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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I had a very frank discussion with General Huyser at 1630 our time today in which we concentrated on the question of whether or not he should leave Iran.

The two issues influencing the decision are the impact of Huyser's presence on the safety of Americans and on our continuing ability to influence the Iranian military leaders.

With regard to the first point, the Ambassador feels a very deep responsibility for the safety of the Americans and there is concern within the community that Huyser's presence may be jeopardizing their safety. I did not get the impression that the word "revolt" was appropriate but the concern is very real. In the past 4 or 5 days the presence of Huyser has been highlighted and he is the focus of much of the anti-American feeling. The opposition is giving Huyser the credit for the bloodshed in Tehran. ✓

As to the second issue, a key concern is how one views the situation. Huyser believes the military retains a reasonable capability to implement Option C and that the threat of Option C is the only leverage Bakhtiar has with the opposition. Sullivan believes Option C is not viable and therefore an accommodation with Khomeini is almost inevitable. Both believe Bakhtiar is the preferable solution but Huyser has greater hope for success, especially if backed to the hilt by the military.

The military is holding together but there are differences of view with Gharabaghi and Admiral Habibollahi being reluctant to take strong action and Generals Rabin and Toufanian urging stronger action. Huyser has been able to keep them unified by stressing the need to support a legal government (Bakhtiar) with as much might as needed and that the unity of the military - and their continuing ability to take strong action - is in the best interest of Iran. Strong action, when required, may well mean the saving of millions of Iranian lives in the long run.

Huyser also stated that their (Huyser and Gast) contacts with the military leaders is the only continuous, intimate tap into the Bakhtiar government. The military leaders are very open with Huyser and Gast. Furthermore, the military is very suspicious of the Ambassador, believing that he was a key factor in the Shah's leaving.

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As to the question of continuing influence on the military if he should leave, Huyser says nothing is certain in Iran these days. Clearly he has their confidence and they remember that the Shah told them to listen to Huyser. On the other hand Gast has been a full participant in all discussions with the military and they and he have confidence in Gast. If Gast has the same access to Washington as he has had, Huyser believes Gast would do well. Huyser and Gast have the same view of the overall situation and Huyser is convinced he would present his views in an unfiltered way. Huyser recognizes that it is a close call on whether or not he should come out. The Ambassador's view should not be taken lightly - he may be right.

In view of Khomeini's press conference tomorrow morning and Huyser's meeting with Gharabaghi also in the morning, I suggested he make a call earlier tomorrow (0700) so that if a decision were made for him to leave, he could get out while the airport is open. He will not tip his hand in any way as to the possibility of leaving. If a decision is made shortly after the 0700 call, he should have time - although it will be close - to discuss his departure with the military leaders before he had to leave for the airport. He fully recognizes that he is to stay until a decision is made otherwise. The earlier call gives us an opportunity to address the issue before another day passes in Iran and for Huyser to take action as required on any Washington decision, whether it relates to his staying in Iran or to the fundamental issue of what is the next move for the military.

I have passed the word he is to call the situation room in the White House at 0700EST and should have Gast with him if possible.

David C. Jones
DAVID C. JONES, General, USAF
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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