**07NEWDELHI1509**

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| **Reference ID** | **Created** | **Released** | **Classification** | **Origin** |
| 07NEWDELHI1509 | 2007-03-29 14:34 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy New Delhi |

VZCZCXRO9031 OO RUEHBC RUEHCN RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHGH RUEHKUK RUEHVC DE RUEHNE #1509/01 0881434 ZNY CCCCC ZZH O 291434Z MAR 07 FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4357 INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 0789 RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA 0898 RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5834 RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 0830 RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 9336 RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 9458 RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0628 RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2674 RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 4211 RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0037 RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3203 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1822 RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 1012 RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4694 RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9656 RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 7253 RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 9295 RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 3798 RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 8830 RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 4368 RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4217 RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 6604 RHMFISS/HQ USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

 C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NEW DELHI 001509 SIPDIS SIPDIS E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/29/2017 TAGS: PREL PGOV KIRF KNNP IR BT KZ SUBJECT: DELHI DIARY, MARCH 8-29 NEW DELHI 00001509 001.2 OF 004 Classified By: PolCouns Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B,D) [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par1) 1. (U) Below is a compilation of Political highlights from Embassy New Delhi for March 8-29, 2007 that did not feature in our other reporting. Former Iranian President Gets a Warm Reception in India ------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par2) 2. (SBU) The mostly Indian audience at the India Today annual "conclave" March 23 heavily applauded former Iranian President Hujjat-ul-Islam Seyed Mohammad Khatami who said, "There is no need to refer the Iranian nuclear program to the UN Security Council. Without threat or use of power, we can solve this problem in a peaceful manner." Responding to questions from the audience, Khatami noted that Iran's oil and gas reserves were diminishing, and stressed that Iran had a "legitimate right" to a peaceful nuclear program. "We can't rely on powers who have this fuel - they use it to control us," Khatami told the crowd, many of whom Poloff observed nodding in agreement. Khatami stressed that Iran was concerned about the proliferation of nuclear arms and stated that the Middle East should be a "nuclear free zone." He declared that it was "unfortunate that the American way of solving problems is unilateral," claiming that "using power to solve the problem won't work," and adding that the "sensitive" Middle East region was "unable to suffer another crisis." He complained that the U. S. was "supporting dictatorial regimes" in the region, and that it supported other nuclear powers. "Negotiations don't require pre-conditions," he underlined, "but only goodwill." When asked if Iran and Pakistan were collaborating on the production of nuclear weapons, he responded that Iran did not have any special cooperation with any country. He said Iran would take advantage of nuclear scientific technology from others on a "legitimate scale." "I give you a guarantee that (Iran's nuclear program) will never be a threat to any other country, and Iran will never have nuclear weapons," he said, reiterating that the Middle East should be a nuclear free zone and that Iran was for a nuclear free world. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par3) 3. (U) Prime Minister Singh continued the warm reception for former President Khatami during his lunchtime speech at the same event. Praising Khatami as &a great citizen of the world, a great leader of the Iranian people, and a great friend of India,8 he said it was &a source of joy8 that Khatami had been part of the event,s initial proceedings. Singh quoted from a speech Khatami gave in September 2000, in which Khatami said that dialogue among civilizations is a means to &attain empathy and compassion.8 Singh added that India, as a multi-cultural society, appreciated this kind of dialogue more than anyone else. Bhutan: Indian Paramilitary Sets up Camp on Bhutanese Border ------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par4) 4. (C) The Sashrastra Seema Bal (SSB, an official Government of India (GOI) paramilitary border force), that polices the NEW DELHI 00001509 002.2 OF 004 Indo-Nepal/Bhutan border, is setting up 132 new security posts on the Indo-Bhutanese border, to prevent ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom) insurgents and Maoists from sneaking into the country, said Tilak Kak, Director General of SSB, speaking to the Calcutta Telegraph. Kak told press that 60 outposts are already in place, and the remainder should be completed by March 2008. This is despite the fact that GOI officials, such as Ministry of External Affairs Director (North) Sudhakar Dalela, and official spokespersons in statements to the Lok Sabha, continue to parrot the Royal Government of Bhutan that there are no "specific reports8 of ULFA cadres establishing camps inside Bhutan. ...and First Bhutanese Political Parties Formed ------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par5) 5. (C) On March 24, the Bhutanese national newspaper "Kuensel" reported the creation of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the Bhutan People United Party, (BPUP) without elaborating on their platforms. The PDP coordinator quoted in the media did not give the name of the party chief, who is a serving minister in the National Assembly, but said that the party has retired government officials, businessmen and community leaders as its members. The BPUP has members including four serving Royal Advisory Councilors and 73 &chimis8 (people,s representative to the National Assembly.) Under the new election law of Bhutan, civil servants must resign before taking part in electoral politics, or else be liable for disciplinary action. The election commission has set July as the deadline for registration of parties for the 2008 polls. "We expect at least three credible political parties to come forward," chief election commissioner Dasho Kunzang Wangdi said. Anti-Conversion Bill Signed Under the Guise of "Freedom of Religion" ----- [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par6) 6. (SBU) On February 19, the governor signed into law the Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. Despite its misleading title, this is an anti-conversion bill identical to what BJP governments have passed in Rajasthan and Gujarat. A similar law was passed in Tamil Nadu before it was repealed by ordinance. The Hindustan Times suggests that the Himachal Congress Party, which faces elections next March, is abandoning secularism and pandering to Hindu votes by borrowing BJP policies. While, the Himachal Pradesh (HP) bill is not new (see New Delhi 80), news about a letter from Archbishop Concessao to Sonia Gandhi asking the Congress party to intervene is a recent development. Gandhi, however, has ignored the letter. As a result, Hindustan Times reports that Indian Christians are beginning to feel doubly betrayed. First, they feel disappointed by Congress, which usually wraps itself in pious paeans to secularism. Second, they feel additionally insecure by being ignored by Sonia Gandhi, who was born Catholic in a Catholic country, and her failure to respond or acknowledge the pleas of Indian Christians. The Hindustan Times goes on to suggest what Congress critics NEW DELHI 00001509 003.2 OF 004 have been saying for years ) that the party,s secularism is a simply a cloak of convenience. Post will continue to follow developments in HP closely. Tibet: PolCouns Meets Rival Ascendant to Leader of Karma Kagyu ------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par7) 7. (C) His Holiness the 17th Karmapa Trinley Thaye Dorje expressed his gratitude for the USG's support for preserving Tibetan culture and language in a March 13 meeting with PolCouns at the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute in Delhi. He said that the Government of India has been a gracious and understanding host since his arrival from Nepal in January 2000, and he resides very comfortably in Kalimpong. The 17th Karmapa stated that he did not have much hope to return to Tibet in his lifetime, but expressed optimism that his people would be able to live in Tibet in peace one day. [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par8) 8. (C) The 17th Karmapa was born in occupied Tibet in 1983 and is the son of a prominent lama (father) and accomplished doctor (mother). He was officially recognized as the 17th incarnation of the Karmapa by the 14th Kunzig Shamarpa, second highest lama in the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. His supporters trumpet him as the leader of the Karma Kagyu sect. However, his ascendancy is mired in controversy, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama purportedly supports Urgyen Trinley Dorje as the Karma Kagyu sect's rightful leader. In separate discussions with prominent members of the Kashag, literally meaning "house of Lord's order," of the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, it was noted that there was no communication between the Dalai Lama and Karmapa Trinley Dorje, and he was not recognized by the Dalai Lama's followers, who represent the Gelupa sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Indian-Kazakh Ties On the Rise ------ [Â¶](http://www.bhutan-research.org/us-diplomatic-cables-on-bhutan/07newdelhi1509#par9) 9. (U) At a March 8 conference celebrating fifteen years of India-Kazakhstan diplomatic relations, Kazakhstan,s Ambassador to India, Kairat E. Umarov, expressed his government,s support for an Indian seat in the UN Security Council. Turning to economic matters, he noted that the $210 million in bilateral trade during 2006 was an increase of 76% in 2005 and added that Kazakhstan wants a common energy network and market throughout South and Central Asia to increase &stability.8 Ministry of External Affairs Joint Secretary (Eurasia) Jaimini Bhagwati said lack of money or SIPDIS conflicting schedules was to blame if India-Kazakhstan relations seem inactive, not lack of will. &India does take Kazakhstan seriously,8 he stated, faulting both insufficient ground links and the small size of Kazakhstan,s population as impediments to greater bilateral trade and investment. While India desires stronger economic ties with Kazakhstan, &the two must interact in a manner that is commercially viable and sustainable,8 he cautioned. Bhagwati noted that NEW DELHI 00001509 004.4 OF 004 defense ties were important, and that &things are happening now and more will happen in the future.8 He did not wish to "publicize" what those activities were, however. Borat Sagdiev was not in attendance. MULFORD