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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

BURNS

September 20, 1988

INFORMATION

Deputy Natl Sec Advisor
has seen

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN D. NEGROPONTE

FROM:

WILLIAM J. BURNS^{WB}

SUBJECT:

Update on the Status of HFAC Legislation
on Iraq CW

State met today with key HFAC staffers to discuss the Administration's views on the compromise language, based on guidance from Mike Armacost. Essentially, they made the following points:

- we don't favor sanctions now; would like 60-90 days to work with the Iraqi government on assurances;
- we would support restrictions on munition list items since they are currently in force, and would provide a letter to that effect;
- we regard Tariq Aziz' recent statement accepting the 1925 Geneva Protocol as a positive sign of Iraq's intention to refrain from further CW use both inside and outside Iraq's borders (in fact, Chuck Redman made this point today at his noon press briefing);
- this legislation could unravel US/Iraqi relations and jeopardize potential multi-billion dollar commercial opportunities;
- the proposed sanction calling for downgrading of diplomatic relations should be deleted;
- based on our consultations with our UN Security Council colleagues, it is unrealistic to ask or expect us to seek multilateral sanctions from that body.

HFAC staffers made clear that there was little flexibility in their position, saying that anything less than what they were proposing would create "massive political problems" for them given the momentum behind this issue in the Senate. While there may be a few cosmetic changes, the language won't be much better than what they have already given us.

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With regard to next steps, the Committee expects to mark up the bill this Thursday, September 22. Under consent rules it will be forwarded to the floor for full House vote next Tuesday, September 27. After that, the bill goes to Conference where we will be lucky to sustain the more flexible, albeit imperfect, language that HFAC is offering.

Prepared by: Sandra Charles

CC: Alison Fortier
Mike Andricos
Eric Melby

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