

ParsBrief

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US to close base near camp housing Iranian exiles

Associated Press Newswire, June 11 2010

BAGHDAD (AP) - The U.S. military will relinquish control of a base near a compound housing an Iranian opposition group next month, a move that will close a chapter on one of the most intractable issues in U.S.-Iraqi relations .

The presence of the People's Mujahedeen Organization of Iran at Camp Ashraf has long been an irritant to Iraq's Shiite-led government, and the exiles expressed fear that they would face violence without the Americans there to protect them .

The announcement Thursday of the base closure on July 1 came nearly a year after Iraqi security forces raided the camp, prompting a melee that officials said left 11 residents dead and dozens injured .

The U.S. military guarded the camp since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 under an agreement that made its more than 3,000 residents "protected persons" under the Geneva Conventions. The military stopped observing the agreement after a new security accord with the Baghdad government took effect last year but maintained the nearby base .

U.S. military spokesman Lt. Col. Bob Owen said Thursday that the closure of the base known as Camp Grizzly is part of the transition as American forces prepare to leave the country by the end of next year .

"U.S. forces will continue to reduce our footprint in Iraq, and this is another base that will be turned over to the (Iraqi government) as we continue our transition to stability operations," he said .

Members of the Iranian faction, which fought with Saddam Hussein's forces against Tehran in the 1980-88 Iraq-Iran war, have made several claims about a host of alleged abuses and pressure tactics by Iraqi authorities who are eager to oust them from the country .

Ashraf's residents are very reluctant to leave the camp because of fear of being detained and threatened with deportation .

Iraqi officials could not immediately be reached for comment. In the past, the government has said the exiles will not be forcibly returned to Iran, where the Islamic leadership considers the People's Mujahedeen, or MEK, an enemy of the state .

The United States lists the MEK as a terrorist organization, though one that has provided the Americans with intelligence on Iran. The European Union removed it from its terror list last year .

A member of the European Parliament sent a letter this week to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton raising concern about a U.S. departure from the area .

Struan Stevenson, the European Parliament's point man on relations with Iraq, warned it would "be an extremely dangerous development that could lead to a new humanitarian catastrophe with far greater dimensions compared to the events of last July ".

Shahriar Kia, a spokesman for the group who lives at the camp, expressed fears about the future .

"The American government is responsible for the future of the people in this camp," he said in a telephone interview from the camp. "This will give a green light to the Iranian regime for any future attack especially when a new government in Iraq hasn't been established ".

Iraqi politicians are jockeying over the formation of a new government after inconclusive elections on March 7 .

Iraq's two largest Shiite political blocs signaled Thursday that their alliance is still strong by giving it a name, keeping them on track to form the core of the country's new government .

The alliance between Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's State of Law coalition and the hard-line religious Iraqi National Alliance was created more than a month ago. But there have been no outward signs of progress on key steps toward forming the government such as bringing in other partners that would give them a ruling majority in parliament or naming a candidate for the top government job, prime minister .

With behind-the-scenes negotiations moving slowly, there has been speculation in the Iraqi media that the alliance might not last .

But in a sign of its strength, lawmaker Khalid al-Attiyah said Thursday the union will now be called "National Alliance ".

He said the coalition would have 159 seats in 325-member parliament, still four seats shy of a ruling majority .

No group won an outright majority in the parliamentary election, but the rival Sunni-backed Iraqiya list claims it should be allowed to form a government because it won the most seats, with 91 compared to State of Law's 89 .

Parliament must still formally approve the National Alliance as a recognized coalition after it convenes for the first time on Monday. Lawmakers will also elect a new president, who will task the largest bloc with forming the new government -- including designating a prime minister, Cabinet officials and awarding other top political jobs to supporters .

Associated Press Writers Qassim Abdul-Zahra, Hadeel al-Shalchi and Lara Jakes contributed to this report

Iraq confirms its intention to remove the Mojahedin Khalq and the U.S. offers to host them in Europe

Al Sumaria News, Baghdad, June 07, 2010

Iraq's new National Security Adviser, Safa al-Sheik, stressed that the new Government of Iraq would end the presence of the Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq (aka PMOI, MEK, MKO, NCRI) in Iraq because its role in Iraq, past and present, was negative. He noted that the West's position on the issue of the organization was simply paradoxical. The U.S. government has called for Iraq to deal humanely with the members of the organization, and has accused Iraq of dealing 'roughly' with members of the organization.

In an interview for Alsumaria News, al-Sheik said there were "a number of important files that need to be addressed by the new government, most notably the file of the PMOI opposition". He noted that, "the new Iraqi government will put an end to its presence due to its negative role in Iraq before and now."

The National Security Adviser said that the organization "has, in the recent parliamentary elections, provided a European Member of Parliament with misrepresentations on the issue of fraud in the elections in Iraq, and after we looked at the source of the news, we know it came from [the PMOI]."

Al-Sheik said, "The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization working in Iraq under the guise of a number of organizations is deceptive, used as a front to play a negative role in Iraq against the parties and the government". He said, "Baghdad has the names of those pseudo organizations used by the organization as fronts".

The National Security Adviser lamented the lack of cooperation by European countries and the United States and Iraq in this area, asserting that "the States is concerned with the subject of the Mojahedin but refuses to accept any of the members of the organization in their country as refugees because it is classified as a terrorist entity". According to al-

Sheik, "At the same time, the States demands that Iraq keep the members on humanitarian grounds, which is an irresolvable and duplicitous way of dealing with the subject".

In late January 2009, the European Union removed the PMOI from its list of terrorist organizations; a move strongly condemned by the Iranian government and the Government of Iraq which has long sought a solution to closing the organisation's base Camp Ashraf in Khalis district, Diyala (55 kilometers) northeast of Baghdad, either by voluntary repatriation to Iran, or by transferring them to places deep in the desert, or to a third country. But things have remained the same.

The new National Security Advisor said that "the negative role played by the Mojahedin organization in Iraqi affairs was stopped significantly after the Iraqi security forces took control of Camp Ashraf," pointing to "the organization's involvement in previous operations to oppress the Iraqi people during the former regime."

The regime of Saddam Hussein provided the organization with a lot of financial, military and political support, particularly during the Iran-Iraq war.

Safa al-Sheik said the organization was "involved in providing support for some political actors and others to incite violence against the current government," pointing out that the former National Security Adviser, Dr. Mowaffaq al-Rubaie, had disclosed this information in 2008. He stated that Iraqi politicians had seized money from the organization and Iran, and said, "We have full confidence that al-Rubaie had sound information."

The new National Security Adviser, a former Deputy since 2004, can effect the removal of the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization from Iraq "positively as regards Iraqi-Iranian relations". But he also said that Iraq was "not prepared to compromise on their presence in Iraqi territory, and remains committed to observing human rights conventions while it takes any action toward the Organization".

For his part, U.S. forces spokesman General Stephen Lanza, said in an interview with Alsumaria News that his country's troops "had started to close the military base Camp Ashraf used by the People's Mojahedin Organization based in the province of Diyala."

Lanza said, "The Iraqi government and the U.S. Department of Defense will be holding a special meeting in the coming period with the MEK to make representation to the members of the Mojahedin on their accommodation in European countries", pointing out that "The Iraqi government is required to deal with them humanely."...

... Lanza said that "Iraqi security forces imposed full control over Camp Ashraf, which includes 3400 members of the Organization, after taking over security responsibility from

U.S. forces, but they deal with them harshly," stressing "the need to resolve Camp Ashraf peacefully and not stir up trouble with the government of Iraq".

The Mojahedin organization was founded in 1965 by academics and intellectual Iranians to overthrow the Shah's regime. It started as a left-wing Muslim opposition to the Shah's regime, but disagreed with the system of Islamic rule in Iran after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 .. it later became, and still is, a fierce opponent of Tehran...

Report of Secretary-General to Security Council May 2010

(UNAMI continues to monitor Camp Ashraf)

United Nations, Security Council, May 14, 2010

... UNAMI, while reiterating the right of the Government of Iraq to exercise its authority over Camp Ashraf and the obligation of the camp's residents to fully respect the law and the authority of the Government of Iraq, has continued to advocate for the residents' unhindered access to goods and services of a humanitarian nature ...

[Link to the full report](#)

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on a quarterly basis on the fulfillment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the third submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since the last report (S/2010/76), dated 8 February 2010, with a focus on the steps taken to implement resolution 1883 (2009). It presents a summary of key political developments during the period under review, as well as regional and international events concerning Iraq. The report provides an update on the activities of my Special Representative for Iraq, as well as operational and security matters.

II. Summary of key political and security developments in Iraq

A. National elections

3. The reporting period witnessed the holding of general elections for the Council of Representatives on 7 March 2010. UNAMI provided support to the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Government of Iraq throughout ...

(...)

52. In March, there were allegations from the Governor of Ninewa that detainees from that governorate were held in a prison facility in Baghdad, outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, and were subjected to abuse and torture without due process. I note that the Government of Iraq has closed the facility. As with other cases in the past, the United Nations urges that these allegations be investigated and those responsible brought to justice.

53. UNAMI continues to monitor the situation in Camp Ashraf in Diyala Governorate. In recent months, Iraqi security forces have not made any further attempt to relocate members of the Peoples Mujahedin of Iran resident in the camp. Although no significant outbreaks of violence have occurred during the reporting period, distrust and tensions between both sides remained, with limited cooperation regarding access to services and supplies in the camp.

54. UNAMI, while reiterating the right of the Government of Iraq to exercise its authority over Camp Ashraf and the obligation of the camp's residents to fully respect the law and the authority of the Government of Iraq, has continued to advocate for the residents' unhindered access to goods and services of a humanitarian nature, as well as for their right to be protected from arbitrary mass displacement or forced repatriation against their will in violation of the universally accepted principle of non- refoulement. UNAMI remains committed to assisting both parties find an acceptable resolution to this problem.

Security, operational and logistic issues

Security

55. Hostile groups continued to demonstrate their determination

(...)http://www.uniraq.org/FileLib/misc/SG_Report_S_2010_240_EN.pdf

Families lobby for PMOI visitation rights

UPI - May 19 ,2010

Iranian families called on U.S. officials in Baghdad to broker visitation rights to Iranian dissidents encamped in their Diyala province enclave.

Members of the dissident People's Mujahedin of Iran are lodged in their Camp Ashraf enclave in Diyala province.

The PMOI opposes the clerical regime in Iran. Washington lists the group as a terrorist organization for its violent methods of opposition, though the group surrendered its weapons in 2003.

Iranian family members of Camp Ashraf residents called on U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Christopher Hill to award them the same rights that U.S. family members have with American hikers detained in Iran since July.

Family members of the hikers are expected Wednesday in Tehran.

The PMOI family members say their relatives are held captive in Camp Ashraf, adding if Washington can broker an agreement with Iran, similar arrangements are possible with the PMOI.

"If America can negotiate this with Iran, we certainly expect that you can negotiate with this small terrorist group so that its members can meet freely with their families," the families said.

The PMOI is included in the Iranian opposition movement the National Council of Resistance to Iran, a French-based group that considers itself the Iranian Parliament in exile. It denies the cult and terrorist categorization, claiming its policy is based on peaceful dissent.

A book on MEK "Misled Martyrs"

By: Payam Rahaee , Translated by Nejat Society

A book on Mujahedin-e- khalq; from fighters of resistance movement to "Misled Martyrs".

The writer starts the book by the above mentioned statement where she describes the heart-rending scene of an MEK sympathizer committing self-immolation to protest the arrest of Maryam Rajavi in Paris. The suicide lost her life. The reader now keeps on reading because questions do not leave his curious mind. What motivation; what kind of hatred makes Neda commit such an act of protest? Why doesn't Mujahedin khalq Organization prohibit such acts? How come that a Canadian educated woman turns into such a "misled martyr"?

There are a few books published on this very topic: Mujahedin Khalq. Ms. Jurith Nourink as an expert on middle East who is correspondent of a famous Dutch newspaper "Trouw", explores MEK's cult-like attitudes in her book , "Misled Martyrs".

The author follows the experiences of a defector of MEK named "Yaser Ezzati", describing his bitter life, she goes over the forty-year history of Mujahedin as an armed organization

that blends its revolutionary version of Shiites with parts of Marxism ideology such as classless society. Ms. Nourink believes that the organization has gradually turned into a cult since Massoud and Maryam Rajavi got married. The influential leader of the cult, Massoud Rajavi seeks absolute power which, according to British historian Dalberg Acton, is the origin of absolute corruption. Any mean to achieve power, finds a saint nature which justifies MEK's collaboration with the enemy of Iran's national interests and territory, Saddam Hussein, and suppression of Kurdish uprising against Saddam during the Gulf War 1991. The quotes made by former members of MEK, confirms the fact that members of the cult obey Massoud Rajavi so blindly and worship him as an idol. Haydiger says:"asking question is the sign of piety of thought" but in MEK, questioning and criticizing are considered as taboos.

Nourink explains that thinking and asking is exclusive concession for a few high ranking members of the organization. Following the ideological revolution in the organization, the members were forced to divorce their spouses and then they were unwillingly separated from their children since Rajavi does not tolerate any obstacle between himself and his devotees. The only central idea and joining point in the group is their animosity towards Iranian regime and their sense of revenge.

The book describes the feeling of those who once thought they were fighting for the benefit of a free cultivated Iran but when they faced the cult-like tendencies of the organization, its close relations with Saddam Hussein and torture and imprisonment in the camps, they felt suppressed and disappointed so they left the group. Nourink portrays the grieves and pains of their suffering sole. These misled individuals thought that criticizing their leader signifies their disloyalty toward "saint ideals" of the organization, although they were quarrelling with their conscience and knew that their part was fake or destructive, they kept silent for years. They paid a high price for those years of being manipulated, isolated, extremist and depressed slaves of Rajavi.

A defector of the cult says:" they injected hatred and rancor in our sole all the time. We were not able to make a decision." Another defector sees himself so misled that calls "Eternal Light" operation as "Eternal Lie". The organization might have been damaged mostly by the side of these very people rather than Islamic Republic.

The author of the book refers to various books on psychological pathology and the origins of the cults. She finds all fundamental elements of a cult in MKO. Rajavi had all the time been studying psychological books in order to spread his absolute rule on the members' minds, according to one of her sources. If Rajavi did not succeed to master a member's

mind, then he/she would be labeled as the regime's spy who would consequently go under threat, torture, pressure and imprisonment.

Nourink uses her artistic talent to develop the characters of her book, describing their true emotions so tactfully, although she is not always neutral as a journalist should be. Sometimes she looks like a human rights activist but sometimes she doesn't offer a persuasive analysis. For instance, she believes that in 1991 when Saddam was threatened by Kurdish uprisings, MKO guaranteed his survival otherwise he would have fallen on the same year.

Nourink assumes the memoirs and experiences of defectors as historical facts, she is not able to take an impartial position of a journalist. She does not enter the organization to talk with MKO's central committee and its present loyal members so that her sources would not be restricted to a few defectors.

Nourink might have authored one of the most comprehensive books on MKO, after Irvand Abrahamian's book " Mujahedin Khalq ". At the end of the book she wonders why American neo-cons who are aware of MKO's hostility towards America and know that MKO assassinated several American military forces and citizens at Shah's era and had a supportive part in hostage taking of American embassy in Tehran and also it is labeled as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by DOS, do not try to remove the group from Iraqi territory. Why do they still view MKO as an option to pressure or to overthrow the Iranian regime? Can really such a terrorist cultist organization be the messenger of democracy or the defendant of human rights in Iran?

Mojahedin Khalq (MEK, MKO) and Iraq – bribery, intrigue and chaos

Almutamar Newspaper, Baghdad, April 29, 2010

The insistence of the Mojahedin-e Khalq of Iran (MEK), which has been based in Camp Ashraf since the 1980s, on staying in Iraq against the wishes of the Government of Iraq and its people has made it an expensive matter.

What casts a black cloud over this organization is the recollection of the Iraqi people. This group, which was hosted by the former regime and its head, the dictator Saddam Hussein during his war with Iran, was used to implement the recommendations of the leaders of the former Iraqi army and the intelligence services. The intelligence of the MEK was used to carry out acts of espionage inside Iranian cities and in Iraqi territory, which according to military experts, often helped the warlords in the planning and execution of military operations in the field. After Saddam and his regime, other governments began to sponsor

the Mojahedin, and even today the international community has provided the group with various civilian and military facilities and given them many possibilities, the most important of which is Camp Ashraf. They allow the organization's leadership and to recruit its members to Iraq in various ways - brainwashing, false promises, kidnapping ... and etc.

The MKO has obeyed the needs of the former regime in following its aggressive policy of war with Iran, and also performed killing and destruction against the people of Iraq and Iran, as well as the liquidation and assassination of opponents, which separated them in Europe and America. This was the result of the possibilities furnished by the former regime.

Many questions remain in the minds of the Iraqis and Iraqi public opinion now, after the end of the Iran-Iraq war which claimed the lives of millions of people, followed by uprisings among Iraqis in 1991, in which the MKO played the major role in helping Saddam's forces (the Republican Guard) and Saddam's security in suppressing the uprising and causing the deaths of thousands of Iraqis in northern Iraq and to the south. After all these tragic events of the past, and now that the Iraqi people have won their freedom after the fall of the dictator, what is the point of having the MKO in Iraq? What are the reasons for insisting on remaining at Camp Ashraf?

The main question is; what is the benefit for the organization to stay in Iraq now, without the presence of the former regime which protected them? The numerous statements made by the leaders and officials of the Mojahedin Organization directed across the world are a show of power and capability of the Organization in defiance of the Government of Iraq in particular, and the international community in general. The claims of the organization's leadership, under the title of 'the security risks facing the Organization and its members', about the activities of the Iraqi forces and the Committee for Camp Ashraf, after the Iraqi government took responsibility for the camp, are nothing but excuses and lies.

For example, the MKO is using not only its own websites but also undeclared spokespeople like Mahdi Akbairi, to claim that the Iraqi government, after taking over responsibility for the camp [in January 2009], is blocking access to food, fuel and medical to Camp Ashraf in an attempt to kill all the members of the organization.

Studies, reports and research by various organizations and agencies, as well as the confessions of the many separated members of the Mojahedin (Batool Soltani, the youngest Farzin, Davoud Heidari, Ali Khaki, Hamid Reza Soleimani, Farhad Quanlo, Mahmoud Sepahe Humayun Khzadi, Ramadan Saeedi. . etc) reveal the reasons for the group's determination to stay in Iraq. Camp Ashraf provides a distant, isolated place, which serves to allow it to control the minds of its members. The group also needs troops and a

military camp inside the Iraqi border, near Iranian territory in order to implement its hostile plans against Iran. In addition, Camp Ashraf is a show of force and power in Iraq.

But these reasons are not enough for the organization to so desperately try to remain in Camp Ashraf. There is another key reason; the search for another dictator, and an alternative sponsor to allow it to achieve its aims. The search for a replacement for the remnants of the Saddam regime of course led the organisation's leadership to the coalition countries occupying Iraq as the first alternative. So the idea was that the United States and the U.S.'s allies would fill the void left by the former regime. This was anticipated by the decision of the coalition forces to agree a ceasefire with the forces of the Mojahedin Organization in Iraq and for it to hand over all its weapons and military equipment to U.S. forces and accept the decisions of the U.S. leadership and agree to end any combat and military activity against any local or external party (Studies of the National Institute for Research on National Defense U.S. RAND). This, first and foremost, deceived the leaders of the organization (Maryam Rajavi) because the idea was not met with a positive reception internationally when she asked the United States and the West to work to create a suitable environment and enable the Mojahedin to launch a military attack on Iran, supported by United States forces stationed in Iraq, to take advantage of the differences and poor relations between America and Iran since the seventies.

So the fact remains that the main motivation for the survival of the Mojahedin of Iran in Camp Ashraf, at this stage is that the organization's leaders only hope is for the return of the ousted regime in Iraq. Or, until they find an alternative for this present situation which will allow it to achieve the plans and aggressive ambitions of the organization against Iran and the creation of a crisis which would spark a new war between Iraq and Iran. This then, is what the organization seeks through its association with elements associated with the Baath party and the former regime in Iraq or terrorist movements and organizations linked to Al Qaeda and others who want to worsen the situation in Iraq and its people. The Mojahedin does its best to support and strengthen these elements in Iraq. This shows that the Mojahedin organization does not want Iraq safer from terrorism, free from intrigue and chaos, and does not want stability for the government and the Iraqi people and does not want a democratic system in Iraq. Because, if this comes about, they will have no future in Iraq. So, they are seeking, in time, to achieve two important plans at the same time. The first is to hold on to Camp Ashraf as a symbol of strength and competence. Then, as alleged, they are following the quest to bring back a fascist dictatorship which will take power in Iraq. This is why the Mojahedin of Iran has taken to embracing all political

opponents of the Iraqi government and embracing the extremists and the remnant elements associated with the Baath party and the former regime.

At the same time, the Iraqi government knew very well that Camp Ashraf had changed to provide a safe haven for these groups in the first years after the fall of the former regime. What the Mojahedin organization and its leadership want, is a return to the previous conditions, meaning; conditions before the coalition forces invaded Iraq. So they hope to damage the existing good relations based on mutual respect between the two neighbors, Iraq and Iran in the interest of the Mojahedin. The public policy pursued by the organization's leadership is currently working using bribery and intrigue to bring about the deterioration of relations between the two countries. The group hopes to weaken democracy in Iraq, and create hostility toward the opening up of Iraqi foreign policy to building international relations and strong and peaceful coexistence with neighboring countries. In this way, the Mojahedin hopes to destroy Iraq's good relations.

So, the Iranian Organization tries to remain in Camp Ashraf under any pretext in order to be at hand to interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq. But the group's justification for its presence on Iraqi soil, using international laws does not apply at all according to observers and experts in international law. It attempts to plant the seeds of dissent and intrigue for the return of the previous conditions, and to work on the lack of stability in Iraq, because otherwise, stability is fatal to its goals.

The Iraqi government acting on proof that the Mujahideen Khalq Organization was interfering in Iraqi affairs and attempting to bring back dictatorship, took steps to destroy the hopes the Mojahedin of Iran for achieving its goals in Iraq. The Government of Iraq ordered the closure of Camp Ashraf and directed the Mojahedin to leave Iraq through Ministerial resolution No. (214), on 17/06/2008, which calls for two main objectives: first, that these organizations and others that adopt terrorist ideology, have no place in Iraqi territory, so that Iraq can achieve security, stability and prosperity and, secondly, it is the will of the Iraqis to have their full sovereignty, freedom and independence at home, especially after the inglorious history of these groups against the Iraqi people.

D. Amir al-Khalidi,