

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 7:56 AM
To: H
Subject: FW: Ashraf residents

-----Original Message-----

From: Fried, Daniel
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 7:46 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Wells, Alice G; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Goldberg, Philip S; Ricci, Anthony P
Subject: Re: Ashraf residents

P.S. Jim Jeffrey got from Fayyad today the reiterated oral assurance we sought: that the GOI would not arrest the "120" (Ashrafis with outstanding warrants) as long as the process is moving forward. They are not in a position to give a written assurance to this effect.

----- Original Message -----

From: Fried, Daniel
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 06:06 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Wells, Alice G; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Goldberg, Philip S
Subject: Re: Ashraf residents

Ah. ICRC reports that there have been no cases of persecution that they know of regarding the several hundred Ashrafis who have returned to Iran. ICRC follows up with many of them, though not all, and will not state flatly that there has been no problem, only that they know of none. So Ridge appears wrong on this.

I responded to Ridge's e-mail and am speaking again with Ridge this afternoon.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 05:59 AM
To: Fried, Daniel
Cc: Wells, Alice G; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Goldberg, Philip S
Subject: Re: Ashraf residents

Thanks - my key ques is that I understand we have no evid of persecution of folks who return to Iran - the passage I asked about suggests otherwise . . .

----- Original Message -----

From: Fried, Daniel
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 05:54 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Cc: Wells, Alice G; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Goldberg, Philip S
Subject: Re: Ashraf residents

Ridge is referring to MEK concerns that the GOI will arrest Camp Ashraf residents and send them to Iran. The MOU has explicit language that the Iraqis will not repatriate any Ashrafi to Iran against his/her will. But Ridge also wants Iraq to formally rescind all arrest warrants outstanding on Ashraf residents (up to 120, we understand, although the number of individuals with serious warrants is much lower). This is turning out to be the biggest remaining issue for the MEK.

The UN cannot ask Iraq to rescind warrants, but has asked for an informal understanding that Ashrafis will be safe and secure at all stages of the resettlement and at Camp Liberty. The Iraqis earlier told Kobler that they would "look the other way" with respect to the warrants if there were a deal. Jim Jeffrey is trying to strengthen that understanding with NSA Fayyad today.

Many other of Ridge's concerns from his e-mail have been addressed.

----- Original Message -----

From: Mills, Cheryl D
Sent: Tuesday, December 27, 2011 05:24 AM
To: Fried, Daniel
Cc: Wells, Alice G; Feltman, Jeffrey D; Goldberg, Philip S
Subject: Fw: Ashraf residents

What is the background for Ridge's reference below in his email (also below):

"I can imagine that the Iranian government and perhaps others covet the opportunity to use such a device to return them to Tehran for imprisonment, torture and murder as they have done to thousands of MEK members and supporters."

Cdm

----- Original Message -----

From: Toiv, Nora F
Sent: Sunday, December 25, 2011 08:49 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Fw: Ashraf residents

From tom ridge. Fyi

----- Original Message -----

From: tjrl [redacted] [mailto:tjrl [redacted]]
Sent: Sunday, December 25, 2011 06:53 PM
To: Toiv, Nora F; fried@state.gov <fried@state.gov>; Kobler [redacted] <Kobler [redacted]>
Subject: Ashraf residents

B6

Dear Secretary Clinton, Ambassador Fried and Ambassador Kobler,

As I extend greetings and best wishes to you and your families on this special day, I cannot help but think of the residents of Camp Ashraf and their families throughout the world. We can all imagine how they wait anxiously and pray daily for a peaceful resettlement of their loved ones through your good efforts and that of the UNHCR. While recognizing and appreciating the extraordinary effort undertaken during the past several weeks in this complex humanitarian matter and realizing that many challenges associated with a successful, peaceful resolution remain, I respectfully offer the following thoughts with the hope that you will consider them as you work to conclude a final memorandum.

The political chaos and violence in Iraq of the past few days have surely given you pause to rethink the proposed agreement regarding the safety, security and resettlement of the residents of Camp Ashraf.

Given the unstable political situation and the multiple, well organized and orchestrated bombings in and around Baghdad, the safety and security concerns raised by the MEK have undeniably become even more legitimate and severe. Hopefully, the need for additional security supporting and monitoring the transfer of the initial group of residents to Camp Liberty has been reassessed. Their request to take their vehicles and moveable property to Camp Liberty surely complicates the mission, but is certainly a reasonable precondition. The violence of recent days and the political volatility would seem to require additional support for the UN team, to include a US or UN "blue helmet" presence traveling with these convoys moving people to Camp Ashraf. I would hope this escalation of violence might also cause you to insist upon a permanent presence of US observers in Camp Liberty. Such an accommodation would certainly reduce the risks to those DoS employees or contractors who would otherwise be subject to greater risks given the frequency of their travel to Camp Liberty in their effort to maintain a robust, but non 24/7 presence. Permanent would mean safer.

The minimum guarantees requested by the leadership of the MEK arise from the promises made and written guarantees provided by the US when the MEK surrendered their means of self defense to the American military. I believe the loss of 3,400 lives with thousands more severely wounded also speak to a moral obligation the US has to keep that promise, if for no other reason, than America's credibility is a stake here as well.

Recent events in Iraq reflect the expanding influence of the Iranian government which must also be taken into account as the final agreement is designed.

If the security of the residents is of the highest priority, there are several other matters that cannot be ignored. First, it was the Iraqi police that attacked Camp Ashraf in 2009. They can't possibly be trusted to provide the proper, peaceful and supportive environment for the UNHCR to do his work at Camp Liberty. With the camp being surrounded by the military, there is no need for their presence inside the camp and deference to the Iraqi position is one more justification for a full time American presence as well. As we all know, historically the mere presence of UN observers has not served as an effective deterrent in other volatile situations around the world. At the very least, the residents of Camp Ashraf and the UNHCR should be separated by a fence and other barriers in Camp Liberty to assure their privacy (remember there are a 1,000 wpmen), a more productive environment for the interviews, and to minimize the possibility of a provocative incident instigated by the police to justify another attack against defenseless residents.

To facilitate the efforts to support the UNHCR to do his work, the MEK leadership seeks a few other accommodations. The siege, persecution and harassment of the residents that remain in Camp Ashraf should be lifted immediately and all warrants for arrest and or extradition must be annulled. I can imagine that the Iranian government and perhaps others covet the opportunity to use such a device to return them to Tehran for imprisonment, torture and murder as they have done to thousands of MEK members and supporters.

Hopefully, the US government, through its considerable financial aid to the Iraqi government can provide adequate compensation to the residents for their property that must remain in Camp Ashraf.

As the UNHCR has previously noted in correspondence to the US National Security Council, the delisting of the MEK is essential for them to do their job as effectively and as quickly as possible. I again appeal to the administration to do so.

Finally, we all realize that in spite of everyone's best efforts, this situation could end badly. At the end of the day, the country assuring the safety of these men and women wasn't Iran or Iraq, but the United States of America. To that end, a letter from President Obama to Prime Minister Maliki reminding him of the critical importance of working with the US and the UN to keep and honor America's promise is a necessary and appropriate addition to your untiring efforts. I would also encourage a strong public statement by the Secretary of State in support of this promise and the efforts of the UNHCR as well.

I appreciate your consideration of these thoughts. With respect and best wishes, Tom Ridge Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry