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10 February 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: HSCICATI Briefing on Iran/Iraq War and Iranian Political Developments

1. On 10 February 1987 the House Select Committee to Investigate Covert Arms Transactions with Iran (HSCICATI) received a briefing on the Iran/Iraq War and Iranian political developments. The session was held in H-405, The Capitol from 1415 to 1545 hours. There is no transcript of this briefing.

2. The following Members were present:

- Lee Hamilton (Chairman) (D., IN)
- Dante Fascell (D., FL)
- Thomas Foley (D., WA)
- Peter Rodino (D., NJ)
- Jack Brooks (D., TX)
- Louis Stokes (D., OH)
- Edward Boland (D., MA)
- Ed Jenkins (D., GA)
- Richard Cheney (R., WY)
- William Broomfield (R., MI)
- Henry Hyde (R., IL)
- Jim Courter (R., NJ)
- Bill McCollum (R., FL)
- Mike DeWine (R., OH)

3. Congressional staff present were:

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|------------------------|-----------------|
| Elaine Mielke          | Spencer Oliver  |
| Steve Berry            | Dave Addington  |
| Mike O'Neil            | Dick Giza       |
| Tom Smeeton            | George VanCleve |
| John Nields            | Neil Eggleston  |
| Bud Hall               | Steve Ross      |
| K.C. Miller (Probable) |                 |

4.

[Redacted area]

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[Redacted area]

5. [ ] opened the briefing with an overview of the Iran/Iraq war and internal political/military developments in Iran that included information on the radicals, moderates and pragmatists currently playing roles in Iranian political matters. On this point, [ ] emphasized that these are not ironclad groupings because the leading players tend to slide from one group to another depending on the issues. He also said that Khomeini has cancer that could cause his death sometime during the next two years. Members' questioning during the discussions centered on dissemination of intelligence on Iran/Iraq, political fractionalism in Iran and Iranian/Syrian relations with the warring Lebanese factions.

6. Mr. Cheney asked about the quality of sources reporting on Iran. He was told that on the political side of the ledger we feel confident that we can identify and analyze trends. He was told that human source reporting has improved, but that we must keep in mind that we started from a fairly low production point. He said that the Iranian press is one of the prime sources of information on developments in Iran. In response to a question concerning whether the coverage of Iran is adequate, [ ] said that he feels confident that we can assess trends in Iran and that we have access to power groups, adding however that the reporting gap is in knowing the exact relationships between the various groups. Mr. Fascell had no questions. Mr. Hyde asked whether we rely too much on [ ] for our insights into the Middle East and particularly into the Iran/Iraq situation. At this point, [ ] asked whether questions on U.S. relations with [ ] were "fair game" for this briefing. The Members agreed that they consider it an appropriate question under the framework of the resolution that established the committee. Hyde said that the U.S. was somewhat vulnerable in that we relied on [ ] on Iran and Iraq. [ ] said this was not so, adding that while we [ ] we do not rely on [ ] Hyde then mentioned a book entitled "Death of Intelligence" and asked about the quality of today's intelligence as opposed to that collected during the Shah's days. [ ] said that it is difficult to compare the periods, adding that when the Shah was in power [ ]

There followed a discussion about the predication that Khomeini will die within two years. Some Members recalled that similar dire predictions were made about him during the Carter administration and he is still here. They wanted to know if we were using the same sources to formulate our current assessment of Khomeini's health. There was discussion

about the likelihood role of the Iranian army and the Revolutionary-Guards in future political developments in Iran. The question being which force would play the dominant role in political developments in Iran. [redacted] said that the Revolutionary Guard will be the most influential, with the army continuing to be tied down fighting on Iran's borders. Mr. Foley asked which Iranian elements are sympathetic to the Soviet Union. [redacted] said that there are no such elements in an ideological sense and that the present regime is basically anti-Soviet. The next question concerned possible Soviet assets in Iran and the answer was that the Soviets do not have significant numbers of assets in Iran. [redacted] asked whether Mr. Ghorbanifar, a key player in the Iran arms deal, had significant/real contacts inside Iran. Barksdale said that Ghorbanifar was in contact with key individuals in Iran and working with certain Iranian leaders. On a related followup question, Mr. Rodino asked whether Ghorbanifar was given a polygraph examination and whether he flunked it. Rodino also asked whether Ghorbanifar is/was an Iranian agent. In response to all of his questions, Rodino was told that it would be more appropriate if they are addressed to another Agency component. McCollum raised the question of the hostages, Iran's relationship with the hostages and the hostage-holders, and whether there is a particular group of Iranians in contact with Hezbollah. He was told that Hezbollah clearly has contacts with Iran but that there is no information that Iran controls the organization, and moreover their agendas do not always run in tandem. He added that Iranians have funded Hezbollah. Mr. Stokes asked how long [redacted] He was told that some material was sold during the Shah's regime and some items that were already in the pipeline were delivered after the Shah fell from power. [redacted] noted that it is important to understand that [redacted] [redacted] may have been involved in these deals but probably with the [redacted] Mr. Jenkins asked whether [redacted] [redacted] He was told that they were not selling them for the United States, that most of the arms are purchased in Europe from arms dealers but that North Korea and China are big suppliers of military equipment to Iran. Mr. Jenkins also asked whether the Israelis have better sources in Iran than we have there. [redacted] asked about internal dissent in Iran and how deeply it reaches into Iranian society.

7. During the second round of questions, Mr. Cheney asked whether there are/were differences in the Intelligence Community over the interpretation of events in Iran. [redacted] said that there was some disagreement over the degree of Iranian control/influence over Hezbollah. Fascell asked when there are analytical differences in the Intelligence

Community, where are these resolved. There followed a discussion about who receives the various intelligence publications, such as the PDB, NID, etc, who determines the distribution, what is the mechanism for comments on these publications, whether the documents are coordinated formally, etc. Mr. Jenkins asked whether former NSC advisor McFarland received briefing(s) before he went to Iran. [redacted] said that he briefed McFarland and Mr. Cave (May 1986) but that the briefing was requested under the umbrella of a briefing on the Soviet threat, Soviet activities in Afghanistan and the Iran/Iraq War.

8. There was one outstanding question: How much oil and how many arms has Iran provided to Nicaragua recently? The answer to this question (attached) was prepared by [redacted] and forwarded to John Nields on 11 February 1987. There were no other outstanding requirements.



House Affairs Branch, OCA

Attachment:  
As stated

