

~~SECRET~~

March 22, 2006

TO: GEN John Abizaid

CC: Gen Pete Pace
Eric Edelman

FROM: Donald Rumsfeld *DR*

SUBJECT: Note on Iran

John, thanks for your note about Iran -- it was helpful. We will get in touch with Matthew Gould.

Attach. 3/21/06 CENTCOM memo to SD re: Conversation with Matthew Gould

DHR.dh
032206-01

.....



Certified As Unclassified
January 9 2009
IAW EO 12958, as amended
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

~~SECRET~~

CCCC

March 21, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Conversation with Matthew Gould

Mr. Secretary,

Matthew Gould is the former UK Charge d'Affairs in Tehran from 2003 until recently. He currently works in the UK Embassy in DC and is a keen observer of the Iranians. We had him at the HQ today. Some insights from him:

- Iranians are extremely unhappy with the regime, but it is extremely capable of protecting itself.
- Doesn't see regime getting in real trouble with its people for at least 10 more years
- Iranians (Persians) are extremely nationalistic, more so than any other culture in the region. Arab-Persian cultural divide is very significant.
- Despite many ethnic groups, non-Persian "nationality" issue not likely to become divisive or even threatening to the Persian ruling class.
- Senior leaders deal with each other with such opaqueness and nuance that the regime very frequently finds itself dealing with unintended consequences.
- Ahmadinejad really does believe in the return of the 12th Imam. While he is not a mullah, he is a fervent ideological supporter of the revolution.



~~SECRET // NOFORN~~

~~Eyes Only~~

- Nuclear weapon issue for Iran is a matter of regime survival. Achieving nuclear weaponry will give the government, in their view, considerable freedom of action against external threats.

Lots to talk about with Matthew Gould. If you get 30 minutes, you might want to talk to him about the Iranians.

V/R

John

CC: CJCS



~~SECRET // NOFORN~~

~~Eyes Only~~