

ParsBrief

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Five Camp Liberty residents fled the Cult

Nejat Society – May5, 2014

Five MKO members residing in Temporary Transit Location, Iraq managed to escape the Camp at dawn Sunday and surrendered themselves to the security forces, Ashraf News reported.

Mohammad Salman Al-Asadi; a security officer responsible for Camp Liberty protection quoted the escapees that they had planned for the escape months before.

The five are handed over to the United Nation's office, Al-asadi added.

The names of the escapees are as follow:

Mohammad and Massoud Enayati, Bayez Ali Keshawarzi, Hussein Bahari and Jawad Reza Yousefi.

Embrace of Mojahedin Khalq shocking, deplorable

Hamid Babaei – May11, 2014

Editor's note: The following is a response to an op-ed by former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, "Team Obama keeps miscalculating Iran — 'change' under Rouhani is a mirage" that appeared in Fox News Opinion on May 7.

Mr. Guiliani's warm embrace of the MEK terrorist organization is shocking and deplorable. Journalists and think tanks across the world have sounded the alarm regarding the "cult-like" practices of the MEK, such as forcing members to give up their children in order to dedicate more time to the cause, and their decades long reign of terror and brutality has been well established by many including the U.S. Department of State when it designated it as terrorist organization in 1997 while describing it as a "repressive cult despised by most Iranians and Iraqis".

But through what the RAND Corp. called "cultic practices and its deceptive recruitment and public relations strategies" as well as giving millions of dollars to politicians and lobbyists in Washington — where it seems everyone has a price tag as campaign donation or "speakers fees," the MEK managed to get itself removed from the list.

It also should be noted that this group supported Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war and played a major role in the violent crackdown on the civilian uprising in the early 90s while living in Iraq as a private militia for Saddam Hussein.

The people of Iraq despise them and want them out, as well they should.

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The MEK's Influence in EU Politics Matters

Eldar Mamedov, Lobelog FP- May10, 2014

In a sign of re-emerging ties between the European Union (EU) and Iran, Edgars Rinkevics, Latvia's minister of foreign affairs, visited Tehran on April 24. The visit was significant because Latvia will hold the EU's rotating presidency in the first half of 2015. Issues pertaining to regional cooperation between the EU and Iran in Central Asia and Afghanistan were discussed during Rinkevics' stay, indicating an EU desire to look beyond Iran's nuclear program. This visit was another step in a string of reconnections that include trips to Iran by foreign ministers and parliamentarians from a number of EU countries including Austria, Sweden, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Not everybody is pleased with these developments. The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), the front group for the exiled Iranian dissident organization, the Mujahadeen-e Khalq (known as the MEK, MKO, or PMOI), which was classified as a terrorist organization by the EU until 2009 and by the United States until 2012, denounced a trip last month to Tehran by Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz. The denunciation came two weeks after the so-called Friends of Free Iran (FoFi), an informal network of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) closely allied to the NCRI, organized a conference calling for regime change in Iran and lauding the NCRI-MEK as the democratic alternative.

This is the message that the NCRI and bedfellows like FoFi have been promoting for years in European countries where the MEK has had many more years to lobby for and promote its agenda than in the United States. While the notion of an irreconcilable enmity between the West and Iran was relatively easy to promote during Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presidency (2005-13), the election of the moderate Hassan Rouhani and the meaningful progress in negotiations over Tehran's nuclear program challenge that narrative. So, the MEK, which detests the notion of rapprochement between Iran and the West, has shifted gears and chosen human rights as its casus belli against the Iranian regime.[..]

The good news is that MEK lobbying efforts against diplomacy with Iran are unlikely to succeed. Even with the extravagant funds the MEK has spent on endorsements by political elites, the group's prominence in the EU is confined only to one part of the EP. The foreign policy decision-making bodies of the EU — the Council of the EU and the External Action Service (EEAS) — do not consider the MEK a serious alternative to the current government in Tehran, as it has virtually no support among the Iranian population. The dominant EU line now clearly favors diplomacy with Iran, which will, hopefully, lead to a final deal over Tehran's controversial nuclear program. The more the chances of success for diplomacy increase, the more irrelevant the MEK will become.

It would be a mistake, however, to completely disregard the capacity of the MEK to poison the present atmosphere of European-Iranian relations. Institutions like the European Parliament are by their very nature open to lobbying from different groups, and the MEK has proven very adept at recruiting supporters. Among the conservative right, the MEK is viewed as staunch defenders of Israel and Western values against Iran's so-called "mad

mullahs”; among the progressive left, the MEK is seen as victims of the American invasion in Iraq in need of protection (the MEK created its base, Camp Ashraf, in Iraq following its exile from Iran).

The MEK’s expensive lobbying and advocacy efforts have also promoted an image of the group as defenders of human rights, especially women rights, facing Iran’s alleged “medieval, barbaric mullah regime”. The group’s strong presence of women, including leader Maryam Rajavi, is sold as evidence of its commitment to gender equality and secularism. Never mind the irony of its members in Camp Ashraf — excluding, of course, Mrs. Rajavi — being invariably dressed in uniformed, almost military suits and headscarves, and never mind the documented human rights abuses by the MEK against its own members.

On the operational level, the MEK is extremely persistent and aggressive. MEK lobbyists maintain a constant presence in the coffee bars of EP buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg, or in front of the plenary room in Strasbourg. These are strategic locations from which to bombard MEPs and their staffers with requests to support the MEK. Sometimes, however, they overdo it — one MEP recounted to me about how she had to scream at an MEK activist until they exited the elevator she was using to get to her office. Even MEPs’ offices are targets: the MEK lobbyists have no qualms about entering them uninvited and distributing flyers against alleged “Islamofascist tyranny” in Tehran.

Yet there is a growing backlash in the EP against the MEK. In May 2011, a number of MEPs from across the political spectrum sent an open letter to their colleagues warning against legitimizing the MEK and its destructive agenda, including to heavyweights such as the powerful German chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Christian-democrat Elmar Brok, the leader of the social-democrats, Austrian politician Hannes Swoboda, the president of the party of the European liberal-democrats, Annemie Neyts, and many others. The last resolution of the European Parliament on Iran contained no references to the MEK or its demands. And the delegation for relations with Iran, while regularly offering the floor to various opposition groups, resisted giving a platform to the MEK.

However, more needs to be done to counter MEK propaganda, which can impede diplomatic efforts with Iran that can, arguably, allow the government to reform from within. Iranian diaspora organizations and individuals, the vast majority of whom do not sympathize with the MEK, may feel that confronting the MEK would give the group unwarranted importance, but the reality is that by being the only organized and constantly present Iranian opposition group in the West, the MEK gets its voice heard. The only way to prevent those MEPs who sincerely desire democratic change in Iran — but are uninformed about Iranian politics or the MEK — from falling into the MEK’s trap is to provide alternative sources of information.

Tehran can also play its part. The leaders of the MEK and the Iranian government may never get along — the Islamic government executed MEK members en masse in the 1980s following terrorist acts by the MEK against Iranian officials that also killed civilians, and the MEK sided with Saddam Hussein’s regime during the brutal Iran-Iraq war — but the Iranian government faces no current, tangible threat from this organization. By complaining about the group to foreign dignitaries, Iran appears weak and preoccupied with secondary concerns. For example, the EP’s ties with the MEK were raised at all meetings during the EP delegation’s visit to Iran in December 2013, but members of that

particular delegation never supported the MEK. Denouncing the MEK to this group of people was akin to preaching to the converted.

Ultimately, a successful nuclear deal will make the MEK more irrelevant, and the EU is an important actor in this process. This deal should also make way for tangible improvements in Iran's domestic environment. So far, the MEK has not presented a credible challenge to this process, but it must not be given the opportunity to parasite on the legitimate concerns of the international community over Iran's nuclear program and its civil and human rights policies.

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SPANISH POLITICIAN'S DANGEROUS RELATION

Alejo Vidal-Quadras , the best friend of the Mojahedin Khalq

The President of Vox admits to 13-years working for an astonishing cause: remove the Iranian Mojahedin Khalq from the terrorism list and rehabilitate the group. He says Spanish politicians should support this organization, which is an "ally" of the CIA.

Alejo Vidal-Quadras is the key man in Spanish political relations with the Iranian People's Mujahedeen. The 'ex-popular' and current president of Vox was the first Spanish politician to begin having a liking for the "Iranian democratic opposition in exile." This is how he defines it: "The year was 2000 and I had just been elected to the European Parliament. I was soon to be in Brussels when I met a socialist Portuguese MEP, Paulo Casaca. He had spent a few years working with the Iranian democratic opposition and asked me to receive some representatives of this movement. We had a long conversation and I was provided with documents and they explained to me the circumstances of Iran and the Mojahedin's history. Here began our relationship...

Since then, he gave his full support to this cause. Since being in the European Parliament, he has "13 years" working for the Iranian National Resistance Council – according to many experts, the political arm of the Iranian People's Mujahedeen – to achieve its objectives. First, get them off the list of terrorist organizations, in which the group was included in 1997 in the U.S. and 2002 in the EU, being accused of the murder of several Americans in the 1970s and the attempted attack in 1992 against the Iranian mission to the United Nations in New York. And second, to have it recognized as the "legitimate alternative" opposition in the eyes of the international community. To do this, the 'lobbying activity' performed for more than 20 years by the organization has been fundamental. And the support of the Spanish politician – a leading member of the group Friends of Free Iran, consisting of around 70 MEPs – has been essential to take the message into international institutions.

The first objective has already been met. In 2009 the Council of the European Union withdrew the terrorist designation. "But it was a strictly judicial procedure," Vidal-Quadras

quickly justified . “It’s been the courts that have ruled that they are not terrorists,” insists the ex-popular, referring to the judgment issued in 2008 by the Court of Justice in Luxembourg, claiming that no evidence was found of the MEK terrorist threat. After this victory in the EU, the Mojahedin also began their specific crusade in Washington. “I lived very close to this process. I had a long meeting with lawyers to raise the issue in the U.S.. We explained how the dispute had been worked out in Europe”. The result? In 2012, the U.S. State Department also stopped considering them terrorists.

What could motivate the U.S. to take them off the blacklist?

Academic researchers, however, rule out that the only reason to get them out of the blacklist was legal. Hillary Clinton warned that the department she headed would not “ignore” or “forget ” past events ” including the MEK’s involvement in the murder of U.S. citizens in Iran in the 1970s and an attack on U.S. soil in 1992 “, but in the opinion of the experts we consulted there are several reasons that led the U.S. government to take this decision.

First, in 2002 the Iranian People’s Mojahedin allegedly discovered Iran ‘s nuclear program and enabled the U.S. to declare ‘war’ on the regime of the ayatollahs. Second, when the U.S. invaded Iraq, after the Mojahedin were captured as prisoners of war, the U.S. granted them the status of “protected persons”. According to official versions, the MEK was “voluntarily disarmed”. According to the unofficial version, the CIA and the Israeli Mossad is training the Mojahedin for their own benefit. So much so, that in January 2012, Ilan Mizrahi, former head of the secret Israeli intelligence service, disclosed the involvement of the Mojahedin in the “secret war” against Iran that had already cost the lives of four Iranian nuclear scientists. And thirdly, for years, U.S. politicians supported the Mojahedin cause as an instrument of pressure against the Iranian regime. “They speak Farsi and still maintain important contacts within the regime. Useful for the USA, justify the experts we consulted. Of course what these experts do not believe is that this support is selfless. In the U.S. there are precedents. The New York Times reported years ago on the Mojahedin’s alleged bribery of influential politicians to support its cause. Then there was talk of fees of between 15,000 and 30,000 dollars; and even the former governor of Pennsylvania, Edward G. Rendell, had to face an investigation by the Department of Treasury of the United States for having taken more than 150,000 dollars from this group which was still included in the terrorism list at the time. And in the case of the European Union it is the same. DIGITAL STAR has unveiled two Spanish presidents attended meetings in Paris annually in June to take payments. “But other politicians who support them do not charge a euro”, Alejo Vidal-Quadras hastens to clarify. “In the world there are still regimes that crush human rights, such as Cuba , North Korea and Iran. I believe it is the duty of any democrat to help transform Iran into a democracy”, concludes the current president of Vox.

Who funds the Mojahedin?

The question still remains unresolved and the experts bring to the fore the question of where does the MEK get all the money it costs to maintain this important network of contacts and support . According to Vidal-Quadras, solely from the Iranians in the diaspora, “some of them are very wealthy”. Although other politicians we consulted doubt this. “I am not so naive to think that the contributions of all Iranians in exile are sufficient to maintain that infrastructure. I do not rule out that there may be powers that are instrumental in acting in their favor”, admits Gari Duran Sen. PP Baleares, and one of the

Mojahedin's greatest defenders in Spain. The USA , Israel and Saudi Arabia are among the possible hidden funders. Duran, however, says she does not care about that; "I have seen people on hunger strike, I have seen the pictures of the dead and have heard their mothers talk, and unless you have to conclude that this is a giant deception, to me it is real."

The deaths of 40,000 Iranians during the Iraq- Iran war are attributed to the Mojahedin, as are the assassination of the Iranian president Ali Rajaei and Prime Minister Javad Bohanar and many Kurds, and the Mojahedin is now active in supporting the Syrian opposition. And in some reports by the UNHCR it confirms that this is a movement which does not respect human rights. But Vidal- Quadras does not give credence to any of these charges and insists it is Iranian propaganda. "The Ayatollah's regime is one of the most cruel in the world". A message that its leader, Maryam Rajavi, constantly repeats in all the parliaments that she visits. She does so in Europe two times a year when she visits and has done so in Spain in December 2012 during a flying visit to Madrid where she also took the opportunity to meet with the mayor, Ana Botella – interestingly the wife of one of the politicians the Mojahedin paid in exchange for public support.

Elsa S. Vejo - Esterella Digital – May6,2014

Progressive MeK, what an absurd idea!

Michael Rubin, Commentary

The Clarion Project dedicates itself "to exposing the dangers of Islamic extremism while providing a platform for the voices of moderation and promoting grassroots activism." Progressive organizations like the Center for American Progress as well as those close to the Muslim Brotherhood like the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and Islamic Society of North America have condemned the group, more often than not by labeling it to try to stigmatize it and its supporters so as to avoid a much-needed debate on issues surrounding radical Islamism.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Clarion Project, as it is dedicated to countering radical Islam, lists a number of progressive Muslim organizations. What is surprising is that they list among them the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the front organization of the Mujahedin al-Khalq, an Iranian opposition group. The Mujahedin al-Khalq may be a lot of things, but it is neither progressive nor is it non-violent. Progressive movements tend not to dictate to women who to marry and who to divorce. The Mujahedin al-Khalq attached itself to Saddam Hussein and allowed itself to be used almost as a mercenary organization against both Kurds and Iraqi Shi'ites.

To accept the Mujahedin al-Khalq as a moderate organization is analytically shallow given the group's record of behavior, its dishonesty in its written work, its past targeting of Americans, and the fact that its rhetoric about democracy does not match its practice.

Current Iran “Crisis” Began With Overthrow of Democratically Elected Government in 1953

MARK KARLIN interviews GARETH PORTER- Truthout - March 24 2014

In *Manufactured Crisis*, investigative journalist Gareth Porter details the manipulation and fabrications that have accompanied the current Iranian nuclear situation. The main difference between this and the Iraq war conspiracy, the author says, was that the neoconservatives who were carrying it out never got the war on Iran they wanted.

Have we narrowly averted a war with Iran, and were the Neocons again behind the bellicose threats against Tehran? Investigative journalist Gareth Porter offers his perspective, as detailed in *Manufactured Crisis* in this interview with Truthout.

MARK KARLIN: You use the phrase *Manufactured Crisis* as the title of your book about the Iran nuclear scare. Were you thinking about Dick Cheney and George W. Bush’s manufactured crisis to justify the Iraq War as precedent?

GARETH PORTER: No, I wasn’t thinking of the direct parallel with the “manufactured crisis” that preceded and paved the way to the invasion and occupation of Iraq when I first came up with the title. But the more I have uncovered about the details of manipulation and fabrications that have accompanied the Iranian crisis, the clearer it has become that the parallel between the two “manufactured crises” is extremely close.

In fact, the book shows that the Bush administration was laying the groundwork for creating a false WMD case against Iran in much the same way that it did in the run-up to the war in Iraq. Readers will be shocked to find that the information that the Bush administration exploited politically most effectively in making the case for a covert nuclear weapons program in Iran came from a German intelligence agency source – a member of the same MEK terrorist organization – just as the source of the famous Iraqi “mobile bioweapons labs” story told by Colin Powell in a UN speech had been the source that the BND [German federal intelligence service] had code-named “Curveball.”

But the parallels between the two conspiracies are even stronger: In both cases the BND warned the US government not to rely on the information from its source, which had been passed on the CIA, because they had concluded it was not trustworthy. And equally startling, in both cases, the Bush administration officials pressured top CIA officials to use the information anyway, while keeping poor Colin Powell ignorant of the BND warning!

I show that the “manufactured crisis” over Iran’s nuclear program was part of a war conspiracy every bit as heinous as the Iraq war conspiracy. The main difference was that the neoconservatives who were carrying it out never got the war on Iran they wanted.

MARK KARLIN: You describe three primary stages to the Iranian nuclear crisis diplomatic narrative. Can you briefly describe them?

GARETH PORTER: The first stage was triggered by the discovery of the Natanz enrichment facility in 2002 by the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, a terrorist organization that was

working hand in hand with Israel. The Bush administration, in coordination with Israel, used that event to launch an [International Atomic Energy Agency] investigation that was intended by the two allies to put Iran on trial for deceiving the IAEA for two decades in order to cover up a nuclear weapons program. That would in turn make it possible to haul Iran before the UN Security Council, giving the Bush administration a basis for a potential military option.

But the IAEA investigation fizzled out, but the Bush neoconservative-Israel alliance had a secret weapon – a set of documents that was said to have come straight from an Iranian nuclear weapons research project. In 2008, the IAEA, cooperating closely with the Bush administration, began pushing those documents as evidence for Iran’s nuclear weapons intentions, thus beginning the second phase of the crisis.

The third phase of the crisis began with an IAEA report in November 2011 that was based almost entirely on intelligence coming from Israel. It was the signal for the phase of punishing sanctions against Iran’s oil exports and Central Bank, which followed immediately.

MARK KARLIN: What is your perspective on the current “bridge” agreement with Iran between the United States and its allies on the development of its nuclear program?

GARETH PORTER: I’m not sure that it was really necessary to have such an agreement, which appears to have been primarily pushed by the US side. The time spent on negotiating it could have been spent on negotiating the long-term agreement that they are now finally tackling more than three months later. One of the problems I see with it is that it may have reinforced the tendency for Obama administration policymakers to feel that the sanctions had put them in the driver’s seat in the negotiations.

MARK KARLIN: Was regime change in Tehran a major goal of the Iranian nuclear scare?

GARETH PORTER: For the Bush administration’s neoconservative inner core it was absolutely the major goal. John Bolton and David Wurmser, both close to the Likudists, believed that regime change would require the use of US military force, which was the anticipated end result of the strategy they cooked up with Israel in 2003-04 to make the case that Iran was threatening to get nuclear weapons – the Iran equivalent of the Iraq war conspiracy that involved Wurmser as well.

MARK KARLIN: Within Israel, although Netanyahu was threatening a military strike on Iran’s nuclear sites, a significant number of former prominent Israeli politicians, the military and intelligence services were arguing that such an attack would be a mistake. What explains the unprecedented public disagreement with Netanyahu?

GARETH PORTER: The most important thing to understand about the Israeli threat of war on Iran, as I document in great detail in the book, is that it was always a political ruse which no Israeli government ever intended to actually carry out. It didn’t start with

Netanyahu, but he and Defense Minister Ehud Barak refined it to an art form. The public disagreement with the idea of attacking Iran is a reflection of the fact that the Israeli military and intelligence establishment never supported an attack – although many believed that threatening to do so was necessary and effective. After 2011, however former Mossad Chief Meir Dagan broke publicly with the policy, because he believed that Netanyahu was irresponsible and had taken unnecessary risks of provoking Iran.

MARK KARLIN: How did you go about researching the book, given all the smoke screens thrown up around Iran's nuclear programs. You provide very detailed footnotes to buttress your argument.

GARETH PORTER: It was a combination of two things that gave me sufficient evidence to make what I believe is an iron-clad case that the narrative about an Iranian nuclear weapons program was a fiction: First, I was able to establish clearly one falsehood in the narrative after another by identifying a series of contradictions between the official line and verifiable facts on the public record. In other words close analysis and the use of logic was crucial. Second, although most officials from the Bush and Obama administrations were not interested in cooperating with my investigation, some former intelligence officials and a key German source provided some key insights and facts that helped to give my account much more documentary basis.

MARK KARLIN: Can you summarize the “mystery of the laptop documents”?

GARETH PORTER: The “laptop documents” were the ones said to have come from the purloined laptop of a scientist in a purported Iranian secret nuclear weapons research project. But the Bush administration was always unwilling to answer questions about their origins. Fortunately I was able to penetrate that mystery thanks to a former high-ranking German official who told me on the record how the documents were given to German intelligence by a member of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, the terrorist organization that had worked for Saddam against the Iranian regime and then developed close ties with Israel's Mossad. I show in the book that the documents could not have been authentic, contrary to the IAEA's official line that they were “credible” and that they were fabricated by Mossad.

MARK KARLIN: What shadow does the US overthrow of the democratically elected government in Iran in 1953 – and its long-term military support of the Shah – cast over the US confrontation with Iran over its nuclear program?

GARETH PORTER: The US relationship with the Shah, which was a central element of US Middle East policy for decades from 1953 until 1979, cast a long shadow on the policy of the Reagan administration toward Iran's nuclear program. The Reagan administration was still looking for an opportunity to overthrow the Islamic regime and restore a cooperative government, and its support for Saddam's war against Iran in the 1980s was the essential reason for trying to stifle the Iranian nuclear program in the early 1980s. I show that the misguided US policy led to Iran's deciding to have its own uranium enrichment capability, contrary to its original plan.

MARK KARLIN: You single out Robert Gates, who has a best-selling memoir out now, as a key figure in laying the foundation for the Iran nuclear scare. Can you expand on his role?

GARETH PORTER: Gates had a twofold interest in keeping Iran as an adversary at a time when President Rafsanjani was trying to thaw the relationship in 1990-91. His career had almost been ruined by his involvement in the Iran-Contra affair, which had gone off the rails when Rafsanjani had made the Reagan administration secret 1985 U.S. mission to Tehran public. But more important, he became CIA director in 1991 at a time when the agency desperately needed a substitute for the Soviet threat that had disappeared. I show in the book how he exploited the idea that WMD proliferation in general was the new equivalent of the Soviet threat and that Iran was the primary candidate to play the heavy on that issue.

MARK KARLIN: You appropriately single out the United States and Israel as perpetuating a war cry about Iran's nuclear program, but haven't other non-Persian and non-Shi'ite Arab states played a behind-the-scenes role in supporting the United States and Israel, particularly Saudi Arabia?

GARETH PORTER: It is certainly true that the Saudis and other Gulf Arab regimes were extremely suspicious of Iran's nuclear program and wanted the United States to do something about it. But it's a bit more complicated than The New York Times coverage led the public to believe. The WikiLeaks documents show that those regimes were extremely concerned about the Israeli threat to attack Iran during the Bush administration's second term, which most Gulf security officials believed would have disastrous consequences, and they wanted the United States to prevent it.

Obtain this book, *Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare*, from Truthout with a minimum contribution. [Just click here](#). You will be enhancing your knowledge, supporting progressive authors and backing the vital journalism of Truthout.

Mark Karlin

Mark Karlin is the editor of BuzzFlash at Truthout. He served as editor and publisher of BuzzFlash for ten years before joining Truthout in 2010. BuzzFlash has won four Project Censored Awards. Karlin writes a commentary five days a week for BuzzFlash, as well as articles for Truthout. He also interviews authors and filmmakers whose works are featured in Truthout's Progressive Picks of the Week.