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Biographical Note

Seyyed Muhammad Khatami was elected President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 23, 1997, with over two-thirds of the popular vote. He was born in 1942 into a middle-class clerical family in the town of Ardakan, located in the province of Yazd in central Iran. His father, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khatami, was widely respected for his piety and progressive views.

At the age of nineteen, Khatami left Ardakan to pursue religious studies in Qom until 1965, when he entered the University of Isfahan to study philosophy. From this time onward, he became active in Islamic politics. In 1969, he began graduate studies in education at the University of Tehran. Two years later, he returned to Qom to pursue further religious studies in Islamic law, jurisprudence, and philosophy.

It was in Qom that he became more immersed in political activity. In 1978, on the eve of the Iranian revolution, he was chosen to lead the Hamburg Islamic Institute *in* Germany, which played a pivotal role in organizing revolutionary activity among the Iranian Diaspora. From 1982 to 1992, he served as minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance. In 1992 he was appointed assistant to the President and head of the National Library of Iran, a position he held until his election to the Presidency.

Mr. Khatami is familiar with English, Arabic, and German. He has published several books and articles, including: *Bim-e Mowj* (*Fear of the Wave*), *1993,* and *Az Donya-ye Shahr ta Shahr-e Donya* (*From the City-World to the World-City*), 1994. He is particularly interested in the works of Farabi, Molla-Sadra, Sheykh Ansari, and Hafez. He is married and has three children.

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