

Pollack, Kenneth M. (NESA)

From: WHSR
Sent: Friday, September 10, 1999 4:37 PM
To: Abercrombie-Winstanley, Gina K. (NESA); Benjamin, Daniel (TNT); Bolan, Christopher J. (VP); Camp, Donald A. (NESA); Clarke, Richard A. (TNT); Gordon-Hagerty, Lisa E. (TNT); Green, Charles A. (TNT); Katulis, Brian M. (NESA/INTERN); Malley, Robert (NESA); Montgomery, Mark C. (TNT); Orfini, Michael H. (VP); Pollack, Kenneth M. (NESA); Riedel, Bruce O. (NESA); Simon, Steven N. (TNT); Wechsler, William F. (TNT)
Subject: IRAN:ClintonUrgesIran

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IRAN: Clinton Urges Iran to Detain Hamas Leaders(Take 1 of 2) JN1009202399
 Kuwait AL-WATAN (Internet Version) in Arabic 10 Sep 99

Report by Dr. 'Ali Nuri Zadah in London]

[FBIS Translated Text] A source close to Iranian President Muhammad Khatami has revealed the contents of a letter that US President Bill Clinton sent to his Iranian counterpart toward the end of last month. Al-Watan has learned from the aforementioned Iranian source that Khatami had received the letter via an Iranian diplomat close to him. This envoy met and negotiated with a special envoy of President Clinton at the headquarters of the European desk at the United Nations. This meeting was within the framework of the talks that were held between an adviser to President Khatami with a US National Security Council official in Rome a few weeks after the visit of Khatami to Italy. According to the Iranian source, the Iranian diplomat in Geneva flew to Tehran in the middle of last August and put President Khatami in the picture of the negotiations that he had held with the US envoy.

After receiving new instructions on the expectations and demands of the Iranian leadership from the US Administration, the Iranian diplomat returned to his headquarters in Geneva. He stayed there for five days during which he met with the envoy of the US president three times and on the last occasion he received a letter from President Bill Clinton sealed with 'To His Excellency Mr. Muhammad Khatami' written on the envelope. On his second return to Tehran, the Iranian diplomat met with President Khatami in the presence of a number of his advisers, including his confidante and office director Muhammad 'Ali Abtahi [name as transliterated]. The contents of the Clinton letter was surprising to Khatami and exciting to the advisers of the Iranian president. According to the Iranian source that is close to the president, Khatami however calmly received the letter because he already knew about its contents.

The Iranian source said that Khatami had advice in the past received from a friendly Arab leader that focused on something close to what Clinton had written in his private letter. Al-Watan has also learned that in his letter the US president addressed Khatami in a cordial tone. He also used expressions that are regarded in political etiquette as words from a friend to a friend and not from the president of the most powerful country in the world to the president of a hostile country.

Bill Clinton expressed his respect for and his trust in Khatami and he also expressed the hope that Khatami and the reform trend would be able to steer Iran to safety. Clinton also noted that his administration had strongly resisted all the pressures from the anti-Iran groups inside

the Congress and the influential circles and which were aimed in recent years at pushing the US Administration into a confrontation with Iran.

In his letter, Clinton also mentioned that a number of officials, including Secretary of State Mrs. Madeleine Albright

and National Security Adviser Berger, knew of his decision to send the letter to the Iranian leadership. He said that this necessitated keeping the letter a secret to avoid the stirring of unwarranted fuss whether inside Congress, the US media, or within the radical rightwing circles in Iran. According to the Iranian source, Clinton enclosed with the letter documents and photographs of some terrorists and members of the Islamic revolutionary organizations and factions in the region who are living in Iran. They include two leaders of a terrorist organization that the CIA and FBI believe were responsible for the bombing of the headquarters of US military personnel in al-Dhahran.

The US satellites had taken some of those photographs of the houses and the places that are frequented by the terrorists, who are wanted by the United States, in Tehran, Qom, Mashhad, Ahvaz, and Khaj [names as transliterated]. In his letter, the US president urged his Iranian counterpart to extradite the terrorists whose hands are stained with the blood of innocent Americans. The US president also indicated that the extradition of those would lead to the removal of the obstacles that are hampering the restoration of the relations between the two countries to normalcy. The source, which is close to the Iranian president, told Al-Watan that Clinton explained to Khatami some aspects of his policy toward the Middle East and Arab-Israeli peace. Clinton also affirmed that he is capable within his powers to confront any move that might be aimed at intensifying the pressure and tightening the sanctions on Iran.

However, Clinton said that he has certain obligations toward the American people and Congress that he would not evade and that as an elected president by his people like Khatami he has to punish the sides, governments, and quarters that had offended the American people and killed their sons. Clinton also indicated that the issue of the presence in the Islamic Republic of Iran of some terrorists and hired agents, who have been proven by the investigations of having been involved in cowardly hostile acts against the interests and citizens of the United States, is sensitive. This is also an extremely important issue that could not be kept secret for a long time. Undoubtedly, if anything is published, albeit rumors, about this subject, the US Administration would come under increasing pressure to take decisive action against the country that is harboring the aforementioned terrorists.

I want to avert any misunderstanding and military measures against Iran, a country whose developments we have been following with particular interest since you assumed the presidency. Therefore, I beg of you to meet my request for extraditing to the United States the terrorists whose photographs, names, and addresses I have enclosed with my letter. According to the Iranian source, Clinton at the conclusion of his letter expressed his desire for handling the matter in complete secrecy and as soon as possible. Clinton also noted that the leadership of a friendly country to Iran is willing to act a mediator between the competent sides of both countries in order to agree on the details of the matter.

The source, who is close to President Khatami, revealed to Al-Watan that after meeting with his advisers, Khatami immediately went to the house of Revolution Leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i and briefed him on the contents of the Clinton letter. After a long discussion between the first and second men in the regime, Khamene'i voiced absolute and full support for any decision that Khatami might take in responding to the Clinton letter. Khamene'i

also invited Khatami to discuss the matter with the member of the supreme national security council in the presence of Ayatollah Muhammadi Kalbikani [name as transliterated], director of his office and principal adviser, and 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Discernment Council.

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IRAN: Clinton Urges Iran to Detain Hamas Leaders(Take 2 of 2 -- 215SEP10)

//the Discernment Council. JN1009202499

[FBIS Translated Text] An emergency meeting was held at the republican presidential office and it was attended by the presidents of the three authorities, Khatami, 'Ali Nateq-Nuri, and Mahmud Hashemi-Sharwidi [name as transliterated]. The ministers of foreign affairs, security, and interior, the secretary of the supreme national security council, four advisers to Khatami, Rafsanjani, and Muhammadi kalbikani, and the army chief of staff attended the meeting the following day after the meeting Khamene'i and Khatami. The Iranian source, who is close to the presidency, described the atmosphere of this meeting as tense and stormy. He noted that Rafsanjani and Nateq-Nuri adopted a position that opposed the proposal of Khatami for conducting negotiations with the United States through a country that is friendly to both Iran and the United States.

Rafsanjani demanded addressing a strongly worded letter to Clinton demanding the extradition to Iran the commander and a number of officers of the aircraft carrier Vincinne [name as transliterated]. They would stand trial for their responsibility for downing an Iranian airliner in the gulf waters in 1988 and for killing the innocent civilian passengers.

Iran would then extradite the wanted persons if they were present on its territory. According to the source, the meeting was not devoid of quarrels and violent verbal exchanges between one of the advisers of Khatami and Rafsanjani. The adviser of Khatami had accused Rafsanjani of putting his personal interests above the interests of the country.

The source quoted the adviser of Khatami as saying that Rafsanjani held secret contacts with the Reagan Administration.

Rafsanjani also instructed his adviser Hadi Najaf Abadi [names as transliterated] to receive Poindexter, the national security adviser of the Reagan Administration, Colonel Oliver North; the deputy chief of the Mosad; and senior US intelligence official at the Hilton (al-Istiqal) Hotel in Tehran. The adviser of Khatami was also quoted as saying that Rafsanjani today is opposing the proposal of Khatami. Khatami is proposing the expulsion of a number of terrorists whose continued stay in Iran would expose the national interests and perhaps the military and economic installations in the country to retaliatory operations by the United States. The dimensions and repercussions of such operations on the internal and international levels could not be predicted today. Al-Watan has also learned that Khatami rejected the recommendations

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of Rafsanjani and raised the issue once again with Khamene'i.

The two men agreed to entrust a committee made up of a number of ministers and their advisers to prepare a reply letter to the US president. The source, who is close to the presidency, explained that the presence of three Hamas [Islamic Resistance

Movement] Khalid Mish'al, Ibrahim Ghawshah, and Musa Abu-Marzuq, in Iran might bolster the negotiating position of Khatami with the US Administration if the contacts between the two countries continued.

Moreover, Khatami in the past few days received signals from Washington reflecting the desire of the US Administration of keeping the three Hamas leaders in Iran. This is because Washington believes that banning the travel of the three Hamas leaders to outside Iran, albeit for a short time, would contribute to a change in the climate in the self-rule and occupied Palestinian territories.

For the distance of those men from Israel and the self-rule region is in itself an influential factor in limiting the activity of the extremists in the Hamas Movement and paralyzing the anti-peace forces. This is especially true of the 'Izz -al-Din al-Qassam battalions whose members take their orders from the Hamas leadership in Jordan. Furthermore, Washington views with satisfaction the measures that have been taken by President Khatami regarding the Lebanese Hizballah movement, foremost of which is attracting hundreds of the fighters of this movement into the civilian institutions, universities, and religious schools in Iran.

In other words, Clinton is demanding that Khatami expel a few men, who are described by Washington as terrorists, from Iran and hand them over to the FBI. At the same time however, he wants Iran to embrace hundreds of those whom Washington also brands as terrorists.

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