

State/WH Relations, 1979

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

EYES ONLY

February 6, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: HAMILTON JORDAN *HJ.*

After watching the early news last night on two networks and seeing different reports ("US officials don't believe that the Bakhtiar government will last more than two days" and that "government officials today refused to give official support to the Bakhtiar government today....just as the U.S. began to soften its support for the Shah in his last remaining days, they have begun to withdraw support for Bakhtiar"), I called Jody. I understand that he called you and that you got a denial to the network in time for the second news programs.

I was first mad and then a little sick that this malicious leaking continues at great cost to our country and to your administration. I believe that the only remedy is strong corrective action on your part.

I doubt that any President has ever had a better Secretary of State and Under Secretary of State than Cy and Warren. But I also doubt if any President has ever had more people in policy positions at the State Department whose views differ with yours on critical issues and who feel free to fight their policy battles through the media.

Jody said that you were considering bringing in a group from State and giving them a dressing down. I would strongly recommend that you do so, and if you do, you should be sure it goes beyond the seven or eight Assistant Secretaries and includes several other people who have been the alleged sources of some of the worst stories.

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If you decide to do it, I would suggest that you make these points:

--that you think that you have in Cy Vance and Warren Christopher the best Secretary and Under Secretary that any President has ever had;

--that on numerous occasions you have expressed your displeasure to Cy and Warren about stories and leaks emanating from the State Department;

--and that while they have tried to discourage leaks, the leaks have continued at great cost to your Administration and to our nation;

--that at best, they (the Assistant Secretaries) are not managing their bureaus in a manner that inspires loyalty in our policies; at worst, they are participating in the leaks that have been so damaging to your efforts in foreign policy;

--that you have always encouraged internal debate and a full presentation of the options in foreign policy before making decisions, but that once decisions are made, you expect everyone in government to support your decisions;

--that if the leaks continue, you will have no choice but to ask Cy to make a series of major changes at the State Department; and that while that might be unfair to people that are neither involved nor responsible, you will have to measure that action against the real damage to our country from the malicious leaks.

If you decide to have such a meeting, I think that the tone of it is very important. It should be a serious meeting, you should express yourself strongly, and you should not make any attempt to cover up your personal anger. Often when you criticize or admonish someone that works for you, you will attempt to end the conversation on a positive note. If you decide to meet with the group from State, you should avoid saying anything that is positive--the entire focus of the meeting should be on your displeasure with them collectively, leaving the strong impression that their jobs are at stake.