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Q: How can you explain the basic contradiction in your policy -- e.g., on the one hand, urging and pressuring others not to supply arms to the Iranians and at the same time doing so yourself?

A: There are two points here: first, the aim of our arms embargo has been to end the war. We have chosen to make a limited exception to that arms embargo to serve the very same objective: the objective of finding an honorable end of the war. By developing the dialogue, we have been working to position ourselves as a credible arbiter who could deal with both sides and bring about an end to war. Such an artiber has been lacking. To further the dialogue and establish ourselves as an arbiter, we decided to provide a limited quantity of defensive arms. In short, the President's decision to make a limited, special exception to our arms embargo -- which will and is continuing -- for the same policy reasons as the general embargo: to bring about an end to the war through a negotiated settlement; preserving territorial integrity; with no winners or losers.

That raises the second point. We provided a minimal amount of defensive material and spare parts that could not have even marginally altered the balance or improved the Iranian military position. Very simply, we provided a small token of our seriousness in pursuing the dialogue.

T-BB-58
add 4/1/87

Q: Why did you have to use arms to prove your seriousness with your Iranian interlocuters?

A: The decision on arms was a tough one. In the end, we felt it necessary because the Iranians we were dealing with -- who were, by the way, under considerable risk -- felt this was the currency that would most demonstrate that the American officials genuinely represented the President and were serious about proceeding. We chose to go ahead given the stakes involved, but we calibrated very carefully what we provided both in type and amount.

Q: What can you say to the allies on whom you've leaned so hard to stop the arms flow to Iran?

A: We can say that the embargo still holds and is necessary to make it more difficult for the Iranians to pursue the war. We did nothing to alter this policy or this objective. We served it. Both our effort to staunch the arms flow and our limited sale of defensive arms and spares were designed to build leverage that would increase the prospect for an honorable end to the war. Additionally, the miniscule amount of arms we provided cannot be compared to the flood of arms that have come from elsewhere and that have been central to the Iranian war effort.

Q: What do you say to the moderate Arabs who feel betrayed by your policy?

A: We say that our policy has not changed. We have always recognized the strategic significance of Iran and understood, along with our regional friends, that we have a strong stake in moderating Iranian behavior so that it doesn't export revolution, support terror, and threaten its neighbors. That has guided our efforts. What has also guided our efforts is, of course, our objective of ending the war. The moderate Arabs have consistently come to us and asked us to do all we could to end the war. In taking steps to try to become a credible arbiter, we have been doing precisely that.

Q: What do you have to show for your efforts with the Iranians?

A: First, one cannot underestimate the intrinsic value of the initiation of a dialogue between the U.S. and Iran. Second, we felt that we were making progress on positioning ourselves to become a real arbiter before these efforts became known. Third, we'll have to see what happens now, but we can tell you that in the area of getting Iran to stop its support of terror and hostage taking, we think that progress has been made. For example, since the dialogue began, the Iranian government has publicly adopted a position of opposition to terrorism; the Iranians helped gain the release of the hostages on TWA Flight 842 last

summer in Beirut; no terror has been directed against us or additional hostages taken by groups associated with the Iranians; the arrest of Mehdi Hashemi signals that those in Iran who favor the use of terror and the export of revolution are being controlled; and, finally, hostages have been returned with the assistance of the Iranians.

Q: Are the Iranians still on the terrorism list?

A: Yes, we've seen some progress and we regard that as encouraging. But we aren't ready to take them off the list.

Q: Did the Israelis play a role in this dialogue?

A: There have been many different countries from different regions that have served or tried to serve as intermediaries. Beyond that, we won't go into specifics on who did or didn't play such a role.

Q: Have you been winking at Israeli arms deliveries or other deliveries during this period of dialogue?

A: Absolutely not. To the contrary, our policy of opposing arms shipments has remained firm and been applied with vigor during this period. All of the shipments associated with our dialogue that we have authorized in any way were miniscule and could have been carried on one transport aircraft.

Q: Have you ended your policy of neutrality in the war?

A: No. Our policy was and is that we want an honorable end to the war. No victors, no vanquished. We have attempted to bring to advance this objective through our contacts with Iran, just as we have through our official diplomatic channels with Iraq.

8346

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

November 21, 1986
2030

NOTE FOR PETER RODMAN
DENNIS ROSS
HOWARD TEICHER
BOB LINHARD



Attached is a copy of the revised
Q&As which incorporated changes
requested by Al Keel.

press

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

November 21, 1986

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR RODNEY B. McDANIEL

FROM: OLIVER L. NORTH
ROBERT L. EARL *E*
CRAIG P. COY

SUBJECT: Washington Post Questions

Attached at Tab I is a memo from you to David Chew forwarding the responses to the Washington Post questions (Tab A) requested by Tom Gibson (see Tab II).

The Q&As at Tab A have been revised to incorporate changes requested by Al Keel.

Howard Teicher, Bob Linhard, Dennis Ross, and Peter Rodman concur.

RECOMMENDATION

That you initial and forward the memo along with the Q&As at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments

- Tab I - McDaniel Memo to Chew
- Tab A - Questions & Answers
- Tab II - Gibson Memo to McDaniel dated November 19, 1986

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

MEMORANDUM FOR DAVID L. CHEW

FROM: RODNEY B. McDANIEL

SUBJECT: Washington Post Questions

Attached at Tab A are NSC answers to the Washington Post questions that were forwarded by Tom Gibson.

cc: Tom Gibson
Pat Buchanan

Attachment
Tab A - Questions & Answers

November 21, 1986

1900

Q: DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT? AND IF THERE ARE, CAN THERE BE ANY DOUBT THAT OUR ASSOCIATION WITH THEM WILL DIMINISH THEIR INFLUENCE IF NOT ELIMINATE THEIR PRESENCE IN THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF IRAN?

HOW DO YOU EVER AGAIN GO TO OUR ALLIES AND ASK THEM TO BE TOUGH ON TERRORISTS OR HOLD UP SHIPMENT OF ARMS TO OTHERS AFTER THE DISCLOSURE OF THIS KIND OF INVOLVEMENT IN IRAN?

A: From the earliest months following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the U.S. Government has attempted to reestablish official contact with that country. Even before I took office, President Carter properly determined that it was necessary to expand security, economic, and political relationships. These attempts included, by necessity, secret meetings between high-level government officials.

Various third countries, numerous individuals and private parties have attempted to be helpful as intermediaries in establishing contact in Iran or in seeking Iranian assistance in the release of the hostages held in Lebanon. These efforts have included attempts by members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

After many disappointments, about 18 months ago we were approached by a third party, who indicated that a group of influential Iranian officials had determined the need to reorient Iran's policy toward the West and the United States. After extensive work to verify the bona fides of the officials I decided to proceed. We viewed these officials as being pragmatic, guided by their own understanding of Iran's need and the importance of ending Iran's international isolation.

The question of credibility with our allies is perhaps understandable, but the answer is easy. The policy basis of all our actions was consistent: halt the spread of terrorism and bring about an end the Iran-Iraq war. The arms embargo, which is still in place, is indicative of our unwillingness to open the door to arms sales to prolong the war or tilt the balance. Our limited exception to the embargo was done to show serious intent to establish better relations and to strengthen the moderate factions within Iran who understood the devastating effects of the six year old war and who recognize that terrorism is an unacceptable means of advancing objectives. Our position was made clear from the beginning. The acceptance of our view by those with whom we were dealing was made a condition of our continuing efforts with them to establish better relations. The fact that only

limited exceptions were being made to the embargo was made clear. Now that we are able to explain our intentions, our allies will see that:

- the United States has not tilted toward Iran in the Iran-Iraq war;
- the small amount of arms I authorized is irrelevant to the outcome of the war and insignificant compared to the volume of arms supplied via Communist bloc countries or even Western Europe;
- I have acted in the best interests of world peace, regional stability, and the safety of innocent hostages; and
- our terrorism policy is clear and unequivocal -- we have not made concessions to terrorists and will not. What we will do is act in our own interests to maintain influence in a vital part of the world.

Q: WHAT PROVISION HAVE YOU MADE IN YOUR DEALINGS WITH IRAN TO ENSURE THAT NO MORE HOSTAGES WILL BE TAKEN?

- A: Throughout our contact we have reiterated our steadfast opposition to Iran's support for terrorism and subversion and hostage taking. We also repeatedly emphasized that as long as hostages were held in Lebanon, it would remain an obstacle to improving the dialogue between our two countries. Those with whom we were dealing understood and accepted our views. In fact, since we began our contacts, the Government of Iran has expressed its opposition to terrorism
- Q: AMONG ALL OF THE ISSUES AND PROBLEMS YOUR ADMINISTRATION FACES IN DEFINING THE NATIONAL INTEREST, IN WHAT ORDER OF PRIORITY WOULD YOU RANK THE FREEDOM OF THE HOSTAGES IN LEBANON?
- A: From the outset, my objectives in our dealings with Iran were exactly as I have indicated. They were first to replace a relationship of total hostility with one of mutual understanding and respect. Next, we have consistently sought a negotiated end to the Iran-Iraq war which is one of the most important reasons for our arms embargo. Iraq, for some time, has expressed its readiness to pursue a mediated settlement of the war. We have also firmly told the Iranians their continued support for terrorism and subversion in the region is unacceptable and must stop. Finally, at every

meeting, we emphasized that the continued holding of hostages by groups influenced by Iran constituted an obstacle to any future improved relations.

Q: IN TERMS OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY, IT WOULD APPEAR THE NSC (NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL) HAS PREEMPTED THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND CIA IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN IRAN. WHAT CONSTITUTIONAL OR LEGAL AUTHORITY HAS THE NSC TO AID AND ABET THE PROSECUTION OF WAR WITHOUT A DECLARATION THEREOF BY CONGRESS IN CENTRAL AMERICA, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE SHIPMENT OF ARMS IN VIOLATION OF EMBARGO STATUTES TO BELLIGERENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A: As with any sensitive intelligence or diplomatic initiative, participation by departments and agencies, as well as individuals, must be based on their need to know. All of my national security advisors, including the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, were consulted and they in turn advised those officials within their departments who had a need to know. Involvement of the NSC staff was similarly limited to a few individuals. This initiative was handled just like any other classified covert intelligence operation. The NSC staff, working with the CIA, was simply fulfilling its function of advising me

on national security issues, as well as carrying out my instructions. Under the law, I told CIA Director Casey to refrain from informing Congress because of the extreme sensitivity and the high risk to individual lives. We always intended and planned to fully inform the relevant committees of Congress when the time was appropriate. To remove any doubt as to our intentions and our actions, I have directed that all information relating to our initiative be provided to the appropriate members of Congress. Of course, some of the information will have to remain classified and not be made public in order to protect individual lives.

It is absolutely false that we were "aiding and abetting the prosecution of war without a declaration thereof by Congress." We have not declared war on Nicaragua -- nor do we intend to. What we have done is support the Nicaraguan democratic resistance forces in their efforts to restore democracy to Nicaragua. The goal of the Nicaraguan freedom fighters has not changed since the revolution in 1979. It was the Sandinistas who betrayed the democratic goals of that revolution. Our support to the democratic resistance has always been within the terms of the relevant laws at the time.

Q: SINCE YOU PERMIT (VICE) ADMIRAL (JOHN M.) POINDEXTER TO APPEAR ON "MEET THE PRESS" AND "THE TODAY SHOW" TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, WILL YOU PERMIT HIM TO GO AND ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN A HEARING?

A: I have pledged publicly that we will offer the fullest possible report to the appropriate members and committees of the Congress. Since this was largely an intelligence operation, I have asked CIA Director Casey to report fully to the intelligence committees, which are the most appropriate forums for discussing the aspects of this policy that remain highly sensitive.

My Assistant for National Security Affairs is a member of my Presidential staff and it would be unprecedented and inappropriate for him to be summoned to appear at a formal Congressional hearing. However, Admiral Poindexter has regularly engaged in informal consultations and briefings with members of Congress on a variety of issues since he took over his present position. I asked him to make himself available for consultations on this issue as well, and he did so on November 21.

Q: WHAT EFFECT DID THE UNITED STATES' PROVIDING SOME MILITARY EQUIPMENT HAVE ON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT?

HAS IRAN CHANGED ITS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WAR WITH IRAQ, TOWARD TERRORISM, OR TOWARD ITS NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION?

A: Although it is too soon to give a complete assessment, we have indeed seen a number of positive effects. It is a fact that there has been a marked reduction in Iranian-sponsored terrorism over the last 18 months. Several Iranians, including government officials, responsible for instigating international terrorist acts have been arrested and are now jailed in Iran. Iran has also been helpful in both the TWA hijacking in Beirut in June 1985, as well as the Pan Am Flight 73 hijacking in Karachi last September. I would draw your attention to the comments of Iran's ambassador to the United Nations who acknowledged the improvement in U.S.-Iranian relations.

Another positive result of our initiative is the release of three of the Americans held hostage in Lebanon. It is true that three more Americans were taken recently, but our information has been ambiguous whether this was Iranian-sponsored.

Q: YOU SAID THIS TRADE WAS TO HELP START A DIALOGUE WITH MODERATE POLITICAL FACTIONS IN IRAN. HOW DOES GIVING WEAPONS TO THE (AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH) KHOMEINI ESTABLISHMENT HELP THIS?

A: That is the question I asked myself. I can only say that I grappled with this decision for a long time. The Iranians themselves asked to purchase this equipment. After careful consideration, our assessment was that the dialogue would only move forward if our Iranian interlocutors became convinced that our negotiators genuinely represented me. The Iranians believed that the authorization to purchase some military materiel was the only gesture that would demonstrate my involvement and commitment to this initiative. We were very explicit in our sale of this equipment to make sure that, first, it could not be used for offensive purposes and, second, that it could in no way affect the outcome of the war with Iraq.

In doing this, we were well aware of the risk and we understood this was a limited deviation from our arms embargo policy. Nevertheless, we proceeded because we saw a potential opening that could, if probed and cultivated successfully, have had long-term stabilizing effects on the regime and could have contributed to ending the war -- the very objective of the arms embargo.

Q: IF THE KHOMEINI AND (LIBYAN LEADER MOAMMAR) QADHAFI ROLES WERE REVERSED SO THAT QADHAFI WAS IN CHARGE OF THE MORE STRATEGICALLY IMPORTANT COUNTRY OF IRAN, WOULD WE BOMB KHOMEINI AND ARM QADHAFI?

A: Questions like this are pure speculation and avoid the heart of the issue. There is no debate over the strategic importance of Iran. In this regard, it is notable that only a few major countries do not have relations with Iran -- Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Israel, South Africa, and the United States. Even Iraq continues to have diplomatic relations with Iran. The Iranians came to us threatened with growing Soviet military power and political influence along its borders and inside its territory. They also face increasing desperation brought on by the costs of the Iran-Iraq war and a deteriorating economic situation. It is neither in our interest nor the interest of any of our regional friends for Iran to unravel and descend into chaos. The more pragmatic Iranian leadership, the more Iran is likely to remain intact, to sustain its position as a strategic buffer to the Soviet Union, to end its practice of exporting revolution and threatening its neighbors.

When making my decisions in the Oval Office, I must deal with the world as it is and make judgments on what best serves the interest of our country, our people, and world peace. I cannot speculate nor can I compare two totally different sets of theoretical circumstances. In the case of our military actions against Libya on April 15, we had extraordinarily clear and unambiguous evidence of Libyan

government involvement in a recent act of international terrorism against Americans in West Berlin. For the past 18 months, we have not had any such similar evidence of Iranian government involvement in terrorism against Americans.

Q: OUT HERE, WE DON'T EXPECT THE PRESIDENT TO DO ONE THING AND SAY QUITE ANOTHER. HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO LIE AND HAVE US TRUST YOU AGAIN?

A: Because I haven't lied, I do expect that the vast majority of Americans will continue to believe and trust in what we say. We have only now begun to present the information concerning this sensitive initiative toward Iran. Although many Americans may still not agree with some of the actions taken, we expect that they will at least understand the strategic dimension of those actions as we have explained it. The choice may not have been easy, particularly given the risks; but there are times when a President must be prepared to run risks in the service of goals of great importance.

Q: WAS ANYTHING DONE (BY IRAN) AGAINST ITS OWN SELF-INTEREST IN RETURN FOR WHAT WE DID? ARE THERE ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES TO GIVE SUBSTANTIALLY MORE ARMS (TO IRAN) THAN THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TOLD ABOUT?

A: The officials in Iran who sought to reorient Iran's policy toward the West and the United States clearly had Iran's -- not America's -- interests in mind. They saw both the external threat to Iran from the Soviet Union and the internal threat brought on by the exasperation with the war and a deteriorating economy. They are aware of the dangers of not dealing with Iran's growing internal problems and divisions. They recognized the need to reduce Iran's international isolation and improve relations with the West in order to respond to those threats. At no time did they act against Iran's self-interest nor would we expect them to do so. The fact of the matter is that there is a gradual congruence of interests between our two countries.

As I have said, our arms embargo remains intact and we will not conduct nor acquiesce in the sale of further arms to Iran. The shipments I authorized were limited to defensive arms and the total of all these shipments could fit in a single cargo airplane.

Q: WHY NOT TREAT IRAN AS WE TREAT NICARAGUA, AS AN ENEMY?

A: We continue to have diplomatic relations with Nicaragua. We do so because it is my belief that we can help bring about a democratic solution to the unrest in that country by remaining there. It is important to remember that only a

few major countries do not have relations with Iran. Even Iraq maintains relations with Iran.

Q: MR PRESIDENT, WHY DON'T YOU MAKE A FULLER ACCOUNTING OF WHAT YOU EXPECTED TO GET IN THIS TRANSACTION (WITH IRAN)? WHAT OTHER SHIPMENTS HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED BY US? THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE PENTAGON WHO CONTEND THAT SOME OF THE STUFF WAS VERY SOPHISTICATED, "BLACK BOX" EQUIPMENT. ARE WE GOING TO SHIP MORE OR DO WE INTEND TO ENCOURAGE OR ACQUIESCE IN THE SHIPMENT OF ARMS TO IRAN BY OTHER COUNTRIES?

A: We cannot and will not publicly go into the specific details of this arrangement. As I have said, all information pertaining to this operation will be provided to the appropriate members of Congress. I will reiterate that the sum total of all the equipment I authorized could fit in one cargo airplane and that there will be no further transfers of military equipment by the U.S. or by any other party in our behalf.

Q: IN LIGHT OF THE FIASCO OF IRAN, THE SWAP OF A SOVIET SPY FOR AN AMERICAN JOURNALIST, THE FAILURE OF REYKJAVIK TO MOVE TOWARDS EFFECTIVE ARMS CONTROL, THE SKIRTING OF U.S. LAWS BY SENDING AN AMERICAN ARMS-SUPPLY PLANE TO NICARAGUA, AND THE CLUMSY DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIBYA, WHAT CHANGES DO YOU PLAN TO RESTORE COMPETENCE AND CREDIBILITY TO THE CONDUCT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY?

A: I do not plan any changes because of false perceptions created by misinformation. First, the Soviets cannot honestly conclude that they came out even in the aftermath of their espionage activities at the UN. Second, we and the Soviets agree that important progress was made at Reykjavik and that our arms control negotiations should resume where Reykjavik left off. Third, the downed aircraft that was attempting to bring supplies to the democratic resistance in Nicaragua was not a U.S. Government aircraft or involved in any U.S. Government operation. Finally, our policy toward Libya since April has been a policy of mobilizing a variety of pressures in order to deter Qadhafi's continuing use of terrorism; there was no policy of misleading or feeding false information to the American press. The one article in the Wall Street Journal that is charged with having been used for purposes of a disinformation campaign turns out to be about 90% accurate in its reporting of facts. The remaining 10% did not come from any U.S. Government officials or sources.

Our six-year record in foreign policy is a successful record. We have restored the strategic position of the United States in the world and have before us some opportunities for important new achievements. I plan no changes in the strong team of advisors who have served the nation tirelessly and well.

Q: IS THERE AN ACCEPTABLE MIDDLE POINT BETWEEN YOUR POSITION ON SDI (STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE) TESTING AND THAT OF SOVIET LEADER MIKHAIL GORBACHEV? ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON THE NUMBER, TYPE, OR CONDUCT OF SDI TESTS THAT WOULD ALLOW RESEARCH TO CONTINUE AT AN ACCEPTABLE PACE AND ALSO ASSURE THE SOVIETS THAT THE U.S. PLANS NO BREAKOUT FROM THE ABM (ANTI-BALLISTIC MISSILE)?

A: We already have a signed agreement with the Soviets governing, among other things, strategic defense testing -- the ABM Treaty. In the context of our proposal to eliminate all U.S. and Soviet offensive ballistic missiles, we are prepared not to deploy advanced strategic defenses for a 10-year period and to confine ourselves to a program of research, development, and testing, which are permitted by the ABM Treaty. What we are not prepared to do is to accept Soviet attempts to kill the U.S. SDI program by directly or indirectly amending the ABM Treaty by restrictively redefining its terms.

SDI offers us the hope of a safer more stable world. Moreover, the Soviets, who have the world's only operational ABM system, also have a long-standing, active, and extensive program of strategic defense research, development, and testing. When the Soviets are prepared to drop their

propaganda attacks on SDI, this may give us the basis for an agreement on a transition to deterrence increasingly based on defenses.

Q: YOU HAVE CALLED FOR A WORLDWIDE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION. WHY HAVEN'T YOU PUSHED FOR SUCH A REVOLUTION WHERE YOU HAVE YOUR STRONGEST INFLUENCE, IN SUCH AREAS AS SOUTH KOREA AND SOUTH AFRICA?

A: The democratic revolution around the world is not something I have "called for;" it is an historical fact, vindicating the fundamental principles that all Americans have always held dear. In Central America, South America, Haiti, the Philippines, and elsewhere, we see inspiring examples of democratic advance. The United States has limited influence to shape events in other countries; but we use the influence we have, and we use it to further our goals of democracy, freedom, and human rights. In the Republic of Korea, we see an allied government, facing a grave security threat from the North, committed to an unprecedented peaceful transition to a civilian democratic government by 1988. In South Africa, the United States has exerted great efforts to promote black economic advances and a political negotiation which leads to a rapid and peaceful end to the repugnant apartheid system and its replacement by a system of constitutional democracy, racial justice, and human rights.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 19, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR ROD McDANIEL

FROM: TOM GIBSON *TG*SUBJECT: Washington Post Questions

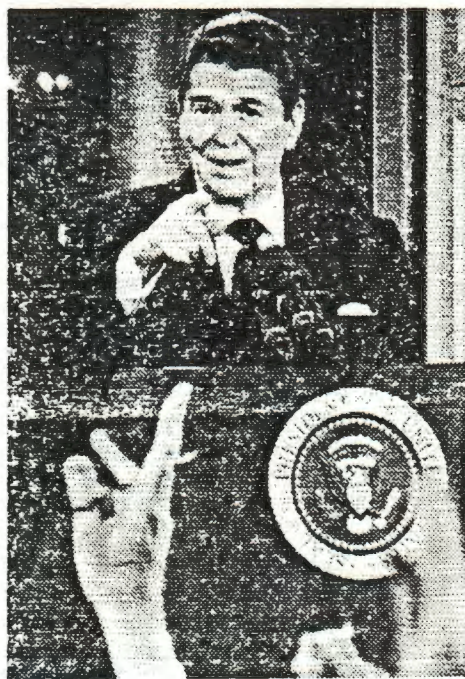
The President has indicated his interest in replying to the 26 questions solicited by the Washington Post in their Federal Report of today's paper. The bulk of them concern Iran.

I would like to coordinate the production of a draft response, either in the form of letter or Op Ed. Brief one to two paragraph answers should be all that is necessary for each question, but respond with the length you deem necessary. I have noted the questions for your attention. Can we try to have drafts back to me by COB Thursday. We'll do an edit and then Chew will staff.

Thanks very much.

cc: Pat Buchanan
David Chew

SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT



BY RICH LIPSKI—THE WASHINGTON POST

Today at 8 p.m., President Reagan will give his first news conference in three months—his seventh this year. The Federal Page asked dozens of Americans in public life to suggest questions that they would like to see the president answer; these are some of the questions we received.

Q: Do you really believe that there are moderate elements within the Iranian government? And if there are, can there be any doubt that our association with them will diminish their influence if not eliminate their presence in the political structure of Iran?

How do you ever again go to our allies and ask them to be tough on terrorists or hold up shipment of arms to others after the disclosure of this kind of involvement in Iran?

—Walter F. Mondale, former vice president and Democratic presidential nominee in 1984

Q: What provision have you made in your dealings with Iran to ensure that no more hostages will be taken?

—John Steinbruner, director of the foreign policy studies program at the Brookings Institution

Q: Among all of the issues and problems your administration faces in defining the national interest, in what order of priority would you rank the freedom of the hostages in Lebanon?

—Norman Ornstein, political scientist

Q: In terms of institutional accountability, it would appear the NSC [National Security Council] has preempted the traditional role of the Defense Department and CIA in Central America and the State Department in Iran. What constitutional or legal authority has the NSC to aid and abet the prosecution of war without a declaration thereof by Congress in Central America, and to authorize the shipment of arms in violation of embargo statutes to belligerents in the Middle East?

—Rep. Jim Leach (R-Iowa), Foreign Affairs Committee member

Q: Since you permit [Vice] Adm. [John M.] Poindexter to appear on "Meet the Press" and "The Today Show" to answer questions, will you permit him to go and answer questions from members of Congress in a hearing?

—Kirk O'Donnell, former counsel to House Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill Jr. (D-Mass.) and president of the Center for National Policy

Q: What effect did the United States' providing some military equipment have on the behavior of the Iranian government? Has Iran changed its attitude toward the war with Iraq, toward terrorism or toward its neighbors, including the Soviet Union?

—John C. West, former Democratic governor of South Carolina and ambassador to Saudi Arabia

Q: You said this trade was to help start a dialogue with moderate political factions in Iran. How does giving weapons to the [Ayatollah Ruhollah] Khomeini establishment help this?

—Michael (Mickey) Kantor, Los Angeles lawyer (partner of former Democratic National Committee chairman Charles Manatt and former senator John Tunney) and Democratic activist

Q: If the Khomeini and [Libyan leader Moammar] Gadhafi roles were reversed so that Gadhafi was in charge of the more strategically important country of Iran, would we bomb Khomeini and arm Gadhafi?

—Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.)

Q: Out here, we don't expect the president to do one thing and say quite another. How do you expect to lie and have us trust you again?

—Deborah Howell, executive editor of the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch

NSC North

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speculation; point is...

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Q: Was anything done [by Iran] against its own self-interest in return for what we did? Are there arrangements with other countries to give substantially more arms [to Iran] than the American people have been told about?

—Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

North NSC

Q: Why not treat Iran as we treat Nicaragua, as an enemy?

—Dinesh D'Souza, managing editor of Policy Review, the Heritage Foundation journal

North NSC
Not discuss specifics

Q: Mr. President, why don't you make a fuller accounting of what you expected to get in this transaction [with Iran]? What other shipments have been authorized by us? There are people in the Pentagon who contend that some of the stuff was very sophisticated, "black box" equipment. Are we going to ship more or do we intend to encourage or acquiesce in the shipment of arms to Iran by other countries?

—Jody Powell, press secretary to President Jimmy Carter

NSC/Done.

Q: Looking back over the past six years, what are the foreign policy achievements of your administration to date?

—Stansfield Turner, Central Intelligence Agency director, 1977-81

Q: Have you looked at the election results in the Upper Midwest—North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota—and concluded that you need to change your administration's policy toward rural America?

—Rep. Vin Weber (R-Minn.), a leader of the Conservative Opportunity Society and narrow reelection winner in an economically depressed farm district

Q: How in God's name can you go to sleep at night as a conservative with a \$200 billion [annual federal budget] deficit looking at you every year—as the biggest deficit spender in American history?

—George McGovern, former senator (D-S.D.) and Democratic nominee for president in 1972

Q: Mr. President, you came into office on a conservative platform and offered a number of measures to cut down governmental activity.

Do you think you have changed the thinking of the American people and have opened up a lasting trend toward reducing the presence of government in our daily lives?

—George Reedy, press secretary to President Lyndon B. Johnson, now journalism professor at Marquette University

Q: What are your plans for reducing the trade and budget deficits? And when are you going to stop kidding the American public and start talking about raising taxes?

—Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), Appropriations Committee member

Q: Given your reluctance to increase taxes and your reluctance and Congress' reluctance to breathe the words "Social Security," how in the world do you think you will ever cut the deficit much below \$200 billion a year? And is that [large deficit] the legacy you want to leave?

—Carol Cox, president of the Committee for a Responsible Budget

Q: You insist that budget deficits are the fault of Congress, yet in the last six years Congress has appropriated less than you have requested and you have vetoed only two appropriations bills. How do you explain these inconsistencies?

—Rep. Marvin Leath (D-Tex.), member of the Budget Committee and challenger to Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wis.) for chairmanship of the Armed Services Committee

Q: Mr. President, under the Reagan administration, the federal-city partnership has deteriorated from its historically supportive role to an adversarial relationship. When you were last in Chicago, you ducked a question about federal funding for Chicago, by citing the release of federal transit funds, which had been committed long ago and had nothing to do with the real issue facing the cities. On another occasion, you suggested that urban Americans should "vote with their feet."

My question is: What do you advise urban Americans, caught between the rock and the hard place, between the consequence of your added trillion-dollar deficit and the new tax policies on one hand, and the loss of social programs formerly funded by the federal government on the other? That is, are you still suggesting that we just mosey along somewhere else, or do you have a policy for the cities?

—Harold Washington, Democratic mayor of Chicago

Q: In light of the fiasco of Iran, the swap of a Soviet spy for an American journalist, the failure of Reykjavik to move towards effective arms control, the skirting of U.S. laws by sending an American arms-supply plane to Nicaragua and the clumsy disinformation campaign against Libya, what changes do you plan to restore competence and credibility to the conduct of U.S. foreign policy?

—John Brademas, president of New York University and former congressman (D-Ind.)

Q: The GOP lost the Senate. Republican candidates lost 13 of 16 races you campaigned in, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff apparently disagrees with the position you took in Iceland, and only 14 percent of the American public believes that your statement about not trading arms for hostages is essentially true. Haven't you lost a little zip off of your fast ball?

—Harrison Hickman, Democratic pollster

Q: Is there an acceptable middle point between your position on SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] testing and that of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev? Are there restrictions on the number, type or conduct of SDI tests that would allow research to continue at an acceptable pace and also assure the Soviets that the U.S. plans no breakout from the ABM [Anti-ballistic Missile] Treaty?

—William E. Colby, CIA director, 1973-76

Q: You have called for a policy of strength, saying this was the only way to get the Russians to behave. Can you point to one example where your military build-up and your rhetoric have succeeded in making the Russians behave better?

—Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.)

Q: You have called for a worldwide democratic revolution. Why haven't you pushed for such a revolution where you have your strongest influence, in such areas as South Korea and South Africa?

—Andrew Young, Democratic mayor of Atlanta and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations

Q: Do you intend to support Vice President Bush or someone else for the GOP nomination in 1988?

—Richard Nathan, professor at Princeton, former assistant budget director and deputy undersecretary of health, education and welfare in the Nixon administration

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THE WASHINGTON POST

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1986

Israel-Iran link reportedly seen in Portugal visit

By Owen Ullmann
Inquirer, Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — A key White House operative in President Reagan's secret arms sale to Iran, Lt. Col. Oliver North, discovered an Israel-to-Iran arms link in Portugal last year while overseeing weapons shipments to contra rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government, a Middle East affairs newsletter reported yesterday.

The Middle East Policy Survey, quoting State Department and other administration sources, said the idea of providing Iran with weapons to obtain the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon originated with North, while he was on a "routine" arms supply mission for the contras in the Portuguese capital of Lisbon in the summer of 1985.

North, deputy director of political-military affairs for the National Security Council (NSC), was overseeing the shipment of weapons to the U.S.-backed Nicaraguan rebels and stumbled upon a group of Israelis preparing to ship arms to Iran, according to the newsletter.

Top White House officials have confirmed that although a U.S. arms embargo was in force at the time, they condoned an Israeli arms shipment to Iran in August 1985. Less than a month later, the Rev. Benjamin Weir, an American hostage, was released by the pro-Iranian Shiite Muslim group holding him.

Four months later, Reagan signed a secret order that modified the embargo to allow for direct U.S. arms sales to Iran, which in return used its influence to secure the release of two more American hostages.

Spokesmen for both the White House and the NSC declined to comment on the report about North, who has been identified by administration sources as being actively involved in secret military and intelligence operations in several countries on behalf of the White House.

Specifically, North has been the administration's chief coordinator of military assistance to the contras —

including during a period from the fall 1984 to October, when a congressional ban on U.S. military aid to the rebels was in effect.

In helping the insurgents battling the leftist Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, North has directly facilitated private shipments of weapons from Europe to Central America, according to both contra and administration sources.

In addition, the White House has acknowledged that North was one of three Americans who accompanied Reagan's former national security adviser, Robert C. McFarlane, to Tehran in May aboard a cargo plane carrying weapons to Iran.

North's reported trip to Lisbon closely followed the June 1985 hijacking of a Trans World Airlines jetliner over Greece. It was in connection with that incident, White House officials said, that they learned of the influence Iranian officials had with Islamic Jihad, the group holding the U.S. hostages in Lebanon.

Reagan has defended his secret arms sales as a gesture of good faith by the United States of its interest in establishing better relations with "moderate" political factions in Iran. He said that was the original motive behind the secret contacts to Tehran, and that the release of the hostages was only a byproduct of that diplomatic overture.

The Middle East Policy Survey also quoted U.S. sources as saying that over the last six months, Iran appears to have strengthened its ties to Abu Nidal, one of the most notorious terrorist groups in the Mideast. It said one U.S. intelligence report contended that elements of the Abu Nidal group were operating out of the Iranian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey.

Reagan, in explaining his reasons for sending arms to Iran, said in a nationally televised speech Nov. 13 that since U.S. contacts began 18 months ago, "there has been no evidence of Iranian government complicity in acts of terrorism against the United States."

PRESERVATION COPY

The Prudent Option in Iran

By JOHN M. POINDEXTER

Managing foreign policy is rarely simple. The president must not only respond to events, but try to shape them as well. When countries of strategic significance, like Iran, are in the midst of transitions, one can choose to sit back and ride it out or try to be active and shape the emerging reality.

While the risks of action are always apparent, the risks and costs of inaction may be less obvious but frequently even more damaging. Few would argue that we paid a high price for not anticipating the potential for convulsive change in Iran in the late 1970s. Maybe there was little we could have done to alter the events of that time, but there is precious little evidence that we anticipated the profound changes that took place or did anything to position ourselves to shape or cope with that new reality.

We were overtaken and overwhelmed by the Iranian revolution and its aftermath. We were traumatized by the new regime and its virulent anti-American posture. Rather than continuing to paralyze us, that trauma ought to be a potent reminder of the costs of waiting for change and not trying to shape it.

Today, change is again looming in Iran and the signs have been apparent for some time. The current transition won't return us to the pre-1979 days, but the consequences and outcome of this transition—though remaining unclear—may still prove to be very dramatic. The actual unraveling and disintegration of Iran is a distinct possibility as the costs of war prove increasingly ruinous to the Iranian economy, factions harden and struggle intensifies in anticipation of Khomeini's eventual death.

Keeping the Country Intact

Neither we nor our regional friends have an interest in Iran's disintegration. Iran is a critical geographic and strategic buffer that physically separates the Soviet Union from the Persian Gulf. No one in the area wants to see that buffer disappear.

Pragmatic elements in the Iranian leadership understand what has been happening internally and the need to face up to their problems if they are to keep their country intact and sustain Mullah rule. At a minimum, they have begun to search for ways to reduce their international isolation and establish more normal relations with the outside world. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that we would begin to get "feelers" from intermediaries representing those in Iran who appreciate the

problematic nature of their own situation.

We did not respond immediately to these signals. Rather, we wanted to be sure that the signals were coming from credible, authoritative leaders. We had and continue to have no illusions about the individuals we have been dealing with or what could emerge from this dialogue.

A pro-U.S. leadership that invites us back into Iran is not in the cards. But that's also not necessary to serve our interests of building peace and stability in this region; of maintaining a bulwark against Soviet expansionism; or of ending a brutal war whose hideous consumption of human

type—was not that important. In fact, the amount sold equated to about 1/1000 the total value of arms already bought by Iran during the war. It was also clear that the arms embargo was not to be lifted, nor was this their objective. What was important was the demonstration of power and willingness to make the limited exception to sell arms: a sign of serious intent in our dialogue.

For our part, we needed Iranian demonstrations as well. We told our interlocutors that we must see signs of Iranian opposition to the use of terrorism and that they must also help gain the release of U.S. hostages in Lebanon. There were signs: Iran-

Those who now question us owe the country an explanation of how they would have acted differently given the stakes, the opportunities and the dangers.

life—especially a nation's precious youth—is almost without precedent, yet has seemingly escaped public attention in the U.S.

What we seek is an Iran that lives at peace with its neighbors; that desires neither to undermine them nor to export revolution; and that no longer supports terror as an instrument of policy. We accept the Islamic revolution as a fact and believe that an Iran that is independent, economically healthy, and living in peace with its neighbors can be a force for stability in the region.

That, of course, requires the emergence of an Iranian leadership that is prepared to accept a similar vision and role for Iran. We have seen the growth of such pragmatic elements in Iran, and, as a result, we began a tentative, probing dialogue with them. As a minimum, we were building a channel for communication.

As this dialogue began, it was characterized by deep mutual suspicion—rooted in history with painful, vivid images and memories on both sides. We each sought to probe the motives and seriousness of the other. For the Iranians—who were running great personal risks—a demonstration of presidential involvement and support for the dialogue was deemed essential; in their eyes, since only the president could authorize a sale of military material of some sort, this was viewed as a clear and convincing measure of presidential support. Moreover, arms are an important, valued commodity in the Middle East. The amount of arms—for that matter even the

Iranian public opposition to the use of terror; the cessation of hostage taking by some Iranian-supported factions; the arrest of government officials linked to terrorist activities; Iranian intercession with the TWA hijackers last summer in Beirut; their quick opposition to the Pan Am hijacking in Karachi and their immediate and public denial of landing rights; and the release of Benjamin Weir, Father Jenco, and David Jacobson, held in Lebanon by the Islamic Jihad.

Throughout, it is important to note, the policy basis of all our actions—overt and covert—was consistent: bring about an end to the Iran-Iraq war, and stop state-sponsored terrorism. Actions to achieve policy objectives should not be confused with the objectives themselves. For example, our arms embargo is not a policy objective but simply an action taken to bring about an end to the Iran-Iraq war.

Let me reiterate one point: The Iranians who have been part of this dialogue and who have been responsible for these demonstrations are not pro-American. They are pro-Iranian. It is their understanding of Iranian needs and the importance of community that is motivating them.

Would it be responsible for us not to try to reach out to such groups—especially when they indicate a desire for a dialogue and contact with us? Would we serve U.S. interests or the interests of our friends in the Gulf if we were to avoid building relations with these groups as the process of jockeying for position in the post-Khomeini

period has gotten under way? How many would be quick to castigate us—or any administration—for not using a variety of instruments to position ourselves to deal with the looming struggle in Iran?

If Iran were a country with little strategic weight or significance, we could afford to take a relaxed, disinterested view of developments there. Unfortunately, we cannot. The Persian Gulf's importance will not simply fade away. It remains a critical strategic crossroads. Moreover, while the oil market of today may suggest diminished importance, in the mid-1990s that is not likely to be the case any longer—and stability in the region will continue to be vital to the well-being of the Western world.

Stakes Justified the Risk

We must think ahead and think strategically. We are, as a result, working strategically, trying to enhance the longer-term stability of this vital region. In the course of doing so, we are not losing sight of our near-term objectives of ending the war honorably; stopping state-supported terror; and getting our hostages out of Lebanon.

We felt we were making progress in each of those areas. With publicity overwhelming this sensitive undertaking, it is not clear what will now happen to this dialogue.

What is clear, however, is that we took a calculated risk in going ahead with the dialogue and developing it. The president believes that the strategic objectives we were pursuing and the stakes involved in Iran justified this risk. Leadership often requires tough decisions and tough choices. Statesmanship is rarely revealed when the choices are easy.

Those who question us now are right to do so. But rather than only criticize what we did, they owe the country an explanation of how they would have acted differently given the stakes, the opportunities and the dangers. They need to tell us how and why they would have turned aside the kinds of overtures we were receiving. They need to tell us how they would have gone about protecting such an obviously sensitive mission. And they need to tell us how they would safeguard our interests in circumstances where the future stability of this vital region may hinge on the unfolding drama in Iran today.

Vice Admiral Poindexter is national security adviser to President Reagan.
