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Date December 1997

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The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

19 December 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Alton G. Keel
Acting Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Counterterrorism
Director, DCI-Hostage Location Task Force

SUBJECT: DCI-Hostage Location Task Force Report

Attached is my report for the week of 13-19 December 1986 on the status of US hostages in Lebanon. Key points in this report are:

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- The two leaders of the US Arab-American community who recently visited Lebanon and Syria in an effort to secure the release of the US hostages, met with representatives of the National Security Council, the Department of State, and the Hostage Location Task Force on 19 December. The two Arab-Americans conceded they were disappointed in the results of their trip and could not verify that they ever met with representatives of the captors, despite their public claims to have done so.

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CHARLES Z. ALLEN

Attachment:
Report As Stated

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SUBJECT: DCI Hostage Location Task Force Report

DCI/NIO/CT/Callen [] (19 December 1986)

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Director of Central Intelligence

HOSTAGE LOCATION

TASK FORCE

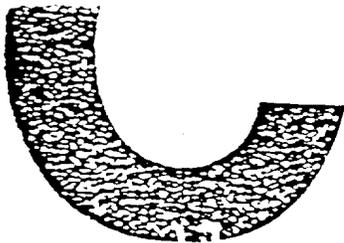
REPORT



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- AUB President Plimpton stated that letters written by Jacobsen since he was taken hostage have been pushed under the door of Nasrallah's private residence for passage to Jacobsen's family. (S NF NC CC [])

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- Father Jenco has described Achmed Nasrallah as a "former employee of Jacobsen who somehow was involved with the kidnapers." (S NF NC CC [])

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Arab-American Leaders Contacts Disappointing

Two leaders of the US Arab-American community have returned to the United States after a fruitless two-week trip to Damascus and Beirut to seek the release of the US hostages in Lebanon. They claim to have made contact with the kidnapers, but acknowledge that those contacts were "insubstantial". (U)

Mohammad Mehdi and Duane Shaheen, respectively Secretary General and Vice President of the National Council on Islamic Affairs, acknowledged they had no proof that those with whom they spoke were authentic representatives of the hostage holders. They also admitted they had been overly optimistic about their chances of obtaining the release of US hostages at the outset of their trip. (S NF NC OC)

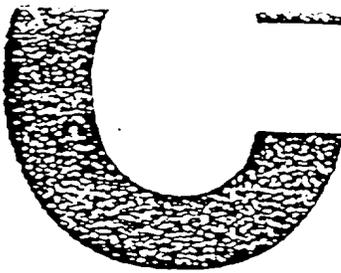
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The US Embassy in Damascus has reported that official Syrian reaction to the visit by Dr. Mehdi and Mr. Shaheen was publicly correct but privately reluctant. Dr. Ahmad Saker at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the Syrians "had" to give Mehdi some press play, given his position in the United States and his stand on regional issues. Nevertheless, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara made it clear to all his ministry officials that Mehdi and Shaheen were not "welcome visitors". (C)

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Members of the Department of State, the National Security Council, and the Hostage Location Task Force met with Mehdi and Shaheen on 19 December 1986 to discuss their trip. Principal points that emerged from that meeting were as follows:

- Mehdi and Shaheen met personally with a man in Damascus that presented himself as a representative of the hostage captors. He provided no bona fides, but Mehdi obtained the impression from the man's knowledge of the situation that he was indeed who he claimed to be. While he was in Beirut, Mehdi also spoke on the telephone twice to an alleged representative of the captors--probably the same man that visited him in Damascus.



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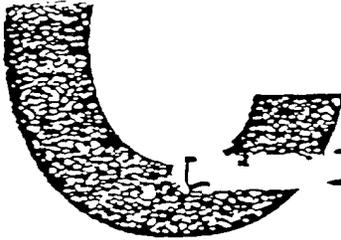
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- Mehdi characterized the captors as stubborn, independent, self righteous, and paranoid. He believed they operated in small groups of about 10 or 15. Consequently, they have been able to maintain tight security, according to Dr. Mehdi, "not like the PLO."
- He sees the captors as spiritually but not politically related to Iran. He doubts that Iran issues direct orders to them. He compared the situation to the Vatican's influence with American Roman Catholics.
- Mehdi reported the captors demands as provided to him were broadly political, centering on US relations with the Muslim world and Israel. He said the Da'wa prisoners were mentioned, but it was his impression they ranked about "number ten" on the captors list of priorities.
- The captor representative said the hostages were all in good health.
- Mehdi was not treated well by the Beirut press. He said a picture was published of him beside Israeli Meir Kahane, with whom he had had a debate. According to Mehdi, the caption attempted to connect him with the controversial Israeli political figure, asking, "What is this man doing here?"
- While in Beirut, Mehdi met with the wives of three US hostages: Mrs. Reed, Mrs. Cicippio, and Mrs. Sutherland. None of them had any news of their husbands.
- Mehdi stated that the fact that Reed and Cicippio are Muslim has little significance to the hostage captors. They see the two hostages as Americans, not Muslims.
- Mehdi met with Shaykh Fadlallah while in Beirut. Fadlallah offered little hope about the hostages, although he suggested that some altruistic gesture on the part of the US might be helpful, for example, feeding the Shia poor in south Lebanon. The phrase "Marshall Plan" and figure of "\$12 billion" was used.
- Mehdi said that as long as US policy prohibits talking with the hostage captors, there is no hope. When Department of State representatives pointed out that that was not US policy, and that we were in fact anxious to talk to the hostage captors--though we would not be willing to make concessions or pay ransom--Mehdi

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showed surprise. He indicated he would attempt to convey this willingness of the US Government to talk to the captors. Overall, neither Mehdi or Shaheen appear to have had any influence on the captors of the American hostages, and we doubt that anything useful will come from this initiative. (S NF NC OC []

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Iranians Allegedly Withhold Buckley Confession

An article (see Annex 1 for complete text) published on 10 December 1986 in the Kuwaiti Arabic language newspaper Al Qabas, alleges that President Reagan has requested the Iranian Government to withhold release of a "confession" by US hostage William Buckley and that Tehran had agreed. The Al Qabas article also stated that Buckley had died in "early summer" 1985. (U)

The "confession," presumably obtained while Buckley was being held hostage by a Hizballah element in Lebanon, was described as a 40 page written statement allegedly providing details about CIA activities in Lebanon and other Arab countries. The article also reported that Buckley's captors had recorded his admissions on a television tape. (U)

Iranian officials who were in contact with the United States in the fall of 1985 claimed that the Iranian Government had in its possession a copy of Buckley's confession. The date given by Al Qabas of Buckley's death is approximately correct. (Based on the debriefings of Jenco and Jacobsen, we believe Buckley died on 3 June 1985. (S NF NC OC []

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Da'wa Party Reported to be Separate Organization from Hizballah

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we believe the Da'wa Party was absorbed into the Hizballah in January 1983. The Da'wa clique within the

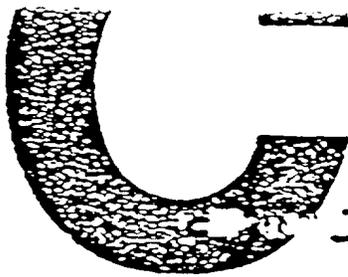
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Hizballah includes Hajj Imad Mughniyah, Hizballah's Beirut Security Chief, whom we suspect of being a charge of those holding the US hostages in Lebanon. L

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FRENCH HOSTAGES

French efforts to normalize relations with Iran continue, but the government appears resigned to a period of stalemate on the hostage issue. The Iranians may, however, try to secure the release of a hostage--perhaps before Christmas--in an effort to persuade the French to make further concessions. (C NF)

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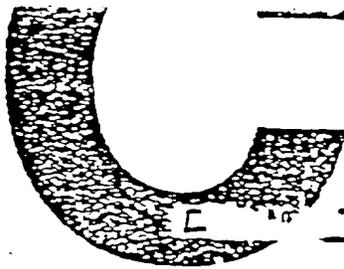
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The ruling Israeli triumvirate--Prime Minister Shamir, Vice Premier Peres, and Defense Minister Rabin--have all publicly justified US motives for the Iran arms shipments. Rabin told two US Senators who visited Israel earlier this month that he agrees with the policy of trading arms for hostages. Israeli leaders' objectives on future assistance would remain much the same as they have been to assist the United States and possibly thereby gain the release of Israeli hostages in the process. There are from two to seven Israelis--captured since 1982 in fighting in Lebanon--held by Shi'a and Syrian-allied radical Palestinian groups.

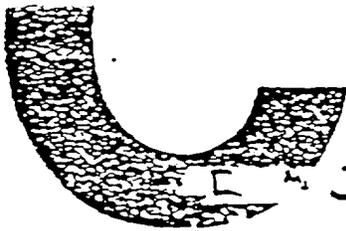
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Rabin told the US Ambassador in Tel Aviv this week that his recent comments on this issue were misrepresented by the press, and that he had intended to leave open the question of whether Israel might carry out such attacks. Responding to US concerns, the Defense Minister said he would try to clarify the issue publicly. (S NF)

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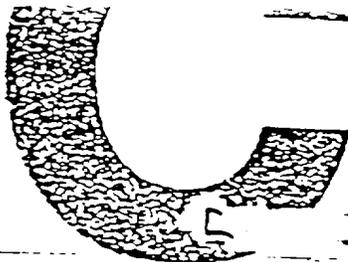
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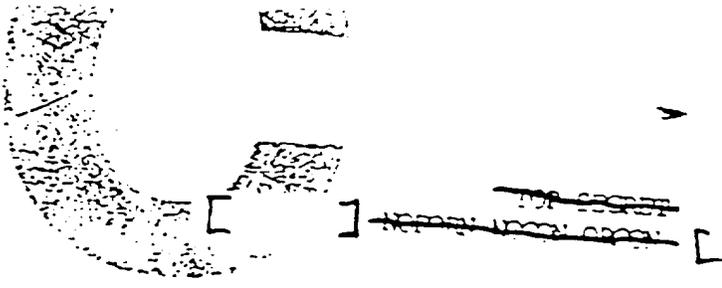
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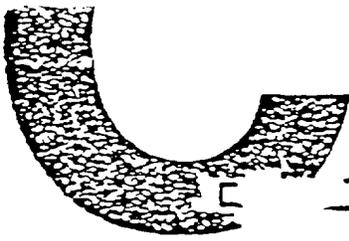
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Annex 1

Test of Al Qabas Article, 10 December 1986,
Regarding William Buckley

Knowledgeable Western sources revealed to Al Qabas an important secret related to the American-Iranian operation which is that President Reagan has appealed to the Iranian officials not to publish or broadcast the admissions of William Buckley, Director of the CIA network in Lebanon who was kidnaped by the "Islamic Jihad" in 1984 and whose death was announced in winter 1985.

These sources also disclosed that Reagan's administration has carried out several secret attempts to salvage Buckley in different ways and means during the period he was held hostage, which extended for more than a year, for fear that he might leak important secrets on the CIA activities in Lebanon and the region.

These sources said that shortly after the abduction of Buckley in March 1984 in Beirut, the Director of CIA William Casey sent a special envoy from the agency to Beirut to collaborate with some Lebanese parties in order to know where he is held and try to save him at any price.

The reason for this is that Buckley was not only the political advisor of the American Embassy in Beirut but he was also actually the first official in charge of the CIA activities in Beirut and he had been working with this agency since a long time and he knew many secrets.

Only a limited number of people in Lebanon knew the reality and role of Buckley, the sources said.

Casey did his swift move to save Buckley before the latter started, during investigation with him, admitting his activities and activities of the CIA in Lebanon and other countries in the Middle East, according to the sources. But this first attempt failed as Casey and the Lebanese parties cooperating with him could not save Buckley.

The knowledgeable sources told Al-Qabas that Reagan's administration had carried out a second attempt when it delegated secretly to Beirut Colonel Oliver North whose mission was to pay a big amount of money exceeding USD one million to save Buckley, but again this attempt failed due to significance of Buckley and his role.

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Reagan's administration had also sought the help of some Arab parties but to no avail, then it sent an envoy to seek the help of Israel.

The Israeli Prime Minister Perez had personally interfered in this question upon the request of Shultz and after consulting with his aides, he advised Reagan's administration to contact with the Iranian officials as they could secure Buckley's release. The American-Iranian contact was carried out consequent upon which 500 TOW anti-tank missiles were sent to Iran as a price for releasing Buckley. The missiles arrived in Tehran in September 1985, yet Buckley was not released but rather Reverend Benjamin Weir.

Then "Islamic Jihad" announced in October 1985 that it had executed Buckley being Director of the CIA in Lebanon.

After the announcement, the American officials received detailed information of great significance on Buckley revealing the following major questions:

1. The Buckley gave detailed written admissions on his role and activity and the activities of the CIA in Lebanon and other Arab countries and that his captors recorded his admissions or a great part of them by his voice and picture in a television tape. The Buckley's written admission came in 40 pages.

Prior to his going to Lebanon, Buckley was in charge of the American intelligence network in Egypt during Sadat's era and he played a major role in bolstering the security cooperation between Washington and Egypt. Therefore, he knows much about the situation in Egypt and the Egyptian-Israeli relations.

2. Those who carried out the investigations with Buckley are experienced in this line and not amateurs.
3. Buckley actually died in early summer 1985, not in October 1985. There is likelihood that he spent a period of time in Tehran.

This means that the Iranians deceived the Americans when they convinced them that Buckley was still alive so they got from them anti-tank missiles then Islamic Jihad announced Buckley's death.

The Western sources told Al-Qabas that the Reagan administration feels very embarrassed at the publishing of Buckley's admissions. The response of the Iranians to the American demand reflects a clear wish not to cut the bridges of contact and dialogue between Tehran and Washington.

In the opinion of the sources, the publishing of the admissions will indicate a setback in the American-Iranian relations.