

OFFICE OF CURRENT OPERATIONS

Bulletin

Item #1
16 Jan 8

***A231

U A BYLZYVZVT A0684

ABC-HOSTAGES-ABC;100

URGENT

NEW YORK (AP) - THE UNITED STATES AND IRAN HAVE REACHED "FULL AGREEMENT" FOR RELEASE OF THE 52 AMERICAN HOSTAGES PENDING ONLY ACCEPTANCE OF THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE; ABC-TV SAID FRIDAY.

THE NETWORK SAID WHITE HOUSE COUNSEL LLOYD CUTLER TOLD REPORTERS "THAT THE AGREEMENT'S LANGUAGE IS BEING WRITTEN NOW. IT SHOULD BE TRANSMITTED FROM WASHINGTON THIS EVENING AND BE IN IRAN BY TOMORROW (SATURDAY)."

"ASSUMING TEHRAN DOES AGREE TO THE LANGUAGE...AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT COULD BE MADE AS EARLY AS TOMORROW;" THE NETWORK SAID.
AP-NY-01-16 1541EST

(over)

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U W BYLBYLQYV A0679

7AM-ASSETS TRANSFER;250

7URGENT

7WITH AM-US-HOSTAGES BJT

WASHINGTON (AP) - THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT SAID FRIDAY THE GO-AHEAD HAS BEEN GIVEN TO PREPARE FOR THE TRANSFER OF \$2.2 BILLION IN IRANIAN ASSETS TO IRAN IN THE EVENT AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED FOR RELEASE OF THE 52 AMERICAN HOSTAGES.

TREASURY SPOKESMAN JOSEPH LAITIN EMPHASIZED THAT A FINAL AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN REACHED. HE SAID THE TREASURY ACTION AMOUNTED TO A 'PREPOSITIONING' OF IRANIAN ASSETS TO FACILITATE THE TRANSFER IF IT OCCURS.

AS PART OF THE PREPARATIONS, LAITIN SAID THE U.S. TREASURY IS TRADING 1.6 MILLION OUNCES OF IRANIAN GOLD HELD IN THE UNITED STATES TO BRITAIN IN EXCHANGE FOR BRITISH-OWNED GOLD IN LONDON. HE SAID \$1.2 BILLION IN U.S. GOVERNMENT SECURITIES ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING CONVERTED TO CASH.

BOTH THE GOLD AND THE SECURITIES WERE AMONG THE \$8 BILLION TO \$14 BILLION IN IRANIAN ASSETS THAT WERE FROZEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER ON NOV. 14, 1979. IN THE EVENT A FINAL AGREEMENT IS REACHED, THE NEWLY ACQUIRED GOLD IN LONDON WOULD BE TRANSFERRED INTO IRANIAN HANDS OR INTO THE POSSESSION OF A THIRD PARTY.

LAITIN SAID THE TWO ACTIONS WOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO TRANSFER THE MONEY AND GOLD TO IRAN; BUT CAUTIONED THAT THE ASSETS WOULD NOT BE TRANSFERRED UNTIL AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED.

'THIS IS JUST A PRELIMINARY STEP TO POSITIONING CERTAIN ASSETS,' LAITIN SAID. HOWEVER, IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE ACTION WAS A POSITIVE STEP THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN TAKEN UNLESS OFFICIALS BELIEVED A FINAL AGREEMENT WAS LIKELY.

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