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To:

NEA/IRN: JMEalum  
PM/IMP: PMartinez  
PM: JTHowe  
ACDA: RMikulak  
IO/UNP: HSizer  
R: RRaphel  
PA: JHughes

From:

NEA: JAPlacke

The White House has requested a press statement and guidance along the lines of the attached for use Monday, March 5.

Please provide your substantive comments/clearance to NEA/ARN: Frank Ricciardone, x0695, by 9:30 today. The final version will then be passed to

S/S, in time for transmission to the White House by 10:30.

Statement will also be transmitted to appropriate posts for notification to host governments.

(hand delivered to S/S for distribution 4:00 pm, March 4)

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United States Department of State  
Office of FOI, Privacy, & Classification Review  
Review Authority: KRUSE, DONALD  
Date: 06/15/94  
Case ID: 91036062

DECL: OADR

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PRESS STATEMENT: IRAQ'S USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The United States has concluded that the available evidence substantiates Iran's charges that Iraq has used chemical weapons. The United States strongly condemns the prohibited use of chemical weapons wherever it occurs. There can be no justification for their use by any country.

The United States has been working for many years with other nations to establish a treaty banning production of chemical weapons, in order to strengthen the present international prohibitions against their use. The use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq War only adds to the urgency of this undertaking.

The United States deplores the tragic and needless loss of both Iranian and Iraqi lives, especially through attacks on civilian populations. We urge both states to respect their obligations under international conventions designed to mitigate the human suffering of warfare, particularly those agreements relating to the use of chemical weapons and to the humane treatment of prisoners of war.

(continued)

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While condemning Iraq's resort to chemical weapons, the United States also calls on the Government of Iran to accept the good offices proffered by a number of countries and international organizations to put an end to the bloodshed. The United States finds the present Iranian regime's intransigent refusal to deviate from its avowed objective of eliminating the legitimate government of neighboring Iraq to be inconsistent with the accepted norms of behavior among nations and the moral and religious basis which it claims.

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Iraq: Use of Chemical Weapons: Follow-up Questions

Q. Beyond condemning Iraq's use of CW, what are you doing to stop it?

A.-- We have made known our views directly to high levels of the Government of Iraq.

-- We have taken steps to prevent U.S. exports to Iraq that could be intended for use in CW production, and have urged other countries from which such materials might be available to do likewise.

-- We have taken note of the Iranian charges both in our 1983 Human Rights report on Iraq, and in our February, 1984 report to the UN Secretary General on worldwide chemical weapons use.

-- We have supported UN and other efforts to bring Iran to accept a ceasefire in this particularly bloody conflict. Iraq has repeatedly stated its preparedness to cease fire.

-- As already noted, we are working for an international agreement to ban the production of chemical weapons.

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Q. What evidence do you have that Iraq has used chemical weapons? When did you get it?

A. Independent information, which I will not further characterize, as well as numerous non-Iranian media reports tending to substantiate that Iraq has used chemical weapons, has been accumulating for some months. We also note Iraq's public statements over the past two years which apparently were intended to provide indirect but increasingly clear warnings of its intention to use chemical weapons against Iranian attacks.

Q. Why are you making this statement at this time?

A. The level of evidence has become increasingly convincing, and reports indicate that Iraq has used such weapons to counter Iran's current offensive. Also, it had appeared until the Iranian offensive that the diplomatic efforts we had made may have been effective in dissuading Iraq from using chemical weapons.

Q. Have you raised this issue with the Government of Iraq? When? At what level? What was the response?

A. I can confirm that, beginning last year, we have expressed our concern on this issue several times directly to high levels of the Government of Iraq. I will not get into details of these diplomatic discussions, nor will I attempt to characterize the position of the Government of Iraq.

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Q. Are you doing anything about this through the U.N.?

A. We took note of the Iranian charges in our recent report to the UN Secretary General on worldwide chemical weapons use. It is up to Iran to cooperate with the UN on this issue, as well as the underlying issue of the war, through appropriate UN procedures.

Q. Would you support or cooperate with Iranian attempts to get UN action on the Chemical weapons issue?

A. We continue to support UN efforts on both the chemical weapons issue and the Iran-Iraq War.

Q. How does this affect our policy toward Iran and Iraq? Is this a tilt toward Iran? Will this end our tilt toward Iraq?

A. We have remained neutral in the war since it began in September, 1980. Evidence of Iraqi use of chemical weapons only underscores the urgency of a resolution to the conflict that will stop the bloodshed immediately, and allow both states to negotiate a settlement that will maintain their independence and territorial integrity. We do not want either side to force its will on the other or upon neighboring states. This was our position when Iraq was the invader, even though Iran was holding American hostages at the time, and it remains our position now that Iran is the invader.

*Bygones*

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3/4/84, #1450K, x0695

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