TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

15 November 1979

MEMORANDUM

I believe that any rescue operation into Teheran within the next two weeks would have a very low probability of success.

We need better to help you prepare for a decision on such an operation, and on what the alternatives are.

First, you deserve an <u>explicit</u> statement of the likelihood of success of a rescue attempt. (Recall that the JCS reviewed the plan for the Bay of Pigs and judged it to have a "fair" chance of success. To the military, "fair" is like a "D" in college; the White House interpreted the JCS opinion as a "fair chance of success.")

Next, you need to know how the likelihood of success would improve over time. You may not be able to control the timing, but you will want to consider alternatives in this light.

In addition, you deserve optional rescue strategies that have different political requirements. Only you can balance the political costs with the changes in probability they afford.

I suggest that you ask the JCS and Secretary of Defense to prepare a chart like the attached. (A second copy with only nominal entries is also attached to provide a feel for how useful it might or might not be.)

Finally, you deserve a considered list of alternatives. If you eschew a rescue operation, the pressure of public opinion will require as immediate and decisive a set of actions as possible.

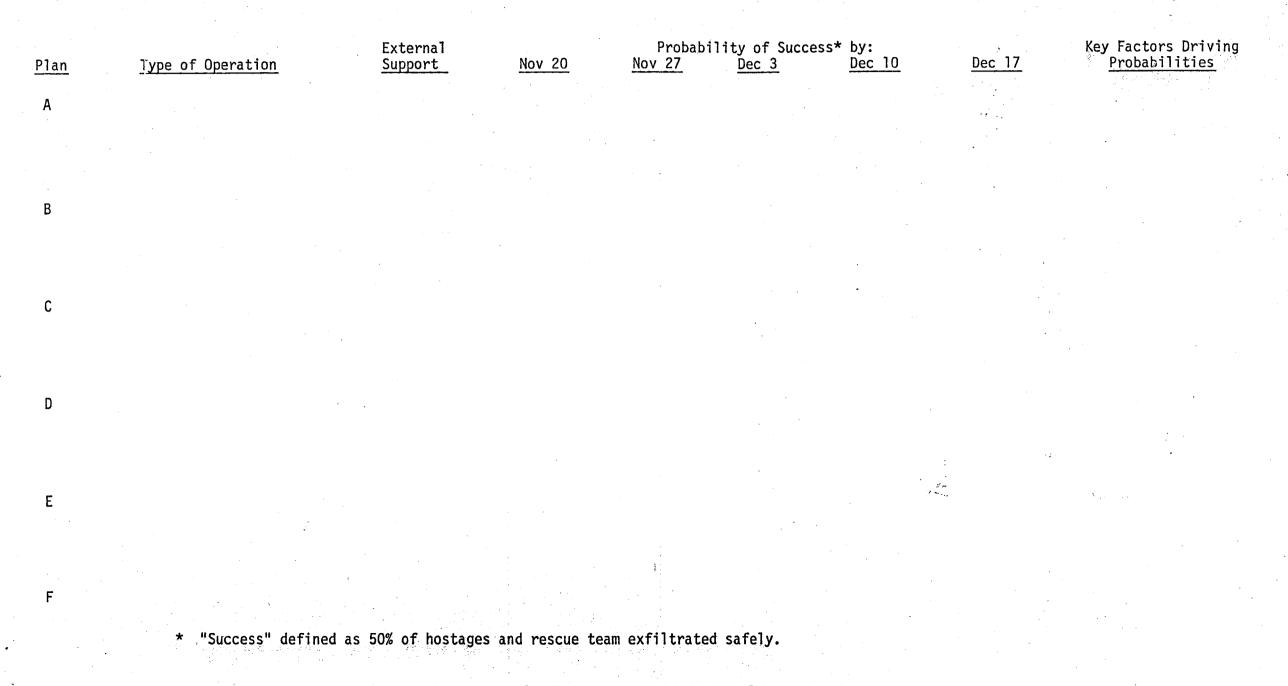
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RESCUE OPERATION OPTIONS



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RESCUE OPERATION OPTIONS

Plan

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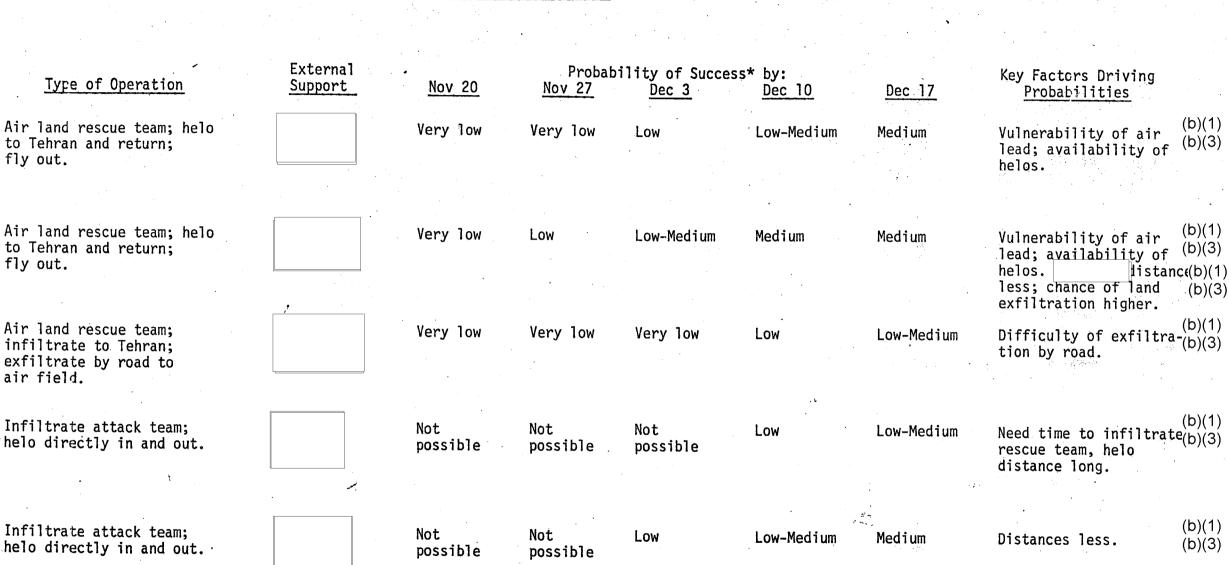
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Infiltrate attack team; helo directly in and out. * "Success" defined as 50% or nostages and rescue team exfiltrated safely. TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

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