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MEMORANDUM

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN 1849
2543

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

ACTION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

May 19, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER HK

SUBJECT:

Letter from George Meany on the
Kurdish Situation and on a Soviet Dissident

At Tabs B and C are two recent letters to you from George Meany.

The first urges US "good offices" in behalf of the Kurds in Iraq. The immediate cause of this letter appears to have been reports he had that Iran would force the Kurds to a final decision to stay in Iran or leave by April 1. We have checked with our Embassy in Tehran and we have nothing to support this particular allegation.

Recent reports on the situation regarding Kurds remaining in Iraq are more optimistic than we expected. Some recent first-hand British reports suggest that the Iraqis are making an effort to treat the Kurds humanely, that many are deciding to remain in Iraq, and that several thousand are returning to Iraq from Iran where they had fled immediately after the agreement. The Iran-Iraq agreement stipulated that the border would be closed on April 1st, and the Iraqis were demanding the surrender of Kurds inside Iraq by that time. But, Baghdad has extended this amnesty as well as the deadline for Kurds in Iran who might wish to return to Iraq.

There has not been much that we can do. The Iranians have ample relief programs and have not asked for US assistance. They are claiming they can handle the problem and the recent British reports indicate that, thus far, this is the case. They no longer want ICRC or other such aid and thus the question of US aid through international agencies now is academic. We are in close touch with the international relief groups to see if there is anything we can do.

The second letter calls to your attention the case of Vladimir Bukovsky, a young Soviet dissident imprisoned for political activities. Mr. Meany's

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letter states that Bukovsky's health is deteriorating and asks what might be done by the United States on his behalf.

At Tab A is a suggested letter replying to these messages.

RECOMMENDATION: That you sign the letter to Mr. Meany at Tab A.
(Paul Theis concurs in the text.)

MR T

Approve

Prefer staff signature