



## Azadegan Organization

August 24, 2006

Jean F. Duff, M.A., M.P.H.  
Managing Director of the Center  
The Center for Global Justice and Reconciliation

Subject: The Center's Invitation of Mr. Khatami

Dear Ms. Duff:

First of all, I must commend the CGJR for its admirable and worthy goals. Global justice would alleviate some of the pains of the downtrodden and help reduce, if not eradicate, poverty. And interfaith dialogue would certainly be a positive step in the direction of reconciliation and, God willing, world peace. I am certain that in order to achieve these results, CGJR seeks and engages the cooperation of honest and dedicated partners who sincerely share its goals and ideals. This is precisely the reason why my colleagues and I were shocked to learn that CGJR had extended the hand of friendship to Mr. Khatami, under whose 8 years tenure as the President of the Islamic Republic, state sponsored atrocities were committed on national and international scale.

Mr. Khatami has a likable smile, and unlike most of his cohorts, is pleasant and seemingly rational. But the gentle demeanor is but a facade hiding a dedicated fundamentalist Islamist who has always been true to his mentor's, i.e. Ayatollah Khomeini's brand of uncompromising fundamentalism and enmity with the "Great Satan". Mr. Khatami has been one of the stalwarts of the Islamic Republic from its inception.

It is universally known that the former President has declared himself a proponent of "dialogue between civilizations". But it is not commonly known that in a number of speeches and pronouncements he has consistently characterized Israel as "a cancer on the body of nations", and on numerous occasions when officiating at Friday prayers in Tehran, he has led the congregation with slogans of death to the Great Satan.

Mr. Khatami's first high post was as the Minister of Culture and Guidance in 1984. His greatest achievement at the time was the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon. His lesser achievement was the brutal enforcement of Islamic attire and public behavior. Flogging of young girls and women for wearing lipstick or not covering their hair adequately became commonplace. And men were accosted for wearing short sleeved shirts.

As the President of the Islamic Republic, by all documented accounts, his tenure was rife with corruption, brutal suppression, illegal incarceration, torture and murder of students and other dissidents, murder of prominent members of the opposition both

inside Iran and abroad, continued plunder of national wealth, rampant increase in drug use by the youth, and prostitution becoming a thriving export industry. But of course, there were some achievements as well: The secret development of Iran's nuclear capabilities, the development of short and medium range missile systems in Iran, and the financing of international terrorist organizations.

Without a doubt, CGJR believes fervently in basic human rights, and abhors atrocities. The question is how can CGJR explain its invitation to a person who has been an active part of the leadership of the murderous regime for almost 30 years? Of course we say yes to dialogue, but with whom and at what cost? People should be held accountable for their deeds. Of the atrocities committed on Mr. Khatami's watch, the following actually made international headlines. Barely one year into his first term, a series of government sanctioned murders, that came to known as the "chain murders", were carried out both within Iran and in Europe:

--The leader of the Iranian Nation's Party, Dariush Forouhar, a prominent and well respected opposition leader, and his wife Parvaneh, a well known author, were butchered to death in their apartment. The government's own investigation identified the assassins as members of the regime's intelligence service. They were detained to quell the outcry, and released when things quieted down.

--A number of Kurdish-Iranian opposition leaders, among them Mr. Abdolrahman Ghasemlou, were assassinated in Germany. Investigation by German authorities linked the killings to agents of the Islamic Republic.

--Mr. Khatami talks of 'openness' and 'dialogue', but when the Tehran University students rose to demand openness, fairness and freedom, Mr. Khatami quashed their nascent aspirations with an iron fist. Mr. Batebi, one of the students arrested at the time is still languishing in jail, nearing death because of a hunger strike protesting the dire conditions of his incarceration.

--Another incident that caught the attention of the international press, albeit for a brief moment, was the murder of a Canadian-Iranian photo journalist in 2003. Zahra Kazemi was visiting her aged mother in Iran and at the same time researching women's conditions there. She was apprehended, tortured, and beaten to death. Once again one of the regime's 'intelligence' officers was arrested, tried and exonerated!

All cases recounted here are documented. In fact, a Google search will pull up most of these reports. Azadegan has always advocated peaceful change for Iran, but sincerely believes that dialogue should not translate to appeasement of a vile, murderous and corrupt regime. Mr. Khatami is not a private individual, but is still very much a part of the nomenclature and is an active member of the Expediency Council.

We respectfully recommend that in the spirit of supporting the Iranian people's struggle for freedom, and affirmation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the CGJR withdraw its invitation to Mr. Khatami, the official public relations representatives of the Islamic Republic.

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