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LETTER DATED 26 FEBRUARY 1985 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL

With reference to the Iraqi letter contained in document S/16978, I have the honour to bring to the attention of Your Excellency the following points:

1. As the letter indicates, the Baathist régime of Iraq has made yet another attempt to take opportunistic advantage of the Security Council in order to divert the attention of the international body from the shameful crimes which it has been perpetrating, in contravention of all humanitarian principles and international conventions, against the prisoners of war (POWs) under its custody. The report of the Secretary-General's Mission, which is another document (S/16962), added to many others, indicating the moral bankruptcy and criminal nature of the Baathist régime of Iraq is indeed another internationally recognized record of defeat. Despite the fact that the achievement record of the Security Council regarding the Iraqi war of aggression does not seem to be a highly honourable one, we sincerely hope that the Council will not allow the Iraqi authorities to take advantage of it, once more. The politicization of the situation of the POWs and its exploitation for political purposes would not be beneficial to the predicament of our POWs in Iraq.

Since diverting the issue will only provide for unnecessary prolongation of their ordeal and sufferings, the international body must, in the interest of the POWs, seriously avoid any action which may divert the essentially humanitarian issue of the POWs to something else.

To orchestrate a meeting of the Security Council while trying to impose pomposity on it by encouraging certain participations is a malicious Iraqi scheme for contaminating the issue and prolonging the suffering of our POWs in Iraq, which must be countered by the Security Council itself.

The Security Council is not particularly renowned for its concern for humanitarian matters; its primary responsibility, constitutionally speaking, is the maintenance of international peace and security. Its previous contributions regarding the Iraqi war of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran proved to be less constructive and may be counter-productive. The Islamic Republic of

Iran has, therefore, counted on the good offices and particularly on the honest and unquestionable impartiality of the person of the Secretary-General, confidence in whom has been the major reason for us to take part in the processes which have so far taken place.

With regard to the foregoing, we hope that the Council will not permit itself to be further manipulated by the Iraqi Baathists. It would be better if the Secretary-General who has enjoyed the vote of confidence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Government of Iraq were left to carry out his successful initiatives without intervention and politicization.

2. In the above-mentioned letter, Iraq has ostentatiously claimed that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been operating in that country continuously and without interruption.

We should hear the comment of ICRC on this Iraqi claim. However, since a brief summary of the results of these intimate and uninterrupted co-operations is now reported to the international body in paragraphs 99, 111, 112, 117, 118, 120, 172, 138, 143 and 144 of the report (S/16962), and the international body in turn may congratulate both ICRC for its conscientious and continuous humanitarian efforts in Iraq, and Iraq for its uninterrupted and intimate co-operation with ICRC concurrent with which the crimes in the paragraphs just mentioned have taken place.

3. Although the presence of ICRC in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been intermittent, the humanitarian attitude of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the Iraqi POWs who call themselves the guests of the Islamic Republic of Iran has remained unchanged and constant.

Let us not forget that humanitarian values and services are not political or axiological inventions of ICRC nor are they its national or international monopoly to be safeguarded under the sole guardianship of ICRC. What is of the utmost importance is that the situation of the "guests" of the Islamic Republic of Iran differs from that of Iranian POWs, civilian POWs, and the thousands of civilians who were forcefully displaced by Iraq during its occupation of our cities.

4. In the said letter, Iraq has pointed out that the United Nations Mission visited only samples of detention places for prisoners in Iran. We have already declared, both in Teheran to the Mission and in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, our wish that the Mission should resume its task so as to be able to visit more camps and locations, simply because we too believe that due to shortage of time it has not been able to complete its mandate in Iran or in Iraq.

Pursuant to our letter No. 074 of 25 February 1985 to the Secretary-General, we reiterate our request that the Mission undertakes another visit so as to complete its investigations of the concerns of both parties.

5. As for the 75,000 Iranian civilians whom Iraq claims to be walking in freedom within Iraq, it is not necessary to add to the self-explanatory comments of the Mission contained in paragraphs 85, 89 and 90.

6. Iraq has announced its readiness to implement the recommendations of the United Nations Mission, although experience shows that one cannot rely on the commitment of the present rulers of Iraq. It is questionable that the Iraqi authorities who have so far committed themselves to the violations of all moral and humanitarian principles would all of a sudden decide to undertake an abrupt change in what they have been violating with peace of mind, and be ready for the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Mission.

We are of the opinion that the following objectives should be pursued in the investigation of the situation of the POWs.

- (a) The extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission;
- (b) An in-depth investigation and formulation of a practical framework for disclosing the fate of the missing persons;
- (c) Undertaking preparatory measures to effect the repatriation of willing civilian POWs and the civilians forcefully removed from Iran and presently detained in Iraq;
- (d) Establishment of practical guarantees from Iraq to terminate the subjugation of the Iranian POWs to the torture, physical and psychological ill-treatment;
- (e) Investigation into the situation of Mr. Tondguyan, Minister of Oil of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and his companions;
- (f) Examination of the treatment of the injured POWs by Iraq particularly in the war fronts;
- (g) The immediate release of all the injured and disabled POWs in view of purely humanitarian concerns;
- (h) Measures to improve the hygiene and general welfare conditions in camps;
- (i) Securing a guarantee for the freedom of religious practices by the POWs;
- (j) Uncovering the clandestine camps in Iraq;
- (k) Putting forward practical proposals for the repatriation of various groups of POWs.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has already expressed its appreciation of the work of the United Nations Mission. However, we wish to bring to Your Excellency's attention and that of the international community our concern that the Mission, compelled by circumstances to produce an even-handed account, has failed to incorporate within its report certain very important and positive aspects of the situation of the POW camps in the Islamic Republic of Iran. These circumstances might have influenced the Mission to insert some "editorial alterations", which do not present all the facts that could have otherwise been presented.

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A detailed response of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the entirety of the report will be subsequently transmitted to Your Excellency.

It would be highly appreciated if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Said RAJAIE KHORASSANI  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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