

The Iranian Pen Club

Panorama



Treasury probes Rendell over speeches for Iranian dissidents

Reza Marashi, Huffington Post, March 16 2012

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/reza-marashi/mek-terrorist-organization_b_1350676.html

The foreign policy and national security challenges posed by Iran have perplexed consecutive U.S. presidential administrations for decades. From the hostage crisis to state sponsorship of terrorism to nuclear programs, the myriad challenges have rarely provided any easy answers. One of the few clear issues pertaining to America's Iran policy has been its designation of the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) as a terrorist organization.

For nearly two decades and four presidential administrations, yearly reviews of the MEK's terrorist designation have reconfirmed its rightful place on this dubious list of 50 unsavory groups -- most recently in January of this year.

Despite this, a massive lobbying push to delist the MEK has been raging inside the beltway for the past year, producing two troubling results. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told U.S. lawmakers that a decision on the MEK's terrorist designation is pending in part to see if the group peacefully relocates to a new, less contentious location in Iraq. Shortly thereafter, the Washington, D.C. court of appeals ordered the U.S. government to respond to a petition on the MEK's terrorist designation by March 26 -- less than two weeks from today.

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MKO's Dollars Challenging "Material Support"

Policy of spending lavish money for organizational achievements is a top priority



Sattar Orangi, Mojahedin.ws, March 16, 2012

<http://www.mojahedin.ws/en/?p=15829>

The gravy train on which some prominent Americans rode seems to be perforce halted in an outstation. The US Treasury Department appears to have begun an inquiry to see whether the speaking fees paid by Mojahedin Khalq Organization MKO to its American advocates who have spoken on its behalf are illegal. In an earlier report by The Washington Times, Edward G. Rendell, the former Democratic governor of Pennsylvania and an outspoken supporter of MKO, has been subpoenaed by the Treasury Department.

He is asked to turn over information on his relationship with the designated terrorist group. Of course, Mr. Rendell is only one among the long list of former officials, including former directors of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and many more, who have accepted fees to speak on behalf of MKO in Paris and Geneva as well as appearing in online videos and participating in arranged rallies. Mr. Rendell asserts that he has been paid between \$150,000 to \$160,000 for seven or eight speeches in support of MKO and calling for its removal from the terrorist list.

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My organization, the National Iranian American Council (NIAC), has been at the forefront of a diverse, uncompensated coalition of former government officials, analysts and scholars calling for the MEK to remain a designated foreign terrorist organization.

To date, I have personally remained silent on the issue in my public commentary in an effort to protect my former colleagues serving in the State Department's Office of Iranian Affairs. My views are identical to theirs.

However, I can no longer remain silent. We are fast approaching a point of no return regarding the MEK's terrorist designation, and my government is running the risk of making a disastrous mistake.

Allow me to explain.

Not one of my former State Department colleagues -- zero -- support de-listing the MEK. Their determination is not based on personal preference or policy ramifications. Rather, the facts of the case are indisputable.

Since NIAC launched its information campaign on the MEK nearly one year ago, I have been in close and con-



fore neoconservative political appointees began jumping ship en masse toward late 2007.

The facts were so indisputable that nearly zero debate took place inside the State Department. Only a few neoconservatives pushed to use the MEK as a pressure point against the Iranian government. Yet despite their countless Iran policy blunders, most neoconservatives in the Bush administration were unequivocal that a terrorist group is a terrorist group.

When presidential administrations change, political appointees cycle in and out of government. Career public servants -- which constitute the vast majority of State Department officials -- transcend elections. Many of the same officials I worked with to reconfirm the MEK's terrorist designation in 2006 and 2007 continue to serve in the Obama administration. The same evidence also remains in place.

tinuing contact with the State Department. They are bewildered by the freedom of movement that a designated terrorist organization enjoys on Capitol Hill; disgusted by former U.S. government officials willing to make a quick buck by shilling for the MEK; and exasperated by senior-level political appointees who have allowed partisan politics to trump making an otherwise obvious decision that was not controversial a few short years ago.

A bit of context tells the real story.

In both 2006 and 2007, I helped review the MEK's terrorist designation. I worked with my colleagues in government to review documentation dating from the 1970s to the present, and it was swiftly determined that the MEK's terrorist designation remained warranted. This was during the Bush administration -- which had an openly stated policy of regime change -- and be-

When presidential administrations change, political appointees cycle in and out of government. Career public servants -- which constitute the vast majority of State Department officials -- transcend elections. Many of the same officials I worked with to reconfirm the MEK's terrorist designation in 2006 and 2007 continue to serve in the Obama administration. The same evidence also remains in place.

If anything, the U.S. government now has more evidence to warrant a swift confirmation of the MEK's terrorist designation. Obama administration officials recently confirmed to NBC News that the MEK is being armed, trained and funded by the Israeli government to murder Iranian scientists. This type of activity -- politically motivated assassinations -- is squarely within the U.S. government definition of terrorism that is used when designating foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs).

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So, why we have reached this critical stage? Because even in the post-September 11th era, there has been lax enforcement of existing laws pertaining to FTOs. An illegal presence on Capitol Hill has allowed the MEK to build a disconcerting degree of political pressure vis-à-vis the Obama administration. Consistent inaction by the administration has exacerbated the problem. Only recently have they started to enforce the law, with former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell subpoenaed by the Treasury Department for his paid speeches in support of the MEK. This is a step in the right direction, and more subpoenas will surely follow -- but is it too little too late?

It doesn't have to be. Let me be clear: The requisite evidence to legally maintain the MEK's terrorist designation is both ample and indisputable.

As one of the appeals court judges wrote in her ruling, "the classified portion of the administrative record provides



organizational structure remains in place, it legally remains a terrorist organization -- regardless of where its base is located. Furthermore, the precedent set by such a mistake would be an unmitigated disaster for the U.S. Does America want to open the door for other terrorist organizations to spend millions of dollars on lobbying to get off the terrorist list?

It's time for the Obama administration to stop playing politics and start enforcing the law. Secretary Clinton and other senior-level officials may not hold their positions one year from now,

Secretary Clinton telling lawmakers that a decision on the MEK's terrorist designation is pending in part to see if the group relocates is tantamount to an admission that the decision has nothing to do with whether or not the MEK is a terrorist organization. This couldn't be further from the truth.

"substantial support" for [the Secretary of State's] determination that the PMOI [MEK] either continues to engage in terrorism or terrorist activity or retains the capability and intent to do so."

The reasoning why the Obama administration has not publicly released this evidence is simple: releasing such information could compromise and damages sources; hamper future intelligence gathering; and jeopardize legal proceedings against alleged criminals involved in the case. This runs the risk of rendering U.S. national security less effective. A similar justification was used by the Obama administration when it withheld much of its collected evidence in the alleged Iranian government plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to Washington.

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Simply put, it is unacceptable to delist a designated FTO in return for them agreeing to relocate. So long as the MEK's

but many of my former colleagues at the State Department will be left to clean up the mess. Political appointees and Congress must stop politicizing the MEK's terrorist designation, and instead let career public servants do their job. This is how they can best uphold the law in pursuit of America's national security interests.

Reza Marashi is director of research at the National Iranian American Council and a former Iran desk officer at the U.S. State Department.



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MKO's Dollars Challenging "Material Support"

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And it is not the first and will not be the last time that the media expose such scandals and it did not come as a shock for many of those who are privy to the ploys and crafts of the terrorist group. But the importance lays in the fact that it is the first time the Treasury Department reacts and summons an advocate to probe into the case.

For years, the conferences held in European countries as well as expensive newspaper and television advertisements have been organized by MKO's alias and advocacy groups in the United States, one of which to name is the Iranian-American Community of Northern California. MKO has set a big table of dollars for anyone who cannot resist easy money in exchange to scarify his/her reputation and only to voice the words dictated to him. The spell of the received money and luxurious, expenses-paid trips being broken, few of these loyalists and backers seem to have faith in the nonsenses they publicized and then begin to look for justification of advocacy for the group. In a voice mail message left with the Inquirer Mr. Rendell stated: "I got involved because they asked me. I did extensive research and I looked at the other



Frankly speaking, the policy of spending lavish money for organizational achievements is an adopted top priority

The truth many are unconscious is that MKO is an excellent master of crafting slogans to win the hearts of pro-democratic politicians, parliamentarians and activists. It fills their minds with buzzwords like "liberty", "human rights", "democracy" "women" and the like to convince them that it is struggling to advocate democracy for Iran and Iranian people. And of course, few of these bipartisan are acquainted with or have accurately studied about its past terrorist careers, crimes and atrocities not only against Iranian people but also against Americans in Pahlavi's reign and the Iraqi people in Saddam's dictatorial era.

people who were involved and they were generals and former elected officials. I had great confidence in them". By these words, one might doubt the legitimacy and efficiency of these personalities in holding sensitive past government posts and policy makings.

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within MKO and all ranking commanders are fully briefed on the issue. Once in 2007 Mehdi Abrishamchi, Maryam Rajavi's ex-husband, in a direct TV program stated that "let me tell you frankly that so far as it concerns us [MKO], we never let any of the organization's political projects come to a halt for financial restrictions".

The dilemma MKO is facing at the time being for sure requires great expenses to designate quota of jobs to be done and words to be voiced by the high-profile European and American supporters. And the offered Euros and dollars are so beguiling that hardly any of them dare to resist.

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) Terrorists eye Jordan relocation

Associated Press, March 04 2012

<http://www.nejatngo.org/en/post.aspx?id=4271>

An exiled Iranian opposition group being forced to relocate from its paramilitary base in eastern Iraq proposed on Saturday to temporarily move to the Jordanian border instead of Camp Liberty [Temporary Transit Location] near Baghdad.

Last month, the Obama administration offered to move the group temporarily to Temporary Transit Location, which once was a base for U.S. soldiers.

Iraq wants Camp Ashraf, with more than 3,000 residents, shut down. The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq, or MEK, guerrilla group was disarmed by U.S. soldiers during the Iraq invasion in 2003, and have since become an irritant to Iraq's Shiite-led government, which is trying to bolster ties with its Shiite-ruled neighbor.

The group, whose political wing is based outside Paris, is seeking removal from the U.S. list of terrorist organizations and in February U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggested that one way to get off it was to cooperate in a relocation plan.

She said the United States will help ensure the safety and security of the Camp Ashraf residents, near the Iraq-Iran border, as they are moved to another site — Temporary Transit Location.

The MEK members fear a massacre if they remain at Camp Ashraf. An Iraqi raid last year left 34 exiles dead.

However, the group insisted in its statement Saturday that "minimum assurances" must be met such as removal of Iraqi guards from seven positions in Temporary Transit Location where women would reside for a relocation to take place. Among other assurances sought are access to medical services, freedom of movement and transfer of vehicles and other moveable property.

So far, "none of the minimum assurances that Ashraf residents had sought has been met," the statement said. It claimed those living there have two options: "massacre and death at Ashraf or gradual death in a place called Liberty, under the name and supervision of the U.N."

Already, 397 Camp Ashraf residents have relocated to Temporary Transit Location.

Maryam Rajavi, co-leader of the MEK, said that camp residents are ready to relocate temporarily to the Jordanian border this month in an area once set up as a tent city to house asylum seekers after the outbreak of the Iraq war in 2003.

The MEK said the relocation would have to take place under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UNHCR refugee agency.

"As such there will be no need for (the) Liberty detention center and the chain of problems and difficulties," the statement said, adding that residents would not leave the premises until acceptance for resettlement in third countries.



It said the group would handle expenses for the move.

Ashraf, with some 3,200 people still present, is to be closed at the end of April.

The U.S. State Department has been ordered by a federal court to re-evaluate its decision to place the MEK on its list of terrorist organizations. The Iranian dissident group carried out a series of bombings and assassinations against Iran regime in the 1980s and fought alongside former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces in the Iran-Iraq war.

The group says it renounced violence in 2001, and it has assembled an impressive roster of U.S. advocates, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and ex-FBI Director Louis Freeh

The group helped Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini overthrow U.S.-backed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, but the MEK quickly fell out with the regime. Thousands of its followers were killed, imprisoned or forced into exile.

The group was designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. in 1997 at a time when Washington sought warmer relations with Iran under the reformist presidency of Mohammad Khatami.

Yet the group has provided the Americans with intelligence on Iran and has convinced many governments that it has abandoned terrorism. The European Union removed it from its list in 2009.

Tehran insists that the MEK continues to commit acts of violence. It claims the group has worked with Israel to kill several Iranian nuclear scientists in recent years. The MEK rejects the allegation.

Treasury probes Rendell over speeches for Iranian dissidents

Guy Taylor, *The Washington Times*, March 11 2012

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/mar/9/>

treasury-probes-rendell-over-speeches-for-iranian-/print/

The Treasury Department's counterterrorism arm is investigating speaking fees paid to a long-time Democratic Party leader who is among the most vocal advocates of an Iranian opposition group designated as a terrorist group by the State Department.

Former Pennsylvania Gov. Edward G. Rendell told *The Washington Times* that Treasury investigators last week subpoenaed records related to payments he has accepted in exchange for public speaking engagements.

Mr. Rendell is among a bipartisan group of prominent former officials - including Cabinet-level Republicans - who

said that on Feb. 29 the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control issued a subpoena seeking "transactional records about what payments we received for speaking fees."

The subpoena was sent to the office of Thomas McGuire, an attorney with the Los Angeles-based talent agency William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, which handles all of Mr. Rendell's speaking engagements, including those in which he has advocated on behalf of the MEK.

Calls to Mr. McGuire on Friday were not immediately returned.

A Treasury Department spokesman on Friday refused to confirm or deny the subpoena's issuance, saying the department "does not comment on possible investigations."

"But the MEK is a designated terrorist group, therefore U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transac-

... A Treasury Department spokesman on Friday refused to confirm or deny the subpoena's issuance, saying the department "does not comment on possible investigations." "But the MEK is a designated terrorist group, therefore U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with or providing services to this group," the spokesman said. Designated terrorist groups are subject to sanctions and the spokesman, added that "the Treasury Department takes sanctions enforcement seriously and routinely investigates potential violations of sanctions laws."

have accepted payment in exchange for speeches calling for the removal of the Mujahideen-e Khalq (MEK) from the State Department's list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

The MEK, also known as the People's Mujahedin of Iran, has long called for the overthrow of the Islamic theocracy in Tehran. The group, which engaged in terror attacks on Iranian government targets in the 1980s, has been on the terrorist list since 1997, when President Bill Clinton put it there in an attempt to improve relations with Iran.

Mr. Rendell and others argue the MEK should be removed from the list because it has not engaged in violence in more than two decades and shares a common enemy with the United States.

While support for their position is widespread in Washington, some observers have raised questions about the legality of accepting payment in exchange for providing assistance or services to a listed terror group.

Mr. Rendell, who asserts that he has done nothing illegal,

tions with or providing services to this group," the spokesman said.

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Mr. Rendell said the subpoena sent to his agent seeks information "about any emails, any letters, any communications involving payment that we've received or sent back."

"We're absolutely cooperating 100 percent," he said. "I've instructed my agent not to hold back on any emails or any documents. There's nothing to hide."

Mr. Rendell, who once served as general chairman of the Democratic National Committee, is apparently the only person to be subpoenaed among a group of nearly two-dozen high-level political figures who have grown increasingly

vocal in their calls for the MEK's removal from the terrorist list.

The group includes Democrats such as former Vermont Governor Howard Dean and high-profile Republicans such as former Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and former Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

Mr. Rendell and Mr. Ridge acknowledged to The Times this week that they have accepted payment in exchange for making media appearances and speeches calling for the MEK's removal from the terrorist list.

And both men defended their actions.

"I've been in politics 34 years, and I can tell you right now that

Assuming there may be a question, and we don't think there is, the bigger question is: Does the MEK belong on the list?" he said. "It's kind of curious that those who don't like our advocacy are suggesting that we might be doing something wrong." Neither man would specify how much he has been paid for his speeches, although Mr. Rendell, who has traveled to Paris and Geneva five times to attend conferences calling for the MEK's removal from the terrorist list, said that in addition to receiving a "substantial speaking fee," his expenses have been covered in full.

At issue is the fate of 3,400 Iranian dissidents said to be members of the MEK. They have been living in Iraq since the Iran-Iraq war during the 1980s when they fought on the Iraqi side.

Since the U.S. occupation of Iraq in 2003, the MEK supporters lived under U.S. protection at a camp on the Iranian border. But now the Americans have left, the Iraqi government has said it will close the camp.

The supporters fear they will be departed to torture and death in Iran, but third countries are unwilling to take them because of the group's designation on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list overseen by the State Department.

The group has sued the State Department in federal court to be taken off the list, but the case has dragged on for more than two years. Last week, a court ruled that the State Department must respond to the MEK petition by March 26.

The European Union removed the group from its terror list in 2009.

David Cole, a professor at the Georgetown University Law Center, noted that "any group that's on the list is also, by definition, on the Treasury Department's list for specially designated global terrorists."

"Anyone in the United States is prohibited from engaging in any transaction with such an entity," he said.

While Mr. Cole stressed his personal belief that individuals have a "First Amendment right to speak out freely" for an organization like the MEK, he said that "it is a crime to engage in any transaction, which would certainly include getting paid to do public relations for them."

I would not jeopardize my reputation for any amount of money," said Mr. Rendell. "I did my research extensively on this issue before I ever agreed to speak on it, and I am 100 percent convinced that the MEK shouldn't be on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list."



As to the extent to which accepting payments for such advocacy may or may not be legal, Mr. Ridge said it is a "moot question."

"Assuming there may be a question, and we don't think there is, the bigger question is: Does the MEK belong on the list?" he said. "It's kind of curious that those who don't like our advocacy are suggesting that we might be doing something wrong."

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A source familiar with the payments said told The Times that a public figure of Mr. Rendell's stature receives "in the ballpark" of \$20,000 per speaking appearance.

But where the money actually comes from is unclear.

Mr. Rendell said payments for

his

Treasury probes Rendell over speeches for Iranian dissidents

speeches come from "money from citizens, both American citizens here and Iranian expats in Europe who believe in the cause."

He stressed that he never directly accepts speaking fees, which are handled by his agent at William Morris.

Mr. Ridge, who has not been issued a subpoena from the Treasury Department, said he believes the money comes from legitimate sources but that he was not sure what they are.

"It is my understanding that there is a very large diaspora of Iranian Americans, and the diaspora is international obviously," he said. "There's a very significant group of American citizens and how they pledge their money and send it in and aggregate it to pay us, I don't know."

Trita Parsi, who heads the National Iranian America Council, argues that the money is connected to the MEK.

"Everyone on Capital Hill knows that, once on the terrorist list, the MEK could no longer lobby under their own name, so they created organizations with the same individuals and used those organizations, which are not on the terrorist list,

The supporters fear they will be deported to torture and death in Iran, but third countries are unwilling to take them because of the group's designation on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list overseen by the State Department.

to do the lobbying," said Mr. Parsi.

"That includes giving money to U.S. officials to speak on their behalf and speak in support of the MEK while pretending that the money is not coming from the MEK."

The website of the National Iranian American Council maintains a list of groups it claims are raising money for the MEK, and Mr. Parsi claims that officials from the State Department have privately told him that the MEK sets up "shell organizations" to raise money.

When asked about Mr. Parsi's claim Friday, a State Department spokesman declined to comment.

• **Shaun Waterman contributed to this report.**

Clinton: Mojahedin Khalq Cooperation 'Key' In Considering Terrorist Designation

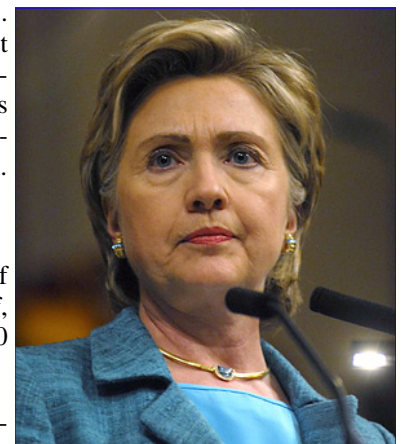


Radio Free Europe, March 01 2012

http://www.rferl.org/content/mko_cooperation_key_to_terror_designation/24500681.html

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says that cooperation by the exiled Iranian opposition Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) during the closure of its Iraqi base at Camp Ashraf will be "a key factor in any decision" on whether to change the organization's terrorist designation.

The MKO (aka People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran) was added to the U.S. State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations in 1999 and is also designated a terrorist organization by Iran.



Iraq is in the process of closing Camp Ashraf, which holds some 3,300 members of group.

The group fought alongside Iraqi forces in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, but has since clashed with Iraqi security forces as Baghdad's relations with Tehran have improved.

The group says the Iraqi government has used its terrorist status to justify mistreatment of the camp's residents and could complicate planned relocation to other countries

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) helps Israeli agents in covert war with Iran: Ex-member

Maariv radio, Tel Aviv, March 07 2012

Reporoduced by Press TV

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/230327.html>

Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) is termed as a terrorist organization under the US law.

A former top commander of the terrorist Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) says the organization has close ties with Israeli operatives, helping them in their covert operations against Iran.

In a telephone interview with Israel's Maariv radio on March 5, Massoud Khodabandeh noted that it was no surprise to hear about the role of the MKO terrorists in assassinating Iran's nuclear scientists.

Some US officials told the NBC network last week that the MKO terrorists have been involved in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists in the past two years.



ty Camp in Iraq.

Khodabandeh said the organization has 5,000 members, barred from any contact with the outside world, who totally obey the Rajavis.

Ann Singleton, the wife of Khodabandeh and a former MKO member, also noted that the MKO has never been independent and has always relied on foreign support.

... In a telephone interview with Israel's Maariv radio on March 5, Massoud Khodabandeh noted that it was no surprise to hear about the role of the MKO terrorists in assassinating Iran's nuclear scientists. Some US officials told the NBC network last week that the MKO terrorists have been involved in the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists in the past two years. Since January 2010, a total of six Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated by operatives of Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, which is using the MKO terrorists for the attacks. "I was not surprised by the recent revelations as I am fully aware of Israel's relations with the MKO." Khodabandeh added ...

Since January 2010, a total of six Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated by operatives of Israel's intelligence agency, Mossad, which is using the MKO terrorists for the attacks.

"I was not surprised by the recent revelations as I am fully aware of Israel's relations with the MKO." Khodabandeh added.

He said the MKO has extensive relations with Israel and its operatives in Europe work with Israeli agents.

According to the ex-MKO official, most members of the organization are women. Their leader Maryam Rajavi, also a woman, is the wife of top MKO member Massoud Rajavi who 'disappeared' 10 years ago and there is no information available on his current whereabouts.

The organization has strong financial resources and two major bases; one in the suburbs of Paris and the other Camp Ashraf in Iraq. The MKO elements were recently evacuated from Ashraf to Liber-

She added that it would be quite logical to imagine that the organization has been involved in the assassination of Iranian scientist.

Dr. Trita Parsi, a prominent MKO critic, also noted that the MKO is not a simple organization, but a cult which suppresses even its own members.

The MKO is termed as a terrorist organization under the US law, and has been described by the US State Department officials as a repressive cult.

The group fled to Iraq in 1986, where it enjoyed the support of Iraq's executed dictator, Saddam Hussein.

The MKO is also known to have cooperated with Saddam in suppressing the 1991 uprisings in southern Iraq and the massacre of Iraqi Kurds. The group has carried out numerous acts of violence against Iranian civilians and government officials.

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) and the Warped Nature of the Iran Debate

Daniel Larison, The American Conservative, February 24 2012

http://



www.theamericanconservative.com/larison/2012

/02/21/the-mek-and-the-warped-nature-of-the-iran-debate/

Edward Luce wrote this a few days ago in a column on Iran:

On Wednesday they hold the first presidential debate in three weeks. As in previous ones, commercial breaks are likely to air a spot calling on Mr Obama to remove the MEK – the Mujahideen e-Khalq, the armed Iranian opposition group – from the US list of foreign terrorist organisations.

The MEK is believed to have carried out the recent assassinations of Iranian scientists on Israel's behalf. Its US front organisations have paid hefty speaking fees to dozens of prominent figures, from Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, to Howard Dean, the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Many of the Republican candidates also support lifting the ban.

Michael Auslin overreacts:

Yet even more incomprehensibly, Luce then notes that at the upcoming Republican presidential debate, there likely will be televised commercials calling for the delisting of Iran's armed opposition group from lists of terrorist groups. Not only does this have nothing to do with the issue at hand, does Mr. Luce think the commercials are being paid for by the GOP? If not, then what's his beef with the free market — whoever can afford a commercial can buy it. Just ask SEIU, which kept up a constant barrage in favor of Obamacare last year.

As the quote from Luce shows, the MEK issue is perfectly relevant to a discussion of Israel and the Iranian nuclear pro-

gram because Israel has allegedly used MEK operatives to kill Iranian nuclear scientists. I assume Luce's point is to draw attention to the fact that there is televised advocacy for de-listing a terrorist group that has recently been implicated in acts of terrorism against Iran, and these attacks form one part of the covert war being waged against Iran because of its nuclear program. Some of Romney's advisers have publicly supported de-listing the MEK, and Gingrich and Santorum are on record endorsing the assassinations the MEK has reportedly carried out.

One problem is that the MEK's American advocates are often paid for their advocacy, and the other is that three of the Republican presidential candidates apparently have no objection to acts of terrorism so long as they are committed against the right people.

If this were any other terrorist group, it would be unthinkable that its advocates could run television commercials calling for the group's removal from the FTO list during presidential debates or at any other time, but because it is a group dedicated to overthrowing the Iranian government it is somehow considered acceptable and unobjectionable.



I am guessing Luce's inclusion of the MEK material in his column was intended to highlight how biased in favor of confrontation the Iran debate in the United States is. That Auslin thinks it is plausible or appropriate to compare advertisements on behalf of a recognized foreign terrorist group with legislative advocacy by an American union confirms it.

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It continued: "Everything shows that at the behest of the Iranian regime, the Iraqi government has turned this camp into a prison and regretfully, UNAMI and (UN envoy) Mr Martin Kobler himself ... assist in this prison-making by confirming it as a refugee camp."

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Another email from Kia on February 27 referred to the "lies that Martin Kobler made to the residents of Camp Ashraf for a forcible relocation to Camp Liberty."

When asked about the PMOI statements, Kobler told AFP that Camp Liberty "was host of 5,000 American soldiers, so it should be possible to have the infrastructure ready also for these 400 persons who are now living there."

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) Terrorists eye Jordan relocation 5

"I do not think that the infrastructure problem is the problem," he said.

"If there is garbage, the garbage can be removed and should be removed, and the government of Iraq stands ready ... to have garbage trucks available, but they have to enter the camp to remove the garbage," he said.

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"The aim of the whole exercise is to have the ... refugee status determination moving," he said, referring to a process which must be completed before the exiles can be resettled.

The PMOI meanwhile says it is facing "conspiracies."

Clinton: Mojahedin Khalq Cooperation 'Key' In Considering Terrorist Designation 8

"The whole plan for the relocation of the residents of Camp Ashraf to Camp Liberty is an Iranian plan, and the mullah's regime's plan, and nobody else," Kia said in an interview with AFP, referring to the cleric-led government in Tehran.

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) helps Israeli 9

He referred to the new camp as "Prison Liberty," saying that "their plan is to destroy the Iranian opposition" there.

Kia also said that "espionage cameras and ... eavesdropping devices" in Liberty give information "to the Iranian embassy and to the agents of the Iranian regime."

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) terrorists in Iraq battle using press releases targetting UNAMI 12

When asked about the purpose of the flurry of statements on the UN, Kia referred to demands over Camp Liberty.

These include the removal of Iraqi armed forces from Liberty and freedom of movement for residents, but also, despite numerous statements accusing the UN of lying about conditions there, a demand for around-the-clock UN monitoring.

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) terrorists in Iraq battle using press releases targetting UNAMI

AFP, March 05 2012

<http://www.france24.com/en/20120304-iran-exiles-iraq-do-battle-using-press-releases>



Iran exiles in Iraq do battle using press releases

An Iraq-based Iranian opposition group that is fixated on conspiracy theories allegedly carried out attacks in Iran and elsewhere for decades, but now relies on a different weapon: the press release.

The United Nations mission here, which has been attempting to facilitate the exit of some 3,400 members of the opposition People's Mujahedeen Organisation of Iran (PMOI) from Iraq, where they have been based for decades, has been the latest target of the group's statement-issuing ire.

Iraq wants the PMOI out of its territory, and signed an agreement with the UN in December to that end.

On February 18, the first group of 397 exiles moved from their longtime base of Camp Ashraf in Diyala province northeast of Baghdad to Camp Liberty, a former US military base near the Iraqi capital, as part of that process.

But soon after, the group began complaining about conditions in Camp Liberty and accusing the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which in January said Liberty met "international humanitarian standards," of misrepresenting conditions there.

The PMOI's focus on public relations campaigns marked by frequent statements to the media and cultivating well-known western politicians to speak on its behalf differs dramatically from its past activities.

The leftwing group was founded in the 1960s to oppose the shah of Iran, but took up arms against the country's new clerical rulers after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The US State Department, which blacklists the PMOI as a terrorist organisation, says it has carried out attacks that killed Iranians, as well as American soldiers and civilians, from the 1970s into 2001.

Now-executed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein allowed the PMOI to establish Camp Ashraf in Iraq after he launched the 1980-88

war with Iran in which the group reportedly fought alongside his forces, and provided financial backing to the group.

But the PMOI said it renounced violence in 2001 and its members in Iraq were disarmed following the 2003 US-led invasion, leaving it in need of other tactics.

It successfully campaigned to be delisted as a terrorist organisation in Europe and is working to do the same in the US too.

A day after the first group of the exiles moved to Liberty, PMOI spokesman Shahriar Kia sent a statement by email alleging a UN expert who assessed the camp told "lies" and apparently "was compelled to file an unrealistic report," with "necessary modifications" made by "political authorities" from UNAMI.

"The bungalows and toilet facilities" were "dirty and unusable," and "there is serious water shortage and electricity is cut off, as in prisons, after 10.30 pm."

A statement emailed the next day described Camp Liberty as "a highly controlled prison," referring to the presence of Iraqi security forces.

Iraqi forces carried out two deadly raids on Camp Ashraf in 2009 and 2011, leaving dozens of people dead.

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