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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

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E. O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PREL, SY
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. DELIVER FOLLOWING LETTER FROM PRESIDENT REAGAN TO SADDAM HUSSEIN IMMEDIATELY.
3. BEGIN TEXT:

HIS EXCELLENCY SADDAM HUSSEIN
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ
BAGHDAD

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I AM WRITING AT THIS TIME TO REASSURE YOU THAT OUR LONGSTANDING POLICY OF SEEKING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE WAR BETWEEN YOUR COUNTRY AND IRAN HAS NOT CHANGED AND THAT OUR POLICY OF NOT NEGOTIATING WITH TERRORISTS AND HOSTAGE TAKERS ALSO REMAINS UNCHANGED. RECENT PRESS REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT OUR POLICY IN THESE TWO IMPORTANT AREAS HAS CHANGED ARE SIMPLY WRONG.

AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE LONG BEEN CONCERNED OVER THE WAR BETWEEN YOUR COUNTRY AND IRAN AND WE CONTINUE TO SEEK WAYS TO HELP BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE FIGHTING AND A RAPID NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. TOWARD THIS GOAL AND IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT SOVIET GAINS IN IRAN AND CONTAIN IRANIAN RADICALISM, WE HAVE SOUGHT THROUGH PRIVATE PARTIES TO DEVELOP A DIALOGUE WITH SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT. BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE AND GEOGRAPHIC POSITION, IRAN HAS AND ULTIMATELY WILL AGAIN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE WITH RESPECT TO ITS NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR MUTUAL, LONG-RANGE INTERESTS ARE BEST SERVED BY TRYING TO FOSTER AN IRANIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL PURSUE MODERATE POLICIES, FRIENDSHIP, AND TOLERANCE TOWARDS ITS PEOPLE AND OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION. NOT TO PURSUE EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE ON OUR PART AND SERVE NEITHER OF OUR INTERESTS IN THE REGION.

WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE

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~~SECRET~~ BY LOT NARA, DATE 4/7/06

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CONFLICT. I AM CONVINCED THAT A U. S. DIALOGUE WITH IRAN IS MORE LIKELY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THAT OUTCOME AND TO GREATER PRAGMATISM IN IRAN THAN AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY OF ESCHEWING ALL CONTACTS.

LET ME EMPHASIZE THAT OUR POLICY HAS BEEN, AND STILL IS, TO RESTRAIN SHIPMENT OF ARMS TO IRAN. WE HAVE BEEN CAREFUL TO ASSURE THAT WHAT WE RELEASED TO THE IRANIANS--FOR THE LIMITED DIPLOMATIC PURPOSE OF DEMONSTRATING OUR EARNESTNESS--WOULD NOT ALTER THE BALANCE IN THE CONFLICT OR PROLONG THE WAR. WE MADE THIS POINT CLEAR TO OUR IRANIAN CONTACTS WHO WERE RUNNING A RISK IN PURSUING A DIALOGUE WITH US. OUR OBJECTIVE WAS TO DRAW THE IRANIANS INTO THE DIALOGUE WHICH WOULD, AMONG OTHER GOALS, END THE WAR.

I CAN ALSO ASSURE YOU THAT THE U. S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT DEVIATED, NOR WILL IT DEVIATE, FROM ITS POLICY OF REFUSING TO GIVE IN TO DEMANDS OF TERRORISTS AND HOSTAGE TAKERS. THE OBJECTIVE OF OPENING THIS DIALOGUE WAS NOT TO BUY THE RELEASE OF U. S. CITIZENS HELD HOSTAGE IN LEBANON, ALTHOUGH IN THE END THE ASSISTANCE OF OUR INTERLOCUTORS DID FACILITATE THE EFFORTS OF TERRY WAITE AND OTHERS IN WINNING THE RELEASE OF SEVERAL OF THE FOREIGN HOSTAGES HELD THERE.

I HAVE BEEN MOST APPRECIATIVE OF YOUR EFFORTS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND TO NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE WAR WITH IRAN. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN ALL NATIONS OF THE REGION CAN LIVE TOGETHER IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF PEACE, STABILITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT.

RONALD REAGAN. END TEXT. SHULTZ
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