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Americans terror delisting the Mojahedin Khalq is a cynical sham

theguardian

Richard Silverstein, Guardian, September 23 2012

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/sep/22/barak-obama-terrorism>

US officials leaked to several news outlets Friday an impending decision by the Obama administration that it intends to remove the Iranian dissident group Mujahadeen e-Khalq (MEK) from the treasury department's terror list. Cont .p2

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By Delisting the MEK, the Obama Administration is Taking the Moral and Strategic Bankruptcy of America's Iran Policy to a New Low



Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, Race For Iran, September 22 2012

The MEK's Massoud Rajavi Emulates His Patron, Saddam Hussein

The U.S. Department of State took the moral and strategic bankruptcy of America's Iran policy to a new low today, by notifying Congress that the Obama administration intends to remove the mojahedin-e khalq (MEK) from the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). Cont.p4

Americans terror delisting the Mojahedin Khalq is a cynical sham

Cont.p1

Historically, the group joined together with Islamists to topple the Shah in 1979. But after it assassinated an Iranian president, prime minister and supreme court justice, Ayatollah Khomeini turned on its members and approved the massacre of hundreds of them.

At that point, the MEK set itself the mission of overthrowing the Iranian Islamist regime. It went into exile to France and Saddam Hussein also offered it refuge in Iraq. It is also known for assassinating US diplomats, military personnel and others.

It now claims it has renounced terror and devotes itself to establishing an Iranian democratic form of government that would replace the rule of the Ayatollahs. But former leaders and members of the MEK have noted the ruthlessness and duplicity of the group. They believe that the Iran it envisions would be a dictatorship rather than a democracy. These dissident former members decry the MEK's slavish worship of its leader Maryam Rajavi in a cult of

personality not unlike that of North Korea and other Communist regimes.

The Iranian dissidents have plotted for years to be removed from the terror list. They enlisted numerous Republican and Democratic officials to lobby on its behalf. Instead of paying lobbying fees to them, it offered honoraria ranging from \$10,000-\$50,000 per speech to excoriate the US government for its allegedly shabby treatment of the MEK.

Among those who joined the group's gravy train are former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell, Rudy Giuliani, Alan Dershowitz, and former FBI director Louis Freeh. Many of them profess to have little interest in the money they have collected. Instead, they claim they are sincerely moved by the group's suffering in Iraq and wish to correct an injustice. I'm sure the money doesn't hurt.

Analysts writing about the MEK and alienated members reject the group's claim that it has renounced terror. Seymour Hersh recently published an expose



reporting that as late as 2007, US special forces had offered Iranians training at a secret Nevada facility in covert operations. It provided them arms and communications equipment and black ops training for their anti-regime terror activities inside Iran.

A confidential Israeli source who is a former senior minister and IDF officer reported to me that the Mossad has used the MEK over many years, both to leak purported Iranian government documents of questionable provenance and engage in acts of sabotage against key figures in the Iranian regime. My source and other journalists have reported the MEK assassinated four nuclear scientists and caused an explosion that obliterated an Iranian Revolutionary Guard missile base.

Last week,

Cont.p3

Americans terror delisting the Mojahedin Khalq is a cynical sham

Cont.p2

the director of Iran's nuclear program reported an August explosion disrupted the power lines to the new Fordo uranium enrichment facility. My source says this sabotage was also a product of the Mossad-MEK collaboration.

The US delisting of the group is a sham. The Obama administration isn't even claiming the MEK has renounced terrorism. If it did, it knows that it's likely such a statement would rebound should the MEK's activities become exposed. The chief argument offered in defense of the change of heart is that the group has agreed to relocate from Camp Ashraf, where it's been a thorn in the side of the Iraqi Shi'ite led government, to a US facility, from which the residents would be relocated to foreign countries.

So, we're removing a terror group from the list not because it's stopped being a terror group, but because it's agreed to leave Iraq, where it had been a destabilizing influence. That's not a principled position. It's a position based on pure

political calculation.

The MEK is useful in the covert war the US and Israel are waging against Iran's nuclear program. It is our proxy, much as the Cuban



rebels involved in the Bay of Pigs operation served our interests in the fight against Fidel Castro; and the Afghan mujahideen fought a dirty war for us against the Soviets.

In fact, Alan Dershowitz has argued that the MEK should be removed from the treasury list not because it has stopped being terrorist, but because it collaborated with US covert activities inside Iran, meaning that it was serving US interests. Or put more simply: the MEK may be terrorists, but they're *our* terrorists.

Delisting the MEK serves several goals for President Obama. He can flex his muscles in the face of both the Iranians and

Republicans. To the Iranians, he's implicitly saying he will make alliance with their worst enemy as long as they resist him at the negotiating table. To Mitt Romney, he's saying he's willing to get tough with the Iranians. This inoculates him from campaign attacks claiming he's soft on Iran or that he's willing to let Iran get the bomb.

You can bet that one of the president's campaign talking points will be that he delisted the MEK. It will establish his anti-Iran bona fides when the TV ads paid for by Sheldon Adelson's anticipated \$100m start airing in the coming weeks.

Just as President Obama's anti-terror policies, including targeted assassinations and drone strikes, have betrayed his previous denunciations of such violations of constitutional principles, so his granting a seal of approval to the MEK marks a further erosion of his commitment to diplomacy and negotiation as the means for resolving international disputes, including the one with Iran.

By Delisting the MEK, the Obama Administration is Taking the Moral and Strategic Bankruptcy of America's Iran Policy to a New Low

Cont.p1

At a macro level, we are disdainful—even scornful—of the U.S. government's lists of both FTOs and state sponsors of terrorism. We have seen too many times over the years just how cynically American administrations have manipulated these designations, adding and removing organizations and countries for reasons that have little or nothing to do with designees' actual involvement in terrorist activity. So, for example, after Saddam Husayn invaded the fledgling Islamic Republic in 1980—on September 22, no less—and starting killing large numbers of innocent Iranians, the Reagan administration (which came to office in January 1981) found a way to remove Iraq from the state sponsors list, in order to remove legal restrictions prohibiting the U.S. government from helping Saddam prosecute his war of aggression as robustly as the administration wanted. (During that war, the MEK—after having tried but failed to bring down the Islamic Republic through a bloody campaign of terrorist

bombings and assassinations conducted against the new Iranian government's upper echelons—ended up collaborating with an Iraqi government regularly carry-



ing out chemical weapons attacks against targets, civilian as well as military, inside Iran.) But, when the same Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990, the George H.W. Bush administration couldn't get Iraq back on the state sponsors list fast enough. We are very skeptical that Saddam's ties to groups that the United States considers terrorist organizations changed all that much during this period.

Yet, precisely because we know how thoroughly corrupt and politicized these designations really are, we recognize their significance

as statements of U.S. policy. Today, the Obama administration made a truly horrible statement about U.S. policy toward Iran.

The statement is horrible even if one wants to believe that FTO designations have some kind of procedural and evidentiary integrity about them. (We don't, but we also recognize that letting go of illusions is often not easy.) Just this year, U.S. intelligence officials told high-profile media outlets that the MEK is actively collaborating with Israeli intelligence to assassinate Iranian nuclear scientists, see here; Iranian officials have made the same charge. Since when did murdering unarmed civilians (and, in some instances, members of their families as well) on public streets in the middle of a heavily populated urban area (Tehran) not meet even the U.S. government's own professed standard for terrorism? Of course, one might rightly point out that the United States is responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent civilians across the Middle East.

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By Delisting the MEK, the Obama Administration is Taking the Moral and Strategic Bankruptcy of America's Iran Policy to a New Low

Cont.p4

But Washington generally strives to maintain the fiction that it did not intend for those innocents to die as a (direct and foreseeable) consequence of U.S. military operations and sanctions policies. (You know, the United States didn't really mean for those people to die, but, as Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld once said, "Stuff happens.") Here, the Obama administration is taking an organization that the U.S. government knows is directly involved in the murder of innocent people and giving this group Washington's "good housekeeping seal of approval."

But, to invoke Talleyrand's classic observation that a certain action was "worse than a crime—it was a mistake," delisting the MEK is not just a moral abomination; it is a huge strategic and policy blunder.

It is hard to imagine how the Obama administration could signal more clearly that, even after the President's presumptive

reelection, it has no intention of seeking a fundamentally different sort of relationship with the Islamic Republic—which would of

and the Iraqi National Congress—who were about as unpopular among Iraqis as the MEK is among Iranians—led to President Clinton's

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course require the United States to accept the Islamic Republic as a legitimate political entity representing legitimate national interests.

Count on this: once the MEK is formally off the FTO list—a legally defined process that will take a few months to play out—Congress will be appropriating money to support the monafeqin as the vanguard of a new American strategy for regime change in Iran.

In the 1990s, similar enthusiasm for Ahmad Chalabi

signing of the Iraq Liberation Act, which paved the way for George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003.

The chances for such a scenario to play out with regard to Iran over the next few years—with even more disastrous consequences for America's strategic and moral standing—got a lot higher today.

–Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett

What's new at Camp Liberty in Baghdad?

Liberty base is a huge military facility near Baghdad International Airport, which was originally created as part of a bigger base called Victory, to house American troops in Iraq. Formerly named Victory North, after September 2004 it was re-named Liberty. Over the current year some 2000 inhabitants of Camp Ashraf of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO, Rajavi cult), were moved to this base as a United Nations Temporary Transit Camp from where they are to be eventually transferred out of Iraq. In May the MKO stopped cooperating with the relocation process and at the present time around 1200 members of the MKO have remained stuck in Camp Ashraf.

Information received from inside both Ashraf and Liberty relates that all other tasks can be stopped inside the MKO so that the process of mind manipulation and brainwashing sessions are not stopped. These reports state that each member attends 3 to 5 meetings of this kind each day. In these meetings - under the label

of opportunism - the issue of escaping from the cult is discussed and everyone is continuously told that leaving the cult is the most severe sin that a follower can commit. The MKO argues that leaving the cult undermines the resistance against Iran and damages their struggle. By doing this they intend to create mental barriers for the members to keep them captive inside the organization.

Comparing

These reports from inside the MKO indicate that there is an ideological argument within the Organization which forbids the members to compare themselves with others.

Since the relocation process began in February several members who have been transferred to Camp Liberty have had routine interviews with UN officials in Iraq. These people were put forward by the MKO and the process is still ongoing. Others were puzzled as to why some people have been sent for the interviews and they haven't. They have been asked to report to their superiors if they have such

sinful thoughts.

The same argument has been introduced in Camp Ashraf. Some are wondering why they have not been sent to Camp Liberty and are made to remain in Ashraf. They also have to report that they are comparing themselves and their situation to that of others.

Possibility of going abroad

Another argument amongst the residents of the Liberty is about the possibility of their being sent abroad. Since the camp is located near to the airport, most inhabitants watch the airplanes taking off with sorrow and regret. The cult leaders have asked the members to report such sinful desires to their superiors as a cultic practice. These kinds of thoughts are severely denounced and are considered as ideological weakness.

Keeping the members busy

One method of manipulation used by destructive mind control cults is to keep their followers busy with useless tasks all the time in order to prevent them from thinking freely. This method is used systematically

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What's new at Camp Liberty in Baghdad?

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inside the Rajavi cult to render the members so exhausted that their minds cannot function properly. When members were transferred from Ashraf to Liberty they were only permitted to take personal possessions. But the MKO managed to also take some stretchers as medical equipment.

These stretchers are now used to shift sand. They have the members move sand which is stored in one place and which is meant to be used to pave the passageways between the bungalows.

The members are forced to relocate this sand from one place to another using the stretchers, and they keep doing this using various excuses. They are also asked to separate out large pebbles from the sand with the excuse that when they pave the pathways these would hurt the elderly residents. The exhaustion caused by

this kind of hard work prevents the members from thinking about their uncertain future and the deadlock they are in.



Conflicts

The reports from Camp Liberty also indicate that there is constant conflict between the members and their superiors. Such conflicts are due to the tense situation inside the camp caused by the uncertainty of almost everything and manifest in swearing and name calling. The extent of this conflict is at a stage that one can predict they will soon turn into physical conflict.

Guests

Further information reveals that some members who insist on leaving the cult are being coerced to stay as

guests. Since they have been made afraid of the outside world and they believe they have nowhere to go, they have accepted this.

This has been Rajavi's latest technique to keep his followers inside the cult and prevent them from leaving. These people are also asked to participate in the meetings but they refuse and say that they are only guests.

**Sahar Family Foundation
Baghdad, 14 August 2012**

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Hamed Moradi escape

Camp Liberty

Hamed Moradi is the third person to run away Temporary Transit Location (Camp Liberty) during the two past weeks. He is from Khoramabad, Lorestan. Previously Mr. Hassan Sharqi from Shasavar, Mazandaran and Mr. Ablodkarim Ebrahimi from Ilam succeeded to escape camp Liberty after 24 years of imprisonment in the cult of Rajavi.



Families from Kermanshah and Lorestan enter camp Ashraf, Iraq

Twenty people of MKO members' families who are from Kermanshah and Lorestan provinces joined other families picketing at Camp Ashraf chanting the slogan:

"Our message hope, Our promise, freedom".

They entered Iraq to visit their loved ones, imprisoned in the Cult of Rajavi.

All those MKO members who recently defected the Cult notified that families' presence



at Camp Ashraf and hearing their voice via loudspeakers have been a very motivating and hope-giving to members.

The families suffer the hardships of traveling to Iraq in order to give the hope of salvation to their loved ones held as hostages in hands of the cult-monsters. Such a determination will definitely win and thank to the God, the promised day of the salvation of hostages of Rajavi's Cult is not far away.

Following their release, families of other cult members who are from the above mentioned cities have been contacting us in the hope of getting news about their loved ones held as hostages in the MKO. They have had no news from their children in 10 to 30 years of their imprisonment. Regarding the recent escape from the cult and their eventual contacting with their families, other families got hopeful to see the release of their families.

Although, they are told that their children have no access to telephone unless they step out of the Camp, they think that all members were released. A mother's message from Ilam: "For God's sake, tell my son, Sattar Kheiri to call his old mother, I'm dying."