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origin: Secretary of State  
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destination:

header:

R 232151Z JAN 09  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO IRAN COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN  
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO  
AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
AMCONSUL MONTERREY  
USINT HAVANA

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S E C R E T STATE 006423

NOFORN

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TAGS: PINR, ETRD, MARR, PREL, PTER, SNAR, AR, BH, BL, BR, CI, CO, CS,  
CU, DR, EC, ES, GT, HA, HO, MX, NU, PA, PE, PM, UY, VE  
SUBJECT: (C) IRANIAN OUTREACH TO LATIN AMERICA  
(C-AL8-02836)

Classified By: SUZANNE MCCORMICK, DIR., INR/I. REASON: 1.4(C).

1. (S/NF) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS ASSESS THAT TEHRAN IS  
REACHING OUT TO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN ORDER TO REDUCE  
ITS DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION AND INCREASE TIES TO LEFTIST  
COUNTRIES IN THE REGION THAT TEHRAN PERCEIVES MAY SHARE ITS

ANTI-US AGENDA. PRESIDENT AHMADI-NEJAD APPEARS TO BE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THIS POLICY, AND HE HAS RECEIVED PERSONAL ASSISTANCE FROM VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ. IRAN'S TIES WITH VENEZUELA, WHICH INCLUDE MILITARY COOPERATION, ARE THE CLOSEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT. GIVEN THE HIGH-PROFILE IRAN-VENEZUELA RELATIONSHIP, HIZBALLAH-LINKED INDIVIDUALS PROBABLY SEE VENEZUELA AS A SAFEHAVEN WHERE THEY CAN CONDUCT FUNDRAISING AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES WITHOUT INTERFERENCE. OTHER POPULIST GOVERNMENTS LIKE BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, AND NICARAGUA HAVE ALSO SOUGHT TO CREATE CLOSER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC TIES WITH IRAN. IRAN HAS ESTABLISHED CULTURAL CENTERS IN 16 COUNTRIES OF THE REGION AND HAS EMBASSIES IN 10 COUNTRIES. AS TIME AND RESOURCES PERMIT AND AS APPLICABLE TO POST, ANALYSTS AND SENIOR LEVEL POLICYMAKERS WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS/QUESTIONS THAT YOU COLLECT DURING THE COURSE OF YOUR NORMAL MEETINGS/BUSINESS ACTIVITIES.

A. (U) FOR IRAN WATCHERS AND THE IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE (IRPO):

1) (S/NF) BEYOND IRAN'S OVERT POLICY TO INCREASE ITS DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE REGION, WE LACK INFORMATION ON TEHRAN'S STRATEGIC INTENTIONS. WHAT DOES TEHRAN SEE AS THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF IRAN'S OUTREACH TO LATIN AMERICA? HOW HIGH A PRIORITY IS LATIN AMERICA FOR IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY? DOES TEHRAN ENVISION BECOMING A KEY REGIONAL PLAYER IN LATIN AMERICA? WHERE DOES IRAN THINK IT IS IN TERMS OF DEVELOPING RELATIONS WITH THE REGION? WHAT SPECIFIC COUNTRIES, GROUPS, AND INDIVIDUALS DOES IRAN VIEW AS ENABLERS IN THE REGION? WHICH COUNTRIES APPEAR TO BE THE FOCUS OF IRANIAN EFFORTS TO MAKE POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, AND ECONOMIC INROADS IN LATIN AMERICA, AND WHERE IS IT PLANNING TO EXPAND? WHAT DOMESTIC, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, OR SOCIAL ISSUES MIGHT IMPACT ITS OUTREACH TO LATIN AMERICA?

2) (S/NF) WHO IN TEHRAN IS PUSHING IRAN'S OUTREACH TO LATIN AMERICA? IF IT IS AHMADI-NEJAD, WHAT IS THE SUPREME LEADER'S OPINION ON IRAN'S EFFORTS TO EXPAND ITS PRESENCE IN THE REGION? WHO IN TEHRAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING IRAN'S LATIN AMERICA POLICY--THE MFA, THE MOIS, THE IRGC? WHO WITHIN THESE ORGANIZATIONS IS INVOLVED IN FORMING IRAN'S POLICY ON LATIN AMERICA? HOW DO THESE ORGANIZATIONS COORDINATE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION?

3) (S/NF) DOES TEHRAN HAVE ANY INTENTION OF USING THE REGION AS A STAGING GROUND FOR POTENTIAL TERRORIST ATTACKS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH SURROGATES? ARE ANY PERSONS AFFILIATED WITH THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT MAKING CONTINGENCY PREPARATIONS TO CREATE NETWORKS FOR POTENTIAL TERRORIST ACTIVITIES LATER? IF SO, WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITIES?

4) (S/NF) DO TEHRAN AND HIZBALLAH SHARE SIMILAR OBJECTIVES IN THE REGION? IN WHAT WAYS DO THEY WORK TOGETHER/INDEPENDENTLY? WHAT, IF ANY, ARE IRAN'S INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES FOR STRENGTHENING HIZBALLAH OBJECTIVES IN LATIN AMERICA?

B. (U) FOR IRAN WATCHERS, IRPO AND LATIN AMERICAN POSTS:

1) (S/NF) WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF THE MOIS AND IRGC-QODS FORCE PRESENCE AND RECRUITMENT IN THE REGION? WHAT HAPPENS TO THE POTENTIAL RECRUITS AFTER THEIR TRAINING IN IRAN OR OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES? ARE IRANIAN OFFICIALS ATTEMPTING TO ACCESS US TERRITORY OR US PRIVATE FIRMS VIA LATIN AMERICA? DO THE IRANIAN CULTURAL CENTERS MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE CONVERTS? DO IRANIAN DIPLOMATIC OR MILITARY (I.E. IRGC-QODS FORCE) OFFICIALS IN THE REGION MAINTAIN ANY CONTACT WITH CONVERTS? HOW DOES TEHRAN PROVIDE MONEY TO THE ICCS?

2) (S/NF) TO WHAT EXTENT ARE IRAN AND ITS LATIN AMERICAN ALLIES COOPERATING AGAINST THE U.S.? IN WHAT WAYS HAS IRAN BEEN SUCCESSFUL AT FOSTERING GREATER ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE REGION? WHAT KINDS OF COVERT IRANIAN ACTIVITY HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN THE REGION? TO WHAT EXTENT DO IRAN AND LATIN AMERICA APPEAR TO SHARE INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION? HAS IRAN PROVIDED INTELLIGENCE TRAINING WITHIN THE REGION?

3) (S/NF) IS IRAN SUPPORTING TERRORIST ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA? IS IT RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPPORTING OR TRAINING ILLEGAL ARMED GROUPS IN COLOMBIA OR ELSEWHERE? IS IRAN FACILITATING LETHAL AID FOR ITS ALLIES OR WORKING TO ESTABLISH NEW TERRORIST INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE REGION?

4) (S/NF) HOW IS IRAN CIRCUMVENTING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS THROUGH ITS TIES IN THE REGION? WHAT KINDS OF COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE DEVELOPING BETWEEN IRAN AND THE REGION? DO JOINT BUSINESS VENTURES WITH IRAN TURN A PROFIT? WHICH COUNTRIES HAVE EXPANDED TRADE RELATIONSHIPS WITH IRAN? ARE THESE TRADE AGREEMENTS FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC GOODS OR SECTORS? IS THERE ANY INDICATION OF TRADE INCLUDING MATERIALS OR TECHNOLOGY WHICH COULD BE USED FOR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT BY IRAN?

5) (S/NF) HOW SUCCESSFUL HAVE TEHRAN'S EFFORTS TO EXERT INFLUENCE IN THE REGION THROUGH CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS PROSELYTIZATION BEEN? ARE THERE ANY INDICATIONS THAT THESE EFFORTS HAVE EFFECTIVELY FOSTERED EXTREMISM IN LATIN AMERICA? WHAT IS THE RELIGIOUS SHIA CONNECTION COUNTRY TO COUNTRY?

6) (S/NF) ARE THERE ANY INDICATIONS THAT IRANIANS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ECUADOR'S JUNE 2008 DECISION TO LIFT VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL VISITORS TRAVELING TO ECUADOR FOR LESS THAN 90 DAYS? WHAT STEPS ARE BOLIVIA OR OTHERS TAKING TO LIFT THEIR VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR IRAN?

7) (S/NF) IS IRAN PERCEIVED AS A LEGITIMATE PARTNER IN COUNTERNARCOTICS EFFORTS? DOES IRAN HAVE ANY PLANS TO EXTEND COUNTERNARCOTICS COOPERATION WITH ANY COUNTRIES IN THE REGION? HOW WILL THIS SORT OF OUTREACH PLAY INTO IRAN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE REST OF THE REGION, ESPECIALLY ITS KEY ALLIES? WHAT ADVANTAGES, PERHAPS BEYOND ACTUAL EFFECTIVENESS IN COUNTERING NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING, DO THESE COUNTRIES SEE IN STRENGTHENING CONNECTIONS TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC?

8) (S/NF) WHAT IS THE STATUS OF IRAN'S EXISTING MILITARY AGREEMENTS WITH LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES? WHAT STATE-TO-STATE MILITARY AGREEMENTS IS IRAN PURSUING IN LATIN AMERICA?

9) (S/NF) SPECIFICALLY, REGARDING IRAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH VENEZUELA, WHAT IS THE STATUS OF IRAN'S AGREEMENT WITH VENEZUELA TO OVERHAUL VENEZUELAN F-5 AIRCRAFT ENGINES, IRAN'S CONTRACT WITH VENEZUELA TO CONSTRUCT MUNITIONS PLANTS, AND THE AGREEMENT WITH VENEZUELA TO PROCURE IRANIAN UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (UAVS) AND LIGHT IRANIAN AIRCRAFT? WHAT IS VENEZUELA'S LEVEL OF SATISFACTION REGARDING THE QUALITY OF MILITARY GOODS AND TRAINING IT HAS RECEIVED FROM IRAN? IS THERE ANY INFORMATION INDICATING PDVSA PLANES ARE BEING USED TO TRANSPORT ARMS FROM TEHRAN TO DAMASCUS AS REPORTED IN OPEN SOURCES? IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CARACAS-BOUND IRANIAN CARGO SEIZED BY TURKEY? WHO OR WHAT ENTITY IN THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY OR CAVIM ORDERED IT AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE? ARE TEHRAN AND CARACAS ACTIVELY PURSUING ANY FORM OF NUCLEAR COOPERATION? AND IF SO, FOR WHAT PURPOSE? WHAT IS THE NATURE OF WEEKLY CONVIASA FLIGHTS BETWEEN CARACAS AND TEHRAN? DO WE HAVE ANY INFORMATION THAT THESE ARE BEING USED FOR TERRORISM PURPOSES?

C. (U) FOR LATIN AMERICAN POSTS:

1) (S/NF) WHAT DO LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WANT FROM IRAN? HOW ARE REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS, ESPECIALLY BUT NOT LIMITED TO VENEZUELA, BOLIVIA, ECUADOR, AND NICARAGUA, CATERING TO IRANIAN OVERTURES? TO WHAT EXTENT ARE LATIN AMERICAN LEADERS CONCERNED ABOUT IRAN'S HISTORIC TIES TO TERRORISM AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF CLOSER TIES TO TEHRAN ON THEIR OWN INTERNATIONAL STANDING?

2) (S/NF) WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IRANIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND THE HOST GOVERNMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA? WHAT SORT OF DIPLOMATIC COOPERATION DO LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS ENVISION WITH IRAN? WHAT ARE THE GOVERNMENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND DECISION-MAKING REGARDING GAINS VS COSTS/RISKS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH IRANIAN OFFICIALS? WHAT LIMITATIONS DO LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS PLACE ON COOPERATION WITH IRAN? HOW MUCH DO REGIONAL, US, OR WORLD REACTIONS FACTOR INTO LATIN AMERICAN POLICYMAKING TOWARDS IRAN? HOW ARE DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS REGARDING INVOLVEMENT WITH IRAN HANDLED?

3) (S/NF) WHAT IS THE STATUS OF AGREEMENTS OR BUSINESS VENTURES SIGNED BETWEEN IRANIAN ENTITIES AND LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS OR PRIVATE FIRMS? WHAT SORT OF FINANCIAL AID OR CASH TRANSFERS IS TEHRAN PROVIDING TO LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS? HOW MUCH AID IS DELIVERED AS OPPOSED TO PROMISED?

4) (S/NF) TO WHAT EXTENT ARE HOST GOVERNMENTS WILLING TO ASSIST THE U.S. AGAINST THE IRANIAN TARGET?

5) (C/NF) WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE SHIA MUSLIM COMMUNITY? WHICH ARE THE KNOWN HIZBALLAH "CLANS?"

6) (S/NF) WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES AT THE IRANIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, NGOS, AND IRANIAN CULTURAL CENTERS IN LATIN AMERICA AND HOW ARE THEY BEING USED TO EXPAND INFLUENCE? WHAT DO LATIN AMERICAN CONVERTS TO SHIA ISLAM, OR OTHER STUDENTS OF IRANIAN INDOCTRINATION, DO UPON RETURN TO THE REGION FROM

RELIGIOUS TRAINING IN IRAN? WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
IRANIAN EMBASSIES AND CULTURAL CENTERS AND KNOWN HIZBALLAH  
MEMBERS OR SUPPORTERS IN THE REGION?

7) (S/NF) IN ADDITION TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, HAS IRAN  
ESTABLISHED TIES WITH ANY NONGOVERNMENTAL GROUPS OR  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES? IF SO, WITH WHICH GROUPS/PEOPLES AND WHAT  
IS THE CURRENT STATE OF IRAN'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE  
GROUPS/PEOPLES? HAS IRAN PROVIDED THESE GROUPS/PEOPLES WITH  
MONEY OR OTHER SUPPORT? HAVE THE IRANIANS ESTABLISHED ANY  
TIES WITH OTHER RADICAL OR TERRORIST GROUPS, LIKE THE FARC?  
ARE IRANIAN OFFICIALS OR THEIR SURROGATES INVOLVED IN OTHER  
ILLICIT ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS NARCOTRAFFICKING?

2. (U) PLEASE CITE C-AL8-02836 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF  
REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.

CLINTON

=====CABLE ENDS=====