

ParsBrief

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Maliki, Kobler discuss evacuation Iranian Ashraf camp, HQ of MKO

Aswat al Iraq, Baghda, October 16, 2011

Premier Nouri al-Maliki discussed with the new UN representative to Iraq the necessity of evacuating Iranian Ashraf camp by the end of this year, according to a Premiership statement.

The statement, copy received by Aswat al-Iraq, added that Maliki met Martin Koplner during which he expressed full support to the UN mission in Iraq.

Both sides discussed joint matters, especially the evacuation of Ashraf camp and the necessity to implement Iraqi Cabinet resolution on this matter.

Iraqi government issued a final resolution to end the presence of Iranian opposition Mujahidin Khalq by the end of this year, because it is a terrorist organization that participated in killing the Iraqi people.

Mujahidin Khalq are stationed in Ashraf camp in Diala province since it moved its headquarters in 1985.

On his side, Koplner said he will continue UN work in full coordination with the Iraqi government according to UN Security Council resolution.

He stressed that the UN prepared a paper containing its vision of the situation in Iraq till 2015, where "the situation proved to be with the ambitions of the paper", as the statement said.

EU is tasked to provide platform for Washington backed MKO

Press TV, October 12, 2011

A senior Iranian lawmaker says the European Union seeks to provide a platform for the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) in order for the terrorist group to muster diplomatic influence.

"The European Union intends to provide opportunities for the MKO terrorist group so they can step into diplomatic circles," said Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, the deputy chairman of the National Security and Foreign Policy Committee of the Iranian Majlis (parliament), on Wednesday.

His comments come in reaction to a recent move by EU Foreign Policy chief Catherine Ashton to appoint Jean De Ruyt as the bloc's advisor to address the situation of the terrorist group in Camp Ashraf, Mehr news agency reported.

The appointment comes as the Iraqi government has announced its decision to shut down Camp Ashraf in Iraq's Diyala province, where MKO members live.

Falahatpisheh noted that in the past the EU and the US supported the MKO to help the group carry out acts of terror in Iran, and argued that the terrorist organization has turned into a "political tool" for the West.

The fact that the EU has repeatedly listed and delisted the MKO as a terrorist organization throws doubt on Brussels' position on the MKO, the legislator pointed out.

Members of the MKO fled to Iraq in 1986, where they enjoyed the support of executed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, and set up Camp Ashraf.

The group has carried out numerous acts of terror and violence against Iranian civilians and government officials.

The terror organization is also known to have cooperated with Saddam in suppressing the 1991 uprisings in southern Iraq and the massacre of Iraqi Kurds in the north.

Tehran has repeatedly called on the Iraqi government to expel the group, but the US has been blocking the expulsion by pressuring the Iraqi government.

Open Letter to Catherine Ashton on behalf of the families of Rajavi's hostages in Camp Ashraf

Anne Singleton, Middle East Strategy Consultants, October 25, 2011

Dear Mrs. Ashton,

It is interesting and entirely predictable that at the same time you replied to Iran that the six major powers - the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia - are willing to meet within weeks if Iran is prepared to "engage seriously in meaningful discussions" over concerns about its nuclear programme, we have seen a flurry of activity by the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) to skew perceptions of the issue with misinformation and self-aggrandising propaganda.

Paid MEK activists held yet another demonstration in front of the White House on Saturday with the irrelevant demand that the US government remove the MEK from its terrorism list. In Brussels Maryam Rajavi, wife of the MEK's leader, was given a platform to promote terrorism in the European Parliament. Conflating the totally irrelevant issue of Camp Ashraf in Iraq with the problems posed by Iran's nuclear programme and the MEK's terrorist listing in the US, she was given a platform to verbally attack and insult Iraqis and their elected government from a parliamentary building.

The MEK is certainly highly proficient in advertising itself as a tool for anti-Iran elements to use and it is unfortunate that Europe's corridors of power are being so casually exploited

to promote Washington's favourite terrorists. The intended signal is that Europe will brandish a stick to open negotiations with Iran over the nuclear issue. Does the European Commission represent European interests in this respect or do you represent the agenda of only the extreme right wings of USA and Israeli politics?

But as much as we believe this is against your interests, these are political issues and we do not wish to take any position in this respect. Our first and foremost concern is that you do not allow the issue of Camp Ashraf and its sick and aging population to be used as a political football for everyone to kick around for their own game.

It has been reported that Mrs Rajavi conveyed her thanks to you for taking the side of the MEK against the government of Iraq. If this is true it is highly unfortunate that your office has been manipulated to look as though you are taking a position of backing the head of a terrorist cult instead of the victims.

Mrs Rajavi like her fugitive husband Massoud Rajavi does not represent the individuals trapped inside Camp Ashraf. The Rajavis do not represent anybody's interests but their own.

The Government of Iraq has frequently advised representatives of the European Union not to use the MEK to push their agendas in Iraq, to the point of issuing written and verbal complaints against interference in the internal affairs of their country, including their elections, and have warned against using elements of terrorism to push their agendas. However, these political issues must be addressed in another arena by other parties. We are specifically interested that you have now taken responsibility for dealing with Camp Ashraf.

As you are aware, around 3400 Iranian individuals remain trapped in a dangerous, destructive mind control cult, the Mojahedin-e Khalq, by its leader Massoud Rajavi inside Camp Ashraf in Diyala province of Iraq.

Since the MEK was confined to and protected in the camp by the US military in 2003, Rajavi has resisted all efforts to allow any external agencies to free these individuals in a peaceful and humane manner. Rajavi is holding the residents as hostages to guarantee his safe future, to avoid prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity brought against him by the government of Iraq and the international community.

You are also aware that since February 2009, many of the families of these hostages have taken turns to stay just outside the camp in an effort to find and meet their loved ones and to prevent the MEK from further harming them. Now, as a new contingent of families from Gilan province in Iran have arrived at the camp, we are writing to you on behalf of the families of the captives of the MEK and its Western backers in Washington, London and Brussels. (Such ordinary Iranians find themselves voiceless in Western political and media circles due to the virulently anti-Iranian attitude which prevails in these circles.) They wish first and foremost to remind you that they are part of the solution, not the problem.

You have demonstrated your particular interest in this issue by appointing Mr Jean De Ruyt, a former Belgian ambassador to the EU, as your advisor on Camp Ashraf. He will no doubt be investigating and examining whatever approaches are available to resolve the situation. By situation I refer to the standoff between the constitutional and legal demand of the elected government of the sovereign nation of Iraq, and the illegal and irrational demands of a cult leader as the hostage taker who represents nobody but his own interests and who is prepared to kill others to this end.

The government of Iraq demands that the MEK leave Iraq before the end of the year, certainly before American troops are withdrawn. For this reason, there is an urgent need to find an effective solution. On two occasions, August 2009 and April 2011, when Iraqi security forces have attempted to enter the camp to impose the rule of law on the camp, Massoud Rajavi ordered his special forces, his fedayeen, to force the brainwashed residents to confront these efforts with a suicidal resistance which led to the deaths and injuries of many rank and file members as well as injuries to Iraqi security forces. Iraq is working hard to avoid a similar confrontation in future and is expecting cooperation from the international community in this respect. Soon after the second of these incidents I visited the camp and interviewed the responsible authorities and gathered enough evidence which is available for any party who would like to know. Since 2008 three reports have described the situation of the camp and two books have been written on the subject.

Mr Jean De Ruyt, who will liaise with EU states and organizations including the United Nations, says that a peaceful and realistic solution and the security and safety of residents are his priority. For this reason the families are very optimistic now that you have taken over responsibility from the Americans. With the appointment of this advisor the families now believe your office has a mandate to help Iraq, the UN and ICRC to resolve the situation as soon as possible.

The families are asking that you coordinate with the Iraqi authorities to help them to protect their relatives when the leaders are finally forced to open the gate of the camp and allow external agencies in. This is the first step before the UNHCR can take the residents out of the garrison and interview them individually without MEK minders present. It is at this time of maximum confrontation that they fear Massoud Rajavi will order the deaths of the residents.

Once the gates of the camp are finally opened safely, the residents will of course be able to access the facts and information which have been denied them for decades about their true situation and the possibilities for their future. Whatever their choices, their families are on hand to offer them protection and support. Of course, not all the families can be in Iraq at the same time, but all are willing to travel there to help their loved ones when their individual circumstances demand.

The MEK is designated as a terrorist organisation by Iraq based on its activities in their country against their citizens – the MEK has killed 25,000 Iraqi civilians over two decades. In contrast, the EU does not regard the MEK as a terrorist entity. This should make it possible for residents of Camp Ashraf – in addition to those who already have citizen or

residency rights – to be brought to Europe as refugees under the auspices of the UNHCR. (Due to the peculiarities of American law, delisting the MEK in the USA would play no part whatsoever in helping the people in Camp Ashraf.)

Considering that the US military has deliberately helped the MEK to keep the gates closed and the residents trapped inside, the opportunity now exists for you to act as a go-between for the US and MEK and thus ensure that the camp is opened up at the earliest opportunity so that work can start to relocate the hostages. Certainly the government of Iraq is happy to help facilitate this outcome on the understanding that if this process is not begun by the end of the year, the international community has obliged them to take unilateral decisions regarding the camp and its residents.

Above all else, the families outside have travelled from far and wide to rescue their loved ones and are more than happy to ensure a swift and peaceful outcome. There can be no possible objection or obstacles to helping them.

Anne Singleton

(Author of Saddam's Private Army, 2003 and co-author of The Life of Camp Ashraf, 2011)

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The MEK's Propaganda Machine

Paul R. Pillar, The National Interest, October 29, 2011

The National Interest will be running on Monday a response to Raymond Tanter's missive on behalf of the Iranian cult/terrorist group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq. Given that Tanter goes out of his way to raise my name a couple of times, it would be appropriate for me as well to point out a couple of the more glaring misdirections in his piece.

Tanter's premise, as reflected in his title, is that anything bad you ever heard about the MEK is a product of propaganda from the Iranian regime. Evidently this means that anyone, either inside or outside of Iran, who has ever been critical of the group must have been brainwashed by the propaganda. If that were true, those responsible for U.S. public diplomacy have a lot of valuable lessons to learn from the Iranians; their propagandists must be doing something right.

The Iranian regime flings propaganda as freely as any other regime. And it certainly has had a lot of unfavorable things to say about the MEK. Some of those things may be exaggerated or even outright lies. But one could erase completely everything the Iranian regime has ever said on this subject, and there would remain the large, long, sordid record of what the MEK has done, what it has stood for, and the abhorrent cult it still is. The record extends from the days it was killing Americans while opposing the shah, through when it was in league with the clerical regime and supporting further anti-American terrorism such as the hostage-taking at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, through the long period during which it was working for the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. The record is not based just on what is said by the State Department or an intelligence agency or any

governmental component with a policy to support, much less on anything the Iranian regime might say. If you want a recent independently reported portrait of the group, see, for example, this article by Elizabeth Rubin.

Tanter tries to smear critics and criticism of the MEK, including some of the contents of an open letter to which I was a signatory, by saying it “resembles regime propaganda against the MEK.” The MEK has conducted terrorism and other violent acts against U.S. interests and against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Is it any surprise that some of the critical things said about the group from the standpoint of U.S. interests resemble some of what the Iranian regime puts out? (And if it's not brainwashing, then just what is Tanter suggesting is the reason for the resemblance?)

One of the respects in which Tanter's piece diverges most widely from reality is his attempt to argue that the MEK has any support to speak of within Iran. He notes that the group was the source of some revelations about Iran's nuclear program. True—and we ought to remember our reliance on the accident of this weird sourcing when we think about how much confidence we ought or ought not to have in our knowledge of this program—but what does that have to do with popular support? It only takes one person to serve as a source. The most telling indication of the MEK's unpopularity in Iran, as pointed out in the aforementioned open letter, is that the Iranian regime uses that unpopularity as a way to discredit the democratic opposition in Iran, by trying to associate it with the MEK. For the same reason, the leaders of the Green Movement have emphatically said that they want nothing to do with the MEK. Tanter also mentions attendance at pro-MEK rallies in the United States as a measure of support, without mentioning that the MEK campaign has resorted to such measures—used in a rally outside the State Department this summer—as padding attendance by busing in homeless people who don't know squat about the MEK or Iran but come for the free food.

Tanter precedes a reference to me with the odd statement that “Intelligence communities are targets of Iran's disinformation.” Odd because I have been out of the intelligence business for more than six years, and anyone who views my thinking as having any connection with judgments that an intelligence agency would reach today will be disappointed and wasting their propaganda resources. Tanter later mentions me again as someone who ought to be concerned about the “political motivation” for having the MEK on the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations, or FTOs. It is true that the listing process is not immune to policy considerations, but that has been much more a matter of avoiding the listing of a group that really ought to be on the list (the Provisional Irish Republican Army of fifteen years ago is the example that comes to mind), than of including on the list a group that should not. Not listing someone means simply not initiating the listing process. Listing a group requires a lengthy process of review by the Departments of State, Justice, and Treasury and the intelligence community, according to the criteria specified by law.

Tanter seems to believe that a group has to have committed terrorist acts within the previous two years to be kept on the list. Not true. (Having been directly involved in the laborious process of compiling the required administrative records for the initial listings after enactment of the law in 1996 that created the FTO list, I know a thing or two about this subject.) Two years used to be the interval between recertifications of listed groups, and it is now the period after which a group can petition for delisting. But no terrorist acts

have to have been committed during that period; retaining the capability and presumed intent to commit them is sufficient to stay on the list. If performing terrorist acts recently was a requirement to stay on the list, many of the 49 groups currently on the list would have to come off. Lebanese Hizballah, for example, probably would be one of them. I expect that many of the pro-MEK campaigners would be among the first to scream if that happened.

There is indeed a large amount of political influence that is being exerted in an effort to affect a decision about the FTO list, and it is almost all coming in the form of the large and well-funded campaign to delist the MEK. In fact, the campaign is extraordinary, and nothing remotely resembling it has ever been waged on behalf of any other group on the FTO list. Whatever is being said in the opposite direction is only a modest reaction to the pro-MEK campaign itself. Here is what I said on the subject two months ago, after that rally outside the State Department:

The secretary of state should pay no heed to what Melvin Santiago and the other hungry homeless outside her office window are saying, or to what the high-paid hired guns are saying, about the MEK. Nor does she need to pay any attention to what people like me are saying about the group. She should keep the windows closed and just pay attention to the terms of the law and to what officials in the departments and agencies involved say about whether the terms of the law still apply in this case.

If Raymond Tanter really wanted to inform us about political influence being exerted on what ought to be administrative and legal decisions, he could shed more light on the campaign of which he is a part. In particular, he could help us understand where all that funding is coming from. It evidently is coming from quarters who would like to stoke ever more tension and animosity between the Iran and the United States. I have a guess who that might be, but so far it is only a guess.

Lloyd James: Lobbying for Backers of MKO Terrorists

By Asawin Suebsaeng - Motherjones.com - October 05, 2011

The international PR firm that repped Libya's Moammar Qaddafi and Syria's Bashar al-Assad takes on a new controversial client: supporters of the Iranian opposition outfit Mujahideen-e-Khalq.

Over the years, the Iranian opposition group and State Department-listed terrorist organization Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK) has won a bizarre patchwork of high-profile supporters. John Bolton, Gen. Wesley Clark (Ret.), big-time Republican lawyers Victoria Toensing and Joseph diGenova, Tom Ridge, Howard Dean, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel have all called on the US government to stop treating the MEK, also known as The People's Mujahideen of Iran, as a terrorist group. This obscure Paris-based outfit—labeled a cult by its critics—that has assembled such an impressive roster of backers now also has the help of Brown Lloyd James, a major international PR firm with a track record of taking on controversial clients.

In late August, hundreds of MEK supporters descended on Washington, protesting the group's foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) listing in front of the State Department with

attendees yelling slogans like "We want justice, we want peace, we want MEK off the list!" Speakers including former Rep. Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) and ex-Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell held forth on why they believe the group is the best hope for secular democracy and human rights in Iran. (The MEK's FTO status is currently being considered by a court-mandated review.)

The well-organized event and high-profile speakers indicated the kind of large-scale, well-funded MEK lobbying enterprise that has been suggested by various media outlets. Jila Kazerounian, one of the rally's press liaisons, was quick to quash that notion. "There is no MEK lobby, that you read about in these articles," she said. "The closest thing we have to a lobby is the money from grassroots supporters; these Iranian Americans—educated, doctors, businessmen, lawyers, young, old." Nevertheless, in the thick of the crowd was a Brown Lloyd James account executive who told me he was taking notes on the rally for his superiors in Manhattan.

In May 2011, the firm was hired by a Germany-based MEK backer named Ali Taslimi working on behalf of Camp Ashraf, a refugee camp in Iraq north of Baghdad that houses over 3,000 Iranian MEK members and supporters. For an initial fee of \$40,000, Brown Lloyd James signed on to provide political consulting services and "a broad range of public relations services for the months of May and June 2011" to Camp Ashraf, which is officially listed as the client.

Brown Lloyd James, a US-British company that specializes in government relations (i.e., lobbying), advertising, and "reputation management," handles the accounts of Al Jazeera English, the government of Qatar, Forbes, and even the composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. But some of its clients are decidedly less savory. In fact, helping MEK supporters isn't necessarily the most controversial thing Brown Lloyd James has done recently: This year, the firm made news for doing business with the Qaddafi regime in Libya and the Assad dictatorship in Syria—in the latter case, \$5,000-per-month work that included landing a fawning Vogue profile of Syrian first lady Asma al-Assad. In an ironic twist, Brown Lloyd James was hired to publicize a September 23 New York bash held by the Logo for Human Rights project, a competition endorsed by Mikhail Gorbachev that aimed to crowdsource a fresh logo that would "become as iconic as the peace sign and serve to advance the global spread...of human rights." (After the news broke, which highlighted the firm's work for clients with dubious human rights records, the project said that it would sever its ties with the firm.)

But while the company is obviously no stranger to controversy, lobbying for delisting the MEK presents uniquely tricky legal issues—particularly when it comes to the material support for terrorism statute, which prohibits providing aid or resources to designated terrorist organizations. Brown Lloyd James maintains that it works with supporters of the MEK, not the group itself. However, experts on counterterrorism law say the firm's MEK advocacy may still be problematic.

"Whether the MEK should or should not be listed is one thing, but the law is very clear that third parties and intermediaries don't insulate you," says David Cole, a professor of law at Georgetown University. "Think about how the United States would respond if [American] citizens were actively working with a PR organization to support the legitimacy of Hamas in Gaza? Here, the only thing protecting the people involved is that they include the former homeland security secretary, not the kind of people the government wants to prosecute...If

circumstances were different, they would be scrambling for a good criminal defense...And the same goes for any public relations firm."

Brown Lloyd James maintains that it works with supporters of the MEK, not the group itself. However, legal experts say the firm's advocacy may still be problematic.

The language of the material support statute is broad enough to encompass the activity of a PR firm, according to Robert Chesney, a professor and international security expert at the University of Texas School of Law. However, Chesney recognizes that a First Amendment defense might have some traction. "There is a free speech issue here, as we are talking about advocating changes to government policy and that is protected if you are doing it independent of the listed group, even if it aids the group indirectly," Chesney says. "At the end of the day, if I were a lawyer advising a PR firm, I would say you have to be very clear as to who you're dealing with here. As a firm doing this kind of work, you have to know that how the facts appear to you might not be how they appear to those pursuing prosecution."

Brown Lloyd James denies that it's in murky legal terrain. "Iranian-American communities are perfectly within their rights to work with anyone they want," Mike Holtzman, a partner in the firm's New York office, said in an email. "They are exercising their First Amendment rights."

Though the MEK has built up a powerful base of political support in the West, there is still much debate surrounding the group's true nature. The MEK and their supporters say the group is the oppressed, Western-friendly, and pluralistic antidote to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Islamic republic. But there's more to the story. Since its founding in Tehran in the mid-1960s, the group, which began as a synthesis of Islamic principles, left-wing politics, and violent resistance to the Shah, has been accused of grave breaches of human rights, indiscriminate mass slaughter (including the deaths of three Americans in 1976), and a totalitarian, hero-worshipping culture.

Critics claim that the MEK's zigzagging alliances—initially supporting the clerics in the 1979 revolution, then challenging their power, then fighting on the side of Iraq throughout the brutal Iran-Iraq War—have made the group unpopular among Iranians, even those who abhor the current regime. Many also allege that MEK fighters—including current leader Maryam Rajavi herself—were part of a death squad that did Saddam Hussein's bidding during the 1991 Shiite and Kurdish uprisings.

The group's supporters brush off the negative press as rooted in the propaganda machines of the Shah, and later the Ayatollah, and view the continuation of the MEK's 1997 Foreign Terrorist Organizations listing as a cynical, naive sop by the Obama administration to the Iranian government. "Some members of the media have bought all that propaganda wholesale," Ali Safavi, president of Near East Policy Research and an organizer behind the well-publicized State Department rally, said. "The Iranian regime has taken a page right out of Joseph Goebbels' book. [The regime has] spent millions upon millions of dollars in their campaign against the MEK."

Meanwhile, though, vast sums of money have reportedly been paid out to speakers at pro-MEK events. Among the recipients is Howard Dean, who has written in support of the organization and has been a paid speaker at MEK-related events since January 2011. He says that he was hired via the New York-based Harry Walker Agency to appear at events "sponsored by groups in the Iranian American community, not the MEK." MEK supporters

and event organizers stress that their advocacy is bankrolled by the "Iranian American community." But what remains a mystery is exactly where the funding that fuels these costly MEK lobbying operations comes from, or what central entity, if any, coordinates the effort.

Brown Lloyd James declined to discuss its pro-MEK work or the firm's relationship with supporters and activists, though Holtzman did offer to field questions on "the humanitarian outrages taking place against the people in Camp Ashraf." Just the same, Holtzman's firm has a decidedly nuanced view when it comes to the MEK's primary oppressor. Peter Brown, the president of Brown Lloyd James, told the Financial Times in late August that he would "love to take on Iran as a client" because "there are areas of commonality that ought to be exploited."

Former Mujahadeen Leader Confirms Alleged Iran Terror Plot Conspirator Affiliated with MEK

Tikun Olam, October 20, 2011

You'll recall that the U.S. claimed that the Iranian alleged conspirator in the terror plot against the Saudi ambassador, Gholam Shakuri, was a Revolutionary Guard (IRG) official. Though many Iranians have scoured every resource they could think of, none have found evidence of such a person with any IRG affiliation. If the U.S. has such evidence it ought to produce it if it wants to be believed. Yesterday, the well-placed Alef site, run by an Iranian majlis member who's run for president twice, alleged that Shakuri is in fact a high level Mujahadeen al Khalq (MEK) leader. It offered evidence to support the charge.

Today, the official MEK leadership has denied that Shakuri is a member and the U.S. has also denied the charge. But in fact, a former high-ranking MEK leader, Massoud Khodabandeh (he has allowed me to use his name), writing in the Gulf2000 listserv, confirmed that Shakuri is in fact an MEK member. He cautions that there may be more than one Gholam Shakuri, and the one who is the MEK member may not be the same Shakuri the U.S. has named. While this may be true, this new development moves Shakuri a lot closer to being MEK than being IRG. And moves the entire U.S. account of this supposed crime closer to the trash heap.

In its story containing the U.S. denial, the NY Times quotes U.S. sources responding to the Iranian charge that Shakuri held or holds a U.S. passport:

Mr. Shakuri is not a United States citizen and does not have an American passport.

I have no doubt that Shakuri is not a U.S. citizen and also that he may not currently have a U.S. passport. But this statement, at least as portrayed by Scott Shane, does not say the U.S. never issued such a passport in his name. There are many ways and reasons a non-U.S. citizen may obtain a U.S. passport including fraud and the possibility that Shakuri was performing a task for the U.S. government or CIA and needed such a document. I am speculating, but in light of the paucity of evidence the U.S. has offered to support its claims, we must parse the information it has distributed to try to determine credibility and accuracy.

There is another intriguing element that the Alef story added to the mix. It claimed that Interpol had released information allowing confirmation of Shakuri as an MEK official. The NY Times says this:

An Interpol spokeswoman declined to comment. But an American official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that Interpol had discovered no link to the opposition group, calling the Iranian news report "pure fiction."

While I do not know the protocols that Interpol follows in making public statements, I'd think that if the organization had been portrayed falsely by Iran, that it would want to say so. I'd also think that the U.S. would be a far more important national partner to Interpol than Iran and that Interpol would also want to deny this story if it were false because the U.S. would benefit from this. The fact that it refuses to do so raises if not a red, then surely a yellow flag for me.

The fact that a U.S. official seeks to speak on behalf of Interpol and under the cloak of anonymity is highly dubious. If they want us to believe what they claim, then I'm afraid it will have to be Interpol speaking on its own behalf.

Saudi envoy plot suspect is MKO man

Press TV - October 17, 2011

Interpol has gained information about the second suspect in the alleged plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States indicating that he is a key member of the Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO).

A source told the Mehr news agency on Monday that Interpol has learned that Gholam-Hossein Shakouri, aka Ali Shakouri and Gholam Shakouri, the second suspect in the alleged plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Washington, is one of the senior members of the MKO, which is an anti-Iranian terrorist group.

Shakouri has travelled to numerous countries with many fake identity documents, including forged Iranian passports, and he was last seen in Washington and at Camp Ashraf, where MKO members are based, the source added.

One of the passports used by Shakouri was issued on November 30, 2006 in Washington with the number K10295631.

The MKO fled to Iraq in the 1980s, where it enjoyed the support of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and set up Camp Ashraf in the eastern province of Diyala, near the Iranian border.

Over 3,000 MKO members are currently residing at the camp. In addition, the group has sent elements to Iran on spying and terrorist missions.

The MKO is listed as a terrorist organization by much of the international community and has committed numerous terrorist acts against both Iranians and Iraqis.

Iran has repeatedly called on the Iraqi government to expel the group, but the US has been putting pressure on the Iraqi government to block the expulsion.

Earlier in the day, a senior Pakistani intelligence official said that the prime suspect in the alleged plot, Mansour Arbabsiar, who is also a cousin of Shakouri, had received forged identity documents from the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad.

On October 11, the US Justice Department accused Iran of plotting to assassinate Saudi Arabian Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir, with help from a man suspected of being a member of a Mexican drug cartel.

Tehran says the media hype created by Washington is an attempt to deflect international attention from the anti-corruption and anti-corporatism protests currently rocking the country.

Iran's envoy to the UN, Mohammad Khazaei, has filed a complaint against the US for what he called the "evil plot."

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has described the US accusation as an immature scenario and says US officials will ultimately be forced to apologize.

Iran Claims U.S.-Sponsored Terrorists Conceived Saudi Ambassador

Raven Clabough - The new American - October 21, 2011

Since news broke that there was an alleged plot by Iran to assassinate the Saudi ambassador to the United States, Adel A. Al-Jubeir (left), and destroy a number of embassies, Iran has adamantly denied the accusations. Likewise, skeptics questioned whether the plot could have been staged by Iran, who would have had little to nothing to gain from such an endeavor, and claimed that the plot was uncharacteristic of Iranian terror. Others have asserted that the entire plot was in fact manufactured by American law enforcement agencies as an impetus for war against Iran. Adding yet another layer to this news story, Iran has come out and said that the plot was in fact planned by the French/Iraqi-based Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK), which is actually funded and supported by the United States.

Last week, the United States charged American-Iranian Mansour Arbabsiar, a used car salesman, for his role in an alleged plot to murder Ambassador Adel Al-Jubeir and attack Saudi installations in the U.S. in a plan reportedly plotted earlier this year. According to the Justice Department, Arbabsiar conspired with Gholam Shakuri, a member of Iran's Qods Force — an arm of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran immediately denied the accusations, with the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast declaring, "These attitudes, which are based on the age-old and hostile policies of the American-Zionist axis, are a ridiculous show in line with a scenario that aims to divide and that emanates from enemies of the region."

A number of experts across the globe came forward and questioned the claims that the plot had been sponsored by the Iranian government. They argued that the Qods Force is far too methodical and effective in its choice of proxies to have chosen a used car salesman and member of a Mexican drug cartel. Others assert that it is unlikely that Iran would sponsor such an act of terror as it does not serve Iranian interests in any way.

Iran has now raised accusations against another party, which they claim to be responsible for hatching the plot. The British paper The Guardian reports, "Tehran has pointed the finger at a dissident group it considers a 'sworn enemy' in an attempt to distance itself from US accusations that the Islamic regime in Iran conspired to kill the Saudi ambassador to Washington."

According to Iran's news agency Mehr, one of the two suspects that the United States asserted was involved in the plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador is a "key member" of MEK. "The person in question has been travelling to different countries under the names of Ali Shakuri/Gholam Shakuri/Gholam-Hossein Shakuri by using fake passports, including forged Iranian passports," said Mehr.

MEK has been declared a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department. Listed as number 28 on the Department's list of terrorist organizations, MEK has been responsible for terrorism against both the United States and Iran for years.

Yet MEK was considered by the Brookings Institution as a prime candidate for U.S. backing to remove the Iranian government. A 2009 report by the Brookings Institution, entitled "Which Path to Persia?" reads:

Perhaps the most prominent (and certainly the most controversial) opposition group that has attracted attention as a potential U.S. proxy is the NCRI (National Council of Resistance of Iran), the political movement established by the MEK (Mujahedin-e Khalq). Critics believe the group to be undemocratic and unpopular, and indeed anti-American.

In contrast, the group's champions contend that the movement's long-standing opposition to the Iranian regime and record of successful attacks on and intelligence-gathering operations against the regime make it worthy of U.S. support. They also argue that the group is no longer anti-American and question the merit of earlier accusations. Raymond Tanter, one of the group's supporters in the United States, contends that the MEK and the NCRI are allies for regime change in Tehran and also act as a useful proxy for gathering intelligence. The MEK's greatest intelligence coup was the provision of intelligence in 2002 that led to the discovery of a secret site in Iran for enriching uranium.

In the 1970s, however, MEK was responsible for the death of three American officers and three civilian contractors in Iran. The group also voiced significant support for Iran's taking of hostages during the Iranian hostage crisis, and some reports indicate that members of the group celebrated the 9/11 attacks, though the organization publicly condemned the attacks.

MEK has conducted a number of other terrorist attacks as well, but most have been excused because they were directed against the Iranian government. In 1981, MEK bombed the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party, killing approximately 70 officials. The organization has also taken credit for dozens of Iranian civilian and military attacks between the years 1998 and 2001.

Still, the United States has reportedly supported the organization. In a 2008 New Yorker article entitled "Preparing the Battlefield," Seymour Hersh revealed,

"The M.E.K. has been on the State Department's terrorist list for more than a decade, yet in recent years the group has received arms and intelligence, directly or indirectly, from the United States. Some of the newly authorized covert funds, the Pentagon consultant told me, may well end up in M.E.K. coffers. "The new task force will work with the M.E.K. The Administration is desperate for results." He added, "The M.E.K. has no C.P.A. auditing the books, and its leaders are thought to have been lining their pockets for years. If people

only knew what the M.E.K. is getting, and how much is going to its bank accounts — and yet it is almost useless for the purposes the Administration intends.”

Hersh also appeared on National Public Radio and indicated that the United States had trained a number of MEK members.

There has been an effort in the United States to remove MEK from the list of terrorist organizations, presumably so that the federal government could provide even more funding to the group.

For some, information such as this is enough to convince them that the entire war on terror is fraudulent and should be approached with skepticism. One popular blog wrote of the war on terror:

From the beginning, even for those wanting to believe the fairy tale that 9/11 was carried out by cave dwellers carrying box cutters directed by Osama Bin Laden, who by all accounts was dying or already dead from kidney failure in 2001 — "unfortunate blunders" in US foreign policy can still be blamed for the creation and perpetuation of the ubiquitous, unceasing terror organization known as Al Qaeda. However, in light of recent events in Libya, Syria, Iran, and Algeria, there is exposed a truth, many have known for over 10 years, and many more are catching onto now — that the "War on Terror" is an absolute fraud, started, fueled and simultaneously fought against by the same handful of corporate-financier interests for the sole purpose of spreading Wall Street and London's hegemony across the globe.

According to Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, it is this type of fraud that has led the U.S. government to accuse Iran of the plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador. Comparing it to assertions that Iraq maintained weapons of mass destruction, Ahmadinejad said that the U.S. simply "fabricated a bunch of papers" to support its claims at the time. "Is that a difficult thing to do?" he asked.