Extent

21 folders, approximately 483 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records related to the attempted assassination of Kahlid Mish’al in Amman, Jordan, September 25, 1997. The majority of these records related to this FOIA case are closed for national security reasons. Khalid Mish’al is widely recognized as the leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, known more commonly by the name Hamas. Clinton Presidential Records relating to Kahlid Mash’al consist of Automated Records Management System [Email] (ARMS). ARMS email records responsive to this FOIA originate in the Office of the National Security Council (NSC) and include mass emails related to the Mish’al assassination and public commentary on it’s ramifications. The collection also includes records from the NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System. The NSC Email include those discussing drafting and tracking of Memorandum of Conversation and Memorandum of Telephone Conversation. The collection also includes tracking sheets and profile sheets for official NSC memorandum.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2008-0070-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. It should be noted that because of sensitivities associated with the diplomatic nature of this event much of this FOIA request is closed in full for National security reasons. Clinton Presidential Records relating to Kahlid Mash’al consist of Automated Records Management System [Email] (ARMS). ARMS email records responsive to this FOIA originate in the Office of the National Security Council (NSC) and includes mass emails related to the Mish’al assassination attempt and public commentary on its ramifications. The collection also includes records from the NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System. The NSC Email includes those

discussing drafting and tracking of Memorandum of Conversation and Memorandum of Telephone Conversation. The collection also includes tracking sheets and profile sheets for official NSC memorandum.

Biographical Note

halid Mish’al is widely recognized as the leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, known more commonly by the name Hamas. Mish’al rose to lead the organization after the assassinations of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Azzis al-Rantissi in 2004. Mish’al has been active in Hamas since its beginnings and claims to have been one of the founders of Hamas. He noted in a 2008 interview in the Journal of Palestine Studies that Hamas grew out of Islamic resistance, nationalist, and jihadist movements and he traces its roots to a 1983 closed meeting in an Arab state. Given the complexities of Arabic names Mish’al’s name in English appears a number of different ways: Abu Walid, Kahled, Kahlid and Mish’al, Mishal, Misha’al, Meshal, Meshaal. Mish’al was born in Silwad, near the town of Ramallah, in 1956. His family became refugees during the Six Day War in 1967 and fled to Kuwait where Mish’al’s father was working in agriculture and also as an Imam. Mish’al grew up in a strongly patriotic and large refugee community in Kuwait. He entered Kuwait University in 1974 and studied physics. Following graduation in 1978 he taught physics and science in lower and secondary schools in Kuwait. Mish’al notes that during his University years, which he describes as “fertile,” he was active in Palestinian nationalist and Islamic resistance movements. By 1984, he was fully devoted to the Islamic movements and to supporting jihad in Palestine. Mish’al attracted little attention from Western governments prior to the attempt on his life. He gradually rose to the position of Political Branch Chief of the Hamas organization in Jordan. Though often thought of as a moderate, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered in 1997 that Mish’al be assassinated. The failed assassination attempt in Amman, Jordan was widely covered in the press and was referred to by the press as the biggest failure of the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, in their history. According to a number of press and internet sources, on September 25, 1997 two men approached Mish’al outside his Hamas office. One of the men, using an unknown device, sprayed a highly powerful painkiller, levofentanyl, into Mish’al’s ear. Mish’al’s bodyguard and his driver attacked the assailants which led to a vehicle and foot chase through the city of Amman. The two men were arrested and though both were

holding Canadian passports, press releases and public statements by Hamas pointed to Mossad’s involvement. King Hussein of Jordan demanded an antidote to the apparent poisoning and at first Netanyahu refused. As political pressure grew Netanyahu relented and the Israeli government provided an antidote and Mish’al’s life was saved. CNN, the Associated Press, Reuters, and a number of Israeli newspapers reported that Netanyahu only gave the antidote after discussions with President Clinton. The failed assassination attempt had dramatic impacts on the Middle East Peace Process. More importantly it threatened the relationship between Israel and Jordan. Jordan was, at this time, the only Arab state who had signed peace accords with Israel. The later release of Sheikh Yassin and a number of Jordanians and Palestinians imprisoned in Israel reduced tension and returned the relationship to a more normal state.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in three collections areas—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files, Clinton Presidential Records: ARMS Emails, and Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, NSC Email, and NSC Records Management System. White House Staff and Office Files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and documents all levels of administrative activity. The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS database is comprised of six sub-series of email records called "buckets." The buckets generally represent a specific White House office. The buckets are titled: NPR for National Performance Review, OPD for Office of Policy Development, POTUS for President of the United States, WHO for White House Office, CEA for Council of Economic Advisers, and Default for emails not associated with an office.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2011. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2015-09-10

Container List

View all digitized files in the National Archives Catalog (NAC)

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2008-0070-F:

Box 1
Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
National Security Council
Records Management
9706661 [Memcons/Telcons, September 1997] [OA/ID 1780]
9706790 [Memcons/Telcons, September 1997] [OA/ID 1780]
9706791 [Memcons/Telcons, September 1997] [OA/ID 1780]
9706981 [Memcons/Telcons, September 1997] [OA/ID 1780]
9706982 [Memcons/Telcons, September 1997] [OA/ID 1780]
Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System [Email]
NSC [OA/ID 1200000]
[Mishal, Hussein, Netanyahu]
[10/14/1997-02/17/1998]
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System
NSC Cables
Jan 1997-Dec 1998 [OA/ID 520000]
[Mishal, Hussein, Netanyahu]
[09/26/1997-10/07/1997]
[10/07/1997-10/09/1997]
[10/13/1997-06/18/1998]
NSC Emails
Exchange-Record (Sept 97-Jan 01) [OA/ID 620000]
[Mishal, Hussein, Netanyahu]
[09/27/1997-10/06/1997]
[10/06/1997-10/09/1997]
[10/13/1997-03/17/1998]
Exchange-Non-Record (Mar 97-Jan 01) [OA/ID 630000]
[Mishal, Hussein, Netanyahu]
[09/29/1997-12/03/1998]

NSC Records Management System
[Mishal, Hussein, Netanyahu]
9706606 [OA/ID 1643]
9706661 [OA/ID 1643]
9706790 [OA/ID 1644]
9706791 [OA/ID 1644]
9706815 [OA/ID 1644]
9706930 [OA/ID 1645]
9706981 [OA/ID 1645]
9706982 [OA/ID 1645]

Content Available Online