



2 June 1980

THE JOINT STAFF

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL VAUGHT

Subject: Psychological Operations Support for SNOWBIRD (S)

1. (U) (S) Subsequent to your discussions and my meeting with MGen Schweitzer on 28 May, MGen Schweitzer provided two papers to JTF outlining a general concept for, and means to implement, an umbrella perception management program designed to facilitate the release of the hostages from Iran. The papers set forth two general objectives: to foster the perception in Iran that the US has forgone plans to use force to gain release of the hostages and to facilitate development of a strong central government in Iran which will be capable of both releasing the hostages and dealing with the internal and external problems facing that country.
2. (U) (S) The concept and means of implementation outlined in MGen Schweitzer's papers, while ambitious, are feasible and necessary. What is called for is, in effect, an unconventional strategic PSYOP campaign of great subtlety, using multiple, mutually reinforcing channels of communication and actions to produce the desired Iranian government behavior. The idea of creating a national-level group to implement such a strategy (as called for in Col. ██████████ PSYOP Plan) was discussed with MGen Schweitzer. It was his opinion that such an organization was not politically feasible and that even if such a group could be formed, the possibility of the group's existence being leaked to the Iranian government, with subsequent disastrous results, was so great that such a course of action should not be considered. Rather, what MGen Schweitzer proposed was that the required actions be taken informally, using Dr. Brzezinski, Mr. Aaron, and Mr. Nimitz as prime "facilitators". The general concept was briefed to Dr. Brzezinski by MGen Schweitzer and was favorably received.
3. (S) MGen Schweitzer strongly emphasized the need to, on the one hand, begin the operation as quickly as possible, and on the other to proceed very slowly and carefully. Any indication to the Iranian government that the US is attempting to influence and/or manipulate their behavior would trigger

SECRET

an immediate reaction which could result in irreparable damage, and preclude any possibility of future successful military action. In this regard, I propose the following course of action:

G a. With the concurrence of CJCS, and in concert with MGen Schweitzer and selected officers from his staff (Col [REDACTED] LTC [REDACTED] and Maj [REDACTED], establish working level contacts with appropriate members of the NSC staff, [REDACTED]

C [REDACTED]; this could be accomplished as soon as possible. Contacts with other agencies (State, DCA, Justice, Commerce, Treasury, etc.) would initially be indirect and would be carefully established under NSC auspices for specific actions; no indication of the existence of an overall strategy should be provided.

b. A series of small actions and communications should be initiated through various means to suggest that the US is beginning to have second thoughts about using military force as an option for hostage release. These actions and communications should be indirect and mutually supportive; intensive analysis should be undertaken after these "seeds" are planted to determine if, and in what manner, the desired perceptions reach the Iranian hierarchy. The process should be repeated, using a slightly different theme, through other means, until a number of viable channels of influence have been identified from source to ultimate Iranian receiver, i.e. Khomeini.

c. Once multiple channels have been identified and are understood, a series of larger, mutually supportive actions and communications should be initiated. These actions and communications should be designed to raise the perception of Soviet activity in the region, and should be of sufficient magnitude that they will trigger an overt response of some type from the Iranian government (a statement by the Foreign Minister, a broadcast by Radio Tehran, increased state of alert by gendarmerie posts in a given region, etc.). The Iranian response would then be carefully analyzed to identify the relationships among the channels used, the Iranian motivation for the response, the form of the response, and the internal effect of the response on the Iranian public.

d. Having identified the channels of influence, analyzed the response and determined the effect of the response, the operation can begin to increase in momentum, proceeding toward the objectives. Obviously, the process is an iterative one, and extreme care must be taken at all stages to insure that no entity used to create a desired perception (US, Iranian or Third country) is aware of the ultimate manipulative intent of the operation.

~~SECRET~~

4. (S) There are a number of additional considerations related to an operation such as this. While the operation is intended to support and should provide excellent [REDACTED] care must be taken to insure that if the operation is [REDACTED] SNOWBIRD will remain uncompromised. Many, if not most, of the participants in this operation will remain [REDACTED] in the overall process. Such individuals, particularly those in non [REDACTED] related positions can be expected to be [REDACTED]

A Beyond such "moral" considerations, certain of the actions proposed in the implementation are on very tenuous legal ground, particularly those involving [REDACTED]. Such legal considerations are unlikely to pose any real constraints on the operation, but should be born in mind in the event that the operation is compromised and [REDACTED]

C 5. (S) In summary, I believe that the concept and proposed implementation provided by MGen Schweitzer are viable and feasible. The desired objectives cannot be reached overnight, but with needed support and cooperation from the [REDACTED] and a large dose of effort and imagination from working level participants, I believe we can get the job done. With your concurrence, I propose to begin the steps outlined in this memorandum immediately.

G [REDACTED]
LtCol, USAF

SECRET