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Feb. 9, 2009: Khatami declares for president, as opposition group releases documents tying him to serial murders. Former president Hojjat-ol elsam Mohammad Khatami, known as a "reformer" in the West, has finally made up his mind after weeks of hesitation, and now says he will challenge Ahmadinejad in the June presidential elections. But Khatami faces opposition from all fronts, including from many of the people who elected him in 1997, who accuse him of quashing the student movement in 1999, and of using a pretense of liberalisation to flush opponents out from hiding so the intelligence services could better identify them and crush them.

Now, the opposition Marze por Gohar party has released an explosive 138 page dossier on the 1998 "serial murders," which for the first time directly ties Khatami to the regime's effort to shut down the Military Court investigation and reveals that the Supreme Leader personally ordered the murder of opposition leaders, journalists, and human rights activists. As Newsmax reports, the revelations come as the Obama administration has repeated its calls for "negotiations without preconditions" with the Islamic Republic leadership, and amid reports that former Defense Secretary William Perry has been discussing security-related issues with senior Iranian officials on Obama's behalf.

Go here for more information, including links to the original Persian documents and to selected English-language translations.

Feb. 5, 2009: In concession to Tehran, U.S. Treasury Dept designates PJAK as terrorist group. The Treasury Department has blacklisted an Iranian Kurdish opposition group based in northern Iraq, a move that was greeted enthusiastically in Iran's state-run media as part of a initiative by the Obama administration to forge better U.S.-Iranian relations. The Party of Free Life of Iranian Kurdistan, known by its Kurdish acronym, PJAK, was created in 2004 and has never engaged in international terrorism or in military activity outside of Iran. But its guerilla fighters have clashed frequently with Iranian Revolutionary Guards units in Iranian Kurdish towns and villages, making it a primary target of the Iranian regime.

FDI urges the Treasury Department to reverse this decision, which appears to be based on Iranian and Turkish government propaganda, not facts. The U.S. decision was greeted enthusiastically in Ankara and Tehran, where the website of Asr-Iran newspaper called it a "positive signal" from the Obama administration. (Stay tuned for more reporting from Newsmax.com on this subject).