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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

December 7, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: JERRY SCHECTER *J.S.*  
SUBJECT: Background Information for Your  
Saturday Morning Press Breakfast

Jody asked me to mark and send to you the relevant portions of his and Hodding's briefings this week on Iran, with particular reference to the hostages and their treatment. I have also included a copy of the Vice President's statement.

All have stressed the primacy of the hostages. Jody's Friday briefing is particularly cogent on this matter -- as per your instructions.

This copy for:

NEWS CONFERENCE

#533

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 1:27 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 7, 1979

FRIDAY

MR. POWELL: I have no announcements to make this afternoon. I will be glad to take your questions.

Q What is the United State's response now to the things that are happening in Iran overnight, in terms of statements that they would try some, release some, and also would have a neutral observer and so forth?

MR. POWELL: Let me say --

Q We will take a five minute pause.

MR. POWELL: Let me say with regard to the comments and reports on trials -- let me just read to you again the statement that was given to you, the statement which we issued at the time the first reports of a plan to try American personnel surfaced in Iran. I will read it to you. We will make it available to you if you would like.

Q What is the date of that? Isn't it November 20th?

MR. POWELL: It is November 20th. 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 United Nations 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.

I would refer you directly to that statement. Insofar as other comments about the possibility of release or partial release or so forth, our attitude on the partial release of some of the hostages would be no different from what they were at the time

MORE

#533

previous, when some of the hostages were released, for whatever reason, by the authorities in Iran. And I would simply underline for you what we said at that time, that the single issue here is the release, and the safe release, of all of our people there.

Q Having said that, Jody, does what has happened -- what has been said by Iranian authorities -- represent in the view of the United States government any advance, any step forward?

MR. POWELL: I would hesitate to try to characterize statements at this point. We noted yesterday our interest in various statements there. I would caution you, frankly, against becoming overly or prematurely optimistic about the situation, based on statements. We have had a lot of statements. We have heard a lot of statements over the past -- better than 30 days. And I am not prepared to place a characterization on the situation there, based on those statements.

Q Would the trial of the hostages be considered as serious a consequence as the harm to a single hostage?

MR. POWELL: Well, I am not going to go beyond that November 20th statement at this point.

Q Well, it seems to me at Camp David -- and I don't remember if this was on the record or unofficial -- let's assume it was background. A White House official at that point said, quoting the President: If harm came to a single hostage, there would be grave consequences. Now that statement was obviously carefully crafted, as was this one. And this one would seem to suggest that the trial -- if there was a trial, the Iranian government would bear full responsibility for ensuing consequences. It seems that a trial in its gravity, if you would read this carefully, would not be as serious as harm to a single hostage.

MR. POWELL: Well, you will have to place your own interpretation on it, but -- if you insist upon interpreting the statement, I am just not in a position to go beyond those exact words. That statement was issued --

MORE

#533

I believe the the same day that the first mention was made of trying our people, I think you can remember when and how and under what circumstances that took place, and I would just refer you back to it and urge that it not be forgotten and I'll just have to leave it at that for right now.

Q The November 20 statement?

MR. POWELL: That is correct.

Q Yes.

Q Jody, would there be a response from this Government if the hostages were put on trial?

MR. POWELL: I am not going to go beyond that statement at this point.

Q Was it discussed at the foreign policy meeting this morning?

MR. POWELL: I did not attend the foreign policy meeting so I do not know.

Q You don't attend a lot of meetings that you talk about.

MR. POWELL: Well, I do not know. I did not attend and I do not know.

Q Was Iran the main subject?

Q Was there any significant reason that Jordan wasn't there?

MR. POWELL: He is out of town.

Q Jody, has the United States Government at any level contacted the Argentine government about trying to get the shah into Argentina?

MR. POWELL: I am not going to get into discussions of what efforts, the particulars, on the efforts that we have been and continue to make, as indicated last Sunday, to help the shah, the former shah, find a permanent place of residence.

Q Would there be, in the view of the Government, an important distinction between any sort of trial of our diplomats as opposed to the trial of military men such as in the Pueblo incident?

MR. POWELL: I am really not going to try to make those sort of -- get into sort of comparing this or that to the other. If you go back to what I said, we have made it very clear that any sort of trial of any of these people would be a flagrant violation of international law and that the Government of Iran would bear full responsibility for, any ensuing consequences.

Q Jody, your exhortation on allowing international inspection teams into the Embassy has apparently struck a chord with the Foreign Minister, or at least he now says that that will be permitted. Have you received any information on a schedule for that?

MR. POWELL: No, not that I am aware of. I would hope -- well,

again I remind you that statements are statements and actions are actions and when and if this takes place, then we will be in a position to judge it.

Q Yesterday you said that there might be straws in the wind. Are you pulling back on that?

MR. POWELL: No. I didn't intend to. Did I say something that led you to believe that?

Q Yes. You know, over-early, optimistic, and so forth.

MR. POWELL: No. I will be very frank, but could I say just for your guidance here just for a moment -- it seemed to me, and this is always a dangerous thing for me to do -- it just seemed to me that overall there was a sort of burst of optimism -- this is just for your guidance now -- in the overall tone of reporting and so forth that maybe was just -- I mean I realize we have been through such a period of -- all of us, in and out of Government, in the press and the public -- when -- in dealing with this thing, and there is perhaps a human tendency to sort of seize on anything that looks like it might be a positive sign and make too much out of it.

I am not trying to say, because I don't know and I don't think we know -- are in a position to judge what these straws in the wind, if you will, may mean. But just because I would hate to see the hopes of the American people and of the hostages' families raised prematurely or without sufficient foundation here, and that is the only reason that I make that point and I really do want that to be said just for your guidance on the thing.

Q You don't want us to go overboard on it.

MR. POWELL: Yes. Primarily because I don't see a basis for that sort of thing, and I know it is a very difficult thing to play with nuances, and that will end the guidance portion. We are back on the record.

Q Is there any expectation at all that Vance could meet with an Iranian representative while he is in Europe?

MR. POWELL: I have no information, public or private, of such a possibility, nor any indication that there has been any interest expressed, directly or indirectly, from the authorities in Iran about such a meeting.

Q Would we be amenable?

MR. POWELL: Well, I think that is one of those cases we will have to deal with if it arises. So far as I know it has not arisen, even in a tentative fashion.

Q If you are confronted with a situation where some of those American hostages were released and some others were put on trial, how would that change the American position?

MR. POWELL: It wouldn't change our basic position at all. I think I cannot emphasize too strongly that the concern here is the illegal holding of Americans as hostage in Tehran. That is the concern. Other questions, grievances, issues, are beside the point.

That must be dealt with. That has been our position from the outset. It is our position now. It will continue to be our position until every single American is safely back in this country, period.

Q We did accept the U.N. resolution, which talks about investigation of the --

MR. POWELL: What avenues are pursued, what discussions take place once our people are safe, that is a matter that can be dealt with then. But not only in this country, but within the international community and within Iran, there must not be any mistake about the position of the United States. Partial release of the hostages, of some of the hostages, will not change that. And that will be a position as strongly held if there are five Americans remaining in Tehran as when there were 50 or 60. It would be the position if there was only one American held.

Q Why isn't the President going to see the families of the hostages?

MR. POWELL: Do you want me to sing a chorus of the ninety nine safely -- I beg your pardon?

Q Why isn't the President going to see the families of the hostages?

MR. POWELL: I don't -- on what basis do you judge that he is not? I don't have anything for you -- (Laughter.)

Q Nice try.

Q Is the President going to see the families --

MR. POWELL: I don't think I would be able to answer that. I don't have anything on it.

Q Jody, can you give us some idea how much time, and in what ways, the President is spending on politics?

MR. POWELL: Oh, I don't generally ask the President to fill out a time card, except periodically, when we are trying to assess how he is spending his time. But he has, as he has in the past, continued to talk with people about politics, both inside and outside of his campaign, for the most part by telephone, or in some cases having people in --

Q Did he have any --

MR. POWELL: -- as he has continued to, as I have pointed out, I think, as forcefully as I could--I think you were gone at that time, Leslie, but toward the beginning of this situation I

made it very clear on several occasions that this government, and this President did not intend to be, himself, held hostage or immobilized by the situation there. On other matters where-- and we would continue to proceed -- we have, of course, made it clear by our actions, that the question of outside trips, political and in some cases non-political, have been curtailed because of his need to be here. And as you know, he did not even attend the fund-raiser in Washington because, as I said, he felt that inasmuch as he had asked other candidates to be restrained with regard to their comments on the Iranian situation, that it was appropriate for him not to make that public appearance.

Q Jody, does the White House bill the campaign for all of these long distance phone calls the President makes to Iowa and places like that?

MR. POWELL: I don't really know how that is handled.

Q The Kennedy people say you are manipulating this hostage crisis for political purposes -- the Washington Post.

MR. POWELL: I don't care to get into any spat with them over that.

Q Iran has lost the President's SALT debate this year, hasn't it? I mean, because of Iran -- how do you feel about that?

MR. POWELL: Well, we agree with the assessment -- we have been in consultation with people on the Hill -- that this is not the appropriate time to bring up SALT in the Senate. There is a time pressure. There would be very little time to begin to deal with it anyway. And I think the Majority Leader and others have said, and we agree, that under the present circumstances it would be very difficult to obtain the focus of attention upon SALT that is appropriate.

We hope to move as rapidly as we can in the new year and obtain ratification as speedily as possible.

Q Do you think the behavior of the Soviet government throughout this Iranian crisis has affected the outcome of SALT?

MR. POWELL: That is a judgment I really can't make at this point. We have expressed our -- when they have behaved in a way which we felt was appropriate, their support in the U.N. and so forth, we have made that clear; and when they have behaved in a way that is decidedly inappropriate, such as some earlier broadcasts and a more recent Pravda piece, we have also made that clear.

Q Is our government now in the position of communicating with the Iranian government through diplomatic channels?

MR. POWELL: I really don't know precisely what -- but if I did I probably wouldn't get into the details. As I think has been made clear, following the United Nations' action there were several diplomatic initiatives that could go forward to attempt to

probe and determine what possibility there might be for a peaceful solution and a safe return of our people. I don't have anything for you on the status of that, of those --

Q Is there a rebellion in our U.S. embassy in Moscow over the Russian attitude --

MR. POWELL: I saw that piece. I don't have any details on it all. I am sure people in our embassy in Moscow share the concern and perhaps even the sense of anger that all Americans feel; perhaps those who are diplomats more keenly so, if that is possible, than their fellow Americans. I don't have any knowledge of whether the report of a meeting that took place is accurate or not.

Q Do you want to say anything about reports that Soviet MIGs based in the Soviet Union are flying missions and strafing and bombing villages in Afghanistan?

MR. POWELL: Not at this point, no.

Q On the meeting this morning that the President had with the Norwegian and Dutch prime ministers, is the President still confident that that modernization of the nuclear forces is going to go through next week?

MR. POWELL: Yes, we do expect a positive result on modernization. It is along the lines of the recommendations of the committees that have been working on this. As I think you know, those recommendations include both a process of badly needed modernization to answer -- well, I will come back to that -- badly needed modernization, and an arms control initiative.

The meetings that have been and are taking place here in Washington are based upon the desire of those governments to communicate their thoughts to the American government and to the President. They are concerned about arms control. I think you can assume that the President has made it very clear that the United States is, as it has always been, interested in, committed to, productive arms control and arms limitation talks whenever those are possible. And that we are also committed -- I know that one of their concerns is the SALT treaty -- and that we are also committed to the early ratification of that treaty.

But the fact of the matter is, and this should be clearly understood by everyone who has an interest in this issue, that the North Atlantic Alliance cannot close its eyes to the behavior of the Soviet Union in this matter. The North Atlantic Alliance cannot fail to recognize and deal with the facts. The facts are that the Soviet Union has proceeded, over the past five years, with a vigorous and accelerating program of deploying SS-20s in particular, and also Backfire bombers, in the western part of the Soviet Union. Those SS-20s -- and let me say that that is at a time when the North Atlantic

Alliance, over that five year period, has not been engaged in significant modernization of similar forces; at a time when the North Atlantic Alliance has made repeated public and private expressions of concern about this behavior; at a time when our willingness to engage in constructive arms limitation negotiations was never in doubt -- the purpose of the SS-20, which as I said has been deployed at a vigorous and accelerating rate by the Soviet Union, should not be misunderstood.

That missile, if it is used, will not drop its warheads on Washington or New York or Atlanta. That missile will drop its warheads upon the great cities of Western Europe. And as I said yesterday, as we have said all along, we are interested, as we have been, in the aggressive pursuit of arms limitations discussions with the Soviet Union, with regard to this type of weapon. But we have been interested for five years, and the Soviet Union has been unresponsive to our expressions of interest.

We cannot now accept the proposition put forward by the Soviet Union that despite their vigorous and accelerating program of deployment of such weapons, that we should continue to do nothing while negotiations proceed, if indeed they do proceed.

Q Jody, the Dutch Parliament yesterday voted to do precisely that. I am just wondering if there is any discussion of that.

MR. POWELL: I won't comment specifically on internal matters in the Netherlands. But I would point out to you that at the same time the SPD in West Germany took a very different position, as did the Italian Parliament, I believe. Also I would remind you of the position taken by the government of the United Kingdom on this matter. The position of the United States, as member of the Alliance, is clear. And as I said earlier, because of the situation in which we now find ourselves, we expect a positive outcome from the meeting to be held next week. And we expect that the North Atlantic Alliance will deal with the facts of the situation, and will not be intimidated by a sort of late, latter day interest on the part of the Soviets, after they have proceeded for five years with a modernization program, asking us to do nothing, while we talk about this.

The fact of the matter is, and I think there ought to be no misunderstanding about this, what has happened is that in this area the vigorous and accelerating program, with regard to the SS-20s in particular and also the Backfire in the Soviet Union, has created a gap there. And that gap must be closed. Our preference always has been to deal with it by negotiations if possible. We have gotten no response to that. We have reached a point now when we can no longer continue to wait for the Soviet Union to adopt a more constructive attitude.

MORE

#533

Q Jody, to what extent would you say the Dutch government, and France, and others who favor a delay, were influenced by Soviet threats?

MR. POWELL: I wouldn't even begin to comment on that. I have absolutely no way of knowing. The government of the Netherlands and their elected representatives have the perfect right to make whatever decision they choose.

Q Jody, does this mean that the United States is rejecting the proposal by Norway, Denmark and Holland to postpone a decision for six months?

MR. POWELL: Our position is in favor, as it always has been, of the report prepared by the two committees, which calls for action to close the gap; but it also calls for a serious arms control initiative. And that is and has been our position.

Q I am sorry. I don't understand. Is that yes or no?

Q I don't think you have accurately stated the positions -- the question is not --

MR. POWELL: To answer your question calls for me to presume upon the exact position of these countries. They can speak for themselves. I have stated our position. It has not changed; it is what it always has been.

Q Jody, this is what I will follow up on. There are two more representatives here from those countries, the Danish Foreign Minister and the Undersecretary of State of Sweden today. Now it looks like the Nordic countries are together doing some kind of pushing for delay. How will that affect the overall NATO meeting next week? Will there be four countries --

MR. POWELL: I have given you our expectations with regard to the NATO meeting. This process of studying the situation created not by any action on the part of the Alliance but by the action on the part of the Soviet Union over the past five years has gone on -- it was initiated early in President Carter's Administration. It is an Alliance undertaking. That study went on for two years. A report has been prepared. The recommendations have been prepared by the Alliance, and we support those recommendations prepared by the Alliance, not by the United States; we support them, and we expect a positive result.

Q Does the attitude of Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands alarm the President?

MR. POWELL: I don't think -- I certainly wouldn't say the President is alarmed by --

Q How would you characterize, Jody --

MR. POWELL: The statement which we issued on these meetings is the statement which we will stand by.

Q Alliance decisions are made by unanimity --

Q Did the two prime ministers today go along with the idea --

MR. POWELL: The State Department explained today, following a question yesterday about the voting procedures and so forth and so on and I will have to refer you to that. I did not try to -- yes?

Q I was wondering if the two prime ministers this morning went along with the Administration's position, as you stated it, that first we close the gap and then we negotiate? Because before they had said they would like some kind of --

MR. POWELL: That is not what I said. I said the negotiations can -- I mean the gap can be closed either way. It will be closed, so far as the position of the United States is concerned, and the position of the Alliance, we would respect, will be that also. We have, for five years, preferred and still would prefer, that it would be closed by negotiations, but we can no longer close our eyes to what the Soviet Union is doing and we cannot accept their suggestion that we continue to do nothing while talks go on, if talks are to go on.

We have -- the process of talking, expressing concern, and so forth, that has been happening for five years and it has not produced a change in the actions of the Soviet Union. They have continued to deploy, not only as I said, in a vigorous manner, but in an accelerating manner. They now, faced with the prospect of, after five long years, a substantive response from the North Atlantic Alliance, express interest in constructive negotiations on this matter.

I am in no position to judge at this point whether those proposals are serious or not. But after five long years in which they have built, deployed these weapons, substantially different from the sort of weapons that there are on the NATO side of the line, we cannot delay further and we cannot continue to do nothing while talks are underway, if they indeed are to be underway.

Q Did the President convey that view to the two prime ministers?

MR. POWELL: I was not in on the meeting but I think you may rest assured that the President --

MR. SCHECTER: The President did that in front of you all when he made his comments to the Norwegian Prime Minister and to the Dutch Prime Minister.

Q But not in the terms that Jody just gave us.

MR. SCHECTER: Well, he made the point that we are going to have a nuclear modernization proposal at NATO as well as an arms control initiative and that is the point that Jody is making, that we are going to do both.

Q But Jody went further, Jerry. Jody said that indeed we have been trying to talk to the Russians for the past five years and that the Russians really haven't responded to those talks and what Jody is saying is now it is time to do more than talk. Did the President convey that?

MR. POWELL: That has been our position all along and I can assure you that all of the governments, and this process has been going on for two years under this Administration, I can assure you that

no government in NATO, and I would suspect no interested government in the world, is unaware of our position and the position of other governments in the Alliance on this matter.

Q Yes, but in that case why did the prime ministers of these countries come here to talk with the President?

MR. POWELL: I have given you, as best I can, their -- the situation. They wanted to speak with members of the Government here, communicate with them about their concerns, particularly in the arms control area, including SALT, and the President, as I said earlier, has made it very clear that we are interested, in the strongest possible terms, in arms limitation, arms control, and so forth, and both in strategic areas and with regard to theater forces. But I have also described to you what our position is, as it has been all along on this matter.

Q Did they ask about SALT II and what did he tell them about it, the chances for passage?

MR. POWELL: I know SALT II is an area that they are concerned about and I can't speak directly since I was not there, but the President, I am sure -- I just don't know if it came up, frankly. If it did, I can assure you that the President left no doubt in their minds about our commitment to SALT II and our intention to press ahead.

Q In the paper today there were all sorts of articles saying it doesn't look good and it is not going to come up until the election year and the votes aren't there.

MR. POWELL: The concern amongst our Atlantic allies, of our allies in the Atlantic Alliance, over SALT II and the importance that they attach to its ratification should be no secret to anyone.

Q I don't see how.

MR. POWELL: How what?

Q You say that after the meeting you are confident that the vote is going to go the way we want it to.

MR. POWELL: I said that yesterday. The State Department said it yesterday, and that is still our view.

Q Jody, can the United States and the other European NATO allies who favor the deployment go ahead without the cooperation of Norway, Denmark, and Holland?

MR. POWELL: I just can't -- as I said, the procedural aspects were dealt with by State today. I did not try to get into them.

Q Well, it is a fairly important point, isn't it? To me it is.

MR. POWELL: I know it is. That is why State dealt with it an hour ago.

Q Well, what is the answer? Can we or can we not?

MR. POWELL: As I just said, Bob, I did not try to brief myself on the procedural aspects of how this is considered and dealt with within the Alliance, because the question came up yesterday, we talked about it, and we decided that State would deal with that, and they have. That is the best I can do for you.

Q It seems to me that you and the President ought to have a fairly clear idea in your minds as to whether we can in fact go through with this if these countries are opposed to it, or whether we cannot, and if I understand you correctly, you don't know.

MR. SCHECTER: No, he answered the question by saying --

MR. POWELL: I am going to bite my tongue. I will deal with this, Jerry. I am going to bite my tongue and I am going to answer you one more time.

Q I have heard you. I just don't understand why you don't know.

MR. POWELL: There is, to make it as clear as I can, there is not a necessity that the White House Press Secretary and the State Department Press Secretary be prepared to brief on exactly the same procedural matters every day.

Q Then that is merely a procedural matter to you, is that correct?

MR. POWELL: Pardon?

Q That is merely a procedural matter to you?

MR. POWELL: The question of how this is dealt with within the Alliance is a question of procedure. I have stated to you that we expect a positive result from this. How -- the procedural way in which that takes place is something which I did not take the time to familiarize myself with this morning.

However, because the question arose yesterday, we discussed it with State and they did deal with that. The locus of that information, obviously, is primarily in the State Department. I can assure you the President understands it fully. I don't. If that is a disqualification, then so be it.

Q Can we ask Jerry a specific question?

MR. POWELL: It has been an issue that has been around for a long time and obviously neither you nor I are familiar with it.

Q Let me ask Jerry about the Netherlands. Can NATO go ahead with a modernization program if the Dutch Parliament refuses to accept the 48 cruise missiles?

MR. SCHECTER: He has answered the question.

MR. POWELL: I said we expect a positive result. Okay?

Q I have a question. Did the President speak with the synfuels conferees today and, if so, what did he say?

Q He dropped in.

MR. POWELL: Yes. I think it was ESC. I was not there and I don't have any information on what he said. I am sure he emphasized the importance of the most rapid possible movement in this area, which we have been doing for -- I sure would like to end this sooner or later.

Q Is it the view of the Government that if there are spy trials of our diplomats that that would substantially increase the gravity of the offense against this Government and these people by the Iranian government?

MR. POWELL: I am sorry, but I am going to stick with what I said, that it would be a flagrant violation of international law and basic religious principles, that the government of Iran would bear full responsibility for any ensuing consequences. That is what we wanted to say and that is what we have said.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

(AT 2:09 P.M. EST)

DECEMBER 5, 1979

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT  
BY  
THE VICE PRESIDENT

The Briefing Room

(12:01 P.M. EST)

VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE: Over the past several weeks we have been hearing a drumfire of propoganda out of Tehran, some of it from people calling themselves students, some of it from the government-controlled radio and television in Iran, and some of it from various officials or people in authority. The message is very clear. It says over and over that the world and the American people should ignore the hostages, forget about the innocent people bound hand and foot, overlook the continued outrage to law and standards of human behavior. We are told to forget all that and focus on the hatred of one man.

We are not going to forget and the American people are not going to get their priorities confused. How are our hostages being treated? The facts are there for all to see, and the simple fact is that 50 human beings are being held in inhuman conditions, contrary to all civilized standards, in order to prove a political point. They are not permitted regular visitors. They are isolated and not allowed to speak except to their captors. As far as we know, the hostages have not been allowed to receive mail or messages. There has never been a systematic accounting of the numbers and welfare of the hostages.

The so-called "students" have not permitted any outside observers even to see these people for 10 days. They are refusing to let international organizations such as the Red Cross into the compound. They refuse visits by religious organizations. They refuse representatives of neutral states. Even prisoners of war are guaranteed certain standards of human treatment. But these standards are being dragged in the dirt every day by a group of kidnappers with the acquiescence of the government.

We are hearing daily propoganda about the alleged crimes of our people in Tehran, most of whom volunteered to serve their country at a difficult and dangerous time. We are not and will not respond to that propoganda. I would note that one of those being held as a so-called "spy" in Tehran is in fact a private American citizen who simply happened to be visiting the Embassy on business at the time of the attack on November 4. It was many days before we even learned, indirectly, that he was being held. That man, like the rest, has now been held for 31 days, tied up, denied contact with his family, denied exercise, denied access even to the comfort of religion.

We hear a great deal about the crimes of the shah, but that is not the issue. The issue which disturbs the American people is that 50 of our fellow citizens are being abused in violation of international

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law. These are our brothers and sisters.

Yesterday the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution which called as the first most important priority, as it should, for the release of the American hostages. That is the issue. It is the only issue, and we are not going to forget they must be set free.

END

(AT 12:05 P.M. EST)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 237

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1979, 11:36 P.M.  
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. CARTER: Good afternoon.

I've got one statement to read into the record.

On behalf of President Carter, Secretary Vance yesterday transmitted the seventh semiannual report on implementation of the Helsinki Final Act to Chairman Dante Fascell of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. These reports are submitted to assist the Commission in its function of monitoring implementation of the Helsinki Accords. The present report covers the period June 1 to November 30, 1979. Copies are available for distribution.

The next followup CSCE meeting will start in Madrid on November 11, 1980. A major feature of that meeting will be a review by the signatories of implementation of the Final Act. The United States intends to speak frankly and honestly about successes and failures in implementation. Our comments will reflect the record of progress at that time.

Thus far, the record has been uneven. Advances in some areas have been coupled with serious failures with respect to other aspects of the Final Act. For example, during the period covered by the report, there have been encouraging developments in the reunification of divided families and the general area of human contacts, but continued repression of individuals seeking to exercise rights which their governments have pledged to respect.

The Final Act recognizes respect for human rights as an integral part of the basis for the development of security and cooperation among the 35 participating states. It is in the area of human rights that certain states have had the most difficulty in meeting the commitments which they voluntarily made at Helsinki. The United States, during the coming year and at the Madrid meeting, intends to continue to encourage all signatories to implement the Final Act in its entirety.

Q How about Shaka?

A What is the State Department's reaction to the reversal of the Deportation Order for Mayor Shaaka, right? That's the question? The answer: We welcome the outcome of the case. To the extent that it contributes to an atmosphere of tranquility on the West Bank and Gaza, we believe it will have a positive effect on the autonomy talks.

Q Do you think American pressure was responsible for this?

A I think that the decision was taken for the reasons that were given, and that's the best that I can do on that.

Q Would you give us your promised announcement on what we are intending to do about Libya?

A Almost any minute now. It's on its way. Let's talk about Iran, for the moment, all right?

Q Do you have any reaction to the Tehran broadcast which seems to some to welcome the U.N. decision?

A Again, we have the same difficulties with this, which is trying to decipher the various broadcasts and statements. Any welcoming of the UN position would be welcome here. For our own part, the United States intends over the next days and weeks to pursue a number of methods for reaching the objective set out in the Security Council resolution.

Yesterday's National Security Council meeting dealt heavily with this entire subject. The situation was reviewed as it now stands, a full month after the assault and the taking of the captives. The President and his advisers are working on ways to achieve our basic objective in the light of the situation as it now stands.

I want to stress that the Security Council resolution does provide another and new basis for further action and further approaches. Action and approaches, which I want to stress also, are non-military.

Q For example?

A For example, as the days go by, I will be able to provide you with examples as we take action. I don't want to anticipate them or to give them away in advance of what is

going on. In some cases, they are going to be diplomatic and hidden, we hope --

Q But you've referred to a Security Council resolution providing a new basis for further action and further approaches?

A Well, simply, what you now have is a concrete statement unanimously adopted by the world community through the Security Council.

Speaking directly to the subject, it is a new base of solidarity from the world community, and it provides us again with some possibilities for approaches which I'm really not going to go into.

Q (Inaudible)

A I'll tell you what I'm not going to do is go through any set of speculations on what may be happening.

Q This is not on speculations. This is just a definition. Is a blockade a non-military action?

A I have never really heard it regarded as such.

Q Are you ruling out military action?

A I have never ruled it out or ruled it in. What I am trying to stress is that we are in a situation as we have described it in the past at this point, in which what we are pursuing are a number of means through diplomatic channels to obtain the release of the hostages.

The President has spoken very clearly on the subject of when or how or what might happen in certain circumstances. Those circumstances don't obtain at this moment.

Q Does this mean diplomatic now or all non-military?

A Diplomatic. That's correct.

Q Diplomatic does not mean economic?

A I really am not going to start defining anything beyond what I've said, really.

Q You put the adjective in front of "actions and approach" diplomatic.

It's hard, it seems to me, for you to back away from either expanding the adjectives before that word, because you're leaving that whole economic thing which is being reported hanging in mid-air. It would be very helpful if you could --

A I'll show you how to back away from it. I'm really not going to go any further with it, honestly.

Q Before taking other directions, aren't you going to wait for a decision of the International Court of Justice?

A The International Court of Justice is supposed to be getting under way the tenth --

Q Next Monday.

A Yes. I was just trying to remember the date. And we are obviously going to be interested in that. But you know, we always said that the Security Council action and possible action of the World Court were not contradictory, but complementary, and that one did not prevent other things from happening while you were seeking to move through the channels afforded by the other, and we're going to continue operating in every way which we can.

Q Have you got anything on the personal initiative by Dr. Waldheim going with the Islamic president to Iran next week or the week after?

A The Secretary General has said repeatedly that he will do anything he can which he feels to be useful to help achieve a peaceful resolution of this situation.

As to what he will actually do, I'll have to leave to him to describe. I'm not going to.

Q Hodding, I would like to follow up on this business of the Security Council resolution: It could as easily be argued that the Security Council has now done about as much as the United States can hope for. I just wonder, what it is that causes you to believe that you have in fact a foundation now for new action by either the Security Council as a body or the UN as a whole?

A What I said -- I wasn't saying either one of those things. I said we have the basis for action. And I also said that there is a foundation, now solidly based upon a unanimous decision, that those hostages should be released.

I'm not suggesting that the Security Council, the General Assembly, or the United Nations is going to do anything. I am simply trying to deal with the context of our efforts today. The context of our efforts today comes in the wake of a unanimous Security Council resolution.

Q Are you saying that we now have a moral basis for action involving diplomacy?

A We always had a moral basis for action involving diplomacy. What we have is now a concrete, public, on-the-record position by the Security Council's members on the basic point that we've been raising all along. It does not radically alter the internal situation in Tehran -- or at least we don't see any signs of it yet; but we would hope that it would begin to seep through there, that that regime stands alone in this matter.

Q But if their moral view is different than our moral view internationally, then how can this hope to persuade them to do otherwise?

A It would be difficult to believe that the entire leadership in Iran is unmindful of the fact that Muslem and non-Muslem, East Bloc and West Bloc, Third World and developed world, all stand as one on this matter.

It is difficult to believe that the leadership of that country can be unaware and unresponsive to this kind of world opinion and world pressure which is manifested in a number of ways, the Security Council resolution being the latest. But we are, of course, pursuing other avenues and continue to do so. I only take note of the Security Council action because it is the latest, but not the last, of the efforts that we will be undertaking.

Q I find it difficult to believe that the leadership of this country would not be moved by the martialing of world opinion. Yet, you're dealing with forces over there who have reputidated not only the Security Council action, but in advance, the World Court action and have just about decimated their own Foreign Ministry. You're not dealing government to government in the classic sense in which you can apply international sanctions and expressions of dismay registered between government and government. That doesn't seem to have any effect on these people at all.

What gives you any feeling that more of the same will change what has obviously been unchanged?

A There are several comments I could make. I would like to make one, that while some of us live in a world in which everything is encapsulated on a 24-hour basis, there is ample evidence from a longer range view that what seems to be the final word today becomes a new word the next day; and that while it doesn't make deadline pressures any easier, it is worthwhile to remember that there have been more startling reversals in the face of pressure than what I'm talking about. That's one thing.

The second thing is, if we were in fact relying only on one approach, i. e. the one that you just mentioned, you'd have some reason to wonder whether we had lost possession of our senses, but we are approaching this through a number of channels, of which this kind of concerted pressure is only one.

Q Have you got any indication that Khoumeini or the Revolutionary Council has indicated that they would like to talk to an American envoy, specifically Andrew Young?

A I don't know. Back a few weeks ago, there were signs --

Q I'm talking about in the last days.

A Oh, I don't know anything about that, Bob. That's just a literal fact. I don't know anything --

Q I noticed when you started talking about this in general terms, you said that the actions were intended over the next days and weeks. That seems to suggest, to me at least, that the Administration is actually operating on the premise that this crisis is going to continue at least for several weeks. Is that correct?

A This Administration is operating on the premise that it would be derelict in its duty if it approached this crisis the way people approach deadlines, that we have to think beyond the current day. And if we are not successful today, we have to have an approach that deals with the next day and the next. Obviously, as I've said every day in here in one form or another, what we expect, intend and demand is that the hostages be released immediately.

Q But it is true apparently that whatever this vague, undefined strategy is that you are talking about --

A It surely isn't going to be defined from here.

Q -- literally is a strategy now projected over a period of weeks, as you've described it.

A Literally, the strategy has always been on two tracks: One, to try to obtain the immediate release of the hostages; and two, to deal with the possibility that that is not going to happen, and to try to find ways to approach it that will obtain it if you can't obtain it immediately. That's always been a two-track approach.

Q Can you be any more specific about this huge campaign you're talking about?

A No. But as I've told you before when going through this same exercise, the truth shall set me free because soon enough you all will see manifestations of it and we can then discuss whether or not this was what I was talking about at the time.

Q Hodding, there was a signed editorial in Pravda this morning, which while accepting the fact that the Iranians probably shouldn't have taken our people hostage, is very sympathetic to their position. Doesn't this kind of thing seriously deflate the pressure that you say is building up in the world community on --

A The commentary that was carried in Pravda today is deplorable. We've made our views known on this subject to the Soviet Union as recently as within this hour. Let me say, I would simply make note of something here -- that that which you have here is a two-fold thing here. The Soviets have taken some positive, constructive steps in diplomatic channels such as the United Nations Security Council in support of the principle of diplomatic immunity. However, in light of the Pravda article, the Soviet position remains ambiguous.

Speaking for the government, we feel that the Soviet Union can and should do more to support the immediate release of the hostages, and to repeat, insofar as the Pravda commentary is concerned, that commentary is deplorable.

Q Is that why Dobrynin was in?

A Dobrynin came in, one, to have a discussion generally with the Secretary. He has been recalled for consultations to Moscow. They wanted to discuss several matters, but Iran was clearly among them.

Q "Ambiguous" I suppose would mean that it isn't clear to the United States what the Soviets are about. Is that really the right word or are they playing both sides of the street?

A I'll leave the description to you. I've described the situation.

Q You mean it's unclear to the United States --

A No.

Q -- whether they have the Russians supporting the release of the diplomats?

A The Russian support is very clear insofar as their public positions are taken in such fora as the Security Council. We also have this kind of commentary.

Q It's confusing?

A We also have earlier radio broadcasts from clandestine sources, and then we have a reversal of that policy. Yes, I'd call that ambiguous.

Q Are there other ways in which you are to a degree confused about Soviet policy? For example, do you have any evidence of Russian financial aid to certain political wings in Iran? Do you have evidence of any military supplies going into Iran from Afghanistan?

A I don't, Marvin, I just don't have anything on that. And I doubt, insofar as Soviet assistance to some of the factions inside, it's notorious that the support for the Tudeh Party has been longstanding.

Q What kind of support has been longstanding because the Tudeh Party has been specifically low-profiled over the last several months, and --

A Most everybody has been.

Q That could be it too.

A That means outside of the official support for Khomeini, virtually all the groups have been low-profile over the last few months.

Q O.K. Well, what kind of support have the Russians been giving them?

A I don't think I have anything of any note to offer on that.

Q Hodding, are you saying that Vance took up the Pravda editorial with Dobrynin this morning?

A I wouldn't lead you away from that idea.

Q SALT, as well? Did that come up?

A I'm not going to go into the whole list of things that they talked about. They may yet be talking. The meeting started at 11. I simply am not going to be able to go any further than that.

Q Can we also assume that the Secretary sought Soviet support this morning for this new campaign, political, diplomatic, and economic?

A I'm just going to say they discussed Iran.

Q Hodding, is this a recall with a prejudice, such as the recall of Ambassador Landau?

A No. Oh, wait. Ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. I mean I can't speak for that. No, there's no recall along that line. This is a normal kind of occasional consultation-recall. He does it from time to time.

Q Hodding, a couple of questions, please: Could you tell us when the decision was reached to launch this new strategy, please?

A Well, wait a minute. "New strategy" would be a new mistake for the day. It is not a new strategy. It is taking into account new factors, continuing our strategy for the release of the hostages and adding approaches into it which seemed worthwhile in light of the situation as it now stands.

The situation, you know, changes; it changes objectively on the ground in Tehran. It changes objectively in the world as a whole. It changes subjectively. I mean all of this, you know -- you continue to review the situation.

I think what I have to tell you is that every three days, I'm going to announce that we have reviewed the strategy -- of course, they are going to be released, Jim,

immediately, and therefore this won't be necessary; but if they are not, we are constantly reviewing and altering the approaches as we discover ways that seem to be more promising or less promising, and that is going to go on.

I recognize the need for breakthroughs and defeats and major initiatives and all sorts of things that make it useful to write about this, but the fact is, this is a continuing process, and that train keeps on moving and you can take snapshots, but we're still aiming at the same objective, which is the release of the hostages.

Q Let me follow this up, please? What value is there in simply announcing that there will be new diplomatic approaches taken, without your itemizing it in any way?

A The value is that it helps us keep some diplomatic initiative. We will let them conduct their diplomacy through the news media; we will try to conduct ours in the ways that seems to be the most useful, which is through diplomatic channels. And if you keep signaling everything you're going to do, as I said, it's a matter of simply putting your cards up and saying, "Excuse me. We're playing poker, but here's my hand." That's not very smart.

Q Just to follow up directly, I'd like to get some kind of impression from you whether in fact there are new initiatives that are being pursued or whether what we have now is U.S. action in the wake of kind of a week-long hiatus that may have been taken due to religious holidays and a national referendum, and is simply a continuation taking into account --

A All of the above, Ted, really. All of the above.

Q Are you doing something -- What we're trying to get at, are you doing something different from what you were doing before?

A I think beyond what I have said here, what will become apparent is what we're doing as we do it --

Q Yes, but you've been saying that for several days.

A That's right, and the things have happened in several ways, and more will happen.

-- MORE --

Q Is it also taking into account the apparent slow death, if it hasn't already died, of the theory that some people like George Ball and some people I believe around this building were propagating, that once the harm was over and once the referendum was over, then they would have achieved their purpose and they would be willing to let the hostages go? Are we finding that this hasn't proven true, so far, and therefore we have got to think up a whole new set of things to do?

A It has been at least five years since Moharram was over, as I read it. And of course it's been disproved because nothing happened within 24 hours, now come on

We are operating in a time frame here, not on, you know, four deadlines a day.

Q Is it fair to infer from what you are saying, that while you have a number of things going, the leading effort now is being done by Waldheim?

A It is fair to say that a number of initiatives are under way and I am not going to try to itemize them.

Q Did you say you were going to have more details for us as "the day" or as "the days" go on?

A Sometimes as the day goes on, and sometimes as the days go on.

Q I mean --

A Today?

Q Today.

A I am catching a train at 1:00, I hope.

Q Do you have anything new on the number of hostages and also the treatment of the hostages? There are reports out of Tehran that there are 47 in the Embassy, according to the student leaders.

A The only count that I know is that when we last had any opportunity to know, 50 seemed to be the proper number.

I will say, for the 24th time I suppose, that there is no way for us to know how many are there or what their condition is. And the continued statements alleging what their condition is, is just so many words unless we do know, and know through some objective, neutral source.

All right, Libya.

Q Yes.

A This morning, Under Secretary Newsom called in the Libyan Representative in Washington. His name is Ali El Huderri.

This follows previous demarches that we have made in Washington, New York, and Tripoli. The responses to these demarches have not been satisfactory. We are asking the Libyan Government to acknowledge clearly, its share of the responsibility in what happened to our Embassy last Sunday and to give restitution for the damages.

We also want firm assurances about the future safety and security of our Embassy and its personnel.

In the meantime, we are temporarily suspending normal operations of our Embassy in Tripoli.

Question, Hodding: What does "temporary" mean?

Answer: That will be defined in large measure by the response of the authorities in Libya.

Question: Is this all that may happen in the event that the response is not satisfactory?

Answer: We will cross that bridge when we come to it, but you can rest assured that we do expect a far more satisfactory answer, and with some promptness.

Q Hodding, does "responsibility" mean anything? Does responsibility mean something more than paying for the damages?

A What do you mean?

Q What do you mean by "responsibility?"

Q Are you saying that they must acknowledge that they were responsible for the attack, or that it is the host country who is responsible for the damages?

A Neither. Aside from everything else, responsibility has to do with its responsibility for having inadequate security despite previous requests for security and in the light of the situation at the time of the attack. As we have said, there was one guard outside the door and that was all.

Q Does this mean pulling all of the American official personnel out at this point?

A No, it means closing the operation. I don't want to speculate with you on our temporary suspending --

Q What do you mean "just temporary?" I don't understand what you mean.

A Well it just simply means that the operation ceases for the moment.

Q Will the people remain?

A I think most of them will, Marvin. There is some question about some of them coming out but that was not resolved --

Q Well did you just close the door?

A No.

Q Was that a de facto break in relations?

A No, it is not a de facto break in relations.

Q You closed the door and are just saying we are not doing any business here -

A For the moment.

Q But everybody for the most part stays inside.

A For the moment.

Q Is that right?

A As to how many may, or may not come out, that is a matter that is being discussed right now.

Q Are you asking the Libyans to curtail their operations here?

A No. We are, at this point, discussing this matter with the Charge. I will probably have more on that as we go along.

Q But you are not throwing them out?

A No, I am not saying anything about throwing them out. But what all is involved will have to develop, again over time. This is where we are right now but this is not the final word from us on this subject.

Q Hodding, when you say you expect a more responsive answer, do you mean you want it, or you think it will be forthcoming?

A We want it.

Q Hodding, in effect, you are giving them more time, aren't you?

A Yes.

Q If people are going to stay there and the Embassy is going to be closed, what are they going to be doing?

A Bob, ON BACKGROUND, you sometimes make statements of this kind to indicate the possibilities of future actions; and that is what is happening here.

Q I don't understand --

A It's just a statement at the moment.  
END BACKGROUND

Q If the Foreign Ministry in Tripoli wants to get in touch with the Charge, is he going to talk to them?

A I would imagine that if they want to get in touch with the Charge about the questions that concern us, we will.

Q Did you give the Libyans some kind of deadline within which they better come up with these two conditions?

A We are discussing this matter with the Charge today. I am not going to go into the thrust of our diplomatic conversation.

Q Did they mention relations or --

A I am not going to go into the conversations. I will leave it to the Libyan Charge to discuss what he does, or doesn't think.

Q Hodding, you have dealt with only one part of the question of responsibility. You have only dealt with the lack of protection outside the Embassy. Now on Sunday when you were first relating this to us you talked about semi-official uniforms of some of the people in the front ranks. Demonstrators, you talked about sound trucks being present, and you said you were assessing the responsibility of that government.

What about the other half of the responsibility, that's whether they were behind the organizing of the demonstration and the attack. You haven't dealt with that. What is your judgment now?

A They have denied it.

We are continuing to assess the situation. I don't have anything for you on it.

Q Do you have any assessment to make, Hodding, of the impact of the suspension of relations on trade between our two countries?

A I would not be able to give you such a projection. I don't know what effect it would have.

We have not, in any case, suspended relations at this point -- "broken" relations at this point.

Q Hodding, have you talked about this with American businessmen, corporations about this step?

A Yes. We consult with them regularly about the whole situation.

Q And one other thing pending from yesterday's discussion of this: Have our people yet, been able to see Qadhafi?

A To the best of our knowledge, no.

George just pointed out something that they were giving you a slight rewrite on the lead on this thing. We will have a skeletal staff working to deal with the consular functions for our folks there -- and that means, really, just a handful -- a couple of people.

Q Is this in the Embassy building?

A No, I don't think they are using the Embassy building. I think we are going to attach it elsewhere.

Q Where?

A I think we are going to attach it to a building next to another Embassy, is more likely.

Q Hodding, in light of the fact that this seems to be the most restrained of all the possible steps you could have taken today, have you had any indications from the Libyans that they want more time to give you what you are looking for?

A We are taking this step and holding in abeyance any other decision, pending the discussion here and the possibility of a response from there. We will then see what happens on the basis of a response -- and I am not going to give you a time on that.

Q But have you been led to believe that you will get a response? That's my question.

A I'm not going to go into that.

Q Hodding, to follow Don's question a little more: In your talks with the American business people, have you asked them to pull out? Have you told them that the situation is more dangerous than it was? Is there insurance --

A We give them our fair assessment of the situation. We have not asked our business community to leave -- that is to say, we haven't asked the people who worked there.

We have told them, we have shared our assessment of the situation and made it very clear to them on that subject.

Q Have you got an estimate of the damages?

Q At the other end of the equation, have the American businessmen made any requests of you that you take this kind of a restrained step?

A They made a number of their viewpoints known to us. There is not uniformity of viewpoint among that rather large community there.

A But let me say again, oil is not playing a role, as I have said now for several days, in the decision making that we will be taking for the protection of our Embassy and diplomatic personnel in Libya. What is under consideration is the safety and security of our people and the best way to insure that and the best way to deal with the situation that occurred on Sunday -- that is what is at the root of our decision-making.

Q Hodding, Senator Nelson, of Wisconsin, is urging the President to impose gasoline rationing, and he cited the Libyan situation as one of the reasons.

My question is: Has the White House asked you for any input on this possible decision -- and the advisability of moving --

A I haven't been asked a question on domestic policy in three years. I know they haven't asked me, in the State Department, clearly.

We would be factored in on certain aspects of domestic policy as they relate to foreign --

Q Oh, but gasoline --

A Yes, now wait, gasoline rationing is domestic, so far.

The fact is that the Secretary said on these two public occasions, the best way to remove the

possibility of American-held hostage to the energy weapon is to implement the President's energy program, in toto and to take the steps for the necessary votes for conservation and domestic development. And that is a consistent theme which I will be happy to repeat.

As far as Senator Nelson's call for a program, I will leave Senator Nelson's domestic program to Senator Nelson.

Q Hodding, is it realistic to expect the United States will cease its imports of oil from Libya?

And if so, how does this step affect Libya? Does it hurt Libya in any way?

A I really wouldn't want to try to assess the latter question. And as far as the former goes, I haven't suggested anything about suspended purchases or anything of that sort.

Q Could it come to that? Is that likely?

A Only if I am leaving office will I even deal with that, at all.

Q Hodding, is the Libyan case a one-shot case, or are you conveying a message to other countries and other areas that we now have a policy that when you suspect government involvement of an attack upon an Embassy, that you will take this sort of action?

A I think that message is clear in any case. It has been made clear in the past and I would expect it to be made clear again, when necessary.

Q Beyond tightening just one diplomatic notch, can you point to any practical effects this is going to have on U.S. - Libyan relations? I realize you are conveying a message here, is there anything practical that arises out of this?

A When you say "practical" do you mean --

Q In terms of our --

A -- speaking in one ear

I mean that sort of idea --

Q That's always useful. But I mean, more specifically in terms of our daily relationship with the Libyans. Is this effecting our relationship in any way?

A I don't know, you might ask them. I don't --

Q Well, I am asking from the U.S. point of view.

A I understand.

As I said, this action is being taken at this time while we await a response and there is a conversation either going on now or will be going on soon -- or has gone on -- went on. And that will be assessed.

Q So it's a signal and an interim step?

A That, I think is an exact description.

With the knowledge that steps can go in several directions and therefore --

I mean, you know I am not trying to tell you something definitely is going to happen or is not going to happen --

Q Hodding, have you an estimate of the amount of the damages in that fire?

A Have we come up with that yet? I know that we have in other instances.

I have not yet seen that come in. I will take the question.

Q And secondly, do you have any expectation that taking this step will, in some fashion, pressure the Libyan Government or give it an incentive to make the kinds of moves that you are expecting them to make?

A We would hope that the Libyan Government would see reason on this and would take up those things which are the minimal responsibility of any host government in the wake of an incident of this sort.

Q Hodding, you say oil is not playing a role. During this review of relations with Libya, was the Department of Energy consulted at any time?

A I don't know. You might ask them. I would not normally go into intergovernmental or interdepartmental consultations, just as a matter of practice.

Q Hodding, just to put it into proportion, when was the last time that you took such a step, and to what country was it?

A I will take the question. I don't have it at the tip of my brain.

Q Hodding, can we go back to Iran?

A Yes, I will take you back there. There is something I want to say on Iran anyway.

Q You had figures Sunday on oil imports from Libya. Do you have a figure there on the amount of unleaded gas Libya supplies us?

A Do you mean the sweet crude ... I don't know.

Q No, I mean unleaded gas.

A Refined gas?

Q Yes. I understand it's substantial.

A You would have to go to DOE for that. I don't have it.

There was in one of the diplomatic interviews that one of you all conducted within the last 24 hours or perhaps it was over PARS, and you asked me about it yesterday -- that there was some reference to the possibility of a trial.

Q Yes.

A Once more, I do not want that one, on behalf of the government, to go by without reminding you, on behalf of the government and reminding the authorities in Tehran of the statement that was issued at the White House on November 20th, to which I would refer you again, on the subject of possible trials. The operative two sentences were:

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.

It went on to note that we are seeking a peaceful resolution on this matter -- which we certainly are, as I emphasized earlier today. I want my remarks to be put in that context and in the context of what I said yesterday, which is: God only knows what is the meaning of things that come over PARS, or come over the networks, or come over anything from the authorities in Tehran -- we are simply incapable of knowing.

All I can say is, we have no knowledge of any trials happening at this point.

Q Can you say you have no reason to believe --

A I have no reason to believe --

Q That they will, or will not, happen.

A I have no reason to know.

Q Can I ask one other question? The Tehran broadcast this morning noted the possibility of a peaceful negotiations that were cited in the Security Council Resolution. In the U.S. view, what, beyond release of the hostages there, is there to negotiated?

A Before the release of the hostages,  
nothing.

Q Well what is there in tandem with the release of the hostages to negotiate?

A In the context of the release of the hostages, we have always said that we were willing to discuss any problems which may exist between us -- as again, called for in the Resolution.

Q Does that include the possibility of any kind of an American investigation of the charges against the Shah?

A It's as noted before, that the possibilities for redress of some of the grievances

which Iranians have raised, exist in a number of structural forms in this country and elsewhere; and it is not for us to initiate the use of those structures.

Q Are you making any progress in the search for a place for the Shah to go?

A I have nothing new for you on that today.

Q Hodding, do you know the author of the commentary on Radio Tehran?

A I don't. I have no idea.

Q You don't know who delivered it or anything?

A I don't. We may.

Q When you say that the Security Council Resolution gives you a foundation for the economic and diplomatic initiatives you are now going to take, are you really saying, or are you suggesting that it would be hard for members of the Security Council to oppose those measures now that they have gone on record with their resolution?

A I think I have said all I want to say on that, really. You can deal with it as you wish, but I don't have anything beyond what I said.

Q What is the rationale behind ruling out in public, the use of the military option such as blockade, for instance?

A Look, this is another one of those things in which I make the mistake of dealing with a longstanding policy that suddenly gets construed as a new one.

What the President has had to say on the use of military force is operative. It is operative today. It remains operative. The rationale for it was as he explained it in his statement preceding the press conference and there is no change in that. That's all.

Q Hodding, you are always very consistent and careful about saying that something that

was decided in another building is really not for you to talk about. Is there --

A No, I have tried to be consistent, as much as I can be.

Q Well you have made the point three or four times today -- and yet you began the briefing by telling us in small but bold detail what the result of that NSC meeting was yesterday.

A Oh, I'll tell you why.

Q Just kind of curious.

A I was trying to provide some kind of a framework or context to deal with what was a whole series of commentaries on what might have been in the NSC meeting.

I am not quarreling, as a matter of fact, with the aspects of any of them, I am just trying -- given the fact that there were at least three different sort of slants being put out, I was trying to provide the official government slant of what went on at the NSC.

Q Oh. I just want to thank you for it.

A All right.

Q Hodding, can you confirm press reports that Soviet troops have been alerted on the north side of the Iranian border? And can you say whether the question of outside military intervention in Iran was discussed by Dobrynin and the Secretary today?

A No, I really couldn't say that.

And on the first, I will take the question. I am taking it, not to duck it. I don't know anything about it.

Q Pursuant to the statement that you made about the Pravda commentary, you said that you feel the Soviet Union can and should do more.

Where do you believe they derive the leverage to do more? And what, specifically, would you like to see them do?

A I don't want to tell other people how they should apply the principles contained in the Security Council Resolution which the Soviet Union voted for. Everybody will have to seek the means to help to implement it on their own. But, there are ample opportunities -- diplomatic and other propoganda to the like -- for the Soviet Union to be useful here; and we would trust that they will be. I don't need to outline it.

Q Are you demanding an apology from Qadhafi?

A What we are asking for is precisely the language that I used, which is:

We are seeking that they acknowledge their share of the responsibility for what happened and to compensation for the physical damage.

Thank you.

(Whereupon the briefing concluded at 12:19 p.m.)

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 236

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1979, 12:03 P.M.  
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MR. CARTER: Good afternoon.

Ambassador Edward E. Masters, our Ambassador to Indonesia will testify before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs at two o'clock this afternoon, subject, "East Timor Famine Relief."

Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Richard Holbrooke will also testify on that subject. Copies of both testimonies will be available later this afternoon in the Press Office.

Tomorrow, I am going to hold the briefing at 11:30 a.m. With any luck, I'm going to catch a 1:00 train for a brief trip outside the town, but in any case, 11:30.

Questions?

Q Do you have anything on travel --

A Wait a minute. You were going to let the wires -- No, my travel -- it's really just me.

Q You said yesterday you were going to announce Vance's --

A I said by mid-week.

Q (Inaudible)

A They did announce it.

Q The Iranian Foreign Minister is quoted in an interview which is now being carried on Pars News Agency saying that the hostages will definitely be put on trial and the judges will be the Islamic militants in the Embassy. Do you have any comment?

A No. I just saw that before I came down here, Jim. It's another one of these "Yes, we will"; no, we won't" statements. I don't have any comment to make on it. I have no independent confirmation of the possibility of a trial.

Q Could I just follow up, please?

A Let Jim finish.

Q In that connection, is that the sort of thing, putting them on trial, not in the Iranian court system but rather in a kangaroo court inside the Embassy, is that the sort of thing which would feasibly trigger other U.S. actions?

A I think the President has spoken specifically to that subject, as I want to speak. I don't have anything new to add to it at all.

~~I want to continue to emphasize that trial or no trial, the basic issue is the release of the hostages immediately.~~ But as to what set of circumstances warrant what set of responses, I think that what has been said by the President is as far as I want to go with it at this point.

Yes, Dick.

Q What do you consider, if anything, authoritative in terms of dealing with a subject like this? Do you expect to get any kind of formal, advance notice that they were going on trial?

A No. I would have a very hard time of dealing with what would be authoritative in this. I have a much more difficult time, however, dealing with Pars as a sort of final, authoritative source than I would even in dealing with some interviews with some of you all. I mean, at least I know who the source of the reporting is.

I just am not going to be able to speculate on what will define the event. What I trust is that the event never occurs, and so I won't have to deal with it.

Q Hodding, are you getting any reports of Americans holding some Iranian citizens here in this country hostage? Can you sort that out, please?

A Yes, let me deal with that because a number of you -- at least one, for sure, and maybe more -- got reports on this all during the evening, or the night rather, and early morning.

First of all, the Department has not received any indication, which is to say evidence, that such abduction as those claimed to be planned to have been undertaken, have in fact taken place. What happened was, we received a call from an unidentified person, which in itself is not uncommon; during this crisis, we've received a lot of anonymous phone calls. The person claimed to represent a group described at

some point as United Americans and by other designations and other descriptions elsewhere in the conversation.

The person claimed that in fact some abductions by these enraged Americans of Iranians had taken place and that more were planned within the United States.

What I want to emphasize is that this was a telephone call from a single individual, and we have absolutely no confirmation from any law enforcement agency or other organ of government or from private citizens that such a group exists or that any kidnappings have taken place.

The President has asked the American people for restraint during the situation. The Attorney General recently spoke very eloquently to the subject, and I can only repeat in this context of an absolutely unverified, anonymous call. I can only repeat the request that the President and the Attorney General have made.

What happened when we got the call was the normal kind of response that our security people must, whether it seems to be a crank or whether it's considered to be authentic. The Office of Security has the responsibility for liaison between the Department and various law enforcement agencies, and thus, sent a message through the police teletype network to local police departments and others, informing them of the particulars of the call and asking for immediate notification of any reports of missing Iranian nationals in their jurisdictions.

The FBI was also informed -- and I notice the FBI has also put out some statement on this subject. This is not an unusual procedure. It is a little unusual in that there is such an instant spread from this teletype network to the press about these requests, but then again, these are unusual times.

What I want to emphasize here, because it's important, is that there is no verification whatsoever that such an event has happened. We would strongly urge all Americans to continue to exercise the restraint that they have shown with a very few notable exceptions at the very beginning of this crisis, and to just say it serves no purpose and could be both an affront to our own traditions and a dangerous threat to the security of the hostages for any such action to be taken.

Q Hodding, a follow up on that, in this same interview that Ghatbzadeh gave -- according to press reports of it -- he says that some Iranian students or some Iranians in the United States have been murdered since the hostage situation began, and Iranian girls have been raped.

This is a different category from kidnapping. Do you have any comment on this allegation?

A I know of no report of any Iranian being murdered or killed in any way which would suggest the lethal intent of someone. I don't know about automobile accidents or something -- I simply don't know.

As far as as rapes, again, I know of no reports. I just simply don't have anything which would confirm such a statement. I think it that it's extraordinarily irresponsible of the Foreign Minister to make such unsubstantiated charges.

Q Another point which might be kind of far out, but let me just ask it in order to cover the possibility: Has the U.S. Government given any thought to the possibility of trying to provide defense counsel of any form to the people in the Embassy if they are put on trial in any form?

A Henry, that question has arisen before. My answer remains the same: They should not be put on trial; they are not now on trial. As to what would occur in the event of a trial, that would depend upon the situation at the time, and there are so many variables involved, not the least of them being, if such a trial were held, how would it be held. But I can't answer it right now.

Q There is no warning any more either from this Department or from the White House against, explicit warning against putting these people on trial. You used the word "should" -- "They should not be put on trial."

A Of course. We tell them a trial would be illegal, unacceptable, a further affront to the hostages, and obviously, something which we would view as a serious matter, but we've said that all along.

Q Hodding, let me come back to my question, though. My question really is whether we're giving any thought to the possibility of what we might do if it does look like it has become pertinent. Are we investigating, are we working perhaps with specialists on Islamic law to see what the possibilities might be? Are we making contingency plans? You say we won't know until we see what happens. What about contingencies?

A Henry, I'm not going to go into that, but it is one of the businesses of various people in this building to try to anticipate those events that you can, or to try to at least formulate some policy guidelines as to how we would deal with them. That is a normal kind of procedure. I don't want to try to apply it here.

I, in no way, want to indicate that we believe that a trial is a foregone conclusion -- that we would find it acceptable under any legal terms whatsoever or to suggest that a policy-planning procedure on our part suggests either inevitability or acceptance. I mean, I just don't want to do that.

Q Hodding, has Secretary Vance or the President exchanged any words in any form, directly through any kind of communication with the Shah?

A Directly?

Q Yes, directly or through a written message or a message carried on behalf of the Secretary?

A You have to take it, I think, as a given that as we have said, we have had direct contact with him in recent days. We said that at the time of the events of the transfer --

Q But that's not my question. My question is has Vance or the President --

A -- and anybody who is dealing in this situation is dealing for the President, and laterally for the Secretary, and therefore the answer is, technically, yes.

Q How about literally yes?

A Literally, technically, factually, yes.

I mean, it's a little difficult for me to get into the question of what some people call a message and other people communication or -- I don't know what --

Q What's the answer? Has he talked to the Shah?

A No. I'm not aware of any direct conversation.

I was answering the second part of your possibilities. I know of no direct communication.

Q Direct how? Direct telephone, direct --

A I just don't know of any of that sort at all.

Q No direct?

A I'm not aware of any.

Q The telephone or otherwise?

A Without the agency of the third party, I know of none.

Q Tip O'Neill was reported as having said that Vance had told him that four countries had expressed a willingness to receive the Shah. Can you address that at all? Are there --

A No. I have had reports on what the speaker had to say over the last 12 hours or so and I can only say I have no comment on it. The question of where the Shah will go or the question of what countries are interested in his presence are matters for the Shah and the countries involved.

Q May I just follow up that early one because Bernie jumped in there? Why has there been no direct conversation between Secretary Vance or the President and the Shah?

A I watch you in the morning and I know what you think the reason is -- cold, icy rage, I think was one phrase, all of which is ridiculous. There's no reason.

Q Did you ever hear me use that gibberish?

A Two mornings ago --

Q No.

A -- about our attitude toward the Shah. But at any rate, the fact is that is just simply not so. The fact is, there is no need for direct contact. As we have said all along, the plans with which we are connected, involved, are matters which represent the interests that he has expressed to us through various representatives that he wishes to leave.

There is a continued effort to meet those desires on the Shah's part by this government now. If the occasion arose in which it was necessary to have a direct conversation, I don't doubt that we'd have it. I will repeat what I've said on that subject before ON BACKGROUND, that for a very long period, it was not very useful to indicate in any way that people holding our hostages had any connection with reality in suggesting that the Shah's trip here was a part of a vast U.S. Government-Shah conspiracy which involved a great deal of inherent complicity and possible other actions.

I've explained that to you all before as to why the arm's length, insofar as relationship was concerned. It was bad enough that it gave every appearance of something which didn't exist. END BACKGROUND.

Q Hodding, let me just follow this: I keep thinking, for example, of the toast the President made to the Shah on New Year's Eve '77-'78, and it's difficult -- unless the United States is simply intimidated, or the President and Vance are simply intimidated by Iran, even apart from the hostages -- for there to be no direct contact between the President or the Secretary and the Shah.

A ~~As I have tried to indicate repeatedly, the primary emphasis, the primary focus of our efforts is to obtain the safe release of our hostages.~~ We have taken a number of decisions which have to do with that focus, and I think that a State Department official has recently said ON BACKGROUND at least one of the problems which would arise if there were this physical and actual connection at this point. That, I'm afraid, is going to have to stand for the reason.

Q Hodding, can I follow that up? The current trip of Dr. Kissinger to Mexico, is that in any way related to a request by Secretary Vance to get the Mexicans to change their mind?

A I wouldn't go into their conversation. I would say to you -- Well, I think you would have to address that question to Mr. Kissinger or to a representative of the Shah as to his thinking about Mexico, frankly.

Q Well, let me just ask you: Did Secretary Vance ask Dr. Kissinger for help in getting the Mexicans to change their mind on this?

A At what point are we talking about, in the last few days?

Q Well, just a couple of days ago, when they talked on the telephone.

A At the time of the announcement?

Q Yes.

A I wouldn't go into any of those conversations at all. I was just sort of interested in what sequence you were dealing with here.

Yes.

Q He left the next day, so that's why that sequence struck me as particularly interesting.

A Uh-huh. Maybe he's on his honeymoon.  
(Laughter) I really don't have anything on that.

Q Has the State Department made up its mind about what to do with regard to the relations with Libya?

A I don't expect a decision on that today. I expect a decision on that within -- within 24 hours, he says, thereby setting himself up.

Q Have you heard anything at all from Libya in this period, Hodding?

A We have not received the kind of messages which we would find useful or responsive to the concerns that we have.

Q Have you had any contact with Quaddafi?

A We have had no contact with the Colonel.

Q Do you have any comment on the reports that Syria and Libya asked OPEC ministers for statements of support for Iran's position?

A No. I have the same reports you have, and we will be looking into that. It follows a pattern that some official has noted in the past ON BACKGROUND about occasional examples of schizophrenic parallelism in policies by various governments.

Q Hodding, in view of what I understand is the custom whereby Senators or Congressmen who go overseas to very sensitive areas, generally when they come back, at least you confer with them for, you know, what they've come up with. I was wondering, do the State Department records include any evidence of any information at all provided in 1975 to the State Department about one of the "most violent regimes in the history of mankind" by Senator Kennedy after he was that regime's guest?

A I wouldn't go into any debriefing records we have. I just wouldn't.

Q You can't?

A No.

Q O.K. I thought I was giving you an easy question.

A I've already had my licks.

Q Have you had any comments on Iran's decision to no longer use the dollar in oil exchanges?

A I will tell you what I've told you before. You know, they've announced this now for two and a half weeks. I don't know that that's happened and I don't have any comment on it at this point. They started off -- You know, it was an urgent matter for me to comment on it when they first started talking about it. I'll see. When they go to it in a way that I can tell, we'll deal with it.

Q The Saudis have announced previously that if the dollar fell below a certain level internationally, that they would also have to consider using a different medium of exchange. The dollar has fallen that low and yet, there hasn't been any of the kind of activity or statements that used to immediately follow that kind of dollar collapse. Is there less concern this time around with the collapse of the dollar than at least the public front that had been put forward in the previous two years?

A It is being watched very closely, Laura.

Q Can you tell us if there is discussion at this point -- I know you couldn't tell us specifically what mechanisms are being discussed, but should we expect that some direct action is about to be taken?

A I wouldn't have any comment on that.

Q Egypt has said it will take the Shah, and Tip O'Neill says there are four nations in all. Two parts: Has the Shah set any preconditions on what country's invitation he would accept or have those countries set any preconditions on accepting him?

A I really wouldn't have any comment on the relationship between possible countries and the Shah. Again, I would have to refer you to countries about which you have seen some speculation, on the one hand, or to his representative, whom I understand has been making himself available to the press down at San Antonio, on the other.

Q There were further reports this morning on the situation of Mr. Laingen, who seemed to have much more difficulties to go through a situation than his two colleagues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tehran. Do you have anything further on that? I mean, it's an extension of the column by Jack Anderson, I think.

A Aside from a very strong feeling that a succession of columns by Jack Anderson on this subject have had the net effect of causing tremendous anguish in the family of the three people who are in the Ministry and doing

absolutely no good for their future security, I would say that I know nothing about it beyond that.

Q Hodding, have you talked about -- perhaps you have -- the recorded message attributed to Plotkin, of California? Did you have anything on that?

A You mean such as verifying his voice and that sort of thing?

Q Yes.

A No, I don't have anything on that.

Q Or duress -- do you have any characterization and so on?

A No, I don't. Let me just say something again FOR THE RECORD, however. However many days it's been-- 31 days -- you start off with the assumption of duress; you start off with the assumption that anybody who is held incommunicado for that period of time is not operating under a normal circumstance, and that anything that anyone is alleged to have said, was heard to have said, is alleged to have signed has to be viewed as documents or broadcast material which was obtained under circumstances under which you cannot in any way assume free will, and in which you have to assume, as a starter, that it was extracted rather than volunteered. And this Government is not willing to take anything on face that emerges from a situation over which we have no ability whatsoever to tell about the condition of the hostages or the conditions in which they live.

Q Hodding, when you talk quite often about various statements possibly endangering the lives of the hostages, do you make a statement like that from the point of view of logic, that this could conceivable endanger --

A Yes, it is just a causal possibility.

Q I see. It's not that you have specific information that one comment or another has endangered anybody's life?

A No, because obviously we can't.

Q You don't have that kind of information?

A No. Let me say ON BACKGROUND that there is just a strong feeling among some of those who have had occasion to know something about the hostages which they have relayed to us, that certain kinds of material has a worse effect on some of the captors than others. That's all.

But, you know, going back ON THE RECORD, of course, I can't make a causal connection. I hope to God none of us ever have the occasion to.

Q The Iranian Foreign Minister said yesterday, indicated that the captors would be willing to allow Christmas presents to reach the prisoners. Do you have any reason to believe that somehow the issue, the crisis might be resolved before Christmas?

A The Prime Minister's record of veracity on what may or may not happen being such as it is, I will believe Santa Claus arriving inside that compound when I see the reindeer come down, and I just don't --

Q Foreign Minister.

A I have no reason. Foreign Minister, I mean. I have no reason to know, to understand, to believe anything that he may say on that subject. We won't know unless we have the opportunity. But beyond all that, I don't even want to deal with Christmas. What we want is the people out tomorrow, right now.

Q Hodding, you say you want the people out tomorrow or right now, but there was a statement put out about Secretary Vance's travel plans that said you have no momentary expectation.

A I said, if they are not released.

Q But you also specifically denied some reports -- I don't know where they came from -- that you had any expectation they would be released momentarily.

A -- or any break in the situation.

Q Yes. Can you say whether the United States has been making preparations or has been, in effect, preparing itself for a long, indefinite, prolonged standoff here, or whether you are still operating on the assumption that they might be released at any time?

A We're operating on the principle that every one of our efforts should be aimed at the immediate release of the hostages. We operate also under the certainty that we cannot tell when they will be released, and therefore, we have to deal with both facts; first, our concerted effort to obtain their immediate release, second, the reality that we have no way of telling when or how they will be released.

Q As far as you know, do you know whether the 50 people are still inside the compound?

A It's the same answer as yesterday, Juan. I have no reason to know that they are; I have no reason to know that they are not. And until they let us in or let someone in who is a neutral observer, we will not know, or even know their condition.

I am touched by the expression of belief from certain quarters in Iran that we should take their word for what the condition is of the hostages, given as a good Muslim or a good Islamic scholar. Since Islamic law specifically forbids what has occurred to these hostages, it is a little difficult for us to accept any Islamic credentials as being justification enough for us to believe what is said.

-- MORE --

Q UPI reported on November 23rd that a former Polish Army counter-intelligence chief whose information has proven correct in the past, has identified Khomeini as a Soviet agent in the 1950s. Is that correct -- accurate?

A I don't know. I have nothing on that. I saw the report. If the report is accurate enough I assume that he said it. I don't know anything about that, actually.

Q Another question:

It has also been reported that the Iranian Foreign Minister Ghatbzadeh was expelled from France last year, after French intelligence discovered he was part of a Soviet-financed, Libyan intelligence network.

Can the State Department verify that?

A No, I can't, and I haven't seen that. But I mean I will just say, though I don't ordinarily comment on intelligence activities -- I haven't seen that.

Q Does the State Department have any information at all concerning Ghatbzadeh's ties with Libya, the PLO, or any radical Arab regimes?

A I don't think I want to go into that. I mean it's for reasons which have to do with sources and the like. I don't comment on that sort of thing ordinarily.

I was being as helpful as I could, but I can't go --

Q Do any more than that.

A Yes.

Q "Montreal Gazette" I have just gotten a clip of a story last month, that a General Ghulam Ali, who was formerly the Commander of the Shah's Royal Guard regiments, escaped the revolution, went into Iraq with 119 other officers and 15,000 fully armed troops, where Iraq's President, Hassan, granted them asylum and increased this army by 5,000 Kurds.

Is the State Department aware of this, or is this report considered inaccurate?

A I don't know about the State Department. I am not aware of the report. I will see if I can get anything on it. I don't know anything about it.

Q Did you take it?

A Yes.

Q Hodding, have you noted any change of attitude on the part of the Iranian authorities in the wake of this referendum which they have now completed, I believe, or do you think it is too early to tell whether that referendum at its completion will have any --

A It is too early for me to tell anything at all about it. I am incapable of being able to verify anything about that -- from turnout of votes, you know, or anything --

Q No, I am not talking about the results, but there was some --

A But what I mean is, I see no indications of anything yet.

The State Department has not come up with any analysis to suggest any change at this point.

Q Well, not on record, but there has been a number of instances where people have been quoted ON BACKGROUND as saying that they hoped that at the completion of this referendum, it might break this -- you haven't seen any indication that it will?

A No. I have seen the reports you are talking about but I don't have anything to tell you.

Q Hodding, you have spoken several times from this podium in general terms about what is, and what is not, accepted in international practice, and I wonder if you would address in that context and not with specific reference to the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the question of having intelligence operatives inside embassies -- which, it has always been my understanding, is accepted international practice.

A Thus thou sayest, but I do not speak on the subject of intelligence activities at all from this podium.

Q Hodding, just two quick questions:

Do you have anything at all today which would confirm reports you were asked about yesterday about unrest in Saudi Arabia -- of any kind -- beyond the Mecca Mosque?

A I have to tell you in all honesty that the first reports we had were dealing with knocking down some ideas that some of our people were being dealt with. I have later reports knocking down the idea that there has been any substantial unrest in the areas that -- well, you know, in which we happen to have Consulates and the like.

Q Can you knock down the specific report of an Aramco explosion?"

A John, I'll tell you what I can't do. I have to refer you to the Saudis from this point on, on that sort of thing. I am not going to be able to deal with this sort of

continuing situation report out of Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else, about internal matters.

I have dealt with you as best I can, to tell you what the reporting is. I am, frankly, unaware of a report of any kind of explosion, but --

Q Have we asked the Embassy, Hodding?

MR. SHERMAN: We put something out over the weekend. There was a report -- denied. That was denied.

Q And that is still the situation?

MR. SHERMAN: Yes.

Q Have the Foreign Ambassadors in Tehran made any new requests on behalf of the United States, to visit the hostages, and have they been rebuffed? I mean, since their first visit early this month, have there been any more attempts from them at all?

MR. CARTER: I don't want to speak for other people's ministers, but I can tell you that within a very recent period, a strong effort was made once more, by certain ministers -- certain Ambassadors -- in Tehran, to both establish their position, their government's position, that the hostages should not be held -- and in the event that they continue to be held, to permit, or have the government permit visitors who could report on their condition and deal with it. There has been no definitive reply, that I know of, to that.

Q Was that since Mr. Ghotbzadeh took office or before?

A Since.

Q Senator Byrd, the other day, said it would not be useful -

Q Excuse me -- since the 28th effort which was mentioned?

A Yes.

Q You know, the read out you gave.

A Yes.

Q Senator Byrd, the other day, said it would not be useful or productive to bring the SALT Treaty to the floor of the Senate while the Iranian crisis was going on.

This brings me back to a statement that Marshall Shulman made, about two months ago. He was saying: "Let's be clear about it. A delay in the SALT Treaty would be tantamount to killing it." Does the State Department now think that one possible repercussion of this Iranian crisis might be the death of the SALT Treaty?

A No, we don't accept the idea that it will be the death of the SALT Treaty. I will say that circumstances alter tactical considerations. That was said two months ago, before Iran, clearly it can't be held to the test of the circumstances that pertain at the time.

I do not know precisely when the leadership and the White House will decide that it is an appropriate time to bring it up to the floor.

That, I think in all honesty you would have to say: will be affected by the Iranian situation. But, I do not know that the effect is "a", "b", or "c" -- I mean, I don't know what the result will be.

Q In other words, you think that because of the national mood of the moratorium on --

A No, it's not that. I don't want to try to speculate on it. I think that it ought to be very obvious to everybody -- I know it is to all of us in this room -- that a great primary focus of attention by everyone, whether on the Hill or in the Administration or among the American public at large, is the situation of our hostages in Iran. It is very difficult to deal with something in that context which requires as much concentration as the SALT Treaty debate would.

I am not, however, agreeing or disagreeing about the timing for bringing it up. I think that that will be decided by the leadership. We will be consulting with them as to the time that seems most appropriate.

Q No, I understand what you are saying about why it wouldn't be wise to bring it up now. But going back to what Marshall Shulman said -- why has that assessment changed because of the Iranian crisis?

A I think that the only thing I can say on that is that you are going to have to deal with the situation as it arises; and, his assessment he offered, I believe, was in light of the circumstances then. The circumstances are not the same now. And the reasons for postponement at the time he talked, would have been this set of possible reasons for postponement; now would be this set. And their political effect, their political meaning could be radically different. That's the only reason why. I mean, you can think about "why" -- what would have successfully brought about postponement two months ago, was totally different from what might bring about postponement now.

Q Hodding, you said before, that one of the problems in negotiating with Iran is the lack of knowing who really is in charge over there. Regardless of the results of the referendums in Iran, will that situation become somewhat clarified?

A The people who study this do believe that the constitutional process, the referendum process should create the framework for a government that you can touch and see and deal with. That is, it now will have an authorized structure under which it can operate.

Having suggested that the bones might be there because of the referendum, I want to rush right forward and tell you that I am not sure whatsoever, and no one else is, as to what flesh and what blood will be put on those bones and, indeed, what will be the nature of the creation.

And so I would not just automatically tell you that we think that there will be a "this" result which we can deal with, or "this" result which can't. It is very difficult for us to tell. We, of course, would find it far preferable to have an institution with which we could do coherent, daily business, and we have been trying to find one for some time -- and maybe we will now.

Q Hodding, Senator Hayakawa, of California, said today on the Hill that he had been told by the Saudi Ambassador in Washington, that the PLO is very instrumental in Tehran, in helping to keep the hostages safe. Do you have any knowledge about the PLO role there?

A I wouldn't have anything for you whatsoever, on the role of the PLO, or anybody else really, in that respect.

Q The Security Council is going to meet this afternoon. Have you got anything on this for us? What are you expecting to have happen?

A I would note two things:

The first is that all the alarms and excursions aside, the matter has been proceeding roughly as we expected and hoped. The statements have, for the most part, been extraordinarily useful.

There is a possibility -- and I now refer myself to a conversation that I had with the Public Affairs Counselor of the United Nations, a little while ago, the USUN, that is -- there is a possibility that the vote could come tonight.

There is also a procedural reality which is that usually when a resolution is introduced, there is supposed to be a 24 hour layover between its introduction and the action. It can be waived.

In any case, somewhere I think. This is really going to be Don McHenry's problem and he will be speaking to this himself, so I don't want to take his role because I am not in a position to do it.

Q When?

A Somewhere within the next day and a half.

Q Hodding, Jama'ati Islami organization has taken credit for at least two of the major incidents against the United States, you know, at foreign embassies. That is an affiliate of the Moslem brotherhood. And the Saudis have now mentioned the Moslem brotherhood as an organization which was involved in the destabilizations.

Why are you still insisting, if you are, that you don't see any international link up between these incidents -- in any formal sense?

A I simply am neither capable of doing so nor authorized to do so.

Q Well could I follow that up a minute?

It's the same basic network that is indicating it might cause problems within the Moslem population of the Soviet Union. Is that a reason why you folks tend to be very soft on that organization and that whole orientation? You're going by some recent statements that came out of the White House and not by Dr. Brzezinski --

A Laura, I don't think we are going soft on anybody. I sometimes feel soft in the head after these briefings.

Q Hodding, a couple of questions:

Did you ever get anything on the APCs in Libya?

A They remain in Libya awaiting shipment to Lebanon. The Libyan --

Q How many of them?

A The Libyan Government is no longer holding them. "How many of them?" I thought you knew that when you asked me the question. I didn't ask that.

Q Who is holding them?

A I think probably the freight forwarder.

Q Government owned?

A There's a lot of free enterprise running around in --

Q Does this mean, then, the Libyan Government has completed its investigation and decided to release them? Is that what you are saying?

A I think you can give me a whole new sequence of questions. This was going to be posted where I didn't have to go through this. . . .

Q Hodding, is the ship free, too?

A The ship went on.

Q Oh, the ship sailed on.

A Yes.

Q Another question: Do you have any updating on how many of those 1,200 Americans in the eleven countries have now left? Last time you said it was about 300. What is the situation? Has it changed much?

MR. SHERMAN: It's just over 300 last time we heard -- about 24 hours ago.

Q 300 what?

MR. CARTER: That's up from 272 or something and it is now a little over 300.

Q Well, you have been saying approximately that figure.

A Yes.

Q Do you expect that not many more of them will go, then? You have had more than week to get a high.

A I think you have seen the biggest thrust of the program.

Q Hodding, when did the Libyans ask us to take the Marines out?

A '73 -- at the time we re-established relations.

Q The hostage crisis has diverted attention from the Soviet offensive in Afghanistan. Can you tell us if the Soviet military action in Afghanistan has increased over the past month? It has been reported that --

A We believe that Soviet advisors have increased their role in support of the Afghan military, especially in the area of command and control functions.

There have been recent Afghan Government offensives against the insurgents, which indicate an extensive Soviet role in their planning and execution. We are not able to confirm that Soviet military personnel have taken a direct combat role in operations against the insurgents. That means actually firing the guns, riding the tanks, or whatever it may be.

While we cannot rule out the possibility that Soviet pilots may be flying some combat missions for the Afghan Air Force, we are unable to confirm numerous reports to that effect.

We believe there are now some 3,500 to 4,000 Soviet military personnel in Afghanistan. We continue to receive reports of larger numbers.

We continue to investigate them, but we will have to stress that our information is fragmentary at best and it should be considered as an informed estimate.

In addition, there are approximately 1,500 Soviet civilian advisors in Afghanistan.

And that's really about it.

Q Have you taken this up lately with the Soviets? And does the United States have any concern here that it would care to express?

A I could repeat the concern which we have expressed about outside intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. We would not be laying this out if we did not have a concern about it.

Q Have you talked to the Russians about it lately?

A I don't know.

Q Does this amount to "outside intervention?"

A I am --

Q Are you concerned about the prospect, or the fact of it?

A I am laying out a situation about which I can tell you we express concern.

Q Hodding, two questions:

One, how recently have these 3,500 to 4,000 Soviet military personnel been introduced?

A I don't know. It has been over some period of time, not recent.

Q And secondly, do you have any information that the -- I believe he is the Deputy Soviet Defense Minister, a General by the name of Pavlovsky?

A I have seen that report. I have never been able to confirm it. I mean, we have not been able to confirm that presence as a fact but we have seen the report.

George, is that a misstatement at this point? Has that changed, because I would rather correct the record if I am wrong on it

MR. SHERMAN: I don't know --

MR. CARTER: The last time we looked, I didn't have it, and it's been a persistent report.

But I will take the question. I think it's much safer if I take the question.

Q Has the State Department pronounced itself lately on the new reports about what comes under the general heading of "human rights violations" in Afghanistan? Executions? Imprisons of former leading government officials and so forth?

A There was, apparently, a reading in mid-November by a regime spokesman, apparently conducted in Kabul, in which the names of between 10,000 and 15,000 political prisoners were read off, and over half of whom, or at least half of whom, were reported to be dead in that reading.

Beyond that, I don't have anything. Clearly, this is a matter of serious concern to us.

Q But have you pronounced yourself on it? You have frequently complained of foreign governments about their human rights violations and so on?

A Oh, do you mean "have we talked to them?"

Q Yes, have we talked to them . . . .

A We have talked to them.

Q Yes, you have talked to them and where does this get you?

A I have described the situation to you.

Q Do you have any new idea of how many Russians have been killed or --

A No.

Q And hurt and --

A No.

Q Also, do you have any better idea now just who is in control of what parts of the country?

A I don't have a status report on that. I think, again, I have to stress the fragmentary nature of our information -- the sifting process still leaves us with a mosaic which is not all that sharp in its definition.

Q Hodding, do you have any estimate of the number of Soviet weapons or combat aircraft that might conceivably be flown by Russians, in these raids that you said you can't confirm?

A I will see what I can get on that.

Q Hodding, there have also been reports of massive evacuations or departure of tens of thousands. I have even seen estimates in the hundreds of thousands of refugees going into Pakistan. Do you have any numbers on that? Do you have any sense of the scope of that? What does one hear from these people when they come out?

A I will take that, I think I can get it for you very fast. I have seen them, but I can't remember.

Q Do you have any more details on this "reading" that you mentioned?

A That's about it. We understand it was some kind of a reading out of the lists. Now again, that gets very sketchy for me so I think that is the best I can do.

Q Somebody stood up at a public forum and read 10,000 to 15,000 names and said which were dead and which were political prisoners?

A They may have posted some of them.

Q Speaking of outside intervention, does the State Department have any notion if any outsiders are intervening on behalf of the anti-Government forces in Afghanistan? Aren't they getting their arms from folks outside the country?

A I don't have much on that.

Q Don't have much?

A I don't have anything on it.

Q Do we object to it, though, if they -

A We object to outside interference.

Q -- if they are our friends?

A We object to outside interference in the affairs of Afghanistan.

Q What about the reports that the Soviets are using poison gas and napalm against Moslem guerillas? Can you verify that?

A I don't have anything on it.

Let me ask you an hypothetical question: If they took over the government, would we feel secure reopening a full embassy there?

A Let me ask you a hypothetical question: If I answered that, would it serve any purpose?

Q Yes, we would like to print it.

A Then your hypothetical answer is better than my hypothetical answer. I have no comment on it.

Q Do you have a reaction to the withdrawal of a Soviet division from East Germany tomorrow?

A Let me say, we are dealing with reports here. There is an indication that they may be planning a well publicized withdrawal of tanks and troops.

We would view the withdrawal of the Soviet tank division from the GDR as a positive step toward correcting the substantial imbalance in ground forces and armored capability that presently exists in Central Europe.

That imbalance, I would add, will continue to exist even after this move.

In this connection, the United States and our NATO allies are continuing to seek in MBFR negotiated reductions, to eliminate this imbalance through an agreement to a common ceiling on military manpower, on both sides in Central Europe -accompanied by an effective package of associated stabilizing and verification measures.

Among those is the addition of some No Doze for John McClain.

Q What do you mean by a "common ceiling" Hodding? What does a common ceiling mean?

A A common ceiling?

Q Yes. Does that mean precisely the same number on both sides?

A I think the phraseology would have to be dealt with by some expert in PM or EUR, because I am not sure of how the formula works.

Q Well I mean you --

A Yes, I understand.

Q The reason I asked the question is, you were still using the acronym "MBFR" -- and balance --

A I know the evolution of it, very well but I am not sure what the formula is right now.

Q Would you take that question?

A Yes.

Q Does the State Department see any strange strings attached to this Soviet withdrawal? And does it consider it a tension-reducing step with such numbers as you have talked about?

A I have given the official position. I dont really have any --

Q Is it unilateral, as it was to have been in the first place?

A If the withdrawal, if it were in fact drawn down, that would be unilateral, since our position on this whole matter is contained in the second paragraph and I want to make note of it again, that even after this withdrawal, the imbalance will continue at a rather substantial differential.

Q I just wonder whether you regard the decision to do this as particularly encouraging, in view of the Soviet threat about how they might respond if the NATO decision is made to deploy these long range nuclear theater warheads.

A I cannot deal with the Soviet threat if I am not sure what you are talking about, but I can deal with the fact that NATO is going to take those steps which it feels is necessary for its common defense and for the sake of intelligent arms control measures, both, and that we expect those measures will be taken at the meeting eight days hence.

Q Hodding, do you have any indication on which unit could be withdrawn by the Soviets?

A No, but I am sure that they will make sure that you see it, and know.

Q Do you think that it will affect the decision process next week in Brussels?

A I believe that the NATO nations well understand the necessity for the steps which has been put before them by the two committees which have been working on this for a year, and that those steps will be taken at the time of the meeting next week in Brussels.

Q Hodding, in reading through the State Department's country reports on human rights two years ago, I don't recall anything in your report on the Shah's government, which indicated that it was one of the most violent regimes in the history of mankind and my question is:

Is it possible that the State Department was uninformed, or is it more probable that the statement on "violent regimes" is an historical absurdity?

A I don't think I have any comment on this whole set of possibilities. I commented on the subject yesterday. I am really not interested in a continuing debate on the justifications for politicians' remarks.

Q Hodding, in connection with the hostages and the Security Council, assuming that the Security Council votes that Iran should free the hostages, what is the most optimistic view that you can take as a result of the Security Council's action, as far as the safety and the future freedom of the hostages are concerned?

A The most optimistic view? Or do you mean the most realistic view?

Q Well, one of each.

A The most optimistic view is that reason will finally penetrate in Tehran and the hostages are set free and allowed to come home immediately.

Q And the most pragmatic?

A The most pragmatic is that that should happen.

Behind that, I do not know.

Q What about a neutralizing effect at least as far as harm to the hostages?

A It is impossible for me to tell anything about what the people who are holding those hostages will do. I know what they should do.

Q Thank you, Hodding.

(Whereupon, the briefing concluded at 12:58 p.m.)

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 12:32 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 4, 1979

TUESDAY

MR. POWELL: I am not going to be in a position to give you -- to get into a great long briefing on the situation in Iran. State is dealing with that. I have been asked by several of you whether we would have any comment on reports about various statements from the Iranian Foreign Minister with regard to trials and so forth. I will not have any comment on those statements at this point.

Beyond that I have a couple of things I can give you on the President's plans for this evening. He will not be attending the Washington fund-raising dinner here. The President simply felt that his attendance there would not be appropriate under the circumstances.

Q Is anybody taking his place?

MR. POWELL: The First Lady and the Vice-President will be attending.

Q Why were we led to believe last week that he would be attending? I mean, was it a last minute decision based on on any new developments?

MR. POWELL: What I have told you at least sixteen times a day for the past several days is that we would make decisions on these matters as we approach the day. And what you were led to believe is --

Q We weren't led to believe. You said he is going, because it is close.

Q It's on the schedule today, Jody.

Q -- it wasn't a question of some sort of hint --

Q It suggests that something occurred to change --

MR. POWELL: It should not suggest -- the decision was made late yesterday, and it should not suggest that that decision was based upon something, some new development.

Q Well in that case we have to read that it is a political decision.

MR. POWELL: You may. Either that --

Q That he thinks it is good politics not to go, finally.

Q Not based on anything in Iran.

MR. POWELL: I am not going to -- I don't really have time to argue with you about that.

Q Not based on anything --

MR. POWELL: As I said, the President simply felt that it would not be appropriate, inasmuch as he has asked other candidates to be restrained in their comments on the situation in Iran while our hostages are still there, and that it is appropriate, under those circumstances, for him to restrain his political activities in general.

Q Well, why isn't that also applied to the five minute commercial that is going on tonight, as I understand it?

MR. POWELL: Well, I don't think we have promised that we will make no steps to announce the candidacy.

Q When will we get the speech?

Q Yes, will you have it in advance?

MR. POWELL: I can't promise you when. Not before 1:45, when you are due to be back.

Q How long will it run?

Q Excuse me, any idea --

MR. POWELL: I don't know exactly. Five minutes or so.

Q Will there be any comments made at all on the situation, the hostage situation, later in the day, possibly?

MR. POWELL: The State Department has a briefing on it right now. But I do not know whether there will be additional comments. That will depend upon developments.

Q Jody, did you say the decision on going to the dinner was made late yesterday, is that right?

MR. POWELL: Yesterday afternoon.

Q After the schedule was issued?

MR. POWELL: Yes.

Q Was it beyond noon?

MR. POWELL: I don't know exactly when the schedule was issued.

Q Jody, on Iran, the Foreign Minister said it is kind of a stalemate now, and the next move is up to America --

MR. POWELL: Wes, I am just not going to comment on those -- at this point.

Q Can you give us a run down on the President's day leading up to his announcement, some sort of feel of what he has been doing, when he got up, and that kind of thing?

MR. POWELL: I didn't really -- his schedule was as it usually is, with a briefing from Dr. Brzezinski early in the morning. He met with the senior staff, as he usually does; I think today it was about 10:30. There was an SCC meeting. He received a report on the SCC meeting, I don't know what time, but later this morning. And he will receive an oral report, and he will receive a more lengthy written report of items that he needs to review personally. And he has obviously been putting the final touches on his announcement statement.

Q Did he cancel his session of the usual Tuesday meeting with Congressional leaders?

MR. POWELL: There was not a Congressional leadership breakfast. There was not one this morning.

Q Don't they do that every Tuesday?

MR. POWELL: Not every Tuesday. We generally do it on Tuesday, but not every one.

Q Jody, once he announces, will the President forego all political activity in his own behalf until this situation is resolved?

MR. POWELL: We will have to make a judgment, as we have in the past, as to what is appropriate under the circumstances.

Q Jody, you were giving us a run down --

MR. POWELL: I think the President has indicated that he recognizes the fact that his personal political campaign activity will have to be restrained. And it will.

Q Do you disagree with Senator Kennedy's statement, that he made in Reno, I believe, that support for the hostages does not automatically mean that there must be support for the Shah?

MR. POWELL: Sam, I just don't see how I can -- once I get into that from this podium, it doesn't seem to me that there is any way to draw a line. So it seems to me that the best posture is just not to get into it.

Q But is there not a difference, I suppose, between supporting the President's policy and criticism of the Shah, apart from the President's policy concerning the Shah?

MR. POWELL: I am just not going to get into it, Sam. I can't answer one question and then either refuse to answer other questions, or be constrained from placing that question in a broader context. So I am just not going to get into it.

Q Let me just ask one more, and I will -- is the President, and are you today, in talking about the President's curtailment in not attending the gala, is he asking all political opponents to do more than he did on Wednesday, which was to support his position? Is he asking them not to discuss Iran at all, in any context, in any way?

MR. POWELL: I have not asked, not intended to ask more than the President asked on Wednesday, whenever it was.

Q Jody, can you give us a run down -- can you say whether the people have talked on the telephone --

MR. POWELL: I haven't tried to compile that.

Q In the hall up there you were giving background on a report that the hostages have been threatened with being shot. I don't think I heard all of it. I think some people didn't hear any of it.

*Execution of Hostages*

MR. POWELL: Let me go on background, then, for a moment, and say what I said quite briefly -- that American hostages have been threatened with execution if they fail to cooperate with their captors.

Q Is there any time on that, Jody?

MR. POWELL: I don't want to try to put a time period on it.

Q Then the confessions --

MR. POWELL: I don't want to get into that -- into

Q -- the confessions

MR. POWELL: I don't want to get much more specific than that --

Q I heard somebody ask --

MR. POWELL: -- you can assume -- you can assume that I don't mean cooperate just in the sense of sort of routine matters -- that is to say, "sit still or don't talk" or that sort of thing.

Q Well, since we are on on background --

MR. POWELL: I realize we are on background, but I think we get -- I think, frankly, -- and I am sure -- I think, frankly, in these areas if you get too specific you can get into a -- even without being aware of it, into sources and methods and so forth and that is something I want to avoid doing at all.

Q Are there recent, recent threats or continuing threats or are you talking about something that did happen at some point in these 31 days?

MR. POWELL: It is something that has happened. Obviously, we do not have information on a minute-by-minute basis of what goes on there. The -- the -- well, when I get back on the record I will once more see if I can do anything about getting any mention of our request that these people be allowed to have someone to -- a neutral observer come in and see them. And, maybe, if I say it enough, somehow it will get over to the correspondents over there and they, in their many interviews will ask that question.

Q Jody, whether you are on the record or background, can you comment on the statement by Ghotbzadeh last night with Chancellor that while there may have been harsh treatment the first couple of days, that since then, there is a great deal of freedom -- people can talk to each other -- joke -- and become friendly with their captors?

MR. POWELL: I will say -- I will go on the record with this and I will say what I have said on numerous previous occasions, that previous statements about the treatment of those hostages have been shown to be not true. And that statements now about their treatment and their supposed well-being can only be accepted by the world community

*Hostage treatment*

*Hostage Treatment*

and by the people and the Government of the United States if the authorities in Iran begin to abide by the minimum standards of civilized behavior and allow third parties to have daily regular access to these people so that they can present to the world their views on how they were being treated and what their condition might be.

Q But you don't have any information to contradict on your own what he was saying about the change in the treatment of the hostages?

MR. POWELL: I have no reason to believe that statement any more than I have reason to believe previous statements which were wrong.

Q Well, since there are no independent observers that are seeing them, according to your point, do we know anything about them? Are those hostages still alive? And do we have any information about them? And, at what point, if we have no information except what Iranian authorities provide us, do we find that unacceptable?

MR. POWELL: I am not going to get into precisely what information we have. I will return to the previous point that -- which we have hit over and over again -- it's been like a tree falling in the woods -- and for the past week -- of the importance of a neutral observer being allowed to see our people over there.

Q Yeah, but let me just -- let me just

MR. POWELL: I am -- I am -- Sam, I am just not going to be -- I am not going to be provoked.

Q I had always thought that you were talking about a neutral observer who could demonstrate what you believe to be the case, and that is that claims that they are being well treated might not be accurate. But now it occurs to me that maybe you are talking about -- we don't even know anything about them.

MR. POWELL: I am just not going to get into what we know. I think I have also pointed out in response, made that same point in response to questions about whether they have been transferred, whether they were all there or not and you will have to -- which seems to me to --

Q You said on background in the hall that the President had previously said that they were threatened by firearms, but it seems to me that being threatened with execution goes a step beyond being threatened with firearms. Does it, or is this the same information, or --

MR. POWELL: If I had any idea I would do it -- you know the President's statement was on the record, but, you know, on background it seems to me that -- frankly, if somebody threatens you -- I don't want you to get hung up on the word "execution," as opposed to being shot summarily or right then or so forth, and I, you know, it seemed to me that --

Q Well, what are you talking about is pointing a gun at somebody's head and saying if you don't do this, I'll kill you?

MR. POWELL: Yes.

*Execution of Hostages*

Q Okay.

Q He is asking, is this more recent information than what the President said last week.

MR. POWELL: I am not going to get into -- again --

Q Well, you should give us some time-frame on this because it is not repetitious, it is a new dimension.

Q Are you talking about the same thing he was talking about?

Q Alright. Can you say whether the trials would change any policies that we have been pursuing?

MR. POWELL: I'm just -- we've made our previous statements about trials. As you know, we made a statement, -- when was it -- it's been two weeks ago. I am not going to go -- I don't have anything to add to that at this point.

*trial of hostages*

Q Can I ask you a question about the trial? Is there any thought in the Administration that if, perhaps, the hostages were put on trial that that might -- that that might give the Iranians what they are looking for -- that is a public affairs, publicity display and then, in turn, a trial in and of itself might diffuse the situation?

MR. POWELL: I really don't think it's helpful to speculate on that -- on sort of theories like that. I am -- you can -- you can --

Q Well, might not the trial be the only way that you would get them if --

MR. POWELL: Well, you can construct just about any theory you wish to construct relating to almost any conclusion you wish to -- you choose. You know, based upon statements, previous actions and so forth. And, I just don't think that it's helpful for me to be -- to be endorsing, publicly, one particular -- or one particular theory about what they may be doing if they do this or that or the other.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that if there was a trial --

Q Have we received any information in the last two days -- have we received any new information within the last two days?

MR. POWELL: Any new information at all?

Q That's a fair question, really.

MR. POWELL: About what?

Q Yes. On the hostages?

MR. POWELL: Okay, if you ask a question that broad, the answer is yes and that's as far as I will go.

Q Have these threats of execution been made more than once?

MR. POWELL: I am just not -- I have said what I intend to say on that matter and that obviously -- references to that have to stay on background.

*Iran of Hostages*

Q Jody, could you just repeat for me the previous statement on trials the way you couched it a couple of weeks ago?

MR. POWELL: I can't repeat it off the top of my head. I will be glad to pull it out of the --

Q Grossly -- that there would be --

Q You said it would be a flagrant violation of international law.

MR. POWELL: I repeated it no later than yesterday or the day or before, but I will be glad to pull it for you again.

Q Iran would be responsible for the ensuing consequences. "Grave consequences" has only been used in terms of harm. "The ensuing consequences" was the phrase on November 20th in that statement.

MR. POWELL: You have the statement that we issued. I am not prepared to add anything to it at this point.

Q Jody, has the new information received within the last two days --

MR. POWELL: I am not going to go beyond what I said before.

Q I have just one question. Has it heightened the concern for the safety of the hostages?

MR. POWELL: I can't deal with that.

Q Jody, are we going to get a transcript of the five-minute commercial tonight? Do you know what time we might get it?

MR. POWELL: I don't know what time. Yes, we will go ahead and give you a transcript embargoed for delivery.

Q Jody, did you say you will definitely have an advance of this announcement at 1:45?

MR. POWELL: I don't know. I said we would not have one before 1:45. Obviously if the President finishes his -- checks off on it and finishes his work on it, then we will -- as soon as we do we will give it to you.

Q Changing it? They are changing it now?

MR. POWELL: That is generally what he does when he is working on it.

Q Jody, do you have any reason to believe --

Q Jody, who is going to be there?

MR. POWELL: Members of the White House staff and members of the campaign staff.

Q Do you have any reason to believe that if there were a trial and they were convicted and that allows them to save face then they would say, "Okay, get out of the country, you are undesirables"?

MR. POWELL: I really think, Wes, that is about the same question that Walt asked, and I just don't -- again, I just don't think it is helpful for me to try to speculate on what they may or may not be doing.

Q I was talking about your assessment of that.

MORE

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MR. POWELL: I just don't want to speculate on that at this point.

Q The situation in Iran appears to have been --

Q Can you comment on the Khomeini election results, 99.6?

MR. POWELL: No, I won't.

Q The situation in Iran appears to have been stabilized for the last several days, but in the context of the announcement today that there definitely will be a trial, the President has cancelled his plans to go to the speech and you now are raising this question about the threat of executions, it suggests the Administration perceives that some change is taking place in the situation over there.

MR. POWELL: I made it clear that the President's decision with regard to this evening was not related to any particular breaking event in Iran. I might also go ahead and say to you, again, so that we can deal with it in the proper context, that the President will be meeting with his foreign policy advisors later this afternoon. That also was scheduled as a periodic review, which he has conducted every few days with his principal advisors and was not related to --

Q What time?

MR. POWELL: I will have to check the time exactly.

Q Will the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs be present?

MR. POWELL: We never release a list. And it was not related to any particular event or break one way or the other in the situation there.

Q Do you have any reason to believe --

MR. POWELL: As far as -- I really can't give you -- I want to avoid -- I have sort of gotten into it, this thing of sort of taking a temperature each day and so forth. But you are aware of the -- because you have asked me about it -- the particular statements sort of thing. I have simply said on those that I am just not prepared to make any comment, I am just not going to make any comment at this time, and I think you really ought to -- if I can guide you -- you ought to take that at face value because it is said at face value. Obviously --

Q What about the warning by the Soviet Union that we are fishing in dangerous waters?

MR. POWELL: I think State may have dealt with that.

Q When you said foreign policy advisors, do you mean to limit that strictly to foreign policy or are you including National Security as well?

MR. POWELL: Well, it is the group which he has normally met with in these situations.

Q So that includes the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs?

Q And you say this meeting had been pre-planned even though it is not on the schedule?

MR. POWELL: We generally don't put those on the schedule.

Q Yes, you do.

MR. POWELL: I don't think we do. Well, we may sometimes, sometimes we don't.

Q What is this group called?

MR. POWELL: Pardon?

Q What is this group called?

MR. POWELL: Well, technically --

Q Good old boys.

Q I didn't ask you. I asked him.

MR. POWELL: -- technically it becomes an NSC meeting when the President is present.

Q Jody, can you help us understand any better why the appearance tonight was cancelled and why the decision was made after --

MR. POWELL: I think I have done it as best I can.

Q Well, it is done for the sake of appearances, isn't it?

Q You said it is not Iran.

MR. POWELL: I said, Sam, that it was not a decision related to some breaking event in Iran. I said that to keep you from doing something which would have been misleading to the public, and that is to imply that there was some new crisis situation there which could have had unfortunate consequences.

Q I understand.

MR. POWELL: I did not say it was not related to Iran. In fact, what I said was that the President considered it not to be appropriate at a time when he was asking other candidates to be restrained in their political comments about Iran. He felt that he ought also to be restrained in his political activity.

Q So he finally considered it not to be appropriate?

Q So that was the case yesterday, earlier yesterday, though, wasn't it, before the decision was made?

MR. POWELL: I am not going to argue with you about it. It was not the most important decision that faced the Administration, frankly. We, as I told you some days ago, we intended to put off until basically as close as we could to announcement day exactly how the announcement day activities would go. We reviewed it yesterday and the President decided he did not feel it was appropriate for him to attend.

Q Were you still selling tickets or something and you didn't want to let it be known he wouldn't be there?

MR. POWELL: I think the tickets have been sold for a while.

Q Have we decided what we would do in the event that the hostages are put on trial? Has a decision been made what action would be taken?

MR. POWELL: I am just not going to comment upon contingencies, as I have not done.

Q Because what, Jody?

MR. POWELL: As I have not before commented upon contingencies.

Q Is the White House concerned by reports that the Saudis are prepared to shift payments for oil from dollars to other denominations?

MR. POWELL: I am not going to comment on that right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

END

(AT 12:55 P.M. EST)

This Copy For:

#530

NEWS CONFERENCE

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH JODY POWELL

AT 2:36 P.M. EST

DECEMBER 3, 1979

MONDAY

MR. POWELL: I have no announcements to make this afternoon. I will be glad to respond to your questions.

Q Could you tell us about the schedule for the re-election announcement tomorrow?

MR. POWELL: Chairman Strauss has, I believe, a meeting with the press scheduled for about 3:00 or 3:15, and he will deal with that. I will try to conclude here in time for you all to get over there. He has indicated that he will try to hold off to give people a chance to make it.

Q Then the scenario is all set for the President's announcement, where and so forth?

MR. POWELL: For the most part, yes.

Q Jody, do you think Senator Kennedy's remarks in San Diego might effect our hostages in Tehran?

MR. POWELL: I will have to respond to that this way; the President made it clear last Wednesday night that he did not think --

Q Slowly, please.

MR. POWELL: -- the President made it clear last Wednesday night that he did not think it appropriate or helpful to allow himself to be drawn into a political debate on this matter while our people are being held in Tehran. Accordingly, we will have to leave any comment on Senator Kennedy's analysis of the situation to others, at least for the time being.

Q Such as Strauss?

MR. POWELL: I talked --

Q The State Department gave a statement, a strong statement.

MR. POWELL: I understand that the State Department gave a brief statement. Pardon?

Q Is it helpful for them to get into the political fight?

MR. POWELL: I think that was an appropriate place in the Administration for that sort of statement.

Q Isn't it possible that remarks like Senator Kennedy's may have the effect of encouraging the Ayatollah Khomeini to hold those hostages until the outcome of the '80 presidential elections is decided?

MORE

#530

MR. POWELL: Walt, I --

Q No, that is a serious question.

MR. POWELL: I recognize that it is a serious question. I think you probably recognize how bloody my tongue is from being bitten, but I will have to continue to bite it nevertheless.

Q Jody, the President has in the past indicated that he hopes the various candidates would practice restraint. Would that position still hold?

MR. POWELL: He has, in fact, indicated that, and --

Q Is there any change in that?

MR. POWELL: -- and we appreciate the restraint that has been shown by most of the candidates.

Q Does that mean you have declared a moratorium on any criticism of the shah?

MR. POWELL: I don't think that is the thrust of our comments.

Q The President didn't allow him to even come into this country for nine months, so he wasn't exactly pleased with his record, was he?

MR. POWELL: As I have said, I will have to not engage in argument or debate on that score for the time being.

Q Can you say anything further, Jody, about the prospect, the possibility, of the shah being granted permanent asylum in the United States?

MR. POWELL: No. I can say -- I can repeat what we have said on that score, which is that the shah has asked that we provide assistance in finding and making arrangements for a permanent place of residence. He has indicated his desire to leave this country when his medical treatment is complete and he is able to do so, and the question of permanent residence in this country, as we have said on numerous previous occasions, simply has not arisen at this point.

Q Jody, is there a reaction to the incident in Beirut, the attack on the oil field, the demonstration?

MR. POWELL: I don't have a reaction to that at this point, no.

Q Jody, does the chairman of the Carter-Mondale Presidential Committee clear his statements with President Carter?

MR. POWELL: Sometimes.

Q Do you think in this case that he will today, or will have?

MR. POWELL: I don't know.

Q You don't know if he spoke to the President today?

MR. POWELL: He has not spoken with the President, so far as I know.

Q Jody, in regard to the shah, is the United States willing to let the International Court assume jurisdiction for hearing Iranian claims against the shah's wealth? I ask that because there is talk in the U.N. about this.

MR. POWELL: First of all, I don't know what control we have over the jurisdiction of the ICJ. Secondly, and more importantly, I don't think it is productive for us to begin now to comment on various and sundry possibilities and hypothetical situations.

Q Why was Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio chosen as the place?

MR. POWELL: As you know, the indication from the -- thank you, Joann, that is very helpful -- the indication from the shah's doctors was that he -- while he was able to leave the hospital and did not require the sort of care that would be associated with hospitalization there at Cornell, that it would not be advisable for him to make a long trip and that he did need a period of recuperation under medical supervision.

We responded on humanitarian grounds to provide a place of secure convalescent care. The choice of Willford Hall at Lackland was made on security and medical considerations, based primarily upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense.

Q Isn't that really going a step further than just giving medical treatment? Isn't that in essence sort of a mid-way step before granting him asylum? He was already in convalescence in New York.

MR. POWELL: I really think you would be in error in drawing that conclusion.

Q Who is footing the bill for all of this? Is it the American taxpayer or the shah ultimately?

MR. POWELL: The shah will provide reimbursement for the accommodations there at Willford Hall and for the --

Q Medicare?

MR. POWELL: -- I am sorry?

Q He said he had Medicare. (Laughter.)

MR. POWELL: And for the flight from New York to Kelly.

Q Are you saying, in effect, that you don't think that the President sending the shah to asylum to an Air Force base is a proper subject for political discussion in this country?

MR. POWELL: I don't believe that was what I was asked.

Q I didn't ask you that, except in relation to what you said about Senator Kennedy's remarks.

MR. POWELL: So far as I know -- I don't know exactly what he said -- did he say anything about that?

Q Yes, he did. He said, among other things, that the shah is being choosy in delaying his departure from the United States and that is why he was sent to that air base and my question is --

MR. POWELL: Bob, in all honesty, I didn't even know he had said that too. But our position on that is that, as I said, the President has made it clear he doesn't think it is helpful or productive for him, as President, to be drawn into a political debate on these matters at this particular time.

MORE

#530

We have made our position clear, as clear as we can. I was just asked a question about that decision, and I have explained as best I can why that decision was made. It was made by the President; it is his responsibility. And as we have said before, we have no apologies to make about it.

The provision of a place for secure convalescent care was made on humanitarian grounds. The choice of this particular facility was one made on medical and security grounds, primarily based upon the recommendation of the Secretary, who was in a position to survey various installations and to make a recommendation. That is our position. What other people may wish to say is their choice. I think our general position is clear in terms of --

Q He has asked for your guidance and assistance in finding him another place. Is the United States actively involved now in finding another place?

MR. POWELL: We are actively involved in assisting the Shah in arrangements for a permanent place of residence.

Q Well, is there any other place? Is there any other country that --

MR. POWELL: Sam, I don't think I can go beyond that. At this point I am not going to be drawn into a discussion of what other countries may -- what their attitudes may or may not be at this particular point.

Q Yes, but I ask because there is one theory that we have decided we don't want to test the Iranian so-called students' resolve, that they would put the American hostages on trial if the Shah leaves, and so we will just keep him here.

MR. POWELL: That theory, of course, if one exists, such a theory exists --

Q I have just expounded it.

MR. POWELL: -- it would be -- well, if you want to identify it as your theory, then that would be more straightforward reporting.

Q No, no.

Q Jody, if you could --

Q No, no, no. Let him deal with it.

MR. POWELL: We have made it clear -- I will refer you to my earlier statement about his stay there. It will be determined by his medical condition, and by decisions on a permanent place of residence.

We have made it clear repeatedly, including yesterday, that this country is not going to be in a position of either forcing his departure or of forcing him to remain contrary to his wishes. That is, I think, as directly as I -- as one can possibly deal with this theory.

Q Jody, when the President spoke the other night at a news conference, he said the Shah's departure was, I think these are his words: up to his own volition. And based on what you have just said now, does that suggest that if the Shah wishes to stay in the United States he may?

MR. POWELL: As I think I have responded to that as best I can, to the question of permanent residence here, given the fact that the Shah has indicated that he does not wish to stay here permanently; given the fact that he has asked us to assist him in finding some other place of permanent residence -- you know, has not arisen. And so I cannot and will not deal with that question at this point. That is the position that we have taken throughout this matter, and it is the position that we will continue to take, unless I am told otherwise.

Q Jody -- but it is fair to say that right at the moment whatever happens is up to the Shah?

MR. POWELL: I beg your pardon?

Q Is it fair to say that whatever happens right now is up to the Shah?

MR. POWELL: Will all due respect, I think, to the extent I am able to do so, I would like for it to be fairly said, what I have just said on the matter, which --

Q Jody, last week you were --

Q Why would that be inaccurate, Jody --

MR. POWELL: Pardon?

Q -- to say that whatever happens is up to the Shah?

MR. POWELL: Well --

Q It is his volition, it is his choice, to stay or go.

MR. POWELL: I really don't think -- it is to my advantage to avoid allowing you to supply quotes for me, and then I am in the position of having to check off on them or not. I would rather be in a position of sort of responding according to the --

Q Do you think that is the wrong interpretation?

MR. POWELL: I think the correct and the best interpretation of the position of the United States government is as it is stated by those who are supposed to speak for it.

Q Jody, did these doctors who provided the medical assessment, including the fact that he needed a further period of recuperation before a long trip, suggest how long that period should be medically?

MR. POWELL: Not so far as I know. I don't have any information on that.

Q Jody, I don't understand why you refuse to deal with the question of whether the Shah can stay here permanently if he so desires.

MR. POWELL: Because it is a hypothetical question which has not arisen.

Q Jody, why is it inappropriate to talk about the Shah's wealth and how to handle it at this point?

MORE

#530

Q I have heard that from several responses.

MR. POWELL: Well, I think what I said was, frankly, that we did not intent -- well, I will refer you back to the transcript and if you think -- I think what I said was, that in line with the President's statement on Wednesday that we did not feel it was helpful or appropriate for him to be drawn into a political debate on these matters at this time --

Q Jody, does the President --

MR. POWELL: -- we did not feel that we would have to leave any comment on Senator Kennedy's statements to others at the time being.

Q Well, not Kennedy --

Q Jody, last week --

Q Do you have any comments --

Q -- you said some some things to point out that we were not in direct contact with the Shah, and it was also very clear that you wanted that made known for fear of the reaction in Iran. What happened to -- by any standard, right now he is an official guest. Whether it is permanent or not and what prompted what is a basic policy change? I mean, he could have stayed in New York to recuperate as well as become an official guest.

MR. POWELL: I believe I made clear last week that we were in a position to be adequately informed upon -- about his wishes and about his medical condition, and that continues to be the case. We have attempted to avoid any impression by our words as well as by our actions that his decisions are being controlled or dictated by this government for reasons, I think --

Q Well, it is --

MR. POWELL: -- you fully understand, and there has been no other -- I would think your statement that this was some sort of major change of policy just not true.

Q Well, Jody, there has been a report today that --

MR. POWELL: If you have a situation which you can -- you may not have had a chance to read the statement that we issued yesterday -- but, in a situation in which his doctors state that he no longer needs the sort of care that is furnished by that hospital at Cornell, and that he has been -- has been necessary up to this point, and at which there is a request for our assistance in providing a secure convalescent facility because -- for one reason because he is not in a condition to make a prolonged trip and also a request -- for obvious reasons -- for our assistance in providing or helping to find a permanent place of residence.

I really think it is somewhat extreme to say that discussion of those matters and arrangements for the transferral to such a secure place of convalescence is a major change in the United States policy.

Q Not a major change in policy --

MR. POWELL: I just don't think he could --

Q Jody, there is a report today that while he was in Mexico, the Shah wrote his memoirs, or at least started on them, and that as part of that, he blames President Carter for his downfall. Specifically that the Shah's departure was undertaken at U. S. suggestion and that he was given to understand that during a brief period the military would supplant the Ayatollah and his people and the Shah would come back and that --

MR. POWELL: I have no information on that and whether it is true or not has no bearing upon the President's decisions.

Q Let me go back to the change of policy --

Q Jody, did you talk to Bob Strauss today about what he was going to say this afternoon?

MR. POWELL: I spoke with Bob several times today.

Q And, did that include what he was going to say, if anything, about Kennedy's statement as well as about the President's announcement?

MR. POWELL: I talked with him about the President's -- about the President's announcement because those decisions are made over here. I don't think private conversations are generally a fit subject of discussion.

Q Are you saying that there was a private conversation then, that there was any discussion about the Kennedy statement?

MR. POWELL: I said I don't think private conversations generally are a fit subject for your inquiry.

Q Let me go back to change of policy. Not only is it a change of policy, but now the government is taking over all information channels for the Shah. All reporters have been thrown off of Lackland Air Force Base. The only way the public in this country has any way to know about the Shah is through the government's spokesmen, like you.

MR. POWELL: Oh, I don't know that -- I don't know that that is true at all.

Q It's not true? Reporters are at Lackland? There is a press room there?

Q That's what we have been told -- that the State Department or Defense Department can't answer questions at Lackland Air Force Base. That's exactly what reporters from Texas have been told. They have to call Washington to get answers.

Q Why are you secluding the Slaw -- the Shah -- I am the Slaw -- (Laughter.)

Q A good point, the cole slaw.

MORE

MR. POWELL: Is it your understanding that the freedom of those who have been speaking for him in the past has been somehow --

Q Well, if they can rent a hall 35 miles away, perhaps.

MR. POWELL: I have more confidence than you in the resourcefulness of the American press.

Q Was it necessary for the Government to throw the press off of Lackland?

MR. POWELL: I don't really know. I think the more appropriate --

Q Was there a security matter involved?

MR. POWELL: I think the more appropriate question is whether any useful purpose was served by maintaining a massive press facility on Lackland Air Force Base.

Q Jody, can you tell us whether Los Angeles --

Q Suppression of knowledge never promotes democracy.

MR. POWELL: Well, we will have our philosophical discussion later. It strikes me, as usual, as special interest pleading rather than any --

Q Jody, this morning a crack network newsman quoted a White House aide as saying that --

MR. POWELL: A what?

Q A crack --

MR. POWELL: Crack or crank?

Q Crack. Reported a White House aide anonymously as saying that the shah is not such a bad guy, he wasn't such a monster. Does that reflect the White House view of the shah?

Q Yes or no?

MR. POWELL: I have made it clear that it is not my intention to become involved in -- I saw that quote. I saw it in the context of Senator Kennedy's analysis of the matter and I am just not going to become involved in it.

Q Jody, can you tell us what happened in the President's meeting with Mayor Bradley of Los Angeles on the question of Federal aid for the L.A. Olympics?

MR. POWELL: I can't tell you that. I was not at that meeting. All I know is that that was the purpose, the discussion of the Olympics in Los Angeles was the --

Q Is the President friendly to the concept of such Federal aid?

MR. POWELL: I will have to take the question and come back with a response.

Q Jody, are we any closer to getting the hostages out of Tehran?

MR. POWELL: No. I can't give you a --

Q As we go into a fifth week?

MR. POWELL: I cannot give you some reason, some event that has taken place that would lead us to believe that those responsible for holding our people in Iran are evidencing a more reasonable attitude than they have in the past. I might say that --

Q How long can this go on?

MR. POWELL: I might say -- ditto your question, ditto my previous answer, Sam.

Q Jody, what about Puerto Rico? What is the President's reaction to the report from Puerto Rico, Jody? The reaction down there?

MR. POWELL: On the incident in Puerto Rico let me say on the President's behalf that this was a despicable act of murder, that the full resources of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice will be available as needed to help identify and bring to justice those responsible for a senseless act of terrorism. Such actions are not consistent --

Q A little slower.

MR. POWELL: -- with the beliefs of the vast majority of Puerto Ricans, whatever their political views.

Q Well, does he believe that there is any connection between this and the release of these terrorists who promised that they are going to use bombs?

MR. POWELL: I know of no connection.

Q No connection?

MR. POWELL: I know of nothing that would substantiate such a feeling.

Q Okay.

Q Jody, where are the hostages?

Q Jody, anything tying that to Castro?

MR. POWELL: So far as I know, Walt, no particular group has, at this point, claimed what has unfortunately come to be known as "credit" for this act.

So I have no information for you at this point on responsibility for it. The FBI has already dispatched additional personnel and equipment to Puerto Rico to assist in the investigation there.

Q In terms of claiming credit for --

Q Excuse me. There have been a number of reports that the hostages have been moved, that Congressman Hansen perhaps saw the only hostages that were there. Does the government know where these hostages are? Is there any verification that they have been moved? Do we have any idea of where these 50 individuals are?

MR. POWELL: I am aware, as I have indicated earlier, of press reports that some of the hostages may have been moved from the embassy. We have been unable to confirm any such reports. I noticed, I believe on the wire shortly before this briefing, that at least someone speaking for, or purporting to speak for, the students, has now denied that any have been removed from the embassy. That, as I said, is something that I just saw recently.

I think the primary point here is that the statements made by those holding our people, whether they relate to their location or the manner in which they are being treated, are appropriately subject to a substantial degree of skepticism from the international community, unless and until they are willing to abide by the minimal standards of civilized behavior, and to allow neutral third party observers to visit these hostages and to speak with them on a regular basis, and to report in an unbiased way and in a way not subject to pressure or intimidation as to their condition and the nature of their treatment.

Q Have your appeals received any response? You have made these appeals repeatedly about allowing third parties, the Red Cross -- we have sat here through these weeks -- is there any response from the Iranian government about permitting third party observers or anybody to see these people?

MR. POWELL: If they were abiding by minimal standards of civilized behavior, it would not be necessary for me, and others speaking for this government, to continually attempt to bring to the attention of the American people and to the people around the world the fact that they are not abiding by such standards.

Q Jody, now that somebody at the Moslem brotherhood has claimed credit for terrorist actions against U.S. installations in at least two cities, and now that the Saudis have named the brotherhood as one of the responsible organizations in the destabilization in that country, why isn't this government saying anything about that organization?

MR. POWELL: I don't have any comment on that.

MORE

#530

*Hostages  
Government*

*Hostages  
Government*

Q I just want to follow up.

MR. POWELL: You get one follow-up.

Q Advisors to this Administration have been extremely soft, to say the least, on the Moslem brotherhood. Is that one reason why you would find it embarrassing if you had to hold them responsible for these actions?

MR. POWELL: I don't believe -- I don't remember comments directed toward the Moslem brotherhood or specific organizations. I think there have been comments about the fact that in terms of East-West conflicts, that those who hold a devout faith in Islam would find the materialism and the atheism of Communism to be repugnant to them.

Q If I gave you the specific references, would you take the question? If I bring the references of advisors talking about the Moslem brotherhood?

MR. POWELL: You may take the question.

Q Jody, given the President's standing request that political candidates restrain themselves while the efforts to release the hostages are underway, and given this particular moment in time, with the U.N. Security Council meeting and the possibility of the Iranian envoy showing up, and maybe private talks, do you regard that request at this point more critical than ever?

MR. POWELL: I don't want to get in a position of sort of saying it is more critical at one time than at the other, because I am not always-- I think part of the problem is that it is not always possible for everyone to know exactly what may or may not be going on privately on a particular day or at a particular time. So I think the general comment --

Q Why shouldn't Mrs. Carter, and the President's mother, Miss Lillian, also observe this sort of moratorium on political comment? Why should they be free to comment when the other candidates are not?

MR. POWELL: If your reference is to the one comment that Miss Lillian made --

Q No, it is not directly. She is campaigning, I think, almost daily.

MR. POWELL: What else has she said that seems to --

Q Well, I am not with her, but she is on the stump, campaigning for her son, the President.

MR. POWELL: I don't think that reasonable people would

expect that at a time when the President is not able to campaign for himself that others not be allowed to campaign for him. So far as the comments about the situation in Iran by the First Lady and others, I think you will find that they have been quite restrained; they have in fact

MORE

#530

been consistent with the -- and also relatively brief -- and so far as I can tell they have been carefully consistent with statements already made by the Administration.

Q Jody, has the White House offered to give any or all of the candidates private briefings on these sensitive matters so that they can appreciate the delicacy of the matter and therefore exercise restraint?

MR. POWELL: I don't know if it is possible to. It seems to me that the sensitivity of the situation is apparent on its face. It is not possible, and I think we have dealt with this a little bit before, but I don't mind taking a little bit of time on it again. This is not a situation in which you have one single question and a set of decisions before the President to be decided one way or the other. This is a continuing process in which new elements emerge and then, in some cases, fade from the picture and other elements arise and new questions arise on almost a -- literally on a daily basis. That is one of the reasons for a daily SCC meeting, and I know of no way to provide that continuing on-going familiarity with the process of what is happening with what questions are current today, of what has been dealt with yesterday and so forth.

Q Jody, does the President believe that it is good business not to have any insurance on any of our embassies around the world, as the Foreign Buildings Office of the State Department confirmed is the case this morning?

MR. POWELL: You will have to deal with State on that.

Q I have. I just want to know. The President is a businessman. Does he feel it is wise not to have any insurance on our embassies?

MR. POWELL: I am not familiar with the issue and you will have to deal with State on it. I promised I would come over here.

Q I am curious about -- I am trying to understand what you said a few minutes ago. Are you telling us -- what you are saying is this; that there is not a change in United States policy for the shah of Iran to go down to Lackland Air Force Base, to go from a civilian hospital to a military hospital and have full protection of the United States military, that is not a change in U.S. Government policy?

MR. POWELL: No, it is not a change in policy. If you think about it, if we are to provide, as the President decided that we would, a secure convalescent facility, it seems to me that doing so, it might make good sense that the most effective way to do that would be at a Government installation. The making of such facilities available to private citizens is by no means a new matter. It is done -- it has been done frequently in the past. Each service secretary has the authority, at his own discretion, to make such facilities available, and the decision to use a Government facility for this purpose, it seems to me almost on the face of it makes eminently good sense.

That does not, it seems to me, or should not, cause a view that our policy, and I assume by that you mean the situation with regard to the shah's presence here, why he is here and so forth, that does not signal a change in that policy, and if -- I am not saying I don't think your question about whether or not it does is -- I don't think that is not a legitimate question, but it seems to me we have responded to it very directly, that it does not, and I have said to you the reasons that it does not. I have said that his stay there will be based upon two factors; one, his medical condition and, two, the decision on a permanent

place of residence.

I have pointed out to you that the shah, as he has since he came here and before he came here, has indicated his desire to depart this country when he is medically able -- when his medical treatment is concluded and he is able to do so, and I have further said that he has, in fact, requested our assistance, which is being provided, in determining or finding a permanent place of residence outside of this country and the question of permanent residence here, given all of those things, just has not arisen, and I don't think it is -- I think it is -- well, to put it this way, I think it is -- at least we deserve the benefit of the doubt and being unwilling to speculate on hypothetical questions at this point.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

MR. POWELL: Thank you.

END

#530 (AT 3:09 P.M. EST)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Al-

Prepare a directive  
to be signed by me  
re telegrams or other  
messages going out  
over my name -

Expedite

A stylized handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly 'J' or 'D', consisting of a horizontal top bar and a downward-pointing shape.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

12/8/79

Jack Watson

The attached was returned in the President's outbox today and is forwarded to you for appropriate handling.

Rick Hutcheson

cc: The Vice President

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

December 7, 1979

*Jack-  
Let Fitz  
interview her  
first  
J*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JACK WATSON *Jack*  
ARNIE MILLER *AM*

SUBJECT: John Gronouski

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When Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed John Gronouski to be the head of the Voice of America, we were intrigued with the idea. We agreed with the assessment of Gronouski's distinguished record and of the domestic political gains his selection would bring.

We also discussed this possible selection, however, with Cy Vance, John Reinhardt, Director of the International Communications Agency, and R. Peter Straus. They all felt that the appointment of Gronouski to the Voice job would be unwise. He is presently acting as the Chairman of the Board for International Broadcasting, and they all believe someone prominently identified with the Board should not head the Voice.

The Voice of America has achieved a fine reputation as an impartial source of world news. On the other hand, the Board oversees the activities of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, whose broadcasts are intended only for Russia and Eastern Europe. RFE and RL have been accepted as partisan advocates of our views, and there has been a long-standing separation between the Voice of America and these other two information sources. The appointment of Gronouski would destroy that historic separation.

We also asked the White House Congressional Liaison staff to raise the matter informally with Senator Pell, whom Congressional Liaison considers a key to approval of any VOA director. Senator Pell stated he would have no objection if Gronouski is named to the Voice job. We were also informed by Congressional Liaison staff, however, that Senator Inouye is particularly important to the Administration at this time.

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

November 30, 1979

*Jack -  
How about  
John Gronouski?*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JACK WATSON *Jack*  
ARNIE MILLER *AA*

SUBJECT: Director of the Voice of America

*J*  
*ps: I have no  
preference yet*  
*J*

We recommend you nominate Mary G. Bitterman, of Hawaii, to be Director of the Voice of America. The Voice is part of the International Communications Agency, and ICA Director John Reinhardt and Frank Moore concur with our recommendation.

Bitterman, 35, has been the chief executive officer of Hawaii's public television station for the last five years. She is also Chairperson of the East-West Center, which was established by Congress to promote relationships between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific. Bitterman served as the Vice-Chairperson of Hawaii's Democratic party until she was selected for her current post. More detailed comments concerning Bitterman follow, and her resume and additional comments about her are included at Tab A.

Although we prefer Bitterman, we have also included information about Chloe Aaron, of California, currently Senior Vice President for Programming at the Public Broadcasting System. Until the appointment of Jane C. Pfeiffer as Chairman of the Board of Directors at NBC, Aaron was the highest ranking woman executive at the network level in television. The Vice President knows Chloe Aaron and supports her candidacy. Aaron's resume and additional comments about her are included at Tab B.

Mary G. Bitterman. She is regarded by Newton Minnow, Chairman of PBS, as having done an outstanding job in establishing the quality of Hawaii's public television station. She is uniformly perceived as very bright, an able executive, sophisticated in international relations and dealing with legislators. As the head of a small station, she is well versed in all aspects of broadcast programming, engineering and financial management. Through her work with the East-West Center, Bitterman is also highly regarded by former Senator Fulbright as a sophisticated and knowledgeable person in foreign affairs.

Chloe W. Aaron. She is well known in the broadcasting industry and is perceived as an excellent manager of

PBS' programming, which has a \$66 million budget. She is uniformly regarded as bright, energetic and tough. Aaron was also Director of the National Endowment for the Arts' Public Media Program, where she was responsible for all the Endowment activities relating to the funding of film, TV and radio. Aaron has also acquired international experience in her work at PBS. She has worked closely with the BBC, the Japanese and French in various program exchanges, and she is generally well versed in foreign affairs.

Both Bitterman and Aaron would accept the job, and either would be the first woman Director of the Voice of America.

RECOMMENDATION:

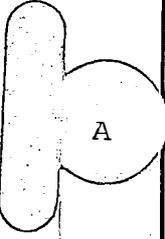
Nominate Mary G. Bitterman, of Hawaii, to be Associate Director for Broadcasting of the International Communications Agency, in charge of the Voice of America.

APPROVE  DISAPPROVE

In the Alternative:

I prefer Chloe W. Aaron

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MARY G. BITTERMAN  
Hawaii

EXPERIENCE:

- 1974 - Present Executive Director and General Manager,  
Hawaii Public Broadcasting Authority
- 1972 - 1974 Project Manager, Hawaii Environmental  
Simulation Laboratory, University of  
Hawaii
- 1971 - 1972 Research Associate, H.E.S.L., and lecturer  
in History, University of Hawaii
- 1969 - 1971 Lecturer in History, University of South Florida

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- 1977 - Present Chairman, Board of Governors, East-West Center
- 1978 - Present Member, Board of Directors, Pacific Mountain  
Network

EDUCATION:

- 1964 - 1965 School of Foreign Service, Georgetown  
University.
- 1966 B.A., University of Santa Clara, Santa Clara,  
California.
- 1968 M.A., Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.
- 1971 Ph.D., Bryn Mawr College

PERSONAL:

White Female  
Age 35  
Democrat

COMMENTS ON MARY G. BITTERMAN

Newton Minnow, Chairman of the Board of PBS.

You couldn't do better. She's terrific in every way. She has taken an almost moribund station in Honolulu and built it into a very respected institution. She is very smart, articulate and very effective in dealing with people.

William J. Fulbright, former Senator from Arkansas and Member of the Board of the East-West Center.

Mary Bitterman is a very impressive woman. She handles herself extremely well as Chairman of the Board. She has the capacity to do the Voice job well. I'm sure she would handle the Congress well, and she has a sophisticated and perceptive view of the world and this country's role in it. You would be very fortunate to get anyone of her caliber for the Voice job.

Minoru Hirabara, Chairman of the Hawaii State Democratic Party.

She is known and well liked by the people of this state and we are proud that her name is being considered. She is an extraordinary person, one of the special people in public life, and she would bring a special dimension to the Voice of America. She knows, appreciates and can articulate the unique experience of different cultures and peoples to the United States and also give the rest of the world a sense that we value the diversity of cultures in the world and respect them. I think that this is a most important thing to communicate through the Voice of America at this time, and I think that Mary Bitterman is the special person who can make other people see that.

R. Peter Straus, former Director of the Voice of America.

She is a very impressive woman, and there is no doubt that she would be terrific in the Voice of America job. Her work with the East-West Center clearly gives her thinking an international dimension, which is important for the Voice job. She has also had the right training. At a small station, she has had the opportunity to learn every phase of the operation -- financial, engineering, programming and public relations. She's ready for this, and she will be great.

John Reinhardt, Director of the U. S. International Communications Agency.

She is an impressive person. She clearly knows radio and asks all of the right questions about international broadcasting. She is politically sensitive and well-attuned to the international picture. I give her high marks, and I have no reason to doubt that she can do the Voice of America job well.

Darzil Rose, Chairman of the Board, Hawaii Public Broadcasting Authority.

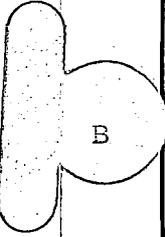
She is probably one of the most competent managers I've ever seen. She took an impossible situation and turned it into one of the best stations in the public television system. She does very well with a diverse group of people here, and she has travelled and worked with folks from Japan, China, and Australia. She has an absolutely fantastic ability to get different kinds of people to work together. I would hate to lose her.

Mrs. Yu-lin Tai, Director, Regional Language Centre, Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization, Singapore, and Member of the Board of the East-West Center.

Mary is a highly professional person of great integrity. She is dynamic and has imagination. She is broad, not narrow, and very perceptive. She understands the world's problems and enjoys the respect of people of different nationalities. She would be a wonderful representative of America in an international job of importance. She has chaired the East-West Center beautifully, and she has the qualities to do any job well.

Larry Grossman, President of PBS.

She is one of the best station managers in the public broadcasting system. She's very able and politically savvy. Her station is a small one, but it contributes more than its share to our national programming.



CHLOE W. AARON  
California

EXPERIENCE:

1976 - Present      Senior Vice President for Programming,  
Public Broadcasting Service

1970 - 1976      Director, Public Media Program,  
National Endowment for the Arts

1964 - 1970      Free-lance journalist, Concentration on  
Communications Industry

EDUCATION:

1960      B.A., Occidental College, California

1962      M.A., George Washington University

PERSONAL:

White Female  
Age 41  
Democrat

COMMENTS ON CHLOE W. AARON

Richard Wald, Senior Vice President of ABC News.

Chloe is smart and tough; a good executive and I don't think you could do better. She has a big and good reputation in broadcasting, and she would be a good Hill person.

Nancy Hanks, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts.

I cannot praise her highly enough. We brought her in to run our program. Her great strengths are that she knows what she wants; her judgment is excellent, and she is good at supervising people.

Fred Friendly, Ford Foundation.

Her judgment as an executive is very good. Chloe would be able to project in her speeches a sense of integrity, conscience and caring about our nation. At least a third of the job is being the Voice of America. She has a sense of confidence about herself, and she can make people think what she's doing is important.

John Reinhardt, Director of the International Communications Agency.

She is highly qualified, and she could do a good job at the Voice. I have two reservations, which I expressed to Ms. Aaron when I interviewed her. Both are based on her relationship to David Aaron, who is on the NSC staff. One, the Voice staff is likely to perceive Ms. Aaron as being connected with the White House and possibly not as independent as other people. She is a fine, tough person, and I think that potential problem could be overcome in time by Ms. Aaron's performance. I am also concerned that a head of the Voice, who could also be associated with the National Security Council, would be subjected, however unfairly, to Soviet propaganda attacking the credibility of the Voice.

Larry Grossman, President of PBS.

I don't want to lose her, but she's outstanding. She has the capacity to work with and appoint good people, and to stimulate them. She is a very capable leader. Her relationship to David (Aaron) could have been a problem in public television, but she has put that to rest as an issue. No one worries about the Administration's influence on her work or on PBS.

Les Brown, Media Critic for the New York Times.

I'm an admirer of Chloe. She's extremely able, knowledgeable and personable. One of the best female executives I've ever seen. She takes her work very seriously. She is extremely bright, a good politician. She is practical, yet enough of an idealist to want to do quality things.

Jay Islin, President of the New York City PBS station.

She was a very classy and skilled person when I knew her at the National Endowment. In her current job, as head of programming for PBS, she assembles the best there is in the country and gets it around. She is a strong administrator, with a bent for quality. She is a sophisticated person, who is now familiar with electronic media.

Dr. Gronouski is Professor of Economics and Public Affairs at the LBJ School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas at Austin. He organized this school in 1969 and served as its dean until 1974.

Born in Dunbar, Wisconsin, on October 26, 1919, Dr. Gronouski holds a PhD from the University of Wisconsin. Long active in the Democratic Party, he was appointed Postmaster General by President Kennedy and served in that position until November 1965 when President Johnson appointed him Ambassador to Poland. He served in Warsaw until 1968.

The Board for International Broadcasting was established as a result of the recommendations of the Milton Eisenhower Commission which reviewed the mission of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty in 1972-73. Dr. Gronouski served as a member of this Commission. The Congress enacted the Commission's recommendations as the International Broadcasting Act of 1973, Public Law 93-129, on October 19, 1973.

The International Broadcasting Act of 1973 set up the Board "to provide an effective instrumentality for the continuation of assistance to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty and to encourage a constructive dialog with the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Eastern Europe." Members of the Board, according to the Act, are to be "selected by the President from among Americans distinguished in the fields of foreign policy or mass communications" and may not be concurrently full-time employees of the U.S. Government.

In addition to providing funds for operation of the radios, the Board is required "to assess the quality, effectiveness and professional integrity of their broadcasting within the context of the broad foreign policy objectives of the United States." At the same time it is charged with keeping in mind "the necessity of maintaining the professional independence and integrity" of these Stations. In addition to receiving Congressionally-appropriated funds for the Stations, the Board is authorized to receive funds from private sources.

Active in many fields of academic endeavor and public affairs, Dr. Gronouski is married to the former Mary Louise Metz and has two daughters, Stacey and Julie.

Confirmed 6-23-77

###

visited Pres. & NSC 6-29-77 (Photos taken)



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

12/8/79

Jim McIntyre/John White

The attached was returned in the  
President's outbox today and is  
forwarded to you for appropriate  
handling.

Rick Hutcheson

cc: Stu Eizenstat  
Frank Press

cc 9-109



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
 OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

2:45 pm

*John -*  
*Push "plan"*  
*authority to*  
*maximum in*  
*correcting NRC*  
*defects - 9/11*  
*sign off on*  
*the proposal*  
*JC*  
*cc Stu*

DEC 7 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: John P. White, Deputy Director 

SUBJECT: Strengthening the Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
 by Reorganization Plan

This memorandum explains the actions that can be taken through use of your reorganization authority to strengthen the performance of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), with particular emphasis on its executive functions.

The attached table identifies, in preliminary form, six separate actions that can be implemented by reorganization plan. Each is described briefly and annotated as to:

- ° Whether the Commission can effect the change by its own action; and
- ° The relative significance of the action in reforming NRC, the probable merits of the action, and its relevance to executive functions of NRC.

The first three actions listed in the attachment are aimed directly at strengthening the Chairman and the Executive Director. They are directly relevant to improving the management and control of operating programs such as research, inspection, enforcement, training and emergency response. These actions are responsive to the Kemeny Commission findings, although they were not Kemeny recommendations. They can be taken without impairing collegial attention to policy rule-making or to major adjudications.

The remaining actions listed in the attachment are potential improvements which require closer analysis before we can conclude that they are or are not appropriate. Generally, they are less directly relevant to the key issue of strengthened executive performance.

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POSSIBLE NRC INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS BY REORGANIZATION PLAN

<u>Description</u>	<u>Can Commission Take Action?</u>	<u>Significance, Merit and Relevance to Executive Strengthening</u>
1. <u>Remove ambiguities in law which weaken Chairman and Executive Director.</u> Amend, through a reorganization plan, two provisions in NRC statute which have been construed in a way to weaken executive direction within NRC by the Chairman and the Executive Director respectively. One gives each Commissioner "equal authority and responsibility for all Commission actions and decisions". This encourages uncertainty in distinguishing the agency management job from the rule-making and adjudication job. The second provision provides that the Executive Director "shall not limit the authority of (specified subordinates) to communicate directly with ... the Commission when (those subordinates) deem it necessary to carry out their responsibilities."	The Commission cannot change the law. It could issue a rule to clarify the ambiguous provisions to minimize their weakening the executive authority of the Chairman and the Executive Director.	<u>Significance</u> - Highly significant in that explicit and statutorily mandated action would be taken to remove a cause for historically weak executive authority of the Chairman and Executive Director. Presidential action and legislative history would underscore intent and be much more effective than Commission action to change itself.  <u>Merit</u> - Clearly merited  <u>Relevance</u> - Directly relevant to managing executive functions such as research, inspection, enforcement, training and emergency response.
2. <u>Consolidate responsibility for crisis management.</u> Assign sole responsibility for NRC's emergency planning and response to the Chairman -- rather than leave it subject to the Commission as a whole, as is now the case.	Only to limited extent. Chairman Hendrie has announced his intention to assume sole responsibility for emergency response effective immediately. This is an interim measure, however, and Hendrie intends to propose legislation to authorize the Commission to assign emergency functions to the Chairman.	<u>Significance</u> - Highly significant. NRC performance during the TMI accident was strongly criticized by Kemeny report.  <u>Merit</u> - Clearly merited  <u>Relevance</u> - Directly relevant to one particular and very critical executive type function - crisis management.
3. <u>Strengthen appointive power of the Chairman.</u> Certain key appointments are, by law, given to the Commission rather than to the Chairman with Commission approval. Positions that primarily involve operating programs, as compared with adjudication, should be filled by the Chairman.	No. The present pattern of appointment authority is specified in NRC statutes.	<u>Significance</u> - Highly significant.  <u>Merit</u> - Appears well merited, although we must evaluate impact of several possible ways to revise present law.  <u>Relevance</u> - Directly relevant to stronger executive management.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Can Commission Take Action?</u>	<u>Significance, Merit and Relevance to Executive Strengthening</u>
4. <u>Strengthen technical advisory group to provide better independent technical advice.</u> Strengthen the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safety to increase its ability to provide the Commission with an independent technical check on safety matters. This could be done by giving the Committee a larger professional staff and providing it with a statutory basis. (Kemeny proposes committee have intervenor authority also.)	Partially. NRC could reassign positions to the staff of the Committee. The Commission, of course, cannot provide a statutory basis by its own action.	<p><u>Significance</u> - Relatively significant. Independent technical oversight is already being obtained from this body. More oversight and assured independence appears desirable. (Intervention seems unwise.)</p> <p><u>Merit</u> - Appears merited - exact degree and means of strengthening present committee can be worked out.</p> <p><u>Relevance</u> - Not directly relevant to strengthened lines of authority within NRC. Aimed at a different goal.</p>
5. <u>Use Commission to hear licensing appeals.</u> Abolish the Atomic Safety Appeals Board and have appeals heard by the Commission. This would fix greater responsibility for major adjudications with the Commission itself, giving them the ability to link case decisions more directly to policy and rulemaking.	Yes. The Appeals Board is not statutory and can be abolished by Commission action if this is found to be desirable in the opinion of a majority of Commissioners.	<p><u>Significance.</u> A very fundamental part of the way NRC conducts its business. Abolishing the Appeal Board would cause a major and complex realignment within NRC including the role of the Commissioners themselves.</p> <p><u>Merit</u> - Uncertain. Full implications need study. Feasibility of the Commission absorbing the appeals workload must be tested.</p> <p><u>Relevance</u> - Indirectly relevant to executive improvement since the Commissioners would be more consumed with adjudication and have less time to become involved in executive functions.</p>

Description

6. Narrow NRC's scope. Transfer responsibility from NRC for functions not clearly related to reactor safety. These include:

- ° Export licensing of nuclear materials and equipment
- ° Antitrust findings.
- ° Radiation hazards from sources other than reactors.

Can Commission Take Action?

No. The laws would have to be changed by reorganization plan -- or bill.

Significance, Merit and Relevance to Executive Strengthening

Significance - Not highly significant to reactor safety as such. Transfer of export licensing function would reduce the Commission workload to some degree and permit more focus on reactor safety.

Merit - Uncertain to doubtful. The gains from the point of view of managing the NRC would be marginal. The potential disadvantages in terms of upsetting nuclear non-proliferation activities seem very real.

Relevance - Not particularly relevant to NRC executive strengthening.

The attachment indicates, for each possible improvement, the degree to which the NRC could take action on its own. Chairman Hendrie, buttressed by the Kemeny findings and the TMI accident itself, is attempting to exercise a stronger executive role. The other Commissioners appear to be generally supportive. Nevertheless, there are good grounds for you to propose changes to the statutes via reorganization plan, and thereby upgrade and reinforce what Hendrie, or any Chairman, can do. Changes in the statutes, for example, would make reform of the established pattern of personal relationships less contingent on the Commissioners agreeing to define and limit their own role. Your action to change the statutes would also be more binding on the Commission as its membership changes over time. Finally, a direct proposal on your part to strengthen NRC performance gives a clearer demonstration of your personal insistence that nuclear safety must be assured.

We have begun an intensive review to address what specific actions should be taken and prepare them in the form of a reorganization plan and supporting documents. We can complete the review, including necessary outside contacts and congressional consultation, by mid-January. The reorganization plan for reforming NRC internally can then be submitted, following your approval. We will keep you informed of progress as appropriate.

Attachment

cc: Mr. Eizenstat  
Dr. Press