

# ParsBrief

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August 2015

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### MKO high rankings to be transferred to Albania

Nejat Society, August 8, 2015

Mujahedin-e Khalq group is moving 203 high ranking members to Tirana.

According to Nejat Society reporter among the transferees are members of leadership council, commanders and headquarters ranks.

In March 2013 the Albanian government announced its agreement to accommodate in Tirana a number of MKO members residing in Camp Liberty, Iraq. Several groups of Camp Liberty (TTL) has relocated in Tirana since then.

### The MEK and the Deal with Iran

The American Conservative, By Daniel Larison, August 13, 2015

AIPAC has been lobbying against the nuclear deal as one would expect, and this week they are touting the opposition of a handful of former military officers to the agreement. The first one that they cite is Hugh Shelton, who recently penned an op-ed objecting to the deal while praising the virtues of the “former” terrorist group Mujahideen-e Khalq’s political umbrella organization, the so-called National Council of Resistance of Iran. It is telling that

they edited the quote to leave out his reference to the latter, since they probably know it would discredit what Shelton says.

Shelton is a longtime MEK booster, and was cheering them on even before they were removed from the official list of foreign terrorist organizations. The MEK seeks to overthrow the Iranian government, as do the cult's many American fans, so they are predictably opposed to any agreement with Tehran. Anyone that sides with this group is pushing a regime change agenda that is extremely unpopular among Iranians, and so shouldn't be taken seriously on anything related to Iran.

As he has done before, Shelton presents the cult and its allies as Iran's "main opposition," but this is plainly false. The group is widely hated inside Iran and has almost no support in the Iranian diaspora. It is wildly unrepresentative of what most Iranians in Iran and elsewhere want for their country, and it is also at odds with what most Iranians think about the nuclear deal. Most Iranians support the deal, as do most dissidents inside Iran, so it is dishonest in the extreme to assert that the MEK's rejection of the deal represents the wishes of "the Iranian people." Shelton is recycling the propaganda of a fanatical exile group and trying to pass it off as something radically different in order to influence a major policy debate here in the U.S.

#### AIPAC's Military "Expert" Loves the MEK And GOP's Islamophobic Fringe

Eli Clifton, Lobelog, August 22, 2015

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has committed over \$20 million to defeating the Obama administration's nuclear agreement between the P5+1 and Iran. But that doesn't mean its campaign has gone smoothly. One of the top challenges facing AIPAC is finding reputable ex-military validators to denounce the agreement.

With a plethora of experts signing letters in support of the Joint Comprehensive Program of Action—one signed by 36 retired top-ranking military officers, another signed by Jewish communal leaders (including AIPAC’s former executive director), and a third signed by 75 leading nuclear non-proliferation experts— AIPAC is dipping into the third or fourth string of “experts” to find anti-deal voices.

On Thursday, the AIPAC-funded Citizens For a Nuclear Free Iran (CFNI) released its third television commercial and its first attempt to put forward a retired military officer, Ret. Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula, as a voice against the deal. But Deptula has a history of associating with extreme elements opposing diplomacy with Iran.

#### Deptula’s Bedfellows

Deptula has appeared at multiple events supporting the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), a fringe Iranian opposition group that advocates regime change in Iran and, until 2012, was listed on the State Department’s terrorism list.

In April, Deptula signed on to a letter supporting the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade’s controversial decision to invite MEK leader Maryam Rajavi to testify. An Obama administration official told Al-Monitor at the time that, “[The MEK] has shown time and time again that they’re not the most credible voices,” and warned lawmakers to be wary of any claims made by Rajavi’s organization.

Deptula, on the other hand, vouched for the MEK’s intelligence-gathering capabilities on multiple occasions.

In February, 2012, according to remarks posted on an MEK website, Deptula praised the group, saying:

The MEK’s access to intelligence about all aspects of Iranian society are very important to countering the malicious aspirations of the current regime in Iran.

And, in May 2012, Deptula told a MEK-hosted Capitol Hill briefing:

It's also important to recognize that the most secretive information about the current Iranian regime's connection in international terrorism about its nuclear weapons program and about its menacing intentions for Iraq has to a large extent come from the Iranian opposition movement.

But the MEK has had a questionable track record when it comes to providing sound intelligence on Iran's nuclear program.

In February, right-wing media outlets leapt at the MEK's claim that it had evidence of a secret underground nuclear site. The MEK exhibited photos allegedly showing a tunnel leading to the facility and a steel door. And that's where the story fell apart. The DailyKos matched the photo to a safe company's website. The full, uncropped image showed windows and sunlight, refuting the MEK's claim of having acquired evidence of a nuclear facility but also revealing that the group had intentionally cropped a catalog image of a safe in a warehouse to look like a surreptitious photograph of an underground bunker.

The group's biggest intelligence coup came in 2002, with the public exposure of the Natanz uranium enrichment facility and Arak heavy water production plant for plutonium extraction. The MEK claimed its clandestine network in Iran had unearthed the nuclear facilities but The New Yorker reported in 2006 that Israeli intelligence had made the discovery and passed information about the sites to the MEK.

Indeed, the CFNI has, through either happenstance or intention, relied heavily on the MEK since its founding earlier this summer.

Ali Gharib and I reported back in July that the group promoted news articles citing the MEK's rejection of the nuclear deal and incorporated b-roll footage from an MEK press event in its first television ad. (CFNI deleted the articles from its website but offered no explanation for the removal.)

Aligned with Gaffney

But vouching for the MEK's intelligence capabilities isn't Deptula's only brush with fringe foreign policy views. In April, Deptula signed on to a Center for Security Policy letter praising the highly controversial "Open Letter to the Leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran" assembled by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR) and 46 fellow senators, a letter that Obama characterized as part of an effort, led by Cotton, to "make common cause with the hard-liners in Iran."

In January, Deptula signed another letter, alongside Frank Gaffney. Gaffney, Deptula, and the other signatories, congratulated Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal for comments he made at a Henry Jackson Society event in London. The letter praised Jindal's harsh remarks about Islam, saying:

It is high time that the rest of our present and future leaders come to grips with the unhappy reality you observed so succinctly when you said: "A so-called religion that allows for and endorses killing those who oppose it is not a religion at all, it is a terrorist movement."

Deptula's decision to sign letters organized by Frank Gaffney—a leading figure in pushing conspiracy theories about Muslim Brotherhood infiltration of the U.S. government and questioning whether Obama is a native-born U.S. citizen—strongly suggests sympathy for, if not identification with, the Republican far right.

But AIPAC's promotion of Deptula is part of an emerging pattern of the organization's shredding of its bipartisan image, as a growing number of Democrats, as well as centrist ex-military and non-proliferation experts, line up in support of the Iran nuclear deal. AIPAC's shift towards the GOP is also hinted at in CFNI's incorporation papers in Washington, DC. Craig Engle, a Republican political operative, is listed as the group's incorporator.

On Tuesday, the Huffington Post's Sam Stein flagged an AIPAC memo quoting six former military commanders opposed to the Iran deal. One of those, retired Adm. James Lyons,

speaking at an event in January, echoed Gaffney's conspiracy theories about the Muslim Brotherhood's penetration of "every one of our national security agencies" and accused CIA Director John Brennan of being a "Muslim convert." He also said that the Muslim Brotherhood has "carte blanche entry into the White House."

With validators like Deptula and Lyons, AIPAC risks whatever reputation it has enjoyed as an influential voice on U.S. Middle East.

### UANI, Joe Lieberman and the MEK

Lobelog, By Ali Gharib, August 12, 2015

I only have a few words to add to Jim's post about United Against a Nuclear Iran naming Joe Lieberman as its new president. Those words are: Mojahedin-e Khalq. That's the ex-terrorist Iranian opposition group, often known as the MEK, that has campaigned tirelessly for decades for regime change in Iran, and Joe Lieberman is one of their favorite advocates in Washington.

Here's a bit of something I wrote in June about Lieberman's positions on Iran and the MEK:

As far back as 2008, Lieberman was joking—yes, joking, as if this were a laughing matter—about the "appeal" of bombing Iran. In a 2010 speech to the Council on Foreign Relations that re-purposed many of the talking points Lieberman had used to push for the invasion of Iraq, he spoke of a six-month deadline—six months! in 2010!—for Iran to roll back its nuclear program before the U.S. had to seriously consider a military strike.

Lieberman's been at it since then, too. In 2012, he said that a military strike could cause Iran's nuclear program to "be delayed for enough years that we may hope and pray that there will be a regime change." And that is the central point of Lieberman's advocacy: he

wants a U.S. policy of regime change. Just this month, he participated by video in a confab of the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), the ex-terrorist Iranian opposition group that relentlessly pushes for regime change.

“Inevitably,” Lieberman addressed the MEK members directly, “as individuals you may ask yourself: Is it possible that we can bring about a change of regime in Iran? And I want to say to you that it is. I’m confident that it is and it will happen.” The US, he said, “should be working closely with your resistance group.” The event was even the subject of a “sponsored report”—whatever that means—from The Washington Times that helpfully categorized Lieberman’s statements as “American support for regime change and the Iranian opposition.”

I mention this because of the raft of deal opponents who just won’t stop insisting that actually they don’t want war with Iran, they just want a “better deal.” If that’s the case, they ought to stop naming Joe Lieberman to prominent positions in their organizations. As it stands now, the hawkish former Democrat holds positions in several major anti-deal groups in Washington. Jim noted his roles at the AIPAC anti-deal spin-off (which has also promoted MEK materials in its advertisements), the American Enterprise Institute, and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, adding to that now his elevation from advisory board member at UANI to being its leader.

Fellow board members who actually support the Iran nuclear deal, such as Graham Allison and its Lieberman’s immediate predecessor, Gary Samore, might take note.

But hawkishness on Iran is a matter apart from support for the MEK. The group is reviled in Iran; it has launched terrorist attacks there; many impartial analysts have described it as a cult. Eli and I have already written about UANI’s targeting of legal humanitarian trade with Iran, and how it belies its professed solidarity with the Iranian people. Now, we can add UANI’s promotion of a pro-MEK hawk to that score. What’s worse, though, is the



group's elevation of a man who has such a cavalier attitude toward war with Iran and who wants official US policy toward the Islamic Republic to be regime change.

We've seen this move before with the Iraq war, and UANI seems determined to have Joe Lieberman, who, as Jim noted, was Honorary Co-Chair of the Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, return to star in the sequel.

### Bill Kristol on Iran Deal: 'Its Munich!'

Global Research, By Daniel McAdams, July 19, 2015

Bill Kristol is the epitome of the neocon mindset: cultivating a staid and urbane image while writing the most unhinged and mendacious claptrap. In his utterly predictable denunciation of the successful Iran nuclear talks, Kristol frames the issue in the crudest terms: if the deal goes through on the US end it will mean the return of \$150 billion that was seized from the Iranians by the United States — and that money will be used to commit terrorism against the United States!

Writes Kristol: "How can we debate [the deal] without attending to the \$150 billion that is going to a regime with American blood on its hands?"

Kristol cites the National Review which makes the fatuous claim (first made by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, which is headed by a close advisor to Israeli prime minister Netanyahu) that Iran has killed 1,000 Americans since 9/11. It turns out any weapon used in Iraq or Afghanistan against an invading US military that might have Iranian manufacturing origins means that the Iranians are responsible for that kill.

Do they want to extrapolate that methodology to include every bullet sold by the US military-industrial complex to every despot overseas?

But you can see how this works: A Netanyahu think tank makes an outlandish claim, it is picked up by the National Review and thus laundered from its biased foreign origins, and then recycled and further laundered by Kristol in his publication. Cute trick.

And Kristol's objection to foreigners with American blood on their hands is highly selective. The Marxist-jihadist death cult Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MeK) has plenty of American blood on its hands, but Kristol's own magazine joined other neocon voices in urging the US to remove the terrorists from the US list of terror organizations. Why? Because they are Kristol's kind of terrorists: they infiltrate Iran to assassinate civilians and foment unrest, while passing off laptops with Mossad-fabricated data made to look like Iranian nuclear weapons activity.

The other thing that has Kristol up in arms over the deal is what he calls the "notorious" Annex III.D.10 of the agreement, which he claims will "help the Iranian regime fight off attempts by others to slow its nuclear program, and more."

But what does that annex really say?

10. Co-operation in the form of training courses and workshops to strengthen Iran's ability to prevent, protect and respond to nuclear security threats to nuclear facilities and systems as well as to enable effective and sustainable nuclear security and physical protection systems;

10. Co-operation through training and workshops to strengthen Iran's ability to protect against, and respond to nuclear security threats, including sabotage, as well as to enable effective and sustainable nuclear security and physical protection systems.

In other words, the parties to the agreement will help Iran protect against attempts to attack and sabotage Iran's peaceful and legal nuclear program. Recall the Israeli/US cyberattack on Iranian nuclear facilities and simultaneous programs to assassinate Iranian scientists. Kristol is furious that anyone would find such illegal and murderous activity to be

objectionable. After all, blood on one's hands doesn't count if it is Iranian or other Muslim blood.

Oh, and, writes Kristol: "Munich!!!" That is obligatory any time diplomacy supplants neocon lust for war.

That Kristol remains a favored foreign policy "expert" on stations like FoxNews and ABC says very little about the quality of his analysis and much more about his saying what the mainstream media want their audiences to hear.

Who can forget Bill Kristol's greatest hits, such as this 2011 piece on the "liberation" of Libya titled "The Party of Freedom"? In it he writes:

And so, despite his doubts and dithering, President Obama is taking us to war in another Muslim country. Good for him. ...Our invasions have in fact been liberations...in our own national interest, of course, but also to protect Muslim peoples and help them free themselves. Libya will be America's fifth war of Muslim liberation.

Ah yes, that glorious liberation of Libya!

Indeed the timeline of his faulty predictions would no-doubt span the equator. Imagine any other profession where one can be so consistently wrong and still be considered (and handsomely remunerated as) an expert. Imagine your doctor was wrong in his diagnosis 95 percent of the time. Imagine your financial advisor consistently lost 95 percent of anything you invest with him. Yet Kristol continues to drop his golden turds from the hallowed heights of the foreign policy firmament. What a country...

#### Iran Urges Iraq to Expel All MKO Members

Fars News Agency, August 18, 2015

TEHRAN (FNA)- Deputy Head of Iran's Human Rights Headquarters for International Affairs Kazzem Qaribabadi called for the complete expulsion of Mojahedin-e Khalq

Organization (MKO, also known as the MEK, PMOI and NCR) terrorist group members from Iraq.

Qaribabadi made the remarks in meetings with Iraq's judiciary and human rights officials during his two-day visit to Baghdad which started on Tuesday.

During the meetings on the first day of his trip, he underlined the necessity for joint cooperation in fighting terrorism at international circles, hailing Iraq's campaign against the terrorist groups, specially the ISIL.

Qaribabadi also appreciated Iraq's position against the MKO terrorist group, and underlined the necessity for continued efforts to expel all MKO members from the Arab country.

The MKO, founded in the 1960s, blended elements of Islamism and Stalinism and participated in the overthrow of the US-backed Shah of Iran in 1979. Ahead of the revolution, the MKO conducted attacks and assassinations against both Iranian and western targets.

The group started assassination of the citizens and officials after the revolution in a bid to take control of the newly-established Islamic Republic. It killed several of Iran's new leaders in the early years after the revolution, including the then President, Mohammad Ali Rajayee, Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar and the Judiciary Chief, Mohammad Hossein Beheshti who were killed in bomb attacks by the MKO members in 1981.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it was protected by Saddam Hussein and where it helped the Iraqi dictator suppress Shiite and Kurd uprisings in the country.

The terrorist group joined Saddam's army during the Iraqi imposed war on Iran (1980-1988) and helped Saddam and killed thousands of Iranian civilians and soldiers during the US-backed Iraqi imposed war on Iran.

Since the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, the group, which now adheres to a pro-free-market philosophy, has been strongly backed by neo-conservatives in the United States, who argued for the MKO to be taken off the US terror list.

The US formally removed the MKO from its list of terror organizations in early September, one week after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sent the US Congress a classified communication about the move. The decision made by Clinton enabled the group to have its assets under the US jurisdiction unfrozen and do business with the American entities, the State Department said in a statement at the time.

In September 2012, the last groups of the MKO terrorists left Camp Ashraf, their main training center in Iraq's Diyala province. They have been transferred to Camp Liberty. Hundreds of the MKO terrorists have now been sent to Europe, where their names were taken off the blacklist even two years before the US.

The MKO has assassinated over 12,000 Iranians in the last 4 decades. The terrorist group had even killed large numbers of Americans and Europeans in several terror attacks before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Some 17,000 Iranians have lost their lives in terror attacks in the 35 years after the Revolution.