

Nejat Newsletter

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Symposium on Terrorism in Iraq

Centre for International and Inter-governmental Studies of the University of Baghdad Thursday, 31st of January 2008.

A round table discussion centred on the issue of terrorism in Iraq and possible solutions to this problem.

The Symposium was divided into 3 parts:

- the general threat posed by terrorist groups and the ways they operate in Iraq
- foreign terrorist organisations in Iraq
- the creation of terrorist organisations in Iraq and the global supporters of these terrorist groups

Participants of the Symposium ranged from university professors including, Dr. Aziz Jabar Shayal, Dr. Samir Alshweely and Dr. Rasheed Saleh, professors of Political Studies from the University of Baghdad. The Symposium was also attended by many

governmental and non-governmental representatives from a wide range of ministries and NGOs, including representatives from Iraq's Ministries of Defence, Human Rights and Security.

Massoud Khodabandeh from the Centre de recherche sur le terrorisme depuis le 11 septembre 2001 (Paris), who was in Baghdad for meetings concerning the fate of the remaining individuals following dismantlement of Camp Ashraf which houses the disarmed Iranian terrorist organisation Mojahedin Khalq Organisation, was invited to participate in the discussion.

Prominent among the participants was Mr. Bassam Alhassani, advisor to Prime Minister Noori Al Maleki.

The Symposium ended with a full report on the issues discussed and Dr. Aziz Jabar Shayal delivered the end resolution in which one paragraph emphasized the neces-

sity for the dismantlement and deportation of the foreign terrorist Mojahedin Khalq organisation and encouragement and facilitation by the government and others to help the remaining individuals find a safe palace outside Iraq and return to normal life.

The symposium was covered by media representatives who reported from the meeting room.

Alaraghia television, Iraq's main TV network, reported the Symposium and broadcast a brief interview with Massoud Khodabandeh.

In the interview, Massoud Khodabandeh emphasised above all the right of the Iraqi people to enjoy security and have justice served against the perpetrators of violent acts in their country, in particular the criminal heads of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq organisation which was involved in the massacre of the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings against Saddam Hussein in March

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Captive in the Chains of Fob



Antoine Gessler, a prominent French writer, is the author of the book shown above which has been published in France about the deeds of the MKO

A letter from Dr Torabi on behalf of 8 UNHCR refugees

Aria Iran,

January 24, 2008

<http://www.ariairan.com/?mod=view&id=3020>

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I'm writing to you on behalf of the following 8 UNHCR recognized refugees who have been forced by Turkish Security and Political Police under gun fire to leave Turkey and cross the border back into Iraq :

Abdollahi, Ali

Adel, Hassan

Azari, Nasrollah

Eslamizadeh, Karam

Ghorbanzadeh, Rameza

Mohebbi, Hamid

Nemati, Hassan

Zolfaghaari, Kamran

These 8 people aged 30-50 are from a larger group of 200 Iranian nationals and former members of Mojaheddin Khalkh Organization (MKO), an opposition group fighting against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Following Saddam's downfall, these people seized the opportunity to leave MKO and take refuge in an American-run camp called Temporary International Presence Facility (TIPF) to await their destiny (i.e., being sent to European countries as refugees). They are all UN recognized refugees, each carrying three identification documents: an Iraqi Government's issued "Lesser Passer" card, a UNHCR Refugee ID, and a Coalition Forces' issued ID.

About 4 weeks ago, American Forces in TIPF began freeing these people from the camp in groups of 4 to 8 people and providing secure passage to various cities in Kordestan , Iraq , e.g., Moussell, Erbil.

Avoiding arrest by Kurdish police and extradition to Iran , many of them began heading north to Turkey.

Upon entering Turkey at the Iraq-Turkey border line, they were all arrested by the Turkish Security Police (in charge of foreigners) and moved to various prisons inside Turkey.

These 8 people, after two weeks in prison, were told to get ready to be moved to the city of Shirnak (Center of Silopi Region) for processing their request (to be formally recognized as UN refugees and allowed to contact UNHCR representatives in Turkey for re-settlement in a safe 3rd country.) Instead, they were taken to the Turkey-Iraqi border post at Haboor on the Turkey side (called Ebrahim Araghi on the Iraq side) in order to send them back to Iraq. Iraqi officials at the border-crossing refused to allow them entry to Iraq . Turkish Security Police then decided to force these people back into Iraq by taking them to a nearby unmanned border point with a river marking the border line between the two countries. There, the Turkish soldiers stripped these 8 people of their money and valuable personal belongings and under the command of Turkish Security Police forced them (by firing warning shots) to cross the river into Iraq.

These 8 people, are now in a border city called Zakhoo in Iraq and in eminent danger of being arrested by the Iraqi police and extradited to Iran.

By writing this letter, I would like to report to you

this unprecedented level of violation of human rights as well as the negligence of basic rights of UNHCR recognized refugees by your border and security police and to appeal to you for your help to intervene on behalf of these 8 and close to 200 other former MKO members who are kept in Prisons in Turkey. Please act from the position of authority and responsibility and use whatever means available to you to ensure that the Turkish Government respect the minimum rights of these people as UNHCR refugees and allow them to contact UNHCR representatives in Turkey for a safe passage to and resettlement in a country within European Union.

Yours Truly

M. Torabi



Ms Fariba Hashtrudi, the former member of NCR (alias of MKO), wrote her memoirs in a book called "my return from Iran" after she had a couple of trips to Tehran. The book has been published in France. Ms Hashtrudi is now a well-known journalist in Paris.

Letter of the Iranian Pen Club to President Talebani of Iraq

**Mr Talebani,
The Honourable President of Iraq**

Respectfully, we would like to acknowledge that the Ghalam Association is consisted of those ex-members of the MKO who managed to free themselves from the mental and even physical barriers of the Organisation. The main object of the Association is of course to try to help the previous comrades in such way that they be able to free themselves too and start a decent normal life again along with their families and beloved ones.

When Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was removed, some terrorist organisations with regional and international activities lost their only godfather and benefactor. One of these organisations is the Mojahedin-e Khalq organisation, listed as a terrorist entity in the US since 1997 and the EU since a year ago.

There is one undeniable fact that MKO and its National Liberation Army (NLA) have been an inseparable part of Saddam Hussein's Regime and have even participated along the forces of the Deposed Despot to suppress the People of Iraq's freedom movement in 1991. The Organisation is also responsible for many sabotage and terrorist activities inside Iran through the years.

The top members of the organisation, who are currently awaiting trial in both Iraq and France, are desperately trying to clear their names by distancing themselves from their cooperation with the Intelligence Services and the Army of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq, and their participation in the massacre of civilians in Iraq and Iran. This is despite the presence of overwhelming evidence and documents showing their engage-

ment in the massacre of both Iranian and Iraqi civilians, as well as a large number of witnesses who have been with this organisation and, after years of imprisonment and torture, have distanced themselves from this organisation which has turned to a military cult. These witnesses can verify this evidence and documents and are ready to testify in any international court of justice.

- We have emphasized to you and the Prime Minister of Iraq Mr. Al Maleki that the remaining 3400 members of the Rajavi cult in Ashraf camp near Kholes are part of the body of this organisation, many of whom have themselves been experiencing mental and physical torture at the hands of the leaders of the Mojahedin. They have been denied any contact with society or even members of their family for years and their account should be separated from the account of the leaders of the cult. You are aware that more than 200 of them who have separated themselves from the Mojahedin are still in the adjacent camp called TIPF and need help to get back to the normal society and integrate

But according to the news received in the last few days by Iran-Ghalam (IRAN-PEN) association, the condition of disaffected members of Mojahedin Khalq Organisation who are now accommodated in the TIPF part of Ashraf Camp is critically dangerous. Some personalities have already raised concern not the least Mr. Mohammed Hasibi who has written an open letter today, 21 December 2007 raising his deep concern about the situation of these people. A copy of this letter is attached.

Also, we would like to acknowledge that Mostafa and Mahbobeh Mohammady arrived

in Iraq from Canada to make another attempt to secure their daughter Somayeh's freedom from the MKO cult. Mostafa Mohammady had meetings with the Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister and the Deputy Head of the Judiciary. By January 12, Canadian Government officials warned that the Mohammady lives cannot be guaranteed in Iraq because of the threat posed by loose MKO personnel.

The American Force in Iraq are planning to close down the TIPF Camp in Ashraf, where the dissident members of the Mojahedin-e-Kalq Organization (MKO) take refuge leaving the organization, or the force will move the camp to other place (most likely into city of Mousel). For the past 2-3 weeks, about hundred and ten residences of the TIPF have been left on their own in an unsafe situation in Iraq. Some of these people decided to enter Turkey to seek a safer place. While entering in to Turkey some of these people were arrested and one of them has been shot and is now admitted in one of the hospital in a boarder of Turkey and Iraq with life threaten injuries, and the rest are also in life threatening situation with not a safe future ahead. We have a list of the 70 names of these people enclosed in this letter.

It is necessary to bring to your attention that closing the TIPF in the city of Kholes where the TIPF ,is presently located will cause a disaster for the dissident members in the Ashraf since they have no hope and safe place to go leaving Ashraf. The presence of TIPF in Ashraf was lasso a threat for Mojahedin; therefore, they MKO were insisting for closing or cancelling the TIPF.

Sir, we would like to ask you, why the TIPF should be closed down before the Ashraf to be cancelled and the MKO to be

Letter of the Iranian Pen Club to President Talebani of Iraq

expelled from Iraq, and why did you make a decision to shot down the TIPF, where the place was the hope for the people who would decide to leave the MKO and now might not have a safe place in Iraq to go.

We are prepared to hand over the names and particulars of the discontented members and those who wish to defect from the organisation as well as nec-

essary files and documents.

With many thanks and regards
22.01.2008

The Iranian Pen Club

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Copy to:

**The Representative of the
International Committee of
the Red Cross in Geneva**

**The United Nation's General
Secretary**

The Human Rights Watch

The Minister of Human

Rights of the Republic of Iraq

The Representative of the

International Committee of

the Red Cross in Iraq

Massoud Rajavi and the Paranoia of Power

**Ebrahim Khodabandeh,
15 November 2007**

Self-delusion is most apparent in those politicians who least consider their supporters and their people in the policies and strategies which they pursue. These are the kind of leaders who do not see the fear in the faces of the people under their autocracy. Rather they relate all such signs of disfavour to the external enemy. When they do find their internal opponents standing opposed to them, they become astonished and fail to analyse the situation realistically.

Self-delusion is the scourge of power that has no popular support. Self-delusion is the illness of those who are unable to evaluate their power and do not understand their true position in either the international or internal political scene. This inability means there is always a vast divergence between the minds of such politicians and real life. On the one hand they are arrogant of their growing power, and on the other hand pass their lives in fear of their enemies; and finally they become the victims of their own phobia. Their self-delusion directs

them to only refer to their self-created fantasy. Disaster occurs when the realities of the outside world threaten to destroy their misinterpretation.

Massoud Rajavi, the leader of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organisation (MKO) of Iran, is an example of an idealistic leader whose absolute power over his followers in the organisation has both shattered his ideals and increased his self-delusion. As Rajavi discovered his power over the organisation to be unlimited, he distanced himself from the realities of life in both his sayings and in his actions. To this end the picture of the social and political life of the people of Iran today is totally different from what he sees or talks about. He is miles away from today's world.

Massoud Rajavi is so certain about the outcome of the manipulation of the members of his organisation with his ideas that he does not see the rows of people tired of his "ideological revolution" and those who are trying to escape the boundaries of Camp Ashraf in Iraq. He is, of course, not worried about the increasing critics

and opponents to his policies and ideas. According to his so-called revolutionary criteria, those who leave him or turn against him are traitors who will sooner or later destroy themselves by their own hands.

Rajavi is a charismatic leader who enjoys the natural supremacy of all such leaders over his followers. He has managed to instil his own fear and paranoia in the minds of his followers so that they are also unable to see the truth of the outside world. Currently the world is deeply concerned about the outbreak of further wars and conflict here and there, and people are working hard everywhere to prevent this. But living in his own self-deluded world Massoud Rajavi is strongly disturbed that there is no war and that the US does not quickly launch a military attack on Iran.

Today Massoud Rajavi has gone into hiding and does not give public appearances - apparently for reasons of security. But he is in fact living in his own dream world of self-delusion and the nightmare of fear as all totalitarians of his kind must do.

Symposium on Terrorism in Iraq (cont. from p1)

1991. Mr Khodabandeh said that in his belief and according to all the studies of the Centre de Recherches sur le Terrorisme, the phenomenon of terrorism cannot have a single solution and needs inter governmental cooperation as well as the involvement of NGOs to protect the human rights of the who have been inveigled by terrorist leaders into this path, and to give them a second chance of integration back into their societies.

countries with the Mojahe-
din Khalq Organisation, and

lation of violence in Diyali
province as well as the



streets of London and other
European countries.

The Symposium lasted for
over two hours. Afterwards
the participants formed
smaller groups to further
discuss the variety of is-
sues raised by the Seminar.
A full report and media

Thanking the organisers of
the Symposium Mr Khoda-
bandeh emphasised the
cult culture of terrorist or-
ganisations and the meth-
ods they use to brainwash
their followers. He also
gave examples of foreign
support by some influential
groups and parties who fa-
cilitate the flow of finance
for terrorism. Not the least
the relationship between
the remainders of Saddam
Hussein in Iraq, London,
Washington and other



the way this relationship is
becoming clear in the esca-

coverage will be published
shortly.

The end of modern slavery, Verdict to arrest three leading officials of the MKO on kidnapping and hostage taking charges

**Mohammadi Family,
23 January 2008**

<http://toeme.blogfa.com/>

The efforts made by Mostafa Mohammadi and his wife Mahbubeh with the support of their children Mohammad, Morteza, and Hurieh who are in Canada for three months have paid off. Accepting every risk in Iraq and with the support of human rights activists and the people of Iraq and some of the former members and the families of the Mojahedin Khalq Organisation (MKO) members the Mohammadis brought their case before an Iraqi court. They charged that they had been beaten and an attempt at kidnap was made by members of the MKO on 7 December 2007. They also protested to the court against the captivity of their daughter Somayeh who was taken to Camp Ashraf in Iraq in 1998 when she was 17 and charged that their son Mohammad

Mohammadi was detained illegally by the MKO for five years from 1999 when he was only 15 years old.

The Mohammadi family approached human rights organizations and an Iraqi attorney along with UN officials in Iraq and some Iraqi government ministers. The fruit of their efforts was that the judge of the Baghdad Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Abbas Davari, the political liaison of MKO in Camp Ashraf, Mozghan Parsaii, the Commander of Rajavi's army in Iraq and Sediqeh Hoseini, the Secretary General of the MKO on the charges of kidnapping and taking hostages. The judge also ordered that Somayeh must be taken away from Camp Ashraf and the MKO must pay compensation to the Mohammadi family.

This is the first official verdict against the MKO by the Iraqi Judicial system and has been issued by one of the highest and most influ-

ential courts in Baghdad.

Regarding the verdict given by the court, the Mohammadi family is continuing their campaign to finally release their captive daughter from the hands of the destructive, terrorist MKO cult. They hope that they can start a move to end the modern slavery of the Rajavi Cult. Many individuals were taken to Iraq by Rajavi when they were underage and forced to work hard and as a result many of them suffer from various mental and physical disorders.

The Mohammadi family believe that this first victory which they worked so hard to achieve belongs to all the suffering families of MKO members held mentally and physically captive in Camp Ashraf in Iraq. The leaders of the MKO must be taken to court for brainwashing their members and isolating them from the outside world and banning them from contacting their families.

MKO terrorists arrested in Iraq

Sat, 09 Feb 2008

Iraqi police has announced the arrest of a number of Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) members in a raid on rogue elements in Karbala.

Karbala police spokesperson, Rahman Mshawi said four of the fifteen detainees are affiliated with the MKO terrorists. Other sources claim six members of the

group were arrested in the raid.

The European Union, the United States and other members of the international community have blacklisted the MKO as a terrorist organization.

The group, which assisted Saddam in the massacre of thousands of innocent Iraqis, is responsible for several acts of terror in Iran including the 1994 bombing of Imam Reza's holy shrine in Mashhad.



British Moslem community delegation visited the Nejat Society

Nejat Society, Tehran,

February 13, 2008

http://www.nejatngo.org/index_en.php?news_id=807



A delegation from the British Moslem community visited the Nejat Society in Tehran

On Monday 5 February 2008, a delegation consisting of representatives of different Moslem organisations and societies in Britain, who were busy visiting Iran, paid a visit to the Ne-

Jat (rescue) Society in Tehran. They met with Ms. Hura Shalchi, Ms. Marjan Malek, Mr. Ebrahim Khodabandeh and Mr. Jamil Basam while some representatives from the British Embassy in Tehran as well as families of the MKO members in Ashraf Camp were present.

The seven members of the delegation each represented a British Moslem establishment which totally covers a good deal of Moslem community in Britain. After the members of delegation heard the report of the MKO activities they emphasised that they are aware of the ideas and actions of the MKO and their

the delegation pointed out that the way the MKO treats the issue of family values is exactly the same way as deviated cults in the west do which has nothing to do with Islamic teachings.

The families present at the meeting described their accounts and that of their children and explained how it is for many years that they are unaware of the situation of their beloved ones and have no contact with them. The members of the delegation were overcome by emotions when they heard of the families' stories so that some of



so-called "Ideological Revolution" and find them con-

them practically started crying.



trary to the Islamic teachings. A lady lawyer from

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The members of the delegation admired the humanitarian activities of Nejat Society and wished endurance and success for the suffering families of the MKO members in Ashraf Camp. They pointed out that the MKO like all other terrorist organisations such as Al-Qaeda have no place amongst the British Moslem community and are designated as a diverted cult which is a threat for the security of the society and the family structure.

Iran sees less threat in exiled MKO militants

Scott Peterson
Staff writer of *The Christian Science Monitor*

11 February 2008



Gholam Reza Sadeghi felt certain of his fate if he ever returned to Iran: torture and execution, given his years as a member of the antiregime Mujahideen-e Khalq, or "People's Holy Warriors."

But stuck in a crowded camp in Iraq with 3,400 other members of the MKO under US military guard, Mr. Sadeghi finally had had enough. He wanted out, and to see his son.

So he came back to the Islamic Republic, which imprisoned him for five years in the 1980s for participating in a group labeled "terrorist" by both Washington and Tehran. Yet some American officials view the MKO - disarmed but still intact - as a possible tool of regime change against Iran. And the MKO's continued presence in Iraq aggravates US-Iran tensions.

What Sadeghi found was a soft-touch amnesty that he had never been told of in the MKO camp. His case could resonate with the 100 or so other Iranian militants who have been allowed to leave the camp in recent weeks, afraid to return to Iran and running into trouble in Kurdish northern Iraq and upon entering Turkey.

"Because I had been in prison, I expected to go back to prison, torture, and execu-

tion," says Sadeghi, who was detained for a week and then let go. "They said [the MKO] is not a threat. [They said,] 'We know you were a victim yourself, who thought you were doing something good for your country but were deceived by a cult.'"

The MKO (or MEK) in 2002 tipped off the world to Iran's secret uranium-enrichment program - with the help of Israel, many analysts have concluded. It now says the recent findings of a US National Intelligence Estimate were wrong and that Iran restarted a nuclear- weapons program in 2004. UN inspectors, however, say that much of the information the UN has received from the group in recent years has a political purpose and has been wrong.

No nation has taken the militants who left Camp Ashraf, north of Baghdad, some of them carrying US military letters for travel to Turkey. Documents of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees show that at one point in their saga nearly two weeks ago, 19 were turned back to Iraq by Turkey, dozens were picked up in Kurdish northern Iraq and some forced to return to the dangers of central Iraq, and 26 were missing.

The situation highlights the sensitivity of Camp Ashraf, which has been virtually off-limits to journalists since the fall of Saddam Hussein. According to some of the 340 former MKO members who have returned to Iran with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the MKO controls all aspects of life in the camp. Numbers have dropped: Only 12 returned to Iran in all of 2007, and three more in mid-January.

"We don't have the impression that these people are harassed or bothered, ... mainly because the families and the [Iranian] authorities want

them to come back," says Andreas Schweizer, until recently the ICRC protection officer in Tehran. "We haven't heard of any problems so far."

Indeed, in 2005, when the Monitor followed up privately on the story of one returnee, his mother complained about the lack official reintegration help. There had been no government interference either, she said.

The MKO's checkered and violent history has kept it on the US and European terrorist list. The MKO killed several American military advisers and civilians in Iran in the 1970s, played a key role in Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, and supported the US Embassy seizure before breaking away and launching attacks that have killed scores of senior Iranian officials.

Exiled first to France and then expelled in 1986, the MKO was given safe haven, weapons, and cash from Saddam Hussein. Though he used it to fight Iran during the Iran-Iraq war - an act that soured most Iranians toward the group - and to help quell local uprisings in 1991, the MKO today portrays itself as a democratic Iranian government-in-waiting.

MKO coleader Maryam Rajavi, as quoted recently in the Opinion pages of the Monitor, claims substantial underground support in Iran, and said US labeling of Iran's Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist group is a "clear testament and an indispensable prelude to democratic change in Iran."

But analysts dispute claims of broad support. "They are so discredited in Iran that I can't imagine they have any social basis," says Ervand Abrahamian, an Iran historian at the City University of New York and author of "The Iranian Mojahedin," a study of the MKO.

Iran sees less threat in exiled MKO militants

"I think you would find the current President [Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad more democratic than the Mujahideen," says Mr. Abrahamian. "Even in the early 1970s, it had turned into a cult organization.... The remaining members ... will do whatever [MKO leader Mas-soud] Rajavi tells them."

The State Department's terrorism report last year said the MKO maintains "the capacity and will to commit terrorist acts in Europe, the Middle East, the United States, Canada and beyond."

The report notes the MKO's "cult-like characteristics," such that "new members are indoctrinated in MEK ideology and revisionist Iranian history [and] required to ... participate in weekly 'ideological cleansings.'" Children are separated from their parents, it adds, and Mrs. Rajavi "has established a 'cult of personality.'"

The US rejected a secret 2003 Iranian offer to exchange top MKO leaders for several Al Qaeda personalities now held in Iran.

"The Islamic Republic's policy toward the MKO is very clear - there is nothing hidden," says

a foreign ministry official who asked not to be named. "In our opinion they are a terrorist cult. When it comes to cults, only the leaders are responsible, and the rest are all victims themselves."

The MKO and some in Congress and the Pentagon have challenged the terrorist label. Senior Iranian officers have accused US forces in Iraq of using the MKO during interrogations of Iranians detained in Iraq. Western news reports also suggest that some MKO operatives may be conducting cross-border operations into Iran on behalf of the US.

Indeed, such action seemed to be on offer to Sadeghi when US federal agents first questioned him in Camp Ashraf in 2003. After release from prison in Iran in the 1980s, he had fled to Canada in the 1980s, where the MKO found him and gave him a letter from leader Rajavi. "The letter said: 'You were one of us, and suffered in prison,'" recounts Sadeghi. "Now you are in Toronto living the good life. You forgot your brothers and sisters, you forgot freedom and democracy."

Sadeghi left his Canadian wife,

broke custody rules by letting the MKO ship his son to his parents in Iran, and was moved by the MKO to Los Angeles. His visit to Iraq was meant to be short-term, but the MKO took his US passport and said they destroyed it, he says.

After US forces disarmed the group in 2003, the FBI met with each member. Sadeghi says he was told that the US planned to topple Iran's regime, that they wanted his help, and that they would ensure his return to the US. Sticking with the MKO would mean "never seeing the US again."

"I didn't believe [the FBI agent] was going to send me back to the US, or I would have jumped on it," says Sadeghi. Tired of daily MKO self-criticism sessions, he finally told the Americans he wanted to go to Iran. He had not seen his parents for 22 years; his son was 16 and full of resentment. "He asked me: 'Where were you? For 10 years, no call, no postcard,'" says Sadeghi, adding that his life was broken by the MKO. "For that, he hates me."

Danish government is determined to prevent activities of MKO

IRNA, December 15, 2007

<http://www2.irna.ir/en/news/view/line-17/0712122029173709.htm>

Danish Ambassador to Tehran Soren Haslund conferred on Wednesday with Head of Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, Alaeddin Boroujerdi on expansion of parliamentary cooperation between the two countries.

At the meeting, the Danish ambassador lauded the positive role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in fostering peace and stability in Afghanistan.

He said Denmark and Iran have common goals in restoring security and stability to Afghanistan and in anti drug

fight in that country which could help broaden cooperation between the two countries.

Europe attaches importance to Iran's decisive role in anti drug campaign in the region, he said.

Calling the MKO as a terrorist group, the Danish ambassador underlined that the Danish government is determined to prevent activities of the group in the country.

Boroujerdi, for his part, referred to exchange of visits between the European and Iranian parliamentary delegations and said the two countries enjoyed ample potential which should be explored.

Role of parliaments in expand-

ing and consolidating ties among countries are of prime importance, Boroujerdi said.

Referring to crises in the region mainly in Afghanistan, he described them as very complicated. He said increasing terrorist acts and unprecedented production of narcotic drugs in Afghanistan is a cause of concern for all countries in the region.

Campaign against drug trafficking would have an effective impact on activities of terrorist groups in Afghanistan and the region, he pointed out.

Criticizing the weak role of Europe in anti-drug fight, he called for more active role on the part of Europe in dealing with the issue.

The Week on the Hill; Lobbying & Law Touting 'Terrorists'

Julie Kosterlitz, National Journal, 19 January 2008 National Journal Group Inc.

<http://nationaljournal.com/>

On paper, the Mujahedeen-e Khalq sounds like the sort of group the United States government might like to cultivate: well-organized Iranian exiles concentrated in Europe and Iraq who share Washington's antipathy to the theocracy in Iran. The group -- whose name translates as "warriors (or freedom fighters) for the people of Iran" -- has its own "parliament in exile," the National Council of Resistance of Iran, and says it supports a secular government, democracy, human rights, and women's rights in Iran.

In practice, however, the Iranian group has some major shortcomings in the ally department. For the past decade, the State Department has listed the MEK as a "foreign terrorist organization," and more recently has argued that the group displays "cult-like characteristics."

The MEK has been waging a spirited campaign to persuade the U.S. to drop the terrorist designation -- which would require either the secretary of State's say-so or an act of Congress.

Although the group can't make its own case directly, in the past several years two prominent former U.S. government officials have been publicly touting the MEK's virtues and arguing that the United States should remove it from the terrorist list.

At the moment, the more high-profile and influential of these advocates is former House Majority Leader Dick Armey, R-Texas, a senior policy adviser at the global law and lobbying firm DLA Piper. Last year, Armey wrote two op-eds for Washington newspapers urging the State Department to drop the MEK's terrorist designation.

"Never has the old adage 'The enemy of my enemy is my

friend' been more true than in the case of the MEK," he wrote in The Hill in July. And in The Washington Times in December, Armey wrote, "With a stroke of the pen, the secretary of State could, and should, remove the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq and the National Council of Resistance of Iran from the list of foreign terrorist organizations."

In 2006, DLA Piper and Global Options, a crisis-management company, issued a 232-page report with a foreword by Armey and Neil C. Livingstone, then-CEO of Global Options, aimed at refuting the U.S. government's allegations against the MEK and calling for an end to its terrorist designation.

Another public advocate for the MEK is Raymond Tanter, who was a senior staff member at the National Security Council in the Reagan administration and is now an adjunct professor at Georgetown University. In 2005, Tanter co-founded the nonprofit Iran Policy Committee, which lists as directors or advisers a half-dozen former executive branch, military, and intelligence officials and describes its mission as promoting a "central role for the Iranian opposition" in bringing about "democratic change" in Iran. The committee's publications, conferences, and congressional briefings routinely urge the U.S. to take the MEK off its terrorist list, as well as to meet with and fund the group.

The MEK began as an anti-shah leftist group in the 1960s. It got on the wrong side of the United States when members assassinated several of the shah's American advisers in the 1970s. In the three decades since Iran became an Islamic regime, the State Department says, the MEK has waged violent attacks inside that country, and it maintains the "capacity and will to commit terrorist acts in Europe, the Middle East, the United States, Canada, and beyond."

Over the years, the MEK has periodically reinvented its ideology, which today blends elements of Marxism, Islam, and feminism.

A charismatic husband-and-wife team leads the group: Massoud Rajavi, whose whereabouts are unknown, is the military leader, and Maryam Rajavi heads the political wing from France. The MEK's size is also unknown, but the Council on Foreign Relations estimates that it could have as many as 10,000 members worldwide.

In 2005, Human Rights Watch issued a report detailing complaints from a dozen former MEK members that they suffered physical and psychological abuse while they were in the group. The State Department says that members undergo indoctrination and weekly "ideological cleanings," are separated from their young children, and must vow "eternal divorce" -- that is, to remain unmarried or to divorce their spouse.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 took a toll on the MEK, which had set up operations there after being driven out of Iran and, later, France in the 1980s. Because Saddam Hussein had been providing the bulk of its military and financial support, the State Department says, the MEK subsequently began to use "front organizations" to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities.

The U.S. military disarmed the group's foot soldiers in Iraq and now holds some 3,500 of them as "protected persons" under the Geneva Conventions at an encampment there. "We are not embracing them, we just don't know how to [disperse] them" without putting their lives in danger, says Brookings Institution senior fellow Peter Rodman, who was an assistant Defense secretary through 2006.

MEK supporters argue that the group has renounced violence, poses no terrorist threat, and, in fact, presents a viable alter-

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native to the theocracy in Tehran. The terrorist designation, they say, was a futile Washington sop to appease that regime. "The U.S. government at any moment can make that decision, and decide [that the designation] is unwarranted," says Alireza Jafarzadeh, the former representative in Washington for the NCRI, and now a self-described consultant and a commentator on Fox News. Jafarzadeh blames "politics" for Washington's failure to act and says that the MEK spends about 80 percent of its resources "to counter the consequences of the designation."

MEK supporters argue that the group provided vital intelligence about Iran's covert nuclear program in 2002, as well as about Iranian-sponsored attacks on U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

Although more than 220 members of Congress signed a letter in 1998 protesting the group's terrorist designation, the MEK's several legal challenges to the designation have failed, and legislative efforts to remove it have gone nowhere.

Despite the Bush administration's tough line on the Tehran regime, the MEK's political fortunes in the U.S. have declined in recent years. The NCRI was once allowed to maintain an office, hire lobbyists, hold press conferences, and generally operate openly in the United States. But in late 2003, the administration got tough and the Justice Department shut down the office. The group still has some congressional supporters -- led by the ideological odd couple of Reps. Bob Filner, D-Calif., and Tom Tancredo, R-Colo.

And then there is Armev, whose history as an outspoken advocate for the MEK is murky. In their 2006 report, Armev and Livingstone touted regime change in Iran through active support for groups such as the MEK, but said that neither the MEK nor the NCRI provided any direction, con-

trol, or financing for the report. Armev's July 2007 article had a similar disclaimer. The December 2007 article identified Armev only as the chairman of the FreedomWorks Foundation, a free-market advocacy group.

DLA Piper has received \$860,000 in fees over the past four and a half years from Saeid Ghaemi, whom the firm identifies as an "Iranian-American businessman who works closely with the Iranian-American community in the U.S. to promote human rights and democracy in Iran." Public records identify Saeid Ghaemi as a used-car dealer in the Denver area, but an Internet search turned up no information about his political work with the Iranian-American community. When National Journal reached him by phone to ask about his hiring of Armev and DLA Piper, Ghaemi said he was busy and would return the call. He failed to return that or subsequent calls.

Ghaemi's brother, Tim Mehdi Ghaemi, a Denver-area real estate manager and broker, is a longtime active supporter of the MEK who bills himself as president of the group Colorado's Iranian-American Community.

Over the past three years, Tim Ghaemi has helped to organize half a dozen pro-MEK events, including a controversial January 2004 fundraiser that led the Treasury Department to freeze the assets of the event's prime sponsor. In 2007, he provided \$8,000 for Filner to travel to Paris to deliver a speech at an MEK rally. The Colorado group has a website that posts news about the MEK and articles about Tehran's persecution of its Iranian opponents, but NJ could find no information about the group, its members, or its board of directors.

Reached by phone, Tim Ghaemi said that his brother, Saeid, was not part of Colorado's Iranian-American Com-

munity, which he called a "larger umbrella group." He referred to "other, smaller, organizations that work specifically on other projects" such as women's rights and the rights of minority religious groups in Iran, including Christians and Jews. But "everybody, unanimously, inside and outside [Iran] -- they say there is no other hope" than the MEK, Tim Ghaemi said. The United States does not need to "send one soldier, or spend one dollar" to defeat the Iranian rulers he added, but only has to "stop appeasing the regime and take the [MEK's] name off the list."

Lobbying disclosure records show that Saeid Ghaemi hired DLA Piper in November 2004, and that Armev joined the team representing him in the first half of 2005. Over time, the team has lobbied Congress; the Defense, State, and Treasury departments; and the National Security Council.

National Journal made repeated calls to Armev's office for comment and information on how he became a supporter of the MEK. The office referred all calls to a DLA Piper spokesman, who provided no information.

Last year, Armev and the other lobbyists also worked on Ghaemi's behalf for a House measure urging the secretary of State to designate the Quds Force of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps as a foreign terrorist organization. Shortly after a broader measure targeting Iran and the Quds Force overwhelmingly passed the House last fall, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice designated the force a terrorist group.

DLA Piper also lobbied in the Senate for the Iran Human Rights Act of 2007 that would, among other things, expand U.S. support for Iranian opposition groups to include those outside Iran, and would establish a State Department envoy to reach out to such groups.

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Tanter, like some other MEK defenders, says he supports the group because it is the only opposition organization that really worries the mullahs in Tehran. "I did an analysis of all the opposition groups and found that the [Islamic Iranian] regime paid attention to [the MEK] 350 percent more than all the others. I am not here to lobby on behalf of groups on the foreign terrorist organization list. I am an American trying to preserve American national security abroad and save lives."

Tanter's tax-exempt Iran Policy Committee has raised a substantial amount of money in a short period of time. In its latest filing with the Internal Revenue Service, the group reported revenues of nearly \$917,000 -- with Tanter receiving about \$102,000 in salary, and the group's co-chairs, Bruce McCole and Chuck Nash, getting just over \$32,000 and \$21,000, respectively.

Tanter says his group raises money on the Web and from speeches. "Every time I speak before a pro-Israel group or an anti-Iranian-regime group, hundreds of people show up, and if I'm in Europe, thousands show up," he said. The average contribution is less than \$1,000, he said, but some have been six- and seven-figure donations from his former students who now "make a killing" on Wall Street and "remember me." Tanter added that he drew on his retirement money to start the group.

The law prohibits anyone in the United States or subject to its laws from providing "material support or resources" to a designated foreign terrorist organization. But these financial sanctions don't prohibit "U.S. citizens from expressing their views on economic sanctions matters -- and that includes the designation of the MEK -- to Congress or the Executive Branch" according to the Treasury Department, whose Office of Foreign Assets Control oversees the sanctions. Bill Livingstone, who worked with his brother Neil on the 2006 report, said that the authors made sure the report did not violate Treasury's rules.

"The First Amendment protects Dick Armeiy to make his opinions known, and protects the Iran Policy Committee's educational mission to find options to reinforce our diplomacy" toward Iran, Tanter said. He has hired an attorney who specializes in the arcane Treasury rules and contends that his group tries "to vet our money to make sure we're not getting any" from prohibited groups. Tanter also points out that several of his group's advisers and directors are retired military and intelligence officers with security clearances that they would do nothing to jeopardize.

The effect of Armeiy's and Tanter's efforts is unclear. So far, the MEK's efforts to shed its terrorist designation have met with far more success in Europe than here. The group has won

court decisions mandating that the European Union unfreeze the group's assets and that Great Britain remove it from that country's list of terrorist groups. The British government says it intends to appeal.

Although the State Department is required to review its designation of the MEK later this year, the group's supporters fear that the decision will reflect a political climate that has become less sympathetic to their cause. Administration hardliners, who have lost ground to pragmatists, have been further undercut by the recent National Intelligence Estimate stating that Iran stopped its nuclear weapons program in 2003 -- a conclusion that the MEK disputes. "This so-called hard-line [Bush] administration is more interested in striking a grand bargain with Iran than the E.U. is," Tanter said. He and other MEK boosters also contend that if relations with Tehran worsen, the MEK's prospects could revive.

The neoconservative community, where the MEK has found support in the past, has become sharply divided, with critics becoming as vocal as supporters in conservative publications. I don't think any administration is going to want to include them," said Rodman, who describes himself as a hard-line opponent of the Tehran regime. "Everyone has rejected [the MEK]. They're not the kind of people we want to work with."