

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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December 21, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB*
SUBJECT: NSC Weekly Report #122

1. Opinion

Difficult Choices in Iran. Let me just add the following to our discussions this morning, because I know that this matter is very much on your mind.

(1) It may well be that Khomeini cannot be moved by economic pressures in which case military action, which is merely an extension of economic pressure (blockade or mining), will not move him either. In the meantime such action could provoke widespread international reactions against us and thus be self-defeating.

Because of that, we need to consider military actions which contribute to his downfall, and thus secure the release of hostages as a consequence of attaining the other objective: his downfall. I have set up a very small, tightly held group to see whether we could somehow mesh covert political action designed to create an alternative to Khomeini with a series of military steps which contribute to that end. In other words, our military options would not be primarily either punitive or designed to apply economic leverage but would be more deliberately geared to attaining a political objective.

(2) In that connection, I will think further about some forms of military action which give us more direct bargaining leverage. Khomeini is not entirely immune to military threats, as we already know because he apparently was influenced by our very secret threat of November 23. You felt strongly today that taking the islands would be the wrong course of action, and you may well be right. My only point was that we ought to think of some military steps which have the effect of imposing a

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Review December 21, 1999
Reason: NSC 1.13(b)
Classified and Extended By Z. Brzezinski

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PER *[Signature]* RE *NSC-96-136*
BY *[Signature]* NARS DATE *1/27/88*

protracted humiliation on Khomeini, which can only be terminated through the release of our hostages. Taking some territory, such as the islands, might have that effect; perhaps mining would also; in any case, as above, I will be seeking to define for you some military options which reinforce our political strategy rather than being either retaliatory or merely an extension of economic pressure.

(3) With regard to Iraq, in addition to the military aspects that we discussed this morning, I have checked with Cy Vance, and he agrees with the notion that it might be useful for Jim Schlesinger to pay a personal visit to Iraq early in 1980 and to engage the Iraqi leaders in a wider discussion. I am so informing Schlesinger.

2. Vance-Brown-Brzezinski Luncheon

Cy, Harold and I reached the following decisions at our weekly luncheon today:

-- DOD Proposals for Improving Covert Action: In response to a proposal from the Department of Defense, we agreed to establish a screening committee to review, expedite and stimulate better covert action proposals. The Committee will meet prior to SCC meetings and will be authorized to return inadequate proposals to CIA for revision if it deems them inadequate for SCC review. The committee will be composed of David Aaron, Robert Komer and Ronald Spiers. (S)

-- Sale of French Computer IRIS-80 to USSR: We agreed that Cy will protest the sale of this advanced computer to the French Ambassador here. Meanwhile, I will be in touch with my counterpart in the Elysee, Jacques Wahl, to indicate that French handling of this matter could affect our attitude on sensitive elements in our relationship -- including certain obvious kinds of cooperation. We noted that a decision on a telephone switching system now pending at COCOM is also part of the problem. (S)

-- IBM Computer Supplies to KAMA River: Also with respect to technology transfer, Harold Brown agreed to look into licenses for IBM computer parts and supplies to the KAMA River plant in light of recent publicity and concern over the military significance of truck production at the plant. (C)

3. National Security Affairs Calendar (attached)

We need to list everything that Khomeini would not want to see occur and which would not incite condemnation of U.S. by other nations.

J

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