

Nejat Newsletter

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Happy Nowruz (New Year)

According to the ancient Persian calendar, 21 March (1 Aries), which is the first day of spring, marks the beginning of the New Year (Nowruz). Persians have celebrated Nowruz for more than 3000 years through the history and did not stop doing so despite many troubles in deferent eras. In ancient times the rulers from deferent parts of the Persian Empire used to gather in Persepolis or any other capital of the time and present their gifts to the king



of kings.

There are many legends told about how celebrating Nowruz was first started. It is also said in these tales that there is an old man called Amu Nowruz (Uncle New

Year) who brings gifts and happiness to the children, like the Santa Claus in Christmas.

On the beginning of

spring the nature becomes alive again and everywhere turns green. There is an expression which states that the winter reminds you the last days of the life and spring reminds you the new life started. This is as if the nature starts a new life on 21 March.

The Nejat Society wishes all readers a very happy New Year. We pray that may God turns this year the year of salvation to those still captured in Iraq under the siege of Rajavi's cult.

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Mojahedin cult acknowledges holding children in Camp Ashraf

In a report from Baghdad on security measures in to combat insurgent activity, the Iraqi government again clarified its position regarding the Mojahedin Khalq organization (aka Rajavi cult).

18 February 2007

...Meanwhile, Iraqi cabinet spokesman Ali Al Dabagh said the government regarded the Iranian [Mojahedin] Khalq opposition group, which



Iraq harboured during former President Saddam Hussein's reign, as 'a terrorist' group.

Al Dabagh said that the group should be forced to leave since 'the constitution forbids the presence of any organization that is engaged in or supports in terrorism in the Iraqi territories.'

Less than a month before Al Dabagh's comments, a [Mojahedin] Khalq spokeswoman had told pan-Arab Al Sharq Al Awsat that the group's faction in Iraq, which lives in a camp east of Baghdad, has stopped its activities.

'We only have around 4,000 men, women and

children who reside in Ashraf camp near Diyali,' Dawla Norouzi said, adding: 'We respect the Iraqi government.'

Norouzi said that [Mojahedin] Khalq activities in were reduced to 'cultural and educational' activities.

[Mojahedin] Khalq has been struggling against the Iranian regime for more than two decades.

Editorial: Comment on the Washington Times article “*An overarching strategy*”

An *overarching strategy* is the title of a commentary article **By James Lyons** published in the American Newspaper *The Washington Times* on February 22, 2007.

In the final part of this article we read: “Furthermore, as part of an overarching strategy we should also review our support for opposition groups within Iran. For example, taking the Mujahideen-al Khalq (MEK) off the State Department's terror list would send a definite signal to Tehran, especially if the MEK were suddenly funded and equipped.

Make no mistake, the MEK is no friend of America. In the past, they have targeted Americans. However, the MEK and other home-grown Iranian insurgent groups are fully capable of carrying out specific missions that would require

the mullahs in Tehran to divert their attention and more importantly their economic and political resources from mischief-making in Iraq, their support for such terrorist groups as Hezbollah, their goal of hegemony in the Persian Gulf region, and their attempts to gain logistical beachheads in South and Central America by allying themselves with anti-U.S. leaders such as Venezuela's Hugo Chavez and Cuba's Fidel and Raul Castro.

Iran's hand has been exposed. We must now be ruthless in pursuing our objectives so an overarching strategy to stabilize the region can be achieved.”

What the author of this article has failed to acknowledge is that the Mojahedin-é Khalq Organisation MKO (or MEK) in not just an adventurous organisation which could be used as mer-

cenaries wherever and whenever necessary. This organisation is proved to be a destructive cult which makes it as much dangerous for anyone who tries to utilize them as to the opposite party.

In the present newsletter an article by [Patrick McElwee](#) has appeared on pages 6 and 7. In this article it is clearly shown how the American citizens could be endangered by using terrorist cults for short term benefits.

By referring to the past experiences, the author of this article shows how destructive this sort of policy could be. We draw your attention to this article and recommend you to read it.

Meeting with Mr Ashraf Qazi, the UN representative in Iraq

A fruitful meeting was held between Mr Ashraf Qazi the UN representative in Iraq and a delegation from the Nejat Society. In this meeting Mr Sametipur, Ms Rabei, and Ms Shalchi were representing the Nejat Society. Mr Alan Fellows, Mr Qazi's assistant in political affairs, was also present at the meeting.

Initially the society was introduced and its aims and demands were described in general. The situation of Ashraf Camp in Iraq and those who are mentally or even physically captive in Mojahedin-é Khalq Organi-

sation (MKO) were also discussed. Mr Sametipur explained in details what the society has been trying to do for the families in the past three years and described how they were striving to arrange meetings between families and their beloved ones in Iraq.

The cultic situation of MKO and its internal relationships and the way recruits are mind manipulated was also explained. Mr Qazi compared MKO with Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in this sense.

The Nejat Society's delegation draw Mr Qazi's atten-

tion to the fact that MKO members have been totally isolated from the outside world for many years and some sort of arrangements must be taken to account to make sure that they can freely choose their future and their destinations.

The Nejat Society delegation made it clear that all families are demanding is to have free contacts with their relatives.

Mr Qazi gave promises that he would see to the matter as soon as he returns to New York and would raze the matter with the appropriate authorities.

The case of the residents of TIPF (Temporary International Presence Facility) in Iraq

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Since April 2003, and after American forces took charge over the members of MKO (Mojahedeen-e Khalque Organization), and their main facility called Camp Ashraf, they were forced to also maintain a temporary camp site in the adjacent facility, that became their own residence and operation facility. The second camp was established to accommodate hundreds of people who were discovered either in on site prisons, controlled by MKO commanders, or in Abu Gharib prison. The only crime of these individuals whom in some cases were detained for years was the fact that at some point they denounced and opposed the ideology and actions of the MKO and expressed their intention of leaving the organization. There are also people who have been kidnapped by the organization or brought into the camp from or other neighboring countries on the mere promise of facilitating their migration to the western countries. There are also some underage children who ended up in in the mass recruitments of 1997-1998 by MKO leadership from Europe and North America .

Due to the fact that these people did not possess any legal documents, since they were confiscated by the MKO commanders upon their arrival at the camp, they were not free to leave before the country succumbed into the war. Also, since Americans were convinced that they will finish their job in no time and leave no proper masseurs were taken to accommodate the hundreds of the people who were originally moved into the camp or escaped the main Camp Ashraf in the past 4 years and joined TIPF. Despite the strict measures taken by MKO commanders to control and secure the Camp Ashraf every month new people risk their lives and join the TIPF resi-

dents since they do not want to be associated with the organization any longer.

In mid 2006 UNHCR started interviewing these guys, through video phone, and currently over 170 people have been interviewed and over 120 files have been distributed among the Western countries, included. Yet no international organization, i.e. Red Cross, HRW, AI etc. have ever visited this camp. The American forces in charge of the camp do not comply with the international laws regarding the Rights of refugees by the reason of neither US nor being a signatory of the 1951 Convention.

The life condition of this camp is below any reasonable standard. The residents of the camp were living in half ripped tents for all these years with only a hose and a water tank as their bathing facility. There are no medical services available except for occasional painkillers. Their means of access to the outside is totally controlled by the Americans and can be easily removed at their discretion (As it has been in the past two month, especially after President Talebani's visit to and escalation of the possibility of war).

Suffering from the insecurity and helplessness in addition to their day to day struggle while trapped in a middle of the war in a foreign country the morals of these guys are deteriorating as their bodies are. They feel totally neglected by the international community, though it labels the MKO a terrorist organization, yet allows its leadership and active members to enjoy free life within the Western democracy. It also allows their various lobbyists to associate themselves with the politicians and get their support, even in . One recent example is David Kilgore's meeting of February 1st in Geneva along with the MKO delegates to negotiate and secure the presence of the MKO members in . This irresponsible proposal by a former politician, who should be aware of the grave impacts of this, raises serious questions.

Who will benefit from this group to remain in even if the current Iraqi government agrees with that? Would it be these people whom after long years of hardship and violence against them will have only the option of stay-

ing in a war torn country that is unable to protect and provide for its own citizens? The Leadership of MKO who will keep their bargaining tools where it has the most effect and generates funds and protection to them? The Iranian government who will have excuse to meddle with the Iraqi affairs till they get them all back and we all know the rest? Or the Americans who have never shied away from using MKO members in their dangerous adventures at the borders? I refer you to the inquiries of Colonel Sam Gardiner, the Marine Commander, who has been repeatedly questioning the relation between the Administration and MKO in .

The main reason behind the efforts of likes of Mr. Kilgore is to keep these guys in without any protection of the International community. It helps the MKO leadership to sell the services of these guys to the best buyer, currently Americans, as they did before with Saddam Hussein. In return the leadership and their agents get to enjoy free and luxurious life in democratic societies while sharing that blood money with the campaigns of a few politicians and rub elbows with them to intimidate their critics.

The whole issue by the account of all experts is that the moment the residents of TIPF leave that camp towards a free life, not to or , the entire Camp Ashraf will express their desire to leave too. This is why all parties involved try their best to kill these innocent people along with their hopes and dreams for a better life. Attached you will find the famous report titled "No Exit" by HRW. It should emphasize what a serious risk it was to denounce this violent and undemocratic organization by these people and those who lost their lives while trying.

Currently over 20 files of residents of TIPF have been sent to through UNHCR. In our opinion it would be a great gesture for to be, as in the past, the pioneer of Human Rights and good will. An urgent action is required before other players, with questionable agenda, lay their hands on these people and create another human disaster.

Respectfully,

Niaz Salimi
Director-North American Divisions

Should Washington "UNLEASH" Rajavi cult in Iraq?

Telegraph, February 25, 2007

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/02/25/wiran25.xml>

According to a report by *Telegraph*, is secretly funding militant ethnic separatist groups in an attempt to pile pressure on the Islamic Republic to give up its nuclear program.

In the past year there has been a wave of unrest in ethnic minority border areas of , with bombing and assassination campaigns against soldiers and government officials.

Such incidents have been carried out by the Kurds in the west, the Azeris in the north-west, the Ahwazi Arabs in the southwest, and the Baluchis in the southeast. Most Baluchis live over the border in .

Although Washington officially

denies involvement in such activity, Teheran has long said to detect the hand of both and in attacks by guerrilla groups on its internal security forces. Last

Monday, publicly hanged a man, Nasrollah Shanbe Zehi, for his involvement in a bomb attack that killed 11 Revolutionary Guards in the city of Zahedan in Sistan-Baluchistan.

An unnamed local official told the semi-official Fars news agency that weapons used in the attack were British and U.S.-made. John Pike, the head of the influential Global Security think tank in Washington , said: "The activities of the ethnic groups have hotted up over the last two years and it would be a scandal if that was not at least in part the result of CIA activity."

The Baluchistan-based Brigade of God group, which last year kidnapped and killed eight Iranian soldiers, is a volatile Sunni organization that many fear could easily turn against Washington after taking its money.

A row has also broken out in Washington over whether to "unleash" the military wing of the Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK), an Iraq-based Iranian opposition group with a long and bloody history of armed opposition to the Iranian government.

The group is currently listed by the U.S. State Department as terrorist organization, but Mr. Pike said: "A faction in the Defense Department wants to unleash them. They could never overthrow the current Iranian government but they might cause a lot of damage."

Telegraph.co.uk

MKO Remains on the EU Terror List

18/02/2007

source : IRNA

The European Union (EU) has sent a letter to the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group in which it enumerated the reasons it has placed the MKO on its terrorist blacklist.

Similar letters will be sent to those people or organizations which have been enlisted as terrorist groups, sources in the EU, speaking on condition of anonymity,

told an IRNA correspondent in Brussels.

The letter follows the decision by the European Court of Justice last December to remove the group from the terrorist blacklist, alleging that there was no transparency in the way the list was composed.

But the EU Council declared on 30 January that it will keep the group on the blacklist.

EU imposes anti-terrorist restrictions on those organi-

zations or groups which are in the blacklist, including freezing the assets or blocking the financial and economic funding, with the list being updated on a yearly basis.

France and Britain which had previously blacklisted MKO, have not reacted to the efforts to unblock the group's assets, EU's official website EU Observer reported.

United States declared that the MKO as a terrorist group in 1997

The European Parliament Held an Assembly, Considering the MKO's Present Situation

On Tuesday February 27, 2007, an assembly hold in EU Parliament in Bruxelles to consider the present situation of the MKO and sustaining the group name in the EU terrorist list.

More than 70 EU parliamentary members who were mostly Green party attending the assembly. Angelika Beer, the representative of the "Dialogue in " of the European



Parliament, was the director of the assembly. Also, there were many journalists and analyst expertise in terrorism. Some former members of the MKO and their representatives were also invited to this assembly whose names are :

- 1- Michael Matison the General Secretary of Common Security in European Parliament Council
- 2- Senator Josie Doubiee



- 3- Mohammad Hussien Sobhanie , Human rights activist and Expert on MKO's Situation

Angelika Beer briefly explained the reason why MKO is absent. She said that " since MKO are known as a terrorist group and their name is among EU terrorist list therefore , they are prevented for attending the assembly."

Followed by Angelika Beer, Michael Matison read a report on legal rights in EU Parliament. Then Senator Josie Doubie shared his personal experience visiting the Camp Ashraf . He mentioned MKO is a cult group by the definition of the cult.

Mohammad Hussien Sobhanie talked his personal experience when he was jailed about the systematic violation of human rights, the danger of cultish believes and terror policy in MKO. Sobhanie told the assembly that removing MKO's from EU terror list will be against Human



Rights principal and the democratic values that EU is based on those values..

The representatives of the Associations who participated and supported the assembly are:

- 1- Pars-Iran Association
- 2- Rahai Society
- 3- Family Rescue Net
- 4- Iran-Sabz Association
- 5- Iran-Interlink
- 6- New View
- 7- Iran-Ghalam Society

Feb.27,2007

US May Be Supporting Terrorists, Endangering Its Own Citizens

Patrick McElwee: Reckless Disregard

Wednesday, 7 March 2007, 9:37 am
Opinion: truthout.org

By [Patrick McElwee](#)
[truthout](#) | Guest Contributor

From:
http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/030607A.shtml



Tuesday 06 March 2007

In the 1980s, in the context of the Cold War, the United States government and its allies provided training, weapons and billions of dollars to Islamist warriors, enabling the development of a terrorist infrastructure. One group emerging from that period later perpetrated the attack of September 11th, 2001. This lesson from history is especially important now that some reports indicate our leaders may be doing it again, ironically in the name of a "war on terror."

In 1978, a pro-Soviet government took power in Afghanistan. In late 1979, after the US provided aid to opponents of the Afghan government, the Soviet Union invaded to shore up its allies. In a secret presidential "finding," President Carter authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to provide lethal and non-lethal support to Afghans fighting the Soviets.¹

The Reagan administration in 1980 announced a more aggressive policy against the "evil empire." Operations in Afghanistan were ramped up. Billions of dollars were poured into the region to support an Afghan "jihad." Saudi Arabia pumped a similar amount of money into the effort. The goal was to recruit, arm and train radical Islamic forces to inflict maximum damage on the Soviet Union.

US leaders were not able to directly commit American forces, both because the US public would not allow it after the horror of Vietnam and due to the risk of hot war with the Soviet Union. So they relied on proxies to do the dirty work; Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt had the most direct contact with fighters.²

There is a debate about whether the United States directly funded the non-Afghani Arabs who joined the war and later formed the core of the Islamic terrorism movement, but it is clear that US allies did. No one seems to have objected to these activities, including when the Saudis recruited the son of a prestigious and wealthy Saudi family: Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden built his organization, al-Qaeda, while fighting in Afghanistan and benefiting from US backing for that effort.

Arab fighters also clearly benefited from the availability of arms and cash in the region, as well as from tactical training. Some Afghan fighters were trained in camps in the United States.³

After the war, Arab fighters returned home hardened and with detailed knowledge of skills like infiltration, taking prisoners and handling weaponry.

In 1996, the [Los Angeles Times](#) found that veterans of the Afghan war had been implicated in all of the major terrorist attacks since the 1980s.

Some press reports indicate our government may once again be aiding terrorists in service of a new cold war - this time with Iran and its Shiite allies in the region.

The US government sees Iran as a competitor for regional power. The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq had the side-effect for Iran of removing two hostile neighbors. In the case of Iraq, the ties between Iran and the Shiite-led government are especially strong.

In a detailed [New Yorker story](#) posted on February 25th, Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Seymour Hersh reports that in the last few months, the White House has decided to confront Iran and its allies by supporting Sunni Muslims in a regional sectarian conflict. In the search for Sunni groups able to act as violent proxy forces, Washington and its allies may be supporting the growth of terrorist groups.

Lebanon is a major front in this new cold war. The Shiite Hezbollah organization, which gained popularity in its war with Israel last summer, is seeking more power in the

US May Be Supporting Terrorists, Endangering Its Own Citizens (cont)

Sunni-dominated government. In a scenario that sounds painfully similar to the proxy war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, Hersh reports that covert funds from the United States and Saudi Arabia provided to the Lebanese government are being used to support violent Sunni groups with ideological ties to al-Qaeda.

While the Bush administration publicly acknowledges its alliance with Sunni states, funding to violent, non-state actors is reportedly kept secret - even from Congress. This is done both by using Saudi money and by tapping into secret pools of money, such as the billions in reconstruction funds unaccounted for in Iraq.

They can also avoid informing Congress about these activities by relying on covert agencies other than the CIA. When authorizing a CIA operation, the president is required by law to send a secret "finding" to Congress. That is not the case for the National Security Council or many Pentagon operations, for example.

At least one member of the Washington foreign policy establishment seems to endorse the administration's strategy. Leslie Gelb, former president of the Council on Foreign Relations, told Hersh that in Lebanon, "We're justified in helping any non-Shiite parties that resist [a change in the distribution of political power to benefit Hezbollah]. We should say this

publicly, instead of talking about democracy."

Another [report of US support for terrorist groups](#) in its confrontation with Iran comes from the Sunday Telegraph, which reported on February 25th that the US is secretly funding separatist militias inside Iran, some of which engage in terrorist attacks. For example, the "Brigade of God," a Sunni militia, last year kidnapped and killed eight Iranian soldiers.

The Telegraph reports there is even an ongoing discussion in the Defense Department over whether to "unleash" on Iran an Iraqi-based organization, the Mujahedeen-e Khalq, which is on the State Department's terrorist list.

The American people and Congress have a very real interest in investigating and stopping covert support for violent, anti-Iranian groups. Terrorist attacks against Americans or against other civilians are the entirely predictable consequences of supporting "our" terrorists against a perceived enemy - just as they were a predictable consequence of the US-supported Afghan jihad.

Congress needs to use its committee and subpoena powers to investigate these allegations, and should act to strengthen prohibitions against funding for terrorist groups. There are two precedents for such action: the Clark Amendment of 1976, which barred US aid to private

military or paramilitary groups in Angola, and the Boland Amendment, which prohibited support for the contras in Nicaragua.

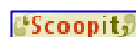
The war in Iraq has already increased the threat of terrorism, according to a [2006 National Intelligence Estimate](#). War with Iran would only further exacerbate it. We must stop these wars. But at the same time, we must be aware of the possibility that our government will support terrorist proxies if they cannot commit US forces. After the horrible blowback we experienced on 9/11, this is completely unacceptable. We must mobilize to restrain our leaders, who seem incapable or unwilling to learn from history.

Patrick McElwee is a policy analyst and national organizer of [Just Foreign Policy](#).

1 Zbigniew Brzezinski interviewed in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 15-21, 1998.

2 Mahmood Mamdani, "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror", (New York: Pantheon Books, 2004), pp. 119-177.

3 John Cooley, "Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism" (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p. 90.



Commemoration of 8th of March, The International Women's Day

Paying tribute to the women's roll in the society, and examining the situation of women in Rajavi's cult



The former women members of Mojehedin-e Khalq Organisation (MKO) participated in a commemorative meeting which was organised by the Nejat Society in Isfahan on the anniversary of the International Women's Day. They presented a conclusion about their experiences from the cultic relationships within the MKO to the concerned families of the MKO members. The atmosphere dominating the cult was also explained and they described how women, even more than men, are mentally abused in the organisation.



The meeting was opened by Ms Rabii. She explained how women have been victims of various cults including the MKO particularly as mothers. The meeting was followed by a panel to discuss the situation of women in cults and two vital questions about women in MKO were discussed. The two queries are as follows:

1. Why women have been given higher positions in the MKO?
2. Why less women defect from the MKO compared to the men?

In this panel Ms Shalchi, Ms Qorsi, and Ms Sadri spoke about their experiences within the MKO. They discussed that despite Rajavi as the leader of the MKO is a man but he has given all key responsibilities to women. This is of course due to the fact that he does not trust men and finds women more reliant.

They illustrated how Rajavi suppressed the natural emotions, passions and feelings of



women and forced them to divorce their husbands and abandon their children. Rajavi knows well that this suppression would absorb them to his cause and make them all dependent on him.

The ladies provided many examples and facts about the misdeeds occurring inside the organisation. For instance Ms Sadri explained how she was suggested to give her one year old child a bottle of milk containing cyanide and how she was made to slap her husband into his face. Ms Qorsi declared that she was threatened that she would be sent to Abu-Ghuraib Prison if she would not submit to the demands of the organisation. Ms Shalchi testified that the organisation believes family is the nest of corruption and made the followers

to have the same thought.

The conclusion at the end of the panel was the answer to the above mentioned questions that although men and women are equal by creation, but the



society has imposed them certain eminent roles. Women, particularly in eastern societies like Iran are more reluctant and dependent to someone else than men. They generally feel the need of being supported. On the other hand women are the core of the family and very dependant to them, therefore the organisation, like many cults, tries to turn their love to the family into hatred. Women would be totally vulnerable to be dependent to the cult and its leader once a woman is made to hate her family and



would be much harder for her to break ties with the cult and leave the organisation.

Finally the families who had participated in the meeting raised their questions to be answered by the panel. They mainly wanted to know that how they can help their beloved ones out of the terrorist cult of Rajavi.

Women Lured by Mojahedin-e Khalq, the Religious Cult

I have only one solution: to rise above this absurd drama that others have staged around me.

Sonia Sanchez



Parvin Haji

Still reeling from my bitter experience, I am trying to come to grips with many years of my most vulnerable life spent in a religious, destructive cult called the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK); an experience which shattered my confidence and left me feeling abused and betrayed.

I was seeking freedom and the equal rights of men and women in my homeland Iran when I was recruited by and trapped in the Mojahedin cult. At the time that I succumbed to them and became a member of the MEK, I would never have thought that one day the MEK's leaders would betray me as they did.

As a former cult member, I endorse the view that the Mojahedin cult's leaders Massoud and Maryam Rajavi are deceptive, exploitive masters of mind control who can weave pernicious spells capable of holding followers in thrall for decades, especially the women. Like many leaders, they are handsome, attractive and seductive.

The organization itself vehemently rejects the notion that it is a cult--and all that the designation brings with it. The leaders prefer to describe their outfit as a legitimate political group which wants to bring freedom to Iran.

Unfortunately, behind this façade they do not follow even the minimum principle of freedom which is the freedom of personal decision making. However the MEK characterizes itself, an individual's foray into the cult netherworld can exact a huge emotional toll. The surrender of personal autonomy, even during the first brief enchantment, can cause profound self-doubt and loss of self-esteem. A longer stay can seri-

ously derail (if not destroy) a member's life. The damage is even greater if exiting members were abused and abuse of women's sexuality in the MEK cult is a common theme for women members. Some former women members describe being forced into marrying men that they did not know. Then, in 1990 the leader of the MEK cult ordered all the members to divorce. This meant that all the married couples in the MEK must divorce without any question or protest. For unmarried members, both men and women, they were required to divorce their sexuality and purify themselves of all sexual thoughts and feelings. Women in the MEK are indoctrinated into performing whatever has been planned for them by the leaders. After the divorces, the women had to give up their children and denounce and destroy their feelings of motherhood.

How much do we have to fear from these groups? And how do otherwise intelligent and seemingly sensible women get trapped in such madness? In the main, cults target people in transition--college students away from home for the first time, people who have moved to new cities for jobs, those who have just been divorced or widowed. The vast majority of members are merely looking for a sense of community during a difficult time in their lives. This is how the MEK as a cult group operates. The MEK recruiters deceive and trap people by finding the weak point of the individual. Once recruited, the individual is subjected to a daily indoctrination using patterns of mind control. This will start by keeping recruits so busy and so isolated that they have no time to question or reflect on what they're doing or to talk to others who might instill doubts. Rigid rules and rituals help reinforce the autonomy of the MEK cult, particularly in women. Yet experts in cults disagree on whether mind control without the use of force is even possible. "No-one who has observed these groups closely has concluded brainwashing is the reason people are in such cult," insists David Bromley, a professor of sociology at Virginia Commonwealth University, and this is what exactly MEK does. Another powerful factor is the charisma, magnetism, and seductive talents of the cult leaders. "They are con artists par-

excellence," I would insist, invasion of privacy, and the infliction of severe emotional distress.

Cults like the MEK should not remain such a mystery to people at this time. It is no longer an unknown phenomenon. Broad agreement does exist among psychologists and sociologists about what is meant by referring to a group as a cult. The study of countless cults has given rise also to valuable research into the use of mind control techniques and what is meant by psychological manipulation and psychological coercion.

Still, while organizations like the MEK are taken at face value and not subjected to rigorous investigation and research, it is clear that not enough is known about the many former members who have been able to extricate themselves from the clutches of the cult and return to a normal life. Nor is it not possible to ascertain how many people are still being recruited through the front door by dangerous, destructive cults like the MEK even as disenchanted members leave through the back door.

As a former member of the Mojahedin cult, I wonder why the public does not know more about destructive cults and the warped motives of their leaders. While experts may argue the finer points about what actually makes a cult or whether or not mind control or brainwashing keeps members in thrall, former members like myself struggle to put their lives back together. But, it certainly isn't easy: being in a cult is not something you walk away from and forget, it is like a disease and needs a long term cure.

There is no doubt that the Mojahedin-e Khalq is a destructive cult. But, when the claim of such an entity to be a democratic, freedom-loving political force which respects human rights, is not subjected to real scrutiny based on the evidence of former members, then I believe the tolerance of such destructive cults will be far more detrimental to society than anyone can imagine they are.

Parvin Haji

Date: 2007-03-06

I am a trained Islamic terrorist

By SAMANTHA WOSTEAR
March 02, 2007

reallife@the-sun.co.uk

COMMENT ON THIS STORY

IN her neat home nestling in a quiet suburban street, mum Anne Singleton peers out from her cottage-style windows.

Her Audi sits in the driveway and beyond it she sees a neat row of cedar trees leading to a church in an open field.

It is a typical English scene . . . and a lifetime away from the hostile deserts of Iraq and the military training camps of the People's Mujahidin of Iran. Though Anne also once called these home.

She was in the clutches of the terrorist organisation and ready to give her life — and sacrifice the lives of the innocent — in the name of a blood-thirsty war.

Little more than a decade ago, Anne was learning how to fire rifles and gearing up to fight for the group backed by Saddam Hussein.

Then, she believed her comrades were fighting for freedom in Iran — and that the deaths of innocent people were a justifiable means to an end.

But now the 48-year-old recognises the group for what it is — a deadly, extremist terrorist organisation.

With growing numbers of British youngsters being recruited into terror cells, Anne hopes her story will act as a warning. At her home in Leeds, she tells The Sun: "What happened to me could happen to anyone.

"These groups entice concerned activists then persuade them to commit terrorist atrocities.

"They convinced me to give up my life to fol-



low them. Now I see their methods were identical to the ones cults use to brainwash people."

Anne became involved with the extremists while studying English at Manchester University in 1979.

Her boyfriend at the time, an Iranian called Ali, was interested in the Mujahidin — a group formed in 1965 to free Iran from "capitalism, imperialism, reactionary Islamic forces and despotism".

Anne says: "I went along to Mujahidin meetings held in Manchester. In truth, I could not understand what the leader was saying in the videos we saw but I was transfixed.

"It all seemed so exciting. I thought, 'I want to help them and do some good' so I decided to convert to being Muslim."

Anne did not realise she was being psychologically manipulated.

She says now: "They flatter you in a way that you don't even realise they are doing it.

"They really put themselves on a pedestal so that when they want you to join them, you feel special.

"I thought I was a saviour of the world and would have done anything for the Mujahidin."

In 1989 Anne moved to London to become more involved in Mujahidin activities, working in computing and PR for them. The computer programmer says: "They told me I should dedicate myself totally to them and that they needed me.

"The following year, during a hunger strike, I succumbed fully.

"I took two weeks off work and by day three of not eating I felt like I was on a complete high.

"We were given tea and sugar to keep us going and I had entered a completely different state of mind.

"I was adamant that this was what I should do for the rest of my life."

Anne has since discovered that hunger and sleep deprivation are classic cult recruiting techniques.

She says: "I didn't question anything. I was shown a film of a female suicide bomber blowing up an ayatollah in Iran. It was horrific and very shocking at first.

"But they showed me the film so many times that I got less and less distressed. Eventually I didn't bat an eyelid. Of course, I heard politicians and journalists describing the group as extreme but I dismissed it and assumed they didn't understand.

"There were 30 or 40 of us living in a safe house and I was the only white person. I never left unless it was for fund-raising or a demo.

"We had no possessions and any money we earned or benefits we received had to be handed straight over to the group.

"We were discouraged from keeping in contact with any family or friends."

Anne's parents, an office administrator and a painter and decorator, insisted she gave them her address and they wrote to her regularly, but letters were often confiscated.

In 1992 Anne was asked to go to the Iraqi desert for military training.

She says: "I loved the camp. It felt liberating to obey orders be-

I am a trained Islamic terrorist (cont)

cause then you lose all responsibility for yourself. I had a uniform, did assault courses, learned how to drive trucks and did firearms training.

"When I signed up to the Mujahidin I never imagined I would do that, but once I was there it seemed totally normal."

After three months Anne was sent to Sweden to carry on with the PR work. But she became depressed after the group introduced a new rule banning marriages and families.

Anne says: "That rule seemed too final. I knew a family was the one other thing I wanted from life.

"To try to make me pull myself together they demoted me, sent me back to London and gave me less responsibility.

"It was reverse psychology, but I was so depressed that even that didn't work.

"I'd lost all motivation. They tried to make me feel guilty, saying I was letting them and God down.

"By 1993 I knew I wanted to distance myself from the group so I began to work part-time again as a college administrator."

Anne was finally ready to leave — but the Mujahidin wouldn't let her go easily. She

says: "They tried to make me frightened of the outside world, saying it was dangerous. They said I'd end up living an immoral life or get sucked into drugs or crime if I abandoned the values of the Mujahidin."

Around this time Anne met Massoud Khodabandeh, a senior and disillusioned member of the group who had also decided to leave.

They went their separate ways but met again and married in 1997. Three years later they had a son.

Anne says: "We are both Muslim but after we left the Mujahidin we would go out and get drunk just to be 'normal'. Being able to think for yourself was amazing.

"We were like little kids doing things like going to the supermarket and choosing our own food. We discussed what we'd been through and I had no doubt we were psychologically manipulated. We're fortunate we have each other to lean on."

Anne feels it is only since the birth of son Babak, now six, that she truly feels like her old self.

"His birth made me pull myself together and we moved to Leeds shortly afterwards," she says. "My family live there and

after years apart it was great to be close again."

The couple are now in a group called Iran Interlink, which campaigns **AGAINST** terrorist cells.

Anne says: "When I joined the Mujahidin I never had any intention of fighting. But by the end I thought it was OK to kill and assassinate.

"I thought it was right that people would die on suicide missions. I'm appalled at that now.

"France and Germany have ministers for cults and I think we need the same here.

"People are free to do what they like virtually until they reach the point of blowing someone up.

"The Government needs to look at terrorism from the angle of recruitment. People have a civilian mind where they know it is wrong to fire a gun and hurt someone. You have to be trained to kill and that is what's happening in these groups.

"Psychological manipulation can happen to anyone at any time.

"If you're lucky, you end up with a timeshare. If you're unlucky you end up blowing yourself and innocent people up on the Tube."

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MKO Defends Terrorist Acts in Zahedan

Iran didban,

February 22, 2007

Despite the condemnation of terrorist operations in Zahedan by the UN Secretary General and the UN Security Council and their call for the prosecution of those behind the attacks, terrorist group of Mojahedin-e Khalq supported the

terrorists under the name of "National Council of Resistance" and asked for the freedom of criminal terrorists who are seeking sectarian and religious divisions.

MKO's statement* says: "Suppression in Sistan and Baluchistan province has taken new dimensions in recent days...Meanwhile, by establishing injustice unofficial courts,

regime is going to execute a number of arrested people as quickly as possible in order to frighten the people.

Iranian resistance, calls on humanitarian communities and organizations to condemn the criminal behavior of mullahs' regime in Sistan and Baluchistan province and try to save the arrested people".

Briefing Publication of Nejat Society

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MEK as a Cult

Date: 2007-02-20

www.pars-iran.com

As described by Amir Taheri, the MEK is a personality cult built around blind devotion to Masud Rajavi, (and) it has recruited its adepts mainly from relatives of people executed by the Khomeini's regime.

Individuals are brainwashed, and not allowed to develop normal relationships outside the organization. Members have reportedly deified Masud's wife, Maryam Rajavi, MEK's political leader; her picture is found throughout all MEK camps. According to one report, from the day they were born, (members) were not taught to think for themselves, but to blindly follow their leaders.

During protests outside Iranian and French embassies in recent years, MEK members and sympathizers have gone on hunger strikes and more than a dozen set themselves on fire. As explained by one French-Iranian and in reference to France's jailing of Maryam Rajavi,

The immolations happened because people see Ms. Rajavi as a symbol of hope. They acted in desperation when this symbol was taken away from them.

These extremist displays of support for the MEK show that they are not just the average dissident group; it is in fact a cult that has operated as such for decades.

The first sign of cult-like tendencies came in the late 1960s when the MEK began preparations for armed struggle against the Shah. It was decided to establish

small cells of two to three members; as explained by Abrahamian, these groups were encouraged to live together in collectives, later known as safe houses, in order to pool resources, get to know each other better, and where feasible marry fellow members.



The MEK had a particularly strong following in Iranian prisons, forming *komunha* (communes) of tightly knit networks; the Qasr commune, led by Rajavi, was the largest. With the removal of the Shah in 1979, Rajavi quickly promoted younger activists from Qasr to the top of the MEK. Abrahamian describes Qasr as the seedbed for the cult of personality that was to grow around Rajavi in the early 1980s and reach full bloom in the mid-1980s. Those rejecting the cult tended to be pushed aside.

After the MEK launched a failed coup attempt in the summer of 1981, the bulk of its members that had not yet been killed or imprisoned fled to France and other European countries. In exile, especially in Western European cities, the MEK again placed its members in communal households. Each member had a supervisor (*masul*), who in turn had a supervisor, and this followed a chain of command all the way up to Rajavi himself, the first

supervisor (*masul-e avval*). Each member had to give a complete account of every day's activities to their *masul*. Members were effectively isolated inside their houses; communes had little interaction with each other and each member had to give the MEK all of his or her financial assets.

Members were forbidden to read non-MEK newspapers and were encouraged to spend their free time studying the group's publications. Self-criticism was required, and those who wished to marry needed to request permission to do so. If permission was granted, the MEK found a spouse for the individual and often arranged the wedding ceremony itself. The MEK continuously stressed the importance of obedience, discipline, and hierarchy, not of free expression, open discussion, or internal elections. Members obeyed Rajavi since he somehow embodied the members' general will. The official MEK publication *Mojahed* published streams of letters, speeches, and poems praising Rajavi; one person even wrote, Masud is to the Mujahadeen what Marx was for Marxism and Lenin for Leninism. The group had also taken on a new slogan: Iran is Rajavi, Rajavi is Iran. Those who had accepted Rajavi were seen as absolutely good, and those who rejected him were labeled traitors and evil. The MEK now had all the characteristics of an inward-looking personality cult.