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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

SYSTEM II  
90053  
Follow-on

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National Security Planning Group (NSPG) Meeting  
January 18, 1985, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon  
White House Situation Room

SUBJECT: Response to Threat to Lebanon Hostages (TS)

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

The Vice President's Office:  
Admiral Daniel J. Murphy

White House:  
Edwin Meese, III  
VADM John M. Poindexter

State:  
Secretary George P. Shultz  
Under Secretary Michael H. Armacost

NSC:  
Donald R. Fortier  
James R. Stark

OSD:  
Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger  
Deputy Secretary William H. Taft, IV

CIA:  
Director William J. Casey

JCS:  
General Charles A. Gabriel  
Lieutenant General Jack N. Merritt

Minutes

VADM Poindexter: The terrorist group known as Islamic Jihad has held three U.S. hostages for a year. Recently they have taken two more hostages, the latest only last week. This past Monday, the Islamic Jihad stated that they intended to try the American hostages as spies and then give them "the punishment they deserve." On Tuesday, you authorized strong demarches to the Government of Iran informing them that the U.S. held Iran responsible for the safety of the hostages and stating that if the hostages are harmed, the U.S. will respond with all appropriate measures. (S)

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Declassify: OADR

DECLASSIFIED IN PART  
NLS F1241#48  
By LOJ, NARA, Date 7/14/04

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VADM Poindexter: (continued) The purpose of this meeting is to review what actions we will take if Islamic Jihad puts the hostages on trial and then executes one or more of them. We want to cover three specific areas:

- first, our contingency plans for the region;
- second, the readiness of our forces to execute these plans, including whether we need to begin movement of forces now to have them in the area; and
- finally, which specific actions we should take against terrorists in Lebanon, [REDACTED] if the hostages are tried or harmed. (TS)

I would like to ask Director Casey to bring us up to date on the intelligence situation. (U)

Director Casey: [REDACTED]

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FOIA(b) (1)

Director Casey



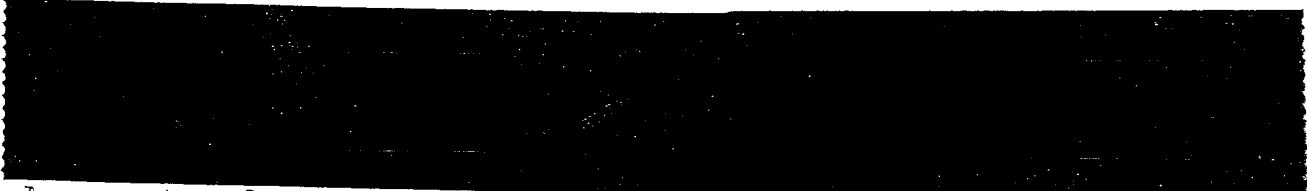
VADM Poindexter: I would like to ask George Shultz to review the diplomatic situation. (TS)

Secretary Shultz: Bill Casey has already covered very well the basic situation. We have sent demarches not only to the Iranian Government, but also to various nations in the region as well as the Summit Seven. I would like to make two points:

-- First, if we take some form of action, State should be involved in advance in order to formulate both a strategy to use with Congress and an international diplomatic strategy to explain our actions to the world.

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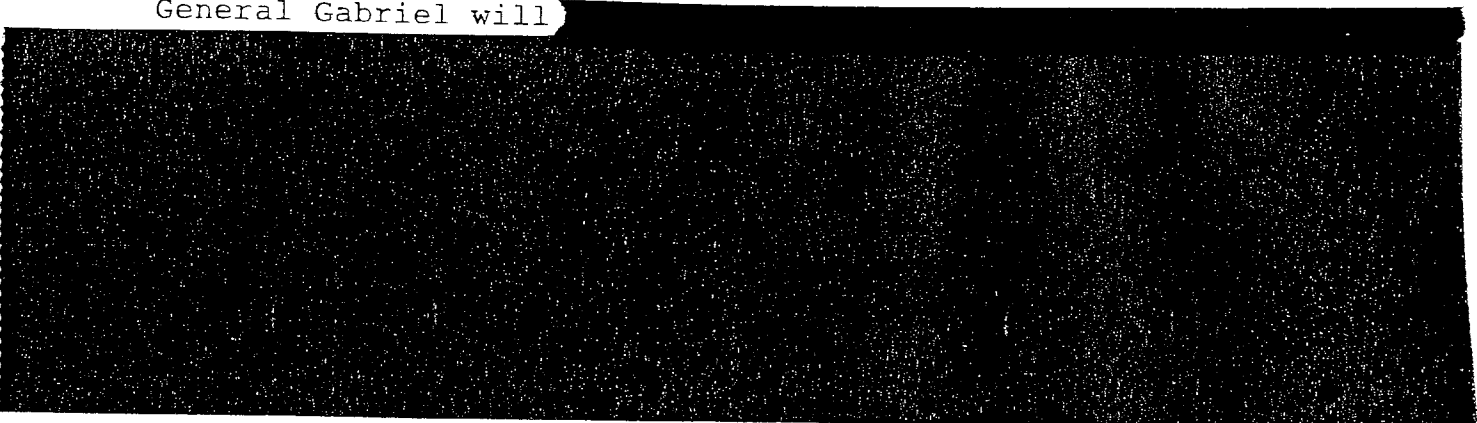


Mike Armacost and Jack Chain will be the State Department points of contact on this. (TS)

Secretary Weinberger: As you know, we in Defense agreed to sending the demarches and also to ensuring that we have the military options to back them up. As you will see, we have reviewed previous contingency plans and will also present some new options. (TS)

The strike portions of the plans are primarily designed to be carried out at night, but could also be flown as daylight strikes. The first two of these could be carried out on 24 hour notice. (TS)

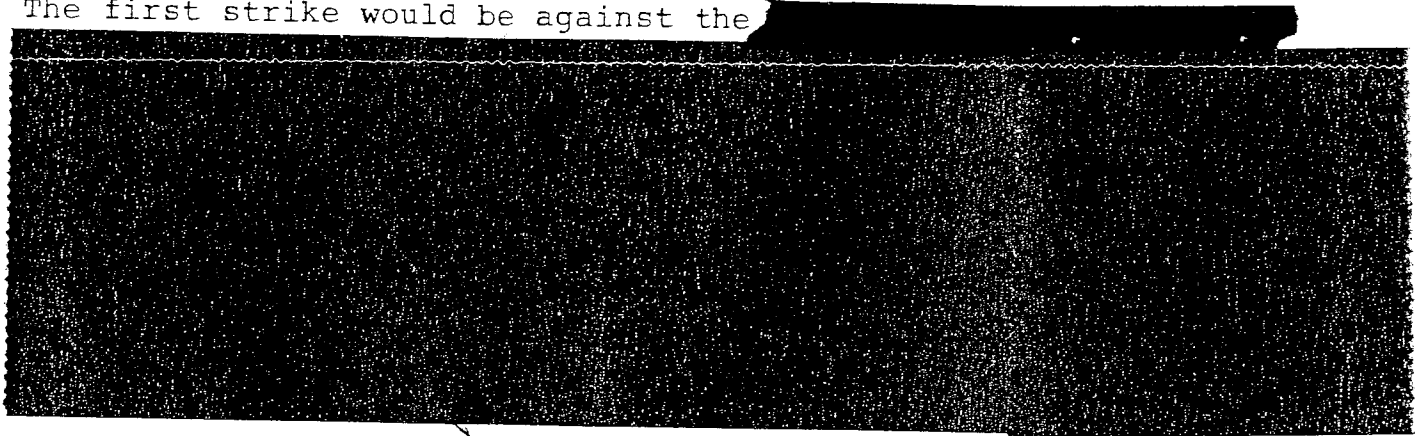
General Gabriel will



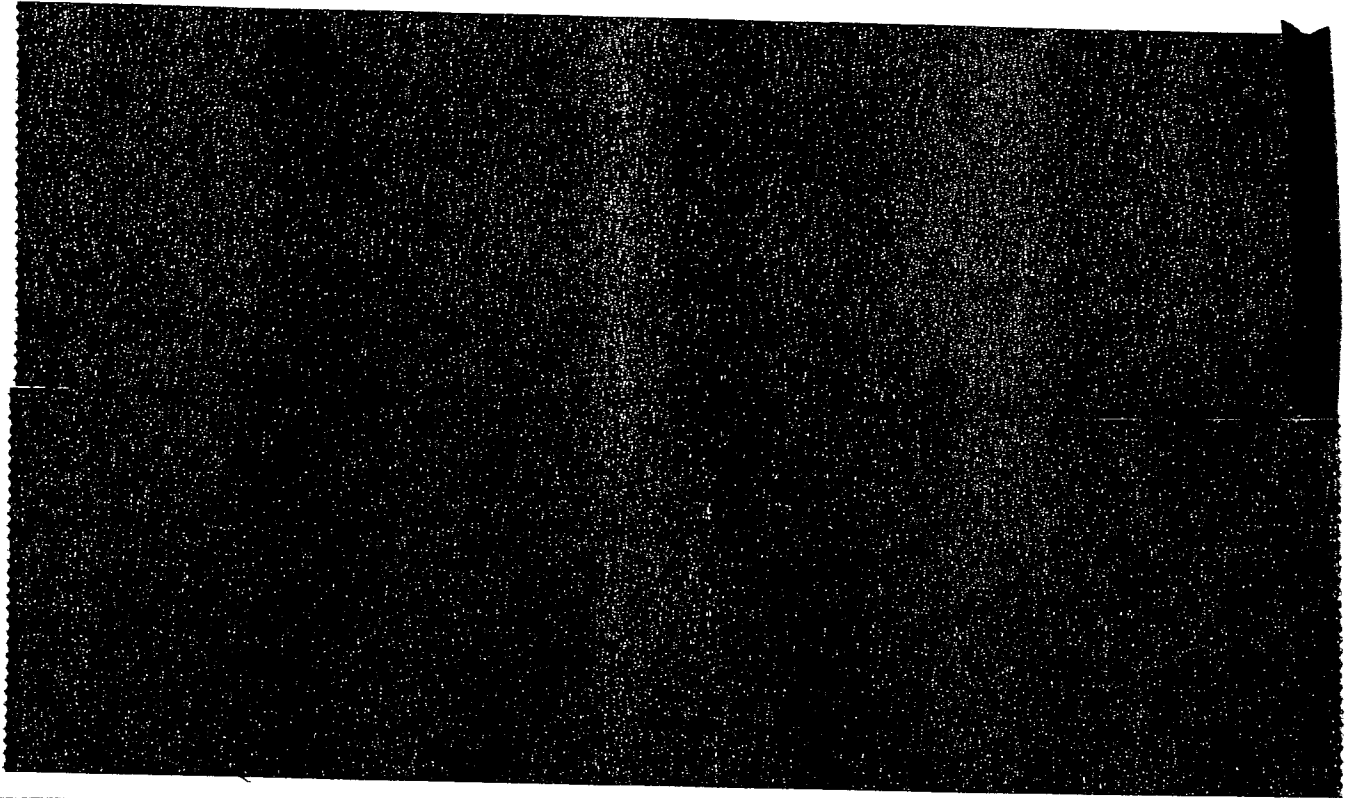
General Gabriel: We are currently well positioned to execute any strike. We have two carrier battle groups in the Indian Ocean and one in the Eastern Mediterranean. (TS)

The first strike would be against the

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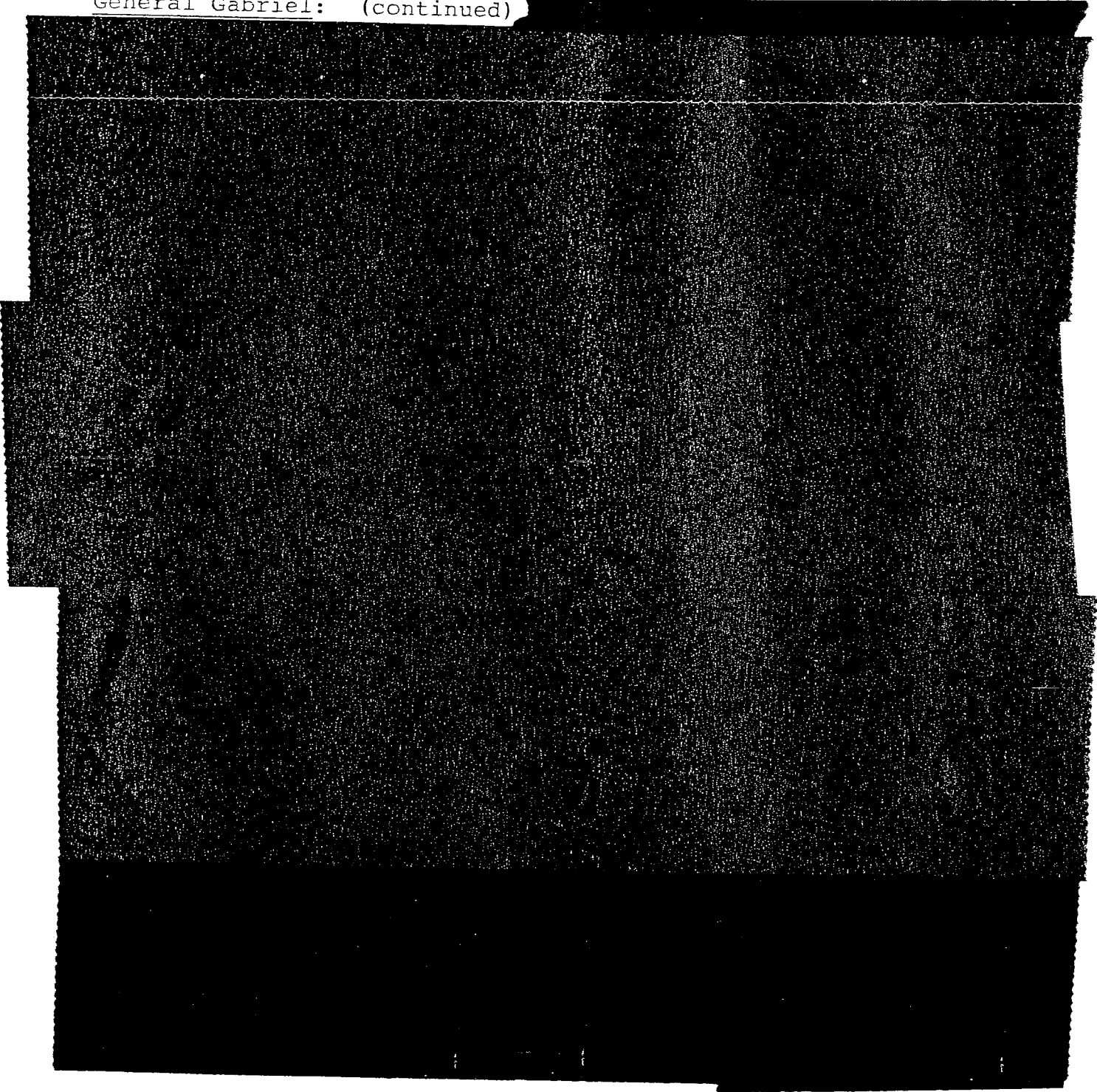
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General Gabriel: (continued)

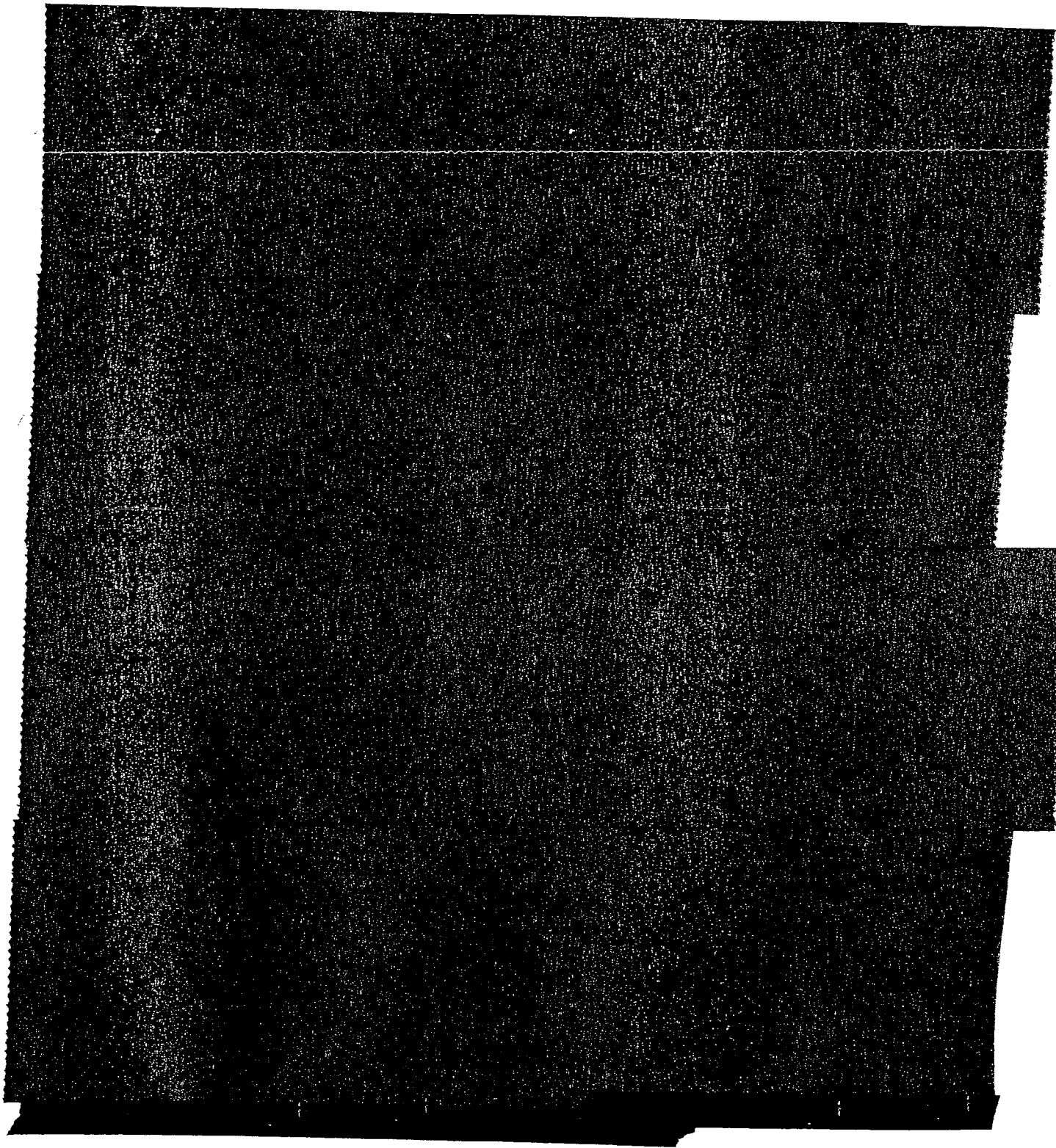


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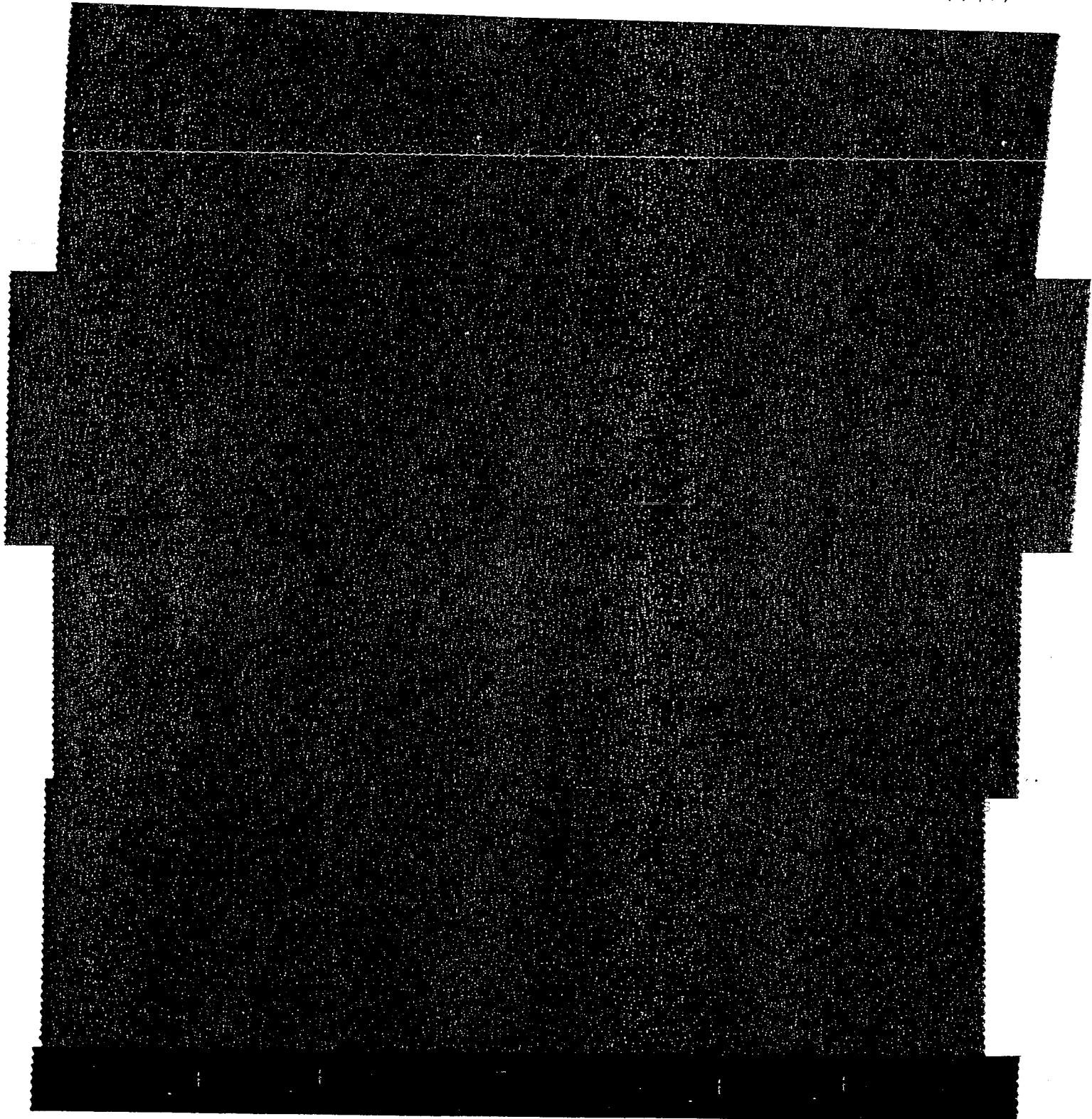
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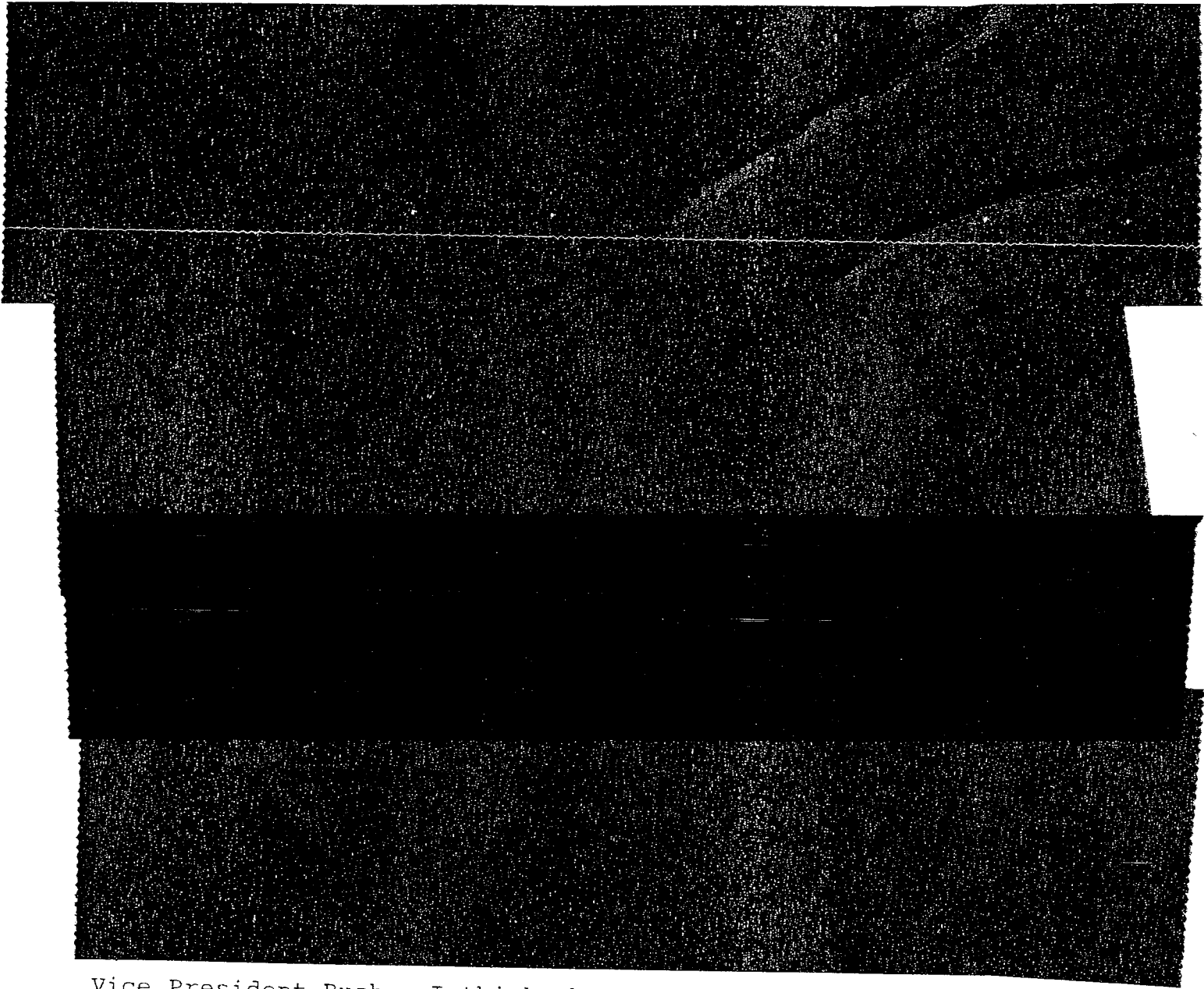
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Vice President Bush: I think the American people would be very supportive. (U)

Secretary Shultz: We actually need to prepare several strategies:

- a public strategy,
- a Hill strategy, and
- a strategy to use with our friends and allies. (S)

We will draft something on each of these and have it on the shelf in case we need it. (U)



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FOIA(b) (1)

VADM Poindexter: I believe that covers the agenda. I recommend we adjourn. We've now agreed that if the hostages are harmed

~~(S)~~

President: (snapping fingers) "Like that." (S)

VADM Poindexter: Don't you think we should reconvene the NSPG to make the final decision? (S)

President: Only if it doesn't delay the strikes. In summary then, if any hostage is harmed, we will

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[REDACTED]

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# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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Case:1241

Archivist: Lisa Jones

DOC	TYPE	DATE	PAGES	CLASS.	CLOSED
1	Memorandum Subject: NSPG 1/18/85 meeting outline To: From: John Poindexter Restriction: FOIA(b)1	01-17-1985	3		12-31-2002
			<i>PART 7/14/04 NLRRF 1241 # 37</i>		
<del>2</del>	<del>Agenda Subject: for NSPG 1/18/85 meeting To: From: Restriction: FOIA(b)1</del>		<del>1</del>		<del>12-31-2002</del>
			<i>R 7/14/04 NLRRF 1241 # 38</i>		
3	Memorandum Subject: NSPG meeting 1/18/84 To: John Poindexter From: Stark and Fortier Restriction: FOIA(b)1	01-17-1985	2		12-31-2002
			<i>PART 7/12/04 NLRRF 1241 # 39</i>		
4	Cable Subject: Islamic Jihad (same as docid 5273) To: From: Restriction: FOIA(b)1, <i>B3</i>	01-14-1985	2		12-31-2002
			<i>PART 10/27/03 NLRRF 1241 # 40</i>		
<del>5</del>	<del>Cable Subject: Islamic Jihad plans (same as docid 5274) To: From: Restriction: FOIA(b)1</del>	<del>01-15-1985</del>	<del>4</del>		<del>01-02-2003</del>
			<i>R 10/27/03 NLRRF 1241 # 41</i>		

COLLECTION: National Security Affairs, Assistant to the President for: Records

SERIES: Chronological File

TITLE: 8590053

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### Restriction Codes

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Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]  
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F-5 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. (b)(6)  
F-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes. (b)(7)  
F-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions. (b)(8)  
F-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells. (b)(9)

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

January 17, 1985

CARRON FILE

*Copy -  
Pres left in his  
folder - Pres JMP  
need to make any  
notation? No  
close out, nothing Pres  
was seen.*

*To → KMS  
1/18*


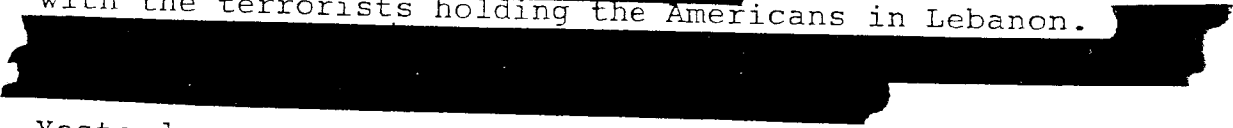
THE NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING GROUP  
DATE: January 18, 1985  
ACTION: White House Situation Room  
TIME: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
FROM: JOHN M. POINDEXTER *JMP*

I. PURPOSE

To review the latest intelligence concerning the five U.S. hostages in Lebanon; to examine the range of contingency plans for responding to terrorist threats to try the hostages; and to discuss the U.S. response if the hostages are tried or harmed.

II. BACKGROUND

You have expressed concern for the safety of the five U.S. hostages being held by Islamic terrorists in Lebanon. Last week the Islamic Jihad stated they would release the hostages after all Americans had left Lebanon. This was followed on January 14 by a telephone call to Reuters from a person claiming to represent Islamic Jihad stating their intention to try the Americans as spies and give them "the punishment they deserve."

The Islamic Jihad (or Hizballah) terrorist group has close ties with Iran through the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, with whom it shares bases and other facilities, and through certain elements of the Iranian diplomatic corps. Newly acquired evidence confirms that the Iranian government in Tehran  is in direct contact with the terrorists holding the Americans in Lebanon. 

FOIA(b) (1)

Yesterday, we sent strong demarches to Iran (through the Swiss), Syria, and Lebanon, as well as to our European and regional friends holding the Government of Iran accountable for the safety of the kidnapped Americans. Specifically, we stated that if the hostages are harmed, "the United States will respond with all appropriate measures."

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NLS F1241#37  
By LSJ, NARA, Date 7/14/04

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As a result of previous terrorist incidents, we already have contingency plans [REDACTED]

The JCS will review those plans and possibly expand upon them.

Should it become necessary to launch retaliatory strikes, you should be aware that we have an unusually high naval strike capability in the area. There are presently three carrier battle groups in the Middle East: one in the Eastern Mediterranean (USS EISENHOWER) and two in the North Arabian Sea (USS VINSON and USS INDEPENDENCE). INDEPENDENCE will transit the Suez Canal late next week and will then remain in the Mediterranean until February 8.

This meeting will give you the opportunity to review our contingency plans and provide positive guidance to ensure that our options for possible actions are sensible and commensurate with terrorist provocation. In particular, we must exploit any element of surprise and reduce to a minimum our possible exposure to hostile fire, lest we be faced with the prospect of additional prisoners in terrorist or Iranian hands. We must also ensure that we have forces either in the area or able to effect closure on short notice should we need to exercise these options.

This is also the time to get tentative agreement on the proper level of response to various terrorist actions. You may recall that when the Iranian government threatened trials of our Embassy hostages in 1979, President Carter replied that any public or government trial would result in the interruption of Iranian commerce, while any harm to a hostage would result in "direct retaliatory action."

III. PARTICIPANTS

- The President
- The Vice President
- Secretary George P. Shultz
- Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger
- William J. Casey
- Vice Admiral John M. Poindexter, USN
- General Charles A. Gabriel (Chief of Staff of the Air Force and Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff)

IV. PRESS PLAN

None.

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V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

I will introduce the subject and set the agenda for our discussion. Bill Casey will give a short update on our most recent intelligence, followed by George Shultz, who will review our diplomatic efforts to protect and gain release of the hostages. Secretary Weinberger and General Charlie Gabriel will then update you on our latest contingency planning for possible action [REDACTED] if the terrorists carry out their threats. The last part of the meeting will be a discussion of the military options, the availability of our forces, and which responses would be appropriate in each set of circumstances. I believe it is important that you get general agreement on this last point. If the hostages are put on trial, we should already have decided upon a preplanned response which needs only your final approval in order to move. We should also have similar decisions if the terrorists execute one, several, or all of the hostages.

FOIA(b) (1)

Prepared by:  
James R. Stark

Attachments

- Tab A - Agenda
- Tab B - List of Participants

cc: Vice President  
Edwin Meese

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NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING GROUP  
Friday, January 18, 1985  
White House Situation Room  
11:00 a.m. - noon

Responses to Threat to Lebanon Hostages

Agenda

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| I. Introduction                                | John M. Poindexter<br>(3 minutes)                        |
| II. Intelligence Assessment                    | Director Casey<br>(2 minutes)                            |
| III. Diplomatic Overview                       | Secretary Shultz<br>(3 minutes)                          |
| IV. Review of Contingency Plans and<br>Options | Secretary Weinberger/<br>General Gabriel<br>(15 minutes) |
| V. Discussion                                  | All Participants<br>(35 minutes)                         |
| VI. Summary                                    | John M. Poindexter<br>(2 minutes)                        |

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BY

LOJ

NARA, DATE

7/14/04

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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

January 17, 1985

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN M. POINDEXTER

FROM: JAMES R. STARK  
DONALD R. FORTIER

SUBJECT: NSPG Meeting, Friday, January 18, 1984, Situation Room, 11:00 a.m. - noon, re: Responses to Threat to Lebanon Hostages

This memorandum summarizes the issues for the January 18 NSPG meeting and forwards at Tab I a briefing package to the President. Attached at Tab II is the package containing the demarches on the hostages.

This meeting should have three principle objectives:

- A review of our contingency plans for Lebanon and Iran and their applicability as responses to the current threat to American hostages held by Iranian-sponsored terrorists in Lebanon.
- An examination of our military capability to execute the contingency plans on short notice, including closure times and the availability of forces in the region.
- An agreement among the participants on which response should be taken if the terrorists try or execute one or more of the hostages.

The initial briefings by Shultz and Casey should be kept short in order to focus attention on the military contingency planning and subsequent discussion.

In past planning, NSC has had to



You may also wish to raise non-strike options such as the declaration of some form of quarantine in the event trials themselves begin.

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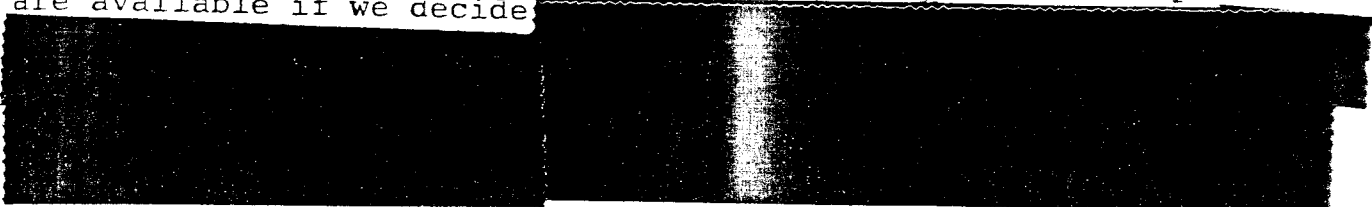
By LOJ, NARA, Date 7/12/04

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Because of the presence of the three carrier battle groups, which is highlighted in your memorandum to the President, immediate naval presence in the region will not be a problem, particularly around the time of the Inauguration (although INDEPENDENCE will be in the Red Sea/Suez Canal from January 24-26). There should also be a discussion of the readiness and closure times of other forces needed to implement the plans. For example, what options are available if we decide

FOIA(b) (1)



This is the time to get a decision on the specific U.S. response to the contingencies: public trial or execution of one, several, or all of the hostages. While the U.S. response to any of these eventualities will obviously not be automatic, the meeting should seek a level of commitment from State and Defense which would be difficult for them to later back away from.

Given the various recent indications of a Libyan inspired threat to U.S. personnel (the truck bomb against the Cairo Embassy and a possible operation against the EISENHOWER battle group during its Suez Canal transit or Alexandria visit), you may want to discuss possible responses to this additional terrorist operation.

Recommendation

1. That you sign the memorandum to the President at Tab I.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

2. That you consider using the talking points at Tab III during the meeting.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments

- Tab I - Memorandum for the President
  - Tab A - Agenda
  - Tab B - List of Participants
- Tab II - Package on Demarches to the Islamic Jihad Threat
- Tab III - Talking Points



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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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National Security  
Decision Directive

RESPONSES TO TERRORIST ACTIONS  
AGAINST U.S. HOSTAGES IN LEBANON (TS)

American hostages have now been held by the Lebanese-based Islamic Jihad terrorist organization for nearly a year. The terrorists have threatened to place the American hostages on trial and there is a significant possibility that the hostages may be physically harmed or executed. (S)

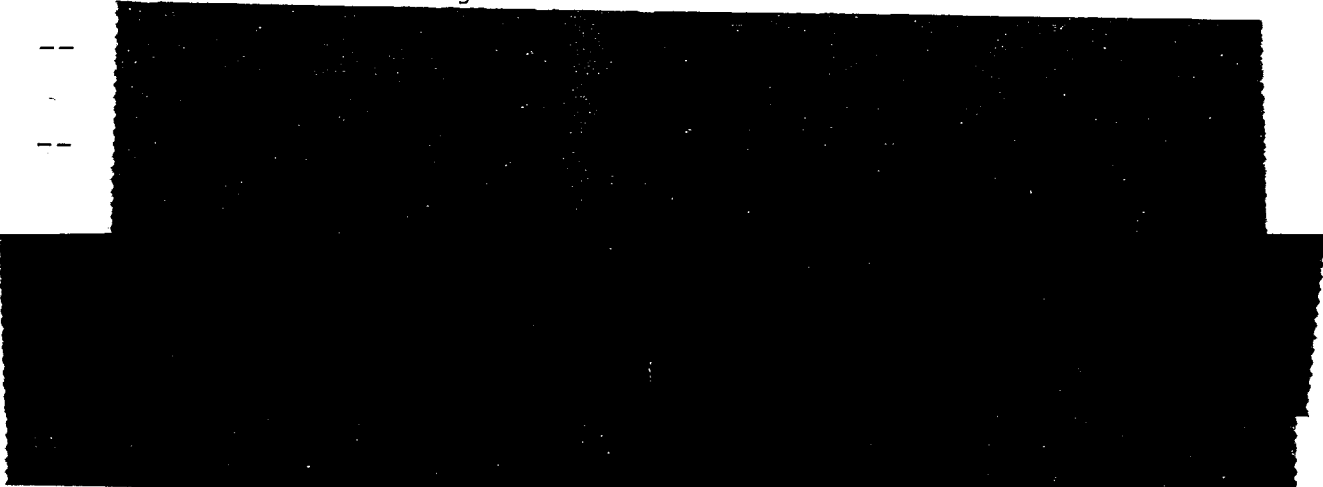
The United States has conveyed to the Government of Iran that we hold them responsible for the safety of the American hostages in Lebanon. If they are harmed, we have stated our intent to respond with all "appropriate measures." (TS)

It is U.S. policy that the death of any of the hostages shall result in the following actions:

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FOIA(b) (1)



U.S. military forces shall be prepared to carry out these operations within 24 hours of receipt of implementing directives. (TS)

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NLS F1241#54  
By LTI, NARA, Date 7/12/04

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

January 24, 1985

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

FROM: JAMES R. STARK *JRS*

SUBJECT: Draft NSDD on Responses to Terrorist Actions  
against U.S. Hostages in Lebanon

As part of the wrap-up for Friday's NSPG, Don Fortier proposed a draft NSDD implementing the President's decisions. A memorandum to the President is attached at Tab I, along with the NSDD at Tab A.

This NSDD would definitely make clear the outcome of the NSPG, although it would not make retaliatory strikes automatic. I have changed the target at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This should also solve the problem of target priorities raised by USCENTCOM's target nomination package, which listed the [REDACTED]

The NSDD also sets out follow-on targets to be hit [REDACTED]

I have included a final paragraph in the draft on readiness to strike within 24 hours of notification. If the President signs the NSDD, this will modify our current 96-hour tether for the Mediterranean CVBG--effectively reducing the tether to 24 hours for the near future.

An alternative to signing this NSDD now is to keep the draft on the shelf until needed. It could then be issued if (1) we received intelligence that hostage executions were imminent, or (2) if disputes arose among the principals as to what the President decided at the NSPG. In view of the problem with the USCENTCOM target priorities and the need to identify a new target [REDACTED] this may no longer be a practical option, since we have to ensure the military are planning for the right targets.

*Don* Don Fortier, *JRS for* Oliver North and *JC* Jock Covey concur.

Recommendation

That you sign the memorandum at Tab I forwarding the NSDD (Tab A) to the President.

Approve \_\_\_\_\_ Disapprove \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment

- Tab I - Memorandum to the President
- Tab A - NSDD

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*Will just keep this on the shelf for now.*

FOIA(b) (1)

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NLS #17241 #52

By LOJ, NARA, Date 7/22/04

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ROBERT C. MCFARLANE

SUBJECT: Responses to Terrorist Actions Against U.S.  
Hostages in Lebanon

Issue

//Whether to sign an NSDD directing U.S. responses in the event American hostages in Lebanon are harmed.

Facts

At their meeting on January 18, the NSPG considered possible U.S. responses to trial or execution of American hostages being held by the Islamic Jihad terrorists. Your decision was that, should one or more of the hostages be executed, the U.S. would initially strike

[REDACTED]

FOIA(b) (1)

Discussion

Shortly after the NSPG meeting,

[REDACTED]

Thus, we need to identify a new primary target option for the [REDACTED] USCENTCOM has recommended a priority listing of targets which concentrates first on [REDACTED]

USCENTCOM's lowest priority target would be the [REDACTED]

After reviewing the NSPG minutes, I believe that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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By WJ, NARA, Date 7/12/04

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is a better option. Such an operation would damage a meaningful military target [REDACTED] and at the same time serve notice of U.S. will and commitment. Moreover, by not attacking other available targets in the area, this alternative allows us to retain escalation dominance [REDACTED] chooses to retaliate. Subsequent U.S. responses would include [REDACTED]

Recommendation

OK      No

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      That you sign the NSDD at Tab A.

Attachment

Tab A - NSDD: Responses to Terrorist Actions Against U.S. Hostages in Lebanon

Prepared by:  
James R. Stark

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

## Ronald Reagan Library

Case:1241

Archivist: Lisa Jones

DOC	TYPE	DATE	PAGES	CLASS.	CLOSED
1	Memorandum Subject: draft NSDD  To: Robert McFarlane From: James Stark Restriction : FOIA(b)1	01-24-1985	1		01-02-2003
		<i>PART. 7/12/04</i>	<i>NLRPF1241 #52</i>		
2	Memorandum Subject: draft NSDD  To: President From: Robert McFarlane Restriction : FOIA(b)1		2		01-02-2003
		<i>PART. 7/12/04</i>	<i>NLRPF1241 #53</i>		
3	NSAM/NSDM/NSDD Subject: draft nsdd  To: From: Restriction : FOIA(b)1		1		01-02-2003
		<i>PART. 7/12/04</i>	<i>NLRPF1241 #54</i>		

COLLECTION: National Security Affairs, Assistant to the President for: Records

SERIES: Chronological File

TITLE: 8590059

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