

RELEASE IN PART B5,B6

From: McHale, Judith A <McHaleJA@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2010 10:07 AM
To: H
Cc: Mills, Cheryl D; Sullivan, Jacob J; Reines, Philippe I
Subject: FW: (AFP) Pastor says may halt Koran burning if White House asks

As we just discussed, below is the quote I referred to from pastor in Florida.

Let me know if you need me to do anything else.

jm

From: Hensman, Chris D
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2010 10:02 AM
To: McHale, Judith A
Subject: (AFP) Pastor says may halt Koran burning if White House asks

Pastor says may halt Koran burning if White House asks

(AFP) – 26 minutes ago

WASHINGTON — A Florida pastor at the center of a global storm over plans to burn hundreds of Korans said Thursday he would likely call off the event if asked to by the Obama administration.

Terry Jones, head of the Dove World Outreach Center, told USA Today he had not been contacted by the White House, Pentagon or State Department about Saturday's planned ceremony on the anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

If he were "that would cause us definitely to think it over. That's what we're doing now. I don't think a call from them is something we would ignore," Jones told the daily.

US President Barack Obama on Thursday warned the burning ceremony would be a "recruitment bonanza" for Al-Qaeda, which carried out the 2001 attacks on the United States in which almost 3,000 people died.

"You know, you could have serious violence in places like Pakistan or Afghanistan," Obama told ABC television in an interview.

"This could increase the recruitment of individuals who'd be willing to blow themselves up in American cities, or European cities," he said.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has also condemned the plans as "disgraceful," while military leaders have warned it could endanger troops serving in Afghanistan and Pakistan, both Muslim countries.

The gun-toting pastor said the aim of Saturday's three-hour evening event in Gainesville, Florida, was to send a message to radical Islamists that "it is possibly time for us in a new way to actually stand up and confront terrorism."

But his tiny church of about 50 members has triggered fears that a violent wave of Islamic anger could ripple around the globe, similar to past controversies centered around Islam.

Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard, who sparked Muslim outrage in 2006 with a drawing of the Prophet Mohammed, told German media that satire like his was "provocation. Provocation should lead to reflection, to enlightenment, to knowledge. In this case, this is really not the case."

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