

Beziehungen USA - Iran

Unterstaatssekretär Kanter übergab mir heute Vormittag zur Weiterleitung an Ihre üblichen Gesprächspartner beiliegende, ausführliche US-Antwort auf die iranische "message" vom 19.12.91. Meines Wissens handelt es sich um die umfassendste US-Stellungnahme zu den bilateralen Beziehungen seit unseren 1990 aufgenommenen, intensiveren Zwischenträgerdiensten. Kanter wies in seinem Kommentar daraufhin, dass das SD die Dezember-Message vorgängig der Abfassung dieser Antwort einem sehr gründlichen Studium unterzogen habe. Er hoffe, dass die Iraner die durchaus auch vorhandenen positiven Elemente entsprechend zu würdigen wüsste.



C. Blickenstorfer

P.S. Die Frau von CSIS-Direktor Robert Hunter, Shireen Hunter, gebürtige Iranerin, heute aber US-Bürgerin und ebenfalls beim CSIS tätig (Schwergewicht Nahost und Südasien), beabsichtigt, an einem vom IRI-Am-Institut organisierten Seminar über Beziehungen IRI - islamische GUS-Staaten teilzunehmen.

Abreise: 28.2.92,

Frage von R. Hunter (beide sind dieser Botschaft gut bekannt):

- riskiert meine Frau etwas?
- wird ihr die Schweiz als Schutzmacht helfen (können), falls ihr etwas passiert?

Frau Hunter reist ausschliesslich mit US-Pass.

CSIS steht für "Center for Strategic and International Studies", einer der hiesigen Think Tanks.



- o The United States has given careful consideration to the message conveyed by the Iranian Foreign Ministry to Swiss Ambassador Greber on December 19, 1991.
- o The two track approach suggested by Iran is not acceptable. Economic relations between the United States and Iran cannot be pursued independently of political issues.
- o In addition to terrorism, issues such as human rights, nuclear proliferation, chemical weapons and technology which support such programs have a direct bearing on the prospects for reestablishing fully normal political and economic relations with Iran.
- o As you know, there is some very limited trade between our two countries.
 - For example, we recently approved, on a one-time only basis, the licensing of U.S. aircraft engines for inclusion in the European airbus.
- o You should be aware, however, that terrorism is a factor of particular importance in limiting our trade relations.
 - Many of our export controls on sales to Iran are the direct result of Iran's designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. The controls can not be lifted unless Iran is removed from the terrorism list in the manner prescribed by our legislation.
 - The embargo on imports of Iranian goods and services is also linked to our terrorism concerns.
- o We cannot ignore the evidence of official Iranian complicity in the killing of Bakhtiar nor in the killings of other Iranian dissidents abroad. The death threat against Salman Rushdie is also, in our view, a form of terrorism.
- o We believe that U.S.-Iranian claims talks at The Hague must remain a purely legal process that is distinct from other aspects of our relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. We will continue to work together with you in that forum to try to resolve cases on their merits as expeditiously as possible.

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- o We take seriously your statement that the People's Mujahedin Organization engages in terrorism against Iranian interests in the United States. While this Administration has a policy not to deal with the People's Mujahedin, we are aware of their public activities in the United States. But we do not know of any terrorist activities and would appreciate any details of such activities against Iranian interests in the U.S. which would allow U.S. law enforcement agencies to investigate your charges.
- o The release of American hostages and the return of the bodies of Buckley and Higgins are important steps. We have noted publicly our appreciation to the Government of Iran for its role in facilitating the release of these hostages. However, the hostage question is not yet closed. Others remain held outside the judicial system, including the two Germans, and the missing Israelis, among them airman Ron Arad. We again urge the Islamic Republic of Iran to use its influence with hostage holders to secure the release of all innocent men without condition.
- o We previously conveyed information on the four Iranian diplomats who were kidnapped in Lebanon.
 - As we have previously informed the Islamic Republic on May 18, 1990, we believe the Iranian diplomats were captured on July 4, 1982 by the Lebanese Forces (LF) under Elie Hobeiqa and taken to the LF compound at Qarantina. Indications are that they were later killed.
 - A copy of our report, passed to you through the Swiss on May 18, 1990, is attached.
 - We have learned nothing more since our May 18, 1990 message and have nothing further to add to our previous information. The Islamic Republic may wish to ask Syria to seek an accounting from Elie Hobeiqa. To the best of our knowledge, Hobeiqa now resides in Zahle, in the Syrian-controlled portion of the Bekaa Valley, and frequently travels to Damascus.
- o We noted with interest Iran's desire to discuss Persian Gulf security. Our arrangements with several Gulf states are entirely defensive and designed to permit us to respond to threats to the security of our friends.
 - We would be prepared to consider any specific questions Iran may have on this subject.

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- We are interested in Iran's views of how confidence on security issues might be built among all interested parties involved in the Gulf. We recognize Iran's potential importance in the region.
- o Concerning Iraq, we are determined to keep all possible pressures on the regime so long as Saddam Hussein remains in power. We are prepared to live in peace and to the extent possible work with a successor regime that will live in peace with both its own people and its neighbors and abide by the relevant UN resolutions.
 - Iraq must give up its nuclear, chemical and biological programs and its long range ballistic missiles. This must be guaranteed for the future so that Iraq does not again pose a regional military threat.
 - We remain committed, as well, to the territorial integrity of Iraq.
- o President Bush's initiative on arms control for the Middle East of May 1991 is directed at enhancing stability throughout the entire Middle East region.
 - We hope Iran will examine the proposals in detail and will conclude that arms control, including nuclear non-proliferation, can contribute more to Iranian security than national efforts to build more weapons.
 - We are prepared to supply more details of our proposals.
 - We are firmly opposed to all activities that contribute to nuclear proliferation anywhere in the Middle East region, and will work actively to inhibit, prevent or reverse such activities.
- o We intend to continue our work for a true Arab-Israeli peace which will meet the legitimate aspirations of all parties to the conflict.
 - We do not understand Iran's opposition to this process, and view Iran's position as being detrimental to Arab and Muslim interests.
- o We are prepared to take steps to reduce the chances of misunderstanding between us. In this connection, our offer to hold direct dialogue with an authorized representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran remains open. In the meantime, we are prepared to use the Swiss channel for any communications we or Iran feel are appropriate.

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- o We reiterate our willingness in principle to consider the appointment of an Iranian diplomat to head the Iranian Interests Section in Washington, D.C.
 - As we have previously indicated, we would require information concerning the proposed individual before we could accept his assignment to Washington. We would also want to agree on the conditions of his activities. He must in any case be a professional diplomat whose travel would be restricted to the Washington, D.C. area.
- o In the future, requests for a waiver to the 25-mile travel restriction for non-U.N. purposes made by Iran's Permanent Representative to the United Nations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. This will result in some waivers being granted to Ambassador Kharrazi.

Attachment: Statement of May 18, 1990

May 18, 1990

As President Bush has publicly stated, the U.S. Government is committed, as a humanitarian issue, to pursuing all sources of information available to it on the status of the four Iranian officials who were taken prisoner in Lebanon in July 1982.

We must note that we have approached Lebanese Forces leaders a number of times in the past on this matter, and have received from them different accounts at different times. While the U.S. Government cannot confirm this version of events independently, we nevertheless convey it to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to support your effort to investigate the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the four Iranian officials. In our most recent reinvestigation, we were told the following.

The four Iranian officials were picked up by Lebanese Forces elements July 4, 1982 at the Barbara/Madfun crossing north of Beirut. They were held for a few days by the Lebanese Forces "Northern Division" and then were transferred to the Lebanese Forces Headquarters in Karantina. There the four Iranian officials were incarcerated and interrogated and, less than three weeks later, executed. Thus, the date of the killings would have been at the end of July or early in August 1982. We would note that in previous discussions with LF

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officials of the disposition of the four Iranian officials we have been told that their executions took place in 1983 or 1984. We cannot explain these discrepancies.

Reportedly, the chief interrogator of the four Iranian officials relayed the results of his interrogations to the then Deputy Chief of LF Intelligence. Part of the Deputy Chief's duties at the time was responsibility for the signing of death warrants for prisoners of the Lebanese Forces. The Deputy Chief signed the death warrants for the four Iranian officials. The actual executions may have been carried out by one of the bodyguards of senior officers of the LF.

We are told further that the Lebanese Forces' practice during that period was to execute prisoners and immediately inter their bodies in the field behind the Headquarters. We understand that bulldozers were frequently used for this purpose. That was reportedly the fate of the four Iranian officials. Thus our sources believe that the bodily remains of the four Iranians may be in the field behind the Lebanese Forces Headquarters in Karantina.

We are told that no effects of the four Iranian officials were kept. Current Lebanese Forces officials have told us that the Lebanese Forces' records were checked after the change in Lebanese Forces leadership in January 1986 and that there was

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no mention of the Iranian officials in those records.

Previously, however, in August/September 1988, we had been informed by an LF official that in the review of LF records in 1986 a list of prisoners had been discovered with check-marks next to a number of prisoners known to have been executed. The names of the four Iranians were on this list and there were similar check-marks next to their names. Senior LF sources told us they regarded this as firm evidence that the four were executed. We cannot reconcile the two versions we have received from LF officials.

We will continue to pursue our efforts to gather information on the circumstances surrounding the incarceration and probable execution of the four Iranian officials. As and when we are able to obtain any such additional information we will pass it to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We have been informed that some documentation may have been prepared in 1982-83 which purported to show that the Lebanese Forces had transferred the physical custody of the four Iranian officials to the Government of Lebanon's Surete General. Copies of this documentation may have been passed to representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are informed that that documentation was false. We are also aware of earlier LF reports that the four Iranians had been interrogated for a few days and released in July 1982 and

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that their car was found in the city of Tripoli. We believe this version of events to be false as well.

We note that this new and lengthier account is not entirely consistent with accounts we have received and provided to you in the past. We are unable to resolve these discrepancies, but we find this version detailed and unfortunately plausible. We must also note our deep regret and dismay about this episode. Summary execution is abhorrent and unacceptable.

We also note that we have discovered no information which would confirm General Aoun's televised statement of April 30, 1990 that three of the four Iranian officials are alive and being held in Laqluq. Not only have we found no corroboration of General Aoun's assertion, our sources do not believe that it could possibly be true. Laqluq is the LF field training headquarters and we believe that the presence of any non-Lebanese there would be common knowledge. We believe that General Aoun is not motivated by a desire to establish the facts around this inquiry, and we do not place confidence in his account.

Based on the result of our new inquiry, we have approached the current Lebanese Forces leadership which has offered to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit the Headquarters and investigate the question further.

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We understand the Lebanese Forces leadership would be prepared to have the ICRC check the fields behind its Headquarters to try to recover the remains of the four Iranian officials. We note that this area is no longer an open field but has been levelled by machine grading over the past few years. We also note that the Karantina location may be the site of burial of many Palestinians and others who may have fallen victim there in earlier years. Thus it may be impractical to seriously pursue this LF offer to have the ICRC investigate the fields and try to recover the remains of the four Iranian officials.

In the course of our inquiries, we have confirmed that Elie Hobeika, former chief of the Lebanese Forces who was removed from that position in January 1986, may be able to provide more information regarding the Iranian officials. As we have told you previously, we understand that Mr. Hobeika now has residences in both Zahle, Lebanon and in Damascus. It is possible that the Government of Syria may be of assistance in learning directly from Mr. Hobeika further facts surrounding the disappearance of the four Iranian officials.

To further demonstrate the deep seriousness with which the USG is treating the repeated requests of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for information relating to the four Iranian officials, the USG would be prepared to support an Iranian official request to the ICRC to make efforts to fully investigate the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of

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the four Iranian officials and their ultimate disposition.

The USG would also like to have noted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran that in August 1989 we made successful efforts to secure the freedom of seventeen other Iranian nationals who had been held in Lebanon. The ICRC was the mechanism for this release. We did this as part of our humanitarian responsibility.

The U.S. Government would also like to express again its deep concern regarding the fate of U.S. hostages reported killed while in captivity in Lebanon. We would like to ask the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide any information it may have on Lt. Colonel William R. Higgins and Mr. William Buckley.

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