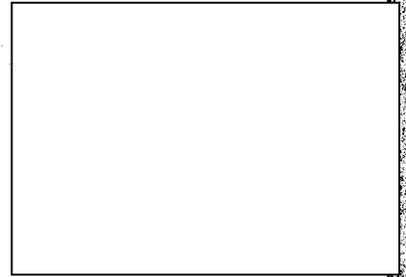


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Director of  
Central  
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SITUATION REPORT

IRAN

*The Revolutionary Council's unwillingness to make a decision yesterday on transferring the hostages probably reflects the rivalries within the Council and concern over Ayatollah Khomeini's attitude on the issue.* [ ]

President Bani-Sadr said yesterday the Ayatollah has not yet made his position clear on the transfer and indicated Khomeini will have to endorse any Council decision. The militants have not made a definitive statement, but they would defer to the Ayatollah. [ ]

Hardliners in the Council--led by Ayatollah Beheshti--almost certainly are pressing for more US concessions and may insist that Khomeini rule on this important decision. Beheshti's major interest is in weakening Bani-Sadr rather than in the hostage issue itself, but even he is likely to bow to Khomeini's wishes. Khomeini may simply prefer to avoid a decision now since he has already said that the National Assembly will ultimately decide the fate of the hostages. [ ]

More Problems with Iraq

Iranian-Iraqi relations are deteriorating sharply in the aftermath of the attempted assassination of Iraqi Deputy Premier Tariq Aziz on Tuesday; over 60 persons were wounded in the incident. President Saddam Husayn Wednesday blamed Iran and declared that Iraq will not be intimidated. [ ]

Since the attack, the longstanding propaganda feud between the two states has intensified further, and the Iranians have resumed harassment of Iraqi diplomats. Saddam Husayn's personal attention to the incident and the extensive publicity it is receiving in Baghdad suggest that Iraq will soon retaliate. [ ]

Foreign Minister Ghotbzadeh has denied any Iranian involvement, but Iraqi charges of Iranian complicity in the attack may be merited. The Tehran press reports that an extremist Iranian group headed by Ayatollah Khalkhali has claimed credit for the attack. [ ]

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