

ParsBrief

Number 14

21.May.2005

- State Department report on terrorist groups 2005
Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)
- "Iran: The Nuclear Threat"—Fox News Channel War Lies
- Ad surprise
- "The Third Way"
- MEK Member Arrested on Money Laundering



NO: 14

www.nejatngo.com

21.May.2005

State Department report on terrorist groups 2005

Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK)

a.k.a. The National Liberation Army of Iran, The People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI), National Council of Resistance (NCR), The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), Muslim Iranian Students' Society

Description

The MEK philosophy mixes Marxism and Islam. Formed in the 1960s, the organization was expelled from Iran after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, and its primary support came from the former Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein starting in the late 1980s. The MEK conducted anti-West-ern attacks prior to the Islamic Revolution. Since then, it has conducted terrorist attacks against the interests of the clerical regime in Iran and abroad. The MEK advocates the overthrow of the Iranian regime and its replacement with the group's own leadership.

Activities

The group's worldwide campaign against the Iranian Government stresses propaganda and occasionally uses terrorism. During the 1970s, the MEK killed US military personnel and US civilians working on defense projects in Tehran and supported the takeover in 1979 of the US Embassy in Tehran. In 1981, the MEK detonated bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Premier's office, killing some 70 high-ranking Iranian officials, including Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Beheshti, President Mohammad-Ali Rajaei, and Premier Mohammad-Javad Bahonar. Near the end of the 1980-1988 war with Iran, Baghdad armed the MEK with military equipment and sent it into action against Iranian forces. In 1991, the MEK assisted the Government of Iraq in suppressing the Shia and Kurdish uprisings in southern Iraq and the Kurdish uprisings in the north. In April 1992, the MEK conducted near-simultaneous attacks on Iranian embassies and installations in 13 countries, demonstrating the group's ability to mount large-scale operations overseas. In April 1999, the MEK targeted key military officers and assassinated the deputy chief of the Iranian Armed Forces General Staff. In April 2000, the MEK attempted to assassinate the commander of the Nasr Headquarters, Tehran's

interagency board responsible for coordinating policies on Iraq. The normal pace of anti-Iranian operations increased during "Operation Great Bahman" in February 2000, when the group launched a dozen attacks against Iran. One of those attacks included a mortar attack against the leadership complex in Tehran that housed the offices of the Supreme Leader and the President. In 2000 and 2001, the MEK was involved regularly in mortar attacks and hit-and-run raids on Iranian military and law enforcement units and Government buildings near the Iran-Iraq border, although MEK terrorism in Iran declined toward the end of 2001. After Coalition aircraft bombed MEK bases at the outset of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the MEK leadership ordered its members not to resist Coalition forces, and a formal cease-fire arrangement was reached in May 2003.

Strength

Over 3,000 MEK members are currently confined to Camp Ashraf, the MEK's main compound north of Baghdad, where they remain under the Geneva Convention's "protected person" status and Coalition control. As a condition of the cease-fire agreement, the group relinquished its weapons, including tanks, armored vehicles, and heavy artillery. A significant number of MEK personnel have "defected" from the Ashraf group, and several dozen of them have been voluntarily repatriated to Iran.

Location/Area of Operation

In the 1980s, the MEK's leaders were forced by Iranian security forces to flee to France. On resettling in Iraq in 1987, almost all of its armed units were stationed in fortified bases near the border with Iran. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom, the bulk of the group is limited to Camp Ashraf, although an overseas support structure remains with associates and supporters scattered throughout Europe and North America.

External Aid

Before Operation Iraqi Freedom, the group received all of its military assistance, and most of its financial support, from the former Iraqi regime. The MEK also has used front organizations to solicit contributions from expatriate Iranian communities.

"Iran: The Nuclear Threat"—Fox News Channel War Lies

Professor Paul Sheldon Foote

California State University, Fullerton - pfoote@fullerton.edu

April 25, 2005

On Sunday, April 24, 2005, the Fox News Channel showed "Iran: The Nuclear Threat". As the neoconservative (neo-Trotskyite) television news channel, this was an opportunity to count the number of intentional errors and omissions. With Chris Wallace as the host and the background music you would expect for war movies, the neoconservatives (neo-Trotskyites)

did not disappoint viewers looking for the MEK (MKO or Rajavi cult) line. The producers even went to Paris, France to interview an MEK spokesperson.

The Fox News Channel has a history of interviewing MEK members and supporters, but not identifying them as MEK members. Instead, viewers hear National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) or terms suggesting that the MEK is pro-democracy. After President Bush's administration closed the MEK's NCRI office in Washington, D.C., the Fox News Channel employed its Alireza Jafarzadeh as an analyst.

Ad surprise

Friday April 22, 2005

The Guardian

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to register its protest, and indeed surprise, at the publication of a so-called "advertisement" in the Guardian (April 20).

It is astonishing that a prestigious publication such as your own should publish an advertisement for a terrorist group. People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI) is the same entity as Mojahedin-e-Khalghe Iran (MEK), which has been proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the European Union as well as by the British government in the Terrorism Act 2000.

MEK Member Arrested on Money Laundering

IRNA

Another member of the terrorist group of MEK has been arrested in France on charges of money laundering and scamming under the cover of humanitarian aids.

French Judge Jean-Louis Bruguiere is investigating two Iranians who are suspected of collecting funds on behalf of the People's Mojahedin of Iran (MKO), AFP reported on 3 May.

The investigation of Ali Mohammad Momen for "criminal conspiracy linked to a terrorist enterprise" and "financing terrorism" began on 29 March, anonymous sources told AFP, and an investigation of Sima Ahmadi on similar charges began in February.

Momen is reportedly connected with a fictitious humanitarian organization called the Iran Aid Association. The organization claimed to collect money for Iranian children but is believed to have sent the money to the MKO instead. Between October 2001 and March 2003 it reportedly collected 580,000 euros (\$753,000) for the MKO.

In an interview with AFP, Momen denied the charges but acknowledged that he sympathizes with the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). According to the U.S. State Department's most recent report on terrorist organizations, NCRI is another name for the MKO, and the MKO uses front organizations to solicit contributions.

"The Third Way"

Anne Singleton

Survivors Report, May 2005

The context of this third way is that the MKO's forces amount to between 2-3 thousand ageing combatants, whose average age is over 45 years old, and in addition, according to the US State Department's Country Reports on Terrorism 2004, "a significant number of MEK personnel have "defected" from the Ashraf group, and several dozen of them have been voluntarily repatriated to Iran."

Recent public and political debate over Iran's nuclear power program, has polarized in some circles around proposals for regime change and how this might be achieved.

On 13 April, the Middle East sub-committee of the US House of Representatives discussed legislation relating to Iran. The Iran Freedom Support Act (HR 282) defines its purpose as, "To hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran." The legislation calls on the White House to support pro-democracy forces that oppose the Iranian regime.

In a similar vein one US think tank called the Iran Policy Committee states that "in consideration of the perceived threat to the US from Iran, the question is, what means should the President use to decrease threats posed by Iran:

- Continued negotiations, including positive and negative incentives
- Future military action
- Support for the Iranian opposition

These options are neither mutually exclusive nor logically exhaustive; but they do reflect courses of action being considered in Washington."

The report concludes that "Washington should consider a third alternative, one that provides a central role for the Iranian opposition to facilitate regime change."

This introduction of a third alternative sounds familiar. We have heard about it from other circles:

Andrew Mackinlay, MP,

Speaking at the Symposium of Parliamentarians and Jurists, March 22, 2005

"Mrs. Rajavi, when she spoke in the European Parliament, quite rightly in my view, rejected the European Union's policy of engagement - or appeasement, as some of us would call it. But, as a proud Iranian woman, she also rejected any prospect of external aggression, and I applaud that. She pointed to a third way: facilitating the men and women of Iran themselves to change their country's regime and bring about justice and democracy."

Dr. Rudi Vis, MP

House of Commons, Hansard Daily Debates, March 24, 2005

"Mrs. Rajavi... rightly rejects the appeasement approach that France, Germany and the UK want to follow. She also rightly rejects the war option. She presented a third option—change brought about by the Iranian people and the Iranian resistance.

...Mrs. Rajavi's third way is surely the preferred option. It requires the proscription of the PMOI to be lifted as soon as possible."

Are we to assume then that the political debate in the USA about a third alternative is somehow linked to the Mojahedin promoting itself under the banner of the third way?

In April, Tom Tancredo (Republican, Colorado), acting as co-chair of the Iran Policy Committee also called for an end to the State Department's designation of the Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) as a terrorist group.

When we are talking about 'a central role for the Iranian opposition to facilitate regime change' or even the 'transition to democracy in Iran' surely what needs to be clarified is what opposition should benefit from US governmental support? And in what ways it is anticipated that such opposition will oppose the regime in order to bring about regime change?

There are many, many individuals and groups, both inside and outside Iran who are actively seeking Iran's transition from clerical rule to secular rule and who seek the inclusion in a democratically elected government of representatives for the many different political, social and economic views which already exist in Iran.

Why then do we see promotion of the terrorist Mojahedin organization and a lack of recognition and support for more peaceful movements of change in Iran?

One reason could be that the Mojahedin has had millions of dollars made available to it by Saddam Hussein for its propaganda activities in the West. The Mojahedin's success has always come at the expense of other groups whose efforts are not so lavishly funded and who do not practice the same totalitarian structure internally, and who do not employ a system of modern slavery in order to push forward their agenda.

In spite of this discrepancy however, there has been no lack of information about the Mojahedin available to western politicians. The US State Department has now published its 2005 Country Reports on Terrorism. There is no reason to suppose that other governments take a different view.

Perhaps the real problem for politicians who support the Mojahedin is that they believe their own governments have designated the MKO as terrorist for political reasons, as part of deals with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

In this case, only the Mojahedin's own words will have resonance for those determined to support the Mojahedin as the only alternative to the current regime.

Maryam Rajavi introduced her Third Way as a rejection of both appeasement and military intervention by a foreign power. She told her Western audience, "...There is a third option: If foreign obstacles are removed, the Iranian people and their organized resistance have the capability to bring about change. This is the only way to prevent foreign invasion. ...the People's Mojahedin, (a member of the NCRI) the pivotal force within the Resistance..."

For elucidation we can read the following article (translated from Farsi) by the Mojahedin's own theorist, Bijan Niabati, called the Third Way.

In it, Mr Niabati says "The Third Way as the Mojahedin explain it [externally] means democratic changes in Iran through the Iranian people and the Iranian Resistance! In more understandable words, instead of a military offensive (as in the case of Iraq) or the policies of fruitless appeasement and ambiguity to achieve "regime change", it is better that the concerned world open the way for the Iranian Resistance and stop supporting the regime of the Islamic Republic!

The pure Farsi translation of this policy would be:

To arm the National Liberation Army again in a bid to move to topple the regime, and of course with air support from the Americans! No joking and no Taarof! [politesse]" [writer's emphasis]

For two decades, at the peak of its strength, the Mojahedin was poised to topple the regime in Iran with the backing of Saddam Hussein. The current demand for air support from the Americans betrays both its incompetence and its lack of independence. The Mojahedin is now desperately looking for a new sponsor. Yet the article concludes, "One should fight back with all force against any possibility of an American military assault." Does this not echo its violently anti-imperialist past?

The real context of this Third Way is that Maryam Rajavi has been investigated by the French Judiciary on terrorism charges and will soon be brought to trial along with several other leading MKO members in France.

With increasing disaffection and desertion among even the Mojahedin's closest supporters and members, can we assess the Third Way as anything but a desperate plea for survival at any cost.

Referendum!

The desired method for the Americans for a controlled change in the regimes in the region is to start a Velvet Revolution. It means that either the dictatorial regimes should accept the basic

fundamental of referring to the vote of the people and prepare their societies for the attack of "liberal democracy" or they will be sidelined! Recently, I heard a sentence quoting "Ali Abdullah Saleh" the president of Yemen saying that "Either we will cut and dress our hair ourselves or they will shave it for us"!

Relative to the above, the presence of "Richard Perl", theorizer of the hawks in the present American administration, participating in last year's concert in Washington to preliminarily introduce and emphasize the [Mojahedin's] "referendum" as a so called solution presented by the Mojahedin, was to try to present it in a framework of non violent (read anti-revolutionary) line of action. In this respect, the Mojahedin, by presenting the tactic of "referendum" purchased its ticket to enter the present political checks and balances.

After entering the scene, contrary to the expectation of many whose mouths were slaving in anticipation of the fall of the hegemony of Mojahedin!, the Mojahedin not only did not accept the disgrace of sitting with the counter revolutionaries supported by "Enterprise", but by introducing the "Third Way" to the European Parliament, they consequently entered the international equation over the problem of Iran in a much higher level.

The Mojahedin had sent the message to the other side that if there is going to be any cooperation, the condition is that your deals must be only with us. Certainly do not ask us to sit down with any other group or force!

The reaction of the "Enterprise" institute was the premature and knee jerk "Referendum" proposal by "Mohsen Sazgara" with the support of "Reza Pahlavi" under the umbrella of "Michael Ledeen". Not forgetting that in the last few years, there has been a history of contacts between the so called reformists inside the regime and the buried remnants of the Monarchists.

By the same logic, it is obvious that any other proposed solution, that is, the dreamlike way of Referendum or the direct military intervention of America, would lead to the creation of any force except a revolutionary force!

The arguments about what this force, which would topple the regime and whose name would come out of the ballet boxes, would do with the International Monetary Bank or the World Bank or even how would it stop the rule of capitalism in "civil society" and in general what its balancing mechanisms would be in the long term program of a "United Middle East" and ... is another matter.

The proposed "referendum" solution cannot work. A velvet revolution in Iran can also be dismissed as a dream. One should fight back with all force against any possibility of an American military assault. The "Third Way" is the most logical way to confront the religious monster ruling Iran and is the end to a nightmare which has been expanding for more than a quarter of a century.