

5 October 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Iranian Support for Terrorism--An Abrupt Change in Line in C.I.A. Publications, late 1985-early 1986

1. I have been asked to explain the circumstances attending the preparation of a Memorandum concerning Directorate of Intelligence (DI) reporting on Iranian support for terrorism, which I drafted in the fall of 1987, while serving on the Deputy Director for Intelligence's Product Evaluation Staff (PES). Mr. Robert Gates addresses aspects of this issue in point number 5 of his testimony of 3 October 1991. He fails, however, to address one key point; i. e., why statements he authored and had published beginning in late November 1987 contradict the findings of the PES study sent to top DI management on 30 October 1987. The substantive issue is an important one: the extent of Iranian support for terrorism at a key juncture for U.S. policy decisions vis-a-vis Iran.

2. The Chief of PES, Mike Barry, on 1 September 1987 instructed me to research what the DI had published on this key issue. He asked that I report on "what was said and when, with no effort to say why something was said." (See Mike's note to me--Attachment 1.)

3. My findings uncovered an unexplained discontinuity. To wit, on 22 November 1985, in an abrupt departure from the longstanding analytical line on Iranian support for terrorism, DI publications began to assert that Iranian-sponsored terrorism had "dropped off substantially" in 1985. I recall being particularly struck by the fact that no evidence was adduced to support that important judgment.

4. This new line was repeated in at least two additional DI publications, the last of which appeared on 15 May 1986. Again, no supporting evidence was cited. After May 1986, the analytical line changed, just as abruptly, back to the line that had characterized DI reporting on this subject up to November 1985 (with no mention of any substantial drop or other reduction in Iranian support for terrorist activity).

5. I followed the instructions of the Chief, PES, to make "no effort to say why something was said." I could not, however, resist noting (though not, of course, in the memo) that Hawk missiles were shipped to Iran in late November 1985. I thought there might perhaps be some kind of clue in this coincidence in timing. I may have been influenced in some degree by an article by Stephen Engelberg in the New York Times of 31 August 1987. Engelberg stated:

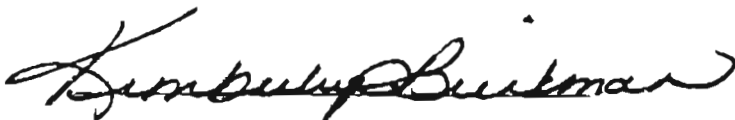
"There was an effort by some officials at the C.I.A. involved in the Iran dealings to write a paper last year arguing that Iran had ended its support of terrorism during the period it bought arms from the United States. The document was substantially rewritten after analysts at other agencies as well as some within the C.I.A. objected. "There was an example of a desperate attempt to try to sort of prove something was happening to make the policy look good, and it wasn't," said Clair George..."

6. Still more puzzling has been the discontinuity between the PES findings of October 1987 and what Mr. Gates began saying the following month, and why efforts to correct the record remained unsuccessful. In late November 1987, Mr. Gates began to claim publicly, and erroneously, that "no C.I.A. publication" had asserted that Iranian support for terrorism was waning. A brief chronology with documentation follows in the Appendix.



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Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 7th day of October, 1991.



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