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Original OA/ID Number: 2962				
Document ID: Ken Pollack to Samuel Berger re: Iranian Response, 09/15/99				
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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. memo	Ken Pollack to Samuel Berger re: Iranian Response on al-Khobar (1 page)	09/15/99	P1/b(1) RDS 2/16/2010
002. memo	Samuel Berger to POTUS re: Iranian Response on al-Khobar [partial] (2 pages)	09/15/99	P1/b(1), P5 RDS 3/12/2015
003. letter	Message to President Khatami from President Clinton (1 page)	ea. 08/99	P1/b(1) RDS 2/16/2010
004. letter	[Response from the Government of Iran to the Government of the United States] (1 page)	ea. 09/99	P1/b(1) RDS 2/16/2010
005. email	White House Situation Room to Gina Abercrombie Winstanley et al. re: Iran (3 pages)	09/10/99	P1/b(1) RDS 2/16/2010
006. email	White House Situation Room to Gina Abercrombie Winstanley et al. re: Iran (2 pages)	09/10/99	P1/b(1) RDS 2/16/2010

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
 National Security Council
 Ken Pollack (Near Eastern Asian Affairs)
 OA/Box Number: 2962

FOLDER TITLE:

Iran - U.S.

2007-1424-M

rs159

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

- C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
- PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

~~TOP SECRET~~

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20504

NOT FOR THE SYSTEM

September 15, 1999

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR SAMUEL R. BERGER

THROUGH: BRUCE RIEDEL *BR*

FROM: ~~KEN POLLACK~~ *KP*

SUBJECT: Iranian Response on al-Khobar

We have prepared a memo for the President regarding the Iranian response to our letter to Khatemi regarding al-Khobar.

The memo outlines the Iranian denial and the fact that the language makes clear that it was the product of the entire Iranian leadership, rather than just Khatemi. The memo also raises the question of how next to proceed on Khobar. If the Iranians make good on their threats to release the text of our letter we are going to face intense pressure to take action.

Concurrence by: Steve Simon *SS/S*

RECOMMENDATION

That you forward the attached memorandum to the President.

Attachments

- Tab I Memorandum to the President
- Tab A Iranian Response
- Tab B U.S. Message to President Khatemi
- Tab C Al-Watan Article

~~TOP SECRET~~

Reason: 1.5(c,d)
Declassify On: 9/15/09

DECLASSIFIED
PER E.O. 12958,
AS AMENDED

2007-1424-01
12/31/08 MJ

Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. memo	Samuel Berger to POTUS re: Iranian Response on al-Khobar [partial] (2 pages)	09/15/99	P1/b(1), P5

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National Security Council
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NOT FOR THE SYSTEM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: SAMUEL BERGER

SUBJECT: Iranian response on al-Khobar

E.O. 13526, 1.4(d)

Even more troubling, late last week, Iranian sources leaked the contents of our letter and the Iranian response to various media sources, including the Kuwaiti newspaper al-Watan. The Tehran Times has reported that Iran is considering publishing the entire text of our letter.

E.O. 13526, 1.4(d)

E.O. 13526, 1.4(d)

TOP SECRET

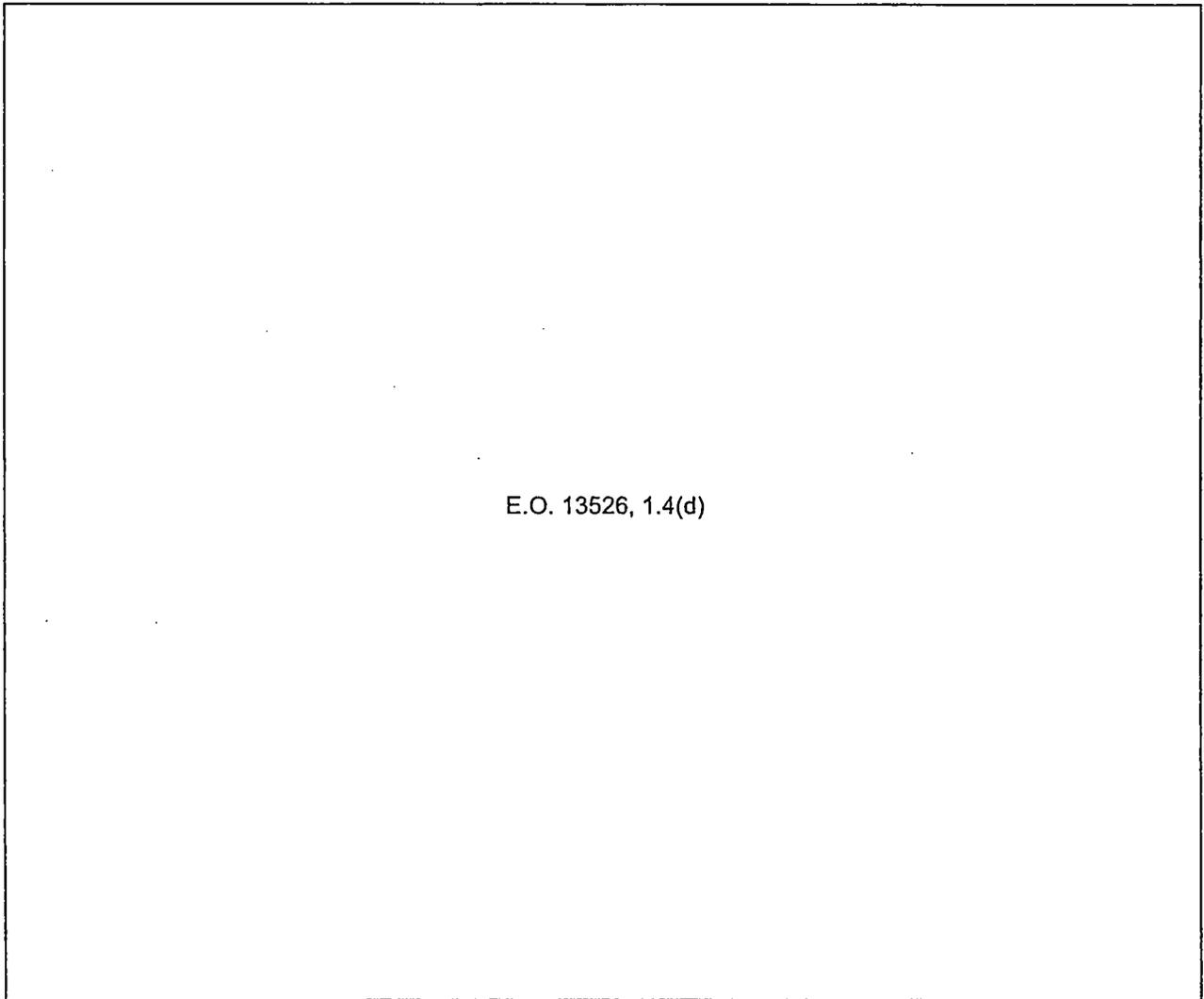
Reason: 1.5(c,d)

Declassify On: 9/15/09

cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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DECLASSIFIED IN PART
PER E. O. 13526



E.O. 13526, 1.4(d)

Tab C Al-Watan Article

MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT KHATAMI FROM PRESIDENT CLINTON:

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS RECEIVED CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT MEMBERS OF THE IRANIAN REVOLUTIONARY GUARD CORPS (IRGC), ALONG WITH MEMBERS OF LEBANESE AND SAUDI HIZBALLAH, WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE TERRORIST BOMBING IN SAUDI ARABIA OF THE KHOBAR TOWERS MILITARY RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX ON JUNE 25, 1996.

NINETEEN AMERICAN CITIZENS WERE KILLED. THE UNITED STATES VIEWS THIS IN THE GRAVEST TERMS. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE BOMBING OCCURRED PRIOR TO YOUR ELECTION. THOSE RESPONSIBLE, HOWEVER, HAVE YET TO FACE JUSTICE FOR THIS CRIME, AND THE IRGC MAY BE INVOLVED IN PLANNING FOR FURTHER TERRORIST ATTACKS AGAINST AMERICAN CITIZENS.

THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES THE POSITIVE STEPS YOU HAVE TAKEN IN SEEING THAT THOSE IRANIANS INVOLVED IN CORRUPTION, DRUGS, DOMESTIC TERRORISM AND INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES ARE CALLED TO ACCOUNT FOR THEIR ACTIONS. HOWEVER, THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE IRGC IN TERRORIST PLANNING AND ACTIVITY ABROAD REMAINS A CAUSE OF DEEP CONCERN TO US.

THE UNITED STATES HAS NO HOSTILE INTENTIONS TOWARDS THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND SEEKS GOOD RELATIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT, BUT WE CANNOT ALLOW THE MURDER OF U.S. CITIZENS TO PASS UNADDRESSED.

IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR CITIZENS, WHICH IS THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY GOVERNMENT, AND IN ORDER TO LAY A SOUND BASIS FOR BETTER RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES, WE NEED A CLEAR COMMITMENT FROM YOU THAT YOU WILL ENSURE AN END TO IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN TERRORIST ACTIVITY, PARTICULARLY THREATS TO AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND WILL BRING THOSE IN IRAN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBING TO JUSTICE EITHER IN IRAN OR BY EXTRADITING THEM TO SAUDI ARABIA.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

The allegations contained in the message attributed to President Clinton are inaccurate and unacceptable. The Islamic Republic of Iran views the recurrence of such unfounded allegations in the gravest terms.

Reliable investigations and serious scrutiny leave no doubt that this allegation, which has been repeated on several earlier occasions is solely based on inaccurate and biased information. No agency or entity connected with the Islamic Republic of Iran had any part, whatsoever, in the planning, logistics or execution of the said incident. Such allegations are fabricated solely by those whose illegitimate objectives are jeopardized by stability and security in the region.

The US Government—which has not only failed to prosecute or extradite the readily identifiable American citizens responsible for the downing of Iranian civilian airliner, but in fact has decorated them— is now seeking the trial or extradition of individuals totally unknown and without any connection whatsoever to the Islamic Republic of Iran. This behavior is unacceptable and must cease immediately.

It is also imperative that the US Government prevents further support of certain official US agencies and institutions for terrorist elements and organizations with irrefutable records of crimes against Iranian people. Any further assistance to these terrorists is indicative of inconsistency between US words and deeds, and shall remain a source of deep concern to the Iranian people and Government.

The Islamic Republic of Iran hears no hostile intentions towards Americans and the Iranian people not only harbor no enmity, but indeed have respect for the great American people. At the same time, they shall vigilantly and resolutely defend their independence, sovereignty and legitimate rights against any threat.

As its irreversible and fundamental strategy, the Government of Iran, backed by a strong national consensus, shall vigorously pursue the policy of détente and institutionalization of the rule of law. The Government is confident and there exists no threat from the Islamic Republic of Iran against any other government or their nationals.

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
CLASS: INTERNATIONAL
ORIG: FBIS
PREC: RUSH
TOR: 990910162605 F0010455

F0215
FBIS S 215SEP10
UNCLAS 5K

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 Kharj [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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MORE) 10 SEP 2022z FBIS NNNN
FBIS 09/10/99 16:19:00

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FBIS

216SEP10
UNCLAS 5K

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

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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