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MESSAGE DESCRIPTION Background Press Guidance

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<u>White House</u>	<u>Hamilton Jordan - EYES ONLY</u>		
	<u>Jerry Powell - EYES ONLY</u>		

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For Background Use with the Press

Commission of Inquiry to Iran

The following is for background use in connection with the U.S. statement following Secretary General Waldheim's announcement that a Commission of Inquiry has been established to go to Tehran:

-- We will have a short formal statement on Secretary General Waldheim's announcement that the Commission of Inquiry has been established.

-- You should know on background that the U.S. has been discussing the establishment of a Commission with the Secretary General since the first days of the crisis. A proposal was conveyed to the Iranians in mid-November. The Secretary General discussed it again during his visit to Tehran the first week in January.

-- During that earlier period, we were operating without an Iranian authority prepared to make a commitment in principle to release the hostages. Two Iranian foreign ministers left their jobs (Yazdi on November 6, Bani Sadr on November 28). The Iranians were still talking about trying the hostages and holding them until the Shah was returned to Iran.

-- Now the situation is quite different. There is an elected President. Both he and the Foreign Minister have made statements about bringing the crisis to an end and creating a situation in which the hostages could be released. Only now have we reached a point where there is reasonable expectation that sending the Commission could lead to release of our people.

-- This is a fact-finding Commission. It will hear Iran's grievances and also look into our grievances about our hostages. The Commission will speak with each of the hostages to determine that they are all there and to assess their condition. The instructions to the Commission make clear that they cannot be subjected to interrogation.

-- The Secretary General has said the purpose of the Commission is to allow an early resolution of the crisis. That, of course, for us includes release of all of our people.

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