that we still may be receiving visas issued by the militants using the visa plates at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Instructions had already been prepared to implement this order if the decision is taken, with special instructions to give preference to minority groups. Mr. Sick noted that this would impact heavily on many Iranians who are friends of the United States and who have legitimate business and personal interests here and in Iran. Mr. Aaron said that was a cost that would have to be accepted so long as the hostages are being held. The SCC agreed that this should be placed on the list of steps we would consider taking in the event we invoke sanctions.⁷

Explore legislation to prosecute individuals supporting the militants. The Attorney General said that there are very few actions Iranians in this country might take which would justify prosecution. If we want to get rid of the students, there are better ways to do it than restricting their freedom of speech. The SCC agreed that this should be rejected. (C)

Prohibit Shipment of Food and Medicine. Treasury noted that the present level of shipments of food is very small. Henry Owen said he would look into the question and report back to the SCC.⁸ It was the general feeling of the SCC that food should be included in the sanctions, since we had imposed the grain embargo on the USSR. Medicine should continue to be excluded. (C)

Prohibit all Transfers of Funds from Iran to Iranians in this Country. It was noted that a cutoff of funds for the Iranian students here would force them either to leave the country or to go on welfare. Mr. Aaron noted that this would be an option if and when we should decide to break diplomatic relations. We had decided not to take that step for the time being.

⁷ Carter approved the item with a checkmark and wrote in the right margin: "for NSC."

⁸ In an April 4 memorandum, Tim Deal of the National Security Council Staff wrote to Aaron and Owen that a U.S. food embargo would work only in the long run if other grain exporting countries imposed a similar food embargo. Deal concluded that "the only effective way to use food to put pressure on Iran *now* would be a multilateral embargo combined with interdiction at sea to prevent grain ships from entering Iranian ports. The political costs of this option would obviously be extremely high." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 4/1/80-4/18/80)

_____ Agree that this step should be held in abeyance.

_____ Prepare to proceed if sanctions are invoked.⁹

Terminate Iranian Military Training Programs. Secretary Brown said that some of the military procurement people would leave if we expel the diplomats. The military students will go if we decide to act on other Iranian students. The SCC agreed. (C)

Census of Claims. Treasury noted that the inventory of claims against Iranian assets is the only part of the sanctions package which has not been widely publicized, or at least understood. That being the case, we could probably toughen it up by indicating from the start that this is a first step toward the preparation of legislation to bring claims against Iranian assets. Originally we had intended to be neutral and note that the inventory of claims could be used either to resolve the freeze or to eventually seize assets. All agreed we should indicate that this is a first step toward satisfying U.S. claims against Iranian assets.

_____ Agree¹⁰

_____ Keep it neutral as previously planned.

It was also agreed that Justice and Treasury should prepare draft legislation which could be introduced at some point in the future which would permit families of the hostages to bring claims immediately against the Iranian assets, even if no seizure of assets was ordered.

_____ Concur¹¹ _____ Other

[Omitted here is material on Libya.]

⁹ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and wrote "NSC" in the right margin.

¹⁰ Carter approved this option with a checkmark.

¹¹ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

237. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, April 3, 1980

Afternoon Report from Iran

I. *Cottam-Ghotbzadeh Conversation: (1530)* Cottam found Ghotbzadeh very depressed and reluctant to go into details on the telephone about the Revolutionary Council meeting. He said he was aware it was a horrible setback but he had not yet given up hope. He would go tomorrow morning to see the Imam to get a reversal of the ruling of the Council so that the transfer could go on as planned.

Ghotbzadeh said that at the critical moment several members of the Council backed away from their prior commitment. When Cottam pressed him as to who or why, all Ghotbzadeh could say was politics. Cottam had the impression that if Ghotbzadeh could not succeed in persuading the Imam to change his position, he would resign.

II. *Bourguet-Precht Conversation: (1600)* Bourguet had had a long conversation with Villalon who told him the Council met to consider the various assurances the U.S. had provided as well as a memo Villalon had written. All of the documentation was considered satisfactory and sufficient by the Council and everyone was in agreement for the transfer to take place on Saturday.² The Council designated Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh to go to the Imam for his final blessing. For reasons that are unclear Beheshti raised objections and Bani-Sadr hesitated to show firmness.

Bourguet said that he, Villalon and Ghotbzadeh felt that it was necessary for the U.S. to send a strong message to Bani-Sadr with a copy to Ghotbzadeh advising them, in a non-threatening way, that the U.S. would take firm measures if the transfer was not accomplished by a specific day. Bourguet suggested that we explain our efforts to understand the difficult political situation in Iran and to assist Bani-Sadr in dealing with that situation. He further suggested that we might want to list the specific measures we had in mind. Only by bringing home to Bani-Sadr our determination to move with concrete measures would we convince Bani-Sadr that we are not a "paper tiger" and that we meant what we said.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Precht.

² April 5.

238. Draft Message From the U.S. Government to Iranian President Bani-Sadr and Iranian Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh¹

Washington, April 3, 1980

Please convey the following oral message from the US Government to President Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh:

“We are gravely disappointed by the failure of the Revolutionary Council in its meeting Thursday² to proceed with the transfer of the hostages to the care and protection of your government in accordance with its own announced decision and President Bani-Sadr’s commitment that the hostages would be transferred. The American people do not understand Iran’s inability to carry out what it has said will be done.

“On April 1, we responded publicly to the President’s statement by announcing that we would defer imposing further sanctions at this time.³ In view of today’s reported reversal of that position by the Revolutionary Council, you should know that, if your government is unable to take effective steps to transfer the hostages to the care and protection of the government [by Sunday, April 6,]⁴ [within the next few days,]⁵ we will put into effect further sanctions. The specific and concrete measures we have in mind will inevitably work hardships on many Iranians.⁶

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. Secret; Sensitive. Sent via the Swiss Embassy in Tehran. Bracketed material represents alternative language. In an April 3 covering memorandum from Aaron to Carter, transmitting this draft message, Aaron pointed out that Vance wanted guidance on whether to include a specific date. Aaron offered two considerations—one, that failure to specify a date might lessen the impact of the message, and, two, that holding a date in reserve could be useful given the fluid situation in Iran. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 4/1/80–4/18/80)

² April 3. See Document 237.

³ See Document 234.

⁴ Cy wanted your decision on whether we should state a specific date Sunday, April 6, or make a more generalized deadline “in the next few days.” He initially favored the former so as to give strength to the message but was concerned by Warren Christopher’s arguments that we are depending for our information on what has transpired upon Ghotbzadeh’s version of events and that should things begin to move, we would confront a major credibility problem if we have to once again pull back from a concrete deadline. [Footnote is in the original.]

⁵ Carter wrote in the left margin: “without further delay.”

⁶ An unknown hand, presumably Carter’s, crossed out a sentence that reads: “We do not desire to take these steps, but we have no choice when your government has proved itself unable to take the step of protecting 50 hostages held in your country.”

“We are sure⁷ you understand the urgency of resolving this crisis before it deepens further.”

Ambassador Lang is requested to convey with utmost urgency the response of Ghotbzadeh and Bani-Sadr to this message.

⁷ Carter changed the word “believe” to the words “are sure.”

239. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Secretary of State Vance¹

Washington, April 4, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran Update—April 4, 1980

Today's Objective

—To determine the chances for an Iranian decision to transfer the hostages this weekend.

—To begin to prepare a second package of measures we might take against Iran if the transfer does not occur.²

Status of Initiatives

—The attached cable from Lang³ responds as best he is able to the questions we put to him on Wednesday. It also conveys the flavor of the situation prior to the Revolutionary Council's about-face late yesterday.

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update April 1980. Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted by Precht. Also sent to Christopher and Newsom.

² In an April 4 memorandum to Aaron on “Next Steps on Iran,” Sick noted burgeoning support for retaliatory measures against Iran, writing, “The hawks are flying.” He listed possible retaliatory acts that the United States could take against Iran. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 4/80)

³ Attached but not printed. The undated cable from Lang provided details of events in Tehran, with particular emphasis on the domestic political context of the events on April 1. Lang also wrote that he was afraid that the Iranian leadership would “screw up’ and procrastinate and let the opportunity slip by” for one reason or another. He also suggested that the United States had to pressure the Iranians “unrelentingly, go over the same material untiringly lest they slacken off and the matter becomes bogged down one more time.” (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update April 1980)

—In addition to the message to the Swiss last night,⁴ we asked the lawyers to press hard for action on the transfer. At this writing, we do not know whether Bourguet will join Capucci in Tehran, but the latter could also be a helpful influence with the Iranians.

—At the suggestion of the SCC, we are looking into a suspension of food aid shipments and revocation of visas for Iranians as a means of additional pressure.⁵

—We sent a cable to Rome of individual messages from the families for delivery to the hostages by Capucci should he have the opportunity to deliver them at religious services.

In a telephone conversation with Bruce Laingen this morning, he asked that we convey to you the following messages:

—He and his colleagues have the highest respect for the decision that the President took to defer sanctions on Tuesday morning.⁶ They fully understand the priority that has been placed on the welfare of the hostages. However, Laingen and the other two believe there is a limit to the flexibility that we can show and they debated among themselves strongly whether it was a good idea to let the Iranians off the hook one more time. We told Bruce we certainly appreciated his point of view and shared his outlook, but there were considerations that justified the steps we had taken. We had made plain to the Iranians that our patience was limited. He agreed with that position.

—Laingen asked, if there was a transfer, whether he should seek to join the 50 hostages. We told him that we should wait and find out what new conditions would be arranged for them. If satisfactory arrangements for them were made, we would want him to exercise a leadership role with his staff. He said he very much wished to do that.

—We told Laingen that any idea of his colleagues to attempt to escape from Tehran should be discouraged. He said he agreed with that.

—Laingen said that he had written a personal letter to Ghotbzadeh urging a further Iranian gesture after the transfer as a sign of goodwill. Laingen proposed a release of the women, the two non-official hostages, and any one requiring medical attention.

⁴ See Document 238.

⁵ See Document 236.

⁶ See Document 234.

240. Draft Message From the U.S. Government to the Iranian Government¹

Washington, April 4, 1980

I telephoned the gist of your early-morning report² personally to Secretary Vance and he asked me to send Ambassador Brunner and you his deep personal thanks for your most timely responses and your analysis. Then, I took the full text to Assistant Secretary Saunders.

Following conversations in the State Department, I want to pass on to you my reading of the situation in Washington.

The Americans remain prepared to cooperate fully in a series of reciprocal steps including the transfer of the hostages to the full custody and protection of the government and their early release. The Americans do not wish to humiliate Iran and want very much for the crisis to end in a way so that gradually they can begin to build with Iran a new relationship of mutual respect and equality. They realize that the alternative could be very harsh for Iran and could give the USSR greater opportunities in Iran, but U.S. larger interests could require the pursuit of such a course if Iran remains intransigent.

The Americans recognize that members of the Revolutionary Council in Tehran are making persistent efforts to achieve the transfer of the hostages to government custody, but the Americans are reaching a point where they doubt whether the authorities in Tehran have the ability to do what they say they will do. Because of the pressures mounting in the United States as a result of repeated inability in Tehran to act as promised, the U.S. Government will have little choice but to take decisive steps in the very near future and to press other governments to follow these steps.

At the same time, the steps which they deferred taking on April 1 could put them on the road to even graver measures. If the crisis continues to drag on, the U.S. will be obliged to take sterner measures which will have the inevitable effect of causing hardship to many

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. Secret. Sent via the Swiss ostensibly as a message from the Swiss Ambassador in Washington, Raymond Probst, to Lang. In an April 4 covering memorandum to Carter, Aaron wrote: "Attached is the draft message to the Iranians which Cy has prepared. It incorporates all my comments." On another copy of this draft, an unknown hand wrote: "cleared by pres 1900." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained 4/80]) Villalon told Precht the United States should send a firm message laying out the U.S. position and the gravity of the situation to eliminate any doubt of U.S. willingness to go forward. If the message were oral, he suggested sending it through Lang. (Memorandum of conversation, April 4; *ibid.*)

² See footnote 3, Document 239.

Iranians. In these circumstances, the Americans should have the fullest possible understanding of what is likely to happen in Tehran.

With the concurrence of my American colleagues, I believe the time has come for you to seek urgently a personal meeting with Bani-Sadr to convey the above analysis of the state of mind and decision-making in Washington. I believe it would be reasonable and important in this situation to tell Bani-Sadr that the United States must know with some precision what his plans for the transfer of the hostages are. You may state as my judgment that the Americans are on the verge of important decisions, and it is essential for them to know what Bani-Sadr is planning to do.

It is important that you try to see Bani-Sadr as early as possible Saturday³ and before the meeting of the Revolutionary Council and the students with Khomeini, which we understand is scheduled for Saturday morning.⁴

³ April 5.

⁴ Sick recalled that the Iranian Foreign Ministry asked for clarification of this message, but the United States responded that there would be no further clarifications. (Sick, *All Fall Down*, p. 338)

241. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron) to President Carter¹

Washington, April 5, 1980

SUBJECT

Sanctions on Iran (C)

I chaired an SCC for two hours Friday afternoon² to review the status of our planning and options in the event we decide to proceed with sanctions against Iran. You now have the following package:

1. *All Iranian diplomats and military officials* will be expelled in 24–48 hours (except one who will clean up).

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

² Neither a Summary of Conclusions nor Minutes of the April 4 meeting has been found.

2. The *Census of Claims* against Iran will be accompanied by *legislation to permit the families of the hostages to begin legal action against Iran and its assets in the U.S.*

3. *An economic embargo which could be total, if you decide to add food and medicine.*

4. *A cut-off in all visas for Iranians except humanitarian cases and exiles/refugees.*

In addition, we are preparing for a new approach to our allies to urge further actions on their part—including the withdrawal of their Ambassadors shortly after our actions go into effect. We also are exploring some military “gestures” (surveillance, jamming, overflights) which would underscore the seriousness of the moment. The problem is that some of them may heighten Iranian military readiness and thus conflict with other options on which you have been briefed. JCS and CIA will do a quiet analysis before Monday.³

Finally, *it is extremely important that the agencies get 24 hours’ advance notice* so that everything will proceed smoothly and we remain in full control.

The following sets forth the specifics on the diplomats’ expulsion and the decision needed on including food and medicine in the sanctions.

Expulsion of Iranian Diplomats

—From the time of notice of expulsion, the diplomats would be allowed until the departure of the last plane out of the country the following evening to leave the United States.

—All Iranian diplomats and all official Iranian representatives of purchasing missions here would be included in the order. Only one diplomat now would be allowed to remain in Washington for an additional five days to handle turnover to a Protecting Power. Military officials will be expelled, but military students and their liaison officers would be permitted to remain.

—Those diplomats wishing to apply for residence or asylum would be permitted to do so from Europe or other locations after expulsion.

³ April 7. According to a memorandum for the record prepared by Carlucci, discussion of military options took place after the April 4 SCC meeting devolved into a smaller group. Carlucci noted that while everyone agreed that a heightened Iranian state of readiness could complicate other options, they felt that such alertness would work to U.S. advantage “since when the Iranians adjust to heightened U.S. activity whatever we do would be less noticed.” Carlucci added: “I am somewhat skeptical of this.” (April 4; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R; Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 13)

—Guidance was developed for the FBI and Secret Service in the event of demonstrations, resistance or other contingencies with an emphasis on avoiding incidents which could affect the welfare of our hostages. However, if the lives of FBI agents are directly jeopardized, they can defend themselves.

Economic Sanctions

—The SCC, with the exception of the Department of State, favored making the embargo total by including food and medicine in the sanctions. The arguments in favor of a food and medicine embargo are: (1) it merely formalizes what we are already doing, since virtually nothing is currently being shipped; (2) it increases the scope of the sanctions package beyond the measures previously publicized; and (3) it demonstrates U.S. determination to terminate all trade with Iran while the hostages are being held. The Secretary of State objects to the use of food as a weapon and believes that, despite the Soviet grain embargo, this is contrary to past Presidential statements. They argue that this goes beyond the sanctions voted by the UNSC, has little practical effect since our Allies will not join us, and will be viewed negatively by other states in the region. I have been unable to reach Secretary Bergland, Dale Hathaway or anyone else in charge of the Department of Agriculture. However, I would imagine they might oppose including food.

*Your Decision*⁴

Make the embargo complete	_____
Exempt food	_____
Exempt medicine	_____

⁴ There is no indication that Carter approved any option.

242. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, April 5, 1980

2. The last cards are being played. B back from Paris just visited me (11:30) before going to see GH. B shared with me the current strategy.

2.1 A "family" meeting is to take place at the Imam's with BS, a delegation from the Revolutionary Council, and students. The results should be known soon. B has a very interesting theory: the Imam, in his hatred for the Americans, wants to humiliate them ad nauseam. This is not the case with BS. Like a Persian rug merchant, the Imam believes he can pressure the US ad infinitum the more so since he interprets American moderation as weakness. Unlike BS he does not realize the damage caused by the sanctions. Paradoxically the Imam does not seem to oppose the transfer of power, but he wants BS and the leadership to do it by themselves and prove their maturity and their authority by showing that they are directing the country effectively. The Imam would be delighted if BS shows himself to be a real President. (Here there is a paradox because he takes umbrage if (BS) becomes too popular or influential.) What is BS doing? Good will, certainly, but no courage. BS is seized by "the great fear" that if he acts the Imam by a word or a speech of which he is a master will not guarantee or not guarantee entirely the action (transfer) or the release, and in so doing ignite public opinion and cause him to lose the Presidency which he values above all. He therefore fears a stab in the back.

2.2 So what is to be done if the results of the consultation with the Imam is negative or inconclusive. B and V and GH have the following cards in reserve.

2.3 Mgr. Capucci has just arrived with B. He is, perhaps, the best person in all the world, given the context, and has perhaps the greatest capacity to persuade because he is "not involved". Capucci is religious, Palestinian favorably viewed by the students,² well viewed by the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 6, Iran 4/1/80-4/18/80. Secret. In an April 5 covering note to Carter, Aaron wrote: "Attached is the latest message from the Swiss. Cy asked that I send it up to you." There is no numeral 1 in the original.

² In his memoir, Carter suggested Capucci was acceptable to the students "because he was convicted in Israel for smuggling weapons to the Palestinians." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 505) As reported in telegram 8450 from Rome, March 30, the United States approached Capucci on March 29 about traveling to Tehran to meet with the hostages during Easter week. Capucci agreed to go not only to provide spiritual comfort, but to talk with key Iranians "in order to explore the possibilities for the release of the hostages." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Mar 1980)

Imam, he knows what it is to be a captive, but above all intelligent. He could make the Imam understand that the affair is costing Iran as much as the USA and that it is likely to cost much more. That numerous Iranians have died and are dying because of this affair (due to a lack of spare parts for helicopters, Khuzestan, medical equipment, etc.). And finally, that Iran has won enough points for this stage and Iran is now likely to lose more than it gains.

2.4 As a last resort if necessary GH will go to the Imam and use all his credit, since he is the favorite child of the Imam.

3.0 B was astonished that I have no message from Carter for BS. He left me convinced that I was going to receive one in a matter of minutes. (It's a question of a message that should indicate that the Monday³ deadline was understood as assisting BS and should not be interpreted as a sign of weakness and that the immediate implementation of sanctions will occur if the affair is not dealt with in the coming x number of hours. My version is not exact but I hope that the idea is right. Should I understand by your 180.3 that Carter had decided not to do it or the contact between B and the State Department is later and something is foreseen?⁴

4. Taylor of Reuters has called me to say that the prayers in the Mosque this morning is against the transfer.

5. I remained in touch with B and V and will go to the Presidency.

Lang

³ April 7.

⁴ Message not further identified. Carter noted in his personal diary that "Bourguet, Villalon, and Lang all recommended against any sort of further explanation of the U.S. position, or any further assurances to" the Iranians. "So we held firm consistently," he added. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 505)

243. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 5, 1980, 4:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Hector Villalon
Henry Precht

SUBJECT

Iran Hostage Crisis

Villalon said that the meeting between the Revolutionary Council and Khomeini had been postponed by Bani Sadr because the conditions were not right (presumably he was referring to the attack on the idea of transfer by the religious hardliners).

Villalon said that a committee had been formed, composed of Capucci, the Swiss Ambassador, Bourguet, Villalon, and the Papal Nuncio (presumably Noland). These men had met all afternoon and evening to try to find a solution to the crisis. They had worked with Ghotbzadeh and developed the proposition which Capucci planned to put to the students at 10 a.m. Sunday.²

Capucci had met for three hours with the students today and found that a large number of them seem to be willing to end the crisis. There was only a small element of hardliners who wanted to hold out. Villalon did not wish to discuss the committee's proposition in detail. It seemed to involve the release of all the hostages to the Revolutionary Council, while the students remained on the compound. This would be a student initiative designed to preserve face rather than eventually have themselves forced to give in by the government.

At 1500 Capucci and the other clergy would conduct their religious visit to the compound. At the same time, the Revolutionary Council would meet and would consider the work of the Capucci Committee and any communication they had from the students. Villalon assumed that the Council would end at about 1730 and a delegation would then go to see the Imam for his blessing of the final proposal. One way

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 4/1/80-4/18/80. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Precht. Villalon and Precht talked by phone. According to an attached April 5 covering memorandum from the White House Situation Room to Brzezinski, the memorandum of conversation was sent to Carter on the evening of April 5 at Aaron's request.

² April 6.

or the other, the matter of the transfer should be finally decided tomorrow.³

Villalon said that if the decision went against the transfer, the U.S. would have made a full effort and would be justified in taking whatever steps it felt appropriate against Iran. I asked Villalon if he sensed that the Iranians wanted some further clarification from us. He said that was a dead issue and that we should not make any further move to give the Iranians anything by the way of clarification or conciliatory statement. I asked whether he knew of any reaction to the message of Ambassador Probst.⁴ Villalon had no knowledge.

Finally, Villalon commented that the major obstacle had been the weakness and lack of capacity of Bani Sadr. He lacked the courage to act, or had acted ineptly throughout the recent critical days.

³ On April 6 Villalon reported to Precht that a four-man delegation composed of Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, Moinfar (an Oil Minister with good religious credentials) and an unnamed mullah, would visit Khomeini the morning of April 7. Villalon told Precht that in view of past experience, "he was not optimistic about the outcome of the meeting tomorrow." (Memorandum of conversation; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran Update 6/80)

⁴ See Document 240.

244. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, April 6, 1980

SUBJECT

NSC Meeting on Iran, April 7, 1980 (C)

There are three sets of questions which need to be addressed:

1. Should we proceed now with sanctions against Iran? If so, when should the announcement be made? (S)

2. What should be included in the text of the announcement and the communication to the allies? (U)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 4/7/80 NSC Meeting re Iran. Secret. All tabs are attached but not printed.

3. What measures of a limited military nature (if any) should we take in conjunction with the announcement, and what preparations should we take now for more stringent military activities which may become necessary later? (S)

Proceed Now With Sanctions

Barring some last-minute change in Tehran, it now appears that Bani-Sadr and his associates have been unable to achieve the kind of support within the Revolutionary Council and with Khomeini which would permit a prompt transfer of the hostages from the custody of the militants. We have postponed imposition of sanctions for a full week to give them an opportunity to make the necessary decision. All of your advisors are agreed that we have delayed as long as we reasonably can and that we must proceed with sanctions in order to sustain our credibility and in order to convince Tehran that their inability to act is costly. This view is shared by Bruce Laingen and by the French lawyers as well. (S)

The package of sanctions is ready to be announced. The timing of an announcement should take into account the need for the Department of State to notify the Iranian Embassy of the expulsion of their diplomats and for the Department of Justice to have its personnel in place to implement the order. You will wish to ask Cy and Ben Civiletti for their comments on timing. (S)

Texts of Communications

The following texts are attached and will be distributed to the participants at the NSC meeting:

Tab A—The draft text of the formal announcement which you will make. (U)

Tab B—The draft text of a message to the allies, in the form of an Aide Mémoire. (U)

Tab C—The text of an Executive Order directing revalidation of all outstanding Iranian visas. There is no difference of views on this issue, and it need not be raised at the meeting. The Executive Order amends the Order which you signed on November 26, 1979, (but which was never implemented) extending its scope to include all categories of visas.² (S)

A. *Draft Announcement.*³ There are three points of controversy in the text:

² A copy of Executive Order 12206, April 7 (see Document 246) and a signed copy of Executive Order 12172, November 26, 1979, are attached at Tab C.

³ For the official announcement, see Document 246. For the full text, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pp. 611–612.

—*Embargo on Food and Medicine*. Cy supports Option A,⁴ which would limit our embargo to those items included in the UNSC sanctions vetoed by the USSR, but excluding food and medicine. Other members of the SCC have supported an extension of the sanctions to formalize what is already a *de facto* total embargo. (S)

—*Announced Purpose of Inventory of Claims*. Cy supports Option A,⁵ which is a neutral statement, leaving all future options open. Other members of the SCC favored some indication in the statement that the inventory of claims would lay the basis for satisfying claims by the hostages and their families against the Government of Iran. Options B, C, and D⁶ provide increasingly explicit commitments to proceed with disposition of claims by the hostages and their families. Option D, which commits us to proceed with formal legislation, is opposed by State and Treasury as counterproductive, on the grounds that it highlights the likelihood of major claims by the hostages and that it may eliminate any flexibility in using the frozen Iranian assets as a negotiating lever in the final negotiations for release of the hostages. Stu Eizenstat proposed Option D as a means of underlining our commitment to use the Iranian assets to compensate the hostages and their families for the ordeal they have been through. (S)

—*“Refugees from Injustice.”* This bracketed language in the fourth numbered paragraph⁷ is opposed by Cy on the grounds that it unduly draws attention to minority groups and will work to their disadvantage by focusing Iranian attention on them. All others supported this language as entirely consonant with U.S. policy and sufficiently general to avoid damaging minority group efforts to remain inconspicuous. (S)

⁴ Paragraph 1, option A, of the April 6 “Draft Announcement of Decisions on Iran” at Tab A reads: “The Secretary of the Treasury will implement (a) fully the U.S. sanctions as approved.” Paragraph 1, option B, reads: “The Secretary of the Treasury will implement (b) a total embargo on U.S. trade with Iran going beyond the economic sanctions approved.”

⁵ Paragraph 2 of the Draft Announcement begins: “The Secretary of the Treasury will make formal inventories of the outstanding claims of American citizens and corporations against the Government of Iran and of the substantial Iranian assets frozen by my previous order.” Option A continues: “This accounting will provide the factual basis for subsequent decisions on the handling of those claims.”

⁶ Paragraph 2, Option B states: “This accounting will provide the factual basis for subsequent decisions on the handling of those claims, including those which may be made by the hostages or their families, and on the disposition of those assets.” Option C states: “This accounting will aid in designing a claims program against Iran for the hostages, their families and other U.S. claimants.” Option D states: “This accounting will aid in designing a claims program against Iran for the hostages, their families and other U.S. claimants. Legislation to facilitate processing those claims is in preparation.”

⁷ That part of paragraph 4 of the Draft Announcement at Tab A reads: “Consular officers will reissue visas or issue new visas only to qualified Iranians who require visas for humanitarian reasons [who are refugees from injustice,] or whose entry has been determined to be in our national interest.” Brackets are in the original.

B. *Draft Message to Allies*. Because of the technical nature of the message, it is more appropriate to send it as an Aide Mémoire rather than a Presidential message. The only item of controversy is the possible additional phrase in paragraph 14 indicating that we intend to go beyond the UN sanctions by embargoing food and medicine. (S)

Additional Measures of a Military Nature

Before turning to this subject, you may wish to reduce participation to the statutory membership of the NSC. (C)

There are a number of *limited military measures* which could be taken simultaneously with the imposition of economic and diplomatic sanctions which would enhance the sense of uncertainty and risk in Tehran (and with the allies) without committing us to any specific additional actions. An illustrative list of such actions is at Tab D, with a paper prepared by JCS and CIA analyzing the possible effects of such measures on Iranian military alert and possible reaction.⁸ With the exception of overflights, none of these measures would intrude on Iranian air or sea space. None is intended to do more than build credibility that we may be prepared to follow through with more stringent military measures, and thereby add urgency to the decision-making process by Iran and our allies. (S)

As we undertake a new program of pressure against Iran, we necessarily edge closer to the point where *mining of Iranian harbors* may be essential to demonstrate to Iran that continued holding of the hostages will severely damage Iran's economy. You may wish to review the status of contingency planning at this point and consider the possible circumstances and timing for such a step. (S)

Finally, you may wish to reconsider with the NSC the desirability of proceeding with a *rescue operation*. In view of the failure of diplomatic efforts to budge Khomeini, and the bleak prospect of any improvement in the internal power struggles inside Iran, this may be the only realistic means of freeing the hostages in the next six months. (S)

⁸ An undated list, "Possible Limited Military Measures," at Tab D mentions increased surveillance, spot jamming, aircraft penetration of the Persian Gulf, naval demonstrations, sonic booms, and overflights.

245. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, April 7, 1980, 9–11:30 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President	<i>The White House</i>
The Vice President	Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
<i>State</i>	Mr. David Aaron
Secretary Cyrus Vance	Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Deputy Secretary Christopher	Mr. Lloyd Cutler
<i>Defense</i>	Mr. Jody Powell
Deputy Secretary Claytor	CIA
<i>JCS</i>	Admiral Stansfield Turner
General David Jones	NSC
<i>Justice</i>	Gary Sick (Notetaker)
Attorney General Civiletti	

MINUTES

The President read the latest report of telephone contact with Bourguet in Tehran,² then opened the meeting noting that the only item on the agenda was Iran. The last week had shown a profound change in the situation. The militants had offered to let the hostages be transferred to the custody of the Government, and the Government had refused. We are close to the point where we must take forceful action. We should inform the Allies privately and then publicly that they should break diplomatic relations with Iran, and we should prepare for forceful action, including the interruption of commerce. They need to know we have a very serious situation on our hands. We have bent over backwards, we have been patient and long suffering, and we could not have been more willing to wait for responsible action by Iran. The President saw no way we could raise the level of our activity on the diplomatic or negotiating front, including the actions of the five individuals (Capucci, Noland, Lang, Villalon and Bourguet) who have formed themselves into a crisis commission in Tehran. We have an

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

² Not found. Swiss Chargé Kaiser reported that the final discussions within the Revolutionary Council took place "against the background of drastically worsening relations with Iraq, which are the actual dominating topic of the afternoon news." He also noted: "These most recent developments with Iraq, behind which is also seen the work of U.S. imperialism, leave the impression that this issue is now the priority concern." (Message from Kaiser to the Department of State, April 7; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran [Retained] 4/80)

obligation to some of our people there in Iran and we should let them know that they should come out. The President had read the list of options discussed previously by the SCC and was aware of the areas of agreement.³ His own preference was to bring the thing to a head, to ask others to join with us, and if they will not to move to take forceful action later on.

The Secretary of State noted that a draft announcement⁴ had been circulated to all participants in the meeting, and he suggested that it be made later today, possibly about 3:00 p.m., which would provide sufficient time to notify those who need to be notified, including those key congressional leaders who should be informed in advance. He noted that there had been some possible additional steps discussed by the SCC which should be reviewed in addition to those covered in the draft announcement.

The President said we are no longer involved in a negotiation with the terrorists. The obstacle now is the Government, with Khomeini as the ultimate authority of the Iranian Government.

Admiral Turner said he did not think it was that clear. Although that was a good line to take publicly—and it could be defended—it was not entirely clear that the militants would in fact have let the hostages go if ordered to do so by the Revolutionary Council.

The President said he included Khomeini in the Government. In that sense, it was not a radical departure, but the militants had for the first time stated that they would turn the hostages over. We should get it out of our minds that we are dealing directly with the terrorists. We need to expell the Iranian diplomats from this country as quickly as physically possible.

Secretary Vance said he recommended the announcement today, with the diplomats to depart by tomorrow night.

Dr. Brzezinski asked if we could enforce it.

Attorney General Civiletti said yes. The only difficulty would be if there was armed resistance.

Dr. Brzezinski said it was his view that we should confront any armed resistance with overwhelming force. It should be crushed quickly.

The Attorney General said he would argue against that approach. If there is armed resistance from the Embassy or Consulates, we should take the kind of measures which the FBI would normally take in such a situation and cut off the food, water and electricity and force them

³ See Document 236.

⁴ See Document 244.

out within 3–5 days. If we should storm the Embassy and kill a dozen or more persons, the results could be tragic and have serious consequences for the hostages in Tehran.

Dr. Brzezinski said it would be worse if a siege should develop here supported by threats from Iran to kill or harm the hostages if the siege is not lifted.

Secretary Vance said he supported the Attorney General.

The President asked what would be the best time to take action.

The Attorney General said evening would be best. Immediate surveillance of the diplomats would be established, with full escort and the Embassy would be ringed. In effect we would take custody of them, although they would be free to move within a very restricted zone. We would stay with them.

Mr. Aaron pointed out that this would not constitute an arrest. They would have the 24–36 hour period to get out of the country.

The Attorney General said that they would arrest them if they violated the terms of their restrictions or failed to depart.

Dr. Brzezinski asked what would happen to the Embassy.

The Attorney General said it would be sealed, and no one would be allowed to enter. We would hope that a third power would be appointed as Protecting Power, and then we would permit some of them to enter as necessary. We have reports that anywhere from 15 to 60 non-diplomats either reside in the Embassy or move through it frequently. Some of them are armed.

The President wondered if this was the case only in Washington.

The Attorney General said it was also true of the Consulate General in Houston.

Mr. Aaron wondered in the event of resistance whether we could seize the Embassy.

The Attorney General said that would not be legal until the order to depart had expired.

Mr. Aaron wondered if we should not break relations. Would that give us more latitude?

Dr. Brzezinski noted they could barricade themselves in the Embassy and refuse to leave.

The Attorney General said that was the worst case. It was considered unlikely so far as the diplomats themselves were concerned, but we do not know about the others.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if tear gas could not be used to rout them out.

The Attorney General said he thought so.

The President asked what short of a declaration of war would give us the necessary authority to move into the Embassy.

The Attorney General said that a situation deemed beyond the control of local forces could justify a declaration of national emergency and the sending of U.S. troops.

The President asked if the Attorney General anticipated problems in the event of an announcement this afternoon.

The Attorney General said that he thought 3:00 p.m. was about right to move. We should begin during normal business hours. Afterwards we would seal the Embassy. We would let people out, but let no one in, and we would hope the numbers inside would be reduced by attrition.

The Secretary of State wondered what would be the interaction between this action and the Iranian students who planned to march against the Shah. Where is this group likely to be between 2 and 4 o'clock?

The Attorney General said that they had a permit to march for the next three days. Between 2:00 and 4:00 they were scheduled to be in a prayer vigil. They proposed starting their parade at the Islamic Mosque and march a double circuit, ending at Lafayette Park. They had been negotiating yesterday with Police Chief Klutz, and an alternate location for the final demonstration had been agreed. They were banned from Lafayette Park. We can ban them from any location near the Iranian Embassy—as far as ten blocks if we wish. The demonstration was expected to be a group of about 200.

Dr. Brzezinski said in his view nothing would be worse than a prolonged siege. We should employ surprise and clear them out of the Embassy before they had a chance to react. Otherwise, if it drags out, the situation will work to our disadvantage and the militants in Tehran could threaten to kill the hostages.

The Secretary of State said that we could not surprise them. They were already expecting this and had shipped some documents out of the Embassy to the UN Mission.

Dr. Brzezinski said that perhaps there would be no resistance. If so that was good. But we should gain control of the facilities right away.

The Secretary of State said that in his judgment there would be no surprise.

Dr. Brzezinski said that they should not be allowed to barricade themselves in the Embassy.

Mr. Aaron noted that we have reports that the Embassy will be closed today.

Mr. Sick observed that a conversation between the Chargé, Ali Agah, and an unidentified individual yesterday evening indicated that the Embassy might be closed today and/or tomorrow in protest against President Sadat's arrival in Washington.

Mr. Cutler said the best time to move would be in the evening. The diplomats could be picked up outside the Embassy.

Mr. Aaron observed that 30 or more are reported to be living inside the Embassy.

The Vice President said he thought the evening would be the best time.

The Attorney General agreed, but added that he saw no real problem with the diplomats themselves. It was earlier agreed that we would not grant immediate asylum to any of the diplomats, but they need 24 hours at least to get out of the country. That could be from 3 o'clock today until midnight tomorrow night. He said he disagreed with Dr. Brzezinski only if there were armed resistance. He did not think it would be advisable to storm the Embassy.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if the Embassy could not be saturated with tear gas. It should be done quickly so no siege could develop.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense said he agreed with Dr. Brzezinski. A prolonged seige would be the worst possible scenario.

Mr. Jordan asked if those with weapons would not be in violation of the law.

The Attorney General said that possession of weapons within the Embassy at this time and until the deadline for departure had expired was not illegal.

The President asked what our position would be if we called the Chargé to the State Department and advised him to depart and he said he needed to go back to the Embassy to get some papers together.

The Attorney General said we would permit him to go to the Embassy. We cannot violate the Embassy premises until the expiration of the 24-hour notice. Presumably, if we broke relations and allowed only an hour to comply, we could do everything necessary. However, this would be contrary to traditional diplomatic law and practice.

The President wondered what would prevent him from going back to the Embassy and barricading himself inside.

Mr. Powell said that he was not a very gutsy individual, and it seemed less likely that he would do it than some others.

Secretary Vance said that the FBI had had experience with situations of this kind over the years. He had faith in their experience and ability to get people out of buildings.

Mr. Claytor said the FBI could starve them out, talk them out, freeze them out. But that would take 2–3 days which would give the militants the opportunity to use threats against the hostages. This situation was very different from the usual siege type situation.

Mr. Powell said he was not sure we would look inept if we cut off the Embassy utilities and if they barricaded themselves in against

the law. After two or three days we could get them out and lock them up and hold them until our own people were released. Rushing in would just get people killed, and it could make us look even more stupid.

Mr. Cutler said that killing someone would put the hostages in greater danger.

Dr. Brzezinski said that tear gas did not kill people. He could imagine being forced to close off Massachusetts Avenue for several days during an armed siege. They could have stockpiled food and drink. It could take many days to get them out. We would look ridiculous if we could not enforce the law right in our own capital. We should use tear gas in the evening, preferably on the first day rather than the second.

Mr. Powell said we should make a judgment expeditiously when the situation arises.

The President said we would not foreclose the option that the situation might develop peacefully. If we take violent steps at the start we allow them no opportunity to leave on their own. However, if there is a barricade situation, we would not reject the use of forceful actions. If they hurt our hostages, they will be hurt severely. If we hurt them at this point, we open a new likelihood that our hostages will be injured. We should do it peacefully but firmly.

Secretary Vance said that the diplomats are required to depart from Dulles.

The President asked if we would escort them to the plane.

The Attorney General said yes. We are also prepared to put an escort on board if necessary. We also have contingency military aircraft available.

The Vice President said taking action in the evening makes sense. During the day there are people in and out. There is a chance they could grab innocents and hold them. If we moved at night, the innocents would be out of the building.

Mr. Cutler said that would also avoid any possible interaction with the proposed demonstrations.

Dr. Brzezinski said it was inevitable that the demonstrators would congregate in front of the Embassy.

The President said we should prevent any assembly or demonstrations around the Embassy and Consulates. He wondered if the announcement should be postponed until 8 o'clock this evening.

Mr. Powell said there would be lots of speculation throughout the day.

The Vice President said that would also avoid the heavy evening traffic and the danger of a shooting incident.

Mr. Cutler said the problem would solve itself if it turned out that the Embassy was closed today.

Secretary Vance said that would not take care of the Consulates.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered how we know they are armed.

The Attorney General said Secret Service observations had seen armed individuals inside. Of the Consulates at Houston, San Francisco, Chicago, and New York, the highest risk appeared to be in Houston because of the substantial student population and in Chicago where the head of the office was a rabble rouser and very nearly a fanatic. Weapons have been seen only in Washington.

The President said we would come back to the timing question. He noted that the sanctions should go ahead. The question was whether they should include food and medicine.

Secretary Vance said we have taken the position all along that food would not be used as a weapon. We would not get our Allies to go along with us on a food boycott. The closer we stick to the sanctions voted in the UN the better will be our chances to get others to come along.

Mr. Cutler agreed. Most food was already effectively blocked. Our position would have more moral force if we observed the sanctions voted at the UN. An embargo would accomplish nothing except publicly making us look tougher.

Mr. Powell wondered if the Allies will help.

The President said only if they think we will interrupt commerce.

Mr. Claytor said a blockade would also interrupt food and medicine.

Mr. Aaron said that our present announcement must have an “except” clause which requires us to explain.

Secretary Vance said the answer is simply that we are imposing the sanctions voted by the UN.

Mr. Aaron said that will attract attention to the fact that no one else is imposing these sanctions.

The President said we will call on the Allies to institute these sanctions. We will first ask privately, later publicly. He preferred that we go for now with the UN sanctions. We should call on the Allies forcefully to join with us. Then . . . (?)⁵ We need to get others involved even if it aggravates them. The situation is intolerable.

⁵ As on the original. Apparently Sick did not hear Carter’s full comment.

Admiral Turner said that no embargo of food would likely have a substantial impact. Cutting off all Iranian commerce would, but otherwise they will be able to find suppliers.

The President said the primary thing is not a mutual interest by five or seven nations, but rather to let Khomeini know he faces a problem not just with us but with others as well. Because of our actions, he is not convinced. In retrospect, he did not believe we had been firm enough. We had been too equivocal. He then turned to the question of a census of claims.

Mr. Cutler said we should make it clear that we intend to satisfy claims especially of the hostages and their families out of the frozen assets and that legislation is being introduced to that end.

The Attorney General said that suits and claims are pending now and could be satisfied by attachment except that the sovereign rights immunity prevents attachment. This could be removed by statute or it could be combined with extra rights and a claims proceeding which would recognize the right of claims for reparations.

The Vice President said that the freezing of \$8 billion in Iranian assets was the one thing we have done which really hurt them. We will need to be in a position to bargain with that money for the final release of the hostages. Once it has been attached, we lose control.

Mr. Cutler said if we take ownership of the assets and establish a claims process, we are always in a position to settle on the remainder of the assets. But in the meantime we can pursue more vigorous steps.

The President asked how much money was involved.

Mr. Cutler said it was about \$6–8 billion in the U.S. and \$12 billion worldwide. We should only vest the assets held in this country, but that would be more than sufficient to cover any conceivable claims that might be made.

The President asked how soon we could have legislation.

The Attorney General said very quickly if we only wish to waive sovereign immunity. If we want to set up a claims process, that would be more complex, but there are ample precedents and it should be possible within a week to clearly define all the alternatives.

The President said we cannot bargain away the rights of the hostages.

Mr. Cutler said we never planned to give back all the frozen assets without first settling claims.

Dr. Brzezinski said he thought that we could send a message to Iran by use of the language in Option A⁶ but it would not lock us into

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 244.

a specific program. We would not wish to be faced with the need to extricate ourselves from legislation for purposes of negotiations.

The Vice President said we should keep the Congress out of this. They can vote any kind of attachment on these funds, and it would be impossible to vote against that sort of thing. They could vote half a billion to every hostage.

Mr. Cutler said the mere inventory of claims was a very modest step. It would take five years for individuals to pursue their claims through litigation.

Mr. Christopher said he was concerned that we do not know exactly where we want to go. He wondered if we wanted to go to Congress with all the hearings, etc.

Mr. Powell said Option A was not clear enough. We should say something about claims dispersal. He thought Option B⁷ was more appropriate.

Dr. Brzezinski said we could announce Option A and background the other.

Mr. Cutler said “claims are to be satisfied out of assets frozen by the previous Government order.”

The President was inclined to go for Option D.

Mr. Powell said we need to move forcefully. If necessary we can get congressional leaders down here and say what we need.

The President said we need to be able to move expeditiously if the hostages are released. We should keep any legislation honed down and specific. The legislation can be vetoed if it is too much. We can warn the Congress that special interest legislation is not acceptable. He could not see keeping the hostages and their families on tenterhooks for five years.

Dr. Brzezinski said this would make it more difficult to negotiate the final release.

Secretary Vance said that Option C would aid in designing a claims program.

The President said we would still have to draft legislation.

Mr. Powell said it would be known within 24 hours of the time we started.

Mr. Cutler said that the Congress will draft it if we do not.

The President said he could see no problem with drafting legislation.

⁷ For an explanation of Options B, C, and D, see footnote 6, Document 244.

The Attorney General said there was only a political problem. Should we, for example, put in reparations of \$1,000 per day for each hostage held?

Mr. Cutler said he could see no problem. There was plenty of money to cover any foreseeable claims. If there were insufficient funds, that would be different.

The President said that since we must prepare legislation, we should go ahead. He thought that if we were perceived as acting forcefully for a change, that could keep Congress under control.

Mr. Jordan said he would hate to see us have to change legislation two months from now to negotiate a solution.

The President said the problems are going to be there anyway. We may face a struggle with Congress. He would prefer to let the courts handle this expeditiously. He was not a lawyer, but in the few weeks after the hostages are released—or killed—we should have a quick response.

Mr. Aaron noted that the President had earlier indicated a desire to raise with the NSC the proposal of stopping all financial transfers between Iran and the U.S. The main effect of this would be to cut off funds to the Iranian students in the country. Many would go on welfare. Others would probably leave. The SCC had decided that if we wished to get rid of the students, we should simply throw them out rather than use the financial weapon. It would be cleaner. This action was very close to a break in diplomatic relations.

The President agreed that this was probably not the way to go. He did want to discuss the possibility of a break in relations, however.

Mr. Claytor briefed the President on the number of Iranian military students in the country.

Secretary Vance asked what excuse we had to keep 500 military students in this country under these circumstances.

Dr. Brzezinski said that if they were not sympathetic to the Khomeini regime, they should be allowed to stay.

The President said we could offer them asylum if they want to stay.

Mr. Claytor said that the U.S. military would prefer to send them home if the diplomats go. A number of midshipmen are in U.S. colleges just like civilian students. They are paid through Iranian banks.

The President wondered what proportion of these Iranian students are supported by the Government.

Mr. Claytor said only 500 are actually paid by the Government of Iran.

The President said that the other thousands are supported by their families. He thought we should permit them (military students) to stay

if they ask for asylum, otherwise he thought they should go home. We should have a viable option to break diplomatic relations.

Secretary Vance said we should do the expulsion first. If we then get the Allies to join us, we could all break relations at once. He thought, however, that the Allies probably will not break relations. They may withdraw all their people.

Dr. Brzezinski said it would be better if we did it now in a clean break.

Secretary Vance said that we previously told the Allies we would consider that in mid-May.

Dr. Brzezinski said that was when we were talking about a transfer first, with the break in relations to come if they did not follow through with a total release by mid-May. That situation is now changed since they have not agreed to a transfer of the hostages.

The President said he could not see what significance it should have for the Allies if we decide to break relations.

Dr. Brzezinski said that in view of the political situation, he thought a clean break in relations made a better package.

Secretary Vance said it could be argued, however, weakly, that a break in relations would change the diplomatic status of our hostages.

The President agreed that was a weak argument in view of the lack of respect they had shown for diplomatic immunity.

Mr. Claytor asked what effect a break in relations would have on student visas.

The Attorney General said that a break in relations would immediately affect how quickly you could act in cancelling A-2 visas, but it would not affect at all how quickly you could expel students. They could still delay through the courts.

The President said he did not think we should try to expel students.

Dr. Brzezinski said the Allies would probably not break relations. They have too much at stake. If we take the step several weeks from now, it will look like a weak and empty gesture. He failed to see why we should not do it now. The package we are considering is marginal. We should not dribble it out.

The President said it would forego an Iranian break with us which would make them seem to be more forceful than us. Our break should put a greater sense of responsibility on our Allies. We would be saying we were through with Iran, that we were washing our hands of it. Giscard, Schmidt, Thatcher, and others would see the ball was out of our hands and the responsibility was more their own. We should ask the Allies to respect the UN sanctions and let Iran know that they will break relations later if the problem is not solved. Our break in relations should not shock even our most severe critics.

Mr. Claytor wondered about the effect on the U.S. priests and others who had been going back and forth to Tehran.

Secretary Vance said that in terms of international practice, it would make no difference. However, psychologically it would make them less willing to continue their efforts.

Mr. Powell said the psychological effect of a break in relations would be to send a signal that this is the first step. The average citizen would see this as the possible prior step to some kind of military action.

The Vice President said that if they break first, we will look weak and reactive. He would like to get ourselves out of the position of being seen as trying to get the Allies always to go along.

Mr. Powell said it was important for us to signal that while we want the support of our Allies, we intend to do what we have to do. Maybe this is the most encouraging thing we could say to the Allies.

Dr. Brzezinski said it would also tell the Iranians that we have exhausted all steps available to us. He recommended that we say that explicitly and privately to the Iranians. We should also indicate that we will wait 2-3 more weeks, then take more severe action. They may threaten the lives of the hostages. It is necessary for the views of Khomeini, the Revolutionary Council, the President and the students to coalesce.

Mr. Christopher said he thought we should go ahead with the break in relations. Otherwise we are left with the problem of trying to explain the metaphysics of why this is different from a break in relations.

The President asked for views, then noted that the group was unanimous in their views, "Just like the Revolutionary Council." He did not support cutting off financial support for the students, but we should cut off all visas. With regard to the "refugees from injustice," phrase in the announcement, he thought that our interpretation of exceptions should be very narrow. We should not let them into the country. If they are truly escaping from persecution, that is acceptable.

Mr. Aaron suggested changing the wording to say that Consular officers will not let them in unless there are compelling reasons.

The President added unless there are compelling and *proven* reasons. The impression is that we have not done a damned thing. Just as the expulsion of 65 diplomats who then "vanished."

The Attorney General said that nearly 1,400 Iranian students have left and we are pretty certain of that although we do not have a signed piece of paper to prove it in each case.

The President said that we are making tough statements, then when the evidence dribbles in . . .

Dr. Brzezinski suggested "compelling and convincing reasons . . ."

The President said if people are truly suffering, yes they should be let in. But if they are living comfortably in Europe or elsewhere, let them stay there. The guidance needs to be rewritten.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that we needed to discuss employment of measures beyond those adopted to date.

Mr. Christopher asked about timing of the announcement.

The President said he hoped he was not going to be informed that the Revolutionary Council was meeting to reconsider the whole issue.

Mr. Christopher said he would not be that brave. He did want to report that the Iranian Embassy was indeed closed today. Since the danger of a confrontation was primarily a Washington problem, he thought that an announcement as soon as possible after the meeting would be desirable.

The President said that we should forbid any demonstrations to go near the Embassy.

The Attorney General said they needed a little time to mobilize. Not just an hour or so.

Mr. Aaron said the demonstrators were probably assembling now.

The President said that we should notify the Allies in strict and cogent terms that the situation is intolerable and that we will take more forceful action unless the hostages are released. We should call on them to impose sanctions, break diplomatic relations, and use all available means to release the hostages. Our words should not be equivocal. This must not keep dragging on.

Admiral Turner noted one phrase in Khomeini's statement was noteworthy.

Dr. Brzezinski said that Khomeini had mentioned visitation rights.⁸

Admiral Turner said that the hostages' wives would wonder whether we will try to get someone in. We could also use visits to get more information about who is where.

Mr. Powell wondered if we should look to the UN for that.

The President said he did not attach too much significance to that statement. He had read it and it was equivocal.

Mr. Christopher said that the latest message from Ambassador Lang in Tehran said that the militants made Capucci promise not to reveal how many hostages he had seen and that he was to come back

⁸ In a statement made on April 7, prior to the announcement of U.S. sanctions (see Document 246), Khomeini reiterated that the hostages would remain in the hands of the militant students until Parliament met and determined their fate. He noted that the "condition of the hostages and their place is good from every point of view." (William Branigan, "Khomeini Bars Hostage Transfer Until Parliament Decides Issue," *Washington Post*, April 8, 1980, p. A1)

tomorrow for something important. This suggests a need to try and see where all the hostages are located.

The President said that, on timing, it would be at 3:00 and he would make an announcement.

Mr. Cutler said the news from Tehran suggested that the militants cannot account for all 50 hostages. Perhaps we should mention that.

The President said he would be queasy about acknowledging that there might be 50. The militants could use that as an excuse to get rid of some of them.

Secretary Vance agreed, noting we should be aware of the reaction of the hostages' families.

(At that point, 10:36 a.m., the meeting was reduced to the statutory membership of the NSC.)

At 10:37, the NSC reduced itself to its statutory membership. The members at that point were: The President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dr. Brzezinski and David Aaron.

The President said that he was really quite disappointed in recent developments. Bani-Sadr is apparently too weak and lacks the courage to act. The Secretary of State agreed with him.

The President said that his own assessment was that we are embarked, finally and after great caution, on a procedure which he—he was interrupted at that point by Hamilton Jordan who asked about Congressional notification. Should the Congressional leaders be brought down to the White House? The Secretary of State pointed out that the Congress was not in session and the leaders would not be around. The President concluded that if we get a draft of the statement before noon, we can notify the key Congressional Leaders.

The President then continued his earlier thought. We have been adequately reticent. In retrospect, we may have delayed taking action for too long, although, at the time, it seemed the better course of action. Now, we need to consider additional steps. We need to force the Allies to help. If they will not, they must know that we will be taking more forceful action. The President said he thought that what we are going to announce today will not result in the freeing of the hostages. But he still believed that knowledge on the part of the Iranian officials, including such figures as Beheshti, that Iran is suffering and is increasingly isolated is a necessary step in getting the hostages released. He did not believe that we would get the help of Bani-Sadr if the action he must take to free the hostages is unpopular. Bani-Sadr is hanging by his fingernails already.

Turning to the military options, the President said that his inclination for the last few months has been the mining option. He did not

believe that stopping ships at sea in a blockade would be operationally sustainable. Moreover, he thought it would put pressure on us from our Allies to desist, but if we simply go forward and mine the harbors, we could maintain the mining even if they were occasionally swept.

Mining would have the virtue of being an accomplished fact and, moreover, could be done without loss of life which the President thought is an important factor for safeguarding the lives of the hostages. At the same time, we would have to tell the Iranians that if the hostages are hurt, then military action would be swift and would be severe.

The President said that we have to think of counteractions to Iranian threats against the hostages, but the most important thing is to convince the Allies that we are going to take these steps rather than the Iranians.

Turning to the possibility of a rescue, the President said he had a bad feeling about the rescue operation. He thought that it would be extremely difficult to stay undetected and in Iran for 24 hours. He says that it sends shivers down his spine.

He wondered whether we had explored the other options such as paratroopers and moving the carriers further into the Gulf so that the helicopters could move in in one operation to pick up the hostages. General Jones said yes, that we had looked at those options and discarded them as being impractical. General Jones said that their confidence in the rescue operation has gone up even since the briefing at Camp David.⁹

The President asked why.

The Chairman said there were two reasons. First, the two individuals which we agreed would be infiltrated into Iran have been there and have looked around. They say it is perfectly safe to wander about the streets. The abnormal has become the normal. They were never threatened nor were they watched. They surveilled the Foreign Ministry, and they even went into the foyer. They went in routinely and got directions from one of the militant guards. Their conclusion is that the situation is so relaxed and so fluid that the operation could be conducted with low risk of detection.

The Chairman said the other reason was that the Otter mission was very successful.¹⁰ Moreover, they were looking at a modification of the plan which would involve caching fuel out in the middle of nowhere. He said, under those circumstances, we would still have to hide the helicopters in the shed for a day, but the caching of fuel would mean that the operation would be significantly less complicated.

⁹ See Document 217.

¹⁰ See footnote 6, Document 217.

He said a C-141 could drop the fuel 12 miles south of the area where the Otter explored. With fuel there ahead of time; the helicopters can depart from the carriers with the Delta team on board and, if the mission must be aborted, they can return to the carriers.

The Chairman said that our principal uncertainty is still whether the hostages are in the Embassy compound. He thought we may need to take some additional risks in order to get a better picture of that situation.

Turning to the schedule, he said the 17th is a possible date for conducting the rescue, but the 24th would be preferable. He would like to ask the NSC to look at the possibility of a decision to cache the fuel before that date. The operation would be conducted as follows: We would take in a C-141, drop four people and a little fuel and a jeep with some radios. They would go into the foothills, surveil the area to find a place to cache the fuel and to land an airplane, if that proved to be the desirable way to supply the fuel. If they run into trouble, they would come out either with an Otter, with a helicopter, or it is possible to literally snatch them from the ground with a moving C-130. However, the area was totally barren and appeared as though no human being had set foot on it for centuries.

The next night, three C-130s would come, and more people would be brought into the foothills. They would then continue the execution of the mission on into Tehran, or they would be pulled out and we would stay in a holding pattern.

With this scenario, we would still have the 24-hour waiting period around Tehran, but he did not believe that the risk of exposure is great at that point.

The President asked what would be visible during the day of waiting.

The Chairman answered that there would be no airplanes; there would be six helicopters, outside, up in these barren hills covered by camouflage. There would be 100 people waiting in the warehouse, which is located 12 miles from Tehran.

The Director of Central Intelligence said that the principal advantage of this is that there would be no more C-130s flying across Saudi Arabia the first night. General Jones said the seizure and holding of Nain has been eliminated and the overflight of Saudi Arabia has been reduced to only the second day when there would be no tip-off problem. Admiral Turner stressed that under this approach, the troops would come out from the carriers on the helicopters and not on a C-130.

The Chairman said that they were about two days away from completing planning on the fuel-caching operation. Once that is completed, he would then like to ask that we consider the possibility of

caching the fuel. At the same time, we are looking at the place where the Otter landed to see if that operation could be simplified. He then went on to describe the Otter landing—the fact that they had encountered three trucks, but concluding that it was a much simpler, easier operation than had been anticipated.

Admiral Turner said that one of the members of the team with the Otter reported that he was on the road and could not see the Otter which had landed 100 yards away. He said that the Major who conducted the operation was confident that we could get away with it. He said that we would have to stop traffic on the road during the actual operation, but they had been successful in laying out an airstrip for the C-130s. However, he thought the option of caching the fuel and using only helicopters was a much better option because it avoided the C-130 overflights of Saudi Arabia.

The Chairman continued by saying that we will worry most about any tip-off during the 24-hour waiting period. If we got such a tip-off, we could just go in after our people or lift ourselves out to an isolated area where we could once again recover them with the C-130s.

He said he did not want to be optimistic, but if our planning looks good and our training demonstrates that the operation could be conducted, he would like to come back and seek a decision on the possibility of caching the fuel. The President asked how soon we could cache the fuel? The Chairman said in about a week, but we would like to aim for the 24th as a rescue date.

Dr. Brzezinski asked, if we are inclined to do this, what would be the actions we would take afterwards? Americans might be seized. He thought we would have to threaten severe reprisals if any remaining Americans in Tehran were harmed. Dr. Brzezinski also thought that we need a post-failure plan. Again, a massive retribution would be required if we wound up with a large number of our people killed or captured. Failure, he added, would have massive international consequences.

The Chairman said that they believe the possibility of a disastrous outcome is probably small, primarily because we are building in fail-safe points along the way. There is a much higher probability, however, that we would have to pull out without having conducted the rescue.

Dr. Brzezinski said that if we are inclined to do this, then we do not want to go ahead with mining or the military threats. We want the vigilance of the Iranians to remain at a low point.

The Vice President asked the Chairman what his judgment was of the likelihood of being detected on a scale of 0–100. The Chairman replied that it was well above 50%. The Vice President asked, if we were detected, what is the likelihood that we could get out? The Chair-

man said he would put that at 80%. He said the place is so relaxed, so without authority, so without leadership, so without organization, that he felt the likelihood of interception was small.

Dr. Brzezinski said the political advantage lies with the rescue over a mining option. Mining would drive the Iranians towards the Soviets. Rescue would not, unless it failed in which case retribution and retaliation become necessary.

Secretary Vance said that mining also increased the likelihood of the hostages being killed. He was concerned, moreover, about the effect in the Middle East generally. He thought there was a likelihood of a strong reaction on the part of the Middle East countries to a mining operation. Finally, he agreed it would push the Iranians toward the Soviet Union. He felt these were substantially negative considerations to be weighed when deciding on the mining option.

The President said the blockade had the same disadvantages. The Secretary of State agreed and thought that a blockade was even more complicated. Dr. Brzezinski said that a rescue was politically more desirable than mining, but considerably riskier.

The President said that what sticks in his mind is the bloodshed, the deaths. He said we cannot do it without deaths.

The Chairman commented that the principal casualties would be Iranians and not Americans, with the exception of those who may be down in the vaults and being closely guarded in the basements of some of the buildings in the Embassy compound. He thought the operation at the Foreign Ministry would not be too difficult.

Dr. Brzezinski said there was no way of avoiding the fatalities, including Americans. Indeed, we have had reports that some of the militants would try to kill the Americans even if Khomeini had ordered them released.

Admiral Turner thought the probability of Americans being killed was less than that we might not be able to find them all. He has been examining reports concerning the location of the hostages, but it was his conclusion that, with the recent arrival of the visitors, all the Americans had been moved back into the compound; however, he did not have hard evidence to that effect. But even if they are all there, the Delta force has to go through five buildings and count 50 heads, and they have to do this running around in the dark; therefore, under those circumstances, it is likely they would leave some behind.

Admiral Turner went on to say that surprise is the *sine qua non* of a successful operation. He thought there were elements of possible prior detection in the actions that would be announced this afternoon. He said these actions will increase the alert of the Iranians. The longer we wait: the more tense things become, and the more likely the possibil-

ity of detection. He said, at the moment, surveillance is down, but as pressure is applied, the Iranians will go back to a more vigilant stance.

The President said that we could have some diplomatic subterfuge. Admiral Turner suggested, for example, that we gear up another action by Waldheim.

The Chairman said that mining would not adversely impact on a rescue unless, as a result of the mining, the Iranians did something with the hostages that would reduce our capacity to free them. Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we would want to save mining as a post-rescue option to deter subsequent actions against Americans left in Tehran. The Chairman concluded by saying that we should use the threat to work on a rescue operation, and come back in several days for a decision on whether to proceed with a fuel caching operation.

The President said we cannot make idle threats. We cannot sit here three or four weeks from now still wondering what we are going to do. On the other hand, he was still not inclined to do the rescue until the hostages' lives were in danger. He said there is no question but what we will kill some of them. On the other hand, we cannot foreclose all our options. He noted the Secretary of State was against mining and he, himself, was against the rescue. There seemed to be nothing we could do.

Dr. Brzezinski said we could tell the Allies that we would take more forceful action by mid-May and then, if necessary, we could go earlier with the rescue operation. The President emphasized once again that he would not go for a rescue until the lives of the hostages were threatened. Dr. Brzezinski pointed out that we might get that reaction with the break in the relations we were announcing today. Admiral Turner added that the trouble with that criterion is that if the hostages are threatened, the possibility of a rescue drops.

The President said he saw no objection to caching the fuel. The Chairman pointed out that we would have a lot of people on the ground during the operation. He said it was a fairly large operation. However, if we were to get away with it, we would gain confidence that we could also get away with a rescue undetected. He concluded by saying that if we are not going to go after the hostages until they are threatened, then he thought that mining was a reasonable alternative.

The President discounted that mining would drive the Iranians into the arms of the Soviets.

Dr. Brzezinski said that we should send a message to the Iranians giving them a deadline by which time we would take an action such as mining. The President asked to whom we would send the message. Dr. Brzezinski indicated that we could send it to Khomeini. He felt that the history of his behavior indicated that he was subject to pressure and threats.

The Director of Central Intelligence said that we would be asking Khomeini to back off his current and most recent statement which was quite categoric and firm. The President said that he could always finesse the problem by constituting the Parliament. Admiral Turner pointed out that they have not gotten their elections completed for that purpose yet.

The President asked the Secretary of State what options he saw. Secretary Vance replied that he preferred a rescue over mining although he said there would be substantial loss of life.

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we move forward on a more flexible program. We could tell Khomeini that by May 15 we would undertake military action. We could tell the Allies that unless they pressure Iran we would be taking more severe action. We could, at the same time, authorize the caching of the fuel and then, by the third or fourth week in April, we could make up our mind which route we wish to go.

The President said he thought setting a deadline in our messages to the Iranians is ill-advised. It would put their nation on alert. Dr. Brzezinski pointed out that this would not affect the mining option, but the President added it would affect the rescue.

In reply, Dr. Brzezinski said we could nonetheless go earlier on the rescue, before the deadline, in fact: we could begin by setting June 1 as the deadline. Dr. Brzezinski then asked what about the daylight problem.

The Chairman said that there were two problems. First, the nights were growing shorter, thus reducing the time we have for operations and forcing us to consider a three-day operation. Second, by mid-May, the temperature will have increased to the point that it will be difficult to get the helicopters over the mountains fully loaded with the Delta team. Thus, we may have to consider the use of even more helicopters and more prepositioned fuel.

The President asked why the fuel cannot go into the rendezvous zone on the same night that the helicopters go in.

The Chairman replied that it is a possibility and, indeed, is one of our options. However, we then have a large number of C-130s and refueling aircraft going over Saudi Arabia in daylight of the first day of the operation.

The President asked at what point the helicopters needed to be refueled. The Chairman replied that the helicopters only have the range to get half-way to Tehran. The President asked whether they needed to refuel on the first night. The Chairman replied, "yes"; they would enter Iran on the first night, get refueled and then go on to Tehran.

The Chairman went on to explain that they are also exploring the possibility of having the C-130 tankers come out of Diego Garcia, but this required a lot of C-141 tankers as well.

Returning to the question of the shrinking nighttime, the Chairman said that, as the nights grow shorter, they would fly the helicopters in only a few hundred miles to a point where they could still return to the carriers should they be discovered. They would wait the night and then go on the second night to the point where they would pick up their fuel.

The President asked how much fuel was involved. The Chairman replied, "9,000 gallons."

Dr. Brzezinski asked about the containers for the fuel. The Chairman explained that if we drop in the fuel, they will use blivits. These are essentially large tires containing 400 gallons of fuel each that can be rolled along the ground to a hiding place. However, if they land the C-130s, there is fuel inside of them, and the helicopters simply come right up next to the C-130s and are refueled. In this option, three C-130's are used. The helicopters, after being refueled, go and hide in the hills outside of Tehran. The problem is that this requires overflight of Saudi Arabia during daylight hours which might tip off the Iranians somehow that an operation was under way. Therefore, we are looking at the combination of C-130s and C-141s refueling from Diego Garcia.

The Chairman concluded by saying that, in three or four days, we will have our analysis completed of these various alternatives, particularly whether the caching idea looks good. If we do not proceed with the operation soon, or if the repositioning of fuel does not turn out to be a desirable option, we can in a few weeks send in the Otter to look for another landing site away from the road.

Mr. Aaron asked why we couldn't have another Otter operation right away. The Chairman replied that we need good moonlight for the Otter operation. Admiral Turner added that the pilot found that he could see much better than he thought he would be able to with the night-vision devices that are associated with the Otter.

Dr. Brzezinski asked how much leadtime would be necessary to place the fuel if we should decide today to go forward with that.

The Chairman asked if he could approach the problem from the other end. If we were to go forward with the rescue, the Chiefs would recommend aiming for the 24th of April. While we could get it there within a week of any decision to go, our plans would call for putting it in the night before and then go right on with the rest of the operation. Alternatively, if we wanted to test our capacity to carry out this activity surreptitiously, we could put it in three or four days ahead of time. In that circumstance, they would camouflage and hide the fuel, and we would pull the men out. Dr. Brzezinski asked, that if they just went forward with the operation, what would happen to the men? The Chairman explained that the men who would do the hiding of the fuel

and all the ground operations are part of the Delta team. They would simply continue on into Tehran as part of the activity there.

Dr. Brzezinski thought that trying this operation might be worthwhile so that we could see whether the risks proved to be as great as one thought. The President added that conducting a prepositioning of fuel operation would increase the risk of detection, but if successful, it would increase our confidence in being able to conduct the overall operation. The Chairman explained that a large number of planes over Saudi Arabia in the daytime might provide a tip-off to the Iranians that an operation was under way. Dr. Brzezinski added that the Israelis might well know of it, and they could be penetrated by the Soviets.

The Chairman said that, because our target date is the 24th, they would like to come back to the National Security Council in five or six days on a decision as to whether to cache the fuel. Admiral Turner asked how many C-130s were involved. The Chairman explained that there would be three. He said that we would come out of Diego Garcia the first night, and the second night we would fly over Saudi Arabia. The President asked whether it would be better to come out of Diego Garcia than Egypt. The Chairman replied, yes.

Dr. Brzezinski asked, that if we were aiming for the 24th, when would the Delta team have to leave the the United States. The Chairman replied, the 18th or 19th.

The President asked, how far do we usually put the carriers up into the Gulf? The Chairman said that we come as close as 60 nautical miles from the Straits of Hormuz, but we are normally operating farther away.

Mr. Aaron asked whether the British would be notified of our operations out of Diego Garcia. The Chairman replied that we could figure out a way to operate so that the British would not know what we were up to.

The President asked if there were any further observations. Admiral Turner said that he thought it was time to intensify our political action operations in Iran. [4 lines not declassified] Admiral Turner felt that, in the long run, [less than 1 line not declassified] neither Khomeini nor Bani-Sadr is going to be viable and will be replaced at some point. [1½ lines not declassified]

Admiral Turner also noted that we had been polite during this period of negotiations in the material broadcast [less than 1 line not declassified]. He would now like to be more strident.

The President replied that we will not prevent any group from making whatever moves they may make—that we couldn't do so in any event. The Secretary of State asked whether the groups would then expect money if we gave them such a signal. [1½ lines not declassified]

This portion of the meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m.

246. Editorial Note

Speaking from the White House Briefing Room at 3:10 p.m. on April 7, 1980, President Jimmy Carter charged the Ayatollah Khomeini with full responsibility for not placing the hostages under Iranian Government control and announced that the United States was breaking diplomatic relations with Iran. Carter simultaneously imposed several measures against Iran. First, he ordered the Secretary of the Treasury to put into effect official economic sanctions prohibiting exports from the United States to Iran in accordance with the sanctions approved by 10 members of the UN Security Council on January 13 but vetoed by the Soviet Union. (See Document 147.) He expected the shipment of food and medicine to be minimal or nonexistent. Second, he stated that Iran's assets would be formally inventoried as would be the outstanding claims of U.S. citizens and corporations. This was to facilitate the processing and payment of these claims. Carter also promised to initiate legislation in Congress for claims against Iran. Third, Carter announced a strict enforcement of visa issuance, including the invalidation of all visas currently issued to Iranian citizens for future entry into the United States, the non-reinstatement of current visas, and new visas only for "compelling and proven humanitarian reasons."

In his concluding remarks, Carter said that the United States had "acted at all times with exceptional patience and restraint in this crisis," had supported Secretary General Waldheim's efforts, and would continue to consult with its allies and other friendly governments on these steps, and "on additional measures which may be required." Carter also stated that "the steps I have ordered today are those that are necessary now. Other action may become necessary if these steps do not produce the prompt release of the hostages." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 611–612)

Carter's instructions to the Department of State for breaking relations, the text of Executive Order 12205 for economic sanctions, his message to Congress reporting on U.S. actions, and the text of Executive Order 12206 on visas are *ibid.*, pages 612–615. U.S. allies were informed of these developments in telegram 91816, April 8. They were asked to withdraw their Ambassadors as a sign of solidarity, to think of a complete break in relations, and to adhere to the economic sanctions. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800175–0062) An undated paper prepared in the Department of State, entitled "European Reaction to Our Request on Iran," listed the responses of U.S. allies (including Canada and the EC Commission) to telegram 91816. As reported in this paper, the EC–9 Ambassadors met with Bani-Sadr on April 12 to demand the release of the hostages, their respective governments agreed to consider further steps, and the modalities of

economic sanctions would be discussed at an upcoming meeting. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Group Demarches)

The Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Henry Precht, called in Iranian Ambassador Ali Agah to tell him all Iranian diplomats would have to leave the country immediately. Agah angrily told Precht that the hostages were well cared for and were under the complete control of the Iranian government. Precht responded: "Bullshit!" As Carter later recalled in an April 8 diary entry, he congratulated Precht in a note that reads: "One of the elements of good diplomatic language was to be concise and accurate and clear, and his reply to the Iranians proved that he was a master of this technique." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pages 505–506)

At 2 p.m. that afternoon in Tehran (5:30 a.m. EST) and thus prior to Carter's announcement, Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, Swiss Ambassador Erik Lang, lawyers Christian Bourguet and Hector Villalon, and Archbishop Hilarion Capucci had lunch. According to Lang, "it was a sad and frustrating luncheon because we realized that the inevitable was about to happen." Lang reported that they had "engaged in one last brainstorming session, the only card remaining to be played being a visit by Capucci to the Imam." They held out little hope. When Lang left the lunch, Ghotbzadeh thanked him for his services. Lang said he was prepared to continue working but, if so, it "will be under much more difficult conditions." Ghotbzadeh answered: "I know that, and I appreciate it." (Cable from Lang to the Department of State, April 7, and cable from Kaiser to the Department of State, April 7; Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 2)

247. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 9, 1980, 4:30–4:40 p.m.

SUBJECT

The President's Telephone Conversation with Giscard d'Estaing

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the French Republic

The President: It is good to hear from you.

Giscard: Hello, how are you? I am calling you because I got your message on the hostages in Iran.²

President Carter: Yes.

Giscard: I wanted to tell you what we are doing these days.

President Carter: Good.

Giscard: There is a meeting tomorrow morning in Lisbon of the European Foreign Ministers. And what we expect is that they will agree on a joint statement on that day from the EC governments.

Carter: Right.

Giscard: We would condemn the Iranian Government action concerning the hostages; say again that we support Waldheim's action and that we expect positive action from the Iranian Government. We would condemn the detention of the hostages and instruct the ambassadors of the Nine to make a joint protest to the Iranians asking why the release of the hostages has been delayed. We will consider the Iranian Government answer and then take a joint position. The EC statement will probably be released tomorrow morning.³ Do you hear me?

Carter: Yes, I hear you fine.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 1. Secret.

² Presumably a reference to telegram 91816. See Document 246.

³ The April 10 communiqué issued by the EC-9 Foreign Ministers in Lisbon reaffirmed their commitment to universal respect for human rights and condemned the use of violence or terrorism as an instrument of policy. It also condemned the violation of these principles in Iran and appealed "urgently" to the Iranian authorities to liberate the U.S. hostages. (Telegram 2773 from Lisbon, April 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800180-0023) The EC-9 also agreed to send a démarche to Bani-Sadr, and to subsequently formulate a joint position on further action regarding Iran after results of the démarche were known. (Telegram 2771 from Lisbon, April 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800179-1244) The EC-9 démarche and meeting with Bani-Sadr are reported in telegram 9749 from Rome, April 11. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800184-0355)

Giscard: Yes, and then either we have a very negative answer from Iran which I think is probable. And then we have to decide what to do. I am just mentioning that I suspect that we will probably have to act on the diplomatic aspect (sic).

Carter: Yes.

Giscard: If on the other hand there is an indication of delay by Iran, then we can resort to take specific actions.

Carter: Allright, I understand. This is good information for me, Valery. I think you understand the difficult position we're in.

Giscard: Yes, I understand very well. Of course we must not only work to release the hostages, but also consider the impact of our actions on Iran.

Carter: Absolutely.

Giscard: We must consider both.

Carter: Yes, I understand that.

Giscard: This is for your personal information and the statement will not say that we are proposing this.

Carter: I understand.

Giscard: But it will certainly be a firm and strong statement.

Carter: Valery, let me ask you to do one other thing for me which I think you already understand. We have had so many promises from them—either outright lies or failure to do what they say they will do. The only thing I would like to ask you all to do is not to let them equivocate and delay and delay and delay, as they have with us for the past five months. That's their character and even if Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh make a flat, absolute promise, they then refer it to the Revolutionary Council. They insist upon a unanimous vote and in the last few days they have had all the Council members except two who approved the transfer of the hostages. Under those circumstances they referred it to Khomeini, who then says it must be a unanimous decision. I know you called me just for information purposes, but I think if you all could try to prevent that sort of deliberate postponement or delay in action, it would really be helpful.

Giscard: Yes. We will be very clear and precise about it. It will look like the European countries acting on their own. If the answer is negative, then we will take a decision at once.

Carter: That's good. We want to avoid taking military action. And, I think we have a few days that we can wait, as you know, before we take any stronger action than we have taken. I think the outcome might very well be determined by how forceful you all act together. Well, I am very grateful to you for this information.

Giscard: One more point, Jimmy. We will also contact the Iraqis tomorrow. They can have also indirect pressure on Iran.

Carter: Yes. I think that's true. Good luck and keep me informed if you will. Thank you Valery, very much.

248. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, April 10, 1980

SUBJECT

Getting the Hostages Free

The steps announced on Monday² bought us some time and set a new process in motion. We need to think now about what we will do with the time we have gained and how we manage the coercive process. (S)

Having taken these initial steps, we must be prepared to back them up or else risk a further loss of credibility. Iran does not believe that we will use force. The measures announced Monday have raised some doubts in their mind, but those doubts will soon be put to rest unless followed by additional measures. (S)

Gradual escalation makes sense only if it is part of a strategy which has some promise of freeing the hostages. In my view there are two strategies available to us which could succeed:

1. A graduated application of force designed to persuade the Ayatollah and his followers that the continued holding of the hostages is self-defeating because it endangers Iran's well-being.
2. A rescue operation which deprives the Ayatollah of his bargaining leverage and punctures his aura of invincibility. (TS)

Both strategies entail significant risks and both are clouded by uncertainties. The following is an effort to examine systematically the risks and prospects. (U)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Rescue Mission 11/79–7/80. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum. This was originally written as an April 8 memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, which Brzezinski asked Sick to rewrite as a memorandum to the President. (Ibid.)

² April 7. See Document 246.

Graduated Pressure

It is now clear that the diplomatic option is closed. The hostages are going to be held at least until the Majlis convenes in June, and the prospects that a new Parliament dominated by the clerics will vote to release them on terms even marginally acceptable to us are very remote. In short, unless something is done to change the nature of the game, we must resign ourselves to the continued imprisonment of the hostages through the summer or even later. (S)

Accordingly, a sharp increase in the pressures on Iran is one way of changing the environment. For example, we could undertake a deliberate program of increasingly severe steps every week or two weeks until the hostages are delivered. We might wish to inform the Iranians in advance of the schedule, or we could simply proceed step by step and let them draw their own conclusions. The following steps represent an illustrative program:

1. Sharply increased surveillance of shipping enroute to and from Iranian ports, combined with some overflights.
2. Declaration of a state of belligerency with Iran, coupled with a screening program of Iranian nationals in this country.
3. Technical interruption of power at a key point, e.g. the refinery complex in Abadan or cities such as Tehran or Qom.
4. Mining of harbors, leaving the Kharg Island facility untouched.
5. Closure of Kharg Island and/or occupation of the Tunbs and Abu Musa at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.
6. Selective air strikes on economic targets. (TS)

The objective of undertaking such a program would be to free the hostages before the program had to be carried to its logical conclusion of outright hostilities. However, once embarked, we would have to be prepared to persevere or else be perceived as paper tigers. (C)

There are several difficulties with this strategy in terms of getting the hostages released. First, the deliberate progression of actions, even if fairly rapid in succession, will encourage the Iranians to seek some counterpressure to force us to stop. The recent threat by the militants to kill the hostages in the event of U.S. military action represents the kind of pressure tactics we can expect to encounter. (C)

The second problem is the uncertainty of the political reaction inside Iran. The Ayatollah would attempt to use this program to arouse public opinion and to unite the nation against the common enemy. He might succeed, at least initially, but over time, as it became clear that the Ayatollah was unable to prevent the disruption of the internal economy and as the citizens begin to bear increasingly heavy penalties because of his obstinacy, the mood might begin to shift from defiance of the U.S. to discontent with the irresponsibility of their own leaders. (C)

A third, very serious problem is the danger that our actions will inspire the tribal elements and other opposition forces to rise up against

the clerical regime, with a complete breakdown of public order or even civil war. Not only would this situation endanger the hostages, but it would sorely tempt the Soviets to move across the border. The Soviets might cite our military actions as armed intervention, permitting them to invoke the 1921 Treaty.³ They might also be able to assemble a Tudeh-dominated government in Azerbaijan or even in Tehran in the name of protecting the Islamic Revolution. The Soviets have steadily been building their military capability near the Iranian border, and they have been accumulating political support by their support of Khomeini against the U.S. A small, disciplined group with outside resources can be very effective in conditions of anarchy and political collapse. (S)

Finally, even if we succeed in pressuring Khomeini to strike a deal, we will have a problem in extricating ourselves from the confrontation. In short, though superficially cautious and controlled, it is a high-risk strategy which sets in motion forces that are dangerous and beyond our power to control. (S)

Rescue Operation

The alternative is to force the issue to a resolution by unilaterally seizing the hostages away from the Iranians. From a political point of view, this course of action has enormous appeal. It is quick and almost totally under our control. A sudden strike with the sole objective of rescuing our people would be understood—and perhaps applauded—by regional states and allies alike. It would provide almost no opportunity or excuse for the Soviets to intervene. And it would embarrass the Ayatollah and show him and his regime to be inept. (TS)

The difficulties of making a decision turn almost entirely on questions of capability and risk. Can we get in and out before the Iranians can react militarily? Can we get all the hostages? Do we believe that we could act swiftly enough to avoid having many of the hostages executed? Can we avoid losing many of our own military people? (S)

I am struck by the evaluation of some of those closest to the situation. My staff assistant, Gary Sick, who has been living with this issue day and night for the past five months, has personally and privately urged me in the strongest terms to adopt this course of action, and has proposed this memo. He has also informed me that the three best Persian-speaking officers in the Foreign Service have recently gone to

³ In the Russo-Persian Treaty of 1921, the Soviet Union renounced Tsarist Russia's imperialist policies including all treaties with Persia (Iran), and promised non-intervention in Persia's internal affairs. Article V prohibited any armed organization in either Persia or Russia whose aim was to engage in "acts of hostility" against the other, and Article VI allowed the Soviet Union to intervene against the troops of any power using Persia as a base of operations against the Soviet Union.

Cy with the same recommendation. They all believe that the risks of continued incarceration or of military escalation are far greater than a surprise rescue operation. They are convinced that true surprise is possible and that penetration of the Embassy is a realistic prospect. (TS)

I find this argument persuasive. There may never be a better moment to undertake such an operation than the next few weeks. The security at the Embassy must have settled into a routine by now, and the Iranians are almost contemptuous in their certainty that rescue is not a feasible option. Even the U.S. press has totally accepted our explanations that such an operation is impossible. The Iranian military is in nearly total disarray and preoccupied with the Iraqi threat. The chance of maintaining true surprise is good, and with true surprise, our chances of a successful operation grow. (TS)

We have no risk-free options. Even the risks of inaction are considerable. No other option offers as many potential benefits or gives us as many opportunities to keep the timing and control in our own hands. We could even build in a little protection for any hostages who might not be freed by "arresting" some of the militants and bringing them back under kidnapping and even murder charges. (TS)

In my view, a carefully planned and boldly executed rescue operation represents the only realistic prospect that the hostages—any of them—will be freed in the foreseeable future. Our policy of restraint has won us well-deserved understanding throughout the world, but it has run out. This is the painful conclusion we must now face. (TS)

I understand that your preference is not to undertake a rescue except as a reaction to the killing of our hostages. But that is really tantamount to dismissing the rescue option altogether. Please consider the following: the lead time on any rescue operation is a minimum of eight days. If a hostage is killed, there will be an immediate outcry for retaliation; there will be mass hysteria; there will also be a heightened state of alert in Tehran and perhaps even additional killings. I very much doubt that we could afford to wait for days to undertake a rescue operation, and could be thus forced to retaliate, which would then further reduce the element of surprise which is so crucial to a successful rescue. (TS)

Post-Rescue

It is essential that we be ready to react to any post-rescue consequences. These would include threats to the lives of any hostages left behind, or to any prisoners taken in the operation, or to any Americans available in Tehran. In addition, we have to consider the need to react to any large-scale failure that could occur, and which could maximize the foregoing complications. Accordingly, in addition to the rescue operation, we should be prepared to initiate almost immediately large-

scale retaliatory strikes against key Iranian facilities. Upon the completion of the rescue operation, the Iranian government should be informed, and we could also make it known publicly, that the U.S. will initiate large-scale retaliatory action if any reprisals follow the rescue. If the rescue operation itself fails, we might want to initiate such retaliation in any case in order to reduce the negative consequences of the aborted undertaking. I believe that the U.S. public will be with us whatever happens. (TS)

Procedure

I would recommend that at some point soon you consult with your advisers on the above. If you decide to undertake the rescue, I would suggest that you inform your advisers that you have decided *against* it. Afterwards, a much smaller group could meet with you to initiate the actual plans and to monitor their execution through completion. I would think that such a small group would be confined to the Vice President, Vance, Brown, Jones, Turner, and myself, as well as perhaps Ham and Jody. At the very last minute, additional advisers could be brought in, but it would be essential to enforce iron discipline and minimum participation (on a need-to-know basis). (TS)

Conclusion

The above recommendation is not easy to make. It is even more difficult for you to consider and accept. However, we have to think beyond the fate of the 50 Americans (and also some Iranians) and consider the deleterious effects of a protracted stalemate, growing public frustration, and international humiliation of the United States. (S)

249. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee (Implementation) Meeting¹

Washington, April 10, 1980

The meeting opened with a brief discussion of the *situation between Iraq and Iran*. There continue to be intermittent skirmishes but there is no sign that either side is engaged in a large-scale buildup or has made any commitment to extend the hostilities substantially. (S)

The State Department reported that our *allies' reaction* to your imposition of sanctions has been cautious so far. The Europeans have come to realize, however, that what we are doing not only affects our relations with Iran or potentially their relations with Iran, but also will be an important factor in relations between the United States and Europe. The EC-9 Foreign Ministers have devoted their current discussion to the Iranian question and we understand that they will be withdrawing their Ambassador from Tehran for consultations. (S)

Treasury pointed out that it will be attending a large number of basically economic meetings with countries from all over the world in the next several weeks. They volunteered to take up the question of Iran and the Olympics as subsidiary themes in these meetings. Henry Owen added that he would be glad to do the same. State and Lloyd Cutler will provide talking points. (S)

The bulk of the discussion focused on a memo by Ben Civiletti posing issues arising out of your commitment to introduce *legislation for claims against the Iranian Government*.² There was general agreement on a variety of issues including timing of actions to be taken, alternate means of settling claims, and the desirability of maintaining maximum executive branch flexibility. There was however significant disagreement among the agencies on whether you should seek authority to vest Iranian resources as part of the claims legislation. (Treasury underlined the impact this could have on the dollar abroad; Civiletti and Cutler saw a claims process without vesting authority as being empty.) In addition there are a number of factors that have to be considered in providing relief for the hostages. (S)

There seemed to be general agreement that legislation should be introduced to remove impediments to legal action against Iran resulting from jurisdictional limitation and the provisions of the Sovereign Immunities Act. There was much less agreement, however, on the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 100, Meetings File, 4/10/80 SCC re Iran. Secret; Outside the System.

² See Document 246. Civiletti's memorandum has not been found.

means of settling hostage claims or providing other relief to the hostages, mainly because of the impact that action taken now would have on the negotiating situation. (S)

State, Defense and Treasury will prepare a memorandum for your decision on the issues that were not agreed upon; it will also brief you in more detail on the areas of agreement. (S)

An additional item was introduced by the Department of Justice concerning the procedures for dealing with the visa requests of *non-immigrant Iranians in the United States*. The questions here are mainly technical and can be settled between State and Justice. There are some more basic questions, however, including whether or not an Iranian married to an American citizen can claim "humanitarian need" in attempting to prolong his or her stay here in the United States. State and Justice will sort their problems out and get back to us quickly. If there is need for a decision by you on any of these issues we will forward the memorandum to you. (S)

Another issue relates to the status of some 213 *Iranian military personnel who are studying in the United States* and are not under the provisions of the FMS. Defense, State, and Justice are not willing to accept responsibility for locating these students and forcing them to leave the United States. In effect, they are in much the same position as any Iranian student here and their military status probably does not make them any more or less vulnerable to deportation. If they can avail themselves of the numerous remedies available in the INS procedure, it could be years before we could deport them. State and Defense will attempt to find a means of getting to them and preemptively moving them out of the country before they can become embroiled in the INS procedures. (S)

[Omitted here is material on the Olympics.]

250. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, April 11, 1980, 11:30 a.m.–1:19 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President	<i>The White House</i>
The Vice President	Zbigniew Brzezinski
<i>State</i>	Jody Powell
Deputy Secretary Warren	CIA
Christopher	Adm. Stansfield Turner
<i>Defense</i>	
Secretary Harold Brown	
<i>JCS</i>	
General David Jones	

MINUTES

The President: The likelihood of hostage release is remote. We need to review our options. Diplomatic moves not likely to be productive. We need to decide our actions and to set a timetable. I will go around the table and solicit opinions.

Warren Christopher: There are some non-belligerent options we should consider: no more exports/imports of any kind; blacklist Iranian ships; blacklist airline companies that service Tehran; embargo telecommunications; remove all items from pipeline; go back to the UN.

We need to give the Europeans some time to respond to our request for embargo.² (Then discusses the down side of the blockade mining option for Americans, Europeans—it does not resolve the hostage issue.)

Harold Brown: The proposed diplomatic initiatives are not impressive. Moreover, they will push Iran toward Soviet bloc. For example, Aeroflot could step in. There are punitive military options, but a blockade could complicate relations for us with the Gulf states and even the

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7, Iran 4/80. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House. At the top of the page, Carter wrote: "Susan, My top secret pers file. J." Susan Clough was Carter's personal secretary. Vance was on vacation in Florida. (Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, pp. 492–493) Jordan also attended this meeting and for the first time learned of the rescue operation. (Jordan, *Crisis*, pp. 249–251) In his memoir, Carter quoted from his April 10 diary entry: "The Iranian terrorists are making all kinds of crazy threats to kill the American hostages if they are invaded by Iraq—whom they identify as an American puppet." He then wrote: "We could no longer afford to depend on diplomacy. I decided to act. On April 11, I called together my top advisers." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 506)

² See Document 246.

Soviets. Mining is less dangerous, though the Soviets could be invited to sweep. Neither, however, resolves the hostage issue.

We should therefore consider the rescue. Latest plans reduce the possibility of disaster, but some deaths are unavoidable. A decision needs to be made very soon—no later than within the next three weeks:

Stansfield Turner: The negotiating option is not really open. The only non-belligerent option is to get Khomeini's advisors to convince him that it is immoral to retain the hostages. Mining would have impact on internal stability if undertaken before the harvest comes in.

As to a rescue, it is probable that all of the hostages are now in the compound.

David Jones: (Describes in detail the mining option.) The rescue option has been well rehearsed. It may be too late to undertake it in May–June. The current scheme calls for two nights and one day—and we are losing nighttime (describes the operation in detail).

The Vice President: Rescue is the best option. We are in an intolerable situation which is humiliating to the United States. A blockade will enhance the humiliation while increasing Soviet influence in Iran. I come down for the rescue. We need a careful deception program, and we should explore the Iraqi aspects.

Jody Powell: We need a formula for explaining the timing of the rescue.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: Rescue is the best of the available action alternatives. If undertaken, it should be undertaken as early as possible; there should be a post-rescue punitive option, if the rescue fails; and we should consider taking prisoners to Egypt (as protection against new hostages being taken by the Iranians).

David Jones: The 24th would be the earliest date.

The President: I have talked this over with Rosalynn, also with Ham, Fritz, Jody, and Cy, and I have talked extensively with Zbig. We may have damaged our country by not acting sooner. (Impressed by Sadat's views.)³ We have to go now on a stronger course of action. Our national honor is at stake. We have to go with the rescue. To do so we will

³ Sadat met with Carter in Washington April 8 and 9. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) In a March 28 meeting in Giza, Sadat had told Sol Linowitz, Special U.S. Negotiator for the Middle East, that, because of Iran, the Soviet Union would not withdraw from Afghanistan and that, after Khomeini died, Iran would move to the left and the Soviets would exploit such a development. "In Iran," he said, "anything can happen." Sadat also reaffirmed that he would allow the Shah to remain in Egypt. He told Linowitz that the Shah was "very bitter" toward the United States. (Memorandum from Linowitz to Carter, April 1; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, VIP Visit File, Box 4, Egypt President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin 4/80 Cables and Memos 3/25/80–4/9/80)

have to keep it clandestine, even from people here in the White House. In the meantime, we can also use Christopher's list and we could tell the Iranians that we are prepared to consider Khomeini's demands in order to provide a cover for the rescue. We should also tell the allies we need more support and indicate that we may have no choice but to blockade. We need to move quickly—by the 24th if ready. (Cy prefers also the rescue option if we have to go the military route.)

(12:48 p.m.) So we ought to go ahead with the rescue without delay.

David Jones: (Outlines possible military deception designed to simulate the mining option.)

Zbigniew Brzezinski: (Argues for a diplomatic initiative and a mining deadline to maximize deception.)

The President: We need to plan for post-rescue actions in the event the rescue does not work.

(1:19 p.m.) OK, let's go.⁴

⁴ As Jordan later recalled, his support for the rescue mission had sounded "lukewarm." He wrote to Carter that "once you are satisfied with the soundness of the rescue plan, I believe you should proceed with the mission." (Jordan, *Crisis*, p. 251)

251. Memorandum From Robert D. Blackwill of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, April 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran and the Allies (U)

After listening to the President's clear exposition to Stobbe this morning² on the gravity of the Iranian situation, and in view of the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 6, Iran 4/1/80-4/18/80. Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. Carter wrote in the upper right corner of the memorandum: "Zbig—Discuss with Warren. C." Below Carter's handwritten note, an unknown hand wrote "done."

² Carter met with the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Dietrich Stobbe, from 9:13 until 9:20 a.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

President's sharp sense of urgency, I am moved to express my concern that our message to the Allies on Iran is not getting across in a blunt and unambiguous way. In his Wednesday meeting with the Allied Ambassadors, Secretary Vance declined to speculate on military options open to the United States if current sanctions proved insufficient. But, according to the reporting telegram, "he did make clear that there remain additional economic steps as well as non-economic measures."³ Following this meeting I received several calls from European Embassies which indicated that they had interpreted Vance's remarks to mean that we were not seriously considering the use of military force and that the Allies had some time in which to decide what additional measures, if any, they should take against Iran. This later point was reinforced in the Aide Mémoire that we sent out on Tuesday⁴ which said "we also strongly urge that Allied Governments give serious consideration to a complete break to relations in Iran *in the weeks ahead*, if Iranian authorities continue to reject efforts to achieve a peaceful solution." (S)

I worry that Vance's comments to the Ambassadors, which were quite different from those of the President, may have contributed to the vapid statement by the Nine yesterday in Lisbon.⁵ If we have in our own mind a clear deadline for European action against Iran (the President told Stobbe we had only a few days in which we could continue to act in moderation), we should so inform the Allies immediately. If we do not, and if we act militarily, they will certainly charge that they were surprised again by an Administration speaking with more than one voice and that they had been led to believe that more punitive steps on our part were not imminent. Such a straightforward message from us would also, of course, increase the likelihood that the Allies will come around. (S)

³ As reported in telegram 93885 to selected diplomatic posts, April 10. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800179–0127)

⁴ April 8. See Document 246.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 247.

252. Memorandum From Paul Henze of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran and the Soviets (U)

I am concerned about the evidence we continue to get of *steady, quiet build-up in the Transcaucasus* for a Soviet military move into Iran. While I do not question current intelligence assessments that there is *no indication* that the Soviets are *actually preparing to move*, I am fearful that we are in danger of wishfully turning this rational assumption into a *conviction* that they will not move. I worry about the kind of mind-sets that afflict intelligence estimators and comfort policymakers and which led to conclusions, e.g., that the Soviets were not putting nuclear weaponry into Cuba in 1962 or that the dynasty was secure in Iran in 1978. (S)

I am worried also about the impact of increased pressure by us on Iran or punitive measures if the hostages are harmed. Given the utterly irrational state of mind that dominates elements in Tehran, and the intense hatred of Khomeini for America, a seemingly rational action such as a *naval blockade could conceivably provoke an Iranian invitation to the Soviets to come in to protect them*. Khomeini could give such intervention his blessing with a doctrine of "*the lesser Satan*." The Iranian left, certainly capitalizing on current tensions to improve its position, could abet such a move. (C)

[1 paragraph (4½ lines) not declassified]

Do the Soviets want to invade? In the final analysis, I find it impossible to believe that the Soviets could resist temptation to take over most or all of Iran if the opportunity presented itself to them in a form where they could get themselves invited in as a protecting power. *For more than 150 years, the Russians have aspired to advance in this area*. Afghanistan has whetted their appetite; but Afghanistan will continue to cost with little prospect of return. Iran could be a paying proposition with its vast oil and gas reserves—the first really profitable territorial acquisition for the Soviets. It could help pay for Cuba and Ethiopia and help

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Logged INT Files, Box 1031, Folder 2, JEC INT 8002284–8006395. Secret. Sent for information. Copies were sent to Sick, Odom, Ermarth, Welch, Bremont, and Griffith. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote: "helpful. ZB." Below Brzezinski's note, Sick wrote: "great—other than penultimate para!! GS."

surround and subdue Afghanistan. If the Soviets were invited in to help frenzied Iranians defend themselves against America, they could anticipate almost no internal resistance, such as they have had to face in Afghanistan. (C)

[1 paragraph (17 lines) not declassified]

Unless we think in broad strategic and operationally bold terms, we are likely to stumble into a mess in Iran which will result in the takeover of the whole country by the Soviets. (C)

[1 paragraph (10½ lines) not declassified]

In contemplating possibilities for unusual, far-reaching actions against Iran, we should at least think about the potential for more effective action we might have if we were able to utilize bases in Turkey for this purpose. The state of our relations with Turkey during the 1970's has, in spite of the recently concluded DCA, left us sadly limited in our capacity to utilize that country's facilities. But how much is release of the hostages and settlement of our festering crisis in Iran worth to us? How much have we already expended on it? A half-billion dollars in military aid firmly committed to Turkey for the next three or four years would go a long way toward satisfying their needs for force modernization, would tie them in more firmly to NATO and would enormously strengthen the alliance in its southeastern sector. It does not seem to me that this would be too high a price to pay for utilization of Turkish bases for mounting a strike against Tehran. (S)

In terms of the kind of thinking we conventionally do these days, the "strategic thoughts" I have just outlined above might be considered justification for my incarceration in a psychiatric institution, an inverse American version of the fate of General Grigorenko . . .² But I sense that we may be whipping ourselves up into a emotional frenzy over the hostages in Tehran which could inadvertently have far worse consequences which would do more harm both to us and to the world than some of the actions I have suggested thinking about . . . (C)

² General Petro Grigorenko was arrested and declared guilty of "prophesying" in 1964 when he criticized Nikita Khrushchev as "an ordinary zero" who would be out of power by the autumn of that year. A commission of psychiatrists sentenced him to prison and then to a psychiatric hospital. He was released in 1965 after Khrushchev's fall from power in October 1964.

253. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 15, 1980, 12:15–12:35 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of President Carter's Telephone Conversation with Helmut Schmidt (C)

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Helmut Schmidt, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

President: How are you this afternoon?

Schmidt: Fine. How is spring in Washington?

President: It is absolutely beautiful. The whole White House grounds are covered with wonderful flowers, and I am sure it is the same where you live.

Schmidt: Ja, it is the same in Bonn, not as yet in Hamburg. Bonn is a benevolent place for the eyes and for the human soul.

President: Well, this is too. It's one of the bright spots about my life these days.

Schmidt: Are the cherry blossoms already on?

President: They have already come and almost gone. But now we have the flowering crab apples which in my opinion are even more beautiful; and the dogwoods are just coming on, and the tulips are in blossom; the azaleas are on the way. It is really a lovely time.

Schmidt: Jimmy, I guess this is my call, or is it yours?

President: It's yours I think.

Schmidt: Let me please, in the first instance reiterate a point which I would like to deal with so that you can interrupt me or say that you have some other points as well and then get back to them one by one.

President: O.K.

Schmidt: Number one, I would say a few words about our actual communications; the next point would be oncoming decisions, which I will take next week as regards Iran, as regards the Olympic Games. I would like also to have an exchange on Afghanistan and on medium-range weaponry. This is about the number of subjects I would like to touch upon shortly, if you have the time for that.

President: Yes, I have the time, go ahead.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 38, Memcons Pres 3/80. Secret. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, Carter wrote: "ok. J."

Schmidt: Number One. I would like to thank you for your talk with Berlin Mayor Stobbe.² I have seen his report; I have not seen him in person so far and would also especially thank you for the very clear statements about the United States and its support for Berlin. I would connect this with my repeated expressions of thanks for our ongoing talks a month ago at your place in Washington.³ I have not seen your television talk with the European editors, but there has been some confusion in the West European press about a deadline or a specific date.⁴ I am not aware of any such deadline and it makes me ask you what is it you mean by that?

President: Well there was no deadline to Allies. I did ask you all to help us with action either two weeks after the Majles is convened or the middle part of May, and we would hope that all of our concerted efforts would have success by then.

Schmidt: Well, I fully understand it. This was my belief that this was what you had in mind.

President: Yes, that is exactly what I had in mind.

Schmidt: It was my speculation. Let me please say that some people of course, in the French, British, German press, I don't know what the other Europeans have said, are speculating whether the Heads of State or Heads of Governments in Europe and in America are communicating over the media with the other leaders. This is certainly not the case and I think we shall take the opportunity within the next couple of days to make it clear that we are in necessary and close personal contact. I just talked to Valery, and he told me that you had been in contact with him, a couple of days ago.⁵

President: Yes, that's true. And that's the only reference I made, and it was completely distorted in some of the European press as an ultimatum or a demand for action and so forth. What I said in the interview was that there was an expectation of success and that we did have a target date, but what I was referring to is the one I have just described to you.

Schmidt: Let me tell you that on Sunday, the day before yesterday, I had a couple of hours with the leading members of the Cabinet,

² See footnote 2, Document 251.

³ Schmidt visited Washington March 4–6.

⁴ During the April 12 interview, Carter told four European journalists that the deadline in question was in his March 25 message to Ohira, Giscard, Thatcher, Schmidt, Cossiga, and Trudeau (see Document 223), in which he asked European nations to make clear to Iranian authorities that they would break relations with Iran if the U.S. steps did not lead to the release of the hostages by mid-May. For the full text of the wide-ranging interview, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pp. 668–682.

⁵ See Document 247.

including the parliamentary and political leaders, Brandt, Wehner and others, so we were nine or ten people altogether talking about Iran, and all the other subjects I have mentioned; and I am glad to tell you that we were very united in the opinion which we at the end articulated and I would just like to mention them now to you one after the other. I have also the opportunity tonight, within the next quarter of an hour, to go over to Parliament to talk to the Foreign Relations Committee in a private session to tell them what is in the making.

First, Iran. As you know from early January, we are still not really convinced that extending economic sanctions will help to liberate the hostages, but we will certainly follow through. We are determined to take that decision next week in our Cabinet.

President: Yes, I am not sure either. There is no way to be sure.

Schmidt: I think it opens up two dangerous possibilities: one danger is that they fall back on the Soviet Union which they will not like, but they may feel they may be forced to and secondly, if sanctions don't work, then in a couple of weeks, we have to come to the point where we have to ask for other measures.

President: Yes.

Schmidt: Anyway, we will participate. Valery will participate. I guess we'll get a consensus with the EC Foreign Secretaries on Monday or Tuesday next week.⁶ They are sitting together Monday or Tuesday; we will try to form a so-called European umbrella for the Nine governments to act on a national basis. Possibly, we might also act by a joint decision. The Rome Treaty has some clause, the famous article 113 which may be useful as an end.⁷ Anyway, I guess you will see in the course of next week some European Cabinets, at least, anyway my Cabinet to publicly decide that we take economic sanctions. They would be declared next Wednesday, but probably becoming effective a fortnight after the election of the Parliament, if within that fortnight the hostages are not freed. This would mean about the date which you mentioned five minutes ago.

President: Well, you know, we have indications that it is very doubtful that the Parliament is going to be elected at all. And the date that I mentioned was really either mid-May or two weeks after the Majles . . .

⁶ April 22 and 23. In an April 22 meeting in Luxembourg, the EC-9 Foreign Ministers voted to impose sanctions on Iran on May 17 unless "decisive progress" was made on freeing the hostages. (R.W. Apple, Jr., "Allies Set To Impose Economic Sanctions on Teheran May 17," *New York Times*, April 23, 1980, p. A1)

⁷ Under Article 113 of the 1957 Rome Treaty, the European Community took the responsibility for negotiating common commercial policies with the rest of the world.

Schmidt: Good. I will make sure that we say either a fortnight after the election or mid-May.

President: That sounds good.

Schmidt: I will tell Valery as well.

President: Good.

Schmidt: Second point is that I would like once again to tell you privately that I am deeply worried about many rumors which one hears here about military measures being in preparation. I understand that one has to prepare oneself for any contingency, but I hear from the Iraqis, from the United Emirates, from the Saudis that they are rather afraid of the possible outcome of all this, and I would very much like you to be careful and think about it a second time before you take any such decision. The Soviets are only waiting for a pretext under which they could intervene.

President: I understand what you're saying.

[Omitted here is material on the Olympics, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union.]

254. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, April 15, 1980, 12:45–2:50 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Deputy Secretary Warren

Christopher

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

Deputy Secretary Graham Claytor

JCS

General David Jones

The White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hamilton Jordan

Jody Powell

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7, Iran 4/80. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House. As he later recalled, Vance had voiced to Carter his objection to the rescue mission earlier in the morning and then again before the NSC meeting. After the meeting, Vance questioned his desire to remain in the administration. (Vance, *Hard Choices*, pp. 409–410) According to the President's Daily Diary, Vance and Carter met from 12:10 until 12:47 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No other record of their April 15 non-NSC meetings has been found.

Secretary Vance: It is a serious mistake to go ahead with the rescue because (1) the Red Cross visit has accounted for all hostages and all of them are OK;² (2) our allies are beginning to move—on April 21 they will plan to adopt sanctions. We should not go forward. There will be loss of lives (5–15 hostages); risk to other Americans and maybe Europeans; and our allies will not understand this.

Secretary Brown: When do you expect the hostages then to be released?

Secretary Vance: I don't know—but maybe one-third of them will get killed in this. Maybe after the Majlis elections.

Secretary Brown: Majlis will be less amenable to release

Zbigniew Brzezinski: We have the problem of timing. If we do not now undertake the rescue, later may be too late. There is also a strategic issue here—Iran is drifting leftward, and we need to lance the boil (which is the hostage issue).

The President: Schmidt is deeply concerned over the negative effects of pressure in Iran,³ and I am also concerned over a failure to act. If the Majlis meets and nothing happens, we will be faced with lengthy detention. Lately the Iranian government has not been disavowing the threats to the lives of the hostages. I don't think our rescue option will itself improve as time passes. If we are left with only the military option, the element of surprise will diminish, whereas now the economic sanctions are lulling the militants. On balance, it is better to go ahead. Delay will cause deterioration in the region. I will stick with the decision I made.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: (Summarizes questions for further discussion: nature of any additional punitive action? What governments to be informed, and when, about the rescue? What disinformation campaign? How to get Americans out of Iran? Possible foreign reactions, notably Soviet? Reaction to a possible failure? Updating the operational scenario?)

Secretary Vance: (Feels that it would be a mistake to consider any additional punitive actions.)

Zbigniew Brzezinski: It is important that we do not look as if we are acting out of desperation. Should examine carefully other options.

² On April 15, a Red Cross representative in Tehran visited all 50 hostages during a 7-hour visit. (Memorandum from Saunders to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom, April 15; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update April 1980) Lang submitted a full description of the Red Cross visit. ("Visit to the Hostages," April 15; *ibid.*)

³ See Document 253.

Secretary Brown: (Outlines possible strike at a TV-power station installation in Tehran.)

The President: It is important that all casualties be limited and that we do not engage in wanton killing.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: We should also avoid Kennedy's mistake at the Bay of Pigs of so limiting the military operation that its chances of success were reduced.

General Jones: We will not engage in wanton killing—we will only do so if it is necessary to avoid U.S. casualties. We will stay in the compound for one hour and search thoroughly the four buildings. (Discussion between Turner, Vance, and Brzezinski about the compound—how it is fortified, how it is guarded.)

The President: My inclination is not to launch any other attacks. We need a clean operation. We should not blow up other buildings in Tehran and I am doubtful about taking prisoners.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: It may be desirable to have prisoners as counter-hostages in the event the Iranians take new ones. (*Brown and Clayton* agree.)

The President: I want it clean and simple.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: It is an asset. We can always send them back.

Warren Christopher: Taking prisoners would be more complicating than helpful.

Jody Powell: I agree with Christopher. What would we do with them ultimately?

Hamilton Jordan: I agree with the above. If we grab someone, it should be someone important.

General Jones: I would take prisoners only as far as Mansuriyah and then let them go. I would want the Commander to have the option.

Secretary Vance: This will simply complicate the situation.

The President: Talk this over with the Commander. Basically, I do not want the prisoners. If need be, take them to Mansuriyah and then release them.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: We should also consider what to do if the operation fails. We should consider retribution if things go badly or more hostages are taken. Our options are mining or an attack on a refinery.

Secretary Brown: (Favors more than that if the failure is large.) The question is, when to react if the operation fails?

Admiral Turner: We should react the same day so it looks like a single operation. Then it looks less like a failure.

Secretary Vance: What would be the consequences for other Westerners?

The President: We are going into our own compound to take our own people out. There is no additional purpose.

General Jones: We should let the gun ships hit some Tehran targets the same night if things go bad.

Jody Powell: It might be a good idea to do the TV station in in the same night.

The President: One thing bothers me. Our nation's stature should be preserved. The Iranians have not killed anybody, and hence we should not kill innocent Iranians.

Secretary Brown: Then we should mine in that case.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: The President is right. We should only do these additional things if there is a failure and killing of hostages afterwards. Maybe we could take out the TV/communications tower. (Discussion of various diplomatic initiatives designed to provide a diversion to prevent speculation on a rescue mission.)

Jody Powell: We won't be able to get all of the American press out. Maybe Ham could get his contact in Tehran to throw our people out. Alternatively we could warn the top TV people that our own media people have been targeted for attack and therefore they should leave.

(*The President* and *Brown* skeptical that the above would work.)

Admiral Turner: Major disinformation should have an overall theme. We particularly need to deceive Soviet/Cuban intelligence. We also need a cover story for a possible leak.

Zbigniew Brzezinski: We should hint that we are considering mining. (Further discussion about cover for the operation, insofar as Oman is concerned—a cover story emphasizing air drops to Afghanistan approved.)

General Jones: The operation will proceed unless the President disapproves next Thursday.⁴ If weather bad, we will postpone on a day by day basis.

⁴ April 24.

255. Editorial Note

[text not declassified.]

**256. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination
Committee Meeting¹**

Washington, April 16, 1980, 9–9:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Robert Owens

OSD

W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

JCS

Lt. General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Treasury

Robert Mundheim

Justice

John Harmon

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
Lloyd Cutler
Hedley Donovan
Jody Powell
Joseph Onek
NSC
Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The SCC reviewed a proposed list of additional non-belligerent sanctions against Iran. The following steps were unanimously recommended for Presidential approval:²

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote “Zbig, J” in the upper right corner.

² Carter approved items 1–7 with a checkmark and initialed “J” in the right margin beside each item. On April 17, Carter issued these additional sanctions against Iran in Executive Order 12211 and notified Congress of his intent in an April 16 letter. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pp. 714–717)

1. *Embargo all imports from Iran to the United States.* This can easily be done under the existing provisions of IEEPA and amounts to approximately \$1 million per month. Treasury will prepare the necessary implementing regulations. (C)

2. *Prohibit the export of food and medicine to Iran.* IEEPA provides authority to prohibit all exports except private donations of food, clothing and medicine. The SCC agreed that private donations would continue to be excepted since this includes packages to the hostages and clear humanitarian gifts. A finding will also be prepared under the Export Administration Act prohibiting exports on the grounds that Iran is assisting international terrorism by its acts. (C)

3. *Prohibit the Use of U.S. Passports for Travel to Iran.* There is statutory authority for the President to invoke measures short of war in order to induce the release of hostages. Use of this statute to prohibit using passports is subject to challenge under the provisions of the subsequent Passport Act which does not provide such authority for hostage cases. If applied to U.S. journalists, we can anticipate an immediate challenge; but court action will require some time. We can probably defeat such a challenge on grounds that the safety of U.S. citizens is endangered by remaining in Iran; however, we will not cite that as our reason in the initial announcement. (S)

4. *Prohibit all Financial Transactions with Iran, Including any Transactions in Connection with Travel to Iran.* If drawn tightly and applied immediately, this would prevent a U.S. citizen from buying a ticket to leave Iran. A group composed of representatives of State, Justice, Treasury, Commerce and the Counsel to the President will meet to draw up regulations which are as tight as possible to pressure all U.S. citizens to depart Iran as soon as possible. The group will also examine the potentially serious policy and constitutional problems relating to the application of this order (under IEEPA) to the press. (S)

5. *Telecommunications.* Matt Nimetz will meet today with representatives of COMSAT to explore the technical implications of interrupting satellite communications with Iran. It was agreed that continued contact with Iran was sufficiently beneficial for intelligence purposes and for maintaining contact with Laingen and intermediaries in Tehran that we should not order an immediate interruption by COMSAT. However, unless there are overriding technical reasons, we should call for an extraordinary meeting of INTELSAT members within 30 days to consider barring Iran from use of the INTELSAT system. The SCC recognized that we may be unable to muster a two-thirds vote in INTELSAT, but considered it desirable to signal our intent to pursue our efforts to isolate Iran internationally. (S)

6. *Close Offices of Iran Air, the National Iranian Oil Company, and the Iranian Natural Gas Company in the United States.* They would be given

until May 1 to comply. The SCC considered closure of Iranian banks, but recommended against taking this step at this time since it would cut off the financial support of most of the 50,000 Iranian students in this country, many of whom are minorities. It could also prompt a massive shift of these students and other Iranian nationals to welfare. (C)

7. [1 paragraph (7 lines) not declassified]

The SCC also considered denying landing rights and port facilities to foreign airlines and ships serving Iran. This is a secondary boycott and totally inconsistent with U.S. efforts to defeat the Arab boycott against Israel. It would create major policy problems for the U.S. and with our allies. The SCC recommended against such moves at this time.³ (C)

³ Carter wrote "I agree" in the right margin.

257. Memorandum From Fritz Ermath of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 16, 1980

SUBJECT

Group Discussion on Soviet Threat to Iran (S)

As you directed, Odom, Welch, Bremont and I discussed the memo I sent you² (Sick and Denend could not make it). We had large areas of agreement, and lively differences. I try here to summarize them, and invite the others to comment further below, as needed. In a nutshell:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran 4/1/80–4/17/80. Secret. Sent for information. Bremont, Welch, and Odom concurred.

² Memorandum from Ermath to Brzezinski, April 15. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, Brzezinski wrote: "Fritz: discuss with WO-MB-JW & GS—and give me a report. This is important. ZB." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80)

—There is a substantial Soviet military threat to Iran, in both the near and the longer term, most likely to be triggered by (a) US military action, or (b) the need of a promising pro-Soviet regime for support.

—The judgment in my memo on Soviet expectation of the need to use force and willingness to do so may or may not prove correct; but it is overstated in the light of current evidence. (Three-to-one against me here; I'll stand pat on my judgment, however.)

—We do need to do more faster in building our security posture in and for Southwest Asia. But it will take more than apocalyptic opinions to generate the requisite additional money and political energy. (S)

Some key points in the discussion:

Bill expressed some skepticism about the extent and novelty of Soviet military upgrades in the Transcaucasus.³ In a day or so, we'll be getting a complete inventory of what they've done since December, and the supporting evidence. The senior DCI staffer on the problem told me today he regards the activity as extensive and novel, but not signifying imminent (days, weeks) operations. He says it looks like they are meeting a new force readiness objective some months in the future. Marshall argued that the Soviets probably regard their military improvements as a prudent response to turmoil in the region, and they need not be linked in Soviet thinking to any specific contingency or schedule. The US forces buildup in the Indian Ocean would be enough to rationalize it. (S)

Marshall argued, with Bill's support, that the Soviets have a preferred strategy for gaining dominance in Iran, in which they have justifiable confidence: A Tudeh-dominated regime, arising out of a post-Khomeini "popular front" and able to consolidate its power without direct Soviet intervention. If this regime were seriously threatened with overthrow from within, the Soviets would intervene to preserve it. But the Soviets see their main military task as deterring US military intervention. I argued that a Tudeh regime would almost inevitably be met with widespread armed resistance requiring Soviet intervention, as in Afghanistan. We were all quite unsure as to how fast the rise of a Tudeh regime could come about. (S)

Marshall was of the view, on balance, that the Soviets would probably not intervene militarily to prevent the emergence of an effective Islamic regime, even if it sought to liquidate the Left. He also judged that Soviet public disaffection over the costs of the Afghan war, assuming it is not a fairly quick victory and well over by the time of a decision on Iran, would have at least some inhibiting effect on a Soviet repeat

³ Memorandum from Odom to Brzezinski, April 16. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Box 6, Iran 4/80-8/80)

performance in Iran. I agree strongly on this point; it's a very powerful case for making the Soviets bleed in Afghanistan. (S)

Jasper contended that Soviet force readiness improvements in the Transcaucasus are only marginally relevant in comparison to other factors since (a) Soviets would need many other units in any case and therefore (b) Soviets are free to manipulate indicators in Transcaucasus in a disinformation program. The other, more important factors are (a) the gross power imbalance in the region, (b) the dominance of internal Iranian developments in any Soviet calculation, (c) Soviet willingness to risk any level of direct military confrontation with the US, (d) US readiness to oppose a Soviet move, and (e) reaction of our European allies. Put simply, grabbing Iran militarily is worth it if the West acquiesces but is not worth it if the West is galvanized to isolate the Soviet Union and thereafter extinguish its penetration into the third world. We tended to agree on this. We also tended to agree that we are arguing over variations on a deeply gloomy prognosis. (S)

258. Memorandum From Marshall Breamer and Stephen Larrabee of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, April 17, 1980

SUBJECT

Future Soviet Military Intervention in Iran (S)

Attached at Tab A is a CIA analysis of Soviet policy toward the Iran-Iraq conflict.² It argues that the Soviets are likely to try to avoid getting drawn into the conflict in a manner which could seriously damage their relations with either side. To date, the Soviets have sought to cast the blame on the US for the exacerbation of tensions between the two countries. However, pressure is mounting on Moscow to take

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 4/1/80–4/18/80. Top Secret. Sent for information. Copies were sent to Albright, Odom, Friendly, Deal, Henze, Griffith, Ermath, Blackwill, Sick, Thornton, and Welch. A stamped notation at the top of the page reads: "ZB has seen."

² Paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, April 10, "Soviet Response to an Iranian-Iraqi Clash," attached but not printed.

a clearer stand, and lately Soviet commentary has evinced a slight tilt toward Iran. (S)

Although they could use the threat of Iraqi military intervention as a pretext to invoke paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Treaty of 1921³ to justify their own intervention, the Agency thinks the chance of their doing so is remote—in large part because of the danger that the US might respond militarily. They feel that the Soviets are more likely to try to maintain a balanced policy and attempt to preserve—and where possible extend—their influence in both countries through conventional diplomacy and economic means. (S)

The paper does not deal with a number of recent developments which suggest an attempt by the Soviets to exploit the instability in Iran and to prepare for possible limited military intervention. These include:

- [1½ lines not declassified]
 - the dispatch of large numbers of ethnic Azerbaijanis back from the USSR, including prominent exiles dating back from the post-war Soviet sponsored Azerbaijan Democratic Republic;
 - the apparent reactivation of the Azerbaijani Democratic Party which closely cooperates with the Tudeh;
 - aid to ethnic dissident groups, including arms and guerrilla training;
 - [1 line not declassified]
 - upgrading of combat readiness of units in Transcaucasus MD.
- (TS)

These developments do not provide hard evidence that the Soviets have decided to intervene. The Soviets may well only be engaging in prudent contingency planning. But the Soviets could conceivably also be positioning themselves to take military action when and if it becomes desirable or necessary. (C)

The Soviets are now pinning their hopes in Iran on the ability of the Tudeh to increase its strength and eventually assume a position of power. The Tudeh is, for example, in far better shape today than the Bolsheviks were in the autumn of 1916. The Tudeh has consistently supported Khomeini for tactical reasons; in return Khomeini has granted the Tudeh a degree of freedom and autonomy not allowed other Leftist parties. The Soviets undoubtedly hope that this strategy will allow the Tudeh to dominate a post-Khomeini coalition. It is the best organized and best armed party in Iran. While it still lacks a strong popular following, it has been increasing its strength among key elements in society, especially the intellectuals and labor groups, and it recently has been actively attempting to recruit among the military. (S)

³ See footnote 3, Document 248.

The continued revolutionary situation and consequent economic deterioration or, for that matter, Khomeini's death or removal from the scene, could work to the Tudeh's advantage. At present the middle class is weak and fragmented, and power is in the hands of the extremists—the mullahs who would take the country back to the fifteenth century, on the one hand, and the radicals who want to accelerate the pace of the revolution, on the other. Under these conditions, the Tudeh could well present itself as the only viable "modernizing" force capable of opposing the mullahs and implementing a true socio-economic revolution. Demoralized and disenchanted with the mullahs, many elements of society might acquiesce in, or at least not resist, a power grab by the Tudeh. (S)

Should the Tudeh take part in a popular front government, an Afghanistan-like situation might well develop where an appeal for Soviet forces to stem "counter-revolutionary bandits" may be made—a call the Soviets would find hard to resist, particularly if they are successful in Afghanistan. For this reason, it is extremely important for us to have counter-forces positioned in the area in order to make a Soviet decision to intervene as difficult as possible for them. This underscores the need for us to:

- monitor Soviet activity in Iran and the Transcaucasus very closely;
- accelerate our efforts to develop the RDF;
- continue to press forward vigorously with our search for facilities and other sites for pre-positioning and stockpiling in the Gulf;
- intensify our efforts to improve our bilateral relations with Turkey and to bolster Ankara economically, with the *long-term goal* of stationing some forces there for use in Mideast/Persian Gulf contingencies;
- improve relations with other Arab states in the area, particularly *Iraq*;
- set up a forum in the Alliance to discuss non-European threats to the Alliance;
- press the European allies to do more to bolster their own defenses on the Central Front; and, above all,
- keep the pressure on the Soviets in Afghanistan (the more they are bogged down there, the less likely they are to intervene elsewhere). (S)

**259. Message From the Department of State to the Swiss
Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹**

Washington, April 17, 1980

We would appreciate Ambassador Lang's delivering the following message at the earliest possible moment to President Bani-Sadr from the USG:

1. While we are pleased that the hostages were visited,² we hope that their conditions can be improved and that visits can take place on a regular basis.

2. Our continued objective is the prompt and safe release of all the American hostages. Because the hostages continue to be held in violation of international law and all principles of civilized behavior, we have today announced additional non-military steps.³ Under the circumstances, we have no choice but to take steps necessary to redress our grievances and to seek the cooperation of others in such measures.

3. We have seen statements indicating that there is a possibility of release before the parliament meets. This outcome is by far preferable to others that have been proposed. We would welcome your suggestions for achieving such a result, through any of the existing channels or otherwise as you may wish.

4. But we are also very concerned about press accounts out of Iran saying that the hostages may be kept through the summer. If the Majlis election takes place May 2, can you give us an estimate as to when it will be in a position to deal with the hostage situation, and how you will avoid a situation in which the Majlis would seek to impose conditions which the United States cannot and will not accept or to delay indefinitely an ultimate decision.

5. Beyond the present crisis it is our hope to build a new relationship with Iran based on equality and mutual respect.

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update April 1980. Secret. Sent via the Swiss Embassy. Attached to an undated briefing memorandum from Saunders to Vance, Christopher, and Newsom entitled Iran Update—April 18, 1980.

² See footnote 2, Document 254.

³ See Document 256 and footnote 2 thereto.

260. Intelligence Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, April 18, 1980

COUNTRY

Iran/Iraq

SUBJECT

Former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar's comments on his plans to return to Iran, on his recent visit to Iraq, on his problems with General Gholam Ali Oveisi's plans, and on his support from Hassan Nazih [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

SOURCE

[*1½ lines not declassified*]

Summary: On 15 April 1980, former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar told a confidant that he now plans to return to Iran towards the end of May once some deficiencies in his plans have been corrected, once his staff in Baghdad is better organized and once he has had an opportunity to hold discussions on cooperation with former Iranian Oil Company Director Hassan Nazih. During 13–14 April, Bakhtiar was in Iraq for discussions with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. Saddam Husayn agreed to support Bakhtiar, but was unsuccessful in getting Bakhtiar to agree to cooperate with General Gholam Ali Oveisi. Iraq is supporting Oveisi in his efforts to overthrow Ayatollah Khomeini by military means. Bakhtiar is reluctant to support Oveisi because of Oveisi's past associations and because he thinks Oveisi's plan will only cause the urban Iranian population to unite behind Khomeini. Bakhtiar warned Saddam Husayn about providing troops to Oveisi because it might give the Soviets cause to move into Iran, but Saddam Husayn discounted this. He also told Bakhtiar, whatever happens in Iran, Iraq does not want the U.S. to be able to reestablish its presence there. Bakhtiar also commented on the progress of his own plans: He said that his propaganda campaign and clashes of his supporters with Pasdarans are going well, that plans are underway to sabotage pumping stations on refined products lines, and that he has enough arms for his supporters, but is having trouble getting them to Tehran. End summary.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables File, Box 93, Iran, 4/18/80. Secret; Specat; [*handling restriction not declassified*]; Exclusive. Sent to the Department of State, JCS/DIA, the White House Situation Room, the NSC Staff, and the CIA Office of Current Operations.

1. Former Iranian Prime Minister Shahpour Bakhtiar now plans to return to Iran in the latter part of May 1980. He had hoped to return to Iran by the end of April, but was forced to change his plans because of several new developments. Notably, in reviewing the plans drawn up by his staff, he noted some deficiencies which must be corrected prior to launching his movement. He is also disappointed at the delays that have occurred in getting his staff in Baghdad organized.

2. Bakhtiar went to Baghdad at Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's request the weekend of 12–13 April and had numerous discussions with Barzan Ibrahim Al-Tikriti, Saddam's half-brother, as well as a two-hour meeting alone with Saddam on 13 April. Saddam told Bakhtiar that he was willing to support him despite Bakhtiar's refusal to cooperate with General Gholam Ali Oveisi who is also receiving Iraqi aid. According to Bakhtiar, one of the primary reasons Saddam Husayn wanted to talk to Bakhtiar was to try to obtain some form of cooperation between Oveisi and Bakhtiar. Bakhtiar refused to even consider cooperation with Oveisi for two basic reasons: One reason is Oveisi's past association with the Shah and the second is that Bakhtiar does not accept Oveisi's relying solely on a military solution to overthrow Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Bakhtiar told Saddam Husayn that Oveisi's plan will not work because it will unite the urban population behind Khomeini. Bakhtiar warned Saddam Husayn about committing any Iraqi soldiers in support of Oveisi as such a commitment would provide the Soviets the option of moving into Iran. Saddam told Bakhtiar that he did not think there was much chance of the Soviets actually invading Iran, particularly because of the already heavy Soviet involvement in Afghanistan.

3. What impressed Bakhtiar most about his discussion with Saddam Husayn was Husayn's almost irrational fear of Khomeini. He was particularly concerned about what Khomeini might or might not be able to do among the Iraqi Shia.

4. In discussing big power involvement in Iran, Saddam Husayn said that one benefit of the revolution in Iran was that the Americans had been forced to withdraw in toto. The Iraqi President thought this was a positive development and he hopes the U.S. will not be able to get back into Iran in strength. (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* comment: Saddam Husayn would look with disfavor on the involvement of any situation which provides the U.S. the opportunity of regaining a foothold in Iran.) Bakhtiar disagreed with Saddam Husayn about the benefits of keeping a U.S. presence out of Iran. Bakhtiar argued that a big power presence is needed to counter the Soviet threat in the region, pointing out that while Iraq has no common border with the USSR, Iran has 2,000 kilometers of common border with the Soviets as well as bordering on Afghanistan. Given this situation, Bakhtiar, said, Iran

must take steps to protect its independence. He pointed out how easy it was to kick out the Americans and commented given the same degree of Soviet involvement, Iran would have a difficult time getting rid of the Soviets.

5. In spite of Bakhtiar's conversation with Saddam Husayn, Bakhtiar remains concerned about what to do with General Oveisi, and his desire to attempt to overthrow the Khomeini regime militarily. Oveisi, Bakhtiar says, considers it essential that a military decision be obtained before the politicians move in. Bakhtiar is concerned at the amount of support that Oveisi is getting from the Iraqis who find Oveisi's arguments persuasive mainly because they fit in with the Iraqi view of Iran. (*[less than 1 line not declassified]*). Comment: [*2 lines not declassified*] On 11 April, Oveisi was on the Iraqi-Iranian border assessing the situation. Reportedly he also conferred with Kurdish tribal leader Sardar Jaf. When he went up to the border, forces loyal to Oveisi occupied twelve deserted Iranian border posts. Oveisi will stay in Iraq until circa 16 April trying to determine whether it will be possible for his forces to carve out a substantial area of operations inside Iran, whereupon he will return to France.

6. Commenting on his own movement's efforts, Bakhtiar said that part of his plan is already in operation and bearing fruit. He was referring to the propaganda campaign currently being conducted by two radios under his control and clashes between his supporters and the Iranian Pasdarans. In noting the success of his growing propaganda campaign, Bakhtiar pointed out that he is coming under increasing attack in the Iranian media. He believes this is an indication that his message is getting through. He has sent tapes back to Iran where they are copied and distributed throughout the country. Bakhtiar said that he would like to see more public relations support from Western countries. He is attempting to generate more support from liberal European groups. He plans a public appearance on 22 April in Brussels which is being supported by a liberal political group. He also plans to meet with West German Socialist Party leader Willy Brandt in Strasbourg at the end of April.

7. As his propaganda campaign increases, Bakhtiar will begin the next phase of the plan which will be to sabotage the transportation of refined oil products. Bakhtiar has obtained the advice of experts who say that the pumping stations on refined products pipelines are very vulnerable as Iran does not have the spare parts and expertise to repair them. Bakhtiar's supporters are planning now to blow up some of these pumping stations. Large amounts of explosives have already been sent to Iran. Bakhtiar said that Saddam Husayn told him the major oil companies assume there will be sabotage operations against Iranian oil. As a result, Iraq has already been approached by the Japanese and

several Western oil companies asking for increased liftings of crude. The Iraqi leader said Iraq has increased its sales of oil and is demanding a premium for these increases.

8. Bakhtiar claims he has a sufficient number of arms for his supporters. One problem though is that he has a fairly large quantity of arms in the Basra area, including AK-47's, rifles, RPG's, and grenades, that he would like to ship to Tehran. Current crackdowns in Kurdistan and Khuzestan are making the shipment of arms difficult for his group. They are now trying to smuggle the arms to southern Baluchistan and then move them from there to Tehran.

9. Another reason Bakhtiar is delaying his return to Iran is that he just recently obtained the support of former National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) head Hassan Nazih. Bakhtiar wants to devote more time to planning and discussions with Nazih whom he hopes to meet with soon. (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* Comment: *[2 lines not declassified]* Hassan Nazih and his group have offered to support Bakhtiar. Abdal Rahman Boroumand, at one time a close associate of former Iranian Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, and currently an intermediary between Bakhtiar and non-national front figures, is holding discussions with members of Nazih's group on how best to organize.)

10. ACQ: *[less than 1 line not declassified]*

11. *[2 lines not declassified]*

12. Washington Dissem: To State Exclusive for the Director, INR. To DIA Exclusive for the Director, DIA.

261. Editorial Note

On April 16, 1980, President Jimmy Carter met with senior advisers and mission commanders to discuss the details of the rescue operation. The meeting took place in the Situation Room from 7:36 until 10:05 p.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) Among those present at the meeting were the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski; Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Chairman of the Joint Staff General David Jones; Secretary of Defense Harold Brown; leader of the Delta Force, Colonel Charlie Beckwith; Director of Operations, Joint Staff, Lieutenant General Philip C. Gast; the commander of the overall rescue mission Major General James Vaught; and White House Chief of Staff Hamilton Jordan. (Jordan, *Crisis*, pages 254-264) Frank Carlucci, the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, represented Admiral Stansfield Turner, the Director of Central Intelligence. (Turner, *Terrorism and Democracy*, page 110)

As Brzezinski later recalled, during the briefing Carter emphasized that he would not interfere with operational decisions and would give the military maximum leeway within the approved plans. Carter emphasized that every effort had to be made to avoid “wanton killings.” He and Brzezinski also agreed to increase the number of helicopters planned for the mission from seven to eight, but held the number there rather than compromise surprise and secrecy with a larger armada. (Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, pages 495–497) According to Jordan’s account of the meeting, the closest Carter came to direct operational orders was over the discussion of possible loss of life. Jordan quoted Carter:

“I think it is important to keep your mission simple. It will be easy and tempting for your men to become engaged in gunfire with others and to try to settle some scores for our nation. That will interfere with your objective of getting our people out safely. In the eyes of the world, it is important that the scope of this mission be seen as simply removing our people. If innocent people are killed, the Iranians will make a great public spectacle of it and will say we murdered women and children.” (Jordan, *Crisis*, page 254)

In his account of this meeting, Carter wrote that he was particularly impressed with mission commanders Vaught, Gast, and Beckwith. He gave them his complete confidence including the promise of non-interference in the mission. Carter noted also that the helicopters and transport planes were already in position, and, for the first time, they had eyewitness information on the location of the hostages. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pages 507–509)

The next day, April 17, Carter wrote the following diary entry: “Vance has been extremely despondent lately, and I called Warren Christopher in this morning to talk to him about what should be done. He advised me to meet with Cy late in the afternoon to add some personal concern to help resolve the problem.” Carter further wrote that he had spoken with Vance who for “the third or fourth time” had “indicated that he might resign.” Carter then wrote that “after he [Vance] goes through a phase of uncertainty and disapproval, then he joins in with adequate support for me. He said he would stay on, but afterward would reserve the right to say that he disagreed with some of the policies on Iran.” (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, page 511) Carter and Vance met from 5:30 until 6:40 p.m. (Carter Library, President’s Daily Diary)

Brzezinski recounted that a small group, which he chaired, began holding daily meetings to fine-tune the rescue mission. He noted that they had stepped up “efforts to deceive the Iranians by initiating a new round of negotiations while pressing publicly for all Americans to leave Iran.” (Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, pages 495–497)

As a part of this disinformation campaign, a message was sent to Iranian Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh on April 23 through Swiss Ambassador Erik Lang in Tehran suggesting that Iran and the United States “take stock of our respective positions in the crisis” and noting that the Carter administration was “willing to discuss practical steps to resolve the crisis as soon as possible.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 4/80) As Jordan recalled in his memoir, he volunteered to see Iranian Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh again. The meeting was arranged through lawyers Christian Bourguet and Hector Villalon. Jordan and translator Stephanie van Reigersberg left Washington on April 18 and met with Ghotbzadeh in Paris on April 19. (Jordan, *Crisis*, pages 264–267, and Saunders, “Diplomacy and Pressure,” *American Hostages in Iran*, page 135) Ghotbzadeh stressed that breaking relations had been bad, and, in answer to Jordan’s question, said that the hostages “are not important anymore,” but that it would still be “months and months” before they returned home. He also told Jordan: “I just hope your President doesn’t do anything rash, like attack Iran or mine our harbors.” Jordan reassured him that this would not happen. On April 19, Carter read Jordan’s report, which Jordan had written on the return flight, then called Brown to say “my last remaining doubt about the mission has been removed. Tell Colonel Beckwith to proceed.” (Jordan, *Crisis*, pages 265–267)

Carter recalled that Jordan had concluded from his meeting with Ghotbzadeh that “there is absolutely no chance the hostages will be released for two and a half to three months, and an even greater chance that it will drag on five or six months. This only supports the tentative decision that you have already made.” Carter also noted that he had been impressed with a report from hostage Chargé Bruce Laingen, urging strong action against Iran. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, pages 511–512) The telegram from Laingen, received via the British Embassy in Tehran, is in Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980.

No other records of these meetings have been found.

262. Memorandum Prepared by the Iran Working Group¹

Washington, April 24, 1980, 8 a.m.

SUBJECT

Cottam/Ghotbzadeh Conversation, 0800, April 24, 1980

Cottam said Ghotbzadeh's first point was that his position was "very bad." He was desperately fighting within the government to resist a turn towards the Eastern Bloc and he was losing. Cottam said Ghotbzadeh had always argued that he was the main obstacle to communist influence in the new revolutionary regime and it was possible that he was employing this argument to induce us to be more flexible.

The second point was that Ghotbzadeh's preferred "salami tactics" would no longer work. His idea of a careful step-by-step to persuade Khomeini to change his position could not succeed now. Previously he had thought that family visits to Iran could have an effect on the Ayatollah. Now he thought there was little chance Khomeini would see any of them if they came to Tehran. There was little prospect that a gradual change in the atmosphere could lead to a resolution of the crisis.

Instead, Ghotbzadeh thought, he had to aim for something more dramatic. He had in mind working through the Arabs. He hoped that we could assist in stimulating an initiative with the Arabs. It was not clear what he had in mind, but it appeared that he wanted Algeria and Syria to undertake a mediation effort. It also seemed he wanted us quietly to encourage them to do this. There was some indication of a meeting of leaders of the countries involved which could result in a visit to Tehran and which could have an influence on Khomeini. Ghotbzadeh indicated Algeria and Syria were respected by Khomeini. Ghotbzadeh thought that he was in such a difficult position in Tehran that he was unable to take any initiative himself. Any initiative that was taken should appear to be spontaneous and originate with the mediating countries.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Memoranda of Conversation. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Precht. A stamped notation on the memorandum reads: "Mr. Newsom has seen Apr 24, 1980." There is no indication as to the location of Cottam or Ghotbzadeh.

Ghotbzadeh said that anything we could do on our side to improve the atmosphere would be welcome. He mentioned Senator Church's idea of a White Paper on Iran² in that connection.

Finally, Ghotbzadeh said that the hostage issue was not having any impact at all on the campaign for parliamentary elections.

² See footnote 5, Document 227.

263. Telegram From the Commander of the Joint Task Force (Vaught) to the Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force at Masirah (Gast)¹

Wadi Kena, April 24, 1980, 1250Z

Subject: Execute Order.

Execute mission as briefed.

We are ready and able. God speed.

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 8, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, I 380-458 Rice Bowl JTF Message Traffic (22-25 Apr 80). Top Secret. Also sent to Beckwith, the Deputy Commander of the Joint Task Force for Fixed Wing Air Operations at Masirah, and the Deputy Commander for Helicopter Operations aboard the *Nimitz*.

264. Telegram From ALFA/J-2 to the Joint Task Force Intelligence Officer (Mattingly) Aboard the U.S.S. *Nimitz*¹

Washington, April 24, 1980, 0045Z

Following is a CIA report. [1 line not declassified]

[1 paragraphs (5 lines) not declassified]

B. Condition of Hostages. Per subject, hostages are physically fit, have been seen walking in the courtyard and those seen walking appear alert and in good health. An ambulance has entered compound on two occasions but it is not known if anyone of the hostages were taken away from the compound. Based on their conversations [less than 1 line not declassified] hostages appear to be well-fed and shortages of food in city have not affected them.

C. Location of Hostages.² The hostages are located in two areas. [less than 1 line not declassified] perhaps four to five of the hostages are kept in the Ambassador's residence. Will attempt to determine from subject exact location within residence, but we are not sure they know. FYI. Four Iranian female guards cover the kitchen area. Subject said that hostages in the residence are often the Marine guards and they are rotated periodically. Can only speculate that they might be assisting [less than 1 line not declassified] in general KP duties. Bulk of hostages are in Embassy offices proper—they are split up between basement, first and second floors.

D. Strength of Guard and Their Readiness. Guard force formerly consisted of three units: Khomeini Revolutionary Guards, Iranian Air Force and the militant students. Air Force guards no longer present and compound is guarded by two remaining groups. Headquarters of Khomeini guards is the house formerly occupied by Mister Moore, the admin officer. The Khomeini guards total approximately forty—rpt forty. Khomeini guards mount guard duty only outside—repeat outside—the compound area. The militant students: Their headquarters are in small building located inside compound bordering on deadend street called "Coutche Bijan." This is right of house occupied by subject.

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 8, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, I 380-458 Rice Bowl JTF Message Traffic (22–25 Apr 80). Top Secret; Limdis.

² In his memoir, Turner noted that the mission received "splendid good luck" when a CIA agent serendipitously encountered a cook from the Embassy leaving Iran on a commercial flight from Tehran to Rome. After landing, the agent questioned the cook, who provided useful eyewitness information on the location of the hostages. This information was sent immediately to Vaught at Wadi Kena and to Beckwith, who modified his rescue plan to "now concentrate his forces on the chancery with greater confidence." (Turner, *Terrorism and Democracy*, p. 118)

There are approximately twenty—repeat twenty—militant students in that apartment house. To left of subject's apartment house there is another apartment house—three stories high—which normally houses approximately six Iranian female guards, those female guards who are on night duty.

E. Areas Patrolled. Areas patrolled by militant students are: 1. Embassy building where there are approximately one guard for each hostage or approximately 45. 2. Ambassador's residence—approximately six guards including four female guards for kitchen area mentioned above. 3. The militant students also control the interior of the compound with emphasis on gates, exits, and around the Embassy building. These latter guards number approximately 100. There are also five to ten militant student guards near the gate to the compound in the vicinity of the Bijan Gate. In all, militant students total approximately 175 at any given time.

F. Status of Alert. All those mentioned above have weapons but subject unable to designate just what kind of weapons. The guards, according to subject, appear very alert and "keyed up."

[Omitted here is the remainder of the telegram.]

265. Editorial Note

President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski wrote in his memoir: "On April 23, the day before the rescue mission, Carter decided that no concurrent attacks on other targets would be undertaken." He added that President Jimmy Carter also decided that during the following day, D-day, he would conduct business as usual in the Oval Office, I would operate out of my office, and Brown would be in touch with me from DOD, while General Jones would conduct the operation from the National Military Command Center." (Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, page 496)

In his memoir, Carter notes that on April 23 he "received a last-minute intelligence briefing about Iran, encapsulating information received from all available sources. The substance was that there was little prospect of the hostages' release within the next five or six months, and that everything was favorable for the rescue mission. Our agents in and around Tehran were very optimistic." He met with Senator Robert Byrd (D–West Virginia) that evening about notifying Congress. They went over a bipartisan list of senators "who should be notified of any secret operation of this type. I had planned to let him know about the impending rescue mission at the end of this conversation, but now I decided to brief him and the others during the following night, after our team was actually in place and ready to enter Tehran. I therefore told him that such an operation was imminent, but not when it would be launched." (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, page 513–514)

According to an August 28 memorandum from Colonel Stebbins and an updated paper attached to the memorandum, the following taped conversations occurred April 24–25 between Joint Task Force headquarters at Wadi Kena and the White House. Because of secrecy requirements, normal recording capabilities were not used. Instead, a portable cassette recorder was connected to the secure instrument provided for dedicated point-to-point contact. The recorder required manual start-stop for each transmission and, therefore, had no electronic means of establishing the time for each call. Stebbins also provided codenames used for other people engaged in the calls. (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–02–0007, J–3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, L14–19 Telephone Conversations)

The following excerpt is pages 11–12 of a 24-page transcript labeled 2808 Tape #1 Side One. All brackets except those denoting text not declassified are in the original:

Carter: Hi David.

Jones: Yes sir, Mr. President. Much clearer.

Carter: David, my question was how close is the nearest settlement or town to Desert One.

Jones: We are . . . I don't know that information . . . I asked them for a full (plot out) (phonetic) on it. It appears in the rough map I have here it's quite a distance to the first town.

Carter: Yes. Quite a distance, OK. That was the question I tried to ask but couldn't get through.

Jones: OK. I've got the book map here and we're just trying . . . we want to know which way it's . . . the truck was going and information of that nature . . . and if the 41 people . . . where they may have been going, leaving home and going to a place like Teheran or something may be expected at home, whatever the . . . we're trying to figure out where the closest gendarmerie station. We've got the report as of a few minutes ago that about 40 minutes after the supposed truck fire gendarmerie were still not up on the network as of now.

Carter: Yes. And you don't have any report on the helicopter's location?

Jones: Well one report that they have passed the point of no return and the fuel to the carrier . . . the six have and that means they were only within 30 minutes out from the landing point, I should be getting a report at anytime on the helicopter in . . . and the refueling.

Carter: OK.

Jones: There's a small town about 15 miles through the roads here to the west . . . it is much further over to the northeast depending on which way the truck was going. It is still . . . it is quite a ways to (NAIENE) (phonetic) and (YAZDEH) (phonetic) where the . . . it will be over 100 miles where we would expect the gendarmerie major post to be. We're listening to all of those and there's no report. But there is this town . . . we're trying to figure out whether those would be any communications out of this little town of (ALI ABAD) (phonetic).

Carter: David, just as a matter of intent . . . do you recall why we decided to land just adjacent to a highway?

Jones: It's not a highway, sir, it's that little road . . . the only place we've been able to find, so for that we could land the 130s . . . and we looked and looked and looked and it's the only place we found. We looked at another one and hoped to land there, and . . . we just did not find any place to land. We have speculated that if we had some delay or something to send the Otter back in if we could find another place. But we had not found another place to land, and the alternatives were (NAIENE) (phonetic) to go ahead and seize the field, or to go to this place.

Carter: OK. If you have any further reports just send them to Dr. Brzezinski.

Jones: All right sir, I've been . . . Harold told me . . . All right, I'll do that. Harold told me to keep him informed. I have been as soon as I get information.

Carter: Oh yeah . . . I was just going to be leaving for a while, that's why I said that.

Jones: All right, sir,

Carter: And I'll check with Zbig. Thank you.

Jones: OK sir. Bye.

(electronic click)

(new call)

Inman: . . . of the helicopter. Again, it's on the field from which they normally do night ops. It's a long way nonetheless from the desert site. And again, our best guess at this point is that it is because of the Iraqi situation that they are doing the flight. On the two reports, which are hopefully down to you now, on the gendarmerie, one of those is certainly at . . . over in Region 4 at the Iraq border. [*4½ lines not declassified*]. My sense is that if they . . . if this was centered over there where (Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–02–0007, J–3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, L14–19 Telephone Conversations)

The following excerpt is pages 4–8 of a 25-page transcript labeled 2808 Tape #2 Side One. All brackets except those denoting text not declassified are in the original:

[electronic click] [new call]

Jones: General Jones.

Voice B: Yes sir. This is the White House operator. Just a moment for the President please.

Jones: OK. [pause]

Carter: David?

Jones: Yes sir. The news is not as good as I indicated to you a few minutes ago. A RH–53 getting . . . trying to get out of Desert One ran into a C–130. The only report we have is there's some burns and injuries to people . . . our people.

Carter: This was on the ground?

Jones: On the ground . . . as the report . . . on the ground there at Desert One. Still sketchy report. And some burns and injuries and people . . . we assume in the 130, but we haven't got whether it's in the 130 or the RH–53. They are taking them out and putting them on . . . [words indistinct] . . . on 130s and evacuate them to Masirah. We have no idea how many or how serious. We will try to get that as soon as we can.

Carter: Uh huh.

Jones: The other part about it is that . . . it appears the report we got from the carrier on the identification of 8 crews was not accurate.

Talking with Vaught we have only been able to determine with certainty 7 of the crews from the helicopters. It's likely that one helicopter is down, probably they think with mechanical trouble someplace down in the southern part of Iran. We're doing everything we can to figure out the identification of it . . . figure out a rescue way, but it looks as though we do not have the eighth helicopter crew identified. They talked with the helicopter crews at the Desert One and they said there are six there. The seventh is returning to the carrier from having landed down below . . . they think the other one went down from mechanical trouble, which probably means they are on the ground and can be retrieved though.

Carter: Now can we detect them on the ground . . . can we find them on the ground?

Jones: We should be able to if they landed OK . . . we should be able to with radios and the rest . . . to be able to find them. We're going to try every effort to see . . . to locate them, to include the helicopters that are coming back to the coast . . . to pick up radios, NSA to try to pick up any radio contact from them. They should be able to pick them up, should be able to get them if everything goes OK. But we are expending all of our efforts towards two things. Getting the people out of Desert One, and two, to identify this eighth crew and get it rescued. I have talked to Admiral Long, who's talking to the carrier task force commander to do everything they can to avoid any casualties on Iranians, and only as a last resort to engage. In that regard, because of the endangering of our hostages. Still the report . . . and of course it's still sketchy until we get everybody figured out . . . that there were no Iranians that were killed or injured at Desert One, but we'll have to confirm that a little later.

Carter: Is everyone off the ground now at Desert One?

Jones: No, they are having to . . . it's been I guess 15 or 20 minutes since I talked to Vaught . . . they may be off the ground, but they were having to move everybody from that 130 to another 130, and helicopter and 130 people had to get off. I would expect them to be off fairly shortly. I asked him for a report as soon as they all get off and headed south. I will pass that word on.

Carter: OK. Thank you David.

Jones: Yes sir.

[electronic click] [new call]

Long: Long speaking.

Johnson: Ah sir, General Johnson here. The Chairman asked me to check, sir, if we had a confirmation on the one helicopter making it back to the *Nimitz* sir.

Long: We have not received a report yet that they . . . the first helo is back aboard *Nimitz*.

Johnson: All right sir. Thank you sir.

Long: All right. Good bye.

Johnson: Good bye sir.

[electronic click] [new call]

Long: . . . as of 2300Z

Johnson: Yes sir.

Long: Reference C–130/helo accident refers. All helos being destroyed/left. All crews coming out in C–130s with some casualties. Number unknown. That's paragraph one. Got that?

Johnson: Yes sir. That all . . . I understand they are destroying all helos?

Long: All helos being destroyed/left. It is they are being destroyed or left.

Johnson: Those that could not fly out. All right sir.

Long: General, I'm giving you what [CURTSY] saying. I don't know that.

Johnson: All right sir.

Long: All crews coming out in C–130 with some casualties. Numbers unknown. Paragraph two. No additional tankers available at Diego Garcia. Additional tanking must come from Wadi Kena. Two KC–135 on station. One boom rigged for C–130. One rigged basket for TACAIR with 28,000 pounds. Basket KC–135 can stay until 250530Z if recovered [SEEB] (phonetic) Oman. Paragraph 3. BLUEBEARD . . . BLUEBEARD 5 on board Nimitz. That's it.

Johnson: All right sir. Thank you sir.

Long: So the first helo is back aboard. And as soon as you tell the Chairman that, call me back. I've got another message for you.

Johnson: All right sir. Thank you, sir.

Long: Good bye.

[electronic click] [new call]

Johnson: General Johnson.

Voice C: Yes sir. Is General Jones there for the President?

Johnson: Yes sir . . . [word indistinct].

Voice C: Beg pardon?

Johnson: Yes, General Jones is here.

Voice C: Thank you.

Jones: Yes

Voice C: General Jones, one moment for the President, please sir.

Jones: Yes. Uh huh. [pause]

[indistinct voices in background]

Voice C: Go ahead, gentlemen.

Carter: Hello?

Jones: Yes sir, Mr President.

Carter: Heard anything else?

Jones: Yes sir. I just got a report from General Vaught. He's on the other phone now, but let me just give you a run down. He believes that all Americans who are alive are off the ground. That is his report.

Carter: All Americans who are what?

Jones: He said who are alive. There are some who evidently were fatalities there. Here is his report. He said it's unsure until they sort it out . . . what they have done is because of the problem of the helicopter and the departure of time . . . and the daylight flyout, they have decided to take everybody out in the 130s and to leave the helicopters there because of the risk of losing people.

Carter: OK. All right.

Jones: Their estimate is that one helicopter crew . . . the one that was involved in the accident . . . the crew . . . the missing . . . probably died in the accident.

Carter: Yes . . . I . . .

Jones: Probably five, they think one got out, that the . . . in the EC-130 . . . when the helicopter hit it up in that part, the pilot is believed missing and presumed dead. And some passengers . . . the passengers most got out, but there may have been some trapped in there. And they haven't been able to make an exact accounting. They just went around and made sure that everyone they could get a hold of got aboard and get them out. They don't believe that anybody remained . . . except fatality . . . but the accounting is very very poor. As to right now they have to sort it out as to what . . . what the situation would be. The . . . if they all left now . . . it's about 2 and one half hours to coast with the . . . with the MC-130s and another hour and a half up to . . . down to Masirah. We are getting air MEDEVAC aircraft into Masirah . . . the one out of Daharan so that there will be the medical treatment there when they arrive. We . . . one helicopter is back on the carrier . . . the one that I reported earlier, and the eighth crew is still unaccounted for. We are doing everything we can to determine the rescue of it. Over.

Carter: I understand.

Jones: And we will try to get an accounting as soon as we can . . . on the accident and how many got out. It will be a little different with the 130s coming out . . . come out somewhat faster . . . better . . . and fewer . . . so the risks of them being attacked probably less . . . less than having both helicopters and 130s coming out.

Carter: Yes, David. Thank you.

Jones: Yes sir.

[electronic click] [new call]

Davis: . . . Therefore imperative that crew returning to *Nimitz* . . . BLUEBEARD 5 be debriefed as to what occurred enroute as soon as possible, and information passed to CINCPAC. Specific questions: Can all 8 helo crews be accounted for? Were there any personnel casualties in the helo/130 collision? Now, you've already answered (Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–02–0007, J–3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, L14–19 Telephone Conversations)

The following excerpt is pages 17–22 of a 25-page transcript labeled 2808 Tape #2 Side Two. All brackets except those denoting text not declassified are in the original:

Inman: Right.

Jones: The other thing about it is we want to keep the visibility as low as possible. We want to have as few people know it . . . particularly Iranians . . . until they discover something, because we've got to get those 130s out, which will transpire in a couple of hours . . . but we got that one helicopter crew unaccounted for we need to rescue [2 lines not declassified].

Inman: [less than 1 line not declassified]

Jones: [2 lines not declassified]

Inman: We'll continue to do it.

Jones: OK.

Inman: Thank you.

Jones: Bye.

[new call]

Voice E: . . . for the President sir.

Jones: OK. [pause] Yes sir.

Carter: Hi David.

Jones: The update is that all of the 5 130s are enroute out. The last one should cross the coast in an hour and about 5 minutes.

Carter: About 8:10 our time.

Jones: Yes sir. Landing in two hours and 40 minutes . . . something around just before 10:00 our time down at Masirah. The first airplanes should be on the ground sometime before that. They came out early.

Carter: So the last one should be on the ground about 10 o'clock?

Jones: Should be by 10 o'clock, yes sir. Five coming out. The best . . . and again they'll have to count everything up . . . but they believe there were 4 crew members of the RH–53 lost in the accident, one pilot of the 130, and one other in the rear for a total of 6 fairly confirmed.

There may be others who are missing from that group. We have aero MEDEVAC airplanes . . . we had at Dhaharan one positioned for the next day . . . and a C-9 special with whole blood coming out of Germany to go into Wadi Kena to meet. We have report from [*less than 1 line not declassified*] . . . we're not sure . . . may be from the helicopter crew that is missing, however their first report is that they cannot get a location on it yet. So we're working on an expedited basis on that [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and the whole business of trying to rescue that crew that're down.

Carter: How would we go about that David?

Jones: Well, probably with that RH-53 we now have back and refueled on the *Nimitz*. They also have other helicopters. That would be the quickest thing. We are also . . . we had loaded aboard C-5 in New Mexico . . . launching some special RH-53s that we did not launch ahead of time because it would tip the hand of the whole operation. But if it becomes very complex they are better. But it appears that the *Nimitz* could pick up in the rescue . . . from the *Nimitz* . . . with its helicopters if we could find out where the crew is located. So that's where . . . now it appears that everybody's airborne out of Desert One and getting close to the coast. We're really concentrating on trying to find that crew. And also be sure to get those 5 aircraft across the coast without being intercepted.

Carter: Now David one thing we don't want to do is compound the problem by having a major pitched air battle over Iran.

Jones: Yes sir. I had told that to . . .

Carter: We need to think this through if we know where that crew is on the ground, how to go about getting them out.

Jones: Yes sir. Well when we find it I'll talk with you or with Harold and we'll make sure we've got a well organized plan to get in and to get it out. I told Harold one thing we wanted to do the better choice we have [*1½ lines not declassified*] to get this helicopter crew picked up. We have no report [*less than 1 line not declassified*] any alerting of anybody anyplace.

Carter: That's unbelievable, isn't it?

Jones: Yes sir.

Carter: Someone just walked through the office watching TV. They're apparently having massive riots on the street over there in Tehran because of other altercations, and they said the streets in Tehran looked almost like they did when the Shah fell.

Jones: I hadn't heard that. I know there was a lot of fighting in and around the Iraqi border, and many people killed over there that we'd gotten earlier. Things have quieted down now as far as all of the gendarmerie out in the country.

Carter: David let's leave it this way. I'm not going to say anything or do anything until we clear it with you. And before you all firm up any part of air intrusion into Iran again make sure you have the clearance from me and Harold.

Jones: Yes sir.

Carter: Because I'm going to ask Harold to stay here with me.

Jones: Well . . . we will and I've got . . . we're working the aftermath problem but we can. All my colleagues have been here and . . . one thing that I have authorized CINCPAC to do is to have the ships that are in the . . . and we had planned to do this after the operation revealed . . . ships in the Persian Gulf that are at sea to move on down out so that . . .

Carter: Yes.

Jones: It will take awhile . . . but the *LaSalle* is in port and would stay in port in Bahrain . . . it can't sail now for quite awhile and we think it's safe in port . . . but the others to come on down and try to avoid any confrontation. One thing that came in as a recommendation . . . which I recommend against . . . that is on the destruction of those helicopters . . . the problem is if we try to destroy and go into the middle of the country we might get there before people get there, but you can never be sure.

Carter: I wouldn't worry about that. If we send a gun ship in there, there would probably be more complications.

Jones: It would probably be an A-6 sir, but I do not recommend . . .

Carter: An A-6 or anything . . . I was . . .

Jones: . . . recommend for it . . .

Carter: Let's not do it, because if there are hundreds of Iranians all over those helicopters looking at them as a curiosity . . . you know we're going to wind up with a bunch of Iranian casualties.

Jones: I agree.

Carter: So let's not do that.

Jones: We're working our best . . . I recommend not and we will not.

Carter: OK. We'll charge them for the helicopter later.

Jones: All right sir.

Carter: OK David. Thank you.

Jones: That's all I have.

Carter: David?

Jones: Yes sir?

Carter: One other thing . . . we've got a problem and a fairly substantial time delay in getting any part of message to GHOTBZADEH

and BANI-SADR . . . and what we'd like to do as soon as you all . . . you might want to think of this independent of us . . . we've got to go through the Swiss and things have to be translated into French and so forth . . . and so we've got at least a couple of hours delay in getting him a message. And I need to let him know as soon as possible that we had planned a rescue operation . . . we had canceled it when we had a collision between . . . an accident involving our own aircraft. So far as we know there are no Iranian casualties and that we . . . that all Americans have been withdrawn. We don't want to have them think we're invading Iran and have them all of a sudden go on a bloodbath against Americans over there.

Jones: Uh huh. Yes I think though they will . . . it will take them quite awhile if they don't see the 130s coming out or anything like that . . . to get out to those helicopters and then look at them and identify them as American . . . and not . . . they were all painted . . . and to get inside them . . . there are things we had to abandon . . . we're not sure what they've . . . abandoned in there . . . but I think there will be a considerable time period before they're really aware of it. I think we'll have a few hours . . .

Carter: Yes.

Jones: . . . and so we are working that and we will be alert to that.

Carter: Let me know . . . let me know immediately when you hear anything about . . . [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. David it's better for you to call . . . we're all here in my little black office . . . it's Signal 176 . . . and then just tell me to pick up the secure phone, if you want to call me.

Jones: OK. Signal 176 and then ask you to pick up secure.

Carter: Yeah. One other thing David. Do you have anyway yet to know what American bodies were left in there?

Jones: No we do not. We . . . they had report of one body, but it was confused if whether the body was taken out. The intent would have been to bring the bodies out.

Carter: I know. I understand they were completely burned.

Jones: They said they were missing . . . I think there may be one body coming and the other 5 missing, but that is clearly not determined as yet.

Carter: OK. I'll be sitting here by the phone.

Jones: Yes sir. Thank you.

[electronic click]

[new call]

Jones: . . . the other one we got back through [CURTSY] which we're still not sure of indicated that 7 were coming back from Desert

One and one had already arrived back at the *Nimitz*. We will assume for now there is a crew down. The main thing is to get . . . we'll ask when the 130s come out. We got a report from [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. We don't want though any egress or penetration of Iranian territory with a search mission until we sort things out a little better . . . is the crew down, where is it down, some debriefing and that, and figure out our rescue operation. Over.

Long: All right. I understand. I'm now satisfied there was only one crew aboard the helo that has returned to *Nimitz*.

Jones: Yeah.

Long: We have . . . we are trying to find out through both your office as well as [CURTSY] how many crews are actually in the 130s. And we have accepted the SAR mission and we are going to [CURTSY] to tell him to give us plans . . . do not execute at this time . . . but give us plans for a search plan considering egress and no egress. Now we're pretty well convinced here . . . or I am . . . that the nature of the beeper is such that it would be impossible to detect it in any range in excess of 50 miles. And probably considerably less from where we are out in the Gulf. So that would appear if there is in fact a helo down that the only way we would be able to detect that beeper . . . other than overhead system . . . would be actually overflying Iranian territory. We will not do that until we get some other indication that that's what is required.

Jones: OK. I agree. Maybe if they can hide out by dark comes again that RH-53 that's got all the overnight capability . . . the night capability might do it. Maybe the 130s coming out can get some indication on beepers. And also when the crews land we ought to be able to get some indication of when that helicopter dropped out. If it just flat dropped out of the sky it most likely crashed. If he aborted because of maintenance trouble he should have told somebody he was going down with (Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-02-0007, J-3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, L14-19 Telephone Conversations)

The following excerpt is pages 5-8 of a 23-page transcript labeled 2808 Tape #3 Side One. All brackets except those denoting text not declassified are in the original:

Voice A: Yes sir, we can.

Jones: OK. [pause] Ah . . . Two C-130s have arrived at Masi-rah. . .

Carter: Uh huh.

Jones: . . . and the three . . . the same kind . . . will coast out about 15 minutes from now and landing about an hour and 45 minutes from now . . . the last ones. We got a medical evacuation airplane that should be landing ahead of it . . . still uncertain as to number of . . . the . . .

people that were casualties at Desert One. That's just . . . they won't know until they get on the ground at Masirah and count up everybody. We now believe . . . and it's highly likely . . . we keep getting confusing reports . . . but it's highly likely that that eighth helicopter crew is on the 130. They just haven't been able to confirm it . . . it's been on again, off again . . . through one channel we get a confirmation, through the other channel an uncertainty . . . but when they land in an hour and 45 minutes, shortly thereafter we should know. So I would say better than 50-50 that the eighth crew . . . so we won't have a rescue mission to perform, but that's still uncertain.

Carter: Well, if that materializes that will be the first good news that we've had tonight.

Jones: Yes sir.

Carter: Any disturbance in Iran yet?

Jones: I just talked with Admiral Inman and he said everything is very quiet. Nothing . . .

Carter: I cannot understand that.

Jones: Nothing at all.

Carter: David, can you explain to me now . . . we're getting down to the point where I'm going to have to start notifying . . . you know . . . members of Congress . . . and even telling the American people. It's getting to . . . it's not crucial, it's getting more and more urgent. *[1½ lines not declassified]*

Jones: *[4½ lines not declassified]*

Carter: I'll hold.

Jones: The belief here is that they will . . . get working together today and it's getting . . . it's light over there now . . .

Carter: It is?

Jones: *[4½ lines not declassified]*

Carter: *[1 line not declassified]*

Jones: *[4 lines not declassified]*

Carter: *[1 line not declassified]*

Jones: *[8½ lines not declassified]*

Carter: *[7 lines not declassified]*

Jones: *[3½ lines not declassified]*

Carter: *[1 line not declassified]*

Jones: *[1 line not declassified]*

Carter: *[1 line not declassified]*

Jones: *[1 line not declassified]*

Carter: *[1 line not declassified]*

Jones: *[1 line not declassified]*

Carter: [1 line not declassified]

Jones: [7½ lines not declassified]

Carter: [2 lines not declassified]

Jones: [1 line not declassified]

Carter: [1½ lines not declassified]

Jones: [1½ lines not declassified]

Carter: [1 line not declassified]

Jones: [1 line not declassified]

Carter: [1 line not declassified]

Jones: [9 lines not declassified]

Carter: [3½ lines not declassified]

Jones: [1 line not declassified]

Carter: Sure, I got you. OK, well I'll be here if you need me.

Jones: There's one thing I would suggest be considered as to what to tell the Omanis . . .

Carter: Yes, Cy and Warren are working on that.

Jones: What we'd planned to do is attempt to transfer the people . . . particularly with the burned one injured . . . but transfer the people and get them to Wadi Kena . . . so they're not on the ground down there . . . to get back to better care . . . and to get them out of Masirah . . . but it's likely to be some . . . some discovery there.

Carter: OK. There's two things . . . just to summarize . . . the obvious. There's two things I need to know about. One is that eighth helicopter . . . the crew. And the other one if the alarm is raised.

Jones: [6½ lines not declassified]

Carter: OK.

Jones: . . . specifically can be the better.

Carter: [less than 1 line not declassified] I'll try to take care of my advisors over here. OK?

Jones: All right sir.

Carter: Thank you David.

[electronic click] (Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–02–0007, J–3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, L14–19 Telephone Conversations)

The following excerpt is pages 15–18 of a 23-page transcript labeled 2808 Tape #3 Side Two. All brackets except those denoting text not declassified are in the original:

Brown: We're not considering that, at least not very . . . not so soon . . . but you couldn't get these back.

Jones: Yet again . . . but the visibility of it. I'm inclined to agree . . .

Brown: All right.

Jones: . . . that we go ahead and start moving them back tomorrow if that's OK.

Brown: Yeah . . . let me check here, but that's my inclination. Very strong inclination. OK. See . . . the Vice President is here and would like to talk to you a little. Then, after that, maybe you could get John [COUSTAY] (phonetic) to call me back over here . . . I'll be in the Cabinet Room or reachable there . . . with his ideas about the sheath of things he sent over in the way of messages that we would send out. The only one I would propose to send out now, suitably modified, is the CINC's alert message. I don't think it makes sense now to tell the Pakistanis, the Omanis, and the Indians to stay away from our ships.

Jones: I agree.

Brown: OK. Here's the Vice President.

Mondale: David, I just wanted some information. If you're busy in an operational sense just call me back.

Jones: No, I'm not busy right now. If I get a hot call or something . . . [words indistinct]

Mondale: Yeah, sure. As I understand it our planes have now cleared Iranian territory.

Jones: That is correct. We still have an uncertainty as to one of the helicopter crews.

Mondale: Uh huh. But everyone that was at Desert One got in the 130s . . . has left and has cleared Iranian territory.

Jones: Yes sir. We had an unfortunate accident at Desert One, where a helicopter ran into a 130 and they both caught fire, and it appears that all but one crew member on the helicopter is a fatality and a small number . . . maybe the pilot and one or two . . . we're not sure . . . in the back on the 130 from that accident and until they get back and sort it out we won't be sure. But a small number . . . caused by an accident there as they were getting ready to leave.

Mondale: What do you estimate? Six dead?

Jones: Well . . . that's so uncertain right now. I would say that's . . . that's about what we know about, but there may be some others missing or dead from that accident.

Mondale: Yeah . . . ah . . . what about the helicopter crew that we've had trouble finding?

Jones: Well, we think it's aboard the 130, but we're not sure. It was confusion as to . . . out of Desert One we got a report that there were only 6 crews there. Then a report . . . no, there were seven crews, and that one got picked up. We have one crew, the eighth one, that had landed and then went back to the *Nimitz*.

Mondale: Uh huh.

Jones: Arrived *Nimitz* about an hour or so ago. He reported that his indication is that there were seven, and one had been picked up. We won't know for sure . . . and I would say better than 50–50 that this seventh helicopter crew is aboard the 130s, but certainly not a high assurance. It should land . . . the 130 should land at Masirah in about 40 minutes and then they're going to . . . General Gast is going to meet . . . check everybody as they get off and see who's missing and . . . one of the first things we do is whether that helicopter crew is there. If it's not, then we've got to . . . a rescue . . . problem of trying to find it without penetrating . . . we then trying to do things through NSA and others to . . . get some indication of where it is . . . the radio beacons . . . we'd earlier had the indication of a beacon . . . but that could be spurious. We got quite a few of those.

Mondale: If, in fact, the crew is aboard, presumably the craft had to land because it was stricken . . . another chopper picked them up and took them on to Desert One, huh?

Jones: That's what the feeling is, the most probable thing now . . . but still not a certainty.

Mondale: Uh huh.

Jones: When they had the accident and the delay and the time that they had [words indistinct due to Mondale's breathing] they decided all to come in the 130s . . . supposed to fly helicopters . . .

Mondale: They just left them behind. . . did they blow them up?

Jones: No . . . for a number of reasons. One is they didn't have time . . . it was the primary reason. And I would guess another reason . . . at least if I had a 130 problem and had to go back . . .

Mondale: You . . . you might need them. Yeah.

Jones: What it looks like now in the post mortem is that everything would have worked well . . . we lost from a reliability standpoint . . . three of our eight helicopters . . . and a determination had been made that if we lose more than 2 of the 8 before we leave Desert One . . . the probability of losing one more was very high . . . and therefore the mission couldn't be accomplished . . . so that . . . so for want of the nail was three of eight helicopters [voice smothered over by Mondale's breathing] . . . the mission.

Mondale: And we'd flown these helicopters all over the country successfully, hadn't we?

Jones: Well, we have . . . those had been on the *Nimitz* since last December or so but they've been flying off the *Nimitz*, and the crews went out about a week ahead of time and did some flying on these helicopters. But they were different ones than we had in the States because we shipped those out many many months ago. We've been

working on them and been flying them out there and . . . but it's just one of those things . . . the reliability impacted on the mission . . .

Mondale: We just got two bad breaks, that's all.

Jones: It looks as though that . . . there's no tip off from that desert landing as yet, and we're surprised, but these vehicles . . . and the vehicle that drove through evidently didn't report anything.

Mondale: It's hard to believe, isn't it.

Jones: Well if I were a person over there and I wasn't sure if you put your head above water you'd get your head chopped off . . . that if I were some poor guy out in the country I'm not sure I just wouldn't drive home . . . you don't know who's there and what it's all about, and that sort of thing.

Mondale: Yeah.

Jones: So, I . . . we thought maybe there was a good chance he wouldn't report. Now, the bus load of 41 people . . . we don't know if this bus was still OK and that they are heading to town or that they are . . . the bus was disabled and they're waiting for the next vehicle to come by or what. There were more vehicles than we thought. We knew there were vehicles coming down that road. We had expected that on a Thursday night . . . a holiday . . . weekend there would be fewer road . . . vehicles in the middle of the night. We did have the expectation there would be some and the roadblock was set up for stopping of the vehicles. But he hasn't tipped off yet, so we'd have been up in the hideout now, and everything was total green at that way . . . bedded down, and things were going. But the reliability . . . once we aborted, when you do that sort of thing . . . confusion increases and the unfortunate accident.

Mondale: I suppose people get so damned distressed and disappointed that they sometimes lose their efficiency too, don't they?

Jones: We may never know, but we'll try to find out what happened . . .

Mondale: Sure.

Jones: . . . helicopter running into that 130 out there. It looked as though . . . if we accept the uncertainty of that helicopter . . . which we think now is probably aboard that 130, we could have gotten all our people out. We don't have any indication of any casualties among the Iranians right now . . .

Mondale: Uh huh. OK, thank you very much David.

Jones: You're welcome, sir.

Mondale: Right, Bye. (Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-02-0007, J-3 DDSO, Box 7, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, L14-19 Telephone Conversations)

266. Chart Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, undated

TIME (ZULU)	PLANNED	ACTUAL EVENTS	IRANIAN REACTIONS
Tehran = ZULU + 4½			
24 April			
1410–1517	Three MC–130's with DELTA team depart Masirah for Desert Strip 1 (DS1).		
1500		Eight helo's take off from carrier	
1506	Seven helo's depart carrier		
1511–1519	Three SC–130's depart Masirah for DS1, as refuelers for helo's		
1600			[9 lines not declassified]
ca. 1700		Two helo's down in mountains about 275 miles inside Iran on flight path	
1810–1917	3 MC–130's with DELTA arrive DS1		
ca. 1815		More aircraft down. No further details	
ca. 1855		Second group up again. One of first two up again, may be on way to DS1.	
1915		MG Vaught requests L70 stop filing situation reports	
1920	3 SC–130's with fuel for helo's arrive DS1		
1930	7 helo's arrive DS1		
1930		Bus with people on board has been stopped at DS1. Fuel truck stopped DS1. Two C–130's on ground. Six helo's en route.	

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1. No classification marking. The "Source of Data" column between the "Time" and "Planned" columns is omitted.

TIME (ZULU)	PLANNED	ACTUAL EVENTS	IRANIAN REACTIONS
1955		Trouble at DS1. Vehicle evaded roadblock. Injured	
2010	7 helo's depart DS1 for Helo Landing Strip		
2020	Final MC130 departs DS1 for Masirah		
2022	3 SC-130's depart DS1 for Masirah		
2055		DELTA and six helo's at DS1. Tankers can stay to 2130Z. Op not yet abandoned. DELTA refueling and awaiting final decision.	
2150		Provides report on Tabas Gendarmerie post to DELTA	
2210		Mission has aborted. Forces being extracted.	
2220	7 helo's with DELTA land at HLS		
2228		CHARLEY/1 notified of abort. He rogered on PT 25 and ceased transmission.	
2235		Some aircraft have departed DS1. Milsat circuitry down. [1 line not declassified]	
2243		Ground collision between helo and C-130. Order had already been given to destroy inoperable helo	
2250	7 helo's with DELTA depart HLS for mountain hideout		
2327		Milsat circuitry up. Cease relaying NSA traffic	
25 April 0157		Helo crews had map coordinates for warehouse.	

TIME (ZULU)	PLANNED	ACTUAL EVENTS	IRANIAN REACTIONS
0315		Recommends against destructive strike against abandoned aircraft.	
0322			[24 lines not declassified]
0350			
0427			
0510			
0621			
0657			
0700			
0752			
0752			
0814			
0944			Tehran Radio's first report cites Press Secretary Powell's statement
1000			Iranian Army says two US planes collided while Iran AF plane was chasing them.
1011			First commentary by Tehran Radio says planes down and helo's stuck in mud.
1154			Khorassan Governor General put out widespread roadblock order
1154			Tehran Gend gets report that area has been inspected. Five helo's plus another helo sighted. At least one other aircraft.
1155			Vienna Austria radio carries live report from its correspond- ent who claims Iran

TIME (ZULU)	PLANNED	ACTUAL EVENTS	IRANIAN REACTIONS
1425			JGS learned of event when he called them. Tehran Radio has report on bus passengers from Tabas
1454			Gendarmerie Students at Embassy say report is a lie.
2000	DELTA assaults Embassy		
2100			77 Division reports 65 men ready to travel Tabas to relieve Gendarmerie
2210	C-141's with hostages and DELTA depart Manzarieh		
26 April 0211			CG, 77 Division files detailed report. Notes civilian tanker seen transporting fuel. Not captured. No traces this tanker
0545			Men of 148 Bn, 77 Div stopped at Tabas because of inoperable bus.
0631 Evening			Khalkhali in area CO and 200 men of 23 SpF Brigade at Tabas airport.
28 April 1906Z			Iran intel reporter says 3 low-flying aircraft seen in Chah Bahar area on 24 April

TIME (ZULU)	PLANNED	ACTUAL EVENTS	IRANIAN REACTIONS
2029Z			Iranian Gendarmerie ordered to search for helo down about 60 km from coast.

267. After Action Report¹

Washington, undated

RESCUE MISSION REPORT

The Countdown

12 to 24 April 1980

On 12 April, CJCS instructed COMJTF to finalize planning for deployment of the force. COMJTF recommended Thursday, 24 April, based on many considerations, a primary one being moon illumination.

A series of interrelated but separate actions were initiated, one of the more significant being a training exercise to practice helicopter refueling using one C-130 aerial tanker and four helicopters on the desert as a final verification of this capability.

On 15–16 April, COMJTF conducted a two-day meeting in the Pentagon to review the plan with commanders, affirm command and control matters, evaluate force readiness, review contingencies, and make an overall assessment of mission success should it be executed on 24 April.

On 16 April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the plan. That evening, the President approved the plan after he was briefed by COMJTF, Deputy COMJTF, and the commander of the ground rescue force.² The President stated that deployment flow should proceed with 24 April as the planning date for execution. The NCA would direct

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 1, Iranian Hostage Crisis, B104-114 Mission Abort Announce. Unclassified.

² See Document 261.

COMJTF to execute, delay, or cancel the mission based on conditions existing at the time of decision.

Through the period 19–23 April, the forces deployed. By mid-afternoon on 24 April, the forces were in place and ready for execution.

Execution and Abort

24 and 25 April 1980

On the evening of 24 April, after 5½ months of planning and training under very tight OPSEC, eight RH-53 helicopters took off from the aircraft carrier *NIMITZ* and began a journey of nearly 600 nautical miles at night and low altitude to a preselected refueling site, Desert One, in the desert. The C-130 element with the ground rescue forces was also in the execution phase on a different track and time schedule to Desert One. Approximately two hours after takeoff, the crew of Helicopter #6 received cockpit indications of an impending rotor blade failure; landed; verified the malfunction (an automatic abort situation); and abandoned their aircraft. The crew was picked by another helicopter, which then continued the mission individually.

Approximately one hour thereafter, the helicopter formation unexpectedly encountered a dust cloud of unknown size and density. The helicopters broke out of the first area of suspended dust but, within an hour, entered a second, larger and denser area. While attempting to navigate through this second area with severely degraded visibility, a second helicopter (#5) experienced a failure of several critical navigation and flight instruments. Due to progressively deteriorating flight conditions that made safe flight extremely questionable, the helicopter pilot determined that it would be unwise to continue. He aborted the mission, reversed course, and recovered on *NIMITZ*. Eventually six of the original eight helicopters arrived at the refueling site in intervals between approximately 50 minutes and 85 minutes later than planned.

While en route, a third helicopter (#2) experienced a partial hydraulic failure, but the crew elected to continue to the refueling site believing repairs could be accomplished there. Upon landing, however, the crew and the helicopter unit commander determined that the helicopter could not be repaired. A hydraulic pump had failed due to a fluid leak, and no replacement pump was available. Even if a pump had been immediately available, there was insufficient time to change it, repair the cause of the leak, service the system, and complete the next leg prior to daylight. The helicopter was unsafe to continue the mission unrepaired.

Earlier, it had been determined that a minimum of six operational helicopters would be required at the refueling site to continue the mission. Since at this point there were only five operational, the on-scene commander advised COMJTF by radio of the situation, and he

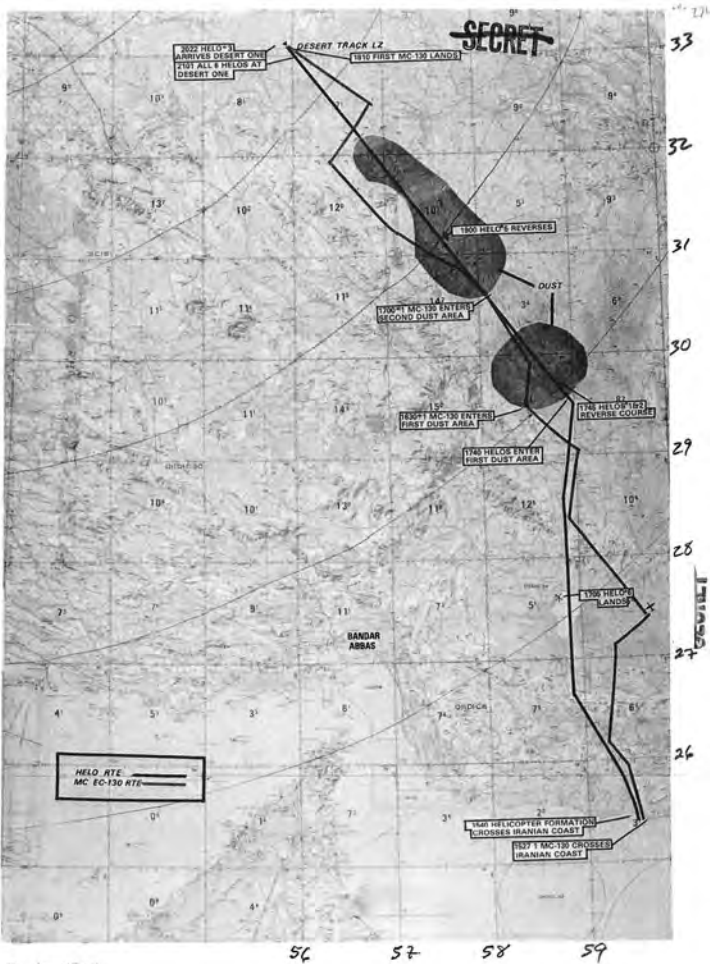
in turn communicated to Washington the status of the force and his intention to abort the operation and return to launch base. The President concurred in the decision that the mission could not continue, and preparations began for withdrawal of the five operational helicopters, the C-130s, and the rescue force.

While repositioning one helicopter to permit another to top off his fuel tanks for the return flight, the first helicopter collided with one of the refueling C-130s. Both aircraft were immediately engulfed in flames in which eight crew members died and five other members of the team were injured. Since the C-130 was loaded with members of the rescue force awaiting extraction, even greater injury and loss of life were avoided only by swift and disciplined evacuation of the burning aircraft. Shortly afterwards, ammunition aboard both aircraft began to explode. Several helicopters were struck by shrapnel from the explosion and/or the burning ammunition, and at least one and possibly more were rendered nonflyable. At this point, with time and fuel running out for the C-130s, the decision was made to transfer all helicopter crews to the remaining C-130s and to depart the area.

Attachment

Map of Rescue Mission Operations From the Iranian Border to Desert One³

Washington, undated



Declassified
A/GIS/IPS
Department of State
EO 13526
Date:

³ Secret.

268. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Switzerland¹

Washington, April 25, 1980, 0536Z

109041. For the Ambassador. Subject: Urgent Message to Bani-Sadr.

1. Secret (Entire text)

2. For Ambassador: Please deliver following message to Ruegg Foreign Office soonest. If immediate circuits not open to Ambassador Lang, request that, in view of urgency, message be telephoned.

3. We would appreciate Ambassador Lang's delivering the following message as quickly as possible to President Bani-Sadr and Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh:

4. Begin text. We want to confirm to you that last night we began to make preparations for a rescue mission to resolve the hostage crisis in Tehran. The sole purpose of this mission was to obtain the release of the hostages.

The mission was cancelled because of a malfunction and an accident involving our aircraft in a remote location in Iran, and those involved in the mission have been withdrawn from Iran. So far as we know there were no Iranian casualties.

We had commenced the preparation of this mission not because of any hostility for Iran but because of our obligation to protect the hostages.

We continue to hold the Government of Iran responsible for the safety of the hostages. End text.

Vance

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Drafted by Newsom. Approved by Christopher.

269. Editorial Note

On April 25, 1980, the White House issued a short statement on the failed hostage rescue attempt. President Jimmy Carter followed this with a longer address to the nation at 7 a.m. that morning. In his address, Carter briefly outlined the rescue mission and then explained that the rescue attempt, which had been months in the planning, was executed only when it became clear that Iranian authorities “could not or would not resolve this crisis on their own initiative.” He also stated regarding the decision to attempt the rescue and the decision to cancel the mission: “The responsibility is fully my own.” (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 771–773)

The Carter administration then continued the process of dealing with the consequences of the failed rescue operation, including engaging in correspondence with U.S. allies and congressional leadership, debating among advisers a new rescue attempt, meeting with the wounded, holding a press conference, accepting the resignation of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, and attending the burial of the returned bodies of those who died at Desert One.

Carter personally apologized to Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, Prince Fahd ibn Abd al Aziz Al Saud, the First Deputy Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and President Anwar Sadat of Egypt for using facilities on their territories as part of the rescue mission without giving them prior information. Carter assured Sultan Qaboos that he would provide “prompt assistance” if the security of Oman was jeopardized as a result of U.S. activities. And he assured Prince Fahd “of full U.S. support for the maintenance of the integrity of Saudi Arabia.” (Letters from Carter to Sultan Qaboos and to Prince Fahd, April 25; Carter Library, Plains File, Box 3 and Box 4, respectively; and telegram 109160 to Cairo, April 25; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047–2438) Qaboos was at first “angry,” then asked that the United States “do everything possible to avoid publicly linking Oman or Masirah Island to Iranian operation.” (Telegram 1151 from Muscat, April 25; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980) Sadat responded that while it was “well-known that Egypt had said it would provide facilities for such humanitarian purposes,” to avoid criticism, Egypt did not intend to say anything publicly, and if it did, any statement would be in the form of a denial. (Telegram 9284 from Cairo, April 25; *ibid.*)

Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of Defense W. Graham Claytor, and Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General John S. Pustay briefed the representatives of the U.S. allies in Washington on April 25, providing a detailed

explanation of the decision-making process. (Telegram 109502 to all NATO Capitals, et al., April 26; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880029–0131) That day Carter met with bipartisan congressional leadership from 10:35 until 11:53 a.m. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) No other record of this meeting has been found. The next day, Carter wrote to Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. and President Pro Tempore of the Senate Warren G. Magnuson, describing the operation and assuring them that he had acted within the War Powers Act. (*Public Papers: Carter 1980–81*, Book I, pages 777–779)

On April 26, from 10:30 to 11:34 a.m., Carter also met with senior advisers to consider the viability of another rescue mission. Attending were the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones, Commander of the Joint Task Force Major General James B. Vaught, Commander of Hunter Army Air Base. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary) As Turner later recalled, the meeting was chaotic. Vaught, who Turner thought should have apologized for mission failure, instead lectured Carter on how well he himself had commanded. Carter didn't respond. Turner described the discussion on ideas for a new rescue plan as unproductive. Suggestions escalated toward a full-scale invasion of Iran by several divisions, and Vaught interrupted everyone. At one point, Carter admonished "that if he could just be allowed to finish a thought," some progress might be made. Eventually, Turner wrote, Carter simply terminated the meeting in frustration. (Turner, *Terrorism and Democracy*, pages 126–127) No other record of this meeting has been found.

On April 27, a personal message from Carter was read at the memorial services for those who died during the operation, although Carter himself did not attend. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 779–780) That day, Carter met with members of the Delta Team and five Iranians who had helped in the mission. (Carter, *Keeping Faith*, page 519) Carter's remarks to the Delta Team are in Carter Library, Plains File, Box 7. On April 28, in San Antonio, Texas, he met with those wounded in action, telling reporters afterwards that he was "overwhelmed with emotion" and "filled with a sense of abhorrence and horror" over the Iranian willingness to exhibit the bodies of the dead Americans. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 786–787) His reference is to April 27 events in which the Revolutionary Guard, apparently acting under the guidance of Ayatollah Khomeini, had moved the bodies of the U.S. servicemen to the U.S. Embassy compound in Tehran. There, in front of journalists, the wrappings around the bodies were removed, revealing the charred remains. At one point,

Khalkhali held up a limb to show a wristwatch. He vowed that the bodies would not be returned to the U.S. Government because it was "unworthy." (William Branigin, "Pledge to Return Corpses in Doubt," *Washington Post*, April 28, 1980, p. A1)

On April 28, Carter accepted the resignation of Secretary of State Cyrus Vance "with regret." Carter wrote to Vance: "Because you could not support my decision regarding the rescue operation in Iran, you have made the correct decision to resign." Vance had submitted his resignation letter on April 21, prior to the rescue mission, due to differences over Iran. The exchange of letters is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 781–782. Carter announced the appointment of Senator Edmund S. Muskie as Secretary of State on April 29. (*Ibid.*, pages 791–792) On April 29, Carter gave a full press conference on the rescue mission from the East Room of the White House. (*Ibid.*, pages 792–801)

Speaking for all the hostages, Chargé and hostage Bruce Laingen expressed "respect" for Carter's "courage in the tough decisions that surrounded the rescue mission." Laingen noted that Carter "has our total understanding in the disappointment we know he feels in its forced cancellation." (Telegram 31 from Tehran to the Department of State, via the British Embassy, April 29; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables Apr 1980)

Iran eventually returned the bodies of the U.S. soldiers killed in Iran. Carter delivered the eulogy at their burials at Arlington National Cemetery on May 9. He stated:

"I speak for all Americans when I say to those who anonymously risk their lives each day to keep the peace and to maintain our military strength, and to the loved ones of those who died on the Iranian desert: Your risk, your suffering, your loss, are not in vain. I fervently pray that those who are still held hostage will be freed without more bloodshed, that all those who would use terror to impel innocent people will see the cruel futility of their criminal acts." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pages 864–865)

Covert and Overt Operations

270. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, April 27, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran—Next Steps

From the perspective of our negotiating strategy, it is essential that we build on and reinforce the central message that the U.S. is prepared to use extreme measures to get our people released. It is that underlying factor which lends credibility and urgency to all the other measures we are able to take.

Nothing builds credibility more effectively than the fact that we believe in our own minds that there are valid options available to us. The underlying assurance and singleness of purpose in the various voices of the U.S. Government over the past several weeks has been unmistakable. That is an asset which must be preserved.

Any future rescue operation *must work*. A mere demonstration that we are willing to keep trying—and failing—will do more harm than good. In any systematic evaluation of possible alternative rescue plans, several key factors must be taken into account:

—Intelligence. We must at a minimum have confidence that we know where the hostages are being held and under what conditions. I suspect, as you do, that the Iranians may be bluffing about moving the hostages. But until we can confirm that with some degree of assurance, and until we can evaluate what changes have been introduced into the security patterns at the embassy (or elsewhere), any action would be irresponsible.

—Regional Support. The Sultan of Oman is now skittish, and all other regional parties are going to watch us like a hawk. We must get our fences mended, since we cannot conduct any kind of an operation without at least tacit cooperation and access to regional facilities.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: "ZB has seen."

—Deception. The press, the Iranians, and all other observers—including the Soviets—will not be easily lulled a second time.

—Internal Unity of Purpose. Any new attempt must have the kind of dedicated purposefulness which went into the first. Certainly, an operation of this magnitude cannot be planned and run from the White House. Those who will be called upon to risk their lives must have a sense of participation. They must believe in what they are doing, not just be ordered to do it.

We learned some important lessons in the first operation. The most important was that the Iranians are as disorganized and vulnerable as we suspected. We can with some confidence deliver men and materiel to points inside Iran with considerable confidence of remaining undetected. We should absorb that fact into our future planning to look at new possibilities.

I recommend that a small group be assembled at some location (e.g. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] a Delta Team facility) for an extensive damage assessment effort. This would involve a total analysis of lessons learned, a complete assessment of assets and capabilities, and a mandate to recommend to the President alternative courses of action. This “total immersion” exercise should include, at a minimum, the key leaders of the team which made the recent attempt, the most capable and hard-nosed planners from the JCS, CIA operatives with on-the-ground experience and knowledge of overall Agency capabilities, and a few carefully selected individuals with knowledge of the political realities as well as an appreciation of the bureaucratic realities in this town. The group should be given at least a week to put something together.

There are a series of specific alternatives which this group could be asked to flesh out:

—Gradual infiltration of personnel on the ground in Tehran or vicinity, with a quick strike and evacuation by a few planes at the last minute.

—Establishment of a base camp in a tribal area or remote location in preparation for a quick “snatch” and evacuation.

—Examination of infiltration overland from Turkey by truck.

—A one-shot operation using a C-5 or several large transports with their own transportation (APCs?) operating from a location as near as possible to Tehran.

—“Commandeering” transportation from lightly guarded civilian (or even military) locations for initial exfiltration to the evacuation point.

—A quick and powerful military strike to be used in the event the situation suddenly deteriorates or hostages are being killed.

The logistics and planning factors for any of these—and others which could be devised—are closely related. A careful examination of each should reveal strengths or technical possibilities which may fit together into a new plan. We simply do not have the necessary answers available to us here to make a judgment, and any attempt on our part to impose our own ideas on the JCS or others will only invite carping and naysaying from the professionals. They must be engaged in the process from the start. The best way to do that is a Presidential mandate to come up with an alternative plan (or plans) in which they are key participants.

271. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, April 29, 1980, 9:25–9:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Acting Secretary Warren Christopher
David Newsom
Harold Saunders

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown
W. Graham Claytor, Jr.
Robert Komer

JCS

General David Jones
Lt. General John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
Hedley Donovan
Lloyd Cutler

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift

NSC

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

(There was a preliminary discussion of Cuba to be reported separately.)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. In the upper right corner, Carter wrote: "Zbig, J."

Next Steps on Iran

Dr. Brzezinski asked the group to step back and consider the longer track of our strategy on Iran. Before the rescue operation, we were proceeding with economic sanctions, allied pressure, and were considering a range of other alternatives including secondary boycotts, cutoff of food and medicine, and interruption of communications via INTEL-SAT. The allies have reaffirmed that they are prepared to follow through on sanctions. Should we take some additional actions of our own? (S)

Secretary Brown said it was his inclination to let the allies proceed down their own track of sanctions as the focus of attention before we do something ourselves. Secretary Christopher agreed, noting that the reason many of the remaining actions available to us were not taken previously was because they had so many adverse consequences. State was preparing a paper looking ahead at the changes in our strategy which were required by the new circumstances. This would be completed and available for circulation by the end of the day. It could be discussed at the SCC meeting on Thursday.² All agreed. (S)

Mr. Cutler noted that the claims legislation was being completed. At this point the legislation does not include any standby authority to vest assets, which means that it has no real bite.³ Mr. Cutler thought the legislation should be reviewed before going forward. It was agreed that this issue would be taken up at the SCC meeting on Thursday. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski noted that it would be useful to have a clearer idea of just what steps the allies are taking and what commitments they have accepted. We should also examine the impact these steps are likely to have on Iran. State and CIA agreed to prepare a brief paper on this subject.⁴ (C)

Admiral Turner noted that he had met yesterday with a group of hostage wives and mothers. It had not been a pleasant meeting. He thought it would be useful if the "cash register could start ringing" for these people. He suggested an initial payment of \$50,000 per family and \$1,000 per day for each day of captivity, with the money to be taken from Iranian assets. Others argued that the amount of money would be too small to be of real concern to the Iranians, and the impression would be created that the families are getting rich as a result of the situation. Mr. Saunders noted that State had had some recent meetings with the hostage families which had not been as grim

² May 1. The meeting took place on May 2. See Document 275. The paper, "Diplomatic Strategy for Iran—The Period Ahead," is Document 273.

³ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Let it bite."

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 275.

as Admiral Turner's had evidently been. Dr. Brzezinski said it would be useful for a small group to look into tangible things we could do as a government to help the morale of the hostage families. It was agreed that a group would meet today under the chairmanship of Sheldon Krys of State who has been closely involved with the Family Liaison Action Group which has done such an excellent and imaginative job in dealing with the problems of the hostages' families.⁵ (C)

Secretary Brown noted that hearings are beginning on the Hill into all aspects of the rescue operation. Thus far we have maintained our position that details of the operation beyond the termination point would not be discussed, but Senator Jackson and others intend to press very hard for full information on the ground basis of determining if the plan was well-conceived and had a realistic chance of success. We may not be able to maintain silence indefinitely, and this was a tough policy choice to be made. Admiral Turner agreed, noting that more and more details—correct and incorrect—about the rescue plan are appearing in the papers, which will make it difficult to remain silent. Moreover, the Intelligence Committees are insisting on being informed about CIA actions on the grounds that it is a covert action. Mr. Cutler had talked to Bill Bader of the SFRC staff. Secretary Brown thought that it might be useful for the President to meet with key leaders as he did immediately after the operation last week to update them. This may be essential if we are to hold the line on not revealing details of the plan. All agreed that the various agencies should be careful to follow the same line in their various testimony so that one agency did not get out in front of the others. (S)

(At that point the meeting was reduced to those who had participated in the planning of the rescue operation.)⁶

⁵ That afternoon, Sick met with representatives from the Department of State, CIA, and the services responsible for liaison with the hostage families. He reported that other than the attitude of one CIA family, overall morale was "less pessimistic" than Turner's account. Sick noted the families needed funds for travel to meet with the President. He suggested using Iranian assets to facilitate such travel. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14)

⁶ See Document 272.

272. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, April 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Items from the Restricted Session of the SCC Meeting, Tuesday, April 29, 1980 (C)

1. The *Oman letter*² will be redrafted to make it less apologetic. Reg Bartholomew will deliver the letter but not as a Presidential emissary. As a sweetener, we will respond to their request for a "gift" of six M-60 tanks by providing them these tanks as a "loan." Bartholomew will explain that we have no grant military assistance. Defense will work out the details of the loan. (TS)

2. [5 lines not declassified]

3. *Rescue Plan*. DOD will proceed with further rescue planning, including:

a. Short-fuse option in which the President decides to go on a very short-time basis in response, for example, to intelligence indications as to where the hostages are located; (TS)

b. Long-fuse option in which we build up our resources and capabilities; and (TS)

c. Emergency option; e.g., if we learn the hostages are being killed. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski also urged that we look at the question of a large-scale option such as using the 82d Airborne. In this connection, General Jones said the key is what staging bases would be available. (TS)

4. *Information for Congress*. We have held the line against saying anything about the rescue operation past the point at which it was aborted. All the Congressional Committees are pressing for information on the rest of the operation so that they can make a judgment as to its overall feasibility and wisdom. There is, however, a grave danger of compromising important methods and techniques for the future. CIA

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Rescue Mission 11/79-7/80. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Drafted by Aaron. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the memorandum.

² Carter's letter to Sultan Qaboos is in telegram 114517 to Muscat, May 1. Carter explained that the rescue mission, if successful, would have reduced dramatically the tensions between the United States and Iran and "would have allowed Iranians and other peoples in the region to focus more clearly on the serious threat in the region created by the projection of Soviet power and influence." He also reiterated the assurances of his April 25 message. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880025-0915) For the April 25 message, see Document 269.

and Defense are each preparing papers indicating what information must be protected and should not be revealed to Congress and what can be revealed. (S)

5. The meeting on Thursday will be a three-tier arrangement: the broader group to address the problem of Iranian assets legislation; secondly, the smaller group to consider our next political steps; and, thirdly, the smallest group to address the [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Congressional issues. (TS)

273. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, undated

DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY FOR IRAN—THE PERIOD AHEAD

This paper lays out for discussion, revision, and decision certain possible propositions from which our strategy for the period until the new Iranian Parliament is formed might be built. It goes on to describe the elements from which our strategy will be fashioned and suggests for consideration a specific course of action over the next few weeks.

After six months of frustrating dealings with the Iranians, it is clear that we are dealing with an outlook that differs fundamentally from our own, and a chaotic internal situation. Our character, our society are based on optimism—a long history of strength and success, the possibility of equality, the protection of institutions enshrined in a constitution, the belief in our ability to control our own destiny. Iran, on the other hand, has a long and painful history of foreign invasions, occupation and domination. Their outlook is a function of this history and the solace most Iranians have found in Shi'a Islam. They place a premium on survival. They are manipulative, fatalistic, suspicious and xenophobic.

With such fundamental cultural and historical differences, it is easier to understand why most Iranians have remained unmoved by

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Diplomatic Strategy for Iran. Secret; Sensitive. Submitted to Brzezinski, Turner, Brown, and Jones under an April 30 covering memorandum from Tarnoff, on which an unknown hand wrote: "Revised Version 5/1/80." Attendees at the May 2 SCC meeting discussed the paper. See Document 275.

our various actions throughout this crisis. We are not in a classic bargaining position.

If we are to help create a break in the situation—recognizing the hard fact that the odds are against such a break so long as the internal situation in Iran remains inchoate and the clerics dominant—we need a strategy which takes account of both the complexities of Iranian politics and the complexities of the Iranian outlook. It must combine elements of reasonableness with regard to the future without making the concessions now that Iranians take as weakness. It must convey a strong element of threat without implying retribution when the hostages are released. And the elements of threat must be both credible and conveyed in a way which does not so challenge their pride that they simply posture, blunder, and recall their history of martyrdom.

Some Basic Propositions

1. We can start by eliminating two extreme options:

—We have long since embarked on a policy of imposing costs on Iran for prolonging the hostage crisis, so no one is proposing a policy of negotiation without some form of pressure.

—A policy of pressure alone cannot force a solution. For one thing Khomeini and the clerics are not susceptible to Western-style pressures, so we have to find a different approach to them. Even then, someone will have to work out a political strategy for engineering the release. We will have to play a role whether we want to or not.

2. Within Iran, different leadership groups have different aspirations, vulnerabilities and objectives in this crisis. Our strategy must play on these varying hopes and fears. Our strategy, therefore, must also be a mix of punitive measures and diplomatic initiatives, to try to help construct a solution which would be politically acceptable both to key groups of the Iranians and to us. The issues are (a) the mix of pressures and diplomatic steps and (b) timing.

3. Our first opportunity for a breakthrough could come, as the Iranians have said, with the convening of a new parliament. We should keep in mind, however, that the Majlis will be fractionated and unruly and perhaps without effective leadership. No date has even been set for its opening session. The major purpose of the Majlis may be as a device toward furthering a solution—or rubberstamping a consensus among lay and religious leaders that it is time to end the crisis. The Majlis is likely to hesitate to assume a leading role in forging a solution. But the period between now, the May 9 elections, and the date the parliament is convened will be a time of political flux in Iran. It seems sensible to focus our immediate efforts on this period. There will be *relative* calm in the political process. Delegates will have been elected, and they will be unsure how to use the new institutions. For a short

time after the convening of Parliament, there will not be clear lines between parties, personal alliances, or political strategies. At that moment, a determined and effective leadership might be able to push through a well-planned solution to the crisis. It is thus important that we seek to engage Iranian authorities in a productive dialogue on how the release of the hostages might be presented so as to win positive support in the new parliament.

4. This time we will want to broaden our approach to work with three separate but related leadership elements: Bani Sadr, who will be responsible for putting before the Majlis a program to end the crisis with the U.S. as part of his overall program; with Ghotbzadeh, who is our most helpful collaborator; and, more than we have before, with the clerics, who must be prepared to follow Bani Sadr's lead or at least not to resist it and make a solution impossible. The failure of our last effort to achieve a negotiated settlement resulted from rivalries between the lay leadership and the clerics. We need to find a way, through a combination of carrots and sticks, to persuade the clerics to accept the outlines of a settlement that the government could push through the Majlis when it meets.

5. In designing our approach, there may be advantage, in some of our communications, in broadening it to reach beyond the hostage issue. With Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, as well as in seeking help from our allies, we could focus on the consequences of widening the crisis for the future of Iran and for the future of Europe. We could concentrate on the kind of U.S.-Iranian relationship we might aim for. However, with the clerics, who believe that a reasonable U.S.-Iranian relationship is impossible or undesirable, it will be necessary to paint more specifically the consequences for their own leadership if the crisis continues.

6. The U.S. position on the elements of a settlement—which might be useful in dealing with the allies and with Bani Sadr—remains that described in the six points passed to Waldheim in January (Tab 1),² with one possible addition. It may be desirable to elaborate on these points to make clear that we would forego retaliation against Iran if the hostages are released safely under honorable circumstances.

Near-Term Objectives

If these propositions are accepted, three specific objectives should be discussed:

—To encourage progressive improvements in the conditions of the hostages—beginning with regular visits and messages for families—with the purpose of working toward a more active official Iranian

² Tab 1 is the undated paper prepared by the National Security Council Staff printed as Document 137.

involvement in the management of the hostages' welfare and in accounting for them.

—To increase steadily tangible pressure by the OECD states and, where possible, to encourage other states to take more limited measures against Iran; in this context by portraying Iran's holding of hostages as offensive to the world community, to broaden the confrontation to Iran vs. the non-communist world.

—To engage key Iranians in discussions that could lead to an understanding on (1) a scenario for hostage release when the Majlis is convened; (2) the role of key leaders during the Majlis consideration; and (3) actions by the U.S. or third countries that would facilitate a release decision by the Majlis.

The issues to be decided are the degree and timing of new pressures, if any, and the nature of a broader diplomatic effort.

Maintaining Pressure

We have the following range of choice in maintaining or expanding pressures on Iran:

—We can maintain the sanctions the U.S. now has in place and press the Europeans to proceed on their present course by following through on the decisions made at Luxembourg.³ This would seem an essential minimum.

—We could take some additional steps to expand our own sanctions (see Tab 2 for a list of possible steps).⁴ In deciding whether we should impose additional sanctions, we face the possibility that a new cycle of growing expectations and then deeper frustration could be stimulated within the U.S. and new divisions with the Allies created, conveying weakness to Iran at a time we should be emphasizing the strength of the Allies' stand. Another issue is whether such steps would best complement a diplomatic effort now, or should be held in reserve as a threat during the Majlis' meetings. Once implemented, we would have little left with which to threaten.

—Additional pressures may be possible through covert action. A great deal of disruptive activity is already under way in Iran which has no U.S. involvement but which most Iranians assume is American-inspired. These disruptions and the assumption of American involvement heighten fears in Iran that we have important assets that could undermine the revolution. In an Iranian context, the advantage of covert options is that although the Iranians will assume we are playing a

³ See footnote 6, Document 253.

⁴ Tab 2, untitled and undated, is attached but not printed. It lists "further measures the President indicated might be imposed" and "additional non-military sanctions most previously considered."

subversive role—because of their beliefs in foreign devils and conspiracy theories—we will not have admitted such a role and reactions would be correspondingly muted. Consideration of action stimulated by the U.S. should include whether risks of detection and the attendant setbacks to any negotiations or harm to the hostages are outweighed by the advantages to be gained.

—The options for such military acts as mining or blockade can be kept open. Indeed, the threat of such action might well be more effective during a Majlis debate than the action itself. See Tab 4.⁵

Diplomatic Approaches

It was one of the propositions set out for discussion at the beginning of this paper that we would not stand back on the diplomatic front altogether simply to allow time to pass and pressures to work but rather use the diplomatic resources at our disposal at least to explore the political situation in Tehran and to determine whether a scenario can be found which might pave the way for release of the hostages when the Majlis is formed.

It was also proposed that we broaden our diplomatic approach to concentrate through a special channel on Bani Sadr and to make an effort to reach the clerics.

If those propositions are accepted, the choice narrows to variants of two approaches:

—*Exploration.* We can start by stimulating a broader range of diplomatic channels whom we would request to explore the situation in Tehran and report back to us so that we can begin to determine whether and how to shape a scenario for coupling Bani Sadr's presentation of his program to the new Majlis with the release of the hostages. We would encourage all those whom we request to participate in this effort (see below) also to make appropriate arguments for the release of the hostages. But we would make no proposal at this time. We would make these approaches immediately in an effort to begin opening broad range of channels as quickly as possible.

—*Exploration with a U.S. proposal.* We could go farther by introducing a tentative proposal of our own, at least to Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh. One possible approach to Bani Sadr would be to look beyond the hostage crisis, to talk with him about the elements that could characterize a U.S.-Iranian relationship after the hostage crisis is over, and to talk about ways in which he could present to the Majlis a program for Iran's relationships with the world in such a way as to subsume the release of the hostages. The elements of our position would be those

⁵ Tab 4, a paper prepared in the Department of State, "Iran: Effects of a Total or Import Blockade," undated, is attached but not printed.

approved in January (Tab 1) with the possible addition of a statement that we have no intention of taking punitive military action against Iran once the hostages are released. But we would make no concession on the issues between us, since the Iranians would interpret this as weakness and a sign of still further concessions. The purpose of the approaches to Bani Sadr would be to determine how to package the January position and what preparatory steps might be useful before the Majlis receives Bani Sadr's program. While this approach is being made to Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, other approaches would be made to the clerics (without a U.S. proposal) stating the arguments for ending the crisis in a way that might be more compelling to them.

The Substance of Diplomatic Approaches

More specifically, the separate approaches to the secular and religious principals in Tehran might go as below.

—*With Bani Sadr* (and Ghotbzadeh) we would take the following line:

—We recognize the importance to the Iranians of their convening parliament in completion of the task of putting into effect the Islamic constitution. We accept Iran's constitutional process.

—We expect that Iran-U.S. relations will be reviewed by parliament in the context of setting the course for Iran's foreign relations.

—We regret difficulties in relations between U.S. and Iran and believe it is in the interest of both countries to find an early resolution to our problems.

—We believe it would be helpful for the President and Revolutionary Council to be able to present to parliament a basis for future U.S.-Iranian relations. We are prepared to discuss this with him on the basis of the position we have conveyed to him (Tab 1). But the Iranians should not expect *any* American concessions, or a relaxation of pressures until all the hostages are freed. We have no interest in talking on any other basis.

At the same time, through different intermediaries and others who will not be acting in our name, we should try to develop an understanding by *Beheshti and the clerics* that the continued holding of the hostages will not be in their interest. The principal motivations of the clerics appear to be (1) desire for power and the construction of an Islamic-dominated regime; (2) fear of the power of the U.S. to prevent them from achieving power; and (3) fear of a Soviet-dominated left. We would use themes that play on their fears and aspirations.

Much of the work on the fear side is already well in train. The rescue mission itself signals U.S. ability to mount significant military operations against Iran. Hostilities with Iraq, the Kurds, the activities of Bakhtiar and Oveissi, and continuing sabotage and disruption within Iran are all assumed to have an American connection and play to the fears of the revolutionaries that we are out to overthrow them. We

should do nothing to relieve them of this fear, as long as the hostages are held. At the same time, we need to find ways to persuade the clerics that the U.S. will not interfere in Iran or retaliate against Iran once the hostages are released.

The line intermediaries might take with *Beheshti and the clerics* could include these points:

—Continued confrontation with the U.S. creates additional prospects for Soviet influence, contrary to the interests of the Iranian revolution. The left is gaining every day in Iran.

—The Europeans and Japanese wish to have good relations with Iran; they can be helpful to Iran in many ways. But this is impossible so long as the hostages are held. They are approaching the Iranians not out of altruism, but because their interests are involved, and they are worried about the future course of events.

—The U.S. is dangerous, unpredictable, and is prepared to give full support to the opponents of the revolution unless the crisis is resolved. The anger toward Iran within the U.S. is widespread and deep.

—The intermediaries would be prepared to press the U.S. to agree to the following points:

—It is for Iranians themselves to decide on the policies of their new government.

—Iran must maintain its integrity.

—Iran must maintain its independence from the Soviet Union.

—Iran must acquire political stability to prevent subversion from within.

—The U.S. would forego retaliation against Iran after all the hostages are released safely under honorable conditions.

—The release of the hostages is a necessary step in the removal of obstacles to such an agreement.

—They would be in a position to guarantee these points once the hostages are released.

The Channels

1. *Ambassador Lang*: Now that Switzerland is our protecting power, we might if the Swiss are willing put more emphasis on Lang as our chief negotiator and representative to present official U.S. views, particularly with Bani Sadr.

2. *Bourguet and Villalon* could continue their concentration on Ghotbzadeh and other secular members of the Revolutionary Council. Despite their contacts with Bani Sadr, they tend to see the situation through Ghotbzadeh's eyes, and it seems a reasonable division of labor to ask Lang to cultivate Bani Sadr while they stick with the Foreign Minister.

3. *Key Islamic states* (including the Saudis and Bangladeshis) could explore the possibility, especially with the clerics but also with the lay

leaders, that the Islamic Conference could act as an intermediary in resolving the hostage crisis. The Islamic Conference's role would be particularly important in providing the Iranians with credible assurances that the U.S. would not take retaliatory action against Iran or act against the Revolution once the hostages are released. The Saudis have hinted to other Islamic states that they might be interested in exploring such an initiative if others would join them.

The *French, Germans, Turks* and possibly the *British* could also be persuasive with the various clerics with whom they maintain contact.

4. *Richard Cottam* is prepared to go to Iran for intensive discussions with Ghotbzadeh, Beheshti, and other contacts.

5. *Archbishop Capucci* is possibly the single most influential foreigner with the militants, Khomeini, and the Revolutionary Council. He can be especially helpful with the religious leadership and with the militants.

There are other channels that could be developed, but these are the ones that we might start with. These approaches are laid out in the table at Tab 3.⁶

In engaging our allies, the best approach might be to share at high level the outlines of our strategy for the next two months on a bilateral basis, asking each government to designate one senior official in its capitals with whom we can discuss our plans in detail on a highly restricted basis.

An important element in enlisting overall allied support and specific cooperation of some close allies will be our position on the use of military options. Understandably, we will not wish to tie our hands completely, but we can assure the allies that (1) we have no present plan to use force; (2) we are prepared to wait for a reasonable period after the Majlis is convened to determine if a peaceful resolution is possible and if our joint diplomatic/political/economic efforts can bring this about; (3) we will consult closely with our allies if we subsequently conclude that the use of force is necessary; and (4) for tactical reasons, we will continue publicly to leave the option of using force open in this interim period, and expect the allies not to criticize us publicly on this point.

Public Affairs Strategy

Because the crisis is likely to continue for some time it will be important to reduce the level of public expectations and to attempt to

⁶ Tab 3, an untitled and undated chart, attached but not printed, lists intermediaries used in various negotiations, their role or special message, the date and place of their meeting with U.S. officials, their primary Iranian contacts, the suggested duration of their stay in Iran, and their means of reporting.

calm public frustration. Thus, we should avoid the public expectation that there will be new or dramatic initiatives every week or so.

A reduced level of rhetoric is important for three reasons:

—The greater are the public expectations that pressures will lead to a solution in the near future, the greater the frustration and impression of U.S. weakness when they don't. Rather than continuing the cycle by meeting a new wave of frustration with new measures, it is better to begin to prepare the public for a lingering problem. The less the public frustration, the wider are our options and the less likely we will be driven to action which does not serve our interests.

—The more we play up the hostages as a public issue, the more the militants are likely to conclude that we will make new concessions and the more the militants will want to keep the limelight by keeping the hostages.

—With regard to our Allies' actions, our public position should underscore the serious hardships and isolation of Iran implied in the sanctions; it is more valuable in Iran and here to play up what the Allies do, rather than down play their actions. This is not to imply that we should take a soft line on Iran. Indeed, a less public line should be shaped to convey menace rather than compromise. But we should avoid promising our public more than we can deliver, thus also building up the militants in Iran.

Our public theme should emphasize the following points:

—Sanctions have been applied and it is necessary to allow time for full effects to be felt in Iran.

—The effects on Iran will increase as the European sanctions are implemented.

—Iran is in conflict with the entire civilized world, not just the United States.

—We are consulting with our allies and friends about further steps they might take.

—Iran has an obligation to the world to improve the condition of the hostages and to report regularly to the families. (We should consider family visits as a means of increasing this form of pressure on Iran.)

Where there are diplomatic developments reported in the press, we should not build these up but portray them as part of our ongoing efforts. We should avoid threats or discussion of military force, except perhaps on background.

*Initiatives During the Next Two Weeks
Through May 10*

During this period we should attempt to lay out a general scheme for concerted activities by our key collaborators and get their agreement to this plan of action. This would mean:

—A Saunders meeting with Ambassadors Brunner and/or Lang in Switzerland for their assessment and our presentation of strategy.

—A meeting with Capucci, Bourguet and Villalon, and, if possible, Nobari on the same trip.

—Messages to our allies or meetings with them outlining special roles for them:

—*For the Germans:* To maintain contact with Tabatabai for improvement in the condition of the hostages; with Beheshti to develop a new relationship there; with Bazargan to encourage him to reassert his influence.

—*For the French and Turks:* To become more active generally with the clerics to convey an “independent” European view. To work also with Bani-Sadr, Salamatian, and others with whom the Ambassadors may enjoy special access.

—*With the British:* To concentrate on Beheshti and the other clerics on the Revolutionary Council or to solicit those clerics by other persons with better influence.

—A trip by Richard Cottam for talks with as many leaders as he can arrange, especially Beheshti, whom Cottam has known for seven years. We would encourage Cottam to stay at least one week and perhaps return to Iran after consultations with us.

May 11–18

—Continue foregoing actions as appropriate.

—Messages to the Algerians and Syrians or Bedjaoui and Daoudi to explore the mediation effort by those countries, possibly supplemented by a role for the Swiss and French or possibly a Non-Aligned Movement initiative. The Algerians and Swiss, for example, could suggest, as protecting powers, that they constitute a contact group to hold talks with us for the Iranians in an effort to resolve specific problems in the dispute between us.

—Capucci and Bourguet or Villalon return to Tehran.

—Refine and expand, if possible, our six-point position paper with the idea that Lang could use this with the leadership in Tehran—without introducing any new concessions.

—Messages or possible visits to EC-9 capitals to assure there is no wavering on the May 17 sanctions.

After *May 18* we would try to put ourselves in a position, through the appropriate intermediaries, to work out a scenario that would reflect the political dynamics in Tehran and steps that are politically feasible for us which might contribute to the decision in Tehran to release the hostages.

Summary of Decisions

If this general diplomatic strategy is approved, we would be moving into a phase of exploring through a number of channels the political

situation in Tehran to develop the insights necessary to fashion a more precise course of action. At this stage, the following are the decisions that need to be taken:

—Shall we now reopen diplomatic contact with Bani Sadr and Ghotbzadeh to begin exploring what steps might make it possible for Bani Sadr to present a program to the new parliament that would subsume release of the hostages?

—If we reopen contact, should we do so simply exploring the options with him, or should we at this stage begin to put forward ideas of our own?

—How should we time our various approaches? Should we contemplate a series of approaches, beginning with exploration and then adding ideas in later stages, or should we put forward a full proposal now if we are going to do so?

—Shall we undertake a full-scale effort to get at Beheshti and the other clerics through new intermediaries?

—Should we specifically attempt to involve key European nations as intermediaries in a more precise way than we have in the past?

274. Memorandum From Stanley T. Escudero of the Office of United Nations Political Affairs, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, to Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff¹

Washington, May 2, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran: US Cooperation with Iranian Exiles

Following our recent conversation I contacted two of the three Iranians whose names I gave you and asked them about leadership among the exiled groups. Both agreed that the exiles have come to an understanding that no government can rule in Iran today without the backing of a military organization. They have agreed that a military commander is required to establish the stability which will be necessary to permit the return of the Western educated technocrats without whom

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80. Confidential.

Iran cannot effectively address its economic problems. Once that stability is achieved the question of permanent leadership could be resolved. Therefore the exiles believe that a collegial form of leadership can be made to work in the early stages of a regime which would replace the clerics once they have thoroughly discredited themselves. General Oveissi is the man whom the exiles feel must take the lead in these early stages. Thereafter there could be agreement on the transfer of power to a civilian regime, perhaps headed by someone like Bakhtiar or conceivably a constitutional monarchy as provided by the 1906 constitution.

The problems of collegial leadership in Iran are obvious but there is some recent precedent for this in General Zahedi's departure for Switzerland after his restoration of the Shah and subsequent Prime Ministership.² In addition, ancient Persian history reveals the successful conspiracy of seven Persian nobles against the Magian usurper and their agreement that one of them, later Darius the First, should be king after the Magus was slain.

It is not clear to me the extent to which Oveissi's role is in fact accepted by other exiled leaders. Moreover, they would be ill-advised to take decisive action in Iran until the clerics had produced widespread dissatisfaction through misrule. Other obvious problems which would have to be addressed during the planning stages by the exiles would include the degree of Westernization to be reestablished in a nation recently subjected to a strong dose of Islam; economic programs to promptly and effectively ameliorate the effects of unemployment, shortages of various kinds, and a generally stagnant economy; relations with other countries including assistance programs.

To repeat, I do not suggest that we deal with any of these substantive issues now—only that we consider approaching the exiles to encourage the development of an alternative to the left following the inevitable collapse of the clerics.

² General Fazlollah Zahedi became Prime Minister following the 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. In 1955 he became Iran's Ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

275. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee¹

Washington, May 2, 1980, 9:15–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Acting Secretary Warren Christopher
(very briefly at beginning)

Harold Saunders*

Roberts Owen*

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown

Frank Kramer*

JCS

General David Jones*

Lt. Gen. John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

Frank Carlucci

Treasury

Secretary William Miller*

Robert Carswell*

Justice

Attorney General Benjamin

Civiletti*

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Hedley Donovan*

Lloyd Cutler*

Henry Owen*

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift*

NSC

Gary Sick

*Present only for items 1–6

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Claims Legislation.* The legislation is currently in draft,² and a number of points of disagreement are being worked out at the staff level. The key question of a policy nature is whether the legislation should contain standby authority to vest (seize) assets. Mr. Cutler noted that it was previously decided not to include such a provision. He

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 112. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote in the upper right corner: "Zbig. J."

² The draft is attached to a May 1 memorandum from Owen to Cutler. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 33) Explanations of the draft legislation and the arguments on expanding it to include vesting are in two memoranda: The first is a memorandum from Owen to Christopher, April 30. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran Claims/Assets Litigations) The second is a memorandum from Cutler to the SCC, May 1. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 13)

wondered if, in the wake of the rescue attempt, we may not wish to toughen the legislation by adding such authority. Otherwise, the legislation provides nothing more than administrative regulations for handling claims which would be resolved either by litigation or negotiation with the Iranians. (C)

Secretary Miller strongly opposed including vesting authority. He did not believe that this action would help free the hostages, but it does have very serious disadvantages for us by adding to the world view that the U.S. is unreliable as a recipient of deposits. Certainly such authority should not be put in merely for show; and if we really intend to use it—especially to vest assets abroad—there will be serious controversy with our friends and allies. One of the effects of vesting assets would be to eliminate immediately the present system of offsetting claims against deposits. Those institutions which have claims but no attachable assets will press hard for vesting out of pure self-interest. However, it will be a net loss to the United States and would have an adverse effect on the dollar. Miller hoped that we would not act in a way which would do irreparable harm to Western financial institutions in the interest of a short-term advantage. (C)

Secretary Brown acknowledged the clear disadvantages, but noted that we must be seen to be doing something. The more we can do in the economic or other fields, the less pressure there is on us to do something else. Paying compensation to the hostages would be useful in that regard. He thought the rest of the world would understand that this is a totally unique situation and not aimed at others, e.g. Saudi Arabia. Dr. Brzezinski said that the question was what it does for the Iranians and what it does for the President domestically by showing concern and taking a tough line. It was true that it would not budge the Iranians. There is a real question whether this is the moment. He thought that this single step now gave the appearance of dribbling out our actions. Perhaps it should be reserved for use later as part of a package. (S)

Henry Owen agreed with Secretary Miller that such action would hurt the dollar, and the symbolism of a weakening dollar would also hurt the President. Mr. Cutler made clear that there was no consideration of seizing assets outside the United States. We have no authority to do so. He acknowledged that this action will probably not budge the Iranians, but that was true of each individual act we have taken in the sanctions area. If the situation was sufficiently grave to justify the risk of a rescue mission, he thought we could take this risk. (S)

The Attorney General said he believed there were advantages in the legislation as now proposed. It provides the basis for settling claims by hostages and others. Inclusion of standby authority to vest would immediately result in pressure to exercise the authority so payment

can begin. He thought such action now would be precipitous. We have not yet even reviewed the results of the census of claims. (C)

Mr. Saunders argued that vesting assets at this stage would greatly complicate negotiations with the Iranians later, since they would demand that all the seized assets be returned as part of the hostage release. Once the President had taken this action, it would be difficult to back down and return the seized assets. Secretary Brown disagreed. He thought that would be a small price to pay for return of the hostages. (S)

The SCC agreed that a decision was not required immediately. The legislation will be completed by next week, and the SCC will return to the question at that time. (U)

2. *Status of Allied Sanctions and Commitments.* The Department of State circulated a brief paper summarizing the status of the allies' position on sanctions at this point. The SCC agreed it was very useful and that it should be forwarded to the President (attached at Tab A).³ (U)

3. *Diplomatic Strategy.* Dr. Brzezinski noted that the strategy paper prepared by the Department of State had been discussed at the Foreign Policy breakfast just prior to the SCC meeting.⁴ The President wishes to read the paper himself. The subject will be discussed at Camp David tomorrow, so the President asked that the SCC not present formal recommendations at this point. (C)

Mr. Saunders reviewed the main points of the paper for the SCC, noting that the intent was to begin a process of reopening lines of communication with key individuals in Tehran. No proposals would be offered until we had a feeling for the Iranian response to our feelers. The problem in the past had been the division between the Beheshti faction and Bani-Sadr which had prevented a unified position by the Revolutionary Council. Our objective, recognizing the severe limitations, should be to promote a unity of views in Tehran that the release of the hostages is critical to Iran's own interests. He noted that Archbishop Capucci might be very helpful to us. Dr. Brzezinski noted that he might be able to assist personally. He had just received a personal letter from the Pope in Polish. Mr. Saunders agreed that the Vatican was one channel of influence in Capucci. One of the French lawyers had also

³ Tab A, not attached, is "Allied Response on Iranian Sanctions," a chart of sanctions and the response of U.S. allies in "Yes/No" format. It was submitted to Brzezinski under an April 30 covering memorandum from Tarnoff. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Economic Sanctions Against Iran) The paper had been requested at the April 29 SCC meeting. See Document 271.

⁴ See Document 273. No minutes were taken at the foreign policy breakfasts.

represented Capucci in his trial for gun-running in Jerusalem and could be helpful.⁵ Secretary Miller recommended an attempt to contact religious authorities in Mashhad and other areas who were influential but had been eclipsed by Khomeini. (S)

Admiral Turner commented that the odds of accomplishing anything for the hostages in this manner were extremely slim. He wondered if we did not appear weak by starting negotiations again immediately after the failure of the rescue attempt. The Iranians will probably ask us to make more concessions. Secretary Brown said we want to establish contacts with a broad range of Iranian authorities in any event, since that will be important in the longer term. Mr. Aaron observed that we need an effective program which focuses public attention not only on the hostage issue but the larger dangers of a possible Soviet takeover. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said he was concerned that we were not focusing beyond the immediate crisis. He saw the danger of Iran merging with Afghanistan. We could find ourselves in the situation where the hostages are rescued by Soviet tanks. The key question is whether we wish to keep the pressure up or deescalate. Can we maintain a high level of pressure while continuing on the diplomatic track? (S)

Mr. Saunders noted that Bani-Sadr has called a large meeting of Islamic and Nonaligned nations in Tehran to "view the evidence of U.S. aggression." Without prejudice to the outcome of policy discussions this weekend, we will need to get messages out to key parties if we wish to have any influence on the event or possibly turn it to some useful purpose. He proposed selecting half a dozen key Islamic and Nonaligned leaders and sharing our thoughts with them in advance of the meeting. Mr. Aaron suggested using the themes developed in the strategy paper, for them to present in Tehran. All agreed. (C)

_____ Approve⁶ _____ Avoid contact or association with this event

4. *Legal Action Concerning the Shah.* The judge in the New York court suggested in a bench conference that the issue should be resolved by Iran's release of the hostages and some payment by the Shah. Mr. O'Dwyer (representing Iran) is now seeking permission to go to Tehran, while Mr. Jackson intends to meet with the Shah. All agreed that, if the Shah is unwilling to make an offer, it would be pointless—and possibly counterproductive—to raise the issue with the Iranians who are likely to demand payment of billions of dollars by the Shah. (C)

5. *Islamic Conference.* Mr. Cutler had been informed by the Saudi Ambassador that the forthcoming Islamic Conference will be held in

⁵ Bourguet.

⁶ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

Islamabad on May 17, the same date as the anticipated imposition of sanctions by the allies. If the two events coincide, the Conference can be expected to denounce the sanctions. State acknowledged the point and said this would be taken into account.⁷ (C)

6. *Rescue Mission Debrief*. General Jones gave a brief summary of the rescue operation for the SCC, responding to the many rumors that are flying around. Secretary Brown said they are preparing to put something out in organized form which would assist in responding to the many queries and rumors. (U)

(At this point the meeting was reduced to those involved in the rescue operation.)

7. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Dr. Brzezinski noted that CIA had prepared a paper. Since Mr. Christopher could not be here, we could not discuss it in detail. It was agreed that a copy of the paper would be delivered to Christopher for his personal information, and the subject would be taken up by the SCC early next week.⁸ (S)

Admiral Turner noted that the State Department had been maintaining contact with several individuals who are in contact with Admiral Madani. They are interested in returning to Iran. The SCC agreed that there was no objection to their returning to Iran at this point since we wanted to keep the contacts open. (S)

8. *Testimony on the Rescue Operation*. Secretary Brown said that he had previously believed it would be impossible to avoid testifying on details of the rescue operation beyond the termination point. He now believed that it would be difficult, but perhaps not impossible to hold the line with the SFRC and the SASC. It was obviously going to be far more difficult for the DCI to hold the line with the Intelligence Oversight Committees. Admiral Turner agreed, noting that the Committees are building up to a major confrontation on their right to be informed of the CIA role in detail. The SCC agreed that there were certain aspects of the operational plan which we would not wish to reveal, since they might be valuable in a future effort. It was difficult to determine exactly which points we would wish to hold back. Admiral Turner agreed reluctantly to provide a copy of his testimony for next week for review, noting the problems of submitting CIA testimony for White House clearance. He was concerned that a major confrontation with the Committees could result in undesirable new legislation. The Committee was already very angry and had threatened to cut off CIA Reserve funding. (S)

⁷ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "No change in date."

⁸ See Document 277.

Dr. Brzezinski acknowledged the problem, but observed that a review of the actual testimony was the only means of clearly identifying those elements which should be protected. It needed to be reviewed by the group and, if there were areas of disagreement, it should be referred to the President for decision. He suggested that the hearing be postponed from Tuesday⁹ until later in the week if possible to permit a review. Admiral Turner said the testimony could be provided today. The SCC agreed to review it on an urgent basis. (S)

_____ Approve¹⁰ _____ Other

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan.]

⁹ May 6.

¹⁰ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed in the right margin.

276. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)

Washington, May 2, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80-10/80. Secret. 2 pages not declassified.]

**277. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination
Committee Meeting¹**

Washington, May 6, 1980, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Acting Secretary Warren Christopher

David Newsom*

Harold Saunders*

OSD

W. Graham Claytor

Robert Komer*

JCS

Lt. Gen. John Pustay

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

*Present only for items 1–3

**Present only for items 1–4

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

Lloyd Cutler*

Hedley Donovan*

Jody Powell**

NSC

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Iran Strategy*. It was agreed that the regular Thursday² morning meeting would be replaced by a PRC meeting chaired by State to examine: (1) the diplomatic strategy paper prepared by State;³ (2) the related strategy concerning allied sanctions to go into effect on May 17, whether we wish to press the allies to include existing contracts as well as future contracts with Iran, and the problem created by the anticipated simultaneous meeting of the Islamic Conference; and (3) claims legislation and whether it should include standby authority to vest Iranian assets. (S)

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the hostage crisis.]

(At 9:20 a.m., the SCC was reduced to key principals.)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 113. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

² May 8.

³ See Document 273.

4. *CIA Testimony*. Admiral Turner is to testify tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. on the rescue mission before the Oversight Committee.⁴ The Committee is outraged at efforts to keep them from learning about covert actions taken (and money spent) on support of the later phases of the rescue operation. They insist they have a statutory right to be informed, and retaliation by cutting off or reducing the Reserve Fund is a likely consequence of refusing information. [5 lines not declassified]

This question raised the entire issue of whether or not we could or should continue to hold to the line of not discussing any aspects of the operation after Phase I.⁵ Mr. Claytor noted that the Defense witnesses were getting very tough treatment in the Congress on their refusal to discuss anything after Phase I. We are being seriously damaged by the torrent of press leaks, which give the impression that everyone is learning of the operation except the Congress. There is great pressure to confirm or deny information appearing in the press. Evans and Novak intend to publish a column tomorrow indicating that the Administration is out of control and damaging U.S. security by lack of discipline on leaks.⁶ It is impossible for the DCI to discuss aspects of the operation after Phase I while denying comparable treatment to the Armed Services Committees. There is also the question of whether the Iranians have access to compromised information that we are unwilling to share with the Congress. (S)

The SCC agreed to go back to the President with a request that he reconsider his instructions not to discuss activities of the post-Phase I operation. Massive leaks are destroying the credibility of this approach, and we are being seriously hurt in Congress where it appears we have something to hide. Press interest has died down, but the pressure in Congress is growing stronger. All recognized that, once the point is breached, it will be difficult if not impossible to prevent additional details of the operation from leaking out. There are several specific aspects which could and should be protected, however: (1) the use of foreign facilities, [less than 1 line not declassified]; (2) identification and location of airfields to be used inside Iran; (3) specific details about

⁴ Turner's prepared testimony before the Senate and House Intelligence Committees is in Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1. The declassified JCS report on the hostage rescue operation was submitted to the Senate Armed Services Committee under a May 6 covering memorandum from Brown. (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 11, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, [unfolded material]) Vaught's prepared remarks before the Senate Armed Services Committee, May 7, are *ibid*.

⁵ Phase I was that part of the mission up to and including Desert One.

⁶ "The New Leakers" by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak who wrote the widely syndicated political column "Inside Report." (*Washington Post*, May 7, 1980, p. A19)

special equipment used on the helos and in other parts of the operation; and (4) any estimates of possible casualties. (TS)

5. *Covert Action on Iran*. The SCC reviewed a CIA proposal for stepping up our covert action on Iran, which was slowed down during the negotiating phase. No additional findings are required. The essential question is where we should place our primary emphasis. The CIA paper proposed advisory assistance to Bakhtiar and Oveissi, each of whom is beginning to cooperate independently with the Iraqis. Our objective would be to exploit the existing organization, but attempt to assist them to pull the various groups together and add more realism to their planning [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski noted that this was essentially an external strategy and he questioned the wisdom of becoming too closely identified with the Bakhtiar/Oveissi group as the central organizing point when they are subject to manipulation by the Iraqis. [*1½ lines not declassified*] We have seen that the situation is chaotic and the country porous. [*15½ lines not declassified*] (TS)

Mr. Christopher expressed strong reservations about the wisdom of supporting Bakhtiar and Oveissi. [*1½ lines not declassified*] On balance, his expectations with regard to Bakhtiar/Oveissi were more minus than plus. We risk anointing them as the recognized leaders of the exile forces. They have been discredited by their relationship with the Shah and they are bad horses for us to ride. He did not object to some level of contact with them, however. (TS)

Admiral Turner said he thought there was little likelihood we would be able to subvert members of the revolution. There is too much anti-Americanism. Bakhtiar and Oveissi are currently fighting an uphill battle since the myth persists that the U.S. actually brought down the Shah, put Khomeini in place, and that we are secretly supporting an outcome which would favor Khomeini's leadership. That may be ridiculous on the face of it,⁷ but it is prevalent among the groups opposing Khomeini and it inhibits their ability to organize effectively. A clear decision on our part to support Bakhtiar and Oveissi would overcome that misperception. (TS)

[*2½ lines not declassified*] Mr. Christopher noted that he was not persuaded that support for Bakhtiar and Oveissi would result in expanding contacts inside the country. On the contrary, it is likely to complicate efforts to develop such contacts. Dr. Brzezinski said that our plan should think through the implications of support for Bakhtiar/

⁷ Carter underlined the phrase "ridiculous on the face of it" and wrote in the left margin: "It's ridiculous all the way through."

Oveissi and insure that we use them for our own larger purposes rather than being used by them and the Iraqis for their own purposes. (TS)

Admiral Turner said he would go to work on such a plan. [3½ lines not declassified] Mr. Christopher said we should not get ourselves in the position of making Bakhtiar our chosen instrument. Dr. Brzezinski said we should not encourage Bakhtiar and Oveissi to move forward at this time. (TS)

_____ Approve development of a strategy focusing primarily on the internal politics of Iran, rather than on an external approach. (TS)

_____ Offer monetary and planning assistance to Bakhtiar. (TS)

_____ Maintain contact with Bakhtiar, but withhold significant monetary and advisory assistance until an alternative strategy has been considered.⁸ (TS)

⁸ Carter approved the first and third options with checkmarks and initialed "J" beneath the options.

278. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, May 8, 1980, 3–4 p.m.

SUBJECT

PRC Meeting on Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Acting Secretary Warren Christopher

David Newsom, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Anthony Lake, Director, Policy Planning Staff

Treasury

Deputy Secretary Robert Carswell

Defense

Deputy Secretary W. Graham Clayton, Jr.

Robert Komer, Under Secretary for Policy

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Cleared by Sick.

Justice

John Shenefield, Associate Attorney General

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Lt. General John Pustay, Assistant to the Chairman

Central Intelligence Agency

Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director

Frank Carlucci, Deputy Director

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hedley Donovan

Lloyd Cutler

Henry Owen

Jody Powell

National Security Council

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Diplomatic Strategy for Iran*. The Department of State presented a draft recommendation to the President outlining a diplomatic strategy (Tab A).² This strategy is designed to keep lines open to Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh without offering any further concessions, while encouraging the Europeans to persuade the clerics that it is in their interest to find a resolution to the hostage issue. The SCC concurred with this recommendation, recognizing that the chances of successfully persuading the Iranian authorities to release the hostages are very slim. (S)

_____ Approve the strategy outlined at Tab A.³

_____ Other

[2 paragraphs (33 lines) not declassified]

[Omitted here is material on Libya.]

² Attached, printed as Document 279.

³ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and wrote in the right margin: "See notes." Reference is to the handwritten notes Carter made on the draft recommendation. See Document 279.

279. Paper Prepared in the Department of State¹

Washington, undated

Recommendation to the President

—That we begin to work² on the development of a diplomatic strategy, looking toward a late May or early June meeting of the Iranian parliament, when there may be an opportunity for a settlement of the crisis.

—That we continue with our strategy of multilateral economic sanctions and diplomatic pressures on Iran, keeping ambiguous in the minds of the Iranians what additional steps we might take, while making clear that we plan no retaliation or intervention in Iran if all the hostages are released safely and under honorable conditions.³

—That we reopen contact with Bani-Sadr and Ghotzbadeh to explore how Bani-Sadr might present a program to the new parliament that would subsume the release of the hostages.⁴

—That in our initial explorations, we elicit Bani-Sadr's ideas rather than presenting our own, while making clear that we will not relax our pressures or make concessions until the hostages are released.⁵

—That we ask selected allies to seek contacts with leading clerics to persuade them toward a consensus on release of the hostages.⁶ The allies could point out to the clerics that: Soviet and leftist ambitions for Iran are furthered by the continued holding of the hostages; that the Europeans and Japanese want to have good relations with Iran but can't so long as the hostages are held; and that the US now is dangerous and unpredictable but would not take retaliatory measures if all the hostages are released safely and under honorable circumstances.

—That we explore with selected non-aligned such as Algeria and Yugoslavia, and possibly the French, the prospects for their undertaking an exploratory role with the Iranians. We would elicit their ideas

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret; Sensitive. In the upper right corner of the paper, Carter wrote: "We should reassess *all* possible avenues & maintain a full court press—with minimum press comment."

² Carter underlined the words "begin to work" and wrote in the right margin: "expedite."

³ In the right margin, Carter wrote: "Keep all options open."

⁴ In the right margin, Carter wrote: "ok, but remember that B-S is a weak reed at best."

⁵ In the right margin, Carter wrote: "We should try to reach Madani thru acceptable intermediary."

⁶ In the right margin, Carter wrote: "FRG can help with Beheshti."

for the framework of a settlement without at this stage committing ourselves to any specific steps.

—That we pursue a public affairs strategy which keeps all options open, but emphasizes the requirement for patient determination while the lessons of sanctions sink in with the Iranian leadership.⁷

—That we examine closely what emerges from the Islamic Conference and from Bani-Sadr's plans for a Tehran conference of non-aligned and others, to see if there are opportunities for constructive exploitation. At the same time we will continue to discourage participants in the Islamic Conference or the Tehran meeting from taking unbalanced positions that ignore the basic issue of the seizure and holding of the hostages.⁸

⁷ In the right margin, Carter wrote: "downplay press."

⁸ Carter wrote "ok" in the right margin beside this paragraph.

280. Briefing for Secretary of State Muskie¹

Washington, May 1980

IRAN CRISIS

Critical Issues. The hostage crisis can be viewed in two different ways:

On one level, it is a complex negotiating problem. By retaining custody of the hostages, the militants are able to influence the course of Iranian revolutionary politics. Those who wish to put an end to the crisis in the interest of normalization and order (e.g. Bani-Sadr) are politically weak and subject to charges of aiding the enemy. Their rivals on the Revolutionary Council (Beheshti and the militant pro-clerical faction) are using the issue to destroy Bani-Sadr's position. Khomeini is primarily interested in vengeance and humiliation of the U.S. Our rescue mission was a unilateral effort to break this political impasse.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 32, Subject File, Iran 5/80. Secret. Prepared by the NSC Staff. A copy was sent to Blackwill. Muskie began his tenure as Secretary of State on May 8.

On a strategic level, the violent anti-Americanism generated by the hostage situation: gives the Soviets and the Iranian left a unique opportunity to increase their strength and legitimacy by siding with Khomeini; diverts attention away from Soviet activities in Afghanistan; constrains U.S. freedom of action; and severely complicates U.S. relations with regional states and our allies. The slide to the left in Iran threatens to extend Soviet influence closer to the Persian Gulf and radically reorient the regional power balance.

Current Policy. Europe and Japan are reluctantly prepared to proceed with economic and diplomatic sanctions in mid-May if there has been no decisive progress toward freeing the hostages.

Basic Choices. We have no risk-free options.

Status Quo/Diplomatic. We can use the period between now and the election of the Majlis to reopen channels of communication with some of the key Iranian actors, including Beheshti if possible. The key question will be whether we will offer any new inducements and/or intensify our military pressures.

Escalate Pressure. We could enhance nervousness and fear in Tehran, and also complicate Iranian shipping, by overt military demonstrations (e.g. interrogation of shipping) and veiled threats. Although this would keep the Iranians off balance and worried, it could play into the hands of the hard-liners and the left.

Military Operation. Another rescue operation or a blockade could be attempted in disregard of intense pressure from the allies.

Covert Action. We could lend active support to some of the dissident groups which are becoming active. This would keep the political pot boiling, but probably would not free the hostages.

[1 paragraph (4½ lines) not declassified]

281. Briefing Memorandum From the Director of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Spiers) to Secretary of State Muskie¹

Washington, May 8, 1980

SUBJECT

The Hostages and Iranian Domestic Politics

You have received analyses about the hostage situation from NEA and other sources. INR has prepared here an analysis of the crisis, setting it within the broader context of the Iranian political situation.

In sum we conclude that the hostages are being used as pawns by competing factions in the Iranian domestic power struggle. Hence, the possibility of reaching a negotiated settlement remains minimal. Only Ayatollah Khomeini has the authority to negotiate on behalf of Iran. Thus consensus building appears the best route to reach our desired goals. The US has little ability to influence the key actors, however, especially if our reward for releasing the hostages is only the cessation of US power projection and pressures.

Background: The dominant ideology which has fueled Iran's revolution rests on two basic ideas:

- Islamic Shiite fundamentalism which projects a vision of an idealized society governed by Islamic law and mores; and
- fanatical hatred of the imperialistic West and particularly the United States, which is viewed as the epitome of decadent, bankrupt Western culture.

These ideas have increasingly demanded strict adherence from all revolutionary cadres. Over the past year, the hardline revolutionary core has progressively eliminated or neutralized those individuals, including former Prime Minister Bazargan, who re-interpreted or modified the Revolution's basic ideology.

As events have developed, the Revolution can be divided into three phases:

- Sweeping away the Shah's regime. (November 1977–February 1979). This was eventually led by a broad and very large anti-Shah coalition.

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Data on Hostages. Secret. Drafted by Grummon. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, an unknown hand wrote: "Mr. Newsom has seen May 12, 1980."

—A series of political crises which have narrowed the base of the revolutionary leadership and destroyed the original coalition. (from March 1979 and still developing); and

—Eventual political and economic reconstruction.

Phase two is not complete. The highly fluid current situation is characterized by competing factions striving to establish a solid political base upon which to begin building Iran's brave new world.

Phase two revolutionary politics are dominated by two fundamental questions. First, is the Revolution an essentially conservative movement designed to restore the prestige and influence of Iran's traditional socio-economic elites i.e. the clergy and the bazaar merchants? Is it instead a process which will eventually revamp Iran's entire social structure by instituting radical income and land redistribution policies, as well as bringing to the forefront a new leftist-oriented elite? Or is it some combination of religious fundamentalism and reform?

These complex questions pit the religiously-oriented ruling entourage against various leftist groups. By and large, the dominant clerics are satisfied with the revolution's principal achievement: the ousting of the Shah and his "henchmen". Beyond re-establishing the predominance of Islamic law those clerics have little genuine interest in fundamentally altering Iranian society. The leftists, however, see the Shah's fall as the first step in a process which will thoroughly restructure the Iranian socio-economic order. Bani-Sadr is in the middle between these two positions and is often attacked by both.

A second question is simultaneously being debated within the current governing entourage: who will rule post-Khomeini Iran? In that connection, an intense power struggle has emerged, primarily between the young hardline clerical fundamentalists and the "Islamic technocrats" (i.e. those individuals who have been secularly educated—often in the West—but who claim to be devout Moslems). The leftists are not so directly involved in this question, preferring to bide their time for now.

This framework helps to explain the seemingly incoherent twists and turns in Iran's domestic politics: most of these machinations are part of the attempt to answer definitively the two previously mentioned questions. Even so macabre an issue as the return of the American dead, for example, is related to the second question: if President Bani-Sadr favored sending the bodies back to the US, then as a matter of principle, the fundamentalists would have to oppose his policy or risk a loss of prestige in their continuing struggle with the President over future pre-eminence.

The Key Actors: Several actors are participating in this on-going drama. Ayatollah Khomeini, of course, remains the Revolution's pre-eminent figure and the final repository of revolutionary legitimacy and

authority. No important decision can be made without first ascertaining his view. Khomeini's power and influence, however, are not absolute. He has always been careful to assure that his pronouncements are in accordance with popular opinion. In this respect, Khomeini is as much a follower of public opinion as he is a shaper of it. He will avoid at all costs making an unpopular decision.

Three competing factions surround Khomeini:

—The Islamic technocrats led by President Bani-Sadr. Bani-Sadr also has been able to forge links with some of the moderate clerics;

—The hardline fundamentalists led by Ayatollah Beheshti. Beheshti heads the Islamic Republican Party, sits on the Revolutionary Council and has been appointed to the Supreme Court.

—Ahmad Khomeini (son of the Ayatollah) and supporters at the Qom Theological School. Ahmad, who is attempting to carve out a sphere of influence, has supported Bani-Sadr one day and Beheshti the next.

The embassy militants occupy a unique position within the political matrix. While not a part of the ruling entourage, they are able to project enormous influence into the political arena by virtue of their forceful character and as symbols embodying all of Iran's revolutionary aspirations. They are committed to keeping the Revolution "on track" by eliminating all US influence in Iran and establishing a thoroughly (but as yet undefined) revolutionary society.

Although all of these factions (with the possible exception of the Embassy occupiers) are united in their determination to prevent a leftist seizure of the Revolution, they are split over the issue of who will receive Khomeini's mantle following the Ayatollah's death.

The leftists represent the greatest single potential threat to the ruling entourage; at present, however, they are not prepared to challenge Khomeini. Instead, they ride his coattails where they can and strengthen their own position for the longer run. They are already represented in several key places, including the student movement and the oil workers.

Three leftist organizations are particularly significant:

—*Fedayeen-al Khalq*: These secular Marxists have broken with Khomeini. Their activities are considered illegal, their headquarters have been raided and closed, and their leaders, for the most part, are underground. Individual members may be associated with the Embassy occupation. Some Fedayeen members have actively supported the Kurds in their struggle with the Tehran government.

—*Mujahiddin-al Khalq*: These Islamic Marxists are also estranged from Khomeini. Like the Fedayeen, they have been attacked and criticized. However, they have not gone underground; some of their members have been elected to the new Parliament.

—*The Tudeh (Communist) Party*: This party, now reportedly legal, supports Khomeini and carries on various activities, such as organizing meetings and publishing a newspaper. The Tudeh has probably concentrated most of its activities in oil, military and bureaucratic circles. Its membership strength has not been accurately gauged.

The intense competition among the basic three competing factions has increasingly radicalized the Revolution. Any individual who has tried to take a moderate stand on relations with the West and/or the US has been tarred as being anti-Islamic and anti-revolutionary. President Bani-Sadr could be the latest victim of this on-going, devouring phenomenon.

Enter the Hostages: It is against this volatile, fragile, extraordinarily complex political background that the hostage issue must be viewed. Essentially, the hostages are involved in three levels of competition.

First, they are pawns in the continuing overall struggle for power. For President Bani-Sadr, the hostages are a liability because the crisis has prevented him from consolidating his political position and moving on to his social and economic programs. By thwarting Bani-Sadr's efforts to unilaterally solve the hostage crisis, Ayatollah Beheshti has kept Bani-Sadr off-balance and over the past three months has gravely weakened the President's political position. Beheshti's Islamic Republican Party won over half of the seats in the first round of the Parliamentary elections and should capture a majority of the remaining seats in the second round on May 9. As a result, Beheshti probably will be in a position to decisively influence the approval and eventual power of the new prime minister and cabinet.

In an atmosphere charged with anti-Americanism and chaos, the left has openly thrived. All leftist factions have supported the Embassy seizure. In the process they have worked to expand their influence and strength. It was probably fear of the left's growing influence which recently led the hardline clerics to attack and oust them from their university strongholds.

As long as the hostages remain an asset for a majority of Iran's clerically dominated factions, it will be difficult to devise a formula for their release. Moreover, any formula which is eventually negotiated must be the result of a consensus building process within Iran. Of course, the eventual consolidation of power by one faction would facilitate the possibility of negotiating a settlement.

Second and on a deeper level, the hostages are living symbols of a perceived US policy which exploited and dominated Iran. Revolutionary Iran believes that the US used the Shah as its instrument to pillage Iran's economic resources and rob it of its cultural heritage. The seizure of the Embassy is, according to this line of thinking, the result of 35 years of pent-up moral outrage. Thus, for the Iranians, the hostage crisis

is a moral issue, rather than one of international law and diplomatic immunity and can only be resolved when the issue is addressed in those terms. At a minimum, Iran is demanding that the US acknowledge the justice of this moral indignation.

Third, the hostages are probably serving as insurance against possible US retaliation. When the hostages were first seized, Iran was not concerned about this insurance issue, but as the crisis has dragged on, it is becoming an increasingly important factor. The Iranians are riding a wild tiger on which they cannot safely remain, but from which they are equally fearful of dismounting.

The Course of Events: Because Khomeini has decreed that the Iranian people acting through the Parliament must decide the hostages' fate, no real progress toward resolving the crisis can be expected until that body convenes. The final round of elections will be held May 9. Optimistically, the new legislature will meet by the end of May and begin the hostage debate by the end of June. (The intervening month will be used by the Parliament for organizing internally and the selection of a new cabinet.) The hostages debate could easily extend through the summer, particularly if legislative sessions are suspended during the holy, fasting month of Ramadan, which commences on July 17.

If Khomeini dies or is totally incapacitated soon, the prospects for a negotiated settlement in the intermediate future will be almost nil. Without Khomeini's legitimizing influence, a weak coalition composed of Iran's various competing forces will not be able to reach an authoritative decision on this issue. Thus, the hostages will have to wait until a new, dominant power center is established which will have the strength and legitimacy to find a solution to the hostage problem. That process could, under the best of circumstances, take several months to come to fruition.

Implications for the US: The previous discussions suggest several conclusions:

—The crisis is essentially self-contained and not subject to manipulation by an outside force. Although outside power and pressures can be projected into the political arena, they will have little impact on the key players. This is particularly true if the reward for releasing the hostages is the mere cessation of outside pressures, such as the current economic measures taken against Iran.

—The hostages are intimately linked to the domestic political process. When a majority of the key players believe the hostages are a liability, a framework for negotiations can be established; however,

—No single individual has the authority to negotiate on this issue; therefore, it is a mistake to look for such a leader with whom normal diplomatic relations can be initiated and pursued. What is needed is

broad consensus building around the concept that holding the hostages is no longer to the advantage of Iran or any of the competing political groups.

—Although the Parliament has been given the assignment of solving the crisis, it will not make a decision until it has received the “correct” signal from Khomeini. It cannot be expected to act on its own initiative;

—Khomeini will send the “correct” signal when he senses the public is ready to end the crisis. This perception, in part, will be generated by the advice he receives from his close confidants and advisors.

282. Message From the Department of State to the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹

Washington, May 13, 1980

We would appreciate it if the following message could be transmitted to Ambassador Lang in Tehran.

1. We have recently completed an assessment of our experiences in dealing with the hostage crisis and reached several conclusions which will guide us in this next phase of diplomatic effort. We regard the period until the new parliament convenes and addresses the hostage question as a crucial moment for preparing the ground for positive action by the legislators. Ideally, we would hope during this period to reach an understanding with the Iranian authorities as to how the hostage issue would be handled with the new parliament and what would be the most useful U.S. contribution. We would like to explore the best ways of doing that and would welcome your analysis and advice.

2. We consider that our previous efforts to negotiate release of the hostages failed largely because of the intransigence of the clerical leadership. We had concentrated our efforts on the secular leadership and left it to them to carry the arguments with the clerics. In this phase we want indirectly to try to be as persuasive as possible with the clerics. We believe Capucci may be best suited to this job, but we will explore whether others might also contribute to this process. We will be in

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 5/80. Secret. Attached to an undated briefing memorandum from Saunders to Christopher and Newsom entitled “May 14—Iran Update.”

touch with the Germans, French and others in this regard to see what they might be able to do.

3. In the previous phase we concentrated our attention heavily on Ghotbzadeh, and we continue to assume he will be one of the key actors. We believe, however, we must give increased attention to Bani-Sadr for it will presumably be his responsibility to guide the hostage issue through the new parliament. If he does not undertake the task, then his yet to be appointed prime minister will be responsible. We would like to continue to rely on you as our channel to official Iranians, i.e. Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, the new prime minister if and when he is appointed, and others you consider appropriate. Obviously any contribution you can make to the persuasive effort with the clerics or any advice you have on that subject would also be welcomed but we recognize that you and your government may well feel it is wise for you to leave that group to others.

4. Bourguet and Villalon will continue to be helpful in a variety of ways. We assume their primary contact will continue to be Ghotbzadeh.

5. There may be other intermediaries involved and we will try to keep you fully informed on these developments. We would be particularly interested in ideas on ways to get to the group working directly with Khomeini.

6. Parallel to our intensified diplomatic effort will be augmented pressure in the form of sanctions from our allies and friends. We believe these measures are having some political and psychological effect but are aware that the economic effects will take some time.

7. It is plain that this crisis will be resolved and the hostages released when Iran's leadership decides that it serves their interest and the interest of the Revolution to do so. There are a variety of arguments and actions that we will put forward to bring these points home to key figures, and we will welcome your insights and suggestions for this process.

8. We believe it would be useful at this stage if you could arrange a *tour d'horizon* with Bani-Sadr to review the present situation, prospects for favorable parliamentary action, the state of planning for such action, and international initiatives that might usefully contribute to that process, especially initiatives by the U.S. We would like to develop as frank an exchange with Bani-Sadr as possible and believe a matching exchange might usefully be held with Ghotbzadeh. We would appreciate your assessment after these conversations so that we can refine our planning.

9. One other issue concerns us. We have heard increasing talk from Tehran again about trial of the hostages. Do you believe this is again becoming a real threat? If so, do you have thoughts about how to turn it aside?

283. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 13, 1980, 1-1:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Hostage Family Representatives of F.L.A.G. (Family Liaison Action Group)

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Katherine Keough, President of F.L.A.G.
Pearl Golacinski, Mother of Alan B. Golacinski, Security Officer
Louisa Kennedy, Wife of Economic Officer, Moorhead Kennedy
Barbara Rosen, Wife of Barry Rosen, USICA Press Attaché
Gary Sick, NSC
Ray Jenkins, White House Press Office

Mrs. Kennedy briefed the President on the recent trip she and several other FLAG members had made to Europe. They asked for Allied unity and solidarity on the question of the taking of diplomatic hostages, and they had the impression that the U.S. has Allied support. However, the Allies must take action in their own way.

The President said that he had received private assurances of support from the Allies, but public statements to the contrary were blown out of proportion by the press, and there was an impression in the U.S. that the Allies were not behind us. He thought the FLAG visit was meaningful and helpful.

Mrs. Keough summarized their recent contacts with the TV networks. They are seeking support for coverage of five hostage families and five Iranian families who suffered persecution under the Shah. The objective is to show that communication is possible among ordinary people and between governments despite very great differences.

The President said the project would be more effective if he was not involved. However, he thought that anything the hostage families did in a human way could be helpful. He wondered about family trips to Iran. He had noted that Mrs. Timm was condemned when she returned, and he regretted this.

Mrs. Keough also noted their efforts to get an opportunity to make a brief appearance before the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference in Islamabad. They had contacted a number of Mid East Ambassadors, and they had sent telexes to Muscat, Jidda and Islamabad.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 119, Meetings File, 5/13/80 Hostage Family Representatives Meeting with President. Confidential. Cleared by Gary Sick. The meeting took place in the Oval Office.

The President said he was inclined to support the effort, though the hand of the U.S. Government should not show. He suggested that FLAG might also consider getting in touch with Archbishop Capucci, who is close to Khomeini.

Mrs. Kennedy said the Vatican had asked them not to publicize its role.

The President summarized U.S. efforts presently underway. Secretary General Waldheim had contacted him yesterday and there was a chance that one or two members of the UN Commission might return to Tehran. This had resulted from Waldheim's conversation with Ghotbzadeh, who is the only one in Iran with any political courage—although he came across on TV as a sleazy character. Bani-Sadr was just nothing, and it had been a serious mistake for us when he was elected. He delayed carrying out his commitments to us and had permitted Beheshti and others to undermine the negotiations. The President said he saw no immediate prospects for the Majlis to release the hostages since they were disorganized. There were four tracks which could go on simultaneously: (1) the UN; (2) Islamic religious leaders who could be in contact in Tehran; (3) the European allies; and (4) the human side with the hostage families. He was pushing the first three, and he would leave the fourth to FLAG. If FLAG needed help with the TV networks, Ray Jenkins, Jody Powell, or Hodding Carter at State would help. He asked that they keep his comments private.

Mrs. Keough said they had found it was better that they do it themselves. One problem is that they are accused of being a "front" for the U.S. Government. If they constantly deny that, the President should understand that this does not mean that they do not appreciate everything he is doing.

The President wondered how we could assist in getting them an appearance at the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference.

Sick said that he would work with Harold Saunders to give them some assistance without evidence of U.S. Government sponsorship.

284. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Vienna, May 16, 1980

SUBJECT

Meeting Between Secretary of State Muskie and Foreign Minister Gromyko

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.:

Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie
William D. Krimer, Interpreter

USSR:

Foreign Minister Andrey A. Gromyko
Viktor Sukhodrev, Interpreter

Foreign Minister *Gromyko* opened the conversation by suggesting that he and Secretary Muskie conduct their talks in compact form since they did not have much time at their disposal. It was his understanding that there was no formal agenda for this meeting; thus they would be free to choose whatever topics they wanted to discuss.

[Omitted here is material on topics unrelated to Iran.]

Iran

Turning to the question of Iran, Gromyko said that some political leaders had frequently asked him why the Soviet Union had not publicly advocated release of the American hostages, saying that this would ease tensions throughout the world. Gromyko would tell the Secretary that the Soviets had made very clear statements to the effect that the holding of U.S. hostages by Iran violates international law and all relevant international conventions. Moreover, the Soviet Union had undertaken a private *démarche* with the Iranian leadership through restricted channels, calling for the release of the American hostages. At the time of this *démarche* Washington had been informed to that effect; that was several months ago.² But, instead of hearing thanks for its initiative, the Soviet leadership had heard nothing but an avalanche of unfriendly statements against the Soviet Union. True, there was a minor assistant who had expressed appreciation, in passing as it were, but the Soviet leadership had heard nothing from the President of the United States or from the Secretary of State. Let no one throw stones

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 5. Secret; Sensitive. Drafted by Krimer. The meeting took place at the Hofburg Palace. At the top of the page, Carter wrote: "Susan—Pers file. C." For the full text of this memorandum of conversation, see *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union, Document 278.

² See footnote 2, Document 83.

at the Soviet position with regard to hostages.³ But, the Secretary knew very well that the Soviet leadership did condemn military methods of liberating the hostages. It believed that such methods cannot help the United States and can only damage U.S. prestige. That also applies to the recent action undertaken by the United States. In his judgment, had the mission proceeded, it would have resulted in the death of all the hostages and probably in the death of many other people as well.

The Soviet Union did not need anything at all from Iran. Let Iran develop its own country peacefully and live in peace with all its neighbors and everyone else.

[Omitted here is material on topics unrelated to Iran.]

Iran

The Secretary said that he was aware of Soviet support and opposition to taking hostages last January. He appreciated that support in spite of other difficult problems we have with each other. But he had to tell Gromyko that two questions were being raised in the United States in connection with Soviet actions with respect to Iran. First, there was a feeling among some that the Tudeh Party of Iran was an instrument of Soviet policy in that country, and that part of the problem with the hostages was the fact that no one in Iran today had authority. The Iranians have not finished structuring their government; perhaps when they finish we might be able to do business with whoever emerges. Secondly, the Secretary had been told of radio broadcasts from the Soviet Union that were provocative in nature and fed anti-American feelings in Iran. He would make one final point in conclusion. The rescue effort we had undertaken was not regarded by us or intended as⁴ a military effort against Iran. It was strictly a rescue effort. It was his view that any government would be remiss in its responsibilities if it did not consider and implement efforts to rescue its citizens. It was unfortunate that our effort had failed, but no one could say with certainty what would have happened had it succeeded. In any case, the rescue effort had served a useful purpose in expiating some of the frustrations felt by the American people.⁵ The hostages have now been held for more than six months and it must be clearly seen that the United States as a great power had displayed extraordinary patience toward a much smaller power such as Iran. The course of patience is what we must follow and hope that diplomatic contacts

³ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "Since the sanctions vote SU has done everything possible to condemn US & to support Iranian Terrorists."

⁴ Carter underlined the words "regarded by us or intended as."

⁵ Carter underlined the phrase "expiating some of the frustrations felt by the American people" and placed a question mark in the right margin.

with Iranian authorities would demonstrate to them that their own best interests dictated release of the hostages. The Secretary did not know whether we will succeed or not. In any case, the failed effort had bought us some time.⁶ This was an election year in the United States and he did not know whether in the heat of the contest a policy of patience can survive. Gromyko knew who the contestants were and he could draw his own conclusions. Conservative opinion in the United States is on the rise and it has had its effect on questions involving détente, arms control, and defense spending. There are pressures on the President who is running for reelection and he cannot ignore those pressures.⁷ The Secretary suspected that he had been selected for the office of Secretary of State precisely because he had a political constituency that would take pressure off the President.⁸ He was willing to do that. In that spirit he had come to the present meeting in order to explore possible solutions. He hoped that its result would be more than simply he and Gromyko gaining confidence in each other. He hoped that some ideas for solutions would emerge from this meeting, enabling both sides to pick up the policy of détente, which in the Secretary's view was the only sensible and serious course to follow. Both of them had said things to each other that were unpleasant, trying to be frank. Perhaps they would be able to communicate some of these sentiments to those they represented.

Iran

Gromyko first wanted to reply to the Secretary's comments about the Tudeh Party. This was an internal domestic political force in Iran, and the Soviet Union had nothing to do with it. It seemed to be an old habit of political leaders in Washington to refer to special relationships between the Soviet Union and such forces as the Tudeh Party. He could only say that these political leaders were victims of their own inventions.

As for the Soviet radio broadcasts to Iran of which the Secretary had spoken, Gromyko could only point out that these broadcasts stated official Soviet policy, i.e., condemnation of the military means contemplated by the U.S., condemnation of the actions of the U.S. fleet of contemplated blockade and mining. That was official Soviet policy and it had been stated in the broadcasts. It was difficult for the Soviet Union to understand why such military actions were being contemplated or

⁶ Carter underlined the phrase "the failed effort had bought us some time."

⁷ Carter underlined most of the previous two sentences and wrote in the left margin: "Election pressures on this subject not a factor."

⁸ Carter underlined the last half of this sentence and placed a question mark in the right margin.

undertaken. In particular, the last rescue operation seemed to him to be contrary to the purposes the United States wanted to accomplish. Had it continued, it would surely have led to the death of all the hostages and perhaps many other people. It would surely be much better to get the hostages out alive. As for the broadcasts the Secretary had mentioned, if one were to compare these broadcasts with those the United States beamed at the Soviet Union, one could only come to the conclusion that if medals were awarded for hostile statements, the United States would walk away with all the medals. He would only ask the Secretary not to consider these to be Olympic medals since the United States obviously did not believe in the Olympics.

Gromyko said that the only policy toward Iran the Soviet Union was pursuing was aimed at seeing an independent, sovereign state, peacefully developing its own interests without any outside interference or intrusions.

[Omitted here is material on topics unrelated to Iran.]

285. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, May 19, 1980

1. Last night I met with my Algerian colleague Abdelkrim Gheraieb (GB) and informed him on our position concerning carrying out our respective mandates, a future examination of respective grievances and a reconciliation of the countries in dispute. GB whose Deputy Foreign Minister (and also Secretary General) is here at present was very much interested and told me that his Deputy Minister had received a much briefer note from Algiers about Algerian-Swiss cooperation. Our formula was not only interesting but sound.

2. GB briefed me about steps undertaken by his country.

2.1. At Tito's funeral, the Algerian president had two meetings which underlie the present Algerian démarche.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80. Secret; Sensitive.

² As reported in telegram 9294 from Bonn, May 14, Schmidt asked Algerian President Chadli Benjedid at the funeral of Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito "to consider an Algerian initiative" to resolve the hostage crisis. Benjedid then dispatched the Algerian Foreign Ministry Director General to Tehran for discussions on resolving the crisis. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables May 1980)

First, with Chancellor Schmidt, who said it is up to you Algerians to help the whole world by keeping Iran-US conflict from further deterioration. We know that the US has reached the end of its patience and will not hesitate to undertake drastic measures and military operations with foreseeable consequences. Furthermore, Schmidt asked Algeria to help Europe. Europe is in a conflict of conscience, for reasons of principle, Europe cannot tolerate a continuation of the violation of diplomacy represented by the seizure of hostages in Tehran. Europe must show effective solidarity with the U.S. but Europe is also aware of its own interests in the region, of the sacrifices involved for results that are not immediate. Europe also worries over the consequences of an isolation of Iran for whom the only salvation lies in Arab and European countries in the face of the Soviet option. The second meeting with Pertini was even more sharpened, Pertini spoke primarily on behalf of Italy for whom the situation is tragic and for whom Algeria is the one chance to lead Iran to its senses.

2.2. Both Schmidt and Pertini would like to get Algeria to act as intermediary so that the government or the leadership of Iran will be able to make "a decisive step" enabling the Europeans to postpone, or not take at all, steps that no one wishes to take. This step should occur before the 17th.

2.3. After his return to Algiers, the President summoned GB and discussed the matter with his government. Not only was the Algerian government impressed by the initiatives of Schmidt and Pertini, he also decided to make them its own and dispatched Deputy Minister (following GB's advice) in order for him to meet with Ghotbzadeh and if possible with Bani-Sadr.

3. GB is a member of the Central Committee of the Algerian National Liberation Front and a member of the National Assembly. I have a great deal of esteem for him, his children and my children play together, for months he has been telling me: "if you wish to succeed here, forget conventional diplomacy and call things by their name. It's the only way to get to some result, maybe."

He gave the same advice to his Deputy Foreign Minister who followed the advice, in part only, this being his first contact here.

This is what he said: "If any country can understand Iran, Algeria is that country. We have suffered under colonialism and imperialism. We know all about what AMERICAN imperialism can do and has done but it is not the only imperialism. Hostage taking cannot be tolerated. As it continues the situation becomes serious, far more serious than you, the Iranians seem to realize. Indeed, if the US and most European countries were to take drastic measures that applied to all countries that would continue to trade with you or to help you then you should know that in spite of our friendship for you, we shall place

our own interests above all else. This means that we shall not be able to do anything for you. Furthermore, you claim to be the legitimate government of the Iranian Islamic Republic but that is not enough. In order for your legitimacy to secure international acceptance, it must be translated into deeds. Words alone are not enough and no longer suffice. If you are incapable of having your decisions implemented, you must draw the consequences of this state of affairs, resign your position and have the country confront its responsibilities. As you know, you belong with the Arab countries and with Europe but you are destroying your place. You must do something concrete and significant to enable the Europeans not to take any measures on the 17th of May and postpone them far into the future.”

4. This is what Ghotbzadeh answered (GB found him to be rather dejected, just as I have found him to be): he understood the situation. He had met with Waldheim in Belgrade and their talks boiled down to three points: first, Waldheim is available; second, he offered to reactivate the UN commission; third, the problem of a gesture enabling the Europeans to put off their decision.

GB points out to me that a reactivation of the UN commission is Waldheim’s wish because he wants to be re-elected and it also is very dear to GH who had gone very far in that direction. GH says that he is interested but he wants to wait and see how the atmosphere will be at Islamabad and he wants some clarifications from Waldheim.

In this context one should point out that Ghotbzadeh would like to enjoy the advantages of the commission without any of the undesirable aspects meaning that where the visit to the hostages is concerned the ICRC visit would be considered as having been made in its place. The idea here is that the work of the commission, its report and its findings will enable the parliament to discuss the hostages in a climate of moral satisfaction (in addition we would have the non-aligned seminar and the new Salamatian Commission set up by Bani-Sadr, as directed by the Imam, to investigate “the American interventions in Iran following the aborted strike of Tabass”).

Is that all, asked his interlocutors? And Ghotbzadeh then gave them explanations similar to those he gave me (see my message 465).³

Both GB and his Deputy Foreign Minister then said that that was not enough. You must place the hostages under governmental control never mind if it is in one or several locations. Then you must say to the country from now on the Revolutionary Council is in control and then you must effectively do this.

³ Not found.

6. (No numeral 5 in original) The Deputy Foreign Minister and GB then asked GHOTBZADEH for a meeting with Bani-Sadr, provided it is clearly understood that if Bani-Sadr is to merely repeat Ghotbzadeh's theses then there is no reason to waste his time. The Algerians clearly expected an act of statemanship on the part of Bani-Sadr. Ghotbzadeh then telephoned Bani-Sadr and briefed him about what he had said. But the Deputy Foreign Minister who is leaving tomorrow has not yet been received by Bani-Sadr who nevertheless found plenty of time yesterday and the day before to meet with a number of journalists . . . and with my British colleague.

7. This is where things stand, says GB. So let us see what effect Waldheim's statement issued after his meeting with Giscard will have. Let us see what Ghotbzadeh will tell us after Islamabad where the Algerian Deputy Foreign Minister is also going, perhaps together with Ghotbzadeh.

Meager results so far.

Lang

286. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, May 20, 1980, 9-9:26 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran and Afghanistan

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Peter Constable

OSD

W. Graham Claytor, Jr.

Frank Kramer

ICA

Robert T. Curran

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

Hedley Donovan

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 113, SCC 314, Iran & Afghanistan 5/20/80. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

JCS
Lt. General John Pustay
Justice
John Harmon
Judge Charles Renfrew

Treasury
Robert Carswell
Robert Mundheim

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
[name not declassified]
Charles Cogan

NSC
Gary Sick
Marshall Brement
Thomas Thornton
Alfred Friendly

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *World Court Decision*. Mr. Christopher said he thought we would get a good decision from the World Court.² At present, however, he did not favor going back to the Security Council after the decision since this would merely provoke additional debate and lead to another Soviet veto. If the Soviet judge on the ICJ should vote for the decision, we should review our position since we might be able to bring new pressures on the Soviets. We should be able to use the decision effectively for public presentation in favor of our position. All agreed that we would not plan to return to the Security Council pending further review after the decision is announced. (C)

_____ Approve³

_____ Plan to return to the Security Council

2. *Iranian Visas*. There have been approximately 700 applications for visas by Iranians. Approximately half of these have been granted on the basis of medical needs, rejoining families, and other humanitarian reasons. The other half have been rejected. We have not been swamped with requests. Of those cases which have been granted, nearly half have been minority applicants, and the conditions applied in those cases are considerably more lenient than for other Iranians regardless of their position. The sharp difference between minorities and other Iranians is becoming very evident, and Mr. Christopher felt we should adopt a more liberal standard for granting visas to non-minority Iranians. Specifically, we should be more flexible in granting visas for medi-

² In its final decision, rendered May 24, the ICJ unanimously determined that Iran must release the hostages immediately, that no hostage could be subjected to a trial or provide witness in any trial, that Iran was obliged to make reparation for injuries caused to the United States, and that the Court would determine the form and amount of this reparation if the two sides could not come to an agreement. Argumentation before the Court and the Court's ruling are in Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1980, pp. 36–69, and July 1980, pp. 43–70, respectively.

³ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

cal treatment.⁴ At present, we are allowing visas virtually only for deathbed cases. Each case should be examined carefully in terms of need, but we should be more flexible in permitting cases of real need. He also suggested that we apply more liberal standards on permitting families to reunite. At present this is limited only to mothers, fathers and children. He would propose extending this to include brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts.⁵ All agreed that some liberalization of the rules was justified, with careful verification of each case. (C)

_____ Approve some liberalization, with close verification of each case

_____ Maintain very tight restrictions as at present⁶

Iranian students are a special category composed of three different groups. The vast bulk of Iranian students, perhaps 50,000, were admitted on the basis that they could remain until they completed their studies. They are not a problem from the visa point of view. About 7,000 students have visas with specific time limits, some of which are expiring. Gary Sick noted that he had been contacted by the Provost of MIT on behalf of the National Association of Foreign Student Affairs pointing out several cases of students whose visas are expiring in the near future despite the fact that they are about to complete work on a PhD. The SCC asked for additional information to review this at a later time. A third group of about 100 Iranian students had valid visas for the duration of their studies but happened to be trapped outside the U.S. (e.g. a weekend field trip to Canada) when the order was imposed and they have not been able to return. Mr. Christopher found the application of the rule in these cases capricious and recommended permitting these individuals to return. The SCC agreed.⁷ (C)

3. *Travel of U.S. Citizens to Iran.* There are a number of possible cases emerging, from individual family members wishing to travel to Iran, to lawyers representing Iran who need to consult with their clients, to Ramsey Clark who apparently intends to attend the forthcoming conference in Iran related to the rescue mission. Dr. Brzezinski asked State and Justice to examine the various cases, define some rational distinctions, and provide recommendations to the SCC on those which require high level decisions. (C)

⁴ Carter underlined the phrase "for medical treatment" and wrote in the left margin: "ok, but only for serious cases where US offers unique treatment."

⁵ Carter underlined "brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts" and wrote "no" in the left margin.

⁶ Carter approved this option with a checkmark, crossed out the phrase "as at present" at the end of the sentence, and initialed "J" in the right margin.

⁷ Carter approved this item with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

4. *Iranian Claims Legislation*. Mr. Christopher noted that there is a very real chance that the proposed legislation⁸ would lead to hearings on the Hill and considerable pressure by various interest groups for amendments to be attached either vesting assets or providing special consideration for certain groups. The legislation itself does not provide any real pressure on the Iranians and it may have the effect of complicating an eventual settlement by getting us tied up in legal constraints. The families of the hostages are opposed to the legislation on the grounds that it will make an eventual settlement more difficult. There is no enthusiasm on the Hill and no pressure to proceed since it is going to set off a lobbying campaign. There is no public pressure to proceed. We may have been mistaken in recommending this in the first place, but we are now committed since the President has announced it. All agreed that there was no reason to hurry the process. Treasury will proceed to put the finishing touches on the legislation, and it will be reviewed next week by the SCC.⁹ (C)

[Omitted here is material on Afghanistan.]

⁸ The revised claims legislation, which did not include a clause on standby vesting authority, is attached to a May 14 covering memorandum from Lori Damrosch, Special Assistant to the Legal Adviser. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 33)

⁹ Carter wrote at the end of this sentence: "No hurry."

287. Briefing Memorandum From the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Constable) to the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, May 24, 1980

SUBJECT

Your Meeting with Secretary General Waldheim, 6:30 p.m., May 25, in Geneva:²
Status of Initiatives

I. INTRODUCTION

Hal Saunders and Henry Precht will return May 24, after completing their consultations in Europe.³ They had good talks with the French, the Germans and the British on ways in which their diplomats in Tehran can be helpful in working to persuade the Iranian authorities,⁴ especially the clerics, that a quick solution of the hostage issue is in Iran's interest. In Vienna, Saunders discussed with Kreisky the latter's plans for a trip this weekend to Tehran with Olof Palme of Sweden and Felipe Gonzalez of Spain.⁵ In Bern, Saunders and Precht had a long session with the Swiss Team on Iran and Foreign Minister Aubert.⁶ The Swiss offered to have their Ambassador Lang play a more active role than would be normal for a protecting power. Lang will attempt to keep abreast of and orchestrate the various initiatives and activities

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council. Secret; Sensitive. Sent through Newsom. Drafted by Clement.

² Christopher's meeting with Waldheim is reported in a May 25 memorandum of conversation. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870110-0843)

³ Saunders and Precht were in Europe the week of May 19. A Status of Diplomatic Initiatives summary, prepared for the White House, was attached to a May 27 memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 5/80) Additional information on their trip is in a May 21 briefing memorandum from Constable to Muskie and Newsom. (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update May 1980)

⁴ Saunders's meeting with the French is reported in telegram 6378 from Vienna, May 21; the report of his meeting with German officials is in telegram 11031 from London, May 22; and his meeting with U.K. officials is reported in telegram 2952 from Bern, May 22. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables May 1980)

⁵ Saunders's meeting with Kreisky in Austria is reported in telegram 9635 from Bonn, May 21. (Ibid.)

⁶ Saunders's meeting with the Swiss team is reported in telegram 2976 from Bern, May 23. (Ibid.)

of other parties on the scene in Tehran. Saunders also met with lawyers, Bourguet and Villalon, and with Archbishop Capucci.⁷

II. STATUS OF INITIATIVES ON IRAN

1. *Socialist International Initiative*

Kreisky, Palme and Gonzalez still plan to arrive in Tehran within a few days. They expect to meet with Bani Sadr, Beheshti, the Revolutionary Council, and Khomeini's son, Ahmad. Their purposes are to explore "cooperation with democratic Europe" and tangentially to have a positive impact on the hostage question.

2. *Capucci/Bourguet Initiatives*

Capucci and Bourguet are in Tehran. Capucci will try to see the leading authorities in Tehran to determine whether it would be useful for him to try to generate démarches in Tehran by the Syrians, Saudis, Emiratis, Kuwaitis, Algerians and Palestinians. His ideas are still unformed, but he has in mind trying to develop a consensus for the release of the hostages. Capucci and Bourguet hope to go to Damascus this weekend, after seeing the leadership in Tehran, to discuss with President Assad and possibly with Yassir Arafat ideas for resolving the crisis. Capucci feels that it is urgent to stimulate some activity before May 28, when the members of parliament first meet. We have stressed to Capucci and Bourguet in the strongest terms that we oppose trials in any form, and Capucci agrees with our position. The Vatican has agreed not to interpose objections to Capucci's travel to Damascus, provided the USG obtains the agreement of Israel to look the other way. Capucci and Bourguet are holding in reserve the idea of a seven-nation conference. The conference would be sponsored jointly by Switzerland and Algeria with the US and Iran attending. The Swiss have decided to stay loose on this until Iranian reaction to such a conference becomes more firmly known. The Swiss recognize that a detailed negotiation of outstanding US-Iranian issues should come only after the hostages' release.

3. *Iranian Conference Initiative*

The Iranians are continuing their efforts to organize a June 2–5 conference of sympathetic organizations and individuals from European and Third World countries. The stated purpose of the conference is to condemn US interference in Iran and the aborted rescue mission. There have been some suggestions that Bani Sadr sees the conference as an opening to build some support in Iran for a resolution of the

⁷ A report of Precht's meeting with Bourguet and Villalon is in telegram 6378 from Vienna, May 21. (Ibid.) Saunders's meeting with Capucci is reported in telegram 13084 from Rome, May 17. (Ibid.)

crisis, but the reasons for his possibly believing so are unclear. So far there appear to have been very few acceptances to participate in the conference. The Iranians are attempting to persuade some Americans to attend, but realize that there could be difficulties for these individuals in obtaining validation of their passports for travel to Iran.

4. Bangladesh Initiative

The BDG at the recent Islamic Conference in Islamabad may have floated the idea of putting together a "contact group" of a few Islamic countries which would go to Tehran to try to be helpful in resolving the US-Iranian crisis. We do not know at this point whether they had any positive responses from other Islamic governments, but are checking on it with our people in Dacca.

5. UN Initiative

The Syrian advisor to President Assad, Adib Daoudi, arrived today in Tehran. His trip is at Waldheim's request for the purpose of exploring possibilities for the UN Commission to resume its mandate. Waldheim has said that he will ask Daoudi to meet with religious leaders such as Beheshti, as well as with government officials. Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh has publicly disassociated Daoudi's visit from the hostage issue. This stance probably reflects Ghotbzadeh's doubts as to whether it will be possible to use Daoudi's visit to contribute to a solution.

Points to be Made

—I would like to reconfirm our understanding that the Daoudi visit is truly exploratory, and that there can be no question of release of the commission report except in an agreed framework for release of the hostages.

—We hope you will keep in closest touch with us, especially as regards the outcome of the Daoudi visit.

—Assistant Secretary Saunders has been in Europe this past week consulting with our major Allies on ways in which their Ambassadors in Tehran can be helpful.

—Saunders has also had long talks with the Swiss government, which represents our interests in Iran. The Swiss have agreed to play an active role and will attempt to be of assistance in connection with various initiatives that are underway.

—Saunders has discussed with European social democratic leaders their plans for visiting Iran. Hopefully such a visit can also have a positive impact on the hostage question.

—Archbishop Capucci is in Tehran at his own initiative attempting to explore the possibilities for Islamic countries playing a helpful role in building a consensus for the release of the hostages.

288. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)

Washington, May 28, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 16. Secret; Sensitive. 3 pages not declassified.]

289. Memorandum for the Record by Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, May 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation with Dr. Brzezinski, 28 May 1980 [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

2. On Iran, I asked for his reaction to our covert action paper that I gave him last week. He said he thought it was a reasonable paper. He had Gary Sick staffing it and would come back to us in writing. I told him I needed a little more guidance on Bakhtiar and Oveisi. The essence of his response was very much what my attitude has been on this—keep the pot stirred; do not give substantial backing or direction, however, that does not preclude giving either modest advice or money.

I described the “jerga” that will take place in Paris shortly. [*1 line not declassified*]

3. I expressed a bit of concern that the “Saunders paper”² was in effect being carried out as a policy even though we had not discussed it in the SCC meeting when it was presented. He acknowledged that we were more or less moving by default in this case but he didn't think there was anything else we could do at this time.

I expressed our continued reservations on the possibility of any good for the hostages coming out of the present semi-negotiations or

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B0012R: Subject Files, Box 15, Folder 43: DCI/DDCI Memrecs/Memos/Agendas of Brzezinski/Aaron Meetings January–December 1980. Secret.

² See Document 273.

the actions of the Majlis. He agreed but said there was a lot of optimism around about the West German approach. I pointed out we had not been clued in on this other than a brief reference to it at this morning's meeting.³ He said it came in a recent NODIS from Stoessel.⁴ The message indicated there was a suggestion that the hostages might be released within three weeks.

[1 paragraph (15 lines) not declassified]

4. I talked also about the rescue operation planning and how much support we should give to it.⁵ His response is that it is not a dead option but that we might have to look at it also in the event we come to an impasse on negotiations. We are going to have to make our own judgment as to how much of our effort we put in that direction. Basically, I think we have to go along with the DoD's requests but we've got to be rather selective, i.e., DoD will cook up all kinds of options and be happy to have us explore each in great detail. We've got to hold back until their enthusiasm calms down enough to know which option is worth looking at seriously. We'll also have to be pretty tough-minded on what we are uniquely equipped to do for them and what they can really do themselves. In short, we must cooperate. We can footdrag, we can not volunteer, and we can insist that there be some signs of seriousness and a reasonable probability of success behind proposals that we expend much effort in supporting. [portion marking not declassified]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

Stansfield Turner⁶
Director

³ Reference is to the Special Coordination Committee meeting that took place that morning at 9:30 a.m. The Summary of Conclusions of this meeting does not discuss the West German approach. (May 28; Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 14)

⁴ Telegram 10010 from Bonn, May 27. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables May 1980)

⁵ A May 20 internal CIA memorandum to Turner, assessing the damage resulting from the rescue mission, concluded that a second rescue attempt was severely compromised. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran Damage Assessment 5/80–6/80)

⁶ Robert Gates signed for Turner.

290. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, May 31, 1980

Message to Lang

In recent conversations beginning in Paris,² Bourguet and Villalon have been very close-mouthed about their plans. Bourguet is now in Tehran working with Ghotbzadeh, but Villalon—through whom we communicate—says only that they will tell us in due course what has been worked out. We have said vigorously each time (a) that they cannot confront us with a plan approved by the Iranians which we cannot accept and, particularly, (b) that any plan which includes trying some of the hostages would risk the most serious reaction in the U.S. We want to tell Lang what is going on and ask him to try to find out what is being discussed in Tehran to get us into the circuit.

Villalon says cryptically that four competing plans for dealing with the hostages are being readied for submission to the *Majlis*:

1. The *Bani-Sadr Plan*. As we understand this from Italian, British, and German reports—not from Villalon—this approach involves three principal elements. First, an appeal by Khomeini to the Parliament Members to release the hostages. In one version, this appeal is a public Khomeini statement; in another version, it is made through private messages delivered by Ahmad Khomeini. The second element is the release of the hostages by the Parliament to unspecified third country leaders. Whether these are leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement, Islamic states, or others has not been spelled out. The third element involves an understanding that the United States would agree to unfreeze the assets, facilitate the recovery of the Shah's assets, and make a commitment not to retaliate or press claims against Iran.

2. A plan being devised by *Ghotbzadeh's group*—Ghotbzadeh, Moinfar, Tabatabai, Chamran, Habibi, two of Ghotbzadeh's staffers, and Bourguet working with them. This group opposes Bani-Sadr's idea

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff, Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 2. Secret; Nodis. In the upper right corner of the memorandum, an unknown hand wrote: "Revised telegram as sent to Swiss." In the original draft of the telegram to Lang, attached to an undated briefing memorandum to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update: May 31, 1980", Saunders said he needed to know if Jordan was expected to be included in any further talks with Bourguet. This query was omitted from the final version, also attached. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 5/80)

² See footnote 7, Document 287.

of releasing the hostages to the Non-Aligned Movement headed by Castro because they feel this would play into the hands of the communist interests. Villalon also says Ghotbzadeh wants the U.N. Commission to complete its work while Bani-Sadr wants it to fail. Villalon will only say that the Ghotbzadeh plan takes into account three elements: (1) Bani-Sadr's ideas; (b) the past scenarios agreed with the U.S.; (c) the Islamic concept of forgiveness or pardon, pardon being one of the Imam's prerogatives. There also seems to be an idea—which Capucci was pressing—of approaching Arab governments such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and perhaps Syria to generate approaches to Iran on behalf of Islamic countries to create a situation in which Parliament would merely endorse the Imam's decision which itself would be folded into an Islamic consensus. A disturbing element mentioned by others than Villalon is the idea of releasing the hostages in 3 or 4 stages—the unofficial hostages, Laingen and colleagues, 42–43 from the hostages, then 7–8 suspected of being spies. We have repeatedly argued against any breakdown which would leave a small group behind to be tried. Villalon said Friday this plan will be submitted to the Imam for approval before we are informed of its details.

3. A *Beheshti* plan on which we have no reports but which we fear may include trials.

4. A plan devised by *the militants* which would be given to sympathizers in the Parliament. Again, we have no details, but assume they would repeat demands for the Shah and/or his wealth and for trials.

One reason Villalon gives for their uncommunicativeness is their view that the U.S. is speaking with different voices. For instance:

—In arguing against any scenario that would lead to trials, we have simply said that if there were trials of any of the hostages we could not rule out military action. (The President told the families on December 7 and was quoted in the *New York Times* that we would interrupt Iran's commerce if there were trials.³ As you know, this was also conveyed in other ways.)

—German Ambassador Ritzel is being reported by Villalon as saying in Tehran that Secretary Muskie told him the U.S. will adhere to peaceful means to resolve the crisis under all circumstances.

If the Bourguet-Villalon approach does in fact include a trial-pardon element, they may resent our persistent argument against trials and feel we are speaking for ourselves.

³ See footnote 2, Document 90. Although no official record of Carter's meeting with the families at the Department of State was found, some relatives spoke with reporters after the meeting and related Carter's remarks. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Carter Says He Plans a Trade Ban Against Iran if Hostages Are Tried," *New York Times*, December 8, 1979, p. 1)

Finally, we urged Lang privately to concentrate on learning what Bani-Sadr needs in managing the decision. With Bourguet and Villalon we have argued for trying to build a consensus that would include both Bani-Sadr and Beheshti. Given the rivalry between Ghotbzadeh with whom they are working, and Bani-Sadr, this may also bother them.

Recommendation

Bourguet plans to leave Tehran this weekend and may want to come to Washington—to see Ham Jordan and me—next week. The circumstances described above and the prospect of a Bourguet visit lead to one recommendation and one question:

I recommend that you approve the attached message to Lang explaining the situation and seeking his assessment.⁴

⁴ Christopher neither approved nor disapproved the recommendation, but the prepared message to Lang is attached to the undated briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom (see footnote 1, above), indicating that it was sent.

291. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, June 3, 1980, 9–10:20 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Edmund Muskie**
David Newsom*
Harold Saunders
Roberts Owen*
Robert Fritts*

Treasury

Robert Carswell*

OSD

W. Graham Claytor
Frank Kramer*

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Lloyd Cutler
Hedley Donovan
Jody Powell
NSC
Gary Sick

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote “Zbig, C” in the upper right corner.

Justice

John Harmon*

JCS

John Pustay

DCI

Frank Carlucci

ICA

Charles Bray*

Robert T. Curran*

* Not present for final item.

** Present only for last two items.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. *Travel to Iran.* The Department of State proposed guidance for approval of certain categories of travel to Iran. It was agreed that this issue needed additional work before presenting it to the President. A working group of State, Justice, Treasury and Lloyd Cutler's office will examine the issue.² (U)

2. *Iranian Students.*³ The Department of State summarized the present situation. As of December, 1979, there were approximately 66,000+ Iranian students in the U.S. of which 56,000+ were registered. The 10,000+ who were not registered are in violation of the law; they are being pursued and will be deported. Of those registered, 6,700 were found to be out-of-status and deportation proceedings have been initiated. Approximately 300 have departed to date. Approximately 42,000 students are in status and in good standing, with visas entitling them to remain in the U.S. for the duration of their studies. They are not a problem. However, there are about 7,000 Iranian students who were granted visas with a specific departure date simply because that was the type of visa being granted at the time. These students now face deportation as their visas expire, terminating their course of study in the middle of a degree program or even in the midst of exams. These students are no different politically or otherwise than the 42,000 who can remain, but they are caught in a technicality. We have been receiving numerous calls from university presidents around the country

² Subsequent to the meeting, the Department of State prepared a "Scorecard of U.S. Passports to Iran," June 4, and, in consultation with the Department of Justice and Cutler, also prepared an action memorandum on travel to Iran, June 9. (Carter Library, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President, Lloyd Cutler's Files, Box 13) On June 11, Muskie sent Cutler a proposed memorandum to the President, which suggested that the Department approve travel requests on a case-by-case basis and that the Treasury make voluntary its requirement for notification of travel by journalists. (Ibid.)

³ The discussion was based on a June 2 memorandum from Saunders, Owen, and Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Barbara Watson to Newsom, and its attached paper, "Inter-Agency Assessment: Iranian Students in the United States." (Ibid.)

asking that these students be granted the right to complete their courses of study. They stress that these students are in many cases non-political or friendly to the U.S., and they represent a new generation of Iranian leadership. It is not in our interest to alienate these individuals simply because of a technicality. (U)

Justice/INS pointed out that these students could have applied for alteration of their status prior to the President's announcement. Normally, the specific time provision was assigned because of projected periods of study. INS would prefer simply to enforce the President's initial decision and grant no extensions. Jody Powell observed that this goes to the nature of the policy decision itself: are our interests served by having more Iranians in this country? Do we want them to get out or not? (C)

Dr. Brzezinski said he was inclined to be lenient in this case, which he thought would serve the national interest. Mr. Cutler agreed that these students should receive equal treatment. It was not necessary to grant extensions on a near-permanent basis. Rather, he would favor an option which would grant extensions for such students to complete only their current course of study or degree level (e.g. Bachelor's, Master's, PhD. etc.), at which point they would be required to leave. Those individuals who have already been accepted to graduate schools, law schools, medical schools and the like would be permitted to continue with those studies.⁴ Those students in this country on scholarships or international exchange ("J" visas) would be accorded the same treatment. Dr. Brzezinski, State, Justice/INS, Treasury, and Defense all agreed that such an approach would be equitable, and the SCC unanimously recommended it to the President. INS agreed that it could administer such a program. (C)

_____ Approve⁵

_____ Insist that the 7,000 students depart as their present visas expire.

3. *ICJ Decision.* Secretary-General Waldheim has not circulated the ICJ decision as a Security Council document as yet, since he is waiting for the official text of the decision to be forwarded to him by the Court. Reportedly, the ICJ has sent the text, but it has not been received.⁶ We will press this to insure that the ICJ decision is circulated in the immediate future. That is the first necessary step. The second step is consultations with the new President of the SC and other SC members. Don

⁴ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "But be very strict in identifying such students. J."

⁵ Carter checked this option and initialed in the right margin.

⁶ The United States sent the text of the ICJ judgment (see footnote 2, Document 286) to the United Nations in a June 9 letter. (*Yearbook of the United Nations*, 1980, p. 311)

McHenry has begun that process in New York and will continue. The third step is to propose a resolution. All agreed that State should prepare a resolution comprising those elements of the ICJ decision which were agreed unanimously by the Court.⁷ Since the timing of such a resolution should be sensitive to events in Tehran and elsewhere, the resolution would not be submitted to the SC until it had been further reviewed by the SCC and the President. All agreed that this matter would be reviewed by the SCC next Tuesday, with the idea of submitting a resolution next week. (C)

_____ Approve⁸

_____ Other

4. *Tehran Conference*. Developments concerning the Ramsey Clark delegation and the Iranian release of a purported message from General Huyser to General Haig were briefly reviewed.⁹ (JCS says the text of the message is probably accurate. It is unclear how the Iranians could have obtained a copy, although it is possible Huyser was working through the Iranian generals at some point.) All agreed that we should hold to our present posture of no comment on the Huyser message. The Attorney General supports prosecution of the Americans in the delegation on civil charges, rather than criminal charges, which would

⁷ McHenry circulated a resolution, a copy of which is attached to a June 16 memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80-11/80)

⁸ Carter checked this option and initialed in the right margin.

⁹ A delegation of 10 U.S. citizens attended an international conference in Iran, "Crimes of America," June 2-5. They attended in violation of the U.S. Government's ban on travel to Iran, facing 10 years in prison and a \$50,000 fine. The members of the delegation were Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General; George Wald, 1967 Nobel Prize winner; Mary Anderson, American Friends Service Committee; Kay Camp, President, Womens International League for Peace and Freedom; Rev. John Walsh, chaplain, Princeton University; Rev. Charles Kimball, student, Harvard Divinity School; Rev. Paul Washington, Episcopal minister; Leonard Weinglass, lawyer; Lennox Hinds, professor, Rutgers University; and John Derrase, journalist. ("U.S. group ignore ban, go to Iran," *Chicago Tribune*, June 2, 1980, p. 2) Lang summarized the conference proceedings in a June 6 message to the Department of State, attached to the June 7 Iran Update. Lang also submitted the conference's "Presentation of Work" in a June 6 cable to the Department of State, attached to the June 10 Iran Update. (Both in Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 6/80) According to the *Washington Post*, the purported telegram from Huyser to Haig, January 22, 1979, released by the Iranian Defense Ministry, was interpreted by the Iranian Government as proof that Huyser had been sent to Iran to mobilize a military coup. (Stuart Auerbach, "Iran Says U.S. General Plotted Coup," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1980, p. A1) The telegram in question is recapitulated in telegram 33229, January 22, 1979, from Huyser to Brown and Jones, which is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, vol. X, 1977-1980, Iran: Revolution, January 1977-November 1979.

involve a fine rather than jail terms. The Justice Representative noted that “It is difficult to be a martyr over money.”¹⁰ (S)

5. *Congressional Letter*. Dr. Brzezinski read to the group a letter which is circulating on the Hill¹¹ as a possible message from Members of Congress to the new Iranian Majlis. It was recognized that the Congress could do whatever it wished on this issue, but all agreed that the Congressional Liaison staffs should coordinate with the Congressional leadership to insure that any letter would be consistent with U.S. policy and coordinated with our own efforts. (C)

(At that point the meeting was reduced to principals and key participants.)

6. *Possible Trials of Hostages*. Dr. Brzezinski recalled that in an NSC meeting at Camp David last November,¹² the President had authorized sending a warning or ultimatum to Iran about possible trials of the hostages. That message stated that any public trial of U.S. persons would result in interruption of Iranian commerce; any harm to any of the American hostages would result in direct retaliatory actions by the U.S.¹³ Subsequently, on December 7, the President had indicated as much publicly, and had used the phrase “interruption of commerce.” The private message had been drafted by Dr. Brzezinski and Secretary Vance and was transmitted to Bani-Sadr via the Swiss. That was in the final days of Bani-Sadr’s term as Foreign Minister, and we have no confirmation of what was done with the message or who in Iran may have learned of it. This past Sunday, the President had again referred to U.S. action in the event of trials.¹⁴ (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said it was necessary to distinguish between a show trial which would publicly humiliate our people and a “farce” in which the Iranians claim a secret trial had been held and then expel our people. He thought we could live with the latter. Secretary Muskie said we could not know in advance what might be done. What we need is a way to justify our public posture so as not to strengthen the hand of the hardliners and militants. Many are coming to believe that

¹⁰ Carter wrote “I agree” in the right margin after this sentence.

¹¹ Printed as Document 309.

¹² See Document 51.

¹³ See Document 52.

¹⁴ On Sunday June 1, Carter appeared on CBS’s “Face the Nation.” In response to a reporter’s question as to whether Carter would tolerate the hostages being put on trial, Carter said: “The third week in November [1979]—I think it was the 20th—we issued a statement that still prevails, in effect, prescribing what actions our nation would reserve as options if the hostages are tried or abused in any way. Those actions would be very severe against Iran. We have not closed any option for our nation to exercise. But for me to spell it in detail what we would do, I think, would be inappropriate.” (Department of State *Bulletin*, July 1980, pp. 1–2) For the November 20 statement, see Document 41.

a trial of some form may be the only way for the Iranian authorities to get out of their own dilemma. Essentially this is a political question. He recommended that any warning be delivered as quietly as possible, recognizing that it is difficult to sustain a private position in an election year when opponents might wish to use events against you. He had raised the general problem with Senator Byrd and the Democratic leadership this morning, and they had advised playing it as low key as possible. (S)

Mr. Cutler observed that the ICJ decision prohibits trials or calling the hostages as witnesses. It also bars the U.S. from taking any unilateral action. We might wish to take a position, in light of the ICJ ruling, that we would pursue the matter through the Security Council, at least in the first instance. Jody Powell noted that the political situation here was affected not only by the outcome of trials but also the process. Some processes available to Iran, e.g. a trial of "U.S. crimes" in which hostages are cited but not called, could be consistent with the ICJ decision and we could probably stomach them politically. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski said we need to differentiate between deterring certain actions by the Iranians and reacting to events. In the first instance, we may wish to signal to the Iranians certain types of procedures which we would protest but would be able to accept as a way out. But we should also make clear our intention to react to public humiliation of the hostages. (S)

Secretary Muskie said he was inclined to emphasize the ICJ ruling and resort to the SC. The President's Sunday statement was probably sufficient to recall the seriousness of our warning. The hardliners now appear to be in control; if we start with provocations or threats, we may only feed the hardliners, while focusing on the ICJ will leave them in some uncertainty about the November 23 message and force them to respond to the ICJ ruling rather than direct threats. We would be giving the hardliners less to attack, but our position would still be there. The choice of intermediary would be extremely important in delivering such a delicate message. The Syrian, Daoudy, on the UN Commission is one choice. Another is the Swiss. Mr. Saunders noted that the most delicate part is to give them enough room to grope their way out without starting a process we do not want to happen. The European ambassadors may be useful in putting some kind of protection around the hostages. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski agreed it was a terribly dangerous business, with Iran still in a semi-revolutionary state and the possibility of a trial process getting completely out of hand. He suggested that State draft a message—or series of messages as appropriate—which would be

available to the President on Thursday afternoon¹⁵ and which could be raised at the breakfast on Friday. This was an issue which required careful and direct Presidential attention. All agreed that the object of the message(s) would be to make a quiet point, not to stress the November 23 threat, to draw attention to the ICJ decision as an approach, and to suggest subtly that there are some possibilities we could live with. Secretary Muskie agreed, noting that we do not wish to reverse the November 23 position but simply to leave it in the background. He also noted that he needed to have a public position he could take in his appearance on “Meet the Press” on Sunday. We should also brief Congress on our position, since they are going to have to take a lot of political heat on the issue. (S)

¹⁵ June 5.

292. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, June 5, 1980

SUBJECT

“Black Chamber” Meeting

The most important issue to be resolved today is an agreed strategy on [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the objective of our political action strategy for Iran.

You will recall that CIA did an initial paper which proposed U.S. advice and support for the Bakhtiar/Oveissi efforts. They were asked to reformulate their proposal [*1 line not declassified*]. We reviewed their revised proposal last week, and ZB sent Turner a memo asking him to put the proposal in the form of a memo to the President (Tab C).

The proposed memo to the President is at Tab B.² All of the participants at the meeting will be familiar with the general thrust of this

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80–10/80. Secret; Sensitive.

² Tab B, not attached, is printed as Document 293.

proposal, although they will not have seen the final draft. *Frank Carlucci would very much like to get authoritative guidance on this proposal before he leaves on Sunday [less than 1 line not declassified].*

- Can we reach consensus on forwarding this to the President?
- Do we need to have a further meeting of principals?

Guidance for Use With Contacts

In my memo to you and ZB last week, I proposed an action strategy which would give CIA specific guidance on the “message” they can use with their various contacts. I was authorized to contact the various participants of this meeting in advance to try out this idea. I have talked with Frank Carlucci, Bob Komer, and John Pustay. I am scheduled to see Newsom this afternoon prior to the meeting.

Komer and Pustay agreed wholeheartedly with the general approach of focusing our efforts on countering Soviet penetration and the growth of radical leftist forces in Iran. Carlucci thought my original formulation was too negative—stressing what we did not want rather than what we hoped to achieve. I have tried to incorporate their comments in the *draft guidance at Tab A*.³ I hope to get a preliminary reaction from Newsom prior to the meeting.

The proposed guidance would serve three purposes:

- It lays out a general overview of the situation from the U.S. point of view. In the past, our “message” to the various Iranian groups has tended to be imprecise and confusing, and this has hampered our credibility. Hopefully, this guidance would help us speak with one voice.

- It makes clear our opposition to premature and ill-guided military operations launched from Iraq (the “White Russian” syndrome). Oveissi and his supporters are presently very active in this country and elsewhere (they saw Sadat last month)⁴ drumming up enthusiasm for a military coup.

- It focuses the objective of our efforts on the internal situation in Iran, by encouraging the development of a coalition of forces to actively

³ Tab A is attached but not printed. The final version is attached to Document 293.

⁴ At their May 24 meeting, Sadat expressed his confidence in Oveissi’s ability to change events in Iran. He also acknowledged Oveissi’s monetary reliance on the Iraqis, but warned him to “be wary of Iraqi intentions.” Sadat advised him to line up the support of all the friendly Persian Gulf countries, to obtain U.S. acquiescence in this, to build his strength inside Iran (particularly through his ongoing broadcasts), and to avoid undue contact with the Shah. Sadat told Oveissi that, unlike the Soviet Union, the United States did not fully understand the seriousness of the Iranian situation and had to be “force fed like a baby.” (Memorandum of conversation, May 30; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1)

resist Soviet penetration and the growth of radical leftist forces. This will not be popular with Oveissi and others who have convinced themselves that they have the capability to go for Khomeini's jugular. However, it provides a practical and realistic objective which is shared by virtually all the dissident groups—and a large part of the Iranian population.

An Azerbaijan Strategy

The greatest immediate *danger of Soviet penetration is in Azerbaijan*. We have recently had reports that the Soviets are offering attractive commercial credits to the powerful guilds in the bazaar in Tabriz. We know that a Soviet intelligence infrastructure remains from the days when a puppet Soviet regime ruled the region. We suspect that the efforts of the Moslem Peoples Republican Party (MPRP—representing a moderate Shariatmadari alternative to mullah rule) to build support in the military in Azerbaijan was thwarted because of Soviet penetration.

[1 paragraph (9 lines) not declassified]

[1½ lines not declassified] Azerbaijan is not only vulnerable to the Soviets, but it is the historical center of political movements for change. The Azeris are the largest minority group in Iran. They are not only a regional force, since they dominate the Tehran bazaar and hold key positions in government, military and commerce throughout Iran. They have a potential alternative religious leader to Khomeini—Shariatmadari—who will be of supreme importance in maintaining order if and when Khomeini's regime collapses.

[1 paragraph (4 lines) not declassified]

Propaganda and Disinformation

Bob Komer feels strongly that we should be more active and imaginative in discrediting the Soviet role in Iran and cynical Soviet support for the Khomeini forces. You may want to ask him to speak to this and suggest some ideas of how we could be more aggressive.

Turkey and Pakistan

In the long run, our best opportunity for developing ties to a hostile Iranian regime lies through its two neighbors. This meeting is not the place for a full-scale discussion of this issue. However, I recommend that *State, CIA and perhaps JCS be asked to develop some thoughts on how we can begin to encourage closer ties between these three neighbors and how we might best exploit such ties to promote some degree of political stability*.

Obviously, if a serious Azerbaijan strategy begins to develop, Turkey will be key. We have some indications that Turkey [*less than 1 line not declassified*] may be willing to play this game.

293. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 6, 1980

SUBJECT

Political Action Options on Iran (S)

Some months ago, you approved several intelligence findings authorizing a significant covert action program toward Iran. During the February and March negotiations with Bani-Sadr, this program was conducted in a very low key to avoid disrupting the talks, although useful contacts were developed with a number of [*less than 1 line not declassified*] individuals which may prove valuable in the future. After the breakdown of the negotiations, all of our assets were devoted almost exclusively to the rescue operation. (S)

Over the past month, we have again examined our options, with the objective of becoming more active in political action. The draft memorandum at Tab A represents the consensus of State, CIA, Defense, the JCS and myself about the present situation and the options available to us. Basically, it outlines a strategy for the long haul, in which we would build an infrastructure of contacts [*less than 1 line not declassified*] in order to maximize our ability to influence the course of events. (S)

This strategy represents a more realistic reflection of current political realities and our actual capabilities. We are also aware of the danger that a premature direct confrontation with Khomeini, so long as he remains the symbol of the revolution, could give the Soviets and the radical left an opportunity to intervene. (S)

Unless you disagree with this general approach, we would propose using the paper at Tab B as guidance for the Agency in their discussions and contacts [*less than 1 line not declassified*].² It has been reviewed and approved by all of the appropriate agencies. (S)

[*2 lines not declassified*] We believe the program outlined in the attached papers will provide the basis for a mutually consistent and effective political action effort.³ (S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 16. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System. Sent for action. In the upper right corner, Carter wrote: "Zbig, J."

² Carter wrote "ok" in the left margin.

³ In an undated memorandum to Turner, Brzezinski wrote that Carter had approved Tabs A and B as recommended at a June 5 SCC(I) meeting. (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 16)

Tab A

Memorandum for President Carter⁴

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Political Action Options in Iran [*portion marking not declassified*]

1. *Political Situation.* Despite the confusion in Teheran and the occasional outbursts of minority unrest in the provinces, Khomeini's hold on power is relatively secure at this point. There is no opposition leader ready to challenge him directly, and he remains capable of mobilizing mass support to confront his opponents. [*portion marking not declassified*]

2. If Khomeini were to die in the near term (next 3–6 months), however, there are few functioning institutions capable of holding the Islamic Republic together. An intense power struggle among his lieutenants would be virtually inevitable. There is no mechanism for this succession. [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. Over the longer term (beyond six months), there is some possibility that the Islamic Republic will be institutionalized and its leaders will be able to consolidate their positions. If the Islamic right can impose some order, the left may avoid a direct challenge. If the right falters, however, the left will probably move quickly to exploit the situation. The Iranian left is too weak at this point to seize power, but it is aggressively trying to prepare for a showdown with the clergy sometime in the future. Leftist leaders hope that the country will become disillusioned with the failures and excesses of the mullahs and look for an alternative. As chaos continues, the stronger the left is likely to become. [*portion marking not declassified*]

4. *Political Action Options.* It is presumed that the political action options we are seeking are to help prevent the left from filling a vacuum created by the failure of the Islamic Republic experiment. At this time, at least, it is not planned to use political action deliberately to undermine or attempt to overthrow the Khomeini regime. In attempting to build a political base from which to be able to influence the course of events in Iran, we have several options:

a. the so-called external option of dealing with expatriated Iranians living in Europe and the United States;

⁴ Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]

b. the ethnic option of dealing with some or all of the Azerbaijanis, Kurds, Qashqai, Turkomen, Arabs, and Baluchis inside Iran;

c. the internal option of dealing with political figures inside Iran, both within and without the government.

While each option can be described independently, we must recognize that our activities in one area clearly affect those in another, and success in one area will likely breed success in others. In short, the options are interlocking and overlapping. [*portion marking not declassified*]

5. *The Internal Option.* Since political institutions, aside from the religious, have been destroyed or badly ripped asunder in the course of the past 20 months, there seems to be little cohesion to the anti-Khomeini political movement in motion, and indeed no such movement may be capable of surviving as long as Khomeini lives. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[14 paragraphs (88 lines) not declassified]

Tab B

Paper Prepared by the National Security Council Staff⁵

Washington, June 5, 1980

GUIDANCE FOR USE WITH CONTACTS

1. The Khomeini experiment in theocratic rule is likely to fail, not because of its "Islamic" nature but because the Iranian clergy will be unable to deal with the economic, political, social and strategic problems of Iran. Their shortcomings are becoming increasingly apparent, and dissatisfaction within the country is growing.

2. However, a large proportion of the Iranian population has been radicalized by the revolution, and Khomeini continues to stand as the ultimate symbol of the revolution. A premature direct attack on the revolution or against Khomeini personally will probably fail.

3. The greatest threat to the long-term independence and territorial integrity of Iran is not mullah rule, which is becoming increasingly discredited, but the emergence of a radical left regime and Soviet political or military domination under the guise of protecting the revolution.

⁵ Secret; Sensitive.

4. We are prepared to support Iranian political elements toward the achievement of the following objectives:

—To develop a coalition of moderate, nationalist elements inside and outside Iran which can provide a credible alternative to mullah rule, including religious elements who oppose Khomeini's theocratic aspirations.

—To organize active resistance to Soviet penetration of Iran at all levels of Iranian society; and

—To counter the growth of communist and radical leftist forces in Iranian politics.

5. The most important contribution which can be made by those Iranians now living outside the country, who are deeply concerned about the future of Iran, is to use their influence, talents and contacts to build a coalition of forces within the country which offers the people of Iran a viable alternative between the two extremes of clerical dictatorship and pro-Soviet Marxism.

6. The eventual political and economic structure of Iran is something for Iranians to work out for themselves. We have no desire to impose specific solutions. However, we share an interest with the people of Iran that their nation be free, independent, united, and not under the domination of foreign powers or ideologies. We are prepared to assist patriotic Iranians to work toward that goal.

294. Message From the Department of State to the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹

Washington, undated

1. We would like to clarify as precisely as possible the thinking of Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh, Habibi (and other leaders you might appropriately contact) regarding the possibility of hostage trials. We would also like them to understand our strong objections to that procedure but our recognition that Iran will try to find a means to end the crisis that

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80. Secret. Sick thought the message, which resulted from the June 3 SCC discussion (see Document 291), did an "excellent job of subtly suggesting" acceptable arrangements, but he found it to be missing the "tough warning which was initially the object of the exercise." (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, June 6; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80)

meets its political needs. The oral message transmitted herewith is intended for President Bani-Sadr, and you may also give a copy to Ghotbzadeh. We suggest that with others you simply use these ideas in conversations.

2. Begin text of oral message for Bani-Sadr: The Iranian radio, TV and various newspapers, as well as public figures, are again speaking of the possibility of placing our diplomats on trial. You are aware of our strong and very serious concern about the dangers of this procedure. We are confident our view is fully shared by almost all other governments who also reject the idea of further violations of the immunity of diplomats. The International Court of Justice has clearly expressed a unanimous judgment that our diplomats should not be involved in judicial proceedings.² We are also sure that Iran's leaders agree that it is essential to civilized international order to preserve the principle of diplomatic immunity.

The American people and others throughout the world who have shown their sympathy for Iranian feelings would not understand or accept trials of innocent diplomats. By no standard of international law, human rights or religion could our diplomats reasonably be placed on trial.

In the interest of the stability of Iran and of its region, we want to see the present crisis urgently settled in a peaceful, honorable and harmonious manner, at the earliest opportunity. We have said, and we have understood Iranian leaders to say, that there is no wish to humiliate the other side. If the crisis can be resolved without acrimony or an attempt to debase the other side, efforts can be made to remove the damage to Iran which has resulted from the seizure of the hostages. An official trial of the hostages would seriously impair international respect for Iran for a long time to come and place in jeopardy diplomats of all nations, including Iran, throughout the world.

We recognize the deep and abiding feeling in Iran that Iran's grievances are not being adequately reflected in world opinion. We have said repeatedly that we have no objection to the provision of appropriate means for expressing Iran's grievances if that would help solve the crisis. It was with this thought in mind that we cooperated in the establishment of the UN Commission. We understand that Iran intended the recent conference in Tehran for this purpose.³ We understand further that the new Parliament will examine the hostage issue. There should be sufficient opportunity in its deliberations for the

² See footnote 2, Document 286.

³ See footnote 9, Document 291. Sick placed brackets around this sentence and stated in his June 6 memorandum to Brzezinski (see footnote 1 above) that he thought it was "gratuitous." Brzezinski approved the telegram with this sentence deleted.

elected representatives to express Iran's feelings toward the former Iranian regime and the United States, without direct involvement of American diplomats.

Our overriding concern is to do nothing that would jeopardize the safety, prolong the confinement or humiliate the hostages. Their welfare and their dignity as individuals must be protected. We feel confident that simple, dignified procedures can be devised to release the hostages and to hear Iran's grievances. Similarly, adequate means can be established to resolve the bilateral disputes between the United States and Iran. We would welcome the President's views on this subject as conveyed through Ambassador Lang. We would also be prepared to suggest ideas.

295. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, June 13, 1980

Please find hereafter Ambassador Lang's reply to your message 0032 from Washington, June 11, 1980 (re trials).²

1. During the reception I tried to have the Director of the Cabinet set up a meeting with Bani Sadr. He gave me little hope for the 7th, 8th, and 9th and added that from the 10th to the 15th Bani Sadr would be invisible. This wording really puzzled me.

Last night I was with my FRG colleague who has encountered the same refusal in spite of the good offices of Tabatabai (?). He has heard a crazy rumor from a usually serious source. According to it the test of strength could occur in the coming days and Bani Sadr, Ghotbzadeh and T. might be leaving the capital if not even the country.

2. But day before yesterday, Ghotbzadeh received me and was most friendly.

2.1. He is against any kind of trial whatsoever and is struggling in that direction. (If you analyze his statements his fallback position would, if necessary, be to accept a trial condemning the United States, but not the hostages.)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 6/80. Secret; Sensitive. The document was found attached to an undated briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update, June 13, 1980."

² See Document 294.

He replied to my questions as follows:

2.2. Ghotbzadeh is of the opinion that the most useful contribution to the release of the hostages is at present the unpublicized and discreet, though long and tedious work which consists in rallying the greatest possible number of members of Parliament to this thesis in order to prepare the groundwork. He added that he is working in that direction.

2.3. I then asked him if this meant that there was no way to speed up matters or bypass Parliament. Ghotbzadeh does not rule this out, but he believes that Parliament must in any event take up the highest priorities first and that "to bypass Parliament" is delicate and depends upon circumstances which have not yet materialized (a figure of speech to conceal the Imam's permission).

2.4. Re scenarios, there are several in the air and it is not a bad thing that there be several scenarios, but at the moment, of course, there is no final version.

3. Given the climate of our discussion, I took it upon myself to tell Ghotbzadeh that rumors had reached the other side (i.e., the U.S.) accusing it of playing a political game with the scenarios, i.e., of giving preference to one group over another. I assured him that this was not the case at all, much to the contrary. The other party is anxious to have the hostages released soonest, without trial, never mind what scenario or what group. Furthermore the other side acknowledges the work and courage of certain leading figures, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the last few months. I added that this comment is even more valid when my own country, as protecting power, is concerned and that it does not want to meddle in any of these factional strifes inside Iran. I added that speaking personally I could only express the honor I feel at the confidence and spirit of cooperation that Ghotbzadeh has shown me and assured him of my loyalty.

Ghotbzadeh replied that he appreciated my words very much and he added that all this should be attributed to the apprenticeship of democracy which is a long and difficult process.

4. Regarding Bani Sadr, I intend to try to see Sandjabi and if I do I will hand over to him a *non-paper*.³

³ A draft of the undated "non-paper" was attached to a May 15 memorandum from Precht to Newsom. It consisted of U.S. "observations" concerning the ability of the Swiss Embassy in Tehran to protect U.S. diplomatic and consular interests in Iran. It acknowledged that "present circumstances" did not allow the Swiss to protect the hostages or take possession of U.S. diplomatic or consular property but did expect the Swiss "to exercise such protection and take possession of such property as circumstances may permit." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Swiss Channel) Saunders gave the non-paper to Kreisky, who later reported to the U.S. Ambassador in Austria that Bani-Sadr had never seen it. (Telegram 7776 from Vienna, June 3; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978-1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables June 1980)

5. My FRG colleague has nothing new to report. He saw Daoudi who is making difficult progress and who seems to have reached the conclusion that except for one or two leading figures, no one wants the Commission to return. Daoudi will discuss with Waldheim whether the continuation of his visit is appropriate or not.

Daoudi encounters as many different opinions as he does interlocutors and of course this is frustrating if you are trying to be constructive.

Lang

296. Memorandum for the Record¹

Washington, June 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Meeting at Agency with Pentagon Panel to Study Rescue Attempt [*portion marking not declassified*]

1. Subject meeting took place in the DCI Conference Room from 1400 to 1500 on Tuesday, 10 June. Attendees were:

a. Pentagon Panel

ADM James L. Holloway, USN (Ret.), Panel Chairman
LGEN. Leroy J. Manor, USAF (Ret.)
LGEN. Samuel V. Wilson, USA (Ret.)
MGEN. J. L. Piotrowski, USAF
MGEN. A. M. Gray, Jr., USMC
COL. Doughty, USAF, Panel Assistant

b. Agency personnel

DCI
John McMahon
[*name not declassified*]
Bob Ames
[*name not declassified*]
Bob Gates
[*name not declassified*]

2. The Director opened the meeting by stating that he would briefly cover those generic activities undertaken by the Intelligence Commu-

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1. Secret; [*handling restrictions not declassified*]. Other assessments of the rescue operation from various parts of the CIA are *ibid*.

nity in support of the rescue operation. He noted that he would skip much of the detail and leave that, and any other questions the Panel might have, for them to address after he finished his opening remarks or to be followed up by the General Wilson-DDCI/John McMahon channel. He then categorized our intelligence support into five distinct areas:

- Positive intelligence
- Training in the US
- Planning and preparation assistance
- Execution of the operation
- Effect of secrecy [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. The Director then proceeded to describe our role in each of these five categories in more detail.

a. *Positive intelligence*

(1) He opened by saying that this was an undertaking shared in by the entire Community (State, NSA, CIA, DIA).

(2) He stated that our primary requirement had been to provide information on where the hostages were.

—He noted that we had high confidence that the hostages were, in fact, in the embassy.² [*5 lines not declassified*] Prior to this windfall information we did have good confidence in the knowledge that the hostages were in the embassy, though there was always some question as to exactly how many hostages were in which specific building. The Director noted that the embassy compound was a very hard target to penetrate.

(3) We also had a requirement to provide intelligence on the compound and its environs.

—We were very good here. [*4½ lines not declassified*]
 —[*6 lines not declassified*]
 —[*1½ lines not declassified*] we were able to obtain the great amount of detail regarding the physical layout and conditions of the embassy, the stadium and other areas of interest to the planners of the operation.

(4) NSA support.

—He commented that NSA did a fine job of getting all the necessary information with regard to the Iranian radar and communications networks.

- [*4½ lines not declassified*]
- [*3½ lines not declassified*]

(5) CIA/DIA military reporting.

—He mentioned that a lot of collection, analysis and reporting had been done on the status of the Iranian military.

² See footnote 2, Document 264.

—A general conclusion, which proved very useful, was that we judged that the military was not in a very effective or high state of readiness, especially for night air combat missions.

(6) Finally the Director mentioned that, in early January, he directed that a biweekly SITREP be provided to the Delta force.

—The purpose of this was to provide, at least biweekly, our best estimate as to the hostage locations.

—This was not represented as gospel, but rather provided to the task force commander in order to give him something concrete to factor into his planning.

b. *Training.* (The DCI noted this as primarily a CIA function.)

(1) He mentioned that we provided a secure site for 42 days during the November-December timeframe.

—We provided the entire logistics support for Delta during this time.

—He noted that their stay at our facility was kept entirely secret, both while Delta was there and even when they made three trips in and out.

(2) He noted that our personnel stayed with Delta force during the entire time that they were in training.

(3) He mentioned that, included in our logistical support, we provided the helicopter pilots with navigational training [*1½ lines not declassified*]. He said that this helo support was continuous and was even provided on the *Nimitz*, where our personnel zeroed all the equipment just prior to lift-off. (The Director then remarked to ADM Holloway that he had been somewhat surprised that our people were able to provide this type of service and training to qualified military pilots.)

(4) In addition to the above the Director mentioned that *all* Delta's requirements, e.g. arms, equipment, etc. were provided by the Agency.

c. *Planning and preparation assistance*

(1) [*3½ lines not declassified*]

(2) [*1½ lines not declassified*]

—[*4 lines not declassified*]

—[*4½ lines not declassified*]

(3) In another vein, the Director commented on our role in selecting Desert 1.

—He noted that, while this was a military operation, we were able to offer some ideas or suggestions at various points.

—In January, the planning centered around staying overnight at a captured airfield. This would have entailed holding the airfield, and all those therein, for about 32 hours. We, as well as some others at DoD, were somewhat leery about whether this could be done with the required secrecy.

—The Agency then began examining photos of desert areas to see if another alternative might be possible. This led to the identification of Desert 1 as a possibility.

—The Director then described the OTTER mission. [4½ lines not declassified]

—He noted that while this (the OTTER flight) was conceived of in January, permission to carry out the mission was not received until the March full moon timeframe.

(4) Communications support

—[3½ lines not declassified]

—[9 lines not declassified]

(5) Farsi-speaking drivers.

—He noted that we had provided the force with this capability.

—[1½ lines not declassified]

—[2½ lines not declassified]

d. Execution phase

(1) The primary intelligence contribution was that provided [less than 1 line not declassified].

—This enabled us to know that one of the aircraft (a C-130) had been detected.

—[less than 1 line not declassified] the Iranian report was confused and it subsequently got lost in the air control network.

—After the landing at Desert 1, and the subsequent unfortunate events, [less than 1 line not declassified] indicated that the word had gotten out.

(2) [2½ lines not declassified]

—[1½ lines not declassified]

e. Secrecy

(1) The Director alluded to the fact that he had just read a report (on 9 June) from John McMahon³ that raised an interesting issue: that the operation may have been so secretive that undue risks may have been incurred.

—The Director commended to ADM Holloway that he and his group look into what price needed to be paid for a given level of secrecy involved in any future joint task force operation.

(2) The DCI stressed that only two individuals in the Agency knew that an official “go” had been given.

—He noted that many more, however, had been told to be ready to “go,” but stressed that even among those in the room, only he knew that a specific decision had been made.

³ Memorandum from McMahon to Turner, June 9. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1)

(3) Again the Director asked, rhetorically, whether we could have blown the whole operation because of too much secrecy (he again commended Holloway that some comment in their report dealing with this would be useful).

(4) Further on this, the Director noted that we were lucky that NSA had been tipped off and used for the OTTER operation.

—Thus they already knew which nets, etc. to monitor when they were told at the last minute to man up.

—The Director noted in passing that, for subsequent phases of the operation, NSA had not had the benefit of any rehearsal; but since those phases were not undertaken, we do not know how the absence of such a rehearsal would have affected NSA's performance.

(5) On this secrecy matter, however, the Director noted that the White House was very pleased with the secrecy that was maintained. [*portion marking not declassified*]

4. At the completion of the DCI's remarks, ADM Holloway made the following points:

a. They were working for the Joint Chiefs.

b. Their ultimate objective was to recommend to the Joint Chiefs an organization and procedure for dealing with this type of thing in the future, i.e. whether and how to maintain a permanent joint task force in the field.

c. Regarding disclosure policy, he noted that the Panel had been aware of this as a problem for them to address from early on in their review of the operation.

—He noted that they had found that the people closest to the problem (Beckwith and Vaught) had a greater appreciation of tight security.

—They viewed the possibility of a leak with real concern, seeing that it could perhaps culminate in an ambush situation. [*portion marking not declassified*]

5. There then followed a brief period of questions and answers (summarized below).

Q (Holloway): [*4 lines not declassified*]

A (DCI): [*3 lines not declassified*]

—[*2½ lines not declassified*]

—[*4½ lines not declassified*]

—[*9 lines not declassified*]

—[*5½ lines not declassified*]

—He mentioned his concern that, as the military viewed the "success" of team "A" as a "piece of cake," it could pose problems in this regard and lead them to be overly optimistic.

—Holloway, and some of the others, expressed sympathy for this point of view.

Q (Holloway): Noting that one of the reasons for their visit (and one of their charges in general) was to explore what interfaces (with a future joint task force) would be necessary. He asked for our view on this (while noting that he felt that such Agency-JTF interface would be essential).

A (McMahon): He described both the routine interface with DoD and the specific involvement on this mission.

—[2 lines not declassified]

—He also described that our terrorist branch works regularly with the Delta force both in terms of providing information and in training.

—For the rescue operation he noted that we expanded our liaison with the Delta force in order to provide training and logistical support, and that we provided [*less than 1 line not declassified*] liaison to the Pentagon for planning assistance.

—Further on the rescue support he noted that we virtually opened our warehouses as far as paramilitary stocks, operational devices, equipment, etc. were concerned in order to ensure that the team had everything it needed for advance training.

Q (Holloway): He advised that the Panel's preliminary view was that any future, permanent Task Force would be a field organization and would include the Delta force, dedicated transport, some Navy personnel and equipment (e.g. SEALs, possibly a submarine) and a command liaison cell in Washington (most likely in the JCS special operations area). He wondered how we thought the interface would, or should, be carried out in this case.

A (DCI): He stressed that there are a number of areas for interface, at different levels, and that such interface with the Agency is essential.

—He noted that future operations involving this JTF would be run as a military operation; but he mentioned that there is a need for the incorporation of clandestine skills [*3 lines not declassified*].

Holloway then made the following comment:

—He said the Panel had discussed (but they had not yet reached any firm resolution) the fact that the JTF would most likely be a military organization.

—The JTF was to be prepared for an NSC decision that a given operation was to be a DoD responsibility as opposed to (a) a negotiation approach to the problem (Holloway referred to this as a State responsibility); or (b) a clandestine approach to the problem (Holloway referred to this as an area of CIA responsibility).

—i.e. their focus to date was to determine how, when the Chiefs were told to execute an operation, they could best do it.

Q (Manor): He asked whether the initial detection by the Iranians had been picked up by their radar and whether it was a C-130 or a helo.

A (DCI): It was a visual sighting of a C-130; it was not a radar detection.

Q (Manor): He was very interested in the lighting which had been installed at Desert 1 and asked for some more details.

A (DCI): [8 lines not declassified]

Q (Manor): He asked if we were involved in the choosing of Desert 1.

A (DCI): He responded that we were and that the Desert 1 site was the result of our own initiative.

Q (Gray): Referring to the Director's comments on security he noted that there must clearly be some sort of balance between secrecy and potential compromise. He asked whether the Agency could monitor the scope of activity in order to determine if the number of those aware of an operation, or the activity involved, was getting too great.

A (DCI): [3 lines not declassified]

Q (Piotrowski): Further on this question of monitoring security he asked whether we could provide information as to whether ten versus eight helos could or should be used (this from a security standpoint).

A (DCI): He suggested that this was more something for the Delta force to do; that they could perhaps best perform the mathematics and be the judge of what was detectable versus what was necessary.

John McMahon then commented that we were, however, carefully monitoring various communications nets in order to ascertain whether any security breach had occurred, but all we found was "business as usual."

—The Director then mentioned an incident at Diego Garcia where some sailor commented to a Navy commander and one of our people that he had figured out why all of this activity was going to the *Nimitz*; he told them he guessed that they were going to be conducting a rescue of the hostages; at this point the Navy commander took the sailor with him to the *Nimitz*, thereby preventing his discussing his "educated guess" with anyone else.

Q (Piotrowski): He noted that the arrival of the fuel trucks and the bus at Desert 1 proved to be an unfortunate circumstance; he then asked whether this site, so close to a road, was the only site or whether there were alternatives.

A (DCI): He responded that this was the only site that we had seen in photography and subsequently checked out on the ground.

—He said the plan was initially to land on the road, but that when the OTTER made its reconnaissance the crew found that they could, in fact, land on the desert.

—He said that we had seen nowhere else that we were as confident of for use as a landing zone.

—He mentioned that we were, at the time the "go" was given, looking at another option which involved the dropping of fuel bladders into the desert, but that there had been no time to organize for, or explore, that option further before the operation was ordered.

—As regards the concern for traffic in the area, he noted that when the OTTER landed, several autos went by; he emphasized, therefore, that it was no surprise that traffic was on the road—in fact, that that is why a special Ranger unit was taken in on the 130s: to deal with any traffic that did come by.

Q (Gray): He wanted to return again to the operational security issue. As they conducted their review of the planning process, he had become concerned that this operation was so compartmentalized that there was insufficient participation in the review of the plan through its various stages, noting that the Panel had been unable to find anyone except the DoD and JCS principals themselves who were aware of, and briefed on, the entire plan. He asked whether we thought that, with more leeway on the security issue, we could not have had a greater sense of confidence in whatever plan was developed.

A (DCI): Noting that he wanted to be candid, he said that, at least three times during the plan's development, he had not been entirely sure of what was going on; and he was concerned because he wanted to make sure that we were providing what was both wanted and needed in order to enhance the plan's success.

—He said that he saw Vaught on several occasions, but that Vaught was expressing a need for many things at once, whereas what we needed to understand was a priority listing of what was wanted so that we could dedicate our resources accordingly (since our limited resources did not permit meeting all of Vaught's requests simultaneously).

—He mentioned that on several occasions he had to ask CJCS to go over the plan in order to see if we were providing what was needed.

—He commented that he had never seen a written plan, and mentioned that the closest we got to this was simply as a result of our [*less than 1 line not declassified*] liaison assigned to the Pentagon.

—He mentioned that one of the unfortunate results of this (unawareness of the details of the entire plan) was that we did not know, nor did anyone ask us about, the taking of [*less than 1 line not declassified*] communications equipment and imagery products along in the helos which were going to be left behind; he opined that the resulting compromise of these materials may have been the result of the absence of any detailed review of the plans by all concerned.

Q (Gray): He underscored his concern for what the Director had just described (the lack of adequate review which led to the unnecessary compromise of classified material). He stated that he was all for an unconventional JTF, one which, of necessity, would be small and well-trained; but he stressed that it was his belief that we (the USG) must always be reliant on other forces, whether attached to CINCs or whether belonging to the CIA. He was concerned that the JTF might migrate into the "roles and missions" of other agencies or organizations (noting that any JTF that tried to do all that some were considering doing would, in fact, be bigger than the CIA).

In this same vein, John McMahon commented that, early on in our relationship with Delta force (pre-rescue), Charlie Beckwith had wanted a CIA capability integrated into Delta which would provide for total world and regional expertise. He mentioned that he had told Charlie that we could not have two CIAs, and the matter was dropped.

A (DCI): He said that he recognized that, generally speaking, the Agency is not in the business of being operators in the unconventional field; he did note that our involvement was primarily in two areas: (a) we do get involved in clandestine reconnaissance; and (b) our paramilitary involvement has primarily been as advisers of others, who in fact form the bulk of any force, e.g. the operations in Laos.

—He recommended that as the Panel look at what they want a JTF to do, that they start at the very beginning, and look at the full spectrum of what might be required, e.g. infiltration, sabotage, clandestine penetrations, etc., and not just focus on the military phase.

—He opined that if, when dealing with hostage rescue, there is an alternative to a military operation, it might be an operation which relies on stealth and clandestine activities. He said that the country needs to have this capability; the question is the where and the how.

Holloway then commented that he thought the Director had made a good point: that a capability gap now exists between the application of force and the application of stealth.

—He said that the more people with helos and guns, etc. that get involved in an operation, the more like an act of war such an operation becomes, and this has its own problems, and that therefore numbers become important.

Further on this the Director commented that he was not necessarily anxious to put our paramilitary capability into an operational mode, but, since he felt the country needed this option, it was something that he commended the Panel to look into. He also suggested that they might need to check the legal aspects of this as well.

Q (Wilson): He asked whether there had been an intelligence judgment of the Iranian reaction which would follow a “successful” rescue of the hostages.

A (DCI): He replied that this had been looked into and that analysis of this had been provided to those involved in planning the operation.

—He noted that there was a possibility of action being taken against other US persons who might be in Iran (e.g. news media representatives), but that it was not clear that the government of Iran would take this action (since it was the militants, not the government which had seized the compound). *[6 lines not declassified]*

—He then described some of the other likely reactions, including the possible strengthening of the left, the almost sure strengthening of Khomeini’s position with an attendant anti-American focus, and the fact that we did not believe that such an operation would necessarily result in direct Soviet involvement.

(Bob Ames [*less than 1 line not declassified*] concurred in this general summation.) [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. At this point the meeting adjourned and the Panel members left. Any subsequent requests for information will be relayed by Sam Wilson, either to John McMahon or the DDCI. [*portion marking not declassified*]

J.H. Rixse
PB/NSC Coordinator

297. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Newsom)¹

Washington, June 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Contacts with General Oveissi

General Oveissi left Iran shortly before the Shah—exhausted and in flight as one of the most hated figures in the Shah’s government. During his career as a military officer he was unpopular with his subordinates and owed his success primarily to his close relationship with the Shah. After a period of retreat in the U.S., he became active again among opposition figures and is now becoming—even more than former Prime Minister Bakhtiar—the most prominent oppositionist.

The CIA began [*less than 1 line not declassified*] contact with Oveissi following the hostage crisis. DOD officers have been in touch with him since his arrival here. CIA disclaims that any tangible support is being provided to him and insists that we “need to stay in touch.” The impression in the Iranian exile community, however, is increasingly that the U.S. is supporting Oveissi. This impression has caused previously timid Iranian money to come forth for his cause and may have contributed to the decision of the Iraqis to give him facilities for a radio station.

There are rumors that Oveissi was recently in Washington and that a group in DIA is seeking to arrange a meeting with Secretary

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Iran 80. Secret. Drafted by Precht. Cleared in draft by Miles Greene.

Brown and General Jones. Beginning with the appearance of the recent *New York Times* article² on Oveissi we can expect more and more attention to him and an increased perception that we are backing him.

Oveissi has, particularly with the appearance of U.S. backing, the capacity to cause serious trouble in Iran. No analyst we know of believes he has a future as a political leader in Iran. He is still in Iranian eyes probably the most hated of former Shah supporters. Before we go further in our contacts with Oveissi, or, rather, whether we continue them at the present level, we owe it to ourselves to examine the probable consequences of his activities.

—What are the consequences for hostage release? Will the increased turmoil produced by Oveissi's agents (with our perceived backing) work for or against release?

—What are the likely effects on the creation of new institutions and a return to stability to Iran?

—How will the perception of our backing for Oveissi affect current or potential opposition groups (e.g., Madani)?

—How do his activities relate to the growth in strength of the Iranian left?

—How will his activities affect regional peace, i.e., Iran-Iraq, and what are the implications for oil supply and Turkey?

Those agencies who believe in contact with, or support for, Oveissi should be asked to respond to these questions. You may wish to discuss them with the intelligence community. In our view, there is a good case for closely restricting our contacts with Oveissi.

² Richard Burt, *New York Times*, June 12, p. A12, called Oveissi the leader of the Iranian opposition and quoted him as saying there would soon be a counter revolution in Iran.

298. Memorandum for the Record by the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, June 17, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation with Dr. Brzezinski, 17 June 1980

I covered the following items:

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

6) I told him the military was creating an inordinate drain on our resources in pressing for our participation in the development of another hostage rescue operation. For example, they were pressing us to buy trucks [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. They were claiming to have Presidential support on this.

Brzezinski said that if we did do another operation we needed to do it right. I said I could agree with that but I had difficulty in working toward an operation which is unlikely to take place in the present context. [*1½ lines not declassified*] He acknowledged that we should have a plan in hand before Defense asks us to go off and buy trucks. Hence, he intends to convene a meeting shortly after his return to hear from Defense and us exactly what that plan may be. I think this will give us reason to hold Defense off for a bit. (*[name not declassified]* should be in touch with Brzezinski's office on the meeting. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] we have been instructed to have a joint planning session with Brzezinski before we make any commitments [*less than 1 line not declassified*].)

Frank C. Carlucci

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B0012R: Subject Files, Box 15, Folder 43: DCI/DDCI Memrecs/Memos/Agendas of Brzezinski/Aaron Meetings January–December 1980. Secret.

299. Paper Prepared by the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders)¹

New York, undated

SAUNDERS TALKS WITH DAOUDI AND WALDHEIM

I spent two hours Thursday morning with Daoudi, Waldheim, and Don McHenry and then another hour alone with Waldheim.² Waldheim is seriously considering submitting to the Security Council a report from Daoudi to him on Daoudi's recent mission in Tehran,³ and he would appreciate our views on the pros and cons of doing this.

In the course of our long discussion with Daoudi on his mission, he made the following points:

—Ghotbzadeh in talking with Waldheim in Belgrade had apparently agreed to Daoudi's coming in hopes that announcement of that mission would head off European sanctions. When it did not, he was less than enthusiastic about the mission.

—The departure of the UN Commission from Tehran at the end of March has left a certain bitterness with Iranian officials. Both Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh have developed a mythology about the Commission's last day there which adds up to the belief that the situation would have been markedly better if the Commission had stayed.

—Ghotbzadeh's main strength derives from his influence with Khomeini, who likes him, supports him, and sees in him the image of his lost son. Ghotbzadeh's attitude is influenced by two factors, the international attitudes to which he is exposed in situations ranging from the Kreisky visit to the Islamic Conference and the Imam's change of attitude on the hostages.

—On this last point, Bani-Sadr and Tabatabai both say they sense a change in the attitude of the Imam. His position has now moved

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 6/80. Secret; Sensitive.

² June 19. McHenry's account of the meeting with Daoudi in New York is in telegram 2443 from USUN, June 20. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables June 1980)

³ Daoudi was in Tehran May 25–June 16. Waldheim called Muskie on June 16 to report on Daoudi's mission to Tehran. (Memorandum of conversation, June 16; Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, UN and Security Council) Lang's account of Daoudi's mission is in his June 16 cable to the Department of State, which is attached to the June 19 Iran Update. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 6/80)

to wanting the hostage matter resolved. The Imam reportedly wants no trials.

—Ghotbzadeh says the March scenario is a dead letter. With regard to the mandate of the Commission, he continues, as we know, to maintain firmly that the Red Cross visit with the hostages took the place of a visit by the UN Commission.

—Beheshti was pleased by the Secretary General's attention in asking Daoudi to see him. His view is that the hostage issue will be solved by the parliament. He did not want to talk about *how* the parliament would solve the problem but he spoke of determination to resolve the problem. He said it must be left to the Iranians with no threats, sanctions, or military action.

—Bani-Sadr remains committed to finding a solution. He believes that whether the parliament decides or not, the issue will go back to the Imam—either for confirmation or for decision.

—Ghotbzadeh very much wants the UN Commission's report available when the parliament begins to consider the hostage issue. Bani-Sadr did not want the report now. He felt that his enemies would see the Commission's report simply as a cover-up for the release of the hostages. He felt that premature submission of the report would close out the Commission from a future role as an organ for conducting a dialogue between the U.S. and Iran to resolve the crisis.

—The Iranian authorities have not reached agreement on a plan or on timing for presenting the hostage issue to the parliament. The timing is very much related to resolution of the formation of a cabinet.

Against the background of his assessment, Daoudi said he felt strongly that "something must be done" as a result of his mission. The mission cannot be left as a failure because that would tend to close the door on a future role for the UN. He said he had considered as one option an interim report by the entire Commission, but he had ruled that out as too complicated since it would involve all members of the Commission. He had, therefore, come to a second option, namely submitting his own report on his mission to the Secretary General to serve some of the functions of an interim report. The remainder of our discussion with Daoudi and the bulk of my discussion with Waldheim centered on what might be accomplished by Waldheim's sending a report from Daoudi to the Security Council.

In outline, a report by Daoudi on his mission would cover the following ground:

—He would describe whom he had seen on his current mission and the instructions he had from Waldheim.

—He would then describe the background of his mission by stating where the previous work of the Commission had left off. He would

begin by explaining that the Commission could not fulfill the second part of its mandate because it was unable to see the hostages because of the position the students had taken. He would report that the President and Foreign Minister thought the situation would have improved if the Commission could have stayed longer.

—He would explain that the Commission had observed evidence presented to it on the activities of SAVAK, violations of human rights and other excesses during the reign of the ex-Shah. He would also say that the Commission was informed of grievances held by the Government of Iran about U.S. involvement in Iran.

—He would state that the Commission had, therefore, completed the first part of its mandate but not the second. He would report Ghotbzadeh's present view that the second half of the mandate had, in effect, been completed by the Red Cross visit to the hostages.

—He would report the Iranian leadership's repetition to him of its grievances in two areas—the excesses of the Shah's regime and the involvement of the U.S. in Iran.

—He would report expressions of intent by Iranian leaders to resolve the crisis by peaceful means despite USG efforts to release the hostages by force and economic sanctions. He would report their determination, as described to him, to continue the course of the revolution. He would report emphasis by the Iranians on the importance of avoiding pressure on Iran and the use of force and their hope that the Secretary General would encourage a peaceful solution.

—He would state that the Iranian leaders expect parliament to take up the issue and believe submission of the Commission's report would be valuable when that takes place. He would report Iranian views that the Commission could resume its work in New York.

—He would conclude by reiterating that Iran's leadership wishes to reach a solution which will not compromise the basic course of the revolution.

Waldheim's view is that some such report would serve a useful purpose. He felt that if the UN does nothing it would undermine the UN's opportunity to play a further role. When I asked Daoudi what purpose such a report could play in the political dynamics of Tehran, he said that the main members of the "team in power" in Iran have to be backed. Involvement of the UN was their idea and should not be seen to be a failure. The Daoudi report would not contain any findings on behalf of the Commission but would simply report what he and the Commission before him had been told.

When we asked whether this would not in some way provide the legitimization of Iranian complaints that the Iranians had been seeking, Waldheim thought not because the report would simply contain what

Daoudi and the Commission had been told in broad descriptive categories without passing judgment one way or another or presenting detail.

We will be providing separately our thoughts on this particular question and on how it might relate to other possible initiatives.

300. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Algeria¹

Washington, June 22, 1980, 1807Z

165006. Subject: Iran Hostages Conversations With Algerians (addressee please handle as Stadis).

1. Secret—Entire text.

2. In your conversations with leading Algerians following your return, you might want to consider the following themes and points in describing attitudes in Washington toward the Iranian hostage crisis:

—The frustration level seems to be rising again. After the rescue mission which tended to relieve the popular feeling that “something must be done,” the public seems to place a great deal of hope in quick, positive action by the Iranian Parliament. Several weeks have gone by, however, and the Iranians seem no closer to the day in which the Parliament will address the hostage issue. The public is still patient but clearly the idea is growing that key Iranian leaders are willing to exploit the hostages for their own internal political purposes and that other leaders who want to end the crisis are powerless to do so. Out of that kind of perception could again come the demand that the U.S. “must do something.”

—The press, radio and television have been giving less prominence to the hostage issue, partly because there is less news coming out of Iran and partly because the administration is working to keep public anxiety about the hostages at a restrained level. The issue has not figured recently in the political campaign.

—Next month, however, the Republicans have their convention and in August the Democrats will meet. Then the campaign will be

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran NODIS Cables June 1980. Secret; Immediate; Stadis; Nodis; Special Encryption. Drafted by Precht. Approved by Saunders.

fully under way. The hostage issue will inevitably move to a place of prominence as election activity heats up. Thus, we have only a relatively few weeks before the hostage issue will become increasingly difficult to manage in the U.S.

—There is a growing feeling in informed circles that the Iranians are putting the hostage issue aside while they indulge in the intense religious-secular power struggle. Americans see little evidence that the Iranian leadership is taking any effective steps to prepare for a successful resolution of the crisis. The American frustration is compounded by the apparent lack of any constructive, detailed thinking by Iranians as to how a release scenario could be managed in Tehran. With no UN Commission on the scene or other similar presence to remind the Iranians of the importance of ending the crisis and to keep the pressure up, the Iranians appear to many Americans to neglect it.

—Some State and local governments have in recent weeks taken legal steps which discriminate against Iranians. This is a reflection of the bitter public mood that has grown up against Iran since the inception of the crisis. The Iranians simply do not realize how much intense feeling they have created against themselves among ordinary American people. This helps explain the sharp public reaction against the U.S. delegation to the Tehran conference.²

—In these circumstances it has not been easy for the USG to deal with Iranian issues. Our room for maneuver is restricted by popular feeling. Nevertheless, we have taken two steps recently to assure that Iranians are fairly treated in this country. First, we eased certain INS restrictions on Iranian students.³ Second, the Department of Justice has entered in court cases to combat discriminatory actions by State and local governments against Iranians in the U.S. We would hope to see some reciprocal gestures from Iran.

—Despite the strong emotions on both sides, the USG still hopes that the crisis can be ended in an honorable way that will eventually permit the restoration of normal ties with Iran. We have no interest in interfering with Iran's political processes, nor in seeking revenge or retribution after the crisis. We want to see an Iran that can build a stable political system that will resist external or internal Soviet pressures. Achieving this kind of resolution to the conflict means we must move quickly before the current opportunity of public patience is lost.

—There are inevitably a number of bilateral problems we must discuss with the Iranians before reaching a final resolution to the crisis. We are ready at any time and through any means for such discussions.

² See footnote 9, Document 291.

³ See Document 291.

—There is a sincere appreciation in Washington for the quiet but very helpful role Algeria has played in the crisis. The Algerians are not only highly perceptive in analyzing the crisis, but they enjoy superb access and influence in Tehran. We would like to encourage them to continue their quiet contact work on behalf of an early settlement.

Christopher

301. Memorandum From the Commander of the Joint Task Force (Vaught) to the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Pustay)¹

Washington, June 24, 1980

SUBJECT

Hostage Rescue Mission (Operation SNOWBIRD)

1. (TS) *Summary.* Due to the lack of definitive intelligence, adequate force proficiency and available launch bases, development of a specific operational plan to rescue the American hostages held in Iran is not possible at this time. Force proficiency is expected to be realized by 15 July. Action is ongoing to produce an adequate intelligence base and some effort is being made to assure the availability of staging facilities near enough to Iran to enable the secure launch and recovery of the rescue force.

2. (TS) *Intelligence.* The location and security conditions of the hostages remain largely unknown. [4 lines not declassified] Several innovative technological approaches to improve intelligence gathering are being pursued. Despite the possible near-term future release of some of the hostages, it is expected that others will experience protracted detention and possibly trial.

3. (TS) *Launch Bases.* It is essential to at least obtain an indication that one or more of Iran's neighbors would ignore our use of its soil for a rescue mission. No such indication is in hand. A survey is being made with a view towards the possible use of Turkey and Pakistan. [2½ lines not declassified]

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 8, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, J90-110 Operations. Top Secret. All tabs (A-G) are attached but not printed.

4. (TS) *Cover*. JTF procurement and training is being covered by project DOUBLESTAR. [2 lines not declassified] Although the security risks are greater than with the previous rescue operation, it is believed that security aspects of preparing and deploying another rescue force can be managed.

5. (TS) *Force Selection*. The ground element of the previous task force has been retained. The C–130s, MC–130s, AC–130s, and EC–130s remain with the force. The helicopter air element has been revised and expanded. A newly available Air Force helicopter unit with improved capabilities has replaced the Navy-USMC helicopter force. Additionally, a newly available Army helicopter unit is being trained for possible inclusion in the JTF force structure.

6. (TS) *Training*. The lack of definitive intelligence has forced the JTF to produce a variety of concept plans (see Tab B) as opposed to a precise operational plan. The attainment of several capabilities is being pursued so we can quickly adapt a selected, trained force to a set of known circumstances (hostage location and security) when those circumstances become known to the JTF. By mid-July, a trained and adaptable rescue force should be available.

7. (TS) *Costs*. Due to the expanded force and protracted training, SNOWBIRD costs are somewhat larger than those associated with the previous organization. Problems are being experienced by the Services in identifying sufficient funds for several categories of expenditures. By mid-July, costs incurred should total approximately 26 million dollars. Approximately two thirds of these expenditures would occur in any event to support routine programmed activities although they would be incurred over a more protracted period.

James B. Vaught²
Major General, USA
JTF Commander

² Printed from a copy with this typed signature.

302. Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher

Washington, June 26, 1980

[Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Iran 1980. Secret. 3 pages not declassified.]

303. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to the Deputy Secretary of State (Christopher)¹

Washington, June 30, 1980

SUBJECT

Contingency Planning Should the Shah Die

ISSUE FOR DECISION

—How to reply to Atherton's request for guidance should the Shah die.²

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Should the Shah die within the next few days, we will have to deal with a variety of political decisions regarding the ceremonies that may be held in Egypt. As yet, we do not know what Sadat plans. We believe it would be desirable to convey our concerns to Sadat's staff quickly

¹ Source: Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah Memos. Secret; Nodis. Sent through Newsom. Drafted by Precht.

² As reported in telegram 14368 from Cairo, June 29, the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamal Hassan Ali told Atherton that the Shah, who had contracted pneumonia, was failing fast. He also told Atherton that no final decision had been made regarding the funeral or mourning period. Atherton asked for instructions "very quickly" about participation in any funeral ceremony, extension of U.S. condolences to the Empress, Embassy observance of any period of mourning, and advance notice of any prominent U.S. citizens who might attend. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 36, Subject File, Iran Cables & Press 6/80)

before his plans are too far advanced. A suggested cable replying to Cairo 14368 is attached for your approval.³

We believe we should make a distinction between participation of an official nature that could have adverse consequences in Tehran and observances of a more personal nature that could be sustained without aggravating the Iranian crisis. Our decisions now appear to include the following:

- whether to authorize Roy Atherton to attend an official funeral;
- whether to send an official emissary or delegation;
- whether to convey condolences to the Empress;
- whether and how to observe official mourning ceremonies;
- how to handle a request by the Empress to come to the United States; and
- advice to private Americans regarding funeral attendance.

On the first two points, i.e., an official delegation or attendance by Roy Atherton at an official funeral, we would be inclined to recommend against those observances. We expect that other countries would be similarly hesitant, although we might be prepared to follow what the Diplomatic Corps will do. As a first step, we should ask Roy to consult promptly with other members of the Diplomatic Corps with a view to having the Corps take a unified position, if possible, and to convey it quietly to the Egyptian authorities with a view to urging the Egyptians toward a relatively private ceremony.

We would not suggest that a Presidential emissary be sent to any funeral. If the President wished to acknowledge the event in some personal fashion, it is possible that a private citizen friendly to the President could be asked to attend on a purely personal basis.

We would see no problem in a personal message from the President and other officials who wish to express condolences to the Empress. Most Iranians hold no special animus against her, and they would understand sympathy being expressed to a widow. Many Iranians would be concerned, however, if the Pahlavis continued to seem a political threat, and we will continue to hear demands for a return of the Shah's money. In these circumstances, a brief, personal message of sympathy for the Empress should be tolerable in Iran. We could acknowledge to the press that such condolences had been conveyed.

³ Attached but not printed. The draft instructed that Atherton not attend any funeral, that no official delegation would attend, that participation of an official nature in commemorations should be avoided, and that he should consult with EC-9 representatives in Cairo and with Sadat, and welcome the Empress to the United States after checking on the timing. For the final version of the telegram, sent as 175165 to Cairo, July 3, see Document 308.

If an official mourning period is declared, we think it would be preferable for our Embassy to follow the practice adopted by the EC-Nine and other significant missions in Cairo.

If the Empress expresses an interest in coming to the United States, we should reassure her that she is welcome. Depending on the circumstances—i.e., statements coming out of Tehran—we might wish to suggest that she defer her trip briefly until a more propitious time. We believe she would understand our concerns, and it is improbable that she will request permission to come here in the near future.

Finally, should private Americans seek our advice on travel to the funeral, we should take a neutral position, neither recommending for or against, but point to the delicacy of the hostage crisis as an obvious constraint on public activities.

RECOMMENDATION

That you approve the suggested cable attached.⁴

⁴ There is no indication on the memorandum that the recommendation was either approved or disapproved.

304. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci) and the Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (McMahon)¹

Washington, June 30, 1980

SUBJECT

Iranian Successor Regime after Khomeini

1. Reviewed the prospects for Iranian political action with [*name not declassified*]. He feels both Bakhtiar and Oveisi are not good bets because they have become so public. Oveisi, for instance, has advertised that he is working with the Iraqis. This is not going to endear him to the Iranian population who can't see much good coming for Iran out of working with Iraq. He felt the basic principle was that there had to

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Executive Registry, Job 82M00501R: Box 14, Folder 1, C-372 Iran 01 June-31 Jul 1980. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

be a religious element in whatever group succeeded Khomeini. He thinks Khomeini, however, cannot be challenged as long as he is alive. The overall conclusion from this discussion would be that if he is right that any new government cannot be secular only, Iran is in for an indefinite period of the same kind of struggle that Bazargan had between the secularists and the clerics and it has been going on ever since with Bani Sadr, etc. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to hostage crisis.]

Stansfield Turner²

² Gates signed for Turner above this typed signature.

305. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, June 30, 1980

I believe that I have lived through another unforgettable day After the Imam's thundering tirade,² the holy cohorts of low-level officials—all hardliners—at the ministries have gotten going. They are taking it upon themselves to bring their own small-minded theories into the offices, with total disregard for rank—the minister is entitled to no more respect than the secretary—and they are launching an assault on drawers, desks, and other furniture, emptying them of their contents, taking them into the corridors . . . there they begin sorting what is satanic from what is not satanic. Ostermann's catalogue is

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 7/80. No classification marking. Brackets are in the original. The document was found attached to a July 3 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update—July 4." Also found attached was the July 1 message from Lang to the Department of State; see Document 306.

² According to an article in the *Los Angeles Times*, on June 27 Khomeini had delivered a "sharp attack on the troubled Iranian government," threatening to "order a new political upheaval" if Bani-Sadr did not solve the country's problems. In particular, Khomeini decried "reports that insignia of the old regime were still in evidence in government offices" and "denounced governmental ministries as 'ineffective,' 'imperial,' and 'satanical.'" He gave the government 10 days to remove the offending insignia in favor of the symbol of the Islamic republic. ("Khomeini Raps 'Ineffective' Bani-Sadr Regime for Laggard Action on Problems," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1980, p. A2)

satanic, the writing paper with the imperial emblem is satanic, even the brochure of North Korean propaganda showing female gymnasts in sport outfits is satanic

I remarked to the Chief of Protocol that he still had the Iranian flag with the lion and sun in his office . . . he replied, "Thank you for pointing it out to me, but anyway who knows whether I will still be here tomorrow."

That's nothing. Although it is difficult to understand how can it still be possible, drastic purges are beginning again. The criteria applied, it seems, to the National Iranian Oil Company, include the fact of having studied in the West, here the look of the client, there the opinion of a hard-line committee which considers that you do not pray fervently enough *Sic patria salvanda est* [Thus the country is being saved]

Lang

306. Message From the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, July 1, 1980, 1:15 p.m.

I was called in last night at 11:30 and asked to give immediate assistance in the following matter:

1. The Iranian government attaches the utmost importance to the state of the ex-Shah.
2. If possible, get specifics on health situation and bulletin.
3. Ghotbzadeh (GH) stresses that it is of paramount importance for the Iranian government to be informed—through GH—before the mass media, if the ex-Shah were to die or be on the verge of dying. The Iranian government would have to take domestic measures and not be caught short to the benefit of others. This matter is of some importance with respect to the hostage issue.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 7/80. Confidential. The document was found attached to a July 3 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update—July 4." Also found attached was the June 30 message from Lang to the Department of State; see Document 305.

4. In conclusion, GH stressed once again the importance of this point and apologized for calling me so late.

5. Personal observation: Yesterday at 4:00 pm Kaiser and myself had seen GH but he said nothing about this. But at 11:30 pm I was instructed by GH's secretariat to call him at a telephone number unknown to me where background noises indicated that some meeting or some conversation was going on.

6. Anything may happen. I refused to believe in the most positive hypothesis which would be too good to happen, that of a gesture of clemency on the occasion of the death of X. Less positive though interesting would be the pretext to the matter of the hostages thanks to the emotion generated by the disappearance of the tyrant. Remembering a conversation with B&V, I would say that it could also be a desire to have Iranian officials issue an official death certificate. Indeed the ex-Shah is supposed to enjoy such a "baraka" (escaping all attempts in 1953, leaving Iran without any problems in 1979, etc.) that he must have some evil powers. Therefore, in a mix of religion and superstition, it is indispensable to have evidence of his death and of his immediate burial so that he cannot come back to haunt Iran. This may sound irrational, but B states that he has observed this aspect in several of his interlocutors and this helps explain the determination to have the ex-Shah returned to Iran alive so that his burial may be supervised and that he may no longer harm the country.

Finally, the most prosaic explanation albeit the most likely one, is that the government wants to use the death of the former sovereign to the utmost and not let the fundamentalists or anyone else you may think of, benefit from it.

Lang

[Omitted here is a follow-up to the message.]

307. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, July 1, 1980, 9–10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher
Roberts Owen*
Harold Saunders
Richard Cooper*

Treasury

Robert Carswell*

OSD

W. Graham Claytor
Frank Kramer

Justice

Benjamin Civiletti*
Charles Renfrew*

JCS

John Pustay

DCI

Stansfield Turner

OSTP

Frank Press**
Benjamin Huberman**

White House

Lloyd Cutler*
Hedley Donovan

NSC

David Aaron
Gary Sick
Al Friendly*

*Not present for last two items.

**Present for first item only.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 114, SCC 223 Iran 07/01/80. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter wrote "Zbig, J" in the upper right corner.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Mr. Aaron opened the meeting by noting that there had been no SCC meeting on Iran for a month. He reminded all participants to brief agencies on the importance of continued cooperation and coordination since many of the issues involving Iran were of considerable political sensitivity. (U)

1. *Iranian Attendance at Scientific Conference.* Frank Press summarized the case of a legitimate Iranian scientist who is to present a paper at a recognized scientific conference in Colorado. The National Academy of Science has asked that he be allowed to attend. Dr. Press pointed out that we have used the rules of the International Scientific Union to persuade the USSR to permit Israelis and Taiwanese to attend conferences in the USSR. We have been criticized for refusing access of Soviet scientists to conferences here after the Afghanistan crisis. If we reject Iranians for political reasons, we will again be subject to criticism. The numbers of Iranian cases are extremely small (only two known cases this year), and he felt that the U.S. national interest was served by granting visas in these cases. The SCC agreed that the specific case he raised should be approved. Other cases in the future which differed significantly from this case would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.² (C)

2. *Iranians With Third Country Nationality.* Iranians who are also nationals of a third nation (Italy, France, etc.) have been denied visas to enter the U.S. on the grounds that they are Iranian nationals, even though they carry legitimate passports of another nation. This rule has been enforced in order to prevent Iranians from simply buying passports of convenience from nations such as Monaco, Bahamas, Dominica, etc. and using them to circumvent U.S. rules. The SCC agreed unanimously that individuals with legitimate third country nationality (e.g. someone who has acquired British citizenship) should be treated as a citizen of that country, even if born in Iran or of Iranian parents. However, visas should continue to be denied in cases of "convenience" passports for circumvention. (C)

_____ Agree that an Iranian dual national who presents a third country passport shall be treated as a third country national unless the passport was acquired illegally or otherwise does not reflect a bona fide acquisition of third country nationality.³

_____ No. Continue to deny visas to Iranian dual nationals.

² Carter approved the item with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

³ Carter approved this option with a checkmark, underlined the words "bona fide," and wrote in the right margin: "Do not permit abuse."

3. *Payment of Interest on Blocked Iranian Accounts.* Banks and other institutions holding blocked Iranian accounts have the use of this money without paying interest on it, which is a clear case of “unjust enrichment.” The Treasury Department believes that interest should be paid into these blocked accounts in order to increase the amount available for claims by hostage families and others at some future point rather than letting the holding institutions reap the benefits. The amount of interest on these blocked funds is very large, up to about \$1 billion per year. The SCC agreed that it would be preferable to have the interest available to claimants rather than oil companies and banks; however, the public perception would probably be that we were forcing U.S. companies to pay interest to Iranians. In fact, Iranians might acquire some or all of this interest at some future date depending on the negotiations leading to release of the hostages. The SCC agreed that there was no logical basis for starting accrual of interest at this point, eight months after the freeze. Beginning at this point would constitute a windfall of about \$600 million for the institutions holding blocked accounts. The Attorney General believes that a retroactive order will be tested in court and will probably fail eventually. However, all agreed that the outcome of litigation was uncertain, and there was no adequate explanation for why we should begin accrual of interest today as opposed to last month or next month. It would be better to make it retroactive and take our chances in court. Treasury has already informally advised companies that interest would probably be required. (S)

All agreed that those institutions holding blocked Iranian accounts should be notified that they are required to pay interest on the Iranian funds retroactive to the date of the freeze, with the interest to remain in the frozen accounts. Treasury will take all possible steps to insure that this is understood as making these funds available to future claimants rather than the banks and oil companies holding these funds and explain that the timing of our decision is related to the preliminary completion of our census of frozen assets. (C)

_____ Approve.⁴

_____ Disapprove payment of interest.

_____ Disapprove retroactive payment of interest.

4. *Sanctions Against Iran.* Through intelligence, we have identified 132 cases of material being transshipped to Iran via third countries as

⁴ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and wrote in the right margin: “Do not specify too tightly ultimate use of accrued funds. OK *not* to go to banks and/or oil companies.”

a means of circumventing the sanctions.⁵ Six of these involve U.S. companies. We are unable to determine from the intelligence the size of these transactions. Also, because of legal rules on use of intelligence, NSA will not provide the names of the U.S. companies to Treasury for possible enforcement without a prior ruling by Justice. The SCC agreed that the DCI should make available to the State Department the names of foreign companies involved in this trade, and State will raise the issue on a classified basis with the governments concerned. The SCC also agreed that Treasury should be provided the names of the companies for purposes of a preliminary investigation to determine the magnitude of the trade by U.S. entities. Based on this preliminary investigation, a further decision will be taken by the SCC about any possible enforcement action. (TS)

_____ Approve.⁶

_____ Disapprove contacting foreign governments.

_____ Disapprove use of intelligence information for a preliminary investigation of illegal U.S. trade by Treasury.

5. *Security Council Resolution on ICJ Decision*.⁷ Ambassador McHenry has been conducting consultations in New York about the possible introduction of a SC resolution incorporating the ICJ decision ordering Iran to release the U.S. hostages. McHenry believes that, if we are willing to press the issue, we can probably get nine votes in the SC for such a resolution. However, he has been advised against such a resolution by the Chinese, the British and Bangladesh. The Soviets have also indicated that the SC debate—and possibly the resolution—would have to deal with the U.S. rescue attempt as well as the ICJ decision. Other nations have also mentioned the likelihood of the rescue mission being discussed. Mr. Christopher said, based on these findings, he would not recommend going ahead with a SC resolution at this time. Such a resolution would almost certainly do nothing to help the hostages, and there is nothing which would justify proceeding at this time. We might wish to proceed with a resolution in the event of an action-forcing development such as the Iranians starting trials. Mr. Cutler said it had been five weeks since the ICJ decision. That was surely long

⁵ According to Turner's talking points for the July 1 meeting, the allies were not intentionally allowing violations of sanctions, but "loose wording, liberal translations, and outright clandestine circumvention is resulting in a large-scale continuation of shipments to Iran from sanction participants. We doubt the Allies would take the steps necessary to effectively close or substantially narrow these loopholes." (Talking Points for 1 July 1980 SCC Meeting, "Allied Honoring of Sanctions Against Iran," undated; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 13, Folder 3: SCC Meeting Iran)

⁶ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

⁷ See footnote 7, Document 291.

enough for the Iranians to act if they intended to. If we do nothing, we run the risk of sleeping on our rights and of trivializing the ICJ decision by not following up in the SC. Mr. Donovan commented that since the Iranians did nothing in response to the previous SC resolution, he anticipated no public question about why we were not going to the SC again in this case. Mr. Claytor said he would prefer to stand on the ICJ decision; we could be worse off if we went to the SC. All agreed that we should not introduce a SC resolution at this time. (S)

_____ Agree.⁸

_____ Introduce a SC resolution based on the ICJ decision.

6. *Iranian Claims to the ICJ*. Mr. Cutler pointed out that we could suggest the ICJ as a proper forum for Iran to present claims against the U.S. Mr. Saunders noted that the problem was not the lack of a forum—it was Iranian unwillingness to take advantage of the forums available to them. Mr. Owen, the Legal Advisor of the State Department, noted that he opposed encouraging use of the ICJ for such claims. If the Iranians decide to use the ICJ, we could only accept. However, there is always the chance that we would lose a case charging us with illegal interference in Iran's internal affairs. This could set an unfortunate precedent and could even involve massive reparation judgments. All agreed that this was not something we should suggest to the Iranians at this point. (S)

_____ Agree.⁹

_____ Other.

At that point the meeting was reduced to the restricted membership.

7. *Diplomatic Strategy*. Mr. Christopher summarized the results of our recent contacts as indicating that "All roads lead to the Parliament." We now have the most active acknowledged channel we have had through the Swiss. Ambassador Lang meets with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, but both of them say nothing will happen until the Majlis convenes. That will probably be around the end of July. We are trying to analyze the composition of the Majlis, but it is likely that any decision will come as a result of internal dynamics, not because of what we can do from the outside. The Iranians have to sort out their own power struggle, including the choice of a Prime Minister, before they can address the hostage question. Even if a decision is taken, it will probably have to go back to Khomeini. The formula they are considering is for the Majlis formally to empower the government to work out the problem, rather than the Majlis itself working out the details. Most of the

⁸ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

⁹ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

Iranians—even Beheshti—now say that the hostage crisis should be put behind them; but they cannot figure out how to do it. We are poised to play an active role, including good working contacts with European governments, but we are unable to act until the Iranians have sorted out their problem. (S)

Mr. Aaron noted that the hostage situation is a very serious problem in this country. A total of 70% of the American people believe that the foreign policy of this Administration is not successful, and that can be traced directly to the hostages and to the Cuban situation. It appears the Iranians are learning to live with the problem indefinitely. If we can think of any additional action, we should try. Mr. Christopher doubted we could help the situation by increasing the visibility without a solution. Mr. Aaron said the problem now is there is no hope. There is the feeling the hostages have vanished. We should do everything possible to locate them.¹⁰ Admiral Turner said that we suspect many of the hostages remain in Tehran. We are fairly confident some of them are at two former U.S. consulates, although they may be at 5–6 other places. We are using all our capabilities to locate them. (S)

8. *Shah's Illness*. Ghotbzadeh believes that the Shah's death would improve the political situation. Others think it would be of no significance. We have a series of decisions to make about our public posture and response in the event of his death. State was preparing a cable to Roy Atherton, and State and the NSC staff would coordinate on working out a public position.¹¹ (S)

¹⁰ Carter wrote in the left margin: "I agree with Aaron. Explore every possibility."

¹¹ Turner's talking points for the July 1 meeting emphasized that the Shah's death would neither change the balance of power within Iran nor lead to release of the hostages. However, the United States could use his death advantageously as a decisive break with the past relationship, a way to persuade world opinion that the rationale for holding the hostages was gone, or as a starting point for a new round of negotiations. The talking points also suggested that the United States "be prepared to counter charges that we killed the Shah or that he is not really dead." Lastly, the talking points recommended working with Sadat to guarantee that the funeral did not require government representatives. (Talking Points for 1 July 1980 SCC Meeting, "The Hostages and the Shah's Health," undated; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 13, Folder 3: SCC Meeting Iran) The CIA also prepared a paper, "U.S. Options Toward Shah's Funeral," July 7. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office Files, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80)

308. Editorial Note

In early July 1980, the impending death of the Shah and whether the United States should have an official presence at his funeral, as well as the kind of statement the United States should issue on his death, became an issue of discussion between the Department of State and the National Security Council Staff.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, wrote President Jimmy Carter a July 2 note advising that he should be aware of the draft telegram with instructions to U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Alfred (Roy) Atherton (see footnote 3, Document 303). Brzezinski suggested that the United States not send an official delegation to the funeral, but that Atherton attend the funeral. Carter approved these points, writing "ok" beside the first point, and "I agree" in the right margin beside the second. Carter also approved contingency draft letters of condolence. (Note from Brzezinski to Carter, July 2; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 9/80)

The revised instructions were sent in telegram 175165 to Cairo, July 3, in which Atherton was instructed to attend an official funeral. He was also instructed to consult with influential members of the diplomatic corps in Cairo, especially EC-9 members. If only a few Chiefs of Mission planned to attend the Shah's funeral, then Atherton was to request additional instructions from the Department and inform Egyptian President Anwar Sadat of U.S. concerns before Sadat made "definite and possibly elaborate arrangements for funeral and mourning." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P870047-2626) The draft of this telegram is described in footnote 3, Document 303.

Carter's decisions were also conveyed to Henry Precht, Director of the Office of Iranian Affairs in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and member of the Iran Working Group, through Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff. At Sick's request, Precht prepared two letters of condolence and a press guidance to be used in the event of the Shah's death. Sick approved the condolence letters, but informed Brzezinski that the press guidance specifically linked Atherton's attendance at the funeral to a decision by the diplomatic corps in Cairo. Sick noted that his own understanding had been that "Atherton was instructed to attend at the invitation of President Sadat" without mentioning the diplomatic corps. Brzezinski agreed with Sick. (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, July 5, condolence letters and Press Guidance attached; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 6/80-7/80) On another copy of this same memorandum, David Aaron, the President's Deputy

Assistant for National Security Affairs, wrote: "Tell Precht to do what the President ordered! DA 7/7/80." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80) In the July 11 Middle East/North Africa Cluster evening report to Brzezinski, the Cluster noted that Precht had been nominated as the new U.S. Ambassador to Mauritania. In the margin Brzezinski wrote: "good riddance." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80)

The NSC Staff and Department of State then prepared different statements to be issued by the Department on the event of the Shah's death. The NSC's undated draft statement referred to the Shah as a "strong leader of Iran and a good friend of the United States," whose "place in history will not be determined by the impassioned judgment of his contemporaries," but "for guiding Iran's emergence as a modern state," an Iran that was a "powerful, stabilizing, and progressive force in a vital region." Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Newsom informed Muskie, July 13, that the Department had "serious problems" with this statement. Newsom thought the "tone of defense of the Shah" and "efforts to mention precise accomplishments of the former ruler" were unhelpful. Newsom's undated alternative statement referred to the Shah as "the leader of Iran for 38 years" of "profound changes," and "acknowledged" the "friendship and cooperation" between Iran and the United States during this period. After discussion with Sick, the final draft statement, which closely followed Newsom's version, with the added statement that the Shah's death "marks the end of an era in Iran, which all hope will be followed by peace and stability," was approved. (All drafts in Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Files, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah Panama Jan–March 180, Egypt Jan–July 1980, Vol. V) The final official statement, issued on July 27 after the Shah's death that day, is in Department of State *Bulletin*, September 1980, page 55. See Document 326.

**309. Letter From Congressmen Guyer, Fascell, Gilman, and
Broomfield to Acting Speaker of the Iranian Parliament
Yadollah Sahabi and Members of the Iranian Parliament¹**

Washington, July 2, 1980

Dear Sirs:

As you begin to fulfill your duties as Members of the new Iranian Parliament, the undersigned Members of Congress of the United States of America share with you a deep understanding of the magnitude of the responsibilities which you have assumed as the elected representatives of your people. It is this sense of duty and responsibility that motivates us to express our sincere hope that our two nations and peoples can reach a better understanding of each other's goals and aspirations for the future.

For this reason we express to you our deep concern about the deterioration of our relationships as a result of the continued holding of American citizens as hostages. Not only has this crisis resulted in a serious breach of U.S.-Iranian relations, but its continuation has created a critical global issue.

At a time when free nations are under attack from the forces of growing hegemony and expansionism, it is in the best interests of both of our nations to resolve this serious bilateral issue in order to confront the more imposing threats to world peace. Accordingly, while we are aware of all of the important domestic issues confronting your government, we urge you to give the hostage issue your highest and earliest priority as the first step in solving the more immediate and crucial threats that free nations face in the world today.

Sincerely,

**Tennyson Guyer
Dante B. Fascell
Benjamin A. Gilman
William Broomfield**

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Aug 1980. No classification marking. Attached to a July 8 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom entitled "Iran Update, July 8, 1980". The letter was co-sponsored and signed by 187 Congressmen, whose names are appended to the memorandum. According to Saunders, Gilman initiated the letter. He asked that the letter, if approved, be sent through the Swiss, with prepared talking points. The talking points are not attached.

310. Memorandum From Secretary of State Muskie to President Carter¹

Washington, July 3, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Approach from Bani-Sadr

We have just received a report of a meeting yesterday in Madrid between Khomeini's nephew, Reza Pasandideh, (the son of Khomeini's older brother) and Washington attorney Stan Pottinger.² The meeting was arranged at Pasandideh's request. According to Pottinger, Pasandideh claimed to be acting as Bani-Sadr's emissary. He stated that Bani-Sadr was now interested in beginning talks in Europe between his representative and a U.S. representative, to discuss a possible settlement, including release of the hostages.

Pasandideh told Pottinger that his approach had been authorized by Bani-Sadr, and that Khomeini was aware of it. He claims to be a close friend and ally of Bani-Sadr, and our information indicates that this is probably correct. He also says that he has been used as a channel of communication between Bani-Sadr and Khomeini. Pasandideh suggested that this proposal for discussions had arisen out of a consensus among Khomeini, Bani-Sadr, Pasandideh's father (Khomeini's brother), and Pasandideh himself that the time has come to end the crisis. Pasandideh said that Bani-Sadr is seeking through these talks to develop a proposal to put before the Parliament. He reportedly believes that a majority of the Parliament will support him on this issue.

Until we have been able to obtain some additional information, we should not exaggerate the importance of this apparent overture. Nonetheless, a direct channel of communication to Bani-Sadr would obviously be very helpful, and I therefore believe we should explore this contact further. With your approval, I plan to give Pottinger (the Washington lawyer) the attached oral message offering to send a representative (probably Hal Saunders) to meet with Pasandideh to discuss the outstanding issues between the U.S. and Iran.³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 31, Iran 6/80–7/80. Secret; Nodis. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner of the page. Aaron informed Carter: "I agree that this is well worth exploring and recommend that you approve." (Memorandum from Aaron to Carter, July 3; *ibid.*)

² The original account of this meeting is in a July 3 memorandum from Saunders to Muskie. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran: Ghotbzadeh, Bani-Sadr, Khomeini (Iranian Government and Its Degrees))

³ Carter approved the plan with a checkmark and initialed "J" in the right margin.

Attachment

Oral Message⁴

Washington, undated

A representative of the United States Government is prepared to meet confidentially with a representative of President Bani-Sadr at an agreed location in order to begin discussions of issues between the United States and Iran, including:

- The release of Americans held hostage in Iran.
- The freeze of Iranian assets in the U.S.
- The interruption of trade.
- A relationship between the U.S. and Iran based on recognition of the Islamic revolution as a new reality in Iran and on the right of Iranians to determine their own future.
- Resolution of other issues between the U.S. and Iran in accordance with principles of international law and the UN Charter.

⁴ Secret.

311. Editorial Note

On July 3, 1980, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs Zbigniew Brzezinski, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones, Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner, and Brzezinski's Military Assistant and Crisis Coordinator William Odom met to discuss special operations contingencies for Iran. According to the account of the meeting Odom prepared for Brzezinski, the participants made four decisions: "the Aaron Special Intelligence Group will prepare a short paper" on U.S. "intelligence policy toward Iran;" the CIA would "prepare proposals for accelerated development of general purpose intelligence resources as well as resources for the hostage" contingency; CIA and the Department of Defense "will make an intensified effort to overcome the intelligence gaps for 'special contingency planning' now in progress in Defense," and these two agencies would proceed "with a trucking endeavor." Odom recounted that Brzezinski asked for the first two actions "when you discovered that CIA has no accelerated programs

designed to put us in a competitive position for the political and civil war likely to develop in Iran. Turner's plans seem designed to replicate a traditional in-country capability, not a multi-tiered effort ranging from key access at the top to low-level cadre penetration into mass organizations and other social, political, and military institutions." As a last development, Brzezinski asked Odom to "join the Aaron group and to follow the preparation of the CIA plan for general purpose resource development." (Memorandum from Odom to Brzezinski, July 3; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office Files, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80–10/80) No other account of this meeting has been found.

As a result and at Brzezinski's request, the Aaron group planned to meet on July 11. In preparation for the meeting, Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff wrote the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs David Aaron that "the purpose of the meeting is to look ahead at our plans and prospects for developing covert action and other intelligence capabilities and resources in Iran. From Odom's memo, the objective of the meeting is to explore how we can broaden and deepen our penetration of Iran in preparation for an anticipated collapse into political and civil war." Sick suggested that Aaron structure the meeting "as a review of CIA planning to date and pressing for development of a *paper which identifies the targets we wish to go after and how we can create and manage the resources necessary.*" (Memorandum from Sick to Aaron, July 11; *ibid.*)

Both Odom and Carlucci wrote about the July 11 meeting. See Documents 314 and 315.

312. Message From the Department of State to the Swiss Ambassador to Iran (Lang)¹

Washington, July 5, 1980

Please convey the following information to Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh in response to his request for information about the health of the former Shah.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80. Secret.

² See Document 306.

Information reaching us indicates that the condition of the former Shah is serious. We have not received any information forecasting the progress of his illness and we are not in a position to make any judgment ourselves in this regard.

Our ability to provide information on the state of the health of the former Shah is limited by the absence of any direct contact with him. Although we are in touch with Egyptians who are informed on the state of the Shah's health, there is necessarily a delay in receiving this information and we are not in a position to evaluate it accurately.

Because of these limitations, we do not believe that private information on changes in the state of his health will reach us necessarily sooner than press reports. We will attempt, however, to keep the Swiss Embassy informed of any significant changes.

(FOR AMBASSADOR LANG: If Ghotbzadeh asks you about attendance at the funeral, you may say that you understand that Ambassador Atherton would attend if President Sadat decides on an official funeral and the Diplomatic Corps are to attend.)³

³ See Document 308.

313. Editorial Note

On July 9, 1980, an attempted coup against the Iranian Revolutionary Government unraveled. The original plot was for 12 pilots with their F-4 and F-5 planes to defect to Iraq, but the plot grew in scope. Ultimately, it included units of the Iranian Air Force, ground forces, members of radio and television organizations, and tribal leaders including from the Qashqai. The plot called for Iraq to create an incident at the border between Iran and Iraq as a diversion under which Air Force supporters would bomb the Tehran Air Base, Mehrabad Airport, the home of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, and Pasdaran headquarters and training centers. Ground forces would take over the airport and radio and television stations, then broadcast material, including a speech from Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari, saying opponents of the coup were anti-Islamic. After 72 hours, control of Iran would pass to Shahpur Bakhtiar, the former Prime Minister and leader of the exile opposition group, the National Resistance Movement of Iran. Bakhtiar himself, the extent of whose role in the coup is unclear, moved the coup from its original August 13 date to July 10, and then again to

July 9, when it became evident that the Tudeh Party had information of the plot's existence. The plot unraveled when the initial attack, moved from Tehran to Hamadan, resulted in premature gunfire. (Intelligence Information Cable, [document number not declassified], August 14; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 36, Subject File, Iran Cables & Press, 8/80)

In a July 10 memorandum, Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff wrote David Aaron, the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs, that the Iranians had been tracking the plot for about a month, [less than 1 line not declassified]. Sick had reservations about the plot, and expressed his concern about the hostages. He felt that "the ominous part is the drum fire of propaganda lately associating various plots and conspiracies with the U.S.—and particularly with the hostages. The campaign appears to be directed—by design or coincidence—towards laying the justification for trials." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80)

In Iran, the government moved on a variety of fronts. Public statements targeted the United States and the hostages. President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr publicly announced that Iran had forestalled a coup and accused the United States, Israel, and Iraq of being in league with the conspirators. Two days later Khomeini accused the United States and the Soviet Union of plotting a coup against him in an effort to crush his Islamic movement. ("17 Iran officers accused of coup tied to U.S., Russ," *Chicago Tribune*, July 12, 1980, page S2) Soon thereafter, a member of the Revolutionary Council stated that the conspirators had planned to free the U.S. hostages. (Doyle McManus, "Iran Arrests 100 Officers in Purge of Armed Forces," *Los Angeles Times*, July 13, 1980, page OC1)

More concretely, Iran arrested two former generals, who confessed to the plot, their direct links to Bakhtiar, and the bombing targets. More than 500 members of the armed forces were subsequently arrested as part of the plot, including 20 Air Force pilots. (Iran Sitrep No. 373, July 14; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 33, Subject File, Iran 7/1/80–7/20/80) Activists unrelated to the coup were also arrested in a wide crackdown. (Intelligence Information Cable, [document number not declassified], August 14; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 36, Subject File, Iran Cables & Press, 8/80) Five leaders of the plot were executed by firing squad. ("Iran Executes Five Accused of Plot Against Regime," *New York Times*, July 20, 1980, page 6)

In Paris, Bakhtiar escaped an assassination attempt, apparently retribution for the intended coup. He told French radio that Iran had sent professional killers to get him. Newspaper accounts noted that

Ayatollah Sadegh Khalkhali had repeatedly stated that killers dispatched by Iran would find Bakhtiar and also mentioned that the Khomeini government had signed an assassination order on Bakhtiar in early 1979. ("2 Killed as Gunmen Raid Bakhtiar Paris Apartment," *Los Angeles Times*, July 18, 1980, page A2, and Henry Eason, "Bakhtiar plots the counterrevolution," *Chicago Tribune*, July 20, 1980, page A6, respectively) Foreign Minister Sadegh Ghotbzadeh, in Paris at the time of the botched assassination attempt, canceled his trip to Nicaragua after the group claiming responsibility criticized Ghotbzadeh for condemning the attack on Bakhtiar. ("Orders From Iran Cited in Attack on Ex-Premier," *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 1980, page B8) In Maryland, Ali Tabatabai, the founder of the anti-Khomeini Iran Freedom Foundation, was killed on July 22 by an American Muslim with ties to the pro-Khomeini group Islamic Guerrillas in America. This group purportedly controlled the Iranian Interests Section in the Algerian Embassy in the United States. (Robert Pear, "Iran Ex-Attaché, Khomeini Foe, Slain in the U.S.," *New York Times*, July 23, 1980, page A1, and Vanderbilt University Television News Archive, NBC Evening News, July 24, 1980)

314. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, July 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Meeting with Carlucci et al.

I spoke with Gary Sick this morning about the agenda for this meeting.² He asked for some comments from me which might give focus or direction based on the ZB/HB/Turner meeting.³ Although the meeting was about special contingencies, Zbig raised the question of our capabilities for political combat within the country as it drifts toward civil war. He got the impression that we are not developing

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80-10/80. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System. Sent for information.

² See Document 315.

³ See Document 311.

resources as rapidly as we must if we are to compete with any chance of success.

Two points emerged from the discussion thereafter. First, in our development of resources for special contingencies, we shall keep in mind their use for other purposes as well. Thus we should have less hesitancy about investing in one-time use capabilities if we can see other possible uses later on.

Second, Zbig asked that we investigate the possibilities of accelerating our resource developments for “political combat” as things get worse in the country. Can we cast our nets wider? Do we have an effective strategic objective? He, of course, considers regaining Iran as *key* to the northern tier, more important than Pakistan and Afghanistan by far.

There are three possible futures for Iran. First, it can become a radical left pro-Moscow state. Second, it may break into pieces with Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, and the USSR drawn in. Third, it may survive with its borders intact with an anti-Soviet regime which is not pro-West but objectively inclined that way for economic and security matters. Our objective should be to ensure the third outcome.

The first phase of a strategy for achieving this outcome must be the development of a resource base within and without the country. I do not pretend to know how much is enough or which resources to prefer over others in the particular case of Iran.

[Omitted here is material on resources.]

315. Memorandum for the Record by the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

Washington, July 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Meeting of the Aaron, Komer, Pustay, Newsom and Carlucci Group,
11 July 1980

1. The meeting was billed as an effort to examine and make suggestions on our intelligence collection and covert action program in Iran.² I was asked to describe both.

2. I first ran over the collection priorities. A consensus emerged on the following:

a. We should add a priority on Soviet activities in Iran as a separate item. This should follow priority c, government/internal stability.

b. The military and economic developments priorities should be reversed.

3. In the more general discussion on priorities that ensued the consumer agencies had the following suggestions:

a. More intelligence on religious groups would be very welcome.

b. A high priority was the decision-making process (some argued that one did not exist). If we could describe the process consumers would welcome reports on the atmosphere that surrounds those in authority.

c. Newsom laid considerable stress on more information from the Bazaaris.

d. In connection with our efforts to penetrate the hostage holders, Newsom renewed an earlier suggestion. If we had the names and backgrounds of some of those involved and could identify the educational institutions in Iran that they attended, State could seek Aid people who may have taught at those institutions. They might have known those involved. The group asked that we update our information on the hostage holders and make it available to them. I would appreciate it if NFAC could do a paragraph or so on the nature of the group and enclose biographic information on those individuals we have identified.

e. Komer asked if we had some [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. He suggested we explore trading information with them on the Soviet external threat for their assessment of Soviet activities inside of Iran. I said we would explore this possibility.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14. Secret; Sensitive; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

² See Document 311. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room at 11 a.m. Newsom, Komer, Pustay, Carlucci, Spiers, Sick, and Odom attended. (Note, Black Chamber Meeting, July 11; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80-10/80)

f. Some discussion took place on obtaining better intelligence on the newly-formed Parliament. I said we were placing attention on this group as a target. It was suggested that we draw up a list of the members and include whatever information we might have. I said I was sure something along these lines was under way.

3. Komer asked that we think about a program which is separate from a) FI collection; b) covert action and c) hostage rescue infrastructure which would be directed toward the possibility of U.S. military intervention in southern Iran in response to Soviet intervention. The program would entail grouping assets in localities that would be key to such an operation. I suggested Komer send me his priority list and we would initiate such a program noting that although developing human assets would take a considerable period of time we could start our technical collection immediately. [*portion marking not declassified*]

4. [*13 lines not declassified*]

5. The only problem that arose during the discussion on covert action was Aaron's continuing belief that we can somehow erect a structure inside without reference to the exile group. He asked about doing this with labor unions, the Bazaaris, etc. I pointed out that in each case there was no identifiable leadership with which we could work. We were not adverse to working with these groups, indeed we were trying to target on them, but in many instances the best lines inside came from those on the outside. I told him I saw no phoenix in Iran about to arise from the ashes. [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. State was asked to go out to its posts with a request for stepped-up reporting on Iran. [*7½ lines not declassified*]

7. I talked with Newsom about access [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. I told him we were prepared to send [*less than 1 line not declassified*] over. Newsom agreed that we should have access but said the first priority was to have him meet with his family. He might very well be on his way back to the U.S. within 48 hours. If so he much preferred we interview him here. I told him he would unquestionably get requests from other intelligence components for access [*less than 1 line not declassified*], but that he could tell them that CIA would handle their requirements. I suggest we convey this to the Pentagon, including General Vaught. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Frank C. Carlucci³

³ [*name not declassified*] signed for Carlucci above this typed signature.

**316. Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Operations,
Central Intelligence Agency (McMahon) to the Commander
of the Joint Task Force (Vaught)¹**

Washington, July 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Feasibility Study

1. Before he left town, the Director asked that I reply to your memo of 2 July on developing plans to infiltrate a hostage rescue force into Iran.² We want to help all we can with this. We are concerned, however, that complying with the full scope of your request might take us into activities beyond the bounds of the Intelligence Community. That is, operational planning which involves considerations of the capabilities and tactics of U.S. forces is normally beyond the purview of intelligence agencies.

2. We therefore feel that all we can and would be most happy to do in support of your rescue planning is to provide opinions on and support for the infiltration plans which your joint task force develops. For instance, we can and should estimate the probability of detection under a given plan. We should estimate what our clandestine resources may be able to do in support. As a general comment in response to your 2 July memo, we do not believe that the governments of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Turkey would agree to permit the use of their territory for a base of operations or through-port for a rescue operation. Moreover, none of these governments should be relied upon to safeguard knowledge of a planned rescue operation. [2 lines not declassified] Insofar as clandestine, or black, infiltration of the rescue force from any of the four countries is concerned (that is without the knowledge of the host government), we would not offer any hope that this is possible.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1. Top Secret. A copy was sent to Jones.

² Attached but not printed. In the July 2 memorandum to Turner, Vaught had asked that DIA and CIA comment on the feasibility of infiltrating a hostage rescue force into Iran "overtly, covertly or clandestinely" from Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, or other nearby countries of the Persian Gulf, with a low chance of detection.

3. In sum, we want to avoid treading where it is not proper for us to be, while at the same time wanting to be as helpful to you as possible in checking out and supporting the plans that you've developed.

John N. McMahon³
Deputy Director for Operations

³ Printed from a copy with this typed signature and an indication that McMahon signed the original.

317. Briefing Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher¹

Washington, July 11, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran Update—July 12, 1980

Today's Objectives

—To decide on next steps in the care of Richard Queen (see attached paper).²

Status of Initiatives

—Henry [Precht] spoke to Richard Queen yesterday afternoon. He was extremely calm, good-spirited, and positive in his outlook. He recalled in detail the shifts in location he had made during his eight months on the compound, as well as the condition of a number of his fellow hostages. We did not press him for details, however.

—Queen said he had been handed over by the militants yesterday morning to a representative of President Bani-Sadr and driven to the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 7/80. Secret; Sensitive. Sent through Newsom.

² Attached but not printed is "Suggestions for Return of Richard Queen." The Iranians released hostage Richard Queen on July 11 due to their concerns about his medical condition. He was later diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

airport where he was handed over to the Swiss. That was his first knowledge that he might be released. He had been concerned about his health—unsteadiness, dizziness, and recently nausea—since December. His condition had become acute in the last week or so.

—Queen said he had a good relationship with most of his captors although he could not abide a few of them. He thought his adjustment had been as successful as any of the hostages he knew of. He said one of the captors told him privately just before he left that the others would be released in three or four months.

—Queen is anxious to come back to the U.S. and interested in his next assignment. He cares deeply, of course, for the hostages left behind. At this point, we believe unless there are strong medical reasons to the contrary that he should be moved to the U.S. rather than Germany for further tests. This would emphasize the fact that he was turned over to his parents rather than to the U.S.G. and could lay a basis for subsequent releases in the future.

—At White House initiative, Henry briefed the President, and the President also spoke to Queen in the afternoon from Georgia.

—The Swiss were told by Sanjabi that the Iranians have found another body at the Tabas site. We checked with DOD and there is absolutely no possibility that the body is that of an American or an Iranian associated with us. We told the Swiss that the body should not be turned over to them or to the Red Cross for us unless there was information we were not aware of to indicate that the body was an American.

—Ghotbzadeh told Richard Cottam last night that he had been responsible for the fast action to release Queen. Ghotbzadeh said he was afraid Queen might die while in Iranian custody and Iran would be blamed for having tortured him.

—Ghotbzadeh said again that he would not take part in the new government under Habibi. When Cottam asked if the installation of a new government would be a setback for hostage release, Ghotbzadeh answered quickly, there was no question; the hostages would be released. He had fixed it so that would happen.

—We attach an analysis of the new Parliament prepared by Bruce Laingen and submitted yesterday through the Swiss.

—We also attach cables received today from the Swiss.³

³ The cable from Laingen and cables from Lang are attached but not printed.

318. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, July 18, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran

The low profile policy² which we have followed since late April has yielded some benefits. Despite the intense in-fighting within Iran's leadership factions over the seating of the Parliament and selection of a Prime Minister, the hostage issue had not been the political football it was in the past. Khomeini has ceased referring to the hostages during his speeches and attacks on the U.S. A consensus appears to be building within Iranian political circles that the hostage issue has been milked for all it is worth and that it is increasingly a political (and economic) liability which must be resolved. Even Beheshti has been prepared to refer publicly to the possibility of settling the hostage issue in accordance with the "humanitarian tradition" of Islam. (C)

Unfortunately, none of these developments provides any assurance that the Iranian leadership will be able to develop or carry out a rational plan for getting themselves out of the hole they have dug for themselves. On the contrary, there is a significant risk that events may run out of control in Tehran at some point in the coming months, confronting us (and them) with a crisis neither side wants. There are several ways this might occur:

—The Majlis has now completed its credential fight against possible moderates who managed to get elected, and constitutional obstacles to its operation have been removed. It should begin formal operations in the immediate future, and a Prime Minister and Cabinet should be selected by the end of this month. There is no indication, however, that the hostage issue will be taken up much before September, and some sources say it will be October before the issue is addressed. Whatever the timing, the chances of prompt, sensible action by the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 5/80–7/80. Secret; Sensitive; Outside the System. Sent for information. A note at the top of the page reads: "ZB saw—rtnd Aug 18."

² An attached July 7 CIA paper, "Current Status of the Hostage Crisis and the implications of U.S. Policy Options," assessed the current U.S. low profile policy as contributing to reduced Iranian interest in the hostage issue, which allowed moderates to work diplomatically. The paper was submitted to Brzezinski under a covering attached but not printed July 7 memorandum from Turner. On this memorandum Brzezinski wrote: "GS. Comment? ZB. 7/11/80."

inexperienced and generally extremist electees of the new Majlis are not good. *In terms of domestic Iranian politics, the most attractive solution available to the Majlis is to hold trials in some form.* It will take firm and skillful leadership to restrain that impulse, possibly by Khomeini personally, and our past experience offers no reason for optimism that such leadership will be exerted. (S)

—A second problem is the progressive deterioration of public order in Iran. This is a vicious circle: incompetence by the Islamic regime leads to public dissatisfaction which leads in turn to more blatant purges and repression by the regime in self-defense which leads to more disaffection. No one knows how long this process will continue before the social structure collapses into a new round of general violence, but most observers believe it should be measured in months rather than years. A collapse of civil order would obviously place the lives of the hostages in jeopardy and would confront us with some urgent decisions. (S)

—A third possibility is the death of one or more hostages, or convincing evidence that their physical safety is in immediate danger. (C)

—Finally, there may be some act of desperation from within the country or in association with the various exile groups which attempts to split the country or establish an alternative regime. At the moment, the prospects for a successful movement of this type appear limited, but the possibility of an attempted revolt in Azerbaijan or an attempt to cut the Khuzestan oil fields away from the rest of the country, for example, cannot be excluded. Any such attempt would raise the danger of civil war and increase the temptation for the Soviets to intervene. (S)

Each of these events would effectively be outside our control but would demand a response on our part which would again place this issue at the forefront of public concern—in this country and elsewhere. Our diplomatic strategy is focused on the first of these contingencies. We are attempting to establish redundant and reliable channels of communications to various elements in the Iranian power structure which will permit an exchange of ideas. We wish to insure that the Iranians understand that trials are totally unacceptable to us. We also wish to explore ideas about how the issue could be managed with the Majlis to avoid unpleasant surprises or, if possible, a new round of sterile rhetoric and confrontational demands. The general outlines of a negotiating framework were established in the position paper developed during the earlier negotiating phase in February and March,³ and our objective is to encourage key Iranians to think in those terms in

³ See Document 137

devising their own scenarios with the Majlis. Some tentative channels of communication have been established. Others may appear as activity intensifies in the Majlis. I have raised with Dave Newsom the possibility of a restricted PRC to review our present situation on the diplomatic front and State is now considering it. (S)

We really have very few assets for preventing or managing the last three contingencies. The UN could again become a useful forum in some circumstances. For example, a Security Council resolution expressly prohibiting trials might be more effective if trials appeared imminent than it would be as an abstract warning. A UN conciliation or peacekeeping effort of some sort might be helpful in some circumstances, although the UN is not equipped to deal with a purely civil war. The UN could be used to impose additional penalties on Iran, and it could provide the forum for an international signal to the Soviets not to intervene. However, judging from our experience over the past eight months, it would be unrealistic to expect the UN to play more than a hortatory role, which Iran is free to ignore. (S)

Otherwise, our options are essentially in the realm of self-help. How do we respond if we learn that a hostage has been killed? What if Iran ignores the warning signals and begins to hold a show trial of several hostages? What if Khomeini dies and/or public order collapses, leaving the hostages at the mercy of a small faction of fanatics? These and other contingencies may never occur, but it would be helpful to have a high-level and restrictive review of our options in advance to identify political, diplomatic, and military planning factors in the event we should be required to react on short notice. (S)

319. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)

Washington, July 22, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office Files, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80–10/80. Secret. 2 pages not declassified.]

320. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 23, 1980, 2:55–3:07 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Katherine Keough and
Louisa Kennedy

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Captain Gary Sick, NSC Staff Member (notetaker)
Katherine Keough
Louisa Kennedy

The President opened the meeting by remarking about how wonderful Richard Queen looked and how excited he was to be back.² *Both visitors* agreed that he was a wonderful young man. Unfortunately, his personal experience as a hostage was limited and may not be typical of the others.

The President agreed that the experience of each hostage may be unique. Queen was obsessed with the different attitudes of the different militants. Some he despised. Others were much better.

Katherine Keough said they had requested the meeting to assure the President of their support. Although some members of their family organization occasionally stray off—as was unfortunately the case at the Republican National Convention where some members “slipped through our fingers”³—the President could be assured that he has 53 hostage families behind him. That emphatically includes Richard Queen and his family who lead them all in support.

The President said that was good to hear. He complimented the two visitors on their remarkable diplomacy and courage. If this turns into a partisan issue, it will detract from the overwhelming commitment of the American people. The President had seen Secretary of State Muskie and had told him to talk to you (the visitors) on a confidential basis about a move which might be desirable in relation to the new

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 38, MemCons President 7/80. Confidential. Drafted by Sick. The meeting took place in the Oval Office at the White House.

² See Document 317.

³ According to Brzezinski, Keough and Kennedy were “embarrassed by the independent foray of several of the hostage wives to the Republican Convention.” (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Carter, July 22; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 119, Trips/Visits File, 7/23/80 Hostage Wives Kennedy and Keough Meeting with the President)

Iranian Majlis. There were some problems involved, but we could probably find ways for some Americans to go to Tehran. Even Beheshti had referred to the need to deal with the U.S. “people” rather than the government. If this could be evoked by private citizens, members of Congress, or even members of FLAG, it might dramatize the hostage problem to the Majlis. The President emphasized that he was not trying to impose an idea on them, but he thought they should discuss the idea with Secretary Muskie.

Katherine Keough noted there are things they could do which the government cannot, and vice versa. They wanted to try and be more in synch with policy in order to protect you (the President) and to help the families. They thought there was a possible opening for some movement after the release of Richard Queen to his parents.

The President agreed and noted that even Beheshti had repeated this formulation.

Katherine Keough thought this might offer the possibility of a role for them. However, she was leery about the families going to Tehran where they were extremely vulnerable to being run through cemeteries, having crutches waved at them and the like. However, that may be necessary.

The President said he was thinking more toward a family visit to the UN to meet with the Iranian UN Representative, or perhaps to Switzerland for a meeting with some Iranians.

Louisa Kennedy said she had seen Farhang (the former UN Representative) in New York on June 20. He had told her he was going back to teach in Iran, but it was evident that he is going back to try to help Bani-Sadr. She told him that if the families can be helpful at some point or if the Iranians develop some scenario utilizing the families—which would have to be highly organized—we could possibly be helpful.

The President said if there was a meeting in Switzerland, then a judgment would be required whether it should be secret or whether it should be done with fanfare. What is probably not possible is to deal with representatives of Ghotbzadeh or Bani-Sadr. It should preferably be a representative of Beheshti or the Majlis, with the Iranian leaders guiding the operation with the help of the Swiss or perhaps Austrian governments. The U.S., of course, should avoid direct association with such a move.

Katherine Keough opined that the Iranians would probably prefer doing it publicly. This would provide an opportunity for the families to be seen pleading for the release of their sons, etc.

The President added “because Jimmy Carter could not do it” (i.e. the public line which the families would take in their plea). He asked Gary Sick to follow up on his note to Secretary Muskie. The FLAG

officials should sit down with the Secretary. They should plan to bypass Bani-Sadr, Ghotbzadeh and the U.S. Government. The sooner the better. The Iranians seem to be on the verge of choosing a Prime Minister.

Katherine Keough said she would rather not rush. It would be worth waiting a bit to see if the new Prime Minister lasts.

Gary Sick noted that the end of Ramadan may provide an appropriate moment for initiative.

The President observed that Khomeini appeared to knock down anyone who sticks his head up in Iran. He recently criticized Beheshti and the clerics. Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh were not aware that Richard Queen was going to be released until they were asked to arrange transportation.

Katherine Keough mentioned that the families had recently written a letter to Ahmad Khomeini on a person-to-person basis when there appeared to be a chance that he might become the Prime Minister. The letter is being carried to Tehran with Professor Ricks who is presently on his way.

The President said that if they saw some positive sign or an opportunity, they should call him directly.

Katherine Keough said one final point they wished to make was to propose the establishment of an international commission to deal with questions such as the sanctity of embassies, the inviolability of diplomatic immunity and the like, perhaps under the auspices of the UN.

The President said we would certainly join such a commission.

Katherine Keough said she hoped, if such a commission were formed, that the leadership of FLAG would be considered for membership in the U.S. delegation.

The President asked how the families of the hostages get along among themselves.

Katherine Keough joked that they fight. There is a continuing problem of those outside Washington vs. those inside. When those from other locations are brought in, they have unrealistically high expectations about what is known and what can be done. When their expectations are not realized, they are frustrated and tend to think that the government is doing nothing. By the time a meeting is over, they usually go away with a positive attitude which lasts 2–4 weeks before frustrations again begin to mount. Seventeen families were represented in the meeting with Richard Queen.

Louisa Kennedy added that there was flak from those who were not there. It had been hard to arrange quickly for everyone. Richard Queen plans to call all the families.

The President said that it was obvious that Queen was weak. Even though he was quite animated and excited during his hour visit with

the President,⁴ he showed signs of physical problems. He noted that the State Department representative who had accompanied him (Sheldon Krys) had been extremely solicitous and anxious that Queen not get over tired.

Katherine Keough said that she wished to put in a word for Krys as a great man who had been extraordinary in his help to the hostage families. She could not say enough good about him. That was also true of other State Department representatives—Peter Constable, Henry Precht, and others—who were competent, hard working and sensitive to their problems. She was not a State Department wife, but she had come to have enormous respect for them. The President was well served by people such as Krys, whom she would term an exceptional bureaucrat.

The President had noted that, when he offered the Queens White House tickets to the Kennedy Center, Krys had stressed the need for Richard to rest.

⁴ Carter met with Queen on July 19 from 10:59 until 11:50 a.m. No other record of the meeting has been found. (Carter Library, President's Daily Diary)

321. Editorial Note

On July 23, 1980, the Special Operations Review Group, chaired by Admiral J. L. Holloway, III, submitted the Final Report of the Special Operations Review Group, often referred to as the Holloway Report, to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In the Forwarding Statement, Holloway wrote that the report was a “professional critique” for the Joint Chiefs and not an after-action summary or a white paper. In this context and as a result of hindsight, he felt that the report would appear to be “highly critical, more so probably than a wider review from a national perspective would deserve.” But he added that the review group had “seen infinitely more to be proud of than to complain about.” The operation, he concluded, had been “risky and we knew it, but it had a good chance of success and America had the courage to try.”

The Final Report contained an Executive Summary, 5 chapters (Introduction, Chronology, Issue Analysis, Conclusions, Recommendations), and annexes. The Executive Summary listed specific and general conclusions. In the specific conclusions, the main points were: 1) that the operation had been conceptually valid and feasible, but high-risk;

2) that delay in implementation until March 1980 was a function of a lack of reliable information on hostage location, fluctuating political circumstances in Iran, and preparation time; 3) that operational secrecy was essential; 4) that command and control had been "excellent at the upper echelons" but more "tenuous and fragile" at the intermediate levels; 5) that mission planning had been adequate, but that a larger helicopter force and better weather contingency preparation would have improved mission success; and 6) that preparation for the mission had been adequate except for operational readiness which would have benefited from a full dress rehearsal and for weaknesses in command and control that should have been addressed. Lastly, the Review Group wrote that the siting of Desert One near a road "probably represented a higher risk than indicated by the JTF assessment."

The Executive Summary contained two general conclusions. First, the Review Group cited the "ad hoc nature of the organization and planning" as a "fundamental concern." They argued that "an existing JTF organization, even one with a small staff, would have provided an organization framework of professional expertise around which a larger tailored force organization could quickly coalesce." Second, they argued that operational secrecy proved limiting: "Many things that, in the opinion of the review group, could have been done to enhance mission success were not done because of OPSEC considerations. The review group considers that most of these alternatives could have been incorporated without an adverse OPSEC impact had there been a more precise OPSEC plan selectively exercised and more closely integrated with an existing JTF organization." These two conclusions led the Review Group to recommend that a Counterterrorist Joint Task Force be established within the Joint Chiefs, and that the Joint Chiefs give careful consideration to the formation of a Special Operations Advisory Panel. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran Special Contingency Group 7/80)

An unclassified version of this report, with technical material excised, was released to Congress in July and made public August 23.

322. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter

Washington, July 24, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Rescue Mission 11/79-7/80. Top Secret. 1 page not declassified.]

323. Intelligence Information Cable Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

[*cable number not declassified*]

Washington, July 25, 1980

COUNTRY

Iran

SUBJECT

Recent Developments in Oveisi Movement [*date not declassified*]

SOURCE

[*2 lines not declassified*]

1. During mid-July, Buick Saber, a trusted aide of Iranian exile leader Gholam Ali Oveisi, made two trips to Cairo to meet with the Shah and members of the royal family at the behest of Ardeshir Zahedi, the Shah's former Ambassador to the United States. Zahedi advised Oveisi that the Shah was attempting to fund other Iranian exile leaders and was informing these leaders that Oveisi was a tool of the United States and was not to be trusted. Zahedi felt that such activity was divisive to the exiles and suggested Oveisi send a representative at once to clear up the matter. When Saber saw the Shah, he proceeded to refute the Shah's claims that Oveisi was being used by the United States to denigrate him and prevent the royal family from returning to Iran. The Shah told Saber that if Oveisi would announce publicly that he wished to restore the 1906 Constitution to Iran, that would be sufficient to appease him. The Shah said he knew he could not return to Iran but still hoped that his son could. If Oveisi agreed, he would provide his movement with U.S. dollars 20 million, the assistance of the royal family, and would attempt to gain Jordanian support for him. Saber then returned to Paris and delivered the message to Oveisi. Oveisi refused to accept the offer and told Saber to go back to Cairo and make clear to the Shah that Oveisi harbored no personal animosity toward him or his family. However, he felt the Shah and the royal family were no longer really an issue, and his only real concern was getting Iran away from Khomeini and the mullahs and preventing it from falling into the hands of the Communists. Once this had been accomplished, the people could determine if they wanted a return of the monarchy. Also, he felt that the Shah's involvement with the exiles

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 36, Subject File, Iran Cables and Press 7/80. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*]. Sent to INR, DIA, the National Military Command Center, NSA, the NSC Staff, the White House Situation Room, and the NFAC.

and his offers of money to certain leaders among them was disruptive to the whole effort. (*[less than 1 line not declassified]* *Comment:* Oveisi believed that an apparent loss of interest in him by the Egyptians was the result of the Shah negatively influencing President Anwar Sadat.) Saber returned to Cairo with Oveisi's message and carefully presented it to the Shah and the royal family. The Shah told Saber that he appreciated Oveisi's explanation, would heed his words, and wished Oveisi well. Shortly after Saber left, Zahedi called an aide of Oveisi and said that the Shah and the royal family had agreed to stop supporting the various factions. Zahedi explained further that in fact only one exile leader had actually been given money, and that was General Ariana in Paris who had received U.S. dollars 100,000.

2. On 16–17 July, Oveisi travelled to Geneva to meet with Ayatollah Hojat, a religious leader from Qom, and a number of his followers. Hojat had reportedly been closely associated with Ayatollah Khomeini but recently had become disillusioned with the course of events in Iran and decided to go into exile. Hojat used a medical problem as an excuse to travel to Switzerland and now plans to base himself in London and eventually lead an anti-Khomeini publicity campaign. Hojat accepted U.S. dollars 20,000 from Oveisi to cover his living expenses in London until he is ready to begin his anti-Khomeini campaign. He also agreed to provide Oveisi with religious contacts in Iran. After the meeting, Hojat's followers returned to Iran. During the Geneva meeting, Hojat told Oveisi that one of the major causes of his disillusionment with Khomeini was Khomeini's policy of crushing any form of opposition to him. Hojat had once told Khomeini that while he was not opposed to selective executions, he felt that they should go unpublicized, and that widespread awareness of the killings was promoting a poor image of Iran in the world. Khomeini had responded to Hojat that world opinion meant nothing to him and that the killings would continue. Khomeini went on to explain that mercy was interpreted as weakness and that killing was necessary for the revolution to survive. Hojat also said that Khomeini was using Palestinians to eliminate opposition to him outside of Iran and was providing these members with the names of those to be eliminated and the support to carry out the missions.

3. On 22 July Oveisi and an aide departed for Cairo at the invitation of Anwar Sadat. After the completion of the Cairo visit, Oveisi intends to travel to Hamburg where he will meet with the son of Ayatollah Shariat-Madari in an attempt to gain more active support for his movement from Shariat-Madari.

4. ACQ: *[date not declassified]*

5. [Omitted here is dissemination information.]

324. Message From the Swiss Chargé to Iran (Kaiser) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, July 25, 1980

PURGES IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY: A SITUATIONAL SKETCH

An official in the Foreign Ministry told me that they had a great purge there yesterday. This operation, which must be seen in connection with Khomeini's latest appeal for the Islamization of every aspect of daily life, was directed against persons as well as objects.

Even though there have been other purges before, this operation is said to have resulted in 200 more persons being retired, transferred, or dismissed. The weeding out of mostly experienced personnel affects all ranks. The Director General for Europe and North America, Ettesam (over 20 years experience) was also dismissed. As Ettesam, who is married to a Swiss citizen, remarked to the chief of our Chancery Division, the orderly conduct of business is at present being made impossible. For instance, he said that he was unable to act on representations and *démarches* from foreign embassies because the internal channels of the Ministry are completely blocked, but also because—and this is doubtlessly the result of the constant attacks by the fundamentalists on the Foreign Ministry as a stronghold of the spirit of the *ancien régime*—it is apparent from the contacts with the rest of the administration that the latter is now hardly willing to accept the wishes or recommendations of the “corrupt” Foreign Ministry.

The purges also affect the personnel of the Secretariat (Minister/Chief of Protocol, etc.) who had had great understanding for the special urgency of many of the concerns of this Embassy and had always been helpful in arranging appointments. Our cooperation with the Foreign Ministry will therefore hardly be improved. The furor was directed also against left-over objects of the *taghouti* (idolatrous) period. For instance, the Persian rug in the Minister's office disappeared, which had long been a thorn in the side of the fundamentalist fanatics. At the same time, the heavy plush curtains, the flags of the country, etc., had to go. The office of the Chief of Protocol, too, was swept bare, which so far had still retained certain representational trappings in view of his special functions.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 7/80. No classification marking. The document was found attached to a July 26 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie and Christopher entitled “Iran Update—July 26 1980.”

The Minister is totally powerless in the face of these events and has resigned himself to them, especially since he will shortly step down together with the present government. My informant told me that since his return from Paris, Gotbzadeh has practically not shown his face at the Foreign Ministry any more.

In my opinion, this snapshot makes amply clear that Khomeini's constant deconsolidation orders are making it less and less possible to govern the country at all.

Kaiser

325. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)

Washington, July 26, 1980

[Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Box I-023, SCC Meetings, SCC (I) Meeting Misc Agenda Items. Secret. 2 pages not declassified.]

326. Editorial Note

On July 27, 1980, the former Shah of Iran, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, died in Cairo. The Department of State issued a press statement conforming to its final draft. See Document 308. The press statement is in Department of State *Bulletin*, September 1980, page 55. President Anwar Sadat announced that Egypt would hold a State funeral for the Shah with full military honors, but would not invite other governments or the diplomatic corps to participate in funeral ceremonies. U.S. Ambassador to Egypt Alfred (Roy) Atherton reported that most members of the diplomatic corps would not attend, some intended to put their flags at half-mast, and others had decided not to fly their flags at all. On the upper right corner of Atherton's telegram, Carter wrote: "Atherton not attend service. Do not fly US flag. C." (Telegram 16446 from Cairo, July 28; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 33, Subject File, Iran 7/21/80-7/31/80)

On July 28, Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff wrote the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, Zbigniew Brzezinski, that the Ambassadors of France and the United Kingdom would attend. He wrote:

"As you know, it was my view that our position on sending Roy to the funeral should be made independently of the rest of the diplomatic corps. I never liked the idea of hiding behind others' skirts on this issue. However, I think we will look both foolish and cowardly if other Western nations send ambassadorial representatives to the funeral and we do not."

In the upper right corner of this memorandum, an unknown hand wrote: "ZB thinks the President should be aware of this right away." Carter then wrote at the bottom of the memorandum: "3:35 p.m. 7/28 I told Ed [Muskie] to let Atherton attend. J." (Ibid.)

The Shah's funeral took place on July 29. In attendance were former President Richard M. Nixon, exiled King Constantine of Greece, Atherton, and diplomats from the United Kingdom, France, China, Israel, Australia, and Morocco. According to an August 11 *Time* magazine article, "An Exile Laid to Rest," on his deathbed, the Shah "asked to be buried ultimately in Tehran near his executed generals, named son Reza as his successor and prayed for the overthrow of the Ayatullah Khomeini."

A Central Intelligence Agency National Foreign Assessment Center Spot Commentary on the Shah's death noted that reaction in Iran had been "low key," although Tehran radio had reported that "the bloodsucker of the century has died." The Spot Commentary concluded: "The Iranians are unlikely to change their fundamental position on the hostages in reaction to the Shah's death. The hostages will remain pawns in Tehran's continuing power struggle." The report noted, however, that Iran's reactions might change depending on actions of the Shah's family and the exile opposition, prominent members of which gathered in Cairo. Some of the exile opposition "reportedly suggested that the Crown Prince name himself Shah. Such an announcement could aggravate tensions in Iran." On the Spot Commentary, an unknown hand wrote: "and in the U.S. since he is resident at Williams College." (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Briefing Book: The Shah Panama Jan–March 1980, Egypt Jan–July 1980, Vol. V) On October 31, from Cairo, on his 20th birthday, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi proclaimed himself Shah Reza II and called for an uprising against the current government. ("Son of the Shah Assumes the Title," *New York Times*, November 1, 1980, page 1; "New Shah Urges Revolt," *Chicago Tribune*, November 1, 1980, page S2)

327. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, July 29, 1980, 9:02–10:10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Iran

PARTICIPANTS

State

Warren Christopher

David Newsom

Harold Saunders

Treasury

G. William Miller

Robert Carswell

OSD

Frank Kramer

Justice

Benjamin Civiletti

John Shenefield

JCS

David Jones

DCI

Stansfield Turner

Office of the Vice President

Denis Clift

White House

David Aaron

Hedley Donovan

Lloyd Cutler

Jody Powell

NSC

Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

This meeting was intended as a general update of the situation in Iran and any outstanding issues in advance of the PRC on our Iran policy scheduled later in the week. The DCI opened the meeting with a general review of the hostages and the political situation. We cannot pinpoint the location of the hostages. Beheshti and the hardline Islamic militants are winning, while Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh are losing power. The DCI foresees a gradual drift toward civil strife, probably with no decisive outcome of the power struggle for some time. There is recent information that Admiral Madani may have gone underground with the Qashqais, which may portend the beginning of a dissident formation with some potential on the ground. Khomeini appears to be motivated by a hatred for President Carter, and there is a possibility that the hostages may be used to embarrass the President prior to the elections, possibly by some form of trials. The Department

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

of State is preparing a cable to nations throughout the world asking for an approach to the Tehran regime urging release of the hostages.² Mr. Christopher noted that many of the countries will make their own judgment about the timing of any *démarche*, and they may insist on waiting until a new government has been formally installed. (S)

Interest Sections

The FBI has been investigating the killing of Ali Tabatabai.³ Some lines run to the Iranian Interests Section of the Algerian Embassy in Washington. The FBI wishes to interview Mr. Sajadi, the Iranian national (but American resident alien) who runs the section. It appears this will be worked out. There were some mixed signals initially, and the Iranians thought we wished to close down the Interests Section and eject Mr. Sajadi. They threatened to retaliate by closing the U.S. Interests Section in Tehran. The State Department pointed out that the Iranian Interests Section in Washington is of greater importance to us (because it handles the myriad cases of Iranians in this country) than is the U.S. Interests Section in Tehran, which is primarily a convenience and an investment in the future. All agreed that if the FBI investigation develops solid information leading to the conclusion that the Iranian Interests Section was involved in the Tabatabai murder, we should act promptly to close it or take other appropriate action. The Attorney General will keep the SCC informed as the investigation proceeds. (S)

Iranian Students

The Attorney General reported on the deportation proceedings against Iranian students. Since the review of students was initiated on November 14, 370 Iranian students have either been deported or have chosen voluntary departure. A total of 9,000 students were found out of status. Proceedings are underway against all of them, but it is a slow process. 2,000 of this group have requested asylum, and their cases are pending. (U)

Of the approximately 160 Iranian students arrested over the week-end in connection with the pro- and anti-Khomeini demonstrations,

² The appeal is in telegram 202298 to all diplomatic and consular posts, August 6. It expresses particular concern that the allied nations urge Iran not to put the hostages on trial. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800366–0240) Responses from various countries are listed by country and telegram response number in an August 5 memorandum from Tarnoff to Brzezinski. Tarnoff informed Brzezinski that the general tone of responses was “supportive and sympathetic, but there is little in the way of specific suggestions or plans for action so far.” (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Group Demarches)

³ See Document 313.

about 80% were pro-Khomeini.⁴ Although a modest bail was set, the vast majority refused to identify themselves, and the judge ordered them to remain in jail until they presented proper identification. The failure to identify themselves may render them out of status and subject to deportation. The combination of this fact together with possible criminal prosecution in connection with the demonstration, may shorten the tortuous deportation process. All of the jailed Iranians have hired a U.S. lawyer to represent them. (C)

Iranian Claims Litigation

Justice is intervening as a “friend of the court” in a claims hearing against Iran in New York.⁵ Our objective is to persuade the court not to make judgment on the case because of its possible implications at a delicate moment in the hostage situation. Regardless of how the judge decides, it could complicate eventual negotiations for the hostages’ release. Mr. Christopher executed an affidavit last night and is prepared to testify in person if essential. The Attorney General does not favor using IEEPA to attempt to prevent the court from issuing a judgment in the case. He believes that such an effort would ultimately fail and would undermine the authority to use IEEPA in other areas. No decision on IEEPA is required until we see if the *amicus* approach is successful. (C)

[1 paragraph (5 lines) not declassified]

With regard to the assets of the former Shah, there is no way to determine the extent of his holdings in this country. Property and other assets can be held in forms which do not reflect identity of ownership. The Iranians have filed a claim in New York to retrieve these assets, but thus far they have been unable to figure out where to look. Mr. Aaron commented that we might wish to issue a public call for such information at some point if it appeared necessary as part of the hostage negotiations. (S)

⁴ Rival demonstrations in Washington on July 27 pitted pro-Khomeini groups against anti-Khomeini groups, including the Iran Freedom Foundation founded by Tabatabai. More demonstrations were held the next day. (Donald P. Baker, “Iranian Groups Clash in D.C.,” *Washington Post*, July 28, 1980, p. A1; Donald P. Baker and Donnel Nunes, “Jailed Iranian Demonstrators Face Possible Deportation,” *Washington Post*, July 29, 1980, p. B1)

⁵ In a July 25 memorandum to Christopher, Owen provided the pros and cons of renewed U.S. Government efforts to seek stays of the Iranian claims and assets cases pending in U.S. courts. (Department of State, Records of David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Subject Files, 1978–1981, Lot 81D154, Iran Claims/ Assets Litigations) Tim Deal provided Brzezinski with information on current lawsuits involving claims against Iran. (Memorandum dated July 24; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 101, Meetings File, 7/17/80 Ad Hoc Group re Iran)

328. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Deputy Director for the National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency (Clarke), and the Deputy Director for Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (McMahon)¹

Washington, July 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Policy Options: Iran

1. I have your respective submissions on possible policy options in Iran [*document numbers not declassified*] as requested by Dr. Brzezinski on 17 July.² First, we have to put this into context. We submitted a paper outlining possible policy options in Iran that we would be willing to develop for Brzezinski if he wanted.³ He responded by ignoring that general request but asking for papers on two specific areas. I'm afraid I don't think that either of the papers we have developed is fully responsive to his request for a survey of the options that are available to us. Such a survey really should include (as he asked for) both the costs and the benefits of these actions. [*portion marking not declassified*]

2. With respect to the DDO paper [*less than 1 line not declassified*] we really are primarily giving him an inventory of what we have done or will do. Much of this is fine, but what he wants to know is what we could do against either of these and what the costs and benefits would be. I think he really wants to help us. If we give him three or four covert actions that we could do [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and what they might produce at what risk, he might help sell those. In short, I think we should have a rather short paper on each which says that we can continue with the present kind of propaganda operations (and a list of those we have done and are planning to do as appended), but that we also could undertake more forceful actions against Khomeini. [*4 lines not declassified*]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1: C-372 Iran 01 Aug 80-31 Aug 80. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*].

² Brzezinski had asked Turner to provide him with two assessments. The first request was for a fresh look at the options and potential costs and benefits for an analysis of "covert and other pressures" [*text not declassified*] against Khomeini. The second request was for an evaluation of the "mining, blockade and other possible non-lethal options for intensifying pressure against Iran," including costs, benefits, and domestic and international reactions. (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Turner, July 17; *ibid.*)

³ The undated paper, "Possible Policy Options: Iran," is an itemized outline of possible U.S. relations options with the Khomeini regime and possible U.S. policy at the Shah's death. (*Ibid.*)

3. On the NFAC paper,⁴ it seems to me we have real trouble writing a pro and con paper—I think our analysts all belong in the policy end of the business! Perhaps the situation is absolutely as bleak as [*name not declassified*] paper makes out—that is, there simply is no benefit whatsoever to be had from any of the non-lethal military options. I frankly doubt that. I really would like to see us lay out both sides of the story, or otherwise we surely will be accused of being subtle advocates. For instance, mining of exports as well as imports will surely have some substantial financial impact. In the past, we have judged this to be insignificant because of all the money the Iranians have banked outside of the country. I think that analysis is a little overdone in view of the fact that it would certainly cause some short-term dislocations if their income was cut off. Beyond that, I sense from intelligence reports of late that the Iranians may be having greater financial problems than we thought they would. Another benefit, it seems to me, would be a demonstration of U.S. resolve. In fact, rather than being a sign of political maneuvering if such a move were executed on 5 November, it could be a clear sign of U.S. determination to solve this problem when there was no political gain to be had (all assuming that the President is re-elected, of course). Still another benefit, it would seem to me, would be a clear demonstration to the anti-Khomeini elements that the United States was basically behind them. Isn't there still a residue of suspicion in Iran that the United States has been behind Khomeini all along? Beyond this, I think we have stretched a little bit in some of the "anti" points just to be sure we make them. Let's pare the "con" down to those that are most important and realistic. Finally, I don't think we need our encyclopedia to review what everybody in the world is going to think about this. We've got to put our response in as succinct a form as possible if it is going to be useful. I'd appreciate your turning people loose on this quickly as I'd like to take a revised response down to Brzezinski on Wednesday, 30 July. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Stansfield Turner⁵

⁴ This July 25 paper, "Iran: US Non-Lethal Military Options," concluded that none of these options would lead to the release of the hostages. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1: C-372 Iran)

⁵ [*name not declassified*] signed above Turner's typed signature.

329. Message From the Swiss Chargé to Iran (Kaiser) to the Department of State¹

Tehran, July 30, 1980

Letter from U.S. Congressmen²

1) The delivery, which was delayed by the resignation of the chief of protocol, and which finally could be arranged by one of his deputies, took place last night at 7 p.m. Since Rafsanjani speaks only Persian and Arabic, I had taken along one of this Embassy's translators to the appointment. In accordance with State Department instructions,³ I stressed the independent initiative of the 187 congressmen, who had by no means acted on the orders of the Executive, and emphasized that the reader of this letter must become aware of the serious desire of these congressmen to end this crisis situation as quickly as possible and in a peaceful manner protecting the honor of all sides. Finally, I requested the speaker to bring the letter to the attention of all parliamentarians at the most suitable moment. After Rafsanjani had been read the content of the letter in Persian, he agreed to acquaint the Parliament with the text at a favorable opportunity,⁴ and then began a monologue lasting almost half an hour in answer of the letter. He then asked me to transmit this reaction to the congressmen.

Rafsanjani declared that if the U.S. Government were really interested in a peaceful solution, it would have had to take a much more

¹ Source: Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update Aug 1980. No classification marking. Attached to a July 31 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom.

² See Document 309.

³ In a July 8 message from the Department, the Swiss Embassy was instructed to share the contents of the letter with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh, and then deliver it to Sahabi. The Swiss Embassy was to tell Sahabi that the letter was a congressional initiative taken independently of the Executive branch and that the letter "describes a sincere desire on the part of the Congress to end the crisis with Iran as quickly as possible in a peaceful and honorable manner." (Message attached to a July 7 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update July 1980)

⁴ According to a July 31 message from Kaiser, Rafsanjani read the letter to the Majles July 30 but blocked a debate on its contents, promising that U.S.-Iranian relations would be debated soon. Kaiser reported that Rafsanjani told the *Tehran Times* that "these problems cannot be solved peacefully," and that in exchange for every step toward solution of the hostage crisis, the United States had to admit that its actions toward Iran had been "inhuman and that mistakes have been made." (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran Update August 1980)

sensible attitude. It had attempted numerous actions which had worsened the atmosphere constantly and widened the gulf between the two countries. He cited the following examples:

1. The freezing of Iranian assets in U.S. banks had been an illegal action. These assets derived from the sale of oil which had been concluded at low prices, about 1/10 of the actual value.

2. Also illegal is the blockage of delivery of spare parts for projects which had been forced on Iran in the first place, with a guaranty of ongoing supplies. Fortunately, in the meantime, Iran is in a position to make its way even without these, partly vital, spare parts.

3. He referred to the strong U.S. pressure on its satellite countries to join the economic boycott. But Iran can stand on its own feet and bravely withstand the effects of the economic boycott.

4. The military offensive in Iran (Tabas), of which there are still many details missing.⁵ This act could in no way be put in a favorable light before the eyes of the world.

5. The continued active support of the Shah before and after his overthrow and to the very end, and the support for the minions of his regime in Iran and abroad constitutes an unfriendly act towards the Iranian people.

6. Extensive propaganda activities in the whole world with the object of defaming the Iranian revolution. After all, it is obvious that the Iranian revolution must be considered the most humane revolution in recent times, marked by the spirit of mercy and forgiveness.

7. U.S. support for leftist groups active in Kurdistan, Khuzestan, Azerbaijan, and Turkestan trying to weaken the Iranian revolution, although supporting these groups can certainly not be in the interest of the Western World.

8. Active subversive propaganda by the Farsi service of the VOA with the goal of bringing about a military coup as planned by Bakhtiar and other accomplices of the Shah. General U.S. support of all those who are actively considering a coup.

9. Active American involvement in the recent abortive coup.⁶ This coup was the work of all counterrevolutionary groups (Bakhtiar/the Shah's people, etc.) as well as the United States and its mercenaries (Israel, among others). The names of those involved had been found in the U.S. Embassy. Only thanks to God's mercy and the vigilance of the people, this sinister attempt had failed.

⁵ Reference is to the rescue attempt.

⁶ See Document 313.

10. The U.S. Government is putting cruel and unjust pressure on faithful Islamic Iranian citizens who live in the the United States and are therefore guests of the country. The most recent example for this is the brutal attack by the police on the Islamic pro-Khomeini demonstrators in Washington, which Rafsanjani condemned publicly in Parliament. The day before, that same police force had tolerated the demonstration by the exiled criminals who had insulted Iran's "sacred leadership."

Returning to one of the basic arguments of the letter, Rafsanjani asked how an atmosphere of understanding could possibly be created in view of all that had happened in all these years and was still happening, and how could the Majlis understand it. Would it not have been better for the United States to fulfill at least the minimal demand of the Iranian people: the extradition of the corrupt Shah who had plundered the country. The trial of this felon would at least have helped soften the revolutionary anger. The non-extradition, however, was tantamount to a flagrant insult to the people and the government. Rafsanjani continued that it had not been wise that the United States had changed its motives vis-à-vis Iran. The U.S. was still dreaming, as in the past, of an Iran under its control and colonial yoke.

In order to achieve an improvement in the atmosphere between the two countries, it is necessary that the United States does everything in its power to heal the injustices of the past. However, if the United States does not change its attitude and the old unfriendliness and enmities are allowed to continue, how can the Iranian nation, which is so forgiving, forget all the mistakes of the past and the injustice it has suffered. With this, Rafsanjani concluded his comments.

2) Last night, after the ambassadors of the PLO, Lebanon, and Romania, it was my turn to talk with Rafsanjani. The President of the Iranian Parliament seems to be a very charming man. But in conversation or negotiations he clearly reveals himself as a hardliner of the Beheshti circle in the IRP.

His monologue listed routinely—and as if learned by heart from a catechism—the all too well-known charges vis-à-vis the U.S. His doctrinaire fixation on this question made any factual discussion of the matter, which was not sought by Rafsanjani anyway, appear hopeless. His entire disposition makes it unlikely that he could be the man who could or would at this point effectively preach understanding to the Majlis moving in the dangerous direction of possible clerical-fascist tendencies. Therefore it is most doubtful whether he should be entrusted with any more messages for the time being.

While I myself did not have an opportunity to mention the hostage problem (time for presentation), the Austrian Ambassador, who had delivered a letter of the President of the Austrian Parliament to Rafsan-

jani two days earlier, the main concern of which had been the hostage problem, told me that Rafsanjani had told him that the question would be submitted to Parliament soon. This will depend first of all on how long and with what consequences the domestic power struggle (prime minister and subsequent formation of a cabinet) will drag on.

Kaiser

330. Memorandum for the Record by the Chief of the Near East and South Asia Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (Cogan)¹

Washington, July 31, 1980

SUBJECT

President's Tasking of State Department for an Update on Options Being Developed in the Hostage Crisis Other than a Rescue Mission

1. You will recall that at a meeting at the Pentagon on 23 July the question of *[less than 1 line not declassified]* designed to create a means to infiltrate equipment and personnel into Iran, was discussed (see para 4 of the attached Spot Report). During the discussion Major General Vaught and Brigadier General Odom were informed that in CIA's view a policy-level decision was necessary to permit us to explore this possibility because if a meeting were to be arranged *[less than 1 line not declassified]* between *[less than 1 line not declassified]* the US Ambassador *[less than 1 line not declassified]* should be briefed. General Odom said he would seek such a policy decision.

2. We subsequently learned from General Odom that word had come back from the President that he did not approve exploring this option and that he wanted a review of everything that is being done in the way of planning a second rescue mission. However, in a follow-up conversation on 31 July, General Odom provided an important and quite different clarification of this matter. He explained that what had happened was that the President, rather than approving the *[less than 1 line not declassified]* proposal, had instead decided to task the State

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 14, Folder 1: C-372 Iran 01 June-31 July 1980. Secret; *[handling restriction not declassified]*.

Department for a complete review and update of all options being developed in the hostage crisis in areas *other* than a rescue mission.

Charles G. Cogan²

² Printed from a copy with Cogan's typed signature and an indication that he signed the original.

331. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, August 1, 1980, 9:10–10:36 a.m.

SUBJECT

Minutes of PRC Meeting on Iran (S)

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Edmund Muskie
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Under Secretary David Newsom
Assistant Secretary Harold Saunders
Ambassador Vanden Heuvel

Treasury

Robert Mundheim
William Anawaty

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown
Frank Kramer

Justice

John Shenefield
John Harmon

JCS

General David Jones
General John Pustay

DCI

Bruce Clarke
Robert Ames

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. In the upper right corner, Carter wrote: "Ed-Zbig, C."

White House
 Zbigniew Brzezinski
 David Aaron
 Hedley Donovan
 Lloyd Cutler
 NSC
 Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Secretary Muskie opened the meeting by reviewing for the PRC an options paper for an Iran strategy over the next two months (Tab B)² and a proposed memorandum to the President reporting the recommendations of the PRC.³ Some participants expressed doubt that the course of action would succeed in achieving the release of the hostages; however, all agreed that the strategy proposed was necessary as a first step toward developing the contacts and channels of communication required for further progress. After some minor revisions, the PRC unanimously recommended approval of the memorandum at Tab A. (C)

_____ Approve⁴ _____ As Amended

The bulk of the discussion related to the question of possible trials of the hostages. Dr. Brzezinski suggested that it may be useful to have a trusted intermediary on his own raise with or suggest to the Iranians a possible resolution of the crisis involving a swift trial and immediate expulsion of the hostages in no more than 48 hours. Although we should continue to stand by our public and private position of November 1979 that we would respond to trials by an interruption of Iranian commerce,⁵ we should also recognize that some form of trials may

² Tab B, an undated paper prepared in the Department of State, "Strategy for Iran—the Next Two Months," is attached but not printed. Tab B also included the U.S. Position Paper, Document 137. The undated paper summarized the May 8 strategy (see Documents 278 and 279) and listed developments since then. It also noted that "fanfare surrounding the alleged Bakhtiar-backed coup" had increased hostility toward the United States since Iran believed it had "detailed and convincing evidence" of U.S. support for Oveissi and Bakhtiar. The paper concluded that results of the May 8 strategy were limited because Iran was preoccupied with its own internal power struggle. The last half of the paper discussed future scenarios and U.S. options. (See footnote 8, Document 332) In a July 31 memorandum, Sick informed Brzezinski: "You do not need to read it." (Carter Library, Brzezinski Donated Material, Box 10) The CIA concurred with the paper's judgments but believed that it was "virtually certain" the Majles would opt for trials. (Undated memorandum by NESAs; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 18, Folder 9: PRC Meeting—1 Aug 80 Iran)

³ Tab A, the proposed memorandum, is printed as Document 332.

⁴ Carter approved this option with a checkmark and wrote "See Notes" in the right margin. Carter's notes on the memorandum are in the annotation to Document 332.

⁵ See Document 52.

prove unavoidable. We should provide a scenario which offers an alternative to an automatic U.S. military response and which provides the basis for a prior understanding that we could restrain our reaction for a brief period in order to resolve the crisis if there were assurances that a trial will be followed by release. (S)

Secretary Brown noted that prearrangements in the past had always come apart, and this kind of scenario would be no different. In his view, the most realistic course would be to leave our position of opposing all trials as it is. He felt that Beheshti and Khomeini are determined to bring down the U.S. government, and they would use the situation against us. Bruce Clarke commented that the Iranians would be able to agree on having real trials more easily and more quickly than they could agree on such a scenario. (S)

Mr. Cutler commented that the ICJ ruling forbids all trials involving the hostages,⁶ and he did not accept that the U.S. could sit still for trials of any nature. Since we would have to misrepresent our position, it was not an honorable course. The United States should never lie. (C)

Mr. Christopher also disagreed with the proposal on the grounds that it would suggest U.S. acquiescence in trials, thereby opening that issue to negotiation. It is also possible that the Iranians would lose control of the process and the scenario would get out of hand. Secretary Muskie commented that the Iranians would probably take our proposal and then escalate to a discussion of additional concessions they may want. If we have to offer some bait in advance to the Iranians, he would prefer consideration of monetary inducements or a carefully drafted apology of some sort rather than accepting trials. In any event, we lack a credible interlocutor in Tehran. (S)

Mr. Donovan disagreed with the notion of trials or an apology, on the grounds that it would promote hostage-taking elsewhere around the world. (S)

All agreed that this should be regarded as a preliminary discussion of possible alternate courses of action. The issues had not been examined sufficiently to permit any decision or recommendation. The nature of the discussion should be reported to the President for his information, and a small working group should examine in more detail the kinds of contingencies we may face suddenly and how we might deal with them. (S)

Mr. Cutler noted that we are progressively losing control of any ability to return the frozen assets. The court cases are proceeding and he believes we will not be able to stop a judgment. Mr. Shenefield commented that this issue was really a lawyers' discussion that had

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 286.

to be worked out among Cutler, Treasury and Justice. Dr. Brzezinski noted that it also affected our negotiating position on the hostages. (S)

332. Memorandum From Secretary of State Muskie to President Carter¹

Washington, August 1, 1980

SUBJECT

A Strategy for the New Phase in Iran

The Issue

The purpose of this memorandum is to report to you as Chairman of the PRC the views and recommendations from the PRC meeting on Iran.² A draft of this memo and the attached options paper ("Strategy for Iran—The Next Two Months") were circulated before the PRC as a basis for discussion.³

The purpose of this exercise is to establish a strategy for approaching the new situation in Iran which you have described—the functioning of the new parliament, the formation of a government, the focus of the parliament's attention on the hostage issue, Queen's release and the end of Ramadan. Some elements of this new situation already exist; others may come fully into play in a couple of weeks; still others may not jell for a month or more. The strategy discussed incorporates the steps you have already directed as well as other possible initiatives.

The attached options paper analyzes what we have done since you approved the last strategy paper early in May⁴ (pp. 1–5), the present trends in Iran (pp. 6–8), and the full range of options available to us

¹ Source: Carter Library, Plains File, Box 10. Secret; Sensitive. Brzezinski returned a copy of this memorandum to Muskie with Carter's marginalia. He informed Muskie that Carter's marginal notes were "on almost every page," conveying the President's feeling that the United States should be moving "more aggressively" on a "wide front." Brzezinski asked Muskie to let him know if he could be helpful in meeting Carter's requests. (Memorandum from Brzezinski to Muskie, August 5; Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1980–81)

² See Document 331.

³ See footnote 2, Document 331.

⁴ Document 279.

(pp. 10–17). Each of those options is argued in that paper and was considered by the PRC.

This memorandum explains my recommendation to the PRC that we broaden the immediate effort already begun with your telegram to friends around the world to probe the Iranian situation from every angle and generate approaches in light of this new situation urging the Iranians to resolve the crisis.⁵ As the results of those initial probes begin coming in, we will sharpen specific initiatives of our own, such as hostage family⁶ and Congressional contacts with the Iranians. Even before the results of those probes are in we can begin laying the foundation with possible family and Congressional groups while avoiding immediate public identification with them.

The discussion in the PRC, as you will see from the minutes, produced general agreement that we should begin by pursuing the course outlined in this memo. There was detailed discussion of such issues as how we might handle a trial situation as it arose, and it was agreed that this should be the subject—along with other specific ideas—of some follow-on work⁷ which will be done by a very small group for the next PRC meeting on this subject. The course of action outlined in this paper, in addition to introducing the new ideas mentioned above, is designed to develop a range of active approaches on which we could call as the situation in Tehran clarifies. It was agreed in the PRC that the work that we will next be doing will focus on refining further the ideas which we may have to put into such exchanges.

The Last Three Months and Where We Stand Now

The strategy you approved on May 8 was designed to broaden our channels and range of contacts in Tehran in preparation for the moment when the top Iranian authorities would be devising their approach to the parliament on the hostage issue. A number of exchanges took place with new contacts, but the internal power struggle so preoccupied the key figures that no one in Tehran in the end was able to give systematic thought to how they would manage the decision on the hostage issue with the new Iranian parliament.

The power struggle is now approaching one of its climaxes over the selection of the Prime Minister and his cabinet. Whatever the outcome, it is expected to signal a further weakening of Bani-Sadr and the moderates, and at least the temporary ascendancy of the clerics.

⁵ Presumably telegram 202298; see footnote 2, Document 327.

⁶ Carter underlined the words “hostage family” and wrote in the left margin: “Why wait?”

⁷ Carter underlined the words “follow-on work” and wrote in the left margin: “Expedite.”

The latter may well be even more intransigent on the hostage issue than the moderates; there is however at least a chance that their victory in this key phase of the ongoing struggle and their assumption of responsibility for the functioning of the government will lead them to want a final resolution of the hostage issue.

We believe there is an opportunity for new efforts to resolve the crisis. We have concluded that—after reviewing the six options identified in the attached study⁸—we should put together a new diplomatic effort, combined with family and Congressional initiatives.⁹ There is no assurance of success by this route, but given the fact that Khomeini has said the parliament would decide, it seems wise to act for the moment on the assumption that we have something new to work with and that we should pick the Iranians up on Khomeini's prescribed approach. We will be refining approaches for the specific further steps that we may want to consider in the next few weeks.

Elements of a Proposed Strategy

The main objective of the proposed strategy would be to try to encourage the new government to take control of the hostage issue as it is put before the Iranian parliament so as to assure to the extent possible that the parliament's decisions on the issue do not preclude a reasonable settlement.

In pursuing this objective, we would work on two parallel tracks:

—encouragement of private and Congressional initiatives to test the potential for a people-to-people approach such as you discussed with hostage wives¹⁰ and

—a series of approaches through diplomatic and private channels to key Iranians to establish a negotiating channel with the most powerful elements in the new government.

At the same time, we would try to generate renewed support from enough other quarters outside Iran to keep the Iranians alert to their stakes in resolving the crisis. During this period, we would continue—and would press our allies to continue—the economic and psychological pressures on Iran.

Hostage Families. As you instructed, I am discussing with the leaders of the hostage family organization ways in which they might propose

⁸ The options listed in the strategy paper were: 1) intensify support for opposition groups in order to destabilize Iran; 2) implement a blockade or mining of Iranian ports and make efforts to block air transport links; 3) intensify negotiations; 4) make a humanitarian appeal for release; 5) develop a response should Iran demand trials as part of a release scenario; and 6) put any U.S. initiatives on hold and wait for Iran to make the next move.

⁹ Carter wrote in the left margin beside this sentence: "I agree—move on it."

¹⁰ See Document 320.

a meeting with some Iranians. As they said to you, they are hesitant about going to Iran themselves, although it has to be recognized that this may be the only realistic way to arrange direct contact. We will be working out separately possible ways for them to conduct their own appeals and probes for possible contact which might open the door to the hostages being turned over to their families.

Congressional Initiative. We know that some Iranians have been interested for some time in the possibility of a meeting involving members of our Congress and the Iranian parliament. We could approach members whom we know interest the Iranians and encourage them to try to arrange such a meeting. We understand that Senators Stevenson and Bellmon¹¹ have been considering the idea, and they might be an appropriate nucleus for a small group. We would have to tell them that we would publicly distance ourselves from their effort to increase the likelihood of its acceptability in Tehran and its independence of the Executive. Their first objective might be to arrange a meeting with counterparts simply to explore how issues between Iran and the United States might be worked out. They might go prepared to agree—in the context of an understanding on a scenario for the release of the hostages—that hearings would be held in the U.S. examining Iran’s grievances and past U.S. involvement in Iran. From our perspective, it would be more desirable for them to trade the commitment to hearings for release of the hostages than to agree that the report on the hearings would be issued concurrent with the release.¹²

The advantage of both the Congressional and the hostage family initiatives is that both provide independent mechanisms for dealing with the hostage situation which would be available should Khomeini decide the time is right for release. They could be complemented by exchanges between our two governments to the extent that would be necessary to lend credibility to these non-Executive initiatives and to provide a channel for working out arrangements for such steps as unfreezing blocked assets.

A Proposed Scenario

We have divided our proposed scenario, somewhat arbitrarily, into three steps. The further approaches under Step #1—some of which have already begun at your direction—would be taken at an early date, once it becomes more probable that the formation of a new government is underway. This is a stage of probing and exploration designed to

¹¹ Senator Adlai Stevenson III (D-Illinois) and Senator Henry L. Bellmon (R-Oklahoma)

¹² Carter wrote in the left margin beside this paragraph: “All of this should be pursued aggressively & without delay.”

give us a wide and immediate picture of what is possible in Tehran. We will assess the results of those probes as they come in to determine how to shape follow-on approaches. Those approaches under Steps 2 and 3—outlined below as illustrative of the kinds of moves we could make—would likely follow the actual formation of the government and our assessment, as the information from the first probes becomes available, of the best way to approach key individual leaders in the government and the new parliament.

Step #1. As a first step, we would continue immediately to encourage a new series of approaches to key Iranian officials, i.e., the new Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, Beheshti and other leaders of the religious party, and Bani-Sadr. Specifically, we would instruct the following approaches:

—The telegram that you have already directed¹³ instructs approaches to *EC-9 members* to ask them, now that the formation of a new government may be near, to reconsider a statement of their own along the lines of their Middle East statement¹⁴ and sending an emissary or a message to Tehran. We laid the groundwork for this approach in June by asking the EC to study such an approach. They replied that they were prepared to consider such an approach but did not feel the time was ripe in early July. We agreed. The advantage of our June approach is that they have now done their homework and should be prepared to move quickly at the right moment.

—Also via the telegram you directed, we would approach *key governments represented in Tehran, important members of the Islamic Conference, and other Europeans* and ask them either to make direct approaches in Tehran or to make public statements appealing to the authorities in Tehran. The substance of these approaches would be an appeal to the Iranian government to take advantage of the convergence of the formation of the new government, the end of Ramadan, the death of the Shah, humanitarian concerns generated by Richard Queen's illness and release to bring an end to the hostage crisis.

—Ask *Kreisky* and his Socialist International group to consider an approach of their own either by going back to Tehran to visit the new leadership or by sending a message to the new leadership.

—Urge both *Waldheim and the President of the UNGA* (if we can manage this without offending Waldheim) to establish either direct or indirect contact with both the new Foreign Minister and Beheshti (Waldheim) and the leadership of the parliament (UNGA President). The substance of the approach would be much the same as that described above. The appeal might not have all that much effect, but it might have some freshness for officials who have not been previously

¹³ Presumably telegram 213548, August 12. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 8/80)

¹⁴ The EC-9 issued the "Venice Declaration" on June 13, establishing an independent European policy toward the Arab-Israeli dispute. The full text is in the *New York Times*, June 14, 1980, p. 4.

involved with the UN. Waldheim might explore whether the return to Iran of a member of the UN Commission or some other unpublicized emissary from him might be useful.

—We might again approach *Agha Shahi* and *Habib Chatti* as leaders in the Islamic Conference and members of the Standing Committee on Afghanistan, urging them to make a special approach urging the Iranians to put the hostage crisis behind them in order to be able to concentrate on the Soviet threat from Afghanistan.

—Ask the *Algerian Government* to instruct its Ambassador in Tehran to make his own probes, particularly among the religious leadership, to provide us with analysis of what the demands and objectives of that leadership are with regard to resolving the hostage crisis. In asking the Algerians to make this approach, we would probably have to provide them with a short statement of our own position so that they could have that to draw on in their conversations. Such a statement would be drawn from the position paper which you approved in November and reconfirmed in January.¹⁵ The Algerians might even raise the question of whether the Conference earlier discussed by them with the Swiss chaired by the two of them or other neutrals might be useful in bringing Iranians and Americans together to resolve bilateral issues which will have to be dealt with when the hostage issue is resolved.

—We would crank up *private individuals* such as Richard Cottam here in the U.S. or Bourguet and Villalon in Paris to make whatever contacts they could. We would particularly ask Cottam to try to open a channel to Beheshti.

—We would inform the Swiss of what we are doing but reserve them for the next step.¹⁶

Step #2. Following relatively soon after we have some feedback from the above approaches, we would launch approaches of our own by sending direct messages to key figures in Iran. These messages would as much as possible take advantage of the efforts of intermediaries during Step #1 to determine how a resolution of the crisis might be shaped. These messages might include:

—A letter from me to the new Foreign Minister through the Swiss stating readiness for discreet exchanges or discussions through an agreed channel in order to manage an acceptable conclusion to the crisis. This could include our positions on key issues.

—The hostage families have just sent via a visiting minister a letter to Ahmad Khomeini. They could send a follow-on message either to Ahmad Khomeini or to Beheshti or perhaps copies to both introducing the idea of contact between the hostage families and an appropriate Iranian group, and possibly a visit by a family delegation to Iran. This would follow through on your conversation with Mrs. Keough and Mrs. Kennedy, which I am further exploring with them.

¹⁵ See Document 137.

¹⁶ In the left margin, Carter wrote: "There is no reason for delay on doing all of these things. They are not mutually incompatible."

—We might work out a direct message to Beheshti from a private or Congressional group to be delivered by the Algerian Ambassador or through their own contacts. One purpose of approaching Beheshti through the Algerian Ambassador would be to try to determine the basis for Beheshti's participation in an agreed final solution.

—A letter from Members of our Congress has been delivered to the new President of the Iranian parliament by the Swiss Chargé and he has reacted substantively.¹⁷ There might be a role for a more pointed Congressional message to him or to other members of the Iranian parliament. Once we have gauged Iranian receptivity, we might consider proposing to the Congressional leadership a bipartisan Congressional delegation to visit Tehran to seek the release of the hostages from the parliament. The delegation, as noted above, would presumably be in a position to assure an appropriate Congressional investigation of U.S.-Iranian relations once the hostages are released.¹⁸

—It is also possible in addition to the private approaches described above to make a substantive public statement at an appropriate moment. A written message to an individual may not be sufficiently dramatic or may not be politically useful in the Tehran context to catch the attention of the Iranians or to develop a situation in which those who want to resolve the crisis can proceed. We have hesitated to make public statements which would fall on deaf ears in Tehran, but if we thought the time was right we might say something about our policies toward Iran after the release of the hostages. Now that the Shah is dead, a statement incorporating our position that we will not stand in the way of Iranians who wish to seek assets in this country might have a political impact.

Step #3. As these various approaches progress, our purpose would be to narrow the field and to identify a target in Tehran for a negotiating effort and to identify the best channel for communicating with that individual or group. Depending on responses to our more general approaches, our purpose at this stage would be to introduce a specific package on which the Iranians could focus and which could become the basis of a negotiation. We would try to design the approach and the package in such a way as to include a suggestion for the Iranians on how the hostage issue might be presented to the parliament. Our staff work will continue in a very small group to develop short papers on each of the main elements of a possible package so we will be ready to move promptly.¹⁹

In proceeding through these steps, we would start with the position paper which you approved early in the crisis and which we have used

¹⁷ See Documents 309 and 329.

¹⁸ In the left margin beside these paragraphs, Carter wrote: "Draft these now. Have them ready."

¹⁹ In the left margin beside this paragraph, Carter wrote: "Ok—Get Bill [Miller] & Lloyd [Cutler] to help."

repeatedly throughout (attached).²⁰ We will weave that into messages we send ourselves as well as trying certain language which might encourage the Iranians to open a dialogue.

Hostage Trials

In addition to the above, we will have to prepare ourselves to deal with what may be the increasing likelihood that there will be trials of some kind.

We are on record as telling the Iranians in November privately and in December through the press that we will interrupt their commerce if any of the hostages are tried.²¹ We have also gained the ruling of the International Court of Justice that the hostages may not be subjected to trial. There is the grave danger that we have worried about continuously that even a trial which started out as a show trial could turn into one which would jeopardize the safety or even the lives of some of the hostages.

Against that background, we will continue to do everything we can to discourage trials of any kind, but it is possible that we will at some point have to consider the possibility of accepting a scenario in which some sort of trial/pardon element is introduced. Clearly there would be risks in any such situation, but we will be developing a separate paper in order to help think through ways in which we might manage such a situation so as to build in the maximum number of safeguards.²²

The Hostages

We have used every opportunity to keep open the possibility of a medical or humanitarian visit to the hostages, but these approaches have been flatly rebuffed since the rescue mission. At the moment of a new diplomatic initiative, it seems to me that we should concentrate our energies and those of the Iranians on release of the hostages rather than settling for a visit to them.

Meanwhile, extensive efforts by the Agency and our Iran Working Group continue in an effort to locate the hostages. As you know, Richard Queen's account tended to confirm both that some of the hostages remain in the Embassy and that a number of them had been moved away from the compound, either elsewhere in Tehran or out-

²⁰ See footnote 15, above.

²¹ See Document 52. The White House issued a statement on trials on December 18. See footnote 9, Document 104.

²² In the left margin beside the two previous paragraphs, Carter wrote: "We should remind UN, Western friends & others of our earlier statements. Don't wait until we face the trials. *Prevention* of them is what we want."

side. While we have indications of where some of them might be, we still cannot be sure where they are at any given moment since we suspect they may be moved around periodically.²³

Public Affairs Strategy

It will be crucial for the Administration to enlist the support of the American people for its strategy.

I believe that it will be possible to mount an effective defense of this strategy in the weeks to come, but we need an agreed and consistent position that will be used by all members of your administration who speak about it publicly. It will be important to stress that our overriding objective in dealing with Iran remains the release of the hostages while protecting this nation's honor. There is a new situation in Iran (formation of a new government, death of the Shah, release of Queen, establishment of the parliament, end of Ramadan) which should be analyzed and explained by Administration spokesmen. It should then be possible for us to outline in general terms our strategy for pursuing the matter without holding out false hopes for an early resolution—and without identifying ourselves with family and Congressional initiatives which depend for their success on remaining independent of us. The problem in dealing with the Iranian authorities and terrorists should also be frankly stated.

The rescue attempt has, I believe, made it less likely that you will be criticized for not taking further military action to try to free the hostages. If you are criticized for failing to take strong enough measures to obtain the hostages' release, I believe that we are in a strong position to challenge the detractors of our policy to come up with alternatives that will produce safe and early release of the hostages. We can emphasize that our purpose is the return of the hostages with honor. We will not act in irresponsible ways. Any attempt to use this issue for partisan advantage would be irresponsible.

I believe that you will continue to enjoy the private and public support of the hostage families if you adopt the strategy that I outlined.

Recommendation:

That you approve the strategy outlined above as the framework within which we will work in the weeks ahead with the understanding that we will continue to refine each of the steps on a contingency basis and as we begin to hear responses to our approaches.²⁴

²³ In the left margin beside this paragraph, Carter wrote: "Keep up PR re hostage abuse & lack of accountability for them."

²⁴ Carter approved the strategy with a checkmark and wrote at the bottom of the page: "Put this *now* into action. Give me a plan—step-by-step with dates, for implementation."

333. Paper Prepared by the Head of the Iran Working Group,
Department of State (Saunders)¹

Washington, undated

PAPERS NOW IN TRAIN

In the light of the emerging situation in Tehran and following Friday's PRC meeting² we have set for ourselves the following work agenda for the next few days in order to refine our approaches to the main openings we may have to deal with:

—Bob Owen and I have reviewed with our colleagues the work on *claims settlement* that was done back in February, and Bob is now developing a series of position papers which would each include three elements: a simple statement of our position as it could be conveyed to the Iranians; a layman's explanation of the position which could be used as argument in a negotiation; whatever more detailed legal or technical material might be necessary as back-up in coordinating the positions of State, Justice, Treasury and NSC. The series of position papers would lead from an optimal settlement to our bottom-line fallback.

—A second series of papers in similar format would deal with responses on the *Shah's assets*, whatever they may be.

—We will develop the *strategy options for dealing with hostage trials* along the lines discussed in the PRC. This paper would discuss our broader options in response to the possibility of trials.

—As a more specialized paper in conjunction with the paper on trials, Bob would review the extensive work done during the winter and develop a paper on the question of providing *counsel for the hostages* if there are trials.

—We are working with Brian Atwood and colleagues on a paper dealing with the *shape of possible Congressional initiatives*. In addition to the Congressional letter which has already been delivered and Rafsanjani's response,³ there are glimmers of other possible moves involving members of Congress, and we will be developing our own thoughts

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 8/80. Secret; Sensitive. Attached to an August 3 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom.

² See Document 331.

³ See Documents 309 and 329.

in following through on the memo which you sent to the President after the PRC.⁴

—We will provide a draft of a *possible statement covering the past US role in Iran* to see what range of choice we have in formulations that might meet the Iranian demand for “apology” in ways consistent with US dignity.

—We will also have a draft of a *message to the new foreign minister* from you for consideration.

Pending a decision on a comprehensive Congressional strategy, we believe we should carefully consider following up Rafsanjani’s reaction to the letter from 187 Congressmen. His comments to the press indicated there might be an opening there, and we recommend sending Swiss Chargé Kaiser back to see Rafsanjani with comments on his remarks and some further hints of the desirability of dialogue with the Congress. If you approve this approach, we would brief Congressmen Hamilton and Gilman⁵ on Rafsanjani’s response through the Swiss which you read Friday. We would then discuss with them the possibility of their sending an oral response to keep the channel open. We have developed a draft response (attached)⁶ to give the Congressmen an idea of what we have in mind. Rafsanjani’s reaction to this second approach would give us a somewhat better idea of the kind of man who we are dealing with as a member of the Iranian Parliament and could then provide a basis for deciding whether and when to try for a meeting.

Approve approach to Hamilton/Gilman⁷ _____

Other _____

⁴ See Document 332.

⁵ Congressman Lee Hamilton (D–Indiana) and Congressman Benjamin A. Gilman (R–New York).

⁶ Attached but not printed.

⁷ There is no indication that Muskie approved this approach.

334. Handwritten Note From President Carter to Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, August 1, 1980

To Stan Turner:

It is difficult for me to understand why we have so *little* information about the whereabouts & conditions of our hostages.

What can we do about it?²

J.C.

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1. Private. The editor transcribed the text from the handwritten original.

² Turner met with Carter on August 28 to brief him on the hostage situation. Turner “certainly got the impression that he wasn’t as upset about this as we might have been led to believe.” (Memorandum for the Record, August 29; Central Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 15, Folder 49: DCI Memrecs/Memos/Agendas of Presidential Briefings January–December 1980)

335. Memorandum From the Commander of the Joint Task Force (Vaught) to the Director of the Joint Staff Hanson and Service Operations Deputies¹

Washington, August 5, 1980

SUBJECT

SNOWBIRD Training and Preparation Program (TS)

1. (TS) *General*: Operation SNOWBIRD, the planning and preparation of a joint task force to accomplish the rescue of the American

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–07–0002, Records of J–3 DDSO, Box 3, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, binder JTF Capability Review. Top Secret. The 15 enclosures are attached but not printed.

hostages in Iran was tasked to the undersigned by competent civil authority on 26 April, 1980. In order to provide the best chance of securing operational security, a cover operation involving DRE was approved on 23 May 80 and briefed to JCS on 3 June. Training and preparation for SNOWBIRD was placed under the cover operations, HONEY BADGER and ICE BOX. Since definitive intelligence has not been available, it was necessary for the Joint Task Force to design a number of possible options and train a wide spectrum of forces. To date, these forces include 2,477 personnel and 136 various aircraft. Most of these forces were incorporated into a July 80 training program that was briefed to the Service OPSDEPS on 2 July. This document recapitulates the major training events, lessons learned, costs and future needs to provide a reasonable assurance of future SNOWBIRD success. The HONEY BADGER exercises incorporated many of the training and validation tasks that had to be accomplished to prepare the Joint Task Force to execute SNOWBIRD Options One through Eight.² ICE BOX activity was to evaluate the feasibility of Option Nine.³ Before and during the July training, a number of increased aviation and communications capabilities were attained, a number of techniques were developed and a number of force deficiencies identified. These deficiencies are incorporated into the overall future training program. An additional, separate activity was the coordination and planning for Option VII and VIII, the use of commercial or USN ships as launch platforms. Finally, this document includes conclusions and recommendations concerning future actions for SNOWBIRD and Special Operations in general.

[Omitted here is a description of Honey Badger and Ice Box, with projected costs.]

9. (TS) *Conclusions:* (See Inclosure 14). Due to the lack of definitive intelligence, approval for the use of launch bases, the absence of an existing means to infiltrate the release force and the lack of total force proficiency, it is not possible to execute the SNOWBIRD mission at

² Explained in enclosure 1, "HB Training Tasks."

³ Option IX envisioned "the clandestine penetration of hostile airspace, the surprise, night-time, air-landed seizure of an airfield, the landing of an extraction force composed of light helicopters, hostage evacuation and finally, force extraction. The concept was first conceived by the Joint Task Force Commander in June" and focused on acquiring and training an LOH (light observation helicopter) unit.

this time. Progress will be paced by intelligence production, but is also dependent on procurement and training. It is believed that launch bases can be obtained, given approval to seek the necessary authority. Force proficiency must be maintained and improved or a substantial delay in mission execution will occur should it be ordered. Currently it is believed that the mission could be executed within three weeks given the requisite intelligence. Although compromise of the mission through continued training and procurement activity is possible, there is no known disabling compromise to date.

The JTF staff of 32 personnel is inadequate to handle a number of administrative tasks such as budgeting, since operational functions must have the priority. Should additional administrative requirements be levied, an augmentation of both personnel and working space would be required. The current relationship with the CIA is unsatisfactory but a practical solution has been reached to support the mission. Currently, SNOWBIRD IX, the LOH option, is considered to be the most probable and is thus being used as a model for force structure and equipment decisions. Option X, designed for multiple, dispersed targets may be more appropriate and is currently under consideration as a model.

[Omitted here is material on JTF achievements and CTJTF.]

In the final analysis, it must be concluded that the United States is ill-prepared to conduct any sort of Special Operation. The Army has subjected its Special Operations forces to a 70% reduction from their pre-Vietnam level. A further cut of 10% is forecasted for FY 81. The Air Force has cut its Special Operations forces by 75% during the same period. CIA apparently stands without either the Special Operations personnel or funds to support sizeable clandestine, military endeavors. Currently, almost any unprogrammed CIA action activity has to be approved by seven committees of Congress. Special Operations has been an unhealed casualty of the Vietnam war. The events of the last year have clearly indicated that immediate remedial action is essential. The JTF has accomplished much but the continued lack of an adequate national Special Operations capability may well plague the United States in the future.

10. (TS) *Recommendations:* (See Inclosure 15). It is recommended that the JTF be provided with \$34.3 million to fund SNOWBIRD activities through 30 Sep 80. It is also requested that JCS press the intelligence community to use all available resources to fulfill outstanding SNOWBIRD requirements. In order to secure authority and essential information concerning a launch base, it is recommended that the JCS approve a JTF approach to the [2 lines not declassified]. It is further recommended that the JTF be dissolved between 1 and 15 November and the SNOWBIRD mission passed to the CTJTF. In order to capture experience and properly brief the new commander and staff, it is recommended that

the CTJTF commander and staff be phased in beginning on 15 August, participate in the JTF training during September and assume the SNOWBIRD mission on 1 November 80.

In order to further define the JTF relationship with other organizations, it is requested that the OPSDEPS consider providing guidance as to a continuation or revision of JTF coordination with both the Department of State and the J-5 of the OJCS. Heretofore, the [2 lines not declassified]. Additionally, the JTF has been restricted in its coordination with J-5.

Finally, it is recommended that the OPSDEPS consider actions to improve the national capability to conduct Special Operations. The DJS could be requested to task OJCS to identify specific deficiencies in the CIA's ability to support the armed forces in clandestine operations and make specific remedial recommendations. This action could be forwarded to the NSC by the JCS on or before 1 November 1980. The OJCS might also be tasked to identify the necessary actions to expand and improve our military Special Operations capabilities by 1 October 1980. This action could be presented to the Secretary of Defense by the JCS by 30 October 1980.

James B. Vaught
Major General, USA

336. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, August 6, 1980

MEETING WITH SARESHTAHDARZADEH MOHSTOFI
(SHAHPAR)

FROM: WILLIAM G. MILLER

Mr. Shahpar called this morning saying that he wanted to see me as soon as possible because he had word from Shapur Bakhtiar, Mr. Ebdehaj and others. I met him at lunch. He said that Bakhtiar, Oveissi, General Jam, Nazih, the Saudi government, and to some extent the Iraqi government, were looking for United States approval and assistance. I asked what he meant by approval and assistance. He said that the situation in Iran was deteriorating daily and that unless action is taken soon, events will force Iran into the Soviet orbit. He says that one in five of all the military in Iran are under the influence of the "Communists". I said, did he have evidence that the Soviet or Tudeh party were active. He said that the Tudeh party is bitterly opposed by the Khomeini government and the Soviet Union is distrusted by almost all Iranians. He said, however, that the borders are wide open. Infiltration by Persian speaking Soviets is occurring and although his information is that there are not large numbers, there could be. His concern about the "Communists" is that they are better organized than any other group. By the "Communists" he means the Tudeh cells and the leftist groups within the Fedayeen. He said that there was no coup; that he knew personally that none of the Iranian groups had supported a coup; and that in fact it was a device by the Khomeini government to curb and crush opposition groups. He said that a number of his own relatives had been killed.

I asked about the relations between Bakhtiar, Oveissi and the other major exile groups. He said that they were in communications with one another but that all agreed that only the military groups who were in Iran were about to do anything. That politicians like Bakhtiar could talk on the outside but that the only real action could come from military groups within Iran. He said that the groups opposed to Khomeini had the capacity now to take over all of Southern Iran, including Khuzistan. He said that the Ayatollahs Shariat Madari, Qomi, and Khoei, and one other, whose name I missed, were in contact with the outside groups, although they were under house arrest. Khoei is in Iraq. He said that Boyer-Ahmadi had 20,000 troops armed with guns. The Qashqai had

¹ Source: Department of State, INR/IL Historical Records, Iran 1980. Top Secret.

40,000, and they were all good fighters with weapons. He said that for all practical purposes, southern Iran is in their control should they choose to exact [*attack?*] it, but they would need ammunition and anti-tank weapons to hold the area. He said that he was prepared to detail the names and groups of the military in Iran who would be involved. He said that the main contact for military matters outside of Iran is the present Khomeini military attaché in Iran, an Air Force colonel named Reziani (phonetic). He had a list of names which he wanted to give me but I did not take it. He said that he was prepared to arrange for contact with all of these groups.²

² Shahpar also met with Sick on August 26. Sick, who found Shahpar “interesting,” noted that Shahpar’s plan was to use the Crown Prince as a figurehead around whom the people could rally based on his assessment that Bakhtiar was “getting nowhere and Oveissi was hopeless (‘He wants to make a coup through the newspapers.’)” [*text not declassified*] (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, August 26; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 42, Subject File, Iran Papers 8/80–12/80)

337. Memorandum From Fritz Ermarth and Marshall Bremont of the National Security Council Staff to the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) and the President’s Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Aaron)¹

Washington, August 8, 1980

SUBJECT

Exploiting the Soviet Threat to Iran

We believe it would be useful to launch a concerted political-diplomatic campaign aimed at heightening attention to the Soviet threat to Iran. Such an effort was made in the Spring with NATO allies. This time a broader effort, perhaps at some point including pointed warning

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 65, Outside the System File, Iran Non-Meetings Hostage Crisis 4/80–11/80. Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. A stamped notation in the upper right corner of the memorandum reads: “ZB has seen.”

to the Soviets, should be considered. The attached paper² outlines the rationale and structure of the kind of effort we have in mind. Although this notion was triggered by the recent Soviet exercises,³ we would have to be careful to protect the sources involved when developing our threat story. (S)

It is time, in any case, for intelligence to do a basic and prompt reassessment of Soviet intentions and capabilities toward Iran. Materials for use with allies and other audiences can readily be spun off. (S)

From a foreign policy point of view, this kind of effort is definitely needed, especially in the post-Olympics period, to keep pressures for drifting back to “business as usual” under control. Although we think this unlikely, it could interfere with the President’s effort to give a balanced view of his foreign policy during the campaign. On balance, we are inclined to believe that, as in most cases, here good foreign policy makes good domestic politics.⁴ (S)

² Attached but not printed. The undated paper is titled “Campaign to Exploit Soviet Military Preparations Against Iran.”

³ According to an August 2 CIA brief, the Soviet Union had carried out a command post exercise in the Transcaucasus Military District in the last week of July. This exercise was the first simulated ground and air operation against Iran since the overthrow of the Shah. The exercise posited Iran as the primary enemy and included the rapid movement of troops across Iran, the use of air power, and the contingency use of tactical nuclear weapons. The objective of the scenario was the Persian Gulf area. On August 6, a CIA brief reported that a second command post exercise simulating a Soviet invasion of Iran had occurred. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00401R: Subject Files of the Presidential Briefing Coordinator, Box 8)

⁴ At the bottom of the page, Brzezinski wrote: “I agree. Give me implementing memo. What about the command exercise? Can we let the Iranians know somehow *via* the Turks or Paks? ZB.”

338. Memorandum From the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia (Ames) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner and the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

NFAC 5634-80

Washington, August 12, 1980

SUBJECT

Iran—Hostages, Options, Etc.

1. *Action Requested:* None; the following is for your information. [portion marking not declassified]

2. *Background:* As I begin my third year as NIO/NESA (or end my second) I have forwarded to you a series of papers that looked at areas of concern, principally the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab-Israeli issue. Nothing has taken more of my time during this period, however, than the problem of Iran. It was my baptism and, I fear, will be my cross as long as I have this job. I have saved my comments on Iran until last because I have no quick fix advice and as I review options and scenarios there is an aching feeling of *deja vu*. I believe it might be useful to outline for you some of my bottom line thinking based on two years' intimate relationship with both sides of this problem: the analytical and the covert/operational. [portion marking not declassified]

3. The question of options is the one that is and has been the most frustrating. Can anything we *do* obtain the release of the hostages and save Iran from a chaotic fall into the radical/leftist camp? As an activist by nature, I cannot accept that we just monitor the events and make moves when we see an opening.² This is the State view and is accompanied by keeping the channels of dialogue open. Although this may have *some* value in the hostage issue, it does nothing to address the long term political problem. [portion marking not declassified]

4. [9 lines not declassified]

[5 paragraphs (31 lines) not declassified]

Robert C. Ames

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1. Secret. Sent through Clarke. A note on the transmittal sheet indicates that Turner saw the memorandum and that a meeting on Iran took place on Monday, August 18. No other record of the meeting has been found.

² In the left margin beside this paragraph, Turner wrote: "Plan 1."

339. Action Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Saunders) to Acting Secretary of State Christopher

Washington, August 13, 1980

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 38, Subject File, Iran Hostage Negotiations 8/80. Secret. 3 pages not declassified.]

340. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 13, 1980

SUBJECT

Soviet Military Threat to Iran

Yesterday senior intelligence and policy officials reviewed the accumulating data on Soviet military preparations for operations into Iran. The consensus, which I share, is that the Soviets are *not* now readying an attack that is only days or weeks away. But they are methodically preparing their forces and contingency plans for a very ambitious offensive toward the Persian Gulf. At a time of their own choosing during the months ahead, they could unleash this offensive after some 3–4 weeks observable mobilization. (TS)

[1 paragraph (10 lines) not declassified]

What all this means for us is, first, that the scope of Soviet planning envisions military aggression against Iran would be very farreaching and very threatening to us; and second, that the palpable threat of such aggression could materialize much more rapidly than our current force improvement and contingency plans appear to allow for. We have, over the past several months, moved in a positive manner to meet the threat of Soviet aggression. In light of the most recent evidence, however, we must, in all probability, considerably accelerate our political and military measures to deter such a Soviet move. (TS)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 33, Subject File, Iran 8/80. Top Secret; Sensitive; Codeword. Carter initialed "C" in the upper right corner.

Because the Soviet threat to Iran is serious, but not immediate, (i.e., we see no troop mobilization evidencing preparation to attack within weeks), I have scheduled consideration of current developments next week. Ed and Harold are being appropriately briefed by their staffs. We must do our utmost to prevent leaks of this intelligence until we develop purposeful schemes for acting on it; a "war scare" that could fade after a few weeks would be very damaging, especially with allies and our own public. (TS)

The next order of business is to prepare options for speeding up our deterrent military preparations, for accelerating cooperation with allies and regional friends, and for dealing with the Soviets. Following SCC review, such plans will be presented to you for approval. (TS)

341. Message From the Joint Chiefs of Staff Intelligence Directorate (J-2) Snowbird to the Deputy Director for Operations, Near Eastern Affairs, Iran Task Force, Central Intelligence Agency¹

J3 0288

Washington, August 13, 1980, 2020Z

SUBJ

60-90 Day Situation Projection

REF

A. JCS/Snowbird/J2 Cite 0274

B. JCS/Snowbird/J2 NBR 065²

1. (TS) Messages cited above provided JTF assessment of hostage locations based on data datelined as of 18 Jun through 31 July 1980. Recent political events in Iran and CONUS plus renewed reports of the possibility of hostage trials warrant a reexamination of the situation and the dissemination of a 60-90 day events projection. This message provides such an assessment.

2. (S) A major goal of Khomeini is to establish a pure Islamic government devoid of Western influence and at the same time humiliate the United States, obtain U.S. acknowledgement of its "sins" during

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 2, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, B270-280 Intelligence Assessment. Top Secret.

² Neither found.

the regime of the Shah, and punish the U.S. President who protected the Shah (an avowed target of Khomeini's hate). The protraction of the hostage situation achieves some of these objectives specifically; humiliation of USG, and punishment of the President by theoretically reducing his potential for reelection.

3. (C) Based upon ongoing events in Iran, such as the continuing purge of military and political leaders with Western backgrounds, increasing control by IRP, and selection of IRP Islamic hardliner as Prime Minister it is clear that secular (moderate) influence is declining as the power of the hardliner and clerics rises. These influences are not likely to assist in obtaining a political solution to the hostage situation.

4. (TS) Based upon the foregoing the following projection of events is provided for planning purposes.

(A) No hostages will be released prior to U.S. Presidential elections unless USG meets Iranian demands or another hostage medical problem occurs.

(B) Reporting on possible trials will increase, but actual trials of individuals is unlikely although a "grand jury style" of indictment proceedings is possible.

(C) Tempo of activity will pickup with the approach of U.S. elections, reaching a peak in mid-late October.

(D) If President Carter loses the election, Khomeini thru the Majlis may direct the incremental release of most of the hostages, retaining some number (5–10) as spies and war criminals, hoping to obtain concessions from the new President in January. However, if President Carter were to be reelected it is extremely doubtful that any of the hostages would be released without significant concessions by the USG.

5. (TS) In summary, the current JTF analysis is that no breakthrough is likely prior to the U.S. Presidential elections and knowledge of actual locations will continue to be extremely restricted while extensive deception actions will continue to be employed.³

³ According to message 0293, August 14, Vaught agreed with this assessment but estimated a 50 percent likelihood of individual hostage trials and incremental release of hostages before the election. Trials would make the location of some hostages available. He added: "A concerted [*less than 1 line not declassified*] collection program in Iran remains the 'sine qua non' for a successful rescue operation." (Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218–07–0002, Records of J–3 DDSO, Box 2, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979–1984, B270–280 Intelligence Assessment)

342. Memorandum From Acting Director of Central Intelligence Carlucci to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 14, 1980

SUBJECT

Possible Policy Options—Iran

Our response to the second part of your July 17 memorandum on this subject was conveyed in a paper handcarried to you by the DCI on U.S. non-lethal options. This paper was dated 30 July.² I am attaching a paper responding to the first part of your memorandum requesting an evaluation of possible stronger covert action against Khomeini.

Frank C. Carlucci
Acting Director

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency³

Washington, undated

[3 pages not declassified]

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80-10/80) Secret. Hunter forwarded the memorandum and attachment to Aaron under an August 18 covering memorandum, noting that "a good deal more elaboration and detail before SCC consideration" was necessary. Aaron drew a line through the sentence in which Hunter asked whether any further action was needed. (Ibid.)

² The actual date of the paper was July 25. See footnote 4, Document 328.

³ Secret.

343. Paper Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECTS

1. Views of Iranian Exile General Oveissi that Control in Iran Could be Claimed by the Radical Left Within the Next Six Months
2. Funding and Support Provided to General Oveissi

1. In early August 1980, Iranian exile oppositionist General Gholam Ali Oveissi remarked that the pace of Iran's unraveling has accelerated to the point where the country in all likelihood will be claimed by the radical Left unless action is taken within the next six months to stop it. In Oveissi's opinion, six principal factors are responsible for the current crisis:

a. There is an apparent concerted effort by Ayatollah Khalkali, a revolutionary cleric who is a member of the Islamic Republican Party, and by what Oveissi called Palestine Liberation Organization-inspired elements to destroy and demoralize what is left of the officer corps through a systematic program of trials and executions. These are carried out arbitrarily, frequently without formal charges. Selected officers are arrested almost daily while at work or at night at home, and the next day they are executed. Random killings occur of other Iranians imprisoned for one reason or another, or for none, under the aegis of Khalkali. These killings also serve as part of a program to terrorize potential opposition to the current regime into submission or into exile. As a result, according to Oveissi, a mood of fear and despair is sweeping the country; more and more people are coming to accept a radical Leftist takeover, or even a Soviet takeover, so long as the present regime is removed.

b. Inflation and increasing unemployment both fuel political discontent.

c. The U.S. Government is perceived by Middle East leaders as being indecisive. There is almost a universal view among these leaders that the U.S. Government is weak and undependable, and few have confidence that the U.S. is willing and able to take steps necessary to shore up Western interests in the region. Many of these leaders are equivocating with traditional allegiances and feel obliged to come to terms with the "new Left." Oveissi said his conclusions are derived from recent conversations with leaders and senior intelligence officers

¹ Source: National Security Council, Carter Intelligence Files, Box I031, Carter Intelligence Files Sep–Dec 1980. Secret. [*name not declassified*] sent the paper to Saunders and Hunter of the NSC Staff under an August 15 covering memorandum.

in the region, i.e., Saddam Husayn in Iraq, Suleyman Demirel in Turkey, Anwar al-Sadat and Director, Egyptian General Intelligence, General Muhammad al-Mahi in Egypt, and unspecified individuals in the Gulf.

d. An “Arab revolution” is underway that may sweep away many of the highly personalized, idiosyncratic, and largely unrepresentative elites in such countries as the shaykdoms in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, and Egypt. The Soviets and their surrogates are behind this revolution and are motivated by the need for new energy sources and foreign exchange and by the opportunity to fill the vacuum created by the U.S. Government’s weakness.

e. The Soviets are moving large numbers of their supporters into Baluchistan, Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and other regions around the Caspian Sea. These supporters are drawn from ethnic groups and new recruits. In many villages, the Soviet flag is flaunted openly with little recourse to government forces.

f. The Palestine Liberation Organization is playing an increasingly important role in training the Pasdaran, in working closely with the Fedayeen-al-Khalq, and in providing praetorian guards for Iranian leaders such as Ayatollahs Khomeini and Beheshti.

2. Oveissi also observed that economic sanctions are being circumvented through sales by European and other producers of merchandise brokered via third-national invoicing, primarily in the Gulf.

3. Regarding Oveissi’s own political endeavors, he cited the following support:

a. From the Iraqis, he has received 21 million U.S. dollars and a promise of more to come if he can show progress. He is also receiving from the Iraqis sizeable quantities of RPG’s, light and heavy machine guns, rifles, mortars, explosives, ammunition, and some transport.

b. [7 lines not declassified]

c. He [less than 1 line not declassified] counts among his supporters a number of ayatollahs, including Shariat-Madari, Qomi, Shirazi, and others.

d. He claims to have assets among the military, including the entire “Rezaiyeh Division” (presumably the 64th Infantry Division headquartered at Urumiyeh—formerly called Rezaiyeh—West Azerbaijan). He also has the support of most of the Air Force pilots but not the Homafars (Air Force technicians).

e. He says that the [2 lines not declassified].

**344. Message From Secretary of State Muskie to
Prime Minister Rajai¹**

Washington, August 20, 1980

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I write to you as one who in my position as Secretary of State has only newly been confronted with the problems which currently beset relations between our two countries. I know that these problems will be but one aspect of the heavy new responsibilities you will be assuming as Iran's first Prime Minister under the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. It is my earnest hope that we, together with the Foreign Minister you will appoint, will be able to work towards constructive solutions to the difficulties between our nations.

With the death of the former Shah, a chapter of Iran's history is now definitely closed. With the establishment of your Government, a new chapter is opened. I believe this is the moment to take a fresh look at the problems between Iran and the United States.

The United States recognizes the reality of the Iranian Revolution and the legitimacy of the Islamic Republic. In a series of successive steps, the Iranian people have had the opportunity to participate in the process of creating new institutions. I assure you that the United States has had no wish to interfere in that process. We believe that no outside power should interfere with the right of the Iranian people to make their own political decisions.

Fifty-two of my fellow Americans remain held in Iran after nine months of captivity. I have met with their families. I cannot express to you adequately the deep and desperate suffering these innocent people have experienced. Americans of all political persuasions and strata of society are united in concern for their early release. I hope that you will agree with me that it is time now to bring an honorable end to their ordeal and to send the hostages home to their families.

I recognize that Iranians have suffered, too. The continuance of the impasse can only lead to further bitterness and suffering on both sides. The cups of anguish are now full. Let us empty them and begin anew.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 38, Subject File, Iran Hostage Negotiations 8/80. Secret. Sent as a telegram from the Department of State to Swiss Chargé Kaiser in Tehran. According to a September 1 report attached to a September 2 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom, Kaiser delivered Muskie's letter to Rajai on the evening of August 31. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 38, Subject File, Iran Hostage Negotiations 8/80) Muskie's letter is also published in Department of State *Bulletin*, November 1980, pp. 54–55.

I assure you that we will show the fullest respect for your independence, your territorial integrity and for the principle of non-interference.

We recognize that the decision on dealing with the hostage crisis has been entrusted to the Iranian parliament as representatives of the Iranian people. We also recognize that in Iran, as in the United States, there are deep feelings as a result of grievances perceived in the past. There are many difficult issues between the United States and Iran. For our part, we are willing to proceed fairly and to approach each of these issues on a basis of mutual respect and equality.

In order to begin the process of understanding each other better, I think it would be useful to establish a regular channel of communication. I would personally prefer that this be done directly, very discreetly if you wish, between representatives of our two Governments. Speaking frankly and directly is the best way of removing hostility and suspicion. If you would prefer, however, we would be pleased to deal through third parties who could transmit messages between us on a regular basis. The Swiss or the Algerian Embassies could play this role as they are already the protecting powers. Other persons, either official or private intermediaries, could perform the same function.

I would hope that you would be prepared to give us your thoughts on points which might be usefully discussed in such an exchange.

I look forward to hearing from you in the interest of our two peoples.

Sincerely,

Edmund S. Muskie

345. Letter From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Jones)¹

Washington, August 21, 1980

Dear Dave,

When Jim Holloway and his group asked for my support, I unhesitatingly agreed, assuming the final report² would be a helpful, objective assessment. I asked in return only to see the sections of the final report that touched on intelligence. He sent me Issues #3 and #18 of his report.³ Frankly, I am appalled at the content and tone of these sections.

Issue #3 clearly implies that the Intelligence Community was slow off the mark. [2 lines not declassified] The report's allusion to delays in responses [less than 1 line not declassified] indicates a lack of understanding of the HUMINT function. The discussion even leaves the impression that intelligence support may have delayed execution of the rescue operation in November–December. I saw no sign that a military operation was anywhere near feasible in November–December; indeed, I believe our mutual perception was that military and intelligence capabilities developed in parallel—neither could be brought to 100% effectiveness instantly after the seizure.

Issue #3 recommends that in any future similar effort the Director, DIA, be placed in charge of an Interagency Intelligence Task Force. This is an unworkable and inappropriate suggestion. The Director, DIA, clearly does not have the authority, statutory or otherwise, to organize and coordinate Community intelligence assets. That is the responsibility of the DCI under statute and Executive Order.

Issue #18 implies that casual conversation with a CIA officer on board *Nimitz* may have negatively influenced a helicopter pilot. If that were in fact the case, it would indicate highly unprofessional performance by the pilot. In any event, the report goes on to state that

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82B00162R: Subject Files, Box 9, Folder 8: Official Memos/Letters August 1980. Secret.

² See Document 321.

³ An undated paper prepared by the Joint Task Force, "Issue 3, Centralized and integrated intelligence support external to the JTF," noted that the augmentation of existing intelligence capabilities evolved over time and "in somewhat piecemeal fashion." Additionally, OPSEC intelligence officers involved in the operation had to "deduce for themselves in essence what was being planned." The Holloway group believed that the Intelligence Community assets and resources "could have been pulled together more quickly and effectively than was actually the case." Issue 18, "The enemy radar threat," looked like a "single, highly explicit event in which unevaluated data was passed directly to helicopter aircrews," and which "contradicted the final conclusions of intelligence analyst." The implication was that perhaps "some helicopter pilot judgments regarding altitude selection were affected by the informal report."

“. . . the (mission) abort . . . cannot be related to any alleged enemy radar intercept capability. . . .” Why, then, was this point germane to the investigation? The facts are that [*4½ lines not declassified*].

I am dismayed if these two misleading references to intelligence are the only references in the report to the intelligence role in the rescue effort. The positive role of intelligence in making the mission possible—from hostage location to arrangements in Teheran [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and more—surely could not have been overlooked. A one-sided, negative appraisal of the intelligence role—as suggested by the parts of the report I have seen—would be unwarranted, inaccurate and unacceptable. I hope my concerns are misplaced, but what I have seen of the report is not encouraging. Accordingly, I’d appreciate an opportunity to read the entire report before reacting further.⁴

Yours,

Stansfield Turner⁵

⁴ In a September 4 memorandum for the record, Turner also conveyed to Brzezinski his displeasure with the Holloway Report. He wanted an outside Commission to look at the rescue operation for lessons learned. (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 95M01183R: Policy Files (1977–1981) Box 1, Folder 3: DCI Turner—Eyes Only Files—Memos and Meetings with Various Officials and Subjects) Turner held a similar conversation with Brown. Brown told Turner that “there were many others like himself who were equally or more upset with the report.” Overall, Turner found Brown to be “defensive” of the report. (Memorandum for the Record, September 5; Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 15)

⁵ Turner signed “Stan” above his typed signature.

346. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, August 22, 1980, 9:30–11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Followup on Security Framework in the Persian Gulf—XV

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Edmund Muskie
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
David Newsom, Under Secretary
for Political Affairs

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
Under Secretary for Policy,
Robert Komer

JCS

Chairman, General David Jones
General Paul F. Gorman, Director,
Plans and Policy

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner, Director
Rae Huffstutler, Director, Office of
Strategic Research

OMB

James McIntyre, Director
Edward Sanders, Assistant Director
for National Security &
International Affairs

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

M. General Jasper Welch
B. General William E. Odom

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting with a statement of its purpose, reviewed intelligence on Soviet exercises and their implications for State and Defense actions. (TS)

Threat Assessment by the DCI

Turner explained that we have seen an upgrading of the Transcaucasus Military District throughout the spring. [4½ lines not declassified]

Turner offered a caveat about his information. It is piecemeal, far from the full view of the July exercises² (see the map at Tab A). [4½ lines not declassified]

[1 paragraph (6 lines) not declassified]

[less than 1 line not declassified] After suggesting a number of reasons, the possible collapse of Iran, our Persian Gulf activities, and the rescue

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 115, SCC 335 Security Framework Persian Gulf 8/22/80. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. No Tabs were attached or found. At the top of the first page, Carter wrote: "Zbig—My inclination is to inform Giscard & Schmidt also, protecting our sources. J."

² See footnote 3, Document 337.

mission, Turner said that it is more likely a general upgrading of contingency planning for the region to bring it to the level that we have observed for Europe and the Far East. [3 lines not declassified] There are, however, constraints on Soviet action: the weakness of the Turkestan Military District, adverse effects on détente, and problems in Poland. (TS)

Turner estimated that an attack is not likely now, but if the U.S. enters Iran, or if there is an internal collapse, these external events might provoke the Soviets to move. [1 line not declassified] this will be an indication of much greater readiness and of offensive rather than defensive thinking on the Soviet part. (SNIE on which Turner's briefing was based is at Tab C.) (TS)

Discussion of the DCI's Briefing

Dr. Brzezinski suggested that we are dealing with a Soviet contingency plan which likely depends on the internal collapse in Iran. Therefore, we need a better assessment of the Iranian political situation. (TS)

General Jones disagreed with the contingency plan notion. The Joint Chiefs believe there is a 50–50 possibility that the Soviets are themselves trying to control the timing, not just preparing to react to outside events. One of the Chiefs is sufficiently disturbed to recommend immediate deployment to the region in an effort to deter the Soviets. The Chiefs are more concerned with time than the DCI. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski summed up that we have reached no overall conclusions about Soviet intentions. (S)

He then stated the next two issues: what to communicate to our friends, and what to communicate to the Soviets. (S)

Communications to Our Allies in Europe

[2 paragraphs (9 lines) not declassified]

Muskie is seeing Francois-Poncet and Genscher on Monday.³ He agreed to have a general analytical discussion about the possible internal collapse of Iran, but he does not want to be sufficiently explicit on our concerns to encourage Francois-Poncet's inference that we [less than 1 line not declassified]. (TS)

[1 paragraph (5 lines) not declassified]

Communications with Countries in the Region

Komer emphasized that only three countries in the region are significant, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey, for U.S. military reactions to the Soviets. The Saudis are at present more concerned with the

³ August 25.

Yemenis than the Soviets. The Egyptians suspect the worst of the Soviets. The Turkish Prime Minister could use this information. Newsom added that we have difficulty with all three, and that we should use this one card to overcome their resistance. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski tasked Newsom to convene a meeting with Komer and the NSC staff to develop possible talking points [*less than 1 line not declassified*] with these countries for review at the next SCC. (TS)

Communications with the Soviets

Dr. Brzezinski recommended that either the President or Muskie in a public speech reconfirm the President's State of the Union Address strictures on Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf.⁴ He expressed doubt that bilateral communications would have much effect in light of our many such previous communications which we have more or less allowed the Soviets to ignore, e.g. Cam Ranh Bay.⁵ (S)

Muskie suggested that the President could do this at the United Nations General Assembly in September but that at some point we must be specific with the Soviets. Until we reach the point beyond which their actions will become unacceptable that should be done privately. (S)

Dr. Brzezinski responded that a two-step approach flows from Muskie's points: a speech at the September United Nations General Assembly for the public, and a Muskie/Gromyko bilateral meeting when Gromyko comes to the United Nations. (S)

All agreed that we could tell the President that this is our preliminary thinking, *not a firm recommendation*. (S)

Defense Actions

Muskie asked, "What is the bottom line"? Can we defend if the Soviets actually invade? Harold Brown admitted that we cannot defend militarily but we might save the Saudi oil and deter the Soviets from going further, or perhaps deter their invasion in the first place. Our one and one-third divisions moved to Iran in 30 days would confront 16–20 Soviet divisions. (TS)

⁴ In response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, and later referred to as the Carter Doctrine, Carter stated in his January 23 State of the Union address to Congress: "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1980–81*, Book I, pp. 194–200)

⁵ In 1979 the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed a 25-year, rent-free lease with the Soviet Union allowing the Soviet Pacific Fleet to base at Cam Ranh Bay. It was the largest Soviet naval base outside of the Soviet Union.

Muskie was concerned that a defense of only part of the region would hurt our political credibility everywhere. Dr. Brzezinski agreed that this point is critical. Our credibility in the region and in Europe hangs on our willingness and ability to fight the Soviets on the ground in Iran and elsewhere, if horizontal escalation is necessary. (S)

General Jones explained that there are two schools on how to defend Iran. One argues that we should put ourselves on a defense line in the Zagros Mountains and hold the Khuzestan oil fields. Another school, more interested in deterring the Soviet invasion, argues that we must begin to interdict their entry into Iran, making it impossible for them to invade without direct combat with U.S. forces. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski structured the discussion on this point with three military options: first, credible deterrence; second a confined defense within Iran; and third, a Persian Gulf strategy, which defends primarily Saudi Arabian oil. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski and others favored the first category, but they admitted that we do not have the capabilities. General Jones emphasized that not only do we not have them, they decline every day because we are trying to do things on the cheap. In comparison, the Soviets have done a great deal more in a region where they already have tremendous advantages. We plan for five years hence. They are upgrading for operations today. (TS)

Dr. Brzezinski tasked Defense to prepare a point paper around the three military options for the next SCC. (S)

347. Memorandum From Secretary of State Muskie to Secretary of Defense Brown and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 27, 1980

SUBJECT

Strategy for Southwest Asia

As tasked at the August 22 SCC meeting,² we are providing draft talking points for possible use with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt on the increased Soviet threat to Iran and the need for accelerated cooperation.³ As indicated below, we do not believe they should be used in the form prepared.

Our view is that the new intelligence is not sufficiently persuasive to be the basis for an extraordinary effort to gain enhanced regional cooperation. Instead, we think this intelligence, properly scrubbed, should be integrated in the following way into the comprehensive diplomatic strategy we are developing:

1. We should, subject to the constraints of protecting sources and methods, pass our latest intelligence through normal intelligence channels to the British, French, Germans, Turks, Saudis, and Egyptians. (Italians?) (Japanese?).

2. General Jones should use this intelligence in his planned consultations with the Saudis, following its use in the scheduled September intelligence exchange. It should be incorporated in a statement of our long-term purposes and concerns about the growing Soviet threat, however, and not emphasized as a near-term emergency requiring immediate Saudi action. We should not press our specific cooperation needs upon the Saudis now: to do so would produce a negative response before our longer-term security dialogue has had any chance to have an effect on their outlook.

3. With other regional states, we ought to pursue the "baseline strategy" (separately distributed),⁴ which is aimed at creating an enduring sense of common interest and confidence that we have a credible

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 22, SCC Meeting #337 Held 9/2/80. Top Secret; Sensitive.

² See Document 346.

³ The talking points are attached to an August 26 memorandum from Newsom to Muskie. (Department of State, Official Files of [P] David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Lot 82D85, Iran 1980–81)

⁴ Presumably Muskie's August 1 memorandum; see Document 332.

strategy. We should build into the baseline strategy a somewhat sharper concern about improvements in Soviet capabilities opposite Iran.

4. We should make no special effort with Turkey at this time. Any implication of trying to draw Turkey into Southwest Asian controversy, confrontation, or conflict e.g., the notion that we would use Turkey in an Iranian contingency to threaten the Soviet "flank" with dual-capable aircraft, would produce not the desired results but a new bilateral problem and possibly more insistent and unmeetable quid demands. (We believe the role of Turkey in our military strategy for Southwest Asia needs further interagency analysis).

5. Once the intelligence has been shared with our key NATO Allies, I should discuss our growing concerns with my counterparts in the course of regular contacts, including the September 24 Quadripartite meeting at the UNGA.

6. Our upcoming talks with the British, Germans, and Portuguese concerning "enroute access" should include our concerns about the Soviet threat to Iran.

7. In the interest of reducing the chances of Soviet miscalculation, I should convey to Gromyko in New York next month a clear message that:

—We have no intention of invading Iran or intervening in its internal affairs.

—By the same token, we would expect the Soviet Union to maintain its commitment to non-intervention in Iran's internal affairs.

—We have no offensive intentions in the region; our only purpose is to protect our vital interests.

I propose that we address this plan at Friday's SCC meeting.⁵

⁵ August 29. The SCC next met on September 2; see footnote 2, Document 350.

348. Memorandum From Gary Sick of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, August 29, 1980

SUBJECT

Alternative Option for Iran

Stan Turner's memo (attached)² is not, in my view, particularly perceptive or accurate in portraying our existing action policy toward Iran, in projecting the likely course of events, or in identifying the nature of the options which we are likely to face. His memo ignores the covert action strategy developed in June³ and formally approved by the President. [10 lines not declassified]

[5 paragraphs (48 lines) not declassified]

I do not believe that the attached memo spells out the present policy or our options in sufficiently complete form to permit a productive discussion at the Cabinet level. Instead, I would recommend that you discuss with Turner the possibility of a prior meeting of David's [Aaron] Special Intelligence Group (Carlucci, Newsom, Komer, Pustay) which has previously examined covert action options prior to consideration by the SCC. I would anticipate that David's group could sharpen the focus of the CIA proposal and flesh out a set of operationally feasible options which could then be taken up by principals. Alternatively, David's group might determine that no further action by principals was required.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80–10/80. Secret; Sensitive.

² Attached but not printed. Turner's memorandum transmitted a August 27 paper prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency, "Policy re Iran: Alternative Option," which discussed the current policy and its weaknesses, [text not declassified]. The paper questioned whether the collapse of the Khomeini regime would work to advance U.S. interests since that might bring the left to power and inflame regional insurgencies. Some analysts believed a clerical state would be anti-American but also strongly anti-Soviet.

³ See Document 293.

_____ Agree that it should be vetted by the Special Intelligence Group, for recommendations to the SCC if appropriate.

_____ No. Set up an SCC at the Muskie-Brown-Turner level.⁴

⁴ The memorandum bears no indication of which option Brzezinski chose. However, Sick and Brzezinski discussed the memorandum on the evening of August 29. Brzezinski agreed that Turner's proposal should be first discussed with the Aaron group. At the bottom of the page, Aaron wrote: "set up a meeting. DA," with an arrow pointing to the circled information "3:00 p.m., Wed, Sept 17." The latter was crossed out. An unknown hand wrote and circled in the margin: "Postponed to an undetermined date." (Memorandum from Sick to Brzezinski, September 2; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 87, For President or Brzezinski Only File, Iran Sensitive 5/80-10/80)

349. Message From Joint Task Delta to 1st Special Operations Wing, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) and 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment¹

Nr 002

Washington, September 2, 1980, 1215Z

SUBJECT

Intelligence Assessment.

REF

JCS/Snowbird/J3 Cite 0288 Subj: 60-90 Day Situation Projection²

1. (TS) This message provides a hardcopy follow-up to the intelligence assessment presented at the 29 Aug 80 JTD planning conference and is a supplement to reference.

A. The American-Iranian hostage situation remains as it did in November and during the intervening months, it is a political problem without a political solution. Political solutions are the product of compromises. In the current situation, the positions of the opposing parties the USG and the Iranian entities are non-negotiable.

B. Although a humanitarian solution is possible the political impasse is likely to continue past 4 November before a major change.

¹ Source: Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff Records, RG 218-07-0002, Records of J-3 DDSO, Box 2, Iranian Hostage Crisis 1979-1984, B270-280 Intelligence Assessment. Top Secret.

² See Document 341.

After 4 November Iranian options include a release of some hostages while requesting concessions from the new US administration (if there is a new administration), or the continued detention of most of the hostages and the initiation of a grand jury type trial heading to the indictment of the USG and several of the hostages.

C. A major unknown in the projection equation is the health of Ayatollah Khomeini. He is currently a major stabilizing force; if he were to die of natural causes and his death acknowledged as such no significant change in the hostage situation is likely to occur as the hardline clerics now possess a far greater degree of control than they did prior to the election of the Parliament and naming of the Prime Minister. However, if Khomeini were to be assassinated or his death claimed to be the result of an American plot then chaos and confusion would result and within three–five days the lives of the hostages would be at serious risk.

2. (TS) In reviewing the threat, five entities warrant discussion.

A. The conventional Iranian military continues to deteriorate due to internal purges of the professional leadership and difficulties in maintaining some of the more sophisticated weapons systems. However the air defense network and associated alert aircraft and point defense ADA systems together with the gendarmerie reporting structure provide a persistent potential for detecting and interdicting mission aircraft.

B. The Revolutionary Guard structure is becoming more structured and is unquestionably a tool of the clerics. In the rural areas the Guard has attempted to replace the army but integration has not occurred. In the larger cities particularly Tehran reports now indicate Guard members have taken to bullying the population at the slightest opportunity and some have established a neighborhood protection payout mechanism.

C. The composition of the militants seems to have changed somewhat with the hard core radicals, many with Marxist influenced backgrounds, continuing to control the fate of the hostages, although there is no question that they have received assistance from the Revolutionary Guard and hardline clerics such as Ayatollah Beheshti.

D. The U.S. media and self proclaimed political moralists pose a significant danger to any prospects of a political solution and a tremendous threat to military planning with false leaks and compromises. Their real danger lies in their potential for creating a dangerous degree of instability in both hostage location and security.

E. The fifth threat entity is the intelligence apparatus of the USSR and its allies. The Soviet intelligence services were embarrassed by the degree of their ignorance regarding the April attempt. They do not

want to be caught unawares again. In addition the Soviet Union is preparing to take advantage of several possible opportunities regarding Iran. It is preparing to move military forces into Iran if anarchy and chaos erupts. Similarly the USSR is preparing to react if U.S. military forces are introduced into Iran in any size, and while awaiting the advent of one of these possibilities, the USSR is busily laying the propaganda groundwork to capitalize on the above and justify a unilateral move on the pretext of countering the alleged presence of counter revolutionary forces operating in Iran against the Government of Iran and the Government of Afghanistan.

3. (TS) Hostage Situation:

A. Dispersion outside of the Embassy compound must be accepted as fact; planning must consider multiple targets. Precise locations remain unknown due to tight security and deception measures employed by militants and clerics. During the past month most hostage relatives have received a letter from their loved ones. The letters indicate long periods of small group isolation, very little outside activity, no physical abuse, allowed to receive some mail, and at least three hostages, military and civilian, have implied they plus another 6 to 9 are being held in a prison or prison-like environment.

B. Current estimates put upwards of a half probably in Tehran as follows: MFA (3), Embassy compound: Chancery 3-5, warehouse 3-5; prison/jail or villa in northern Tehran (16-18). The balance, according to [*less than 1 line not declassified*] reporting are apparently scattered throughout the country in groups of 3-5. A 25 Aug CIA assessment listed ten possible locations, this HQ believes the actual number is less than that, probably no more than 3-5 locations at any given time. The typical site is probably a 2-story house within a walled compound located in a quiet residential neighborhood.

4. (TS) Operational Planning. During the review and crosschecking of possible locations we have located at least one potential fixed-wing landing zone within 100NM of each of the more likely hostage detention locations, and at least one active airhead with extraction potential within 12-15 miles. Of all the locations Tehran offers the greatest number of possibilities for insertion and extraction.

A. In the city proper both Mehrabad and Doshan Tappeh [Airports] hold possibilities with D/T being within 5-6 minutes driving time of the compound and M/B within 20-25 minutes driving time.

B. In the immediate suburbs at least two additional sites have been identified as C-130 capable and two others have been identified within 30 NM.

C. Farther out Manzariyeh still holds a potential for use. In addition three fixed-wing capable sites (one C-141) have been identified in the Semman area.

D. The search for additional sites is continuing and field survey of the more promising sites is hoped to be started within 3–4 weeks.

5. (TS) In summary three points are important to remember during future planning and training.

A. The situation is not stable and the confirmed locations of today can be invalid tomorrow because of a militant reaction to a news rumor.

B. The second point is that the Soviets are actively seeking data on U.S. military intentions toward Iran and are preparing their forces in the border area to move into Iran when the opportunity arises. A prolonged widespread rescue operation that carried a large signature before or during the operation could provide them with the rationale to react against an “American invasion”.

C. The third and final point is that regardless of the Holloway Board’s inference that OPSEC was too restrictive during the planning for the last attempt,³ it was essential then and an absolute imperative now. Secrecy was paramount to mission success the last time, and the same is doubly true now. Secrecy is essential for mission success and for world peace. The bear is standing in wings anticipating the script and watching for his cue to enter stage north.

³ See Document 321.

350. Memorandum From the National Intelligence Officer for Near East and South Asia (Ames) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner and the Deputy Director of Central Intelligence (Carlucci)¹

NFAC-6021-80

Washington, September 3, 1980

SUBJECT

SCC Meeting of 29 Aug 1980:² Security Framework

1. *Action Required:* None; the following is for your information. [portion marking not declassified]

2. *Background:* The 29 Aug 1980 SCC meeting chaired by Dr. Brzezinski was another in the series of meetings held on the Security Framework of the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. This meeting focused on the DoD paper on possible responses to a Soviet threat to invade Iran.³ [portion marking not declassified]

3. Dr. Brzezinski stated he believed the paper was a good one and would serve as a useful starting point for discussion on how to deter the Soviet threat. Most of the discussion centered on the methods that could be used to signal our determination to the Soviets to oppose any incursion. Secretary Brown stated that since the Soviets could bring 16-20 divisions into Iran while we could only bring two, indicated that we must go the deterrence route. While we would use those two divisions, we should insure the Soviets knew of our determination. [portion marking not declassified]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1: C-372 Iran. Secret.

² An unknown hand crossed out "2 September 1980" and replaced it with "29 Aug" both here and in the first sentence of the Background section. This appears to have been done in error, as the SCC met on September 2 to discuss the Security Framework. The Summary of Conclusions of this meeting is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1977-1980*, Vol. XVIII, Middle East Region; Arabian Peninsula, Document 91. This meeting was originally scheduled for August 29, as indicated in an August 28 memorandum from Dodson to Denend. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 22, SCC Meeting #337 Held 9/2/80)

³ The DOD working paper, "Military Strategies," is attached to an August 28 memorandum from Dodson to Mondale, Muskie, Brown, McIntyre, Jones, and Turner. According to this memorandum, Brown had not yet reviewed the paper. The paper included sections on Deterrence Strategy and Warfighting Strategies, with the latter subdivided into sections on Border Strategy, Gulf Outer Ring and Gulf Inner Ring. Also attached to Dodson's memorandum were talking points for holding discussions with Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, SCC Meeting #337 Held 9/2/80)

4. Brzezinski said that he believed we must develop a horizontal escalation capability⁴ since we did not have a meaningful vertical escalation capability. We could close the Black and Baltic seas, blockade Murmansk and Vladivostok, challenge their fleet at sea and levy proxy penalties by involvement in PDRY, Cuba, Ethiopia, Libya and Angola. The Soviets must be made to realize that Iran would not be a limited conflict. Secretary Muskie said this all sounded like World War III—a view not shared by the Europeans. If we assessed the CPX in such drastic terms we should share these views with the Europeans. If we did, this would get out and might provoke the Soviets. [*portion marking not declassified*]

5. Brzezinski stated that in the past we had a kind of unwritten understanding with the Soviets—neither side moved directly into the “other’s” area. The Soviets might have some ambiguity over Iran because of our acquiescence to events there and the question is how do we let them know our position without provocation? Should we send them a secret message that says, “we have no designs on Iran, but if you move in we’ll counter you?” A statement such as this does not impose any limits on our actions. The DCI said that perhaps we should not consider such a message because if the Soviets are not ready to enter Iran such a message might indicate we have a plan of our own and cause them to move. If they do have a plan, such a message, without any teeth in it, could cause them to discount it. We should give more thought to this idea of a message. [*portion marking not declassified*]

6. Muskie reiterated that if we are confident that our CPX assessment indicates probable Soviet action, we have to get Europe on board. Newsom added that Europe still does not accept that the loss of the Gulf to the Soviets would put them under Soviet control. They must be made to see that. Brzezinski did not believe we should go to the Europeans yet. The message should be to the Soviets and it should be clear: their involvement in the Gulf will set them on a collision course with us. We must make sure that the Soviets do not miscalculate our determination—we must minimize Soviet uncertainty. DoD should have a look at horizontal options given the fact that the Soviets do not have any exploitable external weaknesses such as the Persian Gulf is to the West. [*portion marking not declassified*]

⁴ In their August 29 conversation, Turner and Brzezinski discussed horizontal escalation in connection with Iran, that is, “what forms of military action could we take against the Soviets outside of Iran if they invaded Iran—things like a war at sea or closing the Baltic or closing the Black Sea, blockading Cuba, mining the Soviets in their harbor at Dalak, mining Aden, knocking out the Soviet air force contingent at Aden, etc.” See footnote 4, Document 348.

7. We must consider what we want to say to the Soviets and how. We cannot give the Soviets “expressions of concern.” These are no longer credible. Aaron suggested that when Muskie meets Gromyko he should say something along the following lines: “In my short time in office I have come to realize that among the differences between us, nothing is more likely to lead to World War III than your miscalculation of our determination to keep the Persian Gulf for the West.” Muskie can also hand Gromyko a non-paper on this matter. It was agreed that the Newsom/Aaron/Carlucci/Komer group would work on some language for this statement and paper. [*portion marking not declassified*]

8. For the Friday meeting (5 September) the following items will be reviewed:

- a. Horizontal actions we can take;
- b. What we can tell our allies and how we might get this message to Iran; and
- c. Gen. Jones briefings—are there any action add-ons to these briefings.

CIA was also asked, during the course of the meeting, to prepare a paper on European and regional reactions to a Soviet invasion. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Robert C. Ames

351. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Sweden

233019

Washington, September 2, 1980, 1834Z

[Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880136–2199. Secret. 4 pages not declassified.]

352. Memorandum for the Record by Director of Central Intelligence Turner¹

Washington, September 3, 1980

SUBJECT

Conversation with Secretary of State, 2 September 1980

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran.]

2. We spent a lot of time on Iran (the Secretary mentioned to me afterwards he thought we were handling our position and presentations on Iran in the SCC well). Ron Spiers and I both expressed our concern at the possibility of trials for the hostages. The Secretary made a considerable argument that he thought there were more favorable signs that would mitigate against that. He said there had been four contacts with the Iranians in the last few days that indicated a desire to find out what the United States position on the hostage situation is:

a. There was the initiative, through either the Swedes or the Swiss (he couldn't remember which), from Rafsanjani (not certain but he thought that is who it was) asking if the Swedes/Swiss could obtain our position and relay it. The Secretary said that the President had approved a response to this.

b. Beheshti had made an approach to the United States indirectly just today for the same objective. He could not recall through whom the approach came.

c. He then referred to his letter to Rajai, the Prime Minister,² but it wasn't clear whether Rajai had responded to it.

d. Finally, there was the response of the Majlis to the letter from several members of our House of Representatives.³

He feels the situation in Iran is different today because a governmental apparatus is evolving and through it the position of the militants is weakening. Beheshti has adroitly accumulated power and now he's talking in terms of resolving the hostage situation. It remains to be

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 81B00112R: Subject Files, Box 15. Top Secret.

² See Document 344.

³ The letter from the House members is dated July 2; see Document 309. The Majlis letter quoted by FBIS, September 2, asked Congress to "place on your agenda for urgent action an investigation into the damage arising from the past deeds of the American government and into the legitimate claims of Iran, giving this matter the highest and most urgent priority. Thus may the way be paved toward a solution of the crisis." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 9/80) For Rafsanjani's preliminary reaction to the letter, see Document 329.

seen whether he will exercise his power to do that. But the situation is generically different than it has been over the past 10 months.

I responded that I still didn't think there was a critical mass of power in Iran; that Khomeini really didn't want to make a decision on the hostages for fear of losing his constituencies; that the Majlis would not make a decision without Khomeini's approval; and that hostage trials were an easy delaying and escape tactic for the Majlis. I further reiterated my feeling that Khomeini wanted to bring down President Carter and would move toward trials or other ways to embarrass the President between now and the elections. [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. I described the fact that we are working with Ambassador Spain in Ankara with respect to rescue option possibilities on the border with Iran. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran]

8. We talked about the [*2½ lines not declassified*]. I did express my alarm, however, at two things: First, the Soviets apparently were willing to [*less than 1 line not declassified*] (though we didn't know where and whether this was part of a general scenario against NATO or perhaps whether it was purely a military worst-case operation); secondly, I was concerned at the extent of their planning ambitions, particularly [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. Muskie was clearly skeptical that the Soviets would [*less than 1 line not declassified*]. We had a debate as to whether this would be more risky from their point of view than going into Poland. [*portion marking not declassified*]

[Omitted here is material unrelated to Iran]

Stansfield Turner

353. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 2, 1980

SUBJECT

Comments on the Holloway Special Operations Review Group

My comments, based upon reading the complete text of the Report by the Special Operations Review Group,² are meant to answer these questions for you with candor that the Holloway Group could not afford.

- What were the major flaws in the planning and execution?
- Where does the fault lie?
- What are the implications for follow-up actions?

The evidence in the Report is very disturbing. Unless it is inaccurate, it compels one to devastating conclusions about the JCS's adequacy for planning and conducting such operations. It also has implications for basic and structural changes in Defense in the longer run.

Major Flaws

Of 23 issues chosen for extensive review, the Holloway Group singles out 11 as major. I find it difficult to quarrel with any of them, and some strike me as indicative of serious faults in the operation. They are each worth a short elaboration to give you a sense of the evidence in the Report.

1. Operations Security (OPSEC)

The Holloway Group says the requirements of secrecy were imposed too extensively to permit adequate coordination, first of intelligence, later of training, and finally of command and control during the execution phase. Their Report is too hard on some aspects of security, but OPSEC restraints exacerbated most of the other ten major

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran Special Contingency Group 7/80. Top Secret; Outside the System. Sent for information. In a September 4 memorandum to Brzezinski, Denend wrote "there is not a single conclusion in his [Odom's] memo to you with which I would take serious issues." Denend concluded that, based on the Holloway Report, 1) any planning and/or training underway for a second rescue operation in Iran needed to be reviewed for organizational soundness, 2) that the report was "dramatic evidence" or a change in the Unified Command Plan, and 3) that any efforts to change the independence retained by the military services "must wait for stronger leadership in the Pentagon." (Ibid.)

² See Document 321.

issues. The Report avoids being personal, but the finger is pointed at Vaught on OPSEC. In fact, General Jones and others share this burden as well.

2. *Independent Review of Plans*

The lack of an independent review group is underscored as a source of trouble. The Chiefs acted like their own “action officers” in the words of the Report. Sitting in one Sunday when the Chiefs were briefed, I wondered myself how they could know what they pretended to know about feasibilities.

3. *Organization, Command and Control, and the Applicability of JCS [less than 1 line not declassified]*³

[1 paragraph (10 lines) not declassified]

—The Marine Colonel in charge of the helicopters had no staff, believed he was in charge of helicopters, but was never appointed as head of helicopters. He was an officer from Jones’ special staff group. Thus no Marine helicopter unit and commander were ever selected. Jones’ choice of Colonel Pittman insured an ad hoc approach to helicopter operations (one of the minor issues in the Report).

—General Gast, USAF, was made a consultant on air operations, but his role in air operations, planning, and training was never clarified with the Marine Colonel, the Air Force, or the Navy. Again he was the Chairman’s ad hoc appointment.

—The Air Force component commander, who managed the C-130 training, was given “on the scene commander” responsibility just prior to the mission with no chance to plan or rehearse.

—No Navy component commander was ever designated. This is standard Navy practice to avoid being entangled in truly Joint organizations (the RDJTF today has no Navy component commander).

Here you have the “joint system” at its traditional best: one or two of the services do not participate fully, usually the Navy, and the Chairman tries to by-pass the CINCs because he does not command them by law. The Holloway Report makes it seem that Vaught is at fault for the confusion in the air operations responsibilities. Gast as a consultant, however, and his special relation with Jones probably made it difficult for Vaught to manage Gast. No reason is given for no Navy component commander and staff. The Report also leaves the impression of a chaotic “Joint” air operations and training endeavor. The JCS has

³ PRM-30, “Terrorism,” January 2, 1977, is in Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 1.

always dodged the issue of “Joint” training responsibility. Whose is it for the RDJTF? That is still undecided!

4. Comprehensive Readiness Evaluation

Training and readiness evaluation was decentralized. No overall rehearsal of the Desert One took place. The Report sees this as a major weakness for the phase at Desert One. Again, this is a “Joint” training problem.

5. Size of the Helicopter Force

Based on statistical data from RH-53 performance history, the Report argues that ten helicopters were needed. This problem, of course, is related to the confusion in the organization for air operations—Navy and Air Force components and staff support. No truly competent air staff examined the issue for the JTF.

6. Overall Coordination of Joint Training

Vaught, based in the Pentagon, let two officers, who were not fully in the JTF, run the joint training at the Western Training site. The Report considers this a mistake. Gast, as Deputy Commander JTF, should have moved to the training site and taken this responsibility. The Report fails to tie this issue to inherent weaknesses of the “Joint” system of training under JCS procedures.

7. Command and Control Desert One

The late designation of the Air Force component commander as in command at Desert One, his lack of a command post location, a deputy, and other command techniques, including communications on the ground, are cited as major flaws. In my view, the Report understates this problem, and it is related to the lack of full Desert One rehearsal. It is also part of the Air Force and Naval component problem.

8. Centralized and Integrated Intelligence Support External to the JTF

The ad hoc and piecemeal effort by CIA in the early phase, the late tie to NSA, the failure to use DIA fully, and State’s reluctance to supply data from hostage mail are some of the points made by the Report. I saw this problem in detail in November. The Report is correct and perhaps too mild in its criticism. The episode is a preview of what you will see if we ever have to transit from peace to war as the results of PRM-11 prescribe.⁴

⁴ PRM-11, “Intelligence Structure and Mission,” February 22, 1977, is *ibid.*

9. *Alternatives to Desert One*

As the Report indicates, the road traffic at Desert One made compromise during the following day highly probable. An alternative, without this road problem, would have been preferable, but the intelligence does not readily reveal an alternative. The road problem was evident from the OTTER reconnaissance flight, but the JTF assessed the risk as acceptable—wrongly.

10. *Handling the Dust Phenomenon*

The Report is comprehensive in exploring ways to anticipate and deal with the dust. Had any of a number of other weaknesses been absent—communications among the helicopters and with other aircraft, with the air weather service, inadequate navigation aides, the lack of a reconnaissance pre-run flight, or a pathfinder—the dust would *not* have caused at least one abort. I find the lack of a pre-run for weather reconnaissance surprising given the conditions.

11. *C-130 Pathfinders*

In the Son Tay raid,⁵ C-130s flew with the HH-53s, using all-weather navigation aids to guide the helicopters. The failure to include such pathfinders in this operation is surprising, and in my view wholly inexcusable. It violated basic tactics for moving a force anywhere, ground or air.

Where Does the Fault Lie?

The Report puts lots of emphasis on flaws in command procedures, particularly OPSEC being excessive and rigid, in training, and in air operations planning. The finger is pointed unambiguously at Vaught. The Report also, however, gives a thoughtful reader enough evidence to infer a number of other culprits as well.

First, the Navy component of the JTF is no credit to the Navy. I suspect some strained relations between Vaught and the Navy are hidden. The Navy's initial fear of a "witch hunt" is now more understandable. There really is a "witch" in this case.

Second, Gast's role, the confusion in air operations responsibility, and Gast's relations with Jones are other places the fault may be shared.

Third, the DCI and the Intelligence Community share some of the blame. They dragged their feet, and they hid behind interagency barriers in the early phase.

⁵ The 1970 failed rescue mission of 50 American POWs from Son Tay prison near Hanoi was the first joint military operation run by the JCS Chairman.

Fourth, the failure to use the [*less than 1 line not declassified*] and its JTF concept should be blamed on the Chiefs and General Jones. Interservice rivalry and the sacred cow, the Unified Command Plan, prevented the emergence of an effective JTF in 1977. Precisely these same obstructions are now blocking our recommendation for a Mid East Command.

Fifth, although the Report gives the NCA link high marks, when fault is considered, the Secretary of Defense cannot be blameless. The weak JTF structure was ultimately Brown's responsibility.

What Are the Implications for Follow-up?

The President could easily use this report for a number of changes:

a. A Mid East Command is imperative if this Report is accurate. The RDJTF will fail miserably as the JCS now has REDCOM/RDJTF/PACOM/EUCOM linked to paralyze planning, training, and deployment. Nor is there a Navy component commander. Nor is there a "joint" training evaluation scheme.

b. An outside review group of retired officers, a proposal by the Holloway group, is not a bad idea. One could be set up.

c. Practice transitions from peacetime to wartime operations for the Intelligence Community are imperative. PD-58⁶ exercises offer this potential, but other things should also be practiced, particularly within the DOD and DIA.

A *longer run implication* of this Report is found in the necessities it shows for a major change in our Defense Department organization. The JCS is too weak vis-à-vis the services. And DIA is too weak vis-à-vis CIA. The recommended special operations JTF is actually of doubtful legality because it would operate under the NCA and JCS directly, not through a CINC as required by the 1947 National Security Act.⁷ More and more we have the need for a national level military operations staff with *directive* authority over CINCs and services. The same requirement is dictated by the new PD-59⁸ staffing capability as well as the PD-58 COG/C³I capabilities for the President to control the military forces.

⁶ PD-58, "Continuity of Government," June 30, 1980, is in Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 23.

⁷ The National Security Act of 1947 reorganized the armed forces, foreign policy, and intelligence apparatus to meet Cold War demands. The act merged the Departments of War and Navy into the Department of Defense, created a Department of the Air Force, and established three service secretaries. It also established the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency.

⁸ PD-59, "Nuclear Weapons Employment Policy," July 25, 1980, is in Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 23.

A *second major implication* is found in the Report's comments on readiness and training evaluation. The only way we will get greater "factor productivity" in Defense is to look at the "output" of the Department more effectively. Exercises geared to real contingency planning are the single promising instrument for such output measurement. The JCS annual and five-year exercise program, already institutionalized, is the embryo for a future testing system.

Finally, let me add a personal note. From the viewpoint of a military officer who has seen commanders relieved, and who has sent soldiers to jail, this Report is justification for forced resignations at a very high level. Such a sweeping step, of course, may be of dubious wisdom at present, but it is clear that the authors of the Report must have found themselves feeling as I do. They have hedged their judgments to avoid forcing the blame into the open, but the evidence encourages the unpleasant inferences.

I feel that some of the blame should fall on me insofar as I encouraged you to have confidence in the operation. I rendered that judgment on too little first-hand observation of the rehearsals and staff organization. In the final stages, however, I was cut out of the briefings and NSC meetings so that I had a very imperfect view of the details of the operation.

If you want a memorandum for the President on the Report, I shall prepare one, but you may want to reflect on this step for a time while you digest the full import of the Report.⁹

⁹ Odom underlined the phrase "while you digest the full import of the Report," and wrote below it: "This report can be used for *very large* initiatives—if you desire—but we need to think through timing and choice of initiatives. WO."

354. Memorandum From the Chief of the Near East and South Asia Division, Directorate of Operations, Central Intelligence Agency (Cogan) to Director of Central Intelligence Turner

Washington, September 3, 1980

[Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject Files, Box 13, Folder 1: C-372 Iran 01 Sep 80-30 Sep 80. Secret. 2 pages not declassified.]

355. Memorandum From William Odom of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 3, 1980

SUBJECT

Vaught's JTF

I attended a meeting with General Vaught and his intelligence staff, CIA, NSA, and DIA this morning. The following points will be of interest to you.

First, the lack of intelligence about the hostages' whereabouts has stifled most of the JTF's efforts. CIA has recently made a decision to drop almost every other Iran related activity and shift resources to the hostage problem. Even so, the promise of locating them appears small. There is strong feeling in the JTF that too little effort is being made by FBI, NSA, CIA, and State to solve the intelligence problem. They feel they may be asked to perform quickly this fall. Yet they see no way to get ready.

Second, Vaught reports that he has failed to get Harold Brown or Stan Turner to raise the issue with you and the President about public statements on the hostages' whereabouts. It would be extremely helpful, in his view, if the President instructed State and Defense to: (a) avoid discussion of their whereabouts if possible; (b) when it is unavoidable, say that we do not know. Apparently, statements at the highest levels in State, and perhaps elsewhere, have led to stronger counterintelligence measures by the militants. Vaught said the President's own record is perfect on this account.

Third, Turner will speak to you this afternoon about authority to use some special equipment for tracking locations. The JTF staff believes that we have delayed far too long in this effort. I see little danger to the hostages in the event of compromise, and therefore support Turner's proposal.

Fourth, Vaught would like to show you one of the practice operations on the night of September 13th. If you want to attend, let me know.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, General Odom File, Box 27, Iran Activities 12/79–12/80. Top Secret; Sensitive; For Dr. Brzezinski Only. Sent for information. In the upper right corner, Brzezinski wrote: "WO: Status? ZB."

356. Summary of Conclusions of a Special Coordination Committee Meeting¹

Washington, September 5, 1980, 9–10:35 a.m.

SUBJECT

Followup on Security Framework in the Persian Gulf—XVII

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Edmund Muskie
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary
for Near Eastern & South Asian
Affairs

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
Ambassador Robert Komer, Under
Secretary for Policy

JCS

Chairman General David Jones
Lt. General John Pustay

CIA

Director Stansfield Turner
Ray Huffstutler, Director, Office of
Strategic Research

OMB

John White, Deputy Director

White House

Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

General William E. Odom
General Jasper Welch
Captain Gary Sick

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Dr. Brzezinski opened the meeting with a review of the agenda items: first, the non-paper for Gromyko; second, the intelligence briefing for the Allies; and third, Defense actions which may be taken. (TS)

Non-Paper for Gromyko

A lengthy debate took place between Dr. Brzezinski and Harold Brown on the one side and Muskie and Christopher on the other about being explicit in the non-paper for Gromyko that Soviet military action in Iran would lead to a direct military confrontation with the United States. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski argued that to promise the Soviets as the draft non-paper² does, that we will *not* intervene in Iran, and at the same time to be ambiguous about U.S. resort to military actions if the Soviets invade Iran, would possibly be read by the Soviets as an invitation to invade. Brown made more or less the same argument. (TS/S)

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box 57. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. The Tabs are not attached. Carter wrote "Top Secret, J" in the upper right corner.

² Not found.

Muskie and Christopher argued that we should not surrender the future option to avoid confronting the Soviets militarily over Iran because in some cases, such as one or two Soviet divisions in Tabriz only, Congressional and public support might not be adequate for a U.S. military action. Muskie argued that we risk bluffing because we do not have the military capabilities to defeat the Soviets in Iran. Christopher argued that we should not be so specific to the Soviets when we are not sure what we have in mind for military actions even among ourselves. (TS/S)

Thus the argument was joined. (C)

Dr. Brzezinski and Brown cited the example of Berlin as a place where we were not capable of a successful defense but nonetheless deterred the Soviets by ruling out ambiguity about whether we would respond. (TS/S)

Brown insisted that we do have some idea of how we would respond militarily. We could arm the Chinese. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski responded that the Chinese are unlikely to enter the fight with the Soviets if the U.S. is not willing to fight in Iran. (TS/S)

Muskie returned to what the JCS had said at the previous SCC about our ability to conduct a defense in Iran.³ The absence of an effective military capability disturbs Muskie. When Brown and Dr. Brzezinski once more cited that we were not in military shape to defend Europe in the early years after World War II, Muskie insisted that that was different. We at least had some forces on the ground in Europe. If it only takes a trip wire, as Komer had insisted about the role of two or three platoons of U.S. troops in Iran, then why do we have all those U.S. divisions in Europe? Perhaps we should withdraw some of them. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski tried to change the line of analysis by asking what would happen if we leave the situation ambiguous for the Soviets and in fact if the Soviets intervene in Iran. We will be in the soup! Will the dilemma about whether to respond militarily be any easier in that event? (TS/S)

³ The September 2 SCC meeting concluded that, for the September 5 SCC meeting, CIA and DIA would brief on what the United States could tell its European and regional allies about the Soviet threat; the Aaron group would develop talking points and draft the non-paper for Muskie's September meeting with Gromyko; and Defense would report on horizontal escalation possibilities. On an attached September 3 note, Brzezinski wrote to Carter: "These minutes are unusually important. An NSC meeting may be needed. Zbig." Carter then wrote in the upper right corner of the SCC Summary of Conclusions: "Zbig—Set up an NSC meeting next week when all principals can be present (incl. VP). JC." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office File, Box 22, SCC #337 Held 9/2/80) See also Document 350.

Muskie insisted that he can reduce the ambiguity for Gromyko in his oral statement, but he does not accept this non-paper because of its explicit promise of a military reaction. Christopher called it “dangerous.” Muskie explained that he would make the following points to Gromyko orally:

—We are extremely troubled by the military activities of the Soviet Union on Iran’s borders.

—This region is vital to us.

—Gromyko should understand the dangerous consequences that could follow from Soviet military activities. (TS/S)

Muskie again insisted that we do not have a real military capability, and Christopher added that we must preserve the President’s option to judge what is in the United States interest at the time of such an intervention if it occurs in the future. (TS/S)

Muskie offered the political judgment that the Congress would ask whether or not a nuclear war would be worth it for 11 percent of our oil. (TS/S)

Brown asked what would happen if the Soviets invade Iran and we do nothing. Do we really believe that our losses would be only 11 percent of our oil supply? (TS/S)

Muskie retorted that if it means losing Europe, the American people might even accept that loss rather than risk nuclear war. (TS/S)

Harold Brown countered, but what about a Soviet attack on Europe, would we accept the loss or attempt to defend it? (TS/S)

Muskie insisted that NATO is different; we have forces there. If we cannot defend Europe, he added, we ought to ask what the Defense Department is all about. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski asked Muskie if he accepts the proposition that the loss of the Persian Gulf would lead to the loss of Europe. (TS/S)

Muskie agreed that it would. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski then asked what the Soviets will see as their options in such a case if the U.S. leaves some ambiguity about whether it would respond militarily. (TS/S)

Muskie insisted that he could remove all the ambiguity in his oral statements to Gromyko without the explicit text in the non-paper, in particular by telling Gromyko that there is a “high risk” of a military confrontation. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski pointed out that we have given these kinds of warnings to the Soviets before but have failed to act when the Soviets ignored them. (TS/S)

Muskie admitted that he did not know the record. (TS/S)

Dr. Brzezinski said that Gromyko has heard all this talk before about Afghanistan—several weeks in advance of the invasion—but

that did not deter the invasion. We were equally explicit about the high risk if the Soviets increased their naval activities in Cam Ranh Bay. They did not heed that warning, but we have yet to respond. We have a credibility problem with the Soviets which must be taken into account in communicating our judgments to the Soviets about the stakes in Iran. (TS/S)

In the end, agreement was reached to propose to the President the text of a non-paper (attached at Tab A) which included the following sentence as an acceptable compromise: "Any military attempt to gain control of the Persian Gulf, including specifically any Soviet military action in Iran, could lead to a direct military confrontation with the United States." It was agreed to submit the non-paper for Gromyko to the President for his review (Tab A).⁴ (TS/)

Intelligence Briefing for the Allies

Turner and General Jones will work out a final version of the intelligence briefing text which was tabled at the meeting this morning. It will be circulated next week for their comment and reaction. Unless there are strong reservations, the final version will be used by General Jones for briefing the NATO allies. (TS/S)

[1 paragraph (7½ lines) not declassified]

Thus, the intelligence indicates that the Soviet threat is *less imminent* but *more ambitious* than we originally recognized. (TS/S)

Possible Defense Actions

The JCS recommendations of actions to consider doing now were reviewed (attached at Tab B). It was agreed that most of them are already in progress and need no SCC attention. Discussion centered mainly on whether to brief Congressional leaders now (in addition to members of the intelligence committees who already have some awareness [*less than 1 line not declassified*]), and how to approach the question of a Defense supplemental budget request, both in size and the time for its submission. Brown and Muskie expressed concern that a supplemental budget request could escalate the situation with the Soviets and create political excitement within the United States. (TS/S)

[heading and 6 paragraphs (15 lines) not declassified] (TS/S)

⁴ Muskie met with Gromyko in New York on September 25 and read aloud the non-paper, which Gromyko described as piling "word upon word." No copy of the non-paper was found. The memorandum of conversation is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union, Document 302.

357. Letter From the Family Liaison Action Group to President of the Consultative Assembly of Iran Rafsanjani¹

Washington, undated

Dear Mr. President:

We, the families of the American hostages, write to you, Mr. Rafsanjani, as the leader of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, the body of representatives of the Iranian people. We understand that you have been instructed by Iran's supreme spiritual leader, Imam Khomeini, to find a solution to the problem of our beloved relatives, the fifty-two American hostages.

We are writing to you privately as parents, wives, children, and brothers and sisters most directly and intimately affected by the enforced separation we and our loved ones have endured during these past long months. While we trust and pray that the hostages are being treated well in the true spirit of Islam, the grief and hardship imposed by such separation are barely manageable for us all. By saying that, we are, at the same time, aware that you and the people of Iran, a people with a profound sense of family ties, understand our anguish. We hope that this letter conveys a sense of our own sincere desire to communicate these family feelings common to us all.

We understand the people of Iran have suffered untold indignities and wrongs in the past. We share your confidence and hope that the new times in Iran soon will bring about a better life for all your people and their families.

We are writing to you at this point in time because we realize that you spearhead, in its vital beginnings, a new Parliament capable of overcoming and righting the wrongs of the past. We wish you well and pray that your efforts will achieve the goals you have set forth for your people.

We are writing to you at this time, too, with the idea that there might be some way in which the hostages' families could participate personally and directly in the solution of the problem which now divides the Iranian and American people. Might we be the bridge that brings the hostages home? Our families are prepared to come to any location you and your colleagues deem suitable. We feel our mutual concerns can best be discussed face to face, in an atmosphere of human trust.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 9/80. No classification marking. Attached to a September 8 briefing memorandum from Saunders to Muskie, Christopher, and Newsom.

Please know that our hearts and minds are open and that we are willing to meet on any appropriate occasion where an open dialogue might be useful.

We thank you for receiving our letter and the thoughts contained in it. We are anxiously awaiting your reply.

Sincerely,

The family of Thomas L. Ahern
The family of Clair Barnes
The family of William Belk
The family of Robert Blucker
The family of Donald J. Cooke
The family of William Daugherty
The family of Robert Englemann
The family of William Gallegos
The family of Bruce German
The family of Duane Gillette
The family of Alan Golacinski
The family of John Graves
The family of Joseph Hall
The family of Kevin Hermening
The family of Donald Hohman
The family of Leland Holland
The family of Michael Howland
The family of Charles Jones
The family of Malcolm Kalp
The family of Moorhead Kennedy
The family of Steven Kirtley
The family of Kathryn Koob
The family of William Keough
The family of Frederick Kupke
The family of Bruce Laingen
The family of Steven Lauterbach

The family of Gary Lee
The family of Paul Lewis
The family of John Limbert
The family of James Lopez
The family of Michael Metrinko
The family of Jerry Miele
The family of Michael Moeller
The family of Bert Moore
The family of Richard Morefield
The family of John McKeel
The family of Paul Needham
The family of Robert Ode
The family of Gregory Persinger
The family of Jerry Plotkin
The family of Michael Ragan
The family of David Roeder
The family of Barry Rosen
The family of William Royer
The family of Thomas Schaefer
The family of Charles Scott
The family of Donald Sharer
The family of R. V. Sickmen
The family of Joseph Subic
The family of Elizabeth Swift
The family of Victor Tomseth
The family of Phillip Ward

358. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 9, 1980

SUBJECT

Clandestine Option in Iran

1. Several weeks ago I delivered a proposal to you for a clandestine option for helping to resolve the situation in Iran.² [*3½ lines not declassified*]

2. A recent intelligence report on Iran has made it clear that the Iranians are seeing the development of an internal opposition to the Khomeini regime which is separate from the external elements that are generally tainted by association with the Shah. The following is a quotation from that report:

"Because of the deteriorating situation in Iran, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] rumors of plotting were widespread. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the recent televised trial of alleged coup plotters had further incited rumors that nationalistic groups were conspiring against Khomeini. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Iranians who saw the trials had been particularly impressed by the comportment of the younger defendants. They had not asked for forgiveness, but defended their actions by stating they were acting on behalf of the country. Their sincerity, outspokenness and the fact they did not have any apparent ties to the old regime had convinced people that there were still nationalistic elements in Iran who were working to bring down the regime. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the government had erred in broadcasting the trials. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the stories regarding the activities of nationalistic groups were only rumors and [*less than 1 line not declassified*] no firm evidence to confirm their existence [*portion marking not declassified*]

3. Another recent intelligence report states, "With respect to the economic situation in Iran, Beheshti conceded that the impact of the American embargo and freezing of Iranian funds in the United States has been far more effective than the Government of Iran had anticipated. Beheshti stressed the point that the Iranian Parliament must begin solving economic problems immediately or face the prospect of civil unrest as food and fuel shortages become acute." [*1 line not declassified*]

¹ Source: Central Intelligence Agency, Office of the Director of Central Intelligence, Job 82M00501R: 1980 Subject, Box 13, Folder 1. Secret; [*handling restriction not declassified*] Signed September 10 and hand-carried to Brzezinski.

² Attached; summarized in footnote 2, Document 348.

fied] Bazaari merchants are growing increasingly anti-Khomeini as a result of the chaotic economic conditions in Iran. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] the leaders of a large group of Iranian “homofars” (military non-commissioned officers who are technical specialists), who were in the vanguard of the anti-Shah revolution, recently approached former Prime Minister Bazargan complaining that the revolution was being “betrayed.” The homofar leaders, who claim control over 5,000 armed military personnel, asked Bazargan to suggest a means by which they could “seize control” of the revolution. [*portion marking not declassified*]

4. The above two paragraphs are examples of a general trend in the erosion of support for Khomeini among the key segments of Iranian society that brought him to power. If the elements required to bring about a change of government in Iran—a credible opposition leadership, an organization inside Iran, and the erosion of support for Khomeini among the dynamic elements of society—the latter was always perceived as the most difficult. This erosion may have begun and it might be possible to speed up the process [*less than 1 line not declassified*].

5. In sum, I continue to believe that it would be to the U.S. advantage to reinforce this impression of patriotic internal opposition to Khomeini, but that if we don’t start soon we will not have such a capability for some time to come. [*portion marking not declassified*]

Stansfield Turner³

³ Printed from a copy with Turner’s typed signature and an indication that he signed the original.

359. Editorial Note

On September 10, 1980, the Iranian Majlis gave an overwhelming vote of confidence to the government of Mohammed Ali Rajai, who had become the Prime Minister in August, and approved the 14 members he had nominated to his Cabinet. (Telegram 241776 to all diplomatic and consular posts, September 11; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800433–0232) Mohammad Karim Khodapanahi became Minister of Foreign Affairs. Following the appointment of the

Cabinet, the Islamic Revolutionary Council, which had ruled Iran since January 1979, dissolved. The Council's legislative powers had been handed over to the Majlis in May, and its executive powers were now transferred to the new government as of September 10. (Telegram 243049 to all diplomatic and consular posts, September 12; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800435-0050)

Simultaneously, the Majlis Foreign Affairs Committee recommended to President of the Majlis, Hajatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, that the Majlis discuss the hostage issue. (Telegram 240485 to all diplomatic and consular posts, September 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800431-0291) Ayatollah Mohammed Khomeini, spiritual adviser to the militants and Deputy Speaker of the Majlis, stated to the press that Iran "harbors no particular feelings of ill will toward the hostages" and suggested that the seizure of the Embassy must be viewed as "merely a minimal reaction" to years of U.S. oppression. As preconditions for release of the hostages, Khomeini said the United States should apologize and repent for its past crimes, eliminate the freeze on Iranian assets, stop the harassment of Iranian students in the United States, and end the economic sanctions against Iran. (Telegram 241776 to all diplomatic and consular posts, September 11; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800433-0232) His statement closely mirrored Rajai's speech in Qom on September 8 which served as his response to Secretary of State Edmund Muskie's letter. (See Document 344.) Reiterating America's transgressions, Rajai stated that "we do not compromise or make deals." However, he suggested that "if we are sure that you had repented, we would talk." (Telegram 240485 to all diplomatic and consular posts, September 10, National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800431-0291)

Watching the American diplomatic approaches to Iran and the unfolding of the Iranian political situation, Chargé Bruce Laingen wrote: "We are allowing ourselves a glimmer of guarded optimism." (Message from the Swiss, September 9; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 33, Iran Update 9/80)