

January 20, 2012

No Obama Letter to Iran?

On January 18, conservative Iranian lawmaker Ali Motahari [announced](#) and Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast confirmed that President Barack Obama had sent a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei warning Iran against closing the Straits of Hormuz and requesting direct talks. Mehmanparast said that Iran was considering an official response. Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee deputy chairman Hojjatoleslam Hossein Ebrahimi also went on to [describe](#) the details of the letter at length. U.S. officials meanwhile have denied the existence of such a letter, and ISIS has also learned from a European source who has proven reliable in the past that President Obama did not send the letter, which Iranian officials claim was passed through three different diplomatic channels. ISIS is interested in confirming whether anyone has learned otherwise.

It is interesting to speculate on the motive for such a rumor if it was started by Iran. Perhaps some in the regime seek to start a national conversation about direct Iran-U.S. talks, or wanted to test the official U.S. reaction in the media to the notion of conducting direct talks amidst an atmosphere of growing tension. In an even more convoluted theory, Iran may have sought to embarrass President Obama for seeking talks with Iran while he faces increased criticism over his Iran policy by hawkish U.S. lawmakers and presidential candidates.

On the other hand, rumors are sometimes only rumors with no clear intent.