MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 3, 1979

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 our­
   selves 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)

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by NARA on the recommendation of the NSC
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: (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.