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Current Class: SECRET
Current Handling: NOFORN
Document Number: 2002MANAMA00355

Page: 1
Channel: n/a

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B1, 1.4(D)

PAGE 01 MANAMA 00355 290935Z
ACTION NEA-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DS-00 EUR-00
FBIE-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00 MED-07 M-00
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O 290801Z JAN 02
FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3958
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
GCC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL
COMUSNAVCENT

S E C R E T MANAMA 000355

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DEPT FOR NEA AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/12
TAGS: PTER, PREL, PHUM, BA
SUBJECT: GOB PUBLICIZES REQUEST FOR BAHRAINI PRISONERS

REF: MANAMA 310 (NOTAL) AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

SECRET

PAGE 02 MANAMA 00355 290935Z
(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR RONALD E. NEUMANN FOR
REASON 1.5(B).

1. (S/NF) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: A JANUARY 24 FOREIGN
MINISTRY PUBLIC STATEMENT ANNOUNCING CONTACTS WITH THE
U.S. ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF BAHRAINI PRISONERS AT
GUANTANAMO BAY WAS INTENDED TO SHOW THE BAHRAINI PUBLIC
THAT THE GOB IS PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF BAHRAINI
CITIZENS.



B1

Current Class: SECRET

Page: 1

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: SHARON E AHMAD
DATE/CASE ID: 03 NOV 2004 200303827

UNCLASSIFIED

DOS-001984

Current Class: SECRET
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 Document Number: 2002MANAMA00355

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

BAHRAIN HUMAN RIGHTS SOCIETY AND NEWSPAPER COLUMNISTS IMMEDIATELY CRITICIZED THE USG FOR ITS HANDLING OF PRISONERS AT GUANTANAMO.

THE AMBASSADOR IS SEEKING TO REDUCE PUBLIC PRESSURE WITH A LETTER TO NEWSPAPER EDITORS BASED ON SECRETARY RUMSFELDS PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SOUTHCOM'S FACT SHEET ABOUT PRISONER CONDITIONS AT GUANTANAMO BAY. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. (U) THE JANUARY 24 ALL FOUR OF BAHRAIN'S DAILY NEWSPAPERS CARRIED A FRONT PAGE STATEMENT BY A FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN THAT THE GOB HAS CONTACTED THE USG ABOUT BAHRAINI PRISONERS CAPTURED IN AFGHANISTAN. THE MFA SPOKESMAN SAID THE GOB HAS INSISTED "... ON ASCERTAINING WHETHER ANY BAHRAINIS ARE BEING HELD AND ENSURING THAT THEY ARE TREATED HUMANELY IN KEEPING WITH THE GENEVA CONVENTION." THE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THE GOB WANTS ANY BAHRAINI DETAINEES TO BE HANDED OVER TO IT "SO THEY ARE DEALT WITH IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW."

SECRET

PAGE 03 MANAMA 00355 290935Z

3. (U) ON JANUARY 25, LOCAL NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED A STATEMENT FROM THE BAHRAIN HUMAN RIGHTS SOCIETY (BHRS) THAT EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE REPORTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF COMBATANTS CAPTURED IN AFGHANISTAN AND "SHIPPED" TO GUANTANAMO BAY. THE BHRS STATEMENT SAID "THAT THE CAPTURED AFGHANS WERE "HELD HOODED AND BLINDFOLDED IN SMALL CAGES AND IN INHUMANE CONDITIONS." BHRS EXPRESSED ITS CONCERNS ABOUT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RUMSFELD'S STATEMENT THAT THE PRISONERS WERE UNLAWFUL COMBATANTS NOT ENTITLED TO THE PROTECTION UNDER THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ON THE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR. THE BHRS STATEMENT ASSERTED THAT THE DETAINEES ARE PRISONERS OF WAR, CLAIMED THAT USG TREATMENT OF THE PRISONERS VIOLATED THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND CALLED ON THE USG TO RESPECT INTERNATIONAL LAW PROHIBITING THE TORTURE AND INHUMANE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS OF WAR. THE STATEMENT INSISTED THAT THE USG PROVIDE THE DETAINEES WITH ADEQUATE SHELTER AND MEDICAL FACILITIES.

4. (U) LOCAL ARABIC PAPERS ON JANUARY 27 AND 28 CARRIED COMMENTARIES CRITICIZING USG TREATMENT OF PRISONERS HELD AT GUANTANAMO BAY. ONE COLUMNIST "CRITICIZED THE PIONEER COUNTRY IN PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR BECOMING A VICIOUS MONSTER ..." HE ADDED THAT THE PRISONERS' MISTAKE OF GOING TO AFGHANISTAN TO FIGHT DID NOT MERIT THE PUNISHMENT AND TORTURE AMERICA IS IMPOSING ON THEM.

Current Class: SECRET

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

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Page: 3
Channel: n/a

THE SECOND COLUMNIST SAID THAT "BY MISTREATING THEM (THE PRISONERS), AMERICA IS HUMILIATING HUMANITY AND CIVILIZATION." IN A FOLLOW-UP PIECE, SHE PRAISED THE GOB FOR SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE BAHRAINI

SECRET

PAGE 04 MANAMA . 00355 290935Z
DETAINEEES (WHILE NOTING THAT THE MFA WAS SLOW IN DOING SO) AND URGED THE GOB TO INSIST THAT ANY BAHRAINIS BE RETURNED TO BAHRAINI AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THE DETAINEEES ARE TREATED LIKE HUMAN BEINGS. THE COLUMNIST ADDED THAT MANY OF THE GUANTANAMO DETAINEEES WERE MISLED YOUNGSTERS, RATHER THAN HARDENED CRIMINALS.

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Current Class: SECRET

Page: 3