

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

NSC 015A

~~TOP SECRET~~

January 3, 1979

7907501

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Informal NSC Meeting, 12:00-1:15 PM
Wednesday, January 3, 1979, The Cabinet Room

ATTENDEES: The President, The Vice President, Secretary Vance,
Acting Secretary Duncan, CIA Director Turner,
Hamilton Jordan, Zbigniew Brzezinski

1. Iran. The President asked those present whether in their view we should ask the Shah to step aside. ZB indicated he was against this on the assumption that the question is whether we ask and not whether it is desirable that he step aside. Turner indicated the Shah has to leave. Vance suggested we support steps the Shah has taken, including his decision to leave the country, since it would give Bakhtiar more of a chance to succeed. The President said we could assume it is the Shah's decision. ZB argued that we should not delude ourselves that the above would not be interpreted by the Iranians as a recommendation that the Shah step aside. We have to take into account the likely consequences of this for our friends in Iran. Seeming U.S. disengagement could plunge the country into anarchy or even civil war. Vance argued that the military cannot govern. The President indicated that parliament could be a source of stability. A genuinely non-aligned Iran need not be viewed as a U.S. setback.

(In the meantime it was agreed that, if needed, Annenberg would provide a haven for the Shah's family and the Shah himself.)

The Vice President felt that we should encourage the Shah to leave without appearing to have said so. The President stated that the central issue is whether the Shah's early departure is favorable to the U.S. Turner said he was not sure the Shah wants to leave. Duncan suggested that General Huyser should go immediately to reassure the Iranian military of continuing U.S.-Iran military arrangements. ZB argued that if the Shah has to leave we should compensate for this by clearcut commitments to Iran so that, if worse comes to worst and violence is used, the Iranian military will feel confident of U.S. military support.

~~TOP SECRET~~

Review on January 3, 1999
Classified by Z. Brzezinski
Reason for Extension: NSC 1.13(f)

DECLASSIFIED/RELEASED ON 8/26/02
by NARA on the recommendation of the NSC RS
under provisions of E.O. 12958

It was decided that a cable will be sent to the Shah indicating that in line with his decision to leave the country when Bakhtiar is confirmed, the U.S. is prepared to offer him hospitality for the duration of his stay here.

It was also agreed that General Huyser will leave for Iran immediately, with a message for the Iranian military that the U.S. supports them completely, no matter what transient political circumstances may arise, and we urge the Iranian military leaders not to leave the country.

On other matters: ^{Saudi Arabia} (1) It was decided not to deploy the F-15 squadron to ~~Iran~~ until after the Bakhtiar government has been established. When such deployment takes place, both Israel and Egypt ought to be informed. (2) The President approved removal of some of our sensitive equipment and personnel from two U.S. facilities. (3) Precautionary measures regarding sensitive U.S. military equipment were also discussed.

2. Nicaragua. It was agreed that the U.S. will back a plebiscite under close OAS supervision but not direct control. Registration and voting should be combined, despite Somoza's objections. The U.S. will support the FOA position on the other three contentious issues, including the actual wording of the plebiscite.

At the end of the meeting, ZB commented that we should not lose sight of the fact that every U.S. action with respect to Iran seems to indicate disengagement -- civilian evacuation, removal of personnel and equipment, indirect encouragement to the Shah to leave. This is bound to have political ramifications.

Secretary Duncan is to submit wording for the Huyser instructions by c.o.b. today. It was agreed that the instructions should be particularly strong and positive.

Secretary Vance to send telegram to Sullivan for the Shah.