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Bani Sadr fingers leadership in murders

Former Iranian President Abolhassan Banisadr has accused the top leadership of the Islamic Republic of having directly approved the murder of four Kurdish dissidents in Berlin in October 1992.

Speaking before a heavily-guarded Berlin court room last month, the former President said he had three separate sources who had provided him with detailed accounts of how the murder plots were planned and approved.

He told the court that the Islamic Republic has established a "Council for Special Operations," directly controlled by the office of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamene'i. "This council decides on who becomes a death candidate," the former President said. The most important member of the Council was Minister of Information and Security, Ali Fallahian. The German court issued an international arrest warrant for Fallahian in connection with the 1992 Berlin slayings earlier this year.

Once the assassination targets have been designated, he said, they are handed off to a four-person committee that meets in Tehran's Firouzeh Palace, which works out the operational details of the attack. On this committee sit representatives of Intelligence Minister Ali Fallahian, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and Supreme Leader Ali Khamene'i, "as well as a Pasdaran General named Zolqadr," Banisadr said. Banisadr appears to have been referring to IRGC Chief of Staff Brig. General Mohammad Bagher Zolqadr, an outspoken opponent of "liberals" within the Iranian political structure.

The operational plans must then be approved by Khamene'i and Rafsanjani before they can be implemented. "Without their agreement, carrying out the attack was just as unlikely as it would have been without massive support from the state, for example through passports, plane tickets, money, special telephone numbers," the former President added.

In an interview with a Berlin radio station on Aug. 24th, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said "Of course we must evaluate what Banisadr said in the trial. And of course this is something which must be of significance to the type of relations we have with Iran. [However,] I don't want to draw any hasty conclusions or make premature judgments in any form whatsoever, above all because I can not and do not want to interfere in the trial."

Banisadr told AP he was anxious to testify because he was afraid Germany had struck a deal with Iran to free the defendants if they were convicted, an allegation that Bonn immediately rejected.

"I have proof of this," Banisadr said. "I have to ask if (German Foreign Minister Klaus) Kinkel is not the attorney for Rafsanjani."

Banisadr was scheduled to resume his testimony on September 5. So far, his revelations have received scant attention in the U.S. press.

As a general rule, Banisadr said, the strike team travels by boat to Dubai, and from there by plane to the place of the attack, returning the same way when possible. "If problems occur, the Iranian embassy organizes the return trip by providing the attackers with diplomatic immunity," as happened with the 1989 slaying of Kurdish leader Abdulrahman Qassemelou in Vienna.

Banisadr claimed the assassins were trained in special camps, disguised as ordinary villages, located in Iran and Sudan. "Some of the attacks are assigned to terrorist groups abroad - to the Lebanese Hezbollah, for example. The Mujahidin from Afghanistan are also available at any time," he said. "Many of them are now acting as terrorist mercenaries on Iranian orders."

Iranian anger: Iran reacted angrily to Banisadr's testimony in a series of measures announced on Aug. 28th, aimed at pressuring the German government to disqualify him as a witness.

Tehran's ambassador to Bonn, Hussein Mossavian, said the Islamic Republic was filing an 8 billion DM (\$5.4 billion) lawsuit against Siemens, for breach of contract in the Busheir nuclear power plant deal - a curious reaction, seeing as an international court had already arbitrated the case in Iran's favor, but at a much lower level.

In Tehran, the English language Iran News urged the government in an editorial to sue Germany for having helped Iraq build chemical weapons used against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war. "Germany's highest officials were responsible for approving the export of chemicals (for chemical arms) to Iraq and should be answerable for their very deliberate, terrorist and abhorrent decisions," the paper said. "Iran should seriously pursue this matter... and give due consideration to filing suit against high German officials who, through their conscious and anti-human decision, caused the agonizing death of thousands of Iranians."

(Ironically, American Gulf War veterans have filed suit against several German companies for precisely the same thing, alleging that chemical weapons agents released during Desert Storm contributed to causing Persian Gulf War syndrome).

Iran also filed a motion with the German government to extradite Banisadr to Iran, on charges he hijacked the military aircraft which flew him to exile from Iran in July 1981.

Finally, in an Aug. 28 interview with Iran daily, Intelligence Minister Ali Fallahian warned Germany that the Berlin trial could hurt German interests in the Islamic Republic.

"This trial is politically influenced by German pressure groups and by the Zionist regime (Israel) and has no value in our view... The Germans are smarter than to believe we cannot see these problems," Fallahian said. "We did not expect Germany to allow the trial to be diverted and this would not be without effects on our relations with Germany and German interests in Iran."

DOUBLE WIRING OF THE FORUHAR RESIDENCE LED TO THE MURDERERS

By Safa Haeri

Exclusive to the Iran Press Service

PARIS 2ND FEB. (IPS) The double wire tapping of the residence of the murdered Foruhar couple by different, competing sections of the Information (Intelligence) Ministry led to the identification of the killers and the subsequent humiliating admission by the Islamic regime of Iran that itself is the master killer of Iranian opponents, according to well informed sources and investigations run by the Iran Press Service.

During a press conference held in Bonn, Ms Parastou and Mr Arash Foruhar, the daughter and the son of the assassinated leaders of the Iranian People's Party (IPP) disclosed that the residence of their parents had been wire tapped by the Information Ministry and that all the comings and goings to the house, including all the persons who would call on their parents were filmed and photographed.

"Not to our surprise, we discovered a lot of bugging devices all over the house proving that the Intelligence and security agencies of the Islamic Republic were well aware of all our parents movements in the house. Therefore, there is no doubt that they know who the assassins are", they told Iranian and foreign journalists.

But what they ignored was that the bugging devices were planted not by one but two - if not more - competing departments belonging to the same Information Ministry.

So, when, on that fatal evening of 21st of November that some Ministry's agents broke in the house of the Foruhars, introduced by an unidentified "Trojan Horse" and stabbed Mrs Parvaneh with 24 stroke of the knife and her husband with 11, the whole event was taped and dully recorded by other agents back in the Ministry.

Once their dirty work accomplished, the killers call the hojatoleslam **Mohammad Pourmohammadi**, the Deputy Information Minister in charge of the elimination of the Foruhars to inform him that the mission had been accomplished and the two "heretics and apostates had been send to hell", one source with access to the tapes told the IPS.

One copy of the incriminated tapes that contained all the details of the murder of the Foruhars, the very harsh and most vulgar words used by the killers against the ayatollah Mohammad Khatami and a "confession" made by one of them that he also was on the murder list was given to the president by agents sympathetic to him, IPS sources added.

Khatami had then the tapes played back for the **ayatollah Ali Khameneh'i**, the leader of the Islamic regime widely believed to be one of the senior cleric who would issue the *fatwas*, or religious orders for the elimination of the dissidents.

That explains both the rather rapid conclusion of the Presidential Investigation Committee (PIC) and the subsequent extraordinary admission by the Information Ministry that the assassinations of Mr. Foruhar and his wife, Mr. Mohammad Mokhtari and Mr. Mohammad Ja'far Pouyandeh, both of them translators and activists writers were all done by agents of the Ministry.

But following an assault by the conservatives on the president, including "revelations" made to the radical daily "*Keyhan*" and then to the conservative-controlled television by a certain **hojatoleslam Hosseinian** that the killers were pro-Khatami people, the PIC also stepped back, said that the murderers had acted in "closed" circuit without any superior cadres from the Ministry being involved.

Although his declarations stirred outrage among the moderate press and the public opinion, he was followed in that by the military prosecutor, the hojatoleslam Mohammad Niazi, confirming that the murders were not "organised" and that the participation of "foreign hands" could not be ruled out.

But the man who has urged the leader to stand up to both the president and the public's pressures for the identification of all those involved in the assassinations, from those who ordered to those who killed and those who planned the operations, stopped the investigations to be continued and to have ordered the release of the killers is the hojatoleslam Ebrahim Mirhejazi, an all powerful cleric in charge of the security of the office and the residence of the ayatollah Ali Khameneh'i and also considered to be his "guru", or "mentor".

In a more recent statement, **general Yahya Rahim Safavi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Guards** went one step further and accused for the first time "infiltrators" in the Information Ministry whom he did not identified to be the killers.

Some of the information gathered by IPS is confirmed by other reliable sources, including the first elected **Iranian president Abolhasan Banisadr**.

In a communiqué released from his office in the historic city of Versailles, near Paris, Mr. Banisadr revealed the names and the ranks of eleven officials at both the Information Ministry and the Revolutionary Guards involved in the latest round of assassinations of political and intellectual dissidents.

Some of the names in the list released by Mr. Banisadr matches those obtained by the IPS and shows, as he has pointed out, that contrary to the declarations of Mr. Niazi, the killers are high ranking officers belonging to the Information Ministry (IM) and the Revolutionary Guard's (RG) "Special Units".

Here are the names and ranks of the persons named by Mr. Banisadr and completed by our own information put into brackets.

++ (Valiollah) Pourmohammadi, Deputy Information Minister in charge of External Affairs;

++ (Mohammad) Mousavi, General Director of the Information Ministry, in charge of political organisations with "islamic-Marxist" ideology. He has played a leading role in the latest assassinations. He had been the General Director of the Intelligence and security services in the Fars Province (South of Iran);

++ (Morteza) Sadeghi, General Director of the IM in charge of leftist organisations;

++ Mr. Hossein Shariatmadari, Editor of the (radical) daily "*Keyhan*" (that is controlled by the IM. Appointed as the Editor of the paper, Mr. Shariatmadari is a high-ranking officer of the IM and the RG's Intelligence Department);

++ Mr. Hossein Lajevardi, the son of (Asadollah) Lajevardi, former Director of the infamous Evin Prison, nicknamed "the Butcher". Mr. Lajevardi was assassinated some months ago in his shop in the Bazaar of Tehran);

++ RG Brigadier-General (Mohammad) Zolqadr, Commander of the RG's Special Units and the (Acting Commander-in-Chief of the RG);

++ Mr. Abdollahi, an aide to general Zolqadr (he had been working at the IM's Bonn branch in the Iranian Embassy in Germany before being expelled by the German authorities in the aftermath of the Mykonos Trial in April 1997);

++ (Hojatoleslam Mohammad) Kharrazi, Head of the Information Minister's Office;

++ Hojatoleslam Nureddin Shirazi;

++ Hojatoleslam (Mohammad) Namazi, leader's special Representative at the IM;

++ (Hojatoleslam Ebrahim Mir) Hejazi, in charge of the security of the office and the residence of the leader (considered as the guru of Mr. Khameneh'i)

++ (Hojatoleslam) Ali Fallahian, (former Information Minister, presently acting as the leader's special adviser on security and intelligence affairs). He is under an international warrant issued by German authorities.

According to Mr. Banisadr, one of the reason that led the senior leaders of the Islamic Republic to agree to the cover-up of the murders case was the consideration that in case the Information Ministry comes under the control of the so-called "evolved-left", many highly confidential documents and secrets, including all previous assassinations operated both in Iran and outside would fall in their hands, thus endangering the survival of the regime inside and discredited it outside.

"Taking into account the personalities involved in the assassinations, the direct implication of the leader become evident", the former president accuses. ENDS 19 DARIUSH&PARVANEH 329924