

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 2:37 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Kerry: "No plans" to go to Iran

From: Toiv, Nora F
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2009 12:45 PM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Kerry: "No plans" to go to Iran

Kerry: "No plans" to go to Iran

Yesterday, Iranian media reported comments from the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman that the Iranian parliament was considering an alleged request filed by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) to travel to Iran.

Today, Fred Jones, spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told POLITICO that "John Kerry has no plans to visit Iran."

Jones added that "We never discuss the Senator's private or diplomatic conversations."

Asked if that implied that Kerry was exploring the possibility of meeting Iranian officials elsewhere in a third country, Jones said. no. "There are no plans to meet with any Iranian officials abroad."

Interestingly, for the past week, Kerry's office has used variations of "unaware of plans" or "no plans" to discuss these Iran meetings rumors -- rather than "no."

And at face value, Jones' statement today does not seem to be the kind of flat denial that Kerry had filed such a request, but doesn't seem to indicate such a meeting is imminent. It also does not seem to close the door that such plans have been or are being or will be explored.

Has occurred to me that having a non administration lawmaker showing willingness to keep a channel open with Tehran could serve several purposes, in that it's not the administration offering to send an envoy. It could also distract a lot of attention away as a kind of decoy from other conversations that might or might not be going on.