

# ParsBrief

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### Iraqi Politician Warns US about Military Support for MKO Terrorists

Tasnim News, February 16, 2015

An Iraqi politician cautioned Washington against the consequences of its possible military support for the anti-Iran terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO).

“The MKO has asked the US to send weapons for the group again,” Kurdish politician Tahsin al-Fili was quoted by Iraqi Al-Masalah news website as saying on Sunday.

He said the request by the MKO is not a new one but will be followed by an “appropriate” response from the Iraqi political circles.

The Iraqi politician also emphasized that the Islamic Resistance groups in Iraq and volunteer forces will pressure Baghdad to take the necessary decision to expel the members of the group from the Arab country.

The MKO – listed as a terrorist organization by much of the international community – fled Iran in 1986 for Iraq and was given a camp by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. They fought on the side of Saddam during the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-88). They were also involved in the bloody repression of Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq in 1991 and the massacre of Iraqi Kurds.

The notorious group is also responsible for killing thousands of Iranian civilians and officials after the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979.

More than 17,000 Iranians, many of them civilians, have been killed at the hands of the MKO in different acts of terrorism including bombings in public places, and targeted killings.

Back in December 2011, the United Nations and Baghdad agreed to relocate some 3,000 MKO members from Camp New Iraq, formerly known as Camp Ashraf, to the former US military Camp Liberty outside Baghdad.

The last group of the MKO terrorists was evicted by the Iraqi government on September 11, 2013 to join other members of the terrorist group at Camp Liberty and await potential relocation to other countries.

## The Nisman Murder and the AMIA Terror Bombing: A Tangled Thread

Gareth Porter, Antiwar.com, February 07, 2015

The evidence already available about Argentine Prosecutor Alberto Nisman's death from a gunshot to the head creates a strong presumption that he was murdered. He was about to present publicly his accusation that President Christina Fernández de Kirchner and her foreign minister, Héctor Timerman conspired to absolve Iran of the 1994 AMIA bombing and lift the Interpol red notices on the accused Iranians.

And it was Nisman's 2006 request for the arrest of six former senior Iranian officials for the bombing that prompted his push for those red notices. In the context of Argentine political culture, with its long experience of impunity for crimes committed by the powerful, the circumstances of his death have led to a general conviction that the government must have been behind his murder.

But there is good reason to be cautious about that assumption. Nisman's case against Kirchner was problematic. The central accusation in his affidavit, made 96 times, according to press accounts, was that Kirchner and Timerman had sought to revoke the Interpol arrest warrants against the former Iranian officials. But Ronald K. Noble, the secretary general of Interpol for fifteen years until last November, denied Nisman's accusation. Noble declared, "I can say with 100 percent certainty, not a scintilla of doubt, that Foreign Minister Timerman and the Argentine government have been steadfast, persistent and unwavering that the Interpol's red notices be issued, remain in effect and not be suspend or removed."

Noble's denial raises an obvious question: Why would the Kirchner government, knowing that Nisman's main claim could be easily refuted, have any reason to kill him on the eve of the presentation of his case? Why give those seeking to discredit the government's policy on the AMIA bombing the opportunity to shift the issue from the facts of the case to the presumption of officially sponsored assassination?

The Kirchner-Timerman negotiation of an agreement with Iran in January 2013 for an "international truth commission" on the AMIA bombing that would have sent five respected international judicial figures to Iran to question the accused Iranians. That was a way of getting around the Iranian refusal to subject former high-ranking officials to Argentine justice. But Nisman was trying to prove that was an illicit cover-up for a cynical deal with

Iran. He considered it “a betrayal of the country and his work”, according to his friend, Gustavo Perednik.

Nisman’s “criminal complaint” against Kirchner and Timerman claimed the government’s negotiations with Iran involved a “sophisticated criminal plan” to make a deal with one of the Iranians the prosecutor accused of the AMIA bombing, former cultural attaché Mohsen Rabbani. It asserted that Argentina promised Iran that it would lift the Interpol notices on the six Iranian in exchange for an “oil for grains” deal.

Nisman’s accusation was based on snippets of transcripts from 5,000 hours of wiretaps of conversations of allies of Kirchner government that have now been made public by a judge. One of the excerpts quotes Rabbani himself, in a conversation with an ally of Fernandez, as saying:

Iran was Argentina’s main buyer and now it’s buying almost nothing. That could change. Here [in Iran] there are some sectors of the government who’ve told me they are willing to sell oil to Argentina ... and also to buy weapons.

The statement proves nothing, however, except that that Rabbani knew some Iranian officials who were interested in oil sales to Argentina. No evidence of Rabbani being involved in negotiating on behalf of Iran is suggested in the Nisman document, and the person at the other end of the line was not an Argentine official. So the conversation did not involve anyone who even had direct knowledge of the actual negotiations between the governments of Iran and Argentina.

The same thing applies to the other individuals who have been identified as speaking on the wiretaps in favour of such a deal. Those individuals are friendly with officials of the Kirchner government and friendly with Iran, but the actual negotiations were carried out by senior officials of the foreign ministries of Iran and Argentina, not by private individuals. The distinction between knowledge and hearsay is a fundamental principle in judicial processes for a very good reason.

The presentation of facts or allegations as proof of guilt, even though they proved nothing of the sort, was also a pattern that permeated Nisman’s 2006 “Request for Arrests” in the 1994 AMIA bombing. Contrary to the general reverence in the news media for his indictment of senior Iranian officials for their alleged responsibility for the bombing, his case was built on a massive accumulation of highly dubious and misleading claims, from the “irrefutable evidence” of Rabbani’s participation in planning to the identification of the alleged suicide car bomber. This writer’s investigation of the case over several months, which included interviews with US diplomats who had served in the Embassy in Buenos Aires in the years following the AMIA bombing as well as with the FBI official detailed to

work on the case in 1996-97, concluded that the Argentine investigators never found any evidence of Iranian involvement.

Nisman asserted that the highest Iranian officials had decided to carry out the bombing at a meeting on 12 or 14 August, 1993, primarily on the testimony of four officials of the Mujahedeen E-Khalq (MEK), the Iranian exile terrorist group that was openly dedicated to the overthrow of the Iranian regime. The four MEK officials claimed to know the precise place, date and time and the three-point agenda of the meeting.

When US Ambassador, Anthony Wayne, meeting with Nisman in November 2006, asked him about Argentine press reports that had criticised the document for using the testimony of “unreliable witnesses,” Nisman responded, according to the Embassy reporting cable, that “several of the witnesses were “former senior Iraqi [sic] officials, e.g. Bani Sadr, with direct knowledge of events surrounding the conception of the attacks.”

Nisman’s suggestion that former Iranian president Abolhassen Banisadr had “direct knowledge” related to the AMIA bombings was a stunningly brazen falsehood. Banisadr had been impeached by the Iranian legislature in June 1981 and had fled to Paris the following month – thirteen years before the bombing.

Nisman also cited the testimony of Abolghassem Mesbahi, who called himself a “defector” from the Iranian intelligence service, that Iranian officials had made such a decision sometime in August 1993. But Mesbahi was known by US intelligence analysts as a “serial fabricator”, who had also told an obviously false story about Iranian involvement in the 9/11 attacks. Nisman failed to mention, moreover, that Mesbahi had given a secret 100-page deposition to Argentine investigators in 2000 in Mexico in which he had claimed the planning for the attack had begun in 1992.

Nisman’s was so convinced of Iran’s guilt that he was ready to see almost any fact as supporting evidence, even when there was an obvious reason for doubting its relevance. For example, he cited Rabbani’s shopping for a van “similar to the one that exploded in front of the AMIA building a few months later.” In fact, however, as I reported in 2008, the Argentine investigation files include the original intelligence report on the surveillance of Rabbani showing that Rabbani’s visit to the car dealer was not “a few months” before the bombing, but a full fifteen months earlier.

Despite the Argentine intelligence following Rabbani’s every move and tapping his telephones for all those months, Nisman cites nothing indicating that Rabbani did anything indicating his involvement in preparations for a terror bombing. The FBI official who assisted the investigation told me in a November 2007 interview that the use of phone metadata to suggest that Rabbani was in touch with an “operational group” nothing but

“speculation”, and said that neither he nor officials in Washington had taken it seriously as evidence of Rabbani’s involvement.

The fact that Nisman’s two indictments related to Iran and AMIA were extremely tendentious obviously does not dispose of the question of who killed him. But whatever the reason for his being killed, it wasn’t because he had revealed irrefutable truths about AMIA and Argentine government policy.

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And the Winner of the ‘War On Terror’ Financed Dream Home 2014 Giveaway Is...

Ken Silverstein, *The Intercept*, January 01 2015

Oceanfront views, 24-hour doorman, heated pool, and perhaps best of all, a “private tunnel to the beach.” This \$3 million Palm Beach, Florida penthouse could be yours, but unfortunately it isn’t because this prize has already been claimed by a former high-level U.S. official who helped pave the way for the over decade-long “war on terror,” which has been a near complete catastrophe.

Iraq is aflame, the Islamic State is on the rampage, the situation in Afghanistan worsens by the day, and thousands of Americans—and many more Iraqis and Afghans—have died during the post-9/11 conflicts. Meanwhile, the combined cost of the “war on terror” comes to an estimated \$1.6 trillion. But if the American people got screwed on the deal, a lot of former senior government officials who played important roles in this debacle have done quite well for themselves. It’s New Year’s Eve and I need to write a final sendoff to 2014, so I thought I’d take a look at the fortunes (literally) of some of these figures: Former CIA director George Tenet and former FBI director Louis Freeh (I’ll cover former Department of Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge in a New Year’s post).

Consider Tenet. As head of the CIA, he missed multiple signs of a major Al Qaeda attack directed against the United States, called the case against Saddam building Weapons of Mass Destruction a “slam dunk,” and approved the Bush administration’s torturing of terror suspects.

In any fair world Tenet would be tried for criminal incompetence. Instead, he got the Presidential Medal of Freedom and after resigning in 2004 (at which point his agency salary was south of \$200,000), he received a \$4 million advance to write a memoir. In it, he confessed to “a black, black time” a few months after 9/11 when he was sitting at home in his favorite Adirondack chair thinking about the tragedy that killed 3,000 Americans on his watch and asked, “Why me?”

Tenet has received millions more in his current role as managing director of a privately held New York investment bank and as a board director and advisor to intelligence and military contractors. Meanwhile, he collects fat speaking fees to talk about “current global threats to U.S. security and what the future holds for the U.S., our allies and interests around the globe.” (Top Secret: Here’s where he gets his best intelligence.)

Not bad for the son of Greek immigrants who before entering government service in 1982 (as legislative director to then-Senator H. John Heinz III) worked at the American Hellenic Institute and the Solar Energy Industries Association. When he headed the CIA, Tenet lived in a ranch house in Potomac, Maryland, which he bought in 1986 for \$179,000. He currently splits his time between New York and the affluent D.C. suburb of Bethesda, where he reportedly lives in a neighborhood “known for its tree-lined streets, vintage brick homes, and atmosphere oozing with understated luxury.”

Then there’s Louis Freeh, Tenet’s counterpart at the FBI during the run-up to 9/11. (He resigned a few months before the attacks.) The former FBI director was seriously injured in a car wreck this August, but told police he had no idea what happened because he’d been asleep at the wheel, which is a perfect metaphor for his FBI stewardship. (And let me sincerely say I wish Freeh a speedy recovery, but the metaphor is precise.) Like Tenet, Freeh failed to act on a mountain of evidence pointing towards 9/11, i.e. an April 2001 memo sent to him by his assistant director that cited “significant and urgent” intelligence of “serious operational planning” for terrorism attacks by Islamic radicals linked to Osama bin Laden. He also botched cases involving Richard Jewell, Wen Ho Lee, and Robert Hanssen.

Freeh resigned from the FBI two months before 9/11. When he worked there he was making an annual salary of \$145,000 and lived “in a heavily mortgaged house in Great Falls, a Virginia suburb,” according to an old and admiring New Yorker profile. He and his wife now own at least four lavish estates worth many millions of dollars, including a residence in Wilmington, Delaware, a six-bedroom summerhouse worth more than \$3 million in Vermont, and a beachfront penthouse at 100 Worth Avenue in Palm Beach, Florida, which was bought for \$1.4 million and now has an estimated value of \$3 million.

How'd that happen? Well, Freeh is one of many former U.S. officials who got paid big speaking fees (reportedly up to \$50,000 a pop) by a creepy Iranian group called the People's Mujahedin, also known as Mojahedin-e-Khalq, or MEK, to successfully advocate for its removal from the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. He also opened up a consulting firm whose clients have included Saudi Arabia's Prince Bandar, who the U.S. Department of Justice accused of taking massive bribes from a British defense contractor. That's right, Freeh represented a prince from America's old pal Saudi Arabia, home to fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers, and whose export of Wahhabism is credited with giving rising to the Islamic State.

Freeh is also hired to conduct investigations, like the controversial report he produced about Penn State's football program. Nasser Kazeminy, a Minnesota businessman who in 2008 was accused of bribing former Senator Norm Coleman, also hired Freeh to conduct a "thorough investigation" of the allegations against him in the hopes of clearing his name.

In 2011, Freeh issued a public statement saying that his investigation had "completely vindicated" both Kazeminy and Coleman. Sure, Kazeminy had bought Coleman \$100,000 worth of presents, but, Freeh said at a press conference, "There was no quid pro quo in the gifts. There was no wrongdoing." Freeh also met with the Justice Department – which was investigating the bribery charges but declined to bring a case—on Kazeminy's behalf.

Oh yeah, about Freeh's Palm Beach penthouse. As I discovered through Florida property records, Freeh's wife co-owns it with Kazeminy, which kind of makes you wonder about just how thorough and impartial his investigation was. The quit claim deed giving Freeh's wife one-half ownership of the penthouse was signed nine days after Freeh's vindication of Kazeminy.

*Freeh declined to comment for this story. Email the author: [kensilverstein@firstlook.org](mailto:kensilverstein@firstlook.org)*

Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO): US-Israel Sponsored Terrorist Entity directed  
against Iran

Dr. Ismail Salami, Global Research, January 09, 2015

In their abortive effort to assassinate another Iranian nuclear scientist, Israeli officials only sustained desperation and disgrace in their dastardly elimination campaign against Iran which was apparently in sync with ISIL inhumane brutalities inside Iraq and Syria.



More alert than ever, security forces are diligently tasked with protecting the lives of the Iranian scientists wherever they are.

A top Iranian military official said on Saturday that in the last two years, “the Zionist entity has been making clandestine efforts to assassinate an Iranian nuclear scientist, but the timely presence of the IRGC security forces thwarted the terrorist operation.”

It is now common knowledge that Tel Aviv has been carrying out covert ops inside the Iranian soil for a couple of years, assassinating Iranian nuclear officials and scientists although Israel has constantly declined to admit to its unjustified iniquity against the Iranian nation.

Translating suspicion into conviction, a report carried by CBS News in March 2014 revealed that Obama has pressured Israeli espionage apparatuses to put an end to their assassinations inside Iran against the country’s nuclear scientists.

The terrorist Mujahedin Khalq Organization AKA MKO or MEK seems to be a ubiquitous agent any time there is an assassination in Iran. A shadowy cult with myriad of financial, military and intelligence connections to Tel Aviv and Washington, the MKO works in league with Kidon, the assassination unit within the Mossad. There are solid reports which indicate that the MKO members have received military and intelligence training both from the US forces as well as from the Mossad.

In 2012, Seymour M. Hersh revealed that at a secret site in Nevada, the US Special Operations Command (JSOC) conducted training, beginning in 2005, for members of the Mujahideen-e-Khalq, “a dissident Iranian opposition group known in the West as the M.E.K.” According to the report, the training ended sometime before President Obama took office. A retired four-star general says, “They got the standard training, in comms, crypto [cryptography], small-unit tactics, and weaponry—that went on for six months.... They were kept in little pods.”

Within the US government, the cult enjoys a rather immense support for their sabotage activities against the Islamic Republic. Among their skills are former top Bush officials and other Republicans (Michael Mukasey, Fran Townsend, Andy Card, Tom Ridge, Rudy Giuliani) as well as prominent Democrats (Howard Dean, Ed Rendell, Bill Richardson, Wesley Clark).

A revealing report by NBC News report by Richard Engel and Robert Windrem cites two anonymous senior US officials with two interesting claims: 1) that it was MEK which perpetrated the string of assassinations of Iranian nuclear scientists and 2) the terrorist group “is financed, trained and armed by Israel’s secret service.” So the report testifies to

the veracity of what Iranian officials have asserted about the involvement of MEK and Israel in murdering nuclear scientists on the Iranian soil.

Interestingly, a few weeks ago, I received a threatening email from Ali Safavi, the notorious MKO spokesman (through a western publisher of mine) in which he had pontificated about the virtues of the MKO terrorists and the so-called 'vices' of the Islamic Republic, accusing me of serving as a mouthpiece for the Islamic Republic. I strongly believe that revealing the murky realities of a terrorist group responsible for the deaths of 17000 innocent Iranians is only my ethical obligation. Besides, Ali Safavi and the likes

of him should come to their senses and realize that their efforts to whitewash their crimes will eventually prove pointless and that there is no way at all for them to lend a cloak of legitimacy to their unnamable crimes against the Iranian nation.

During the Iraq-Iran war, the MKO joined hands with Saddam Hussein, the tyrannical ruler of Iraq in attacking and killing Iranian combatants. However, a bloodier chapter in the history of the cult can be traced in their collusion with Saddam in crushing the popular uprisings in 1991. No doubt, their tanks took an inconceivable reprisal on thousands of innocent civilians. The callous command of Maryam Rajavi is still gnawing and tearing at the hearts and minds of the Iraqis: "Take the Kurds under your tanks, and save your bullets for the Iranian Revolutionary Guards."

Unfortunately, the MKO, long considered a terrorist organization, was delisted thanks to the unflagging endeavors of former US Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

In 2011, Mohamed Ali Lobnani, a Lebanese national, who was arrested on charges of spying for Mossad confessed that he had spied for Israel under the cover of a Shiite cleric in Lebanon.

In a court hearing session, Lobnani said he had phone contacts with Mohammad Alizadeh, an MKO ringleader, claiming that had no idea that the number was a Mossad contact number.

Asked about the link between MKO and Mossad, he noted, "As far as I know, the group (MKO) has been collaborating with Israel for several years and has massive interactions with Mossad."

The MKO is the artifact of a corrupt ideology which is in many respects comparable to that of the ISIL cult. No wonder they are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the ISIL terrorists in Iraq and Syria.

The fact that these two curious cults are thriving rigorously, that the West caters – either publicly or secretly – to their cravings, that they are being bigheartedly financed by the

puppet regional regimes and that they receive sophisticated military and intelligence training from Mossad and CIA evinces a believable bond between the two.

That the MKO and the ISIL cults are pursuing the selfsame path of perversion is no coincidence at all. The reason is simple: they are cut from the same cloth. And that Mossad is dispatching assassins into Iran to liquidate Iranian scientists is only meant to strike fear and beyond that, to secretly make up for what the ISIL and MKO terrorists feel emasculated to do in Iran.

### How To Stop Being Terrorists: A Guide For ISIS, Courtesy Of The MEK

Sean Nevins, Mint Press News, January 22, 2015

An Iranian group shows that as long as you stop being violent, it's possible to gain supporters in the U.S. government and get removed from the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list — especially if your end-game is to overthrow the current Iran regime and take over.

<http://youtu.be/ikUXrwAPGR8>

Transcript:

WASHINGTON — While the world's eyes are focused on ISIS [the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] and rising tensions in the Middle East, a former terrorist group from Iran is tromping through the halls of Congress, and garnering support from some of America's most powerful and prominent politicians and officials.

Speaker: "Howard Dean, Ed Rendell, Patrick Kennedy, and many others."

The group is the People's Mujahedeen of Iran, or the MEK, in its Persian acronym. It was taken off of the State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organizations list [in 2012] after demonstrating that it had not been engaged in terrorist activities for the last 10 years.

The group is led by Massoud Rajavi, who has been in hiding since 2003, when the United States and Britain invaded Iraq, and Maryam Rajavi, who acts as the president-elect of the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the group's political wing.

According to the FBI, the MEK murdered American citizens in Iran during the 1970s, allied with the ayatollahs to help overthrow the Iranian government, participated in the American embassy hostage crisis in 1979, and teamed up with Saddam Hussein to fight their own countrymen during the Iran-Iraq War.

They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of Iranians and a campaign of bombings, assassinations, and military attacks, as well as collusion with Iraq.

The goal of the group now is to overthrow the current Iranian regime and take power for themselves.

So how does a group go from being one of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world to having an office on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., with backing from the likes of the former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. John Bolton and former Director of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, among many others?

CNN: “There’s been a lot of pressure in the United States both from the group and from its supporters in Congress, and very high-paid former officials speaking on their behalf to delist the group.”

In 2011, groups around the country acting as front organizations for the MEK — including the Iranian American Community of Northern California — hired lobbyists to help remove the MEK from the Foreign Terrorist Organizations list.

They recruited the likes of Howard Dean, who is a former Democratic presidential candidate; Michael Hayden, the former CIA director; Newt Gingrich, who is the former Speaker of the House; and the lobbying firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, among many others. They [MEK] often paid five-figure speaker fees to individuals, and six figures to the firms lobbying on their behalf.

Jeremiah Goulka: “They’re just thorough PR jobs, that do a very good job of making lawyer-like arguments based on taking very nit-picky looks at wording.”

That’s Jeremiah Goulka, the author of “The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum,” a report published by the Rand Corporation in 2009 that assesses the status of the MEK at a camp called Ashraf in Iraq.

Goulka: “I was asked to join the Rand Research Team. ... Who are the MEK? Why are they there in Iraq? What should the detainee operations command do, if anything?”

However, following publication, the Rand report came under fire by the MEK and its paid lobbyists in Washington.

Lincoln P. Bloomfield: “Well, I’m a former policy official and one of my roles is as a consultant to a law firm in Washington. An American citizens group hired the law firm to help them advocate to remove the MEK from the terrorism list.”

That’s Ambassador Lincoln P. Bloomfield, the former deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs from 1992 to 1993. He wrote a book, entitled “The Mujahedin-e Khalq, MEK: Shackled by a Twisted History,” that posits that the MEK has been severely misunderstood over time.

Bloomfield: “I found out that there’s a gap between what everyone was saying about the MEK and what the information seemed to show, that there was a gap, something was amiss. So that really piqued my curiosity and I just kept digging for the next two years.”

Ambassador Bloomfield’s law firm, Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, was reportedly paid \$620,000 dollars by a group supportive of the MEK during those two years, according to the Senate Office of Public Records.

But are his claims — which match those of the MEK — true?

Bloomfield: “As I began to examine what think tanks were saying, what the press was saying, a very consistent set of allegations arose: that they’d killed Americans in the 1970s in Iran, that they had helped with the embassy hostage takeover during the revolution in 1979, that they were a violent, left-wing, Marxist group that was speaking about democracy but didn’t really mean it, and that they’d engaged in a whole series of violent actions, and that they were also human rights abusers in their own midst.”

In June 1973, Lt. Col. Lewis Hawkins of the U.S. Army was the first American assassinated by the MEK, as he walked near his home in Tehran, according to The Associated Press.

Ambassador Bloomfield claims that Hawkins was murdered by a man named Vahid Afrakhteh, citing two Washington Post articles from 1976.

This is significant because the MEK narrative has attempted to gain credibility in the United States by separating itself from the killing of Americans.

Bloomfield: “Other activists who were impatient with the MEK took the Mujahedeen name and weren’t interested in Islam, and they wanted a secular Marxist, violent revolution, and they were the ones who killed the Americans. They were caught. I have put The Washington Post articles from those days in my report.”

The Washington Post articles are referenced as proof that a U.S. State Department report on the MEK is problematic — and possibly untrue — because it says Reza Rezai, not Afrakhteh, “was arrested and executed by the Shah’s government for the murder of Colonel Hawkins.”

The MEK and its supporters are trying to separate Rezai from the killing of Lt. Col.

Hawkins because even though he is dead, he is still idolized by the current MEK as a hero. However, while it may be true that Afrakhteh committed the actual murder of Hawkins, two separate reports from The Associated Press in 1973, obtained by MintPress News, named Reza Rezai as the “man alleged to have planned the murder of... Lieutenant Colonel Lewis Hawkins” and as the leader of the group. One of the reports says, “The gunman who killed Hawkins still is at large.”

That person who was “still at large” very well could have been Afrakhteh, so the fact he is named as the actual gunman does not in any way absolve Rezai from responsibility for the murder, nor does it contradict the State Department report.

The MEK also claims, as does Ambassador Bloomfield, that it is separated from the murder of the seven Americans, including Lt. Col. Hawkins, because there was a schism in the group between a Marxist-leaning faction, and the Muslim faction led by Massoud Rajavi.

Bloomfield: “There was blood between the two factions. The one that wanted Islam is the one that we see today, and for their commitment to Islam a couple of people were gunned down by these leftist revolutionaries, who were using the name Mujahedin.”

However, that schism did not happen until 1975, according to Ervand Abrahamian, author of “The Iranian Mojahedin,” and one of the foremost scholars of the group. Therefore, in the words of Muhammad Sahimi, “Hawkins’ assassination, at least, was irrefutably the work of the original” MEK.

Another problem with the narrative of the MEK not being involved with the killings of Americans is that the group bragged about those murders in its very own newspaper called “Mojahed,” seen here.

The text states:

“It was the Mujahedin-e Khalq that killed with guns American Generals and also blew up nests of spies, like America’s information office...”

[Mojahed – Number 77, Page 2]

The MEK and its supporters also claim that the group was not involved with the U.S. Embassy hostage crisis and that it did not support it in any way.

Bloomfield: “This one is very black and white, and misunderstood. And, frankly, allegations that the MEK were behind the embassy takeover, and were promoting keeping the Americans hostage only surfaced in detail a few years ago.”

The problem with this statement is that the MEK clearly promoted the 1979 embassy takeover in its newspaper.

The headline to the article in this issue of “Mojahed” says:

“We are happy that this time they targeted the real Shah, which is America’s imperialism; The nest of the spies has been seized!”

[Mojahed – Number 10, Front page, November 12, 1979]

Further, despite an intense campaign to expunge the MEK’s troubled history toward the safety and well-being of American citizens and the way it treats its own members, the

State Department, the FBI, Human Rights Watch, and the Rand Corporation have not changed their stance on any of these issues.

So, what is the MEK? The aforementioned organizations claim that not only is it an opposition group to the current Iranian regime, but it is a kind of cult.

Goulka: “At the MEK camps, there’s a whole set of practices that are all textbook out of cult theory – sleep deprivation, make-work projects, which is one of the reasons why Camp Ashraf has all this — surprisingly, it’s pretty. I mean there’s all of these beautification projects there. There’s fountains and there’s gardens, and there are all of these statues and memorials to things. Make-work projects. Sometimes food limitation. But one of the big things I didn’t know about them, the stuff that gets at people, um: 1) forced celibacy; 2) forced divorce; 3) gender segregation. They will claim that the divorce was not forced. One of their representatives told me that, I don’t remember his exact words, but that in the desert, it just doesn’t support family life. And I’m sure that Iraqi families feel just the same way.”

Masoud Banisadr was an MEK member for 20 years and served as the group’s representative to the United Nations and the United States during that time. He now ardently denounces the group. His account of what it’s like on the inside supports Goulka’s claims.

Masoud Banisadr: “Not only me, all members were forced to divorce their spouses, and later they have to send their children abroad to Europe and United States to be adopted by supporters and other members. The final stage was self-divorce, which meant that you have to divorce your own personality, your own individuality. You had to prove to the group that your whole individuality and personality before you become member of the group were devilish and wrong and corrupt and so-on.”

The MEK and its supporters claim that the group is not a cult, though, and that former members have been coerced into saying that it is a cult by Iran’s intelligence services.

Goulka: “This is what’s important to remember: Even if there are Iranian efforts to paint the MEK as terrible, which there are — I mean, the Iranian regime is always trying to make the MEK look terrible. But, it’s easy to make the MEK look terrible because the MEK looks terrible.”

Part of Goulka’s job in Iraq when assessing the MEK camp was to interview members of the group.

Goulka: “I mean, I interviewed loads of people, and, I mean, were they all agents? I doubt it. Were they Iranian agents, were they sneaking into the locked-off refugee camp off of

F.O.B. [Forward Operating Base] Grizzly, and planting information to somehow feed me when they did not know I was coming?”

In response to the MEK's claims, Human Rights Watch even went back and re-assessed their reporting and re-interviewed the original people from their report.

The second time around, they made the same claims that the organization is a cult and that they [members of the group] were tortured and abused by MEK's leaders.

Human Rights Watch found no evidence of influence by Iranian intelligence services.

Despite all the documented history behind the group's nefarious claims, it still came off the [Foreign Terrorist Organizations] list. And that's because the single most important thing it did was end all acts of violence. And on this point, both Goulka and Ambassador Bloomfield agree.

Bloomfield: “In September of 2012, when Secretary of State Clinton removed the MEK from the U.S. terrorism list, the announcement said that the MEK had conducted no acts of violence for at least 10 years.”

Goulka: “I was actually thinking they should come off the list. I don't think the U.S. made the decision for the right reasons, but I think they made the right decision. I think they needed to come off the list because I think the list, as written — I mean, the statute as written — they no longer really satisfied. And I think it's important that there be some kind of incentive to terrorist groups in the world to say, ‘You know, if you stop being violent, we will take you off the list.’”

So now that the MEK is no longer officially considered a terrorist group, what is it? How are they any different from other Iranian opposition groups, such as the National Front, or supporters of the previous monarchy?

Banisadr: “This is the problem which they are facing. I mean, the kind of questions that they face from ordinary Iranians outside of Iran, or their supporters outside of Iran is: How do you want to go back to Iran? How do you want to overthrow this government? The only answer which they have is that, ‘We are lobbying the United States. We are lobbying Western countries to fight against the Iranian government. First to put sanctions, put hardship on Iranian government so they cannot solve the problems of [the] Iranian people. And this might create some resistance on the opposition within Iran, and create an environment of revolution, perhaps, inside of Iran. At the same time, we are inviting Western countries, especially [the] United States to attack Iran because of [the] nuclear issue, because of [the] Israeli issue, and so on. So, when [the] United States attacks Iran the only the only people that can govern the country are us. There is nobody else.’”



Goulka agrees with Banisadr's assessment of the group. He echoed his remarks about the MEK trying to grab power in Iran through pressuring the American government, but from a perspective rooted in the shame behind the horrors of America's invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Goulka: "We're always trying to make it sound like Iran is so super powerful as a military force. And it's nothing compared to Israel, which is nothing compared to us. Yet we're going to get ourselves up into a lather where the only, the only end result of that, the only logical end result if you let it keep going, is that we get violent with Iran. And that doesn't suit anybody's interests, without even questioning the actual morality of it. I mean, do I support the Iranian regime? No. But when you look at what we did to Iraq, where now people in the media constantly talk about 100,000 civilians dying as if that's something we should accept. And most evidence suggests that's like one-tenth of the people that actually died. And that's death — that's not the number of people who are just displaced, or injured, or had their lives ruined. The millions of people who were displaced and had to leave the country, or just displaced in the country — I mean, we wrecked that country because some people here wanted to do it, and you had fools like Ahmed Chalabi saying that they could go in and take over the place, and our fools who followed it. And the number of deaths for our people, too, and the way we've ruined lives here, and the way we've, you know, the money we've spent on it. Why would we repeat that in Iran? I mean, it's insane. But, of course, insanity is the whole notion, you know, thinking you can do it again right this time. And it's just frightening to watch us go down that path if we keep listening to the MEK."

*For MintPress News in Washington, this is Sean Nevins.*