

The Iranian Pen Club

# Panorama



**Tell the U.S. Government to Say NO to Mujahedin  
Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult)**



Massoud Khodabandeh

**New U.S. approach to Mojahedin-e Khalq  
(MKO, MEK) in Camp Ashraf overlooks the  
victims' human rights**

NIAC, Washington DC, July 07 2011

<https://secure3.convio.net/niac/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=187>

Sometime in August, Secretary Clinton will decide whether to keep the Mujahedin-e Khalq on the US's terrorist list. This is a decision that will have significant implications for the Iranian-American community, the United States and the people of Iran.

Members of NIAC have urged us to speak out, because delisting the Mujahedin would undermine the peaceful Iranian pro-democracy movement and strengthen the regime in Tehran. It would threaten the free voices of the Iranian-American community in the US. And it would allow the Mujahedin to receive US funding and become a powerful force in support of war with Iran, just like the Iraqi exiles who deceived us into war with Iraq did.

Supporting terrorists and replacing one undemocratic regime that abuses its own people with an undemocratic cult that tortures its own members is a recipe for disaster.

Former senior U.S. officials have called Mujahedin "Iran's hope." They have said Mujahedin leader Maryam Rajavi

**Continued on Page 2**

Massoud Khodabandeh, MESConsultants, July 05 2011

<http://mesconsult.com>

Attitudes are slowly crystallising and shifting over what should be done about the MEK, with the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq James Jeffrey introducing a new and positive approach in U.S. dealings with the group in Iraq. But the July 4 Miami Herald article 'Iranian dissidents in Iraq want refuge in 3rd country', also highlights the danger that various elements are still trying to derive their own benefits from the MEK even though the demise of Camp Ashraf has become inevitable. Of course you would need to ask those involved what they each hope to get out of such a defunct group.

Ambassador James Jeffrey, addressing only MEK leaders, has urged them to "'dissolve' their paramilitary organization and become refugees someplace else in Iraq". In its turn the MEK itself has already threatened to massacre its own members if any external body interferes in the camp. Jeffrey added that the group "really believe that the U.N. and the United States will protect them forever." Well, they have good reason to believe that to be so.

**Continued on Page 3**

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“should be recognized as the President of Iran.” Some have already acknowledged received cash to support the organization.

In Congress, massive lobbying efforts have convinced many that Mujahedin is the “main opposition in Iran” and that the Mujahedin speaks for the Iranian people and the Iranian-American community.

It's time to set the record straight.

Tell Congress, the State Department, and the Justice Department: the Mujahedin does NOT speak for the Iranian-American community and does NOT represent Iran's peaceful democratic movement.



**FBI recently disclosed report reveals  
Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult)  
continued terror campaign years after  
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**... According to the FBI. A recently disclosed FBI report from 2004 reveals Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) continued to plan terrorist acts years after they claimed to renounce terrorism. The State Department has documented the MEK's disturbing record: killing Americans and Iranians in terrorist attacks; fighting for Saddam Hussein against Iran and assisting Saddam's brutal campaign against Iraq's Kurds and Shia; its "cult-like" behavior; the abuses and even torture it commits against its own members; and its support for the U.S. embassy takeover and calls for executing the hostages ...**

A U.S. State Department document released in May 2011 under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act says the MEK has no popular support inside Iran and “to the extent Iranians know about this group they are far more likely to oppose it than support it.” It added, “Any U.S. support for MEK would extremely damage its reputation amongst Iranians and would increase anti-American sentiments in Iran.” The State Department cables quoted defectors as describing MEK as a cult that punishes former members. The cables said the MEK leadership ordered the execution of all attempted defectors.

Trita Parsi's timely article Washington's Favorite Terrorists exposed U.S. hypocrisy in dealing with the MEK in Washington. But we may very well see a similar level of support continuing in Iraq. The obvious way this would manifest would be for the MEK to be taken (en masse) inside a U.S. military base and held there until further notice. This would protect the group from Iraqi attempts

report in 2005 which was laudable, but what have they done since then? Amnesty International still prefers to think of the MEK as an entity and ignore the existence of the individuals in the camp. What has AI said about the internal problems of the residents; the daily violations and abuses of their basic human rights?

**... The problem is not the name of Camp Ashraf or the name MEK. The Rajavi's cannot simply re-name, re-brand or even relocate their group for political expediency and expect the 'members' to continue as their slaves. To solve this problem (before the question of whether they want to work for or against anyone) the residents must be given access to the outside world, to their families, to media, communications, get paid for their work and have access to the post office, cinema, marriage registry, birth registry, police station, legal aid, courts and legal bodies of the country they are living in etc. Nine years after the fall of Saddam ...**

to expel them from the country, and also obviate the need for the U.N. to enter Camp Ashraf and rescue the individual residents from their enforced imprisonment by the MEK leadership.

The wholesale transfer of the residents of Camp Ashraf would truly be a human rights disaster. The sooner it is acknowledged that Rajavi is nobody's representative but his own, the sooner the victims of the MEK will be helped.

From the hardliners in Iran who want to keep their dangerous foreign backed enemy, to the neoconservatives in the U.S. who want to keep the hatred between Iran and the west (as the neocon version of Holocaust denial, the fact that the MEK has killed so many Iranians is what feeds this hatred), to Iraqi internal factions which want to use the MEK for attacking other factions, to Europeans who still believe the MEK are a useful bargaining chip with Iran or can be used to influence the internal affairs of Iraq. All these have an interest in keeping the MEK intact. None wants the dissolution of the camp or the organisation. They all want to stop the camp being disbanded because they are using the MEK for their own various agendas.

The problem is that without taking the necessary action to access the individual residents of the camp they are essentially being left in the ownership of the Rajavis and their backers. In this respect where are the human rights organisations which should be directly involved in helping these victims? What attempts have the U.N. made to actually get inside the camp and have free access to the residents? Human Rights Watch published its 'No Exit'

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Nine years after the fall of Saddam and the disappearance of the cult leader it is not acceptable for a U.S. official to simply try to move the group from one part of the world to the other part without the slightest concern about the human rights of the captives there.



*The Iranian Pen Club*

## Washington pressures Iraq to provide sanctuary for Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) terrorists



Solomon, Wall Street Journal, June 29, 2011

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President Hamid Karzai, before traveling to Tehran, welcomed President Barack Obama's announcement on Wednesday that the U.S. would withdraw 33,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan over 15 months.

The U.S. is also committed to withdrawing all of its remaining 45,000 troops from Iraq by year-end; some U.S. military officials want some troops to stay to serve as a check on Iran, but Iraqi hostility to the U.S. presence has been an obstacle.

In Pakistan, military and civilian leaders are under domestic pressure to curb U.S. ties, in a wave of anti-Americanism fueled by the U.S. raid in May that killed Osama bin Laden at his home in Pakistan.

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<http://www.morningstar.co.uk/uk/markets/newsfeeditem.aspx?id=148573656221514>

### Iran Woos US Allies As Troops Withdraw

Iran is moving to cement ties with the leaders of three key American allies -- Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq -- highlighting Tehran's efforts to take a greater role in the region as the U.S. military pulls out troops.

The Afghan and Pakistani presidents, visiting Tehran, discussed with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "many issues. . . that might come up after the NATO military force goes out of Afghanistan," Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said in an interview here Sunday.

"The three presidents were very forthcoming in carrying out the cooperation and contacts so as to make sure things will go as smoothly as it could," he said

That was a jab at Washington, which is increasingly in competition with Tehran for influence in the region, particularly as popular rebellions have surged across the Middle East and North Africa since January.

The overtures by U.S. nemesis Iran come amid tensions between Washington and three governments that have each received billions of dollars in U.S. aid. Afghan

Tehran has been pressing Afghanistan -- Iran's neighbor to the east -- and Pakistan to end their military alliances with Washington.

Officials at the White House and State Department declined to comment on Sunday on the Tehran meetings.

U.S. and European officials have said they believe Iran's regional ambitions are hampered by a stagnant economy and growing political infighting in Tehran that could cost Mr. Ahmadinejad his job.

There are also historical tensions between neighbors -- and in some cases, current conflicts. Afghan President Hamid Karzai told Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari that Pakistan must stop lobbing rockets into his country, according to a statement from Mr. Karzai's office. Mr. Zardari denied Pakistan's military was firing the rockets.

But Iran's government took every opportunity to play up its international ties during a weekend that also included a conference in Tehran attended by representatives from around 60 countries.

...Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, voiced his support for Iran's call to shut a military camp in central Iraq that has served as a base for an Iranian insurgent group, the Mujahedin e-Khalq, or MeK. Washington, while designating the MeK as an international terrorist organization, has pressured Iraq to continue to provide sanctuary to some 3,400 MeK fighters over fears they would be persecuted if they returned to Iran. Mr. Talabani said in a speech to the terrorism conference Saturday that his government's patience with the MeK had worn thin. The MeK camp "will be shut down by the end of the year," Mr. Talabani said ...

The Obama administration and European nations had lobbied countries against attending what Iran called an "International Conference on the Global Fight against Terrorism." The U.S. characterizes Tehran as the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism.

The event was also attended by diplomats from U.S.-friendly countries such as Mongolia, Oman and Indonesia. The United Nations and Organization of the Islamic Conference both sent representatives.

"Pakistan and Iran share an historic bond," Mr. Zardari told the conference on Saturday, when his late wife, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was honored by Iran's gov-



Iraqi

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For its part, the U.S. charges Tehran with fomenting instability by providing arms and training to insurgent groups, including the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Kata'ib Hezbollah militia in Iraq, that battle American forces. Tehran denies the charge.

For the most part, the conference followed a pattern many U.S. and European officials anticipated. Iranian, Cuban and Palestinian representatives -- mixing with North Korean, Zimbabwean and Myanmar diplomats -- branded Israel the world's largest terrorism threat.

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged war crimes, addressed the conference and said the definition of terrorism is abused internationally.

On Friday, after a three-way meeting between the Iranian, Afghan and Pakistani presidents, the three leaders pledged to intensify their joint efforts to fight militant groups and combat narcotics trafficking, while "rejecting foreign interference" in their countries, according to a statement. The three also agreed to meet next year in Islamabad.

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Maria Abi-Habib in Kabul and Maya Jackson Randall in Washington contributed to this article.



## Challenges for the Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) lobby in US

ted States, too. They were sending a lot of Iranian exiles to the United States from Europe to give talks, purporting to be Iranian leaders. A lot of times, I remember, when I went to Israel Uri Lubrani would take me to meet these people who were stashed in various hotels all over Tel Aviv and he would always make me switch cabs on the way, that kind of thing! This culture of regime change was very strong, very powerful, inside elements in Israel, and the Pentagon, the neoconservatives, a lot of pundits here." [2]

Weissman believes that regime change policy is a wrong one that no foreign force should impose on Iran. "[Support

bes the cult of Rajavi:"after liberation [of Iraq], the MKO embraced America not because it loves liberty or apple pie but rather because it is an ideological chameleon. Only fools would believe that the MKO is sincere in its pro-American rhetoric." [5]

MKO's Geobel-style propaganda misleads Western officials drawing their attention to their own agenda which is the overthrow of Iranian government. Weisman says to PBS that Iran was alarmed at the possibility that the United States might engage in overt and covert efforts to instigate opposition inside

**... The relationship between the Mujahedin -e- khalq (MEK/MKO) and Israel is getting weirdly closer as the group's large-scale campaign to get removed from FTO list of the State Department grows. It's not a coincidence that the MKO adoring supporters among American neoconservatives – these days largely responsible for the push toward war in the Middle East- seem also caring to Israel and the Zionist lobby in the US, AIPAC. Having begun with an anti Zionism—even anti Jews-- and anti-imperialism agenda, the MKO's role to run the super powers' policy is considered controversial by experts. [1] In a series of interviews with PBS, Keith Weissman former senior official of AIPAC shows his concern over a possible war that may be pushed by Israeli lobbies against Iran. He reveals ...**

for regime change] was the personal opinion of many people in AIPAC, but it never uttered the words 'regime change.' And I think my efforts were part of the reason why they never did," he says, adding: "How would it look anyway? This is what makes it so stupid! The American Jewish community choosing the next government of Iran? Helping to change the next government of Iran? How can that government have any legitimacy? It's completely ridiculous. And I think the arguments that I raised against it convinced AIPAC, no matter what they personally thought, they realized that what I was saying was right." [3]

Besides, Philip Giraldi, a former CIA official, of American Conservative believes that American politicians who "have soft spot in their hearts for MEK because it is an enemy of the regime in Tehran", are also "passionate supporters "of Israel.[4]

What causes Israeli lobbyist to get involved with a terrorist designated personality cult? The enemy of my enemy is not always a friend, writes Michael Rubin, criticizing US former officials for their blind support for MKO. Rubin descri-

Iran. "Many in AIPAC, especially among its lay leadership and biggest donors, strongly backed regime change in Iran. "That was what Larry [Franklin] and his friends wanted," he says. "It included lots of different parts, like broadcasts, giving money to groups that would conduct sabotage, it included bringing the Mojahedin[-e Khalgh], bringing them out of Iraq and letting them go back to Iran to carry out missions for the United States. Harold Rhode backed this.... There were all these guys, Michael Ledeen, 'Next stop Tehran, next stop Damascus.'"

But when Franklin asked Weissman for help, he turned him down. "We didn't do anything. We chose not to do anything. I told Rosen it was a terrible idea, and it wouldn't work, and all it



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would do would be to make more trouble.” [6]

On one hand it seems just ridiculous that US former officials are naïve enough to fall for MKO propaganda, on the other hand, high speaking fees paid to former GOP officials convince them to advocate for a terrorist designated group although, according to Danielle Pletka of the Enterprise blog, it should be investigated by both the FBI and Justice Department where this money comes from and how it is being transferred to a Foreign terrorist organization. She wonders how a group with dark record of “cult-like behavior, murder, terrorism or money laundering” that has the blood of Americans in its hands can own a lobbying campaign in the United States government.[7]

Lobbying on behalf of a terrorist destructive cult might



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embarrassingly harm the former politicians’ fame. Even engaging in conversation with the cult of Rajavi seems too credulous, let alone lobbying for them.

Mazda Parsi

References:

[1]“In May24, 1974 for the anniversary of hanging of their leaders, this organization operated some explosive actions in American and Jewish economic companies and internal depended capitalists such as American and Jewish General, English0-Court Insurance Company Pork Shire and Jewish company Techno vice.” Karami, Mohammad (former MKO member), Open Letter to President Obama, Iran-Interlink, May17,2011

[2]Dreyfuss, Robert, AIPAC From the Inside/Part Two Wrangling Over Regime Change , Tehran Bureau, PBS, June 11, 2011

[3]ibid

[4]Giraldi, Philip, American Diplomacy 101, American Conservative, June 12, 2011

[5]Rubin Michael, What's Behind the Campaign to delist the Mujahedin al Khalq Organization?, Commentary Magazine, February 24, 2011

[6] Dreyfuss, Robert, AIPAC From the Inside/Part Two Wrangling Over Regime Change , Tehran Bureau, PBS, June 11, 2011

[7]Pletka Danielle, Lobbying for Terrorists, The Enterprise Blog, June 15, 2011

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## US State Department claims no popular support for Mojahedin Khaq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) among Iranains

UNCLAS RPO DUBAI 000048

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

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E.O. 13526; N/A

TAGS; PREL, PGOV, IR, PTER

\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*

SUBJECT: IRANIAN POPULAR ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE MEK

1. (SBU) NOTE: The following cable is based on input from State Department Iran-watchers and consular interviewing officers in the main posts that interact with Iranians on a regular basis, i.e. ANKARA, BAKU, BERLIN, DUBAI AND ISTANBUL. END NOTE.

2. (SBU)

SUMMARY: Showing a unanimity rare among Iranians, anecdotal information gleaned from both ordinary Iranians living inside Iran and abroad and from Iran analysts strongly indicates that the 'Mujahedin-e Khalq' (MEK) opposition group has no significant popular support inside Iran. To the extent that Iranian respondents are familiar with the MEK they express severe dislike for the group, primarily due to its alliance with Saddam Hussein during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. All Iranians queried tended to disbelieve the MEK's expressed allegiance to the ideals of human rights and democracy, with even hardened Iranian oppositionists and persecuted religious minorities such as the Iranian Baha'i saying they would prefer the current Iranian government to an MEK-affiliated one. Many Iranian respondents believe that any indication of USG support for the MEK would seriously harm USG popularity among ordinary Iranians, even among those Iranians who oppose the current Iranian government, would fuel anti-American sentiment, and would likely empower Iranian hardliners.

END SUMMARY.

3. (SBU) MEK – BACKGROUND (see Appendix): Originally a 1960s Islamic-Marxist group dedicated to violent overthrow of the Pahlavi regime, the 'Mujahedin-e Khalq' (MEK- a.k.a. 'The People's Warriors') was one of the main popular organizations to emerge in the early days of the 1979 Revolution. The increasing ascendancy by clerical elements supporting Ayatollah Khomeini after the revolution let to this group's gradual elimination from

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Since deprived of Iraq government funding since 2003 the MEK has increasingly relied on fundraising in Europe under various front organizations that use popular antipathy towards the Islamic Republic to solicit money. END BACKGROUND.

4. (SBU) In January and February 2011 State Department Iran-watchers and consular offices in the main posts that interact with Iranians on a regular basis (Ankara, Baku, Berlin, Dubai and Istanbul) asked Iranian contacts and visa applicants their opinions on the MEK.

POPULAR FEEDBACK



5. (SBU) In speaking to hundreds of Iranians both in the preceding two months and before, ordinary Iranians were almost uniformly dismissive of the MEK, reacting with either disdain or apathy, their responses strongly indicating a lack of any significant popular support for the MEK among Iranians living in Iran. Among older Iranians this lack of support was largely due to MEK support of Saddam Hussein's Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war. Among younger Iranians (i.e. most of the population) this lack of support was derived from both the MEK's 'treasonous acts' in supporting Iraq during the war and also from a near-total lack of information due to the absence of any MEK influence inside Iran.

6. (SBU) The following direct quotes reflect what was heard

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from ordinary Iranians both inside Iran and abroad:

--- "The MEK are detested among the young and old in Iran, although many young Iranians don't know much about them, and to the extent they do it is in relation to their pro-Iraqi activities during the Iran-Iraq war. Many young Iranians familiar with the MEK's lack of any support inside Iran wonder why this group is so well-supported abroad and in international organizations."

--- "They are hated among Iranians, since their hands are stained with the blood of their fellow countrymen."

--- "I'm an Iranian Bahai (i.e. the most persecuted religious minority in Iran) and I can tell you that even Bahais in Iran would much prefer the current Iranian government to any MEK government."

--- "We are scared of them because we think they want

power. They are like Fidel Castro in Cuba. They will turn Iran into a North Korea or Cuba. It's not correct to call them a terrorist group **THOUGH: THEY JUST WANT POWER. THEY DO NOT HAVE the support of the majority of people.** They are not democratic just because they appointed a lady as 'President of Iran'."

---"They were supported and loved during the Revolution, especially among young people. We loved them. They were beautiful people. But their Marxist-Islamic ideology has passed away. The group's ideology is far away from the people now."

---"Aside from their cooperation with Saddam against Iran, their leadership is immoral – Massoud Rajavi has forced himself on many women, with Maryam's awareness, and in their camp in Iraq they separate children from their parents. I had a distant relative who joined the MEK and once he did so the rest of the family disowned him."

---"Nobody likes them."

---"They have no support in Iran."

---"The group is not popular. People hate them, and they are



--- "Right after the 1979 revolution the MEK had considerable support in Iran, especially among the youth. Even after the MEK began its campaign of assassination of official figures in June 1981 and the regime responded by executing several thousand of MEK supporters, there was still sympathy. But then MEK leadership left Iran and went first to France and then Iraq, began collaborating with Saddam Hussein's regime, and acting as its spies. This turned the tide against the MEK, and the Iranian people began despising MEK for its support of Saddam, for its revealing information about Iran, and for still continuing its campaign of assassination while the nation was involved in a long war."

That has not changed, and in fact it has become stronger, since all sorts of horror stories have been told to the public by former MEK members who had become disillusioned with the leadership and wanted to leave Iraq and Camp Ashraf but were tortured and then delivered to Saddam intelligence as Iranian spies. It was also revealed that the MEK had a direct role in putting down the Shiite uprising in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq right after the first Persian Gulf war. The fact that MEK revealed some information about Iran's nuclear program also angered a lot of people, because they consider it treason.

The net result is that, with losing thousands of its members to executions and consistent opposition to the IRIG, the MEK has no significant base of support in Iran. Given that 70 percent of the population is under 35, they do not even know who the MEK are. Iranians who know about the MEK consider it nothing but a religio-political cult. MEK has the same power structure as does the IRIG: It has a "Supreme Leader," Masoud Rajavi; a "President," Maryam Rajavi, and it demands absolute obedience of the leadership. So, as we say in Persian, "az chahel dar biyayam to chahel biyoftin?" (We are getting ourselves out a small ditch in order to fall down in a deep well!)"

--- "The trick used by the MEK is to approach the 'simple man on the street' or politicians with little expertise on Iran and convince them that they are collecting signatures or money to protest human rights violations in Iran. These signatures are then used by the organization as proof of support for the organization's broader political agenda. The organization works under a number of PSEUDONYMS. THE RECENT PROTEST MOVEMENT in Iran that followed the 2009 elections showed quite clearly that the MEK has no noticeable support inside Iran and is isolated amongst exiled Iranians as well."

--- "Generally speaking I encountered two things concerning the MEK from living in Iran. The older generations' has a disdain for the MEK because of their belief that MEK contributed slightly to the radicalism and violence of the early years of the revolution and for its siding with Saddam in the Iran-Iraq War. This disdain was not merely based on the fact that the government held MEK responsible for the bombings of the early revolutionary years. In addition, many liberal and/or secular people who I know still hold MEK responsible for the radical Islamist turn of the revolution that was then manipulated by more established clerics. The younger generation's views on the MEK are characterized by apathy and lack of basic knowledge about the group, its leadership, and its political positions. I have not found any evidence that MEK has been able to fire the imagination of a single university or high school student in Iran. Believe it or not, the few students who

terrorists. They killed many people.”

---“Once they fought for what they believed in and they had some support but now we don’t really know who they are and what they do.”

---“They are a terrorist organization.”

---“The MEK is a joke.”

---“They are a bunch of #@\*\$!” [From a young Iranian male]

---“They MEK under the leadership of Massoud Rajavi and President Maryam Rajavi are meaningless in the domestic Iranian political spectrum and totally marginalized. They try however, with great effort, to create the impression that they are the most significant Iranian exiled opposition group.”

## ANALYSTS ON MEK

7. (SBU) The above-cited characterization of the MEK by ordinary Iranians was replicated in feedback from political analysts focused on contemporary Iran, all of whom were Iranian by birth. Without exception these analysts said that the MEK lacked any significant popular support inside Iran, with Iranian popular

express interest in radical politics, instead of reform, were much more interested in Marxism than MEK.”

--- “Outside Iran, a handful of groups and individuals have sought to emerge as centers of opposition. Among these groups is the MEK. It has no political base inside Iran and no genuine support on the Iranian street. The MEK, an organization based in Iraq that enjoyed the Baathist regime’s support, lost any following it may have had in Iran when it fought on Iraq’s behalf during the 1980-1988 war. Widespread Iranian distaste for the MEK has been cemented by its numerous terrorist attacks against innocent Iranian civilians and Iranian government officials. Since Saddam Hussein’s fall, the MEK now depends almost entirely on the goodwill of the United States, which placed it on its list of foreign terrorist organizations and, at most, seems prepared to use it as a source of intelligence and leverage in its dealings with Iran. The most prominent international human rights organizations -- including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International -- have determined the MEK to be undemocratic, with a cult-like organizational structure and modus operandi that belies its claim to be a vehicle for democratic change. During my time living and working in Iran, it became quite clear that the MEK is not at all popular among the Iranian people. Of the literally hundreds of people I interviewed and/or spoke with in Iran about the MEK, not one had anything positive to say about it. When Iran’s (2009) post-election turbulence commenced, the MEK quickly sought to join the frenzy of brewing opposition to the current government inside Iran. But by claiming links to this indigenous opposition, the MEK connected their name to genuinely disenfranchised voters, thereby providing the Iranian government with yet another excuse to ‘discredit’ and crackdown on peaceful protesters. Increased U.S. government support for the MEK will empower Ahmadinejad and other hardliners in Iran, thereby increasing their Ahmadinejad and the other hardliners’ overall domestic support exponentially. Never has the level of cohesion among regime ‘insiders’ been so low [but] supporting the MEK will provide Iranian government insiders with a foreign-based threat that can be exploited to heal fractures within the regime, increase the number of Iranians that rally around the flag, and eliminate indigenous political opposition -- thereby hurting the very people that America seeks to help. Ironically, if the U.S. wants to help Ahmadinejad and the hardliners cement a long-term dictatorship in Iran, support for the Mojahedin is the way to do it. It will significantly reduce any chance of real rapprochement with the Iranian government, and severely curtail indigenous democratic progress in Iran. The Iranian people won’t forgive or forget this -- particularly given the history surrounding U.S. policies toward Mossadeq and the Shah. And this is one of the cardinal sins poisoning U.S.-Iran relations to this day. It is worth noting that increasing American support for the MEK is a step that the Bush administration -- even at the height of its openly hostile Iran policy -- wasn’t willing to take. Even they understood that increased support for the MEK will exacerbate all of the challenges and problems that Iran policy currently poses to the U.S.”

--- “The MEK is a dead political group in Iran, even if its specter is not anymore haunting the Iranian people. The MEK has no considerable support in the country, either among the elites or

---“Right after the 1979 revolution the MEK had considerable support in Iran, especially among the youth. Even after the MEK began its campaign of assassination of official figures in June 1981 and the regime responded by executing several thousand of MEK supporters, there was still sympathy. But then MEK leadership left Iran and went first to France and then Iraq, began collaborating with Saddam Hussein’s regime, and acting as its spies. This turned the tide against the MEK, and the Iranian people began despising MEK for its support of Saddam, for its revealing information about Iran, and for still continuing its campaign of assassination while t---“The MEK are an Islamist-Socialist cult whose membership numbers in the thousands. Their popular support in Iran is negligible. Over a four year

reactions to the MEK varying from rank ignorance (mostly among the young) to extreme aversion (to those more familiar with their history).

8. (SBU) The following direct quotes from prominent analysts of contemporary Iran, all of whom are Iranian by birth, reflect the feedback received:

---“Right after the 1979 revolution the MEK had considerable support in Iran, especially among the youth. Even after the MEK began its campaign of assassination of official figures in June 1981 and the regime responded by executing several thousand of MEK supporters, there was still sympathy. But then MEK leadership left Iran and went first to France and then Iraq, began collaborating with Saddam Hussein’s regime, and acting as its spies. This turned the tide against the MEK, and the Iranian people began despising MEK for its support of Saddam, for its revealing information about Iran, and for still continuing its campaign of assassination while the nation was involved in a long war.

That has not changed, and in fact it has become stronger, since all sorts of horror stories have been told to the public by former MEK members who had become disillusioned with the leadership and wanted to leave Iraq and Camp Ashraf but were tortured and then delivered to Saddams intelligence as Iranian spies. It was also revealed that the MEK had a direct role in putting down the Shiites uprising in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprising in northern Iraq right after the first Persian Gulf War. The fact that

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The net result is that, with losing thousands of its members to executions and consistent opposition to the IRIG, the MEK has no significant base of support in Iran. Given that 70 percent of the population is under 35, they do not even know who the MEK are.

Iranians who know about the MEK consider it nothing but a religio-political cult. MEK has the same power structure as does the IRIG; It has a “Supreme Leader”, Massoud Rajavi; a “President”, Maryam Rajavi, and it demands absolute obedience of the leadership. So, as we say in Persian, “as chaale dar biyaam to chaah biy-oftim?” (We are getting ourselves out a small ditch in order to fall down in a deep well?”).

---“The trick used by MEK is to approach the “simple man on the street” or politicians with little expertise on Iran and convince them that they are collecting signatures or money to protest human rights violations in Iran. These signatures are then used by the organization as proof of support for the organization’s broader political agenda. The organization works under a number of PSEUDONYMS. THE RECENT PROTEST MOVEMENT in Iran that followed the 2009 elections showed



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Any U.S. support for MEK would extremely damage its reputation amongst Iranians and would increase anti-American sentiments in Iran. People would regard such an act not as animosity towards the regime but towards the nation. They would assume that the U.S. intentions are not to promote freedom and democracy in Iran, but simply to spoil the country. The Iranian regime would definitely take advantage of such a situation, showing it as a proof of its claims of calling Americans as the enemy of the nation.”

--- “The MEK are an Islamist-Socialist cult whose membership numbers in the thousands. Their popular support in Iran is negligible. Over a four year period living in and traveling to Iran I never met anyone who expressed any affinity for them. On the contrary they are widely perceived as brainwashed traitors who fought alongside Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war. The U.S. government should stay as far away from them as possible. Even [former NSC head] General Jones recent interactions with them have spurred concerned rumors among Iranian democracy activists that Washington may be flirting with the MEK.”

9. (SBU) COMMENT: The results of this admittedly unscientific polling of contacts and ordinary Iranians concerning the MEK confirm what those familiar with Iran already assumed to be the case: regardless of whether the USG deems it a terrorist organization, the MEK lacks any significant popular support in Iran, and to the extent Iranians know about this group they are far more likely to oppose it than support it. The pro-human rights and democratic ideals which the MEK now claims to espouse are ones which the USG also emphasizes in our own Iran policy. But one does not need to support the MEK to promote these goals, and indeed it seems to be the case that any increased show of USG support for this group will not help the cause of freedom and democracy in Iran, but will only adversely impact popular perceptions of the USG among ordinary Iranians, and could also strengthen support for Ahmadinejad and other hardliners.

#### END COMMENT.

#### APPENDIX: MEK HISTORY

1965: MEK Founded on Islamic-Marxist ideology by former members of Iran's nationalist "Freedom Movement of Iran."

1970s: MEK engaged in ideological work combined with armed struggle

against the Pahlavi regime, to include terrorist killings of US military and civilian personnel in Iran.

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1979-81: Like Iranian nationalists and leftist elements, MEK influence in government slowly eliminated by the clerical elements supporting Ayatollah Khomeini.

Early 1980s: As IRIG moves against MEK, MEK elements inside Iran mount massive assassination campaigns against the IRIG leadership, killing approximately 70 high-ranking IRIG officials in one June 1981 bombing, with another MEK bombing two months later killing the IRIG President and Prime Minister. Hundreds of MEK supporters and members either arrested or killed. Masoud Rajavi forced to flee Iran in 1981, and majority of MEK relocates in France.

1981-1986: Using France as base of operations, MEK continues campaign of violence against Iranian government figures.

1986-1988: In 1986 due to improved Iran-France relations MEK relocates headquarters to Iraq, relying on Iraq for basing, financial support, and training. During Iran-Iraq war, its "NATIONAL LIBERATION ARMY" UNDER CONTROL OF THE IRAQI MILITARY mounts attacks against the Iranian military, causing it to lose massive support among the Iranian people.

1988: Mass execution of MEK prisoners inside Iran by IRIG.

1989 - 2001: MEK continues assassination attacks against IRIG officials, receiving major financial support from Saddam Hussein, to include:

- 1992 (April): MEK conducts near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations in 13 countries.
- 1999 (April): MEK assassinates key Iranian military officers, to include deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff, Brigadier General Ali Sayyad Shirazi.
- 2000 (February): MEK launches series of attacks against Iran, to include a mortar attack against a major Iranian leadership complex in Tehran.
- 2000-01: MEK conducts regular mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids against Iranian military and law enforcement personnel, as well as government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border.
- 1991: MEK assists Iraqi Republican Guards in crackdown on anti-Saddam Iraqi Shia and Kurds.
- 2001: FBI arrested seven Iranians in the United States who funneled \$400,000 to a MEK-affiliated organization in the UAE which used the funds to purchase weapons.
- 2003: At start of Operation Iraqi Freedom MEK leadership negotiated a cease-fire with Coalition Forces and voluntarily surrenders their heavy-arms to Coalition control.
- 2003: French authorities arrest 160 MEK members at operational bases they believed the MEK was using to coordinate financing and planning for terrorist attacks.
- Post-2003: high-level MEK leave MEK's "Camp Ashraf" in Iraq, relocating in various European capitals.

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The most prominent international human rights organizations -- including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International -- have determined the MEK to be undemocratic, with a cult-like organizational structure and modus operandi that belies its claim to be a vehicle for democratic change.

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During my time living and working in Iran, it became quite clear that the MEK is not at all popular among the Iranian people. Of the literally hundreds of people I interviewed and/or spoke with in Iran about the MEK, not one had anything positive to say about it. When Iran’s (2009) post-election turbulence commenced, the MEK quickly sought to join the frenzy of brewing opposition to the current government inside Iran. But by claiming links to this indigenous opposition, the MEK connected their name to genuinely disenfranchised voters, thereby providing the Iranian government with yet another excuse to “discredit” and crackdown on peaceful protesters.

Increased U.S. government support for the MEK will empower Ahmadinejad and other hardliners in Iran, thereby increasing their (Ahmadinejad and the other hardliners) overall domestic support exponentially. Never has the level of cohesion among regime “insiders” been so low (but) supporting the MEK will provide Iranian government insiders with a foreign-based treat that can be exploited to heal fractures within the regime, increase the number of Iranians that rally around the flag, and eliminate indigenous political opposition -- thereby hurting the very people that America seeks to help. Ironically, if the U.S. wants to help Ahmadinejad and the hardliners cement a long-term dictatorship in Iran, support for the Mojahedin is the way to do it. It will significantly reduce any chance of real rapprochement with the Iranian government, and severely curtail indigenous democratic

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progress in Iran. The Iranian people won’t forgive or forget this - particularly given the history surrounding U.S. policies toward Mossadegh and the Shah. And this is one of the cardinal sins poisoning U.S. – Iran relations to this day. It is worth noting that increasing American support for the MEK is a step that the Bush administration—even at the height of its openly hostile Iran policy -- wasn’t willing to take. Even they understood that increased support for the MEK will exacerbate all of the challenges and problems that Iran policy currently poses to the USG.”

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Michael Rubin, Commentary Magazine, July 04, 2011

## Bachmann and the Mujahideen e-Khalq

**Embracing Massoud and Maryam Rajavi's cult (Mojahedin Khalq, MKO, MEK) is like embracing Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge**

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2011/07/03/michele-bachmann-and-the-mujahideen-e-khalq/>

While I welcome Rep. Michele Bachmann's presence in the presidential debate, I am agnostic on her candidacy. Certainly, she has a compelling personal story. Because I believe in small government, prioritize individual liberty and freedom, and am libertarian on most social issues, I also sympathize with the Tea Party movement, and I certainly also value a strong national defense. That said, I also believe the science supporting the theory of evolution is

there are certain incontrovertible facts: (1) the MKO has targeted Americans in past terrorist attacks; (2) they have embraced Saddam; (3) they operate as a cult which remains hostile to freedom, liberty, and democracy; and (4), they have very little if any support among Iranians in Iran.

If any presidential candidate wishes to embrace freedom and liberty in Iran, great. Iranians have suffered disproportionately in their history and deserve a real chance at freedom and democracy. Should the regime fall in Tehran, Iran could become as much a force for stability as it is now a catalyst for instability. After all, the Iranian people will have been immunized against the disease of populism and the misuse of religion for political purposes.

However, support for the MKO is the best way to preserve the Islamic Republic. Iranians recognize while what they have is bad, embrace of Masoud and Maryam Rajavi's cult would be analogous to embrace of Pol Pot's

**... I also welcome the debate on whether the MKO is a terrorist group or not (I believe it is), there are certain incontrovertible facts: (1) the MKO has targeted Americans in past terrorist attacks; (2) they have embraced Saddam; (3) they operate as a cult which remains hostile to freedom, liberty, and democracy; and (4), they have very little if any support among Iranians in Iran. However, support for the MKO is the best way to preserve the Islamic Republic. Iranians recognize while what they have is bad, embrace of Masoud and Maryam Rajavi's cult would be analogous to embrace of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge ...**

compelling and that science, rather than religion, should form the basis of science classes, and so I am somewhat put off by Bachmann's apparent support of intelligent design. When push comes to shove, however, national security is my key issue.

I was disappointed, therefore, to see Bachmann's uncritical support (see 3:25) for the Mujahideen e-Khalq Organization (MKO), which the State Department defines as a terror group. While I agree the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Islamic Republic against MKO members—including the infamous purge of political prisoners—is inexcusable, and I also welcome the debate on whether the MKO is a terrorist group or not (I believe it is),

Khmer Rouge. The only thing that can make Iranians rally around their current leadership is American outreach to the MKO. Having lived and traveled in Iran, the best analogy to understand how Iranians feel about the MKO is to imagine how Americans would react if, in a misguided attempt to show solidarity with Americans, some outside force promoted John Walker Lindh as a force for freedom. The logic of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" does not always hold true. If Bachmann wants to be serious on Iran, she should repudiate Obama's naive outreach, but she shouldn't accept the propaganda of an equally undemocratic cult.

## CONTENT

**Tell the U.S. Government to Say NO to Mujahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult)** 1-2

**New U.S. approach to Mojahedin-e Khalq (MKO, MEK) in Camp Ashraf overlooks the victims' human rights** 1-3

**Washington pressures Iraq to provide sanctuary for Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) terrorists** 4-5

**US State Department claims no popular support for Mojahedin Khaq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult)** 8-13

**Bachmann and the Mujahideen e-Khalq** 14

**Challenges for the Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) lobby in US** 16



### Jalal Talibani: Committee formed to shut Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) Ashraf camp

Iraq's President Jalal Talabani says a committee has been formed to shut down a camp belonging to the anti-Iran terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO).

"The government of Iraq will do all it can to prevent terrorism. We should attempt to close down MKO terrorists' Ashraf Camp and we shall remove all those people. Those who are willing will



Iraq's President Jalal Talabani

**... Iraq's President Jalal Talabani says a committee has been formed to shut down a camp belonging to the anti-Iran terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO). "The government of Iraq will do all it can to prevent terrorism. We should attempt to close down MKO terrorists' Ashraf Camp and we shall remove all those people. Those who are willing will go back to Iran. Others will go wherever they want to," Talabani said in a speech during an anti-terrorism conference in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on Saturday. Talabani pointed out that the committee was formed by Iran, Iraq and the International Red Cross, reiterating that the camp would be closed by the end of 2011 ...**

go back to Iran. Others will go wherever they want to," Talabani said in a speech during an anti-terrorism conference in the Iranian capital, Tehran, on Saturday.

"A committee has been formed to shut down Camp Ashraf in order to help establish security for our neighbors," he went on to say.

Talabani pointed out that the committee was formed by Iran, Iraq and the International Red Cross, reiterating that the camp would be closed by the end of 2011.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari also said during a joint press conference with his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Salehi earlier that the camp would be shut down and its members would leave Iraq by the end of 2011.

The MKO is listed as a terrorist organization by much of the international community and is responsible for numerous acts of terror and violence against Iranian civilians and government officials.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it enjoyed the support of Iraq's executed dictator Saddam Hussein and set up Camp Ashraf near the Iranian border.

The organization is also known to have cooperated with Saddam in suppressing the 1991 uprisings in southern Iraq and the massacre of Iraqi Kurds.

Iran has repeatedly called on the Iraqi government to expel the group, but the US has been blocking the expulsion by pressuring the Iraqi government.

Iran is among the

**Continued on Page 16**

## Challenges for the Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) lobby in US

The Cult Rajavi

Mazda Parsi, Nejat Bloggers, June 27 2011

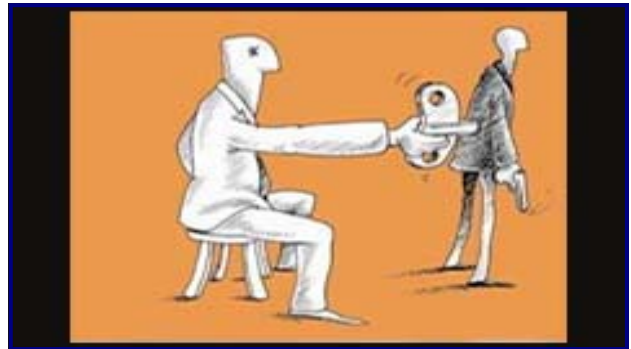
<http://www.nejatngo.org/en/post.aspx?id=3753>

The relationship between the Mujahedin -e- khalq (MEK/MKO) and Israel is getting weirdly closer as the group's large-scale campaign to get removed from FTO list of the State Department grows. It's not a coincidence that the MKO adoring supporters among American neo-conservatives – these days largely responsible for the push toward war in the Middle East- seem also caring to Israel and the Zionist lobby in the US, AIPAC. Having begun with an anti Zionism—even anti Jews-- and anti-imperialism agenda, the MKO's role to run the super powers' policy is considered controversial by experts. [1]

In a series of interviews with PBS, Keith Weisman former senior official of AIPAC shows his concern over a possible war that may be pushed by Israeli lobbies against Iran. He reveals how Israel funds and supports Iranian dissident groups like Mujahedin - e- Khalq for a further war and eventually regime change policy against Islamic Republic. Weisman asserts that his role to stop those policies was influential. After the American invasion to Iraq, Iran became front and center for Weisman at AIPAC, according to Robert Dreyfuss of Tehran Bureau, PBS. Weissman describes the situation at that time:

"Iran came back in a big way after the invasion of Iraq, because you had all these guys running around saying, 'Next stop Tehran!' and all that," says Weissman. Many within AIPAC, and some of Israel's top Iran-watchers, wanted to push hard for Iraq-style regime change in Iran, too, beginning with overt and covert support for dissidents, minority groups, and exile militia such as the Mojahedin-e Khalgh (MKO).

"You should see the people who crawled out of the woodwork to talk to me! I talked to monarchists, to socialists, to communists, everybody. And they all wanted AIPAC to support regime change," remembers Weissman. "Israel was also trying to unduly influence the Uni-



victims of terrorism as more than 17,000 Iranians, including senior officials, have lost their lives in various terror attacks since the victory of the Islamic Revolution some thirty years ago.

Out of the 17,000 Iranians killed in terrorist attack, 12,000 of them have fallen victim to acts of terror carried out by the MKO.



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Continued on Page 6