

The Iranian Pen Club

Panorama



Open letter to Mr. Nouri al Maliki the honorable prime minister of Iraq



Ghafour Fatahiyan

I , Ghafour Fatahiyan, one of the former members of People's Mujahedin Organization(MKO, PMOI, Rajavi's cult) who spent 20 years of my life in this cult. Since my affiliation to this organization , from the first day till my leaving time , I had to go through many harsh ordeals and I was under severe tortures which is unthinkable and unbelievable.

The organization which I and the people like me entered in it with honesty and sincerity and pure intentions , but this organization has been a destructive terrorist organization under the control of egoistic leadership and because of Rajavi's power mongering and ambition they have done all kind of crime against Iraqi and Iranian people ranging from killing of Iraqi Kurds to supporting of the terrorist groups in Iraq by bringing them inside of the Ashraf garrison to teach them the terrorist trainings as well as interfering in Iraq elections by spending huge amount of money and killing the civilians at the Iranian border and all these brutal actions have been carried out by the direct order of Massoud Rajavi who masterminded and planned all those mentioned above.

As a result of the suppression and repression inside of Ashraf garrison which was created by the pmoi operatives , the pmoi members because of being accused and labeled as mercenary and traitor, were too terrified and scared to leave the organization .

In 1996 , Massoud Rajavi in a big gathering had ordered the killing of pmoi separated mebers throughout the world.

Mr. Prime Minister As you are fully aware of the issues regard- **Continued on Page 2**

An Iranian mystery: Just who are the MEK?

Owen Bennett Jones, BBC, April 15 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17615065>

Female MEK militants at Camp Ashraf in 2006

The MEK forced its members to divorce

How do you get a group described by the US government as a cult and an officially designated foreign terrorist organisation to be viewed by many congressmen and parliamentarians as champions of human rights and secular democracy?

It would challenge even the most talented PR executive.

The starkly differing perceptions of the MEK or People's Mujahideen of Iran

could be a case study in the power of image management - of what can be achieved not with guns but by the way information is disseminated.

The organisation has a history of ideological and tactical flexibility.

Since the 1970s, its rhetoric has changed from Islamist to secular; from socialist to capitalist; from pro-Iranian-revolution to anti-Iranian-revolution; from pro-Saddam to pro-American; from violent to peaceful.

And there is another dichotomy - it has admiring supporters and ardent critics.

Take, for example, the US military officers who had to deal with the MEK after they invaded Iraq in 2003.

Not only was the MEK heavily **Continued on Page 2**



Owen Bennett Jones

Open letter to Mr. Nouri al Maliki the honorable prime minister of Iraq

Continued from Page 1

ing Ashraf garrison , the people inside this camp have been deprived of their preliminary rights . in this camp , everything is forbidden , may be these facts are unbelievable and very hard to imagine . everything such as Telephone, Internet and Foreign News was available and accessible for the pmoi commanders and high ranking officers but we were deprived of all those rights and even we had to take permission to do sport and everything we wanted to do in that garrison, should have been under direct supervision of pmoi commanders and high ranking officers .

Mr. Prime Minister, during my 20 years of stay in Rajavi's hell hole , I had witnessed and seen many injustice , insults and killing of the dissidents inside the pmoi hell hole and many members committed suicide as a result of the tremendous pressures which the pmoi operatives and leadership exerted upon them.

As a result of the suppression and repression inside of Ashraf garrison which was created by the pmoi operatives , the pmoi members because of being accused and labeled as mercenary and traitor, were too terrified and scared to leave the organization .

Mr. Prime Minister , Massoud and Maryam Rajavi repeatedly and consecutively have announced in their private and personal sites that they have adhered to their host country and international regulations and rules of law whereas it has been proved during these years that all those sham statements were to deceive to buy more time and on the other hand the leadership of this cult consecutively issues the messages of war and resistance in Ashraf garrison.

Now it is the time that the pmoi operatives and its leadership be consigned and surrendered to the Justice , for this reason I urge the Iraqi government and it judicial system to help us to condemn the pmoi leadership in the court of law because of all those cruelty and crime that they have perpetrated against all of us and our friends

All the best

Ghafour Fatahiyan

18.04.2012

Continued from Page 1



armed and designated as terrorist by the US government, it also had some very striking internal social policies.

For example, it required its members in Iraq to divorce. Why? Because love was distracting them from their struggle against

the mullahs in Iran.

And the trouble is that people love their children too.

So the MEK leadership asked its members to send their children away to foster families in Europe. Europe would be safer, the group explained.

Some parents have not seen their children for 20 years and more.

And just to add to the mix, former members consistently describe participating in regular public confessions of their sexual fantasies.

You might think that would set alarm bells ringing - and for some US officers it did.

One colonel I spoke to, who had daily contact with the MEK leadership for six months in 2004, said that the organisation was a cult, and that some of the members who wanted to get out had to run away.

And yet another officer, who was there at precisely the same time and is now a retired general, has become an active lobbyist on the MEK's behalf.

With his open smile and earnest friendly manner, he is a good advocate. "Cult? How about admirably focused group?" he says. "And I never heard of anyone being held against their will."

We later emailed him about a former member who claimed to have told the general to his face that people were held against their will. "He's lying," the general replied.

You just have to decide which side to believe.

Ex-MEK member Eduard Termado is now living in Germany.

An Iranian mystery: Just who are the MEK?

His face is scarred to the point of being misshapen. His complexion is grey, his skin blotched and waxy, and his forehead constantly covered in dribbling beads of sweat - but then he spent nine years as a prisoner of war in Iraq.

He joined the MEK hoping to help Iranian democracy and did not like what he saw.

He says that after three years he asked to leave, but was told he couldn't. He stayed for 12 years.

He now says joining the MEK was the biggest mistake of his life and he has expressed that feeling in an unusual way.

He has married and produced three children. "My family is my

Why do people take such strong positions on the MEK?

After a month talking to people on both sides of the argument, I am left thinking this. Some supporters are paid, others see the MEK through the prism of Iran - they will just support anything that offers hope of change there. Many are well motivated but some are naive.

And the former members?



... Ex-MEK member Eduard Termado is now living in Germany. His face is scarred to the point of being misshapen. His complexion is grey, his skin blotched and waxy, and his forehead constantly covered in dribbling beads of sweat - but then he spent nine years as a prisoner of war in Iraq. He joined the MEK hoping to help Iranian democracy and did not like what he saw. He says that after three years he asked to leave, but was told he couldn't. He stayed for 12 years. He now says joining the MEK was the biggest mistake of his life and he has expressed that feeling in an unusual way. He has married and produced three children. "My family is my protest against the MEK," he says ...

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There are many other stories. Children who never forgave their parents for abandoning them. Children who did forgive and are now joyously reunited. Divorcees who have got out of the organisation saying they still love their former spouses who are still in.

In over 25 years of reporting, I have been lied to often enough but, as successive former MEK members told what they had been through, their tears seemed real enough to me.

And yet a significant number of politicians in the US and UK would say I was tricked because the former MEK members who spread these kind of stories are, in fact, Iranian agents.

Again, who to believe?

In the US in particular, an impressive array of public figures have spoken in defence of the MEK.

There are more than 30 big names - people like Rudy Giuliani former mayor of New York, Howard Dean at one time the democratic presidential hopeful, a retired governor, a former head of the FBI.

Many get paid. Of those who have declared their earnings, the going rate for a pro-MEK speech seems to be \$20,000 (£12,500) for 10 minutes. But then many other prominent MEK supporters act without payment.

Some are embittered, others just seem broken.

Which is when it occurred to me - the perception people have of the MEK may say more about them than about the organisation itself.



Rajavism

Our Men in Iran?

Seymour M. Hersh, The New Yorker, April 6 2012

<http://www.newyorker.com/online/>

<blogs/newsdesk/2012/04/mek.html>

From the air, the terrain of the Department of Energy's Nevada National Security Site, with its arid high plains and remote mountain peaks, has the look of northwest Iran. The site, some sixty-five miles northwest of Las Vegas, was once used for nuclear testing, and now includes a counterintelligence training facility and a private airport capable of handling Boeing 737 aircraft. It's a restricted area, and inhospitable—in certain sections, the curious are warned that the site's security personnel are authorized to use deadly force, if necessary, against intruders.

It was here that the Joint 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. The M.E.K. had its beginnings as a Marxist-Islamist student-led group and, in the nineteen-seventies, it was linked to the assassination of six American citizens. It was initially part of the broad-based revolution that led to the 1979 overthrow of the Shah of Iran. But, within a few years, the group was waging a bloody internal war with the ruling clerics, and, in 1997, it was listed as a foreign terrorist organization by the State Department. In 2002, the M.E.K. earned some international credibility by publicly revealing—accurately—that Iran had begun enriching uranium at a secret underground location. Mohamed ElBaradei, who at the time was the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear monitoring agency, told me later that he had been informed that the information was supplied by the Mossad. The M.E.K.'s ties with Western intelligence deepened after the fall of the Iraqi regime in 2003, and JSOC began operating inside Iran in an effort to substantiate the Bush Administration's fears that Iran was building the bomb at one or more secret underground locations. Funds were covertly passed to a number of dissident organizations, for intelligence collection and, ultimately, for anti-regime terrorist activities. Directly, or indirectly, the M.E.K. ended up with resources like arms and intelligence. Some American-supported covert operations continue in Iran today, according to past and present intelligence officials and military consultants.

Despite the growing ties, and a much-intensified lobbying effort organized by its advocates, M.E.K. has remained on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations—which meant that secrecy was essential in the Nevada training. "We did train them here, and washed them through the Energy Department because the D.O.E. owns all this land in southern Nevada," a former



senior American intelligence official told me. "We were deploying them over long distances in the desert and mountains, and building their capacity in communications—coordinating comms is a big deal." (A spokesman for J.S.O.C. said that "U.S. Special Operations Forces were neither aware of nor involved in the training of M.E.K. members.")

The training ended sometime before President Obama took office, the former official said. In a separate interview, a retired four-star general, who has advised the Bush and Obama Administrations on national-security issues, said that he had been privately briefed in 2005 about the training of Iranians associated with the M.E.K. in Nevada by an American involved in the program. They got "the standard training," he said, "in comms, crypto [cryptography], small-unit tactics, and weaponry—that went on for six months," the retired general said. "They were kept in little pods." He also was told, he said, that the men doing the training were from JSOC, which, by 2005, had become a major instrument in the Bush Administration's global war on terror. "The JSOC trainers were not front-line guys who had been in the field, but second- and third-tier guys—trainers and the like—and they started going off the reservation. 'If we're going to teach you tactics, let me show you some really sexy stuff...'"

It was the ad-hoc training that provoked the worried telephone calls to him, the former general said. "I told one of the guys who called me that they were all in over their heads, and all of them could end up trouble unless they got something in writing. The Iranians are very, very good at counterintelligence, and stuff like this is just too hard to contain." The site in Nevada was being utilized at the same time, he said, for advanced training of elite Iraqi combat units. (The retired general said he only knew of the one M.E.K.-affiliated group that went through the training course; the former senior intelligence official said that he was aware of training that went on through 2007.)

Allan Gerson, a Washington attorney for the M.E.K., notes that the M.E.K. has publicly and repeatedly renounced terror. Gerson said he would not comment on the alleged training in Nevada. But such training, if true, he said, would be "especially incongruent with the State Department's decision to continue to maintain the M.E.K. on the terrorist list. How can the U.S. train those on State's foreign terrorist list, when others face criminal penalties for providing a nickel to

the same organization?”

Robert Baer, a retired C.I.A. agent who is fluent in Arabic and had worked under cover in Kurdistan and throughout the Middle East in his career, initially had told me in early 2004 of being recruited by a private American company—working, so he believed, on behalf of the Bush Administration—to return to Iraq. “They wanted me to help the M.E.K. collect intelligence on Iran’s nuclear program,” Baer recalled. “They thought I knew Farsi, which I did not. I said I’d get back to them, but never did.” Baer, now living in California, recalled that it was made clear to him at the time that the operation was “a long-term thing—not just a one-shot deal.”

Massoud Khodabandeh, an I.T. expert now living in England who consults for the Iraqi government, was an official with the M.E.K. before defecting in 1996. In a telephone interview, he acknowledged that he is an avowed enemy of the M.E.K., and has advocated against the group. Khodabandeh said that he had been with the group since before the fall of the Shah and, as a computer expert, was deeply involved in intelligence activities as well as providing security for the M.E.K. leadership.



the M.E.K., adding that the operations benefitted from American intelligence. He said that the targets were not “Einsteins”; “The goal is to affect Iranian psychology and morale,” he said, and to “demoralize the whole system—nuclear delivery vehicles, nuclear enrichment facilities, power plants.” Attacks have also been carried out on pipelines. He added that the operations are “primarily being done by M.E.K. through liaison with the Israelis, but the United States is now providing the intelligence.” An adviser to the

... Five Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated since 2007. M.E.K. spokesmen have denied any involvement in the killings, but early last month NBC News quoted two senior Obama Administration officials as confirming that the attacks were carried out by M.E.K. units that were financed and trained by Mossad, the Israeli secret service. NBC further quoted the Administration officials as denying any American involvement in the M.E.K. activities. The former senior intelligence official I spoke with seconded the NBC report that the Israelis were working with the M.E.K., adding ...

For the past decade, he and his English wife have run a support program for other defectors. Khodabandeh told me that he had heard from more recent defectors about the training in Nevada. He was told that the communications training in Nevada involved more than teaching how to keep in contact during attacks—it also involved communication intercepts. The United States, he said, at one point found a way to penetrate some major Iranian communications systems. At the time, he said, the U.S. provided M.E.K. operatives with the ability to intercept telephone calls and text messages inside Iran—which M.E.K. operatives translated and shared with American signals intelligence experts. He does not know whether this activity is ongoing.

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special-operations community told me that the links between the United States and M.E.K. activities inside Iran had been long-standing. “Everything being done inside Iran now is being done with surrogates,” he said.

The sources I spoke to were unable to say whether the people trained in Nevada were now involved in operations in Iran or elsewhere. But they pointed to the general benefit of American support. “The M.E.K. was a total joke,” the senior Pentagon consultant said, “and now it’s a real network inside Iran. How did the M.E.K. get so much more efficient?” he asked rhetorically. “Part of it is the training in Nevada. Part of it is logistical support in Kurdistan, and part of it is inside Iran. M.E.K. now has a capacity for efficient operations than it never had before.”

In mid-January, a few days after an assassination by car bomb of an Iranian nuclear scientist in Tehran, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, at a town-hall meeting of soldiers at Fort Bliss, Texas, acknowledged that the U.S. government has “some ideas as to who might be involved, but we don’t know exactly who was involved.” He added, “But I can tell you one thing: the United States was not involved in that kind of effort. That’s not what the United States does.”

U.N. Iraq chief: The countries of the world must take MEK 'refugees'

Josh Rogin, Foreign Policy, April 17 2012

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/16/un_iraq

The United Nations and the State Department have been struggling to convince the Iranian exile group the Mujahedeen e-Khalq (MEK) to move to a former U.S. military base in Iraq, but the real need is for third countries to accept MEK "refugees" on a permanent basis, according to the top U.N. representative in Iraq.

The MEK is a State Department-designated foreign terrorist organization opposed to the Iranian regime that has been living in a closed compound in Iraq called Camp Ashraf for years. The Iraqi government has pledged to close Camp Ashraf, using force if necessary, so the U.N. and the State Department are slowly but surely cajoling Ashraf's 3,200 residents to move to Camp Liberty, a former U.S. military base near the Baghdad airport.

But that's only a temporary solution. Unless other countries start accepting MEK members for relocation, they could face the prospect of being returned to Iran, where they could face retribution from the Iranian regime they have been fighting for decades.

"I have the feeling that the Camp Ashraf residents have made peace with the idea to go to Camp Liberty and they've made peace with the idea that there is no future in Iraq and they will leave Iraq," Martin Kobler, the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), told The Cable.

But finding homes for the MEK members when they leave Iraq "is the most difficult part of the story," he said. "The whole process only will succeed if all the 3,200 find countries who will take them into their borders."

The U.N. held a resettlement conference on March 27 in Geneva and the response was "not overwhelming, to say the least," Kobler said.

Part of the difficulty of dealing with the MEK group members at Camp Ashraf is that they have been cut off from the world for years and little is known about their individual histories or whether they would qualify for refugee status. Some reports say that MEK members are still conducting violent attacks inside Iran at the behest of the Israeli government.

The United States is legally barred from accepting any refugees from members of a foreign terrorist organization. There is also no plan for what happens to those MEK members who do not qualify for refugee status.

"We will find a solution then," Kobler said. "Everybody has Iranian nationality and on a voluntary basis can go back to Iran... The question is what happens to them then."



Martin Kobler

Kobler disputed the claims made by the MEK and its long list of American advocates that the Camp Liberty site is not fit for human occupation.

"Camp Liberty is a place where 5,500 American soldiers lived for many, many years... What worked for 5,500 people should also work humanitarian wise for 3,200 Camp Ashraf residents," he said.

Kobler declined to comment on reports that the MEK is involved in ongoing attacks on the Iranian nuclear program and its personnel inside Iran. He also declined to confirm that U.N. reports have stated that MEK members were intentionally sabotaging the facilities in Camp Liberty in order to make the camp look worse than it is, saying only, "There were big initial difficulties and a lack of cooperation. However this has improved over the last weeks."

Some advocates of the MEK, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, have called Camp Ashraf a "concentration camp," a reference Kobler said is insulting and offensive.

"I am a German citizen. To compare the situation of Camp Ashraf residents to the systematic extermination of European Jews during Nazi dictatorship, this is not only historically totally absurd but is an insult to the victims," he said.

"My message to these supporters is, spend your energies not so much on attacking the United Nations or others. Spend your energies to convince your governments to take them into your countries," he said.

While in Washington, Kobler met with Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, Assistant Secretary of State for Refugees, Population, and Migration Anne Richards, and Ambassador Daniel Fried, the State Department official in charge of the Camp Ashraf issue.

Former U.S. Officials Investigated for Receiving Payments to Promote a Designated Terror Group

The Real News, April 14 2012

<http://therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com>

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Jeremiah Goulka, former RAND expert on the Mujahedin-e Khalq, says war hawks from Bush admin. and some Democrats were paid by the group to advance its interests in DC and are being investigated by US Treasury

Transcript

PAUL JAY, SENIOR EDITOR, TRNN: Welcome to The Real News Network. I'm Paul Jay in Washington.

Well, what do the following list of former government officials have in common? People like former Homeland Security secretary Tom Ridge, former Homeland Security adviser Frances Fragos Townsend, former attorney general Michael Mukasey, former UN ambassador John Bolton, as well as former Republican mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, former Democratic governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania, and former governor of Vermont Howard Dean, ex-FBI director Louis Freeh, and retired chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hugh Shelton? What are all these people have in common? Well, they're all being investigated by the Treasury Department for material aid, receiving money from a terrorist organization, at least an organization that's on the State Department's foreign terrorist organization list. What's the organization? Well, the MEK.

Now joining us to talk about what the MEK is and what this is all about is Jeremiah Goulka. Jeremiah is an independent public policy scholar and writer. From 2007 to 2010 he was an analyst at the RAND Corporation, where he conducted research for the U.S. military and was a lead author of *The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq: A Policy Conundrum*. Before that, he worked as a lawyer in the Justice Department under the Bush administration. And let me add he has now become a critic of much of the policy he used to work for. Thanks for joining us, Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH GOULKA, PUBLIC POLICY SCHOLAR: Thanks for having me.

JAY: So give us a quick, first of all, rundown just what the MEK is, for those who haven't followed the story, and then we'll get into what the heck are all these officials doing taking their money.



GOULKA: Sure. The MEK is an Iranian dissident group. It was founded in 1965 by several graduate students at the University of Tehran. Their goal was to fight against the regime of the Shah, which they saw, accurately, as a puppet of the U.S. government. Soon the Shah's regime found out about them, suppressed them pretty brutally. And one leader survived prison, whose name is Massoud Rajavi. In the Iranian Revolution there were lots of different dissident groups, not just Ayatollah Khomeini's group.

And as the leader of the Mujahedin-e Khalq, Rajavi tried to participate in the new government. He wanted to run for president. Several members of the MEK wanted to run for the Majlis, which is the Iranian parliament, but Ayatollah Khomeini's government pushed the MEK out of the running. And in response to that, the MEK turned against the new government, and it did so violently. The result was that the new government brutally suppressed the MEK, its leaders went into exile in France, and its members went underground in Iran. So this is 1981.

Fast forward to 1986, and you're in the middle of the Iran-Iraq war. The MEK's leadership makes a deal with Saddam Hussein, the starter of the Iran-Iraq War, which was an absolutely catastrophe for Iran. The deal was that Saddam would provide weapons, some territory within Iraq, in exchange for the services of the MEK. The services that they would render would be providing some soldiers, particularly providing some intelligence and interrogation of Iranian POWs. In exchange for this, what the MEK was going to get in the bargain was the power of Saddam's military, in their hope to install themselves as the new government of Iran.

Well, this failed. Historically it was their biggest mistake, because the Iranian people saw the MEK essentially as traitors by signing up with the instigator of that horrible war. The MEK, you know, voluntarily crossed the border into Iran and fought against Iranian soldiers. In fact, they launched an inva-

Former U.S. Officials Investigated for Receiving Payments to Promote a Designated Terror Group

sion after the ceasefire in that war. So the Iranians basically have no—there's no support for the MEK, not much support. The MEK claims that there's a lot, but it's not true. The government still hates the MEK, but that's a side matter.

JAY: And why were they put on the terrorist list?

GOULKA: So in 1997, after the creation of the Foreign Terrorist Organization list, MEK was one of the first couple to be put on there. One—well, the factual predicate for them being on there is that they assassinated several Americans in Tehran back during the Shah's era, specifically three military officers and three civilians who were military contrac-

carrot to offer the group if they'll kind of play nicely. That's part of it.

But it also was not like there was a monolithic point of view in the Bush administration about the MEK. When I was at the RAND Corporation and did my interviews for the report that you mentioned in the introduction, I spoke to dozens of U.S. officials, and the points of view varied. The people who were of the strongest on to Tehran type attitude, who wanted to invade Iran, they saw the MEK as a potentially useful ally, in the sense of the enemy of my enemy is my friend. And there were several people who were sort of fooled by the MEK's excellent press relations that it's been doing since leaving Iran in 1981, where they have this thing

... Well, what we've said in the report and has been said by others, such as Human Rights Watch, is that the group actually is a cult. So this is another part of the history. Starting in 1985, Massoud Rajavi, the leader, married Maryam Rajavi, who was the wife of one of his colleagues in the MEK, and the two of them turned the group into something of a cult of personality. This became—started in earnest when they were in the desert in 1986, in the desert of Iraq, fairly isolated, and they had a hard time recruiting any new recruits after their participation with Saddam in the Iran-Iraq War because they had lost their support in Iran ...

tors. They also did various attacks against American interests and assassination attempts during the time. And the MEK have been violent until just a few years ago, doing lots of attacks against Iranian targets, government targets, mostly in Iran but occasionally in Europe, even in the U.S., with some bystanders as casualties. The MEK also make a point of saying that the MEK was added to the FTO list as a political reason, because the Clinton administration was trying to make nice with the government, at the time, in Iran, which was perceived as being more moderate. And, well, of course, it's a political list and political actions by governments, so I think that there's probably some truth to that, but that doesn't make it not true that the [crosstalk]

JAY: And why did they stay on this list during the whole Bush administration years, when we know that Bush—the Bush administration was actually putting a lot of money into trying to have this sort of terrorist fund subversive types of activity in the border regions of Iran? I mean, there's lots of stories that the CIA and others were promoting this kind of stuff, so why not take them off the list?

GOULKA: Well, there's a bit of having your cake and eating it too. The government could—the Bush administration was able to keep—by keeping the group on the list, they have more of a negotiating point with the group. You know, it's a

called the National Council of Resistance of Iran, which is the political arm, which has been selling themselves as a liberal, democratic, human rights respecting organization that could go in and be the new—either be the new government or help create a new democracy in Iran. It's very much like how Ahmed Chalabi sold himself in the Iraqi National Congress.

JAY: I mean, what evidence is [there] that they're not liberal, democratic, and so on and wouldn't play this role?

GOULKA: Well, what we've said in the report and has been said by others, such as Human Rights Watch, is that the group actually is a cult. So this is another part of the history. Starting in 1985, Massoud Rajavi, the leader, married Maryam Rajavi, who was the wife of one of his colleagues in the MEK, and the two of them turned the group into something of a cult of personality. This became—started in earnest when they were in the desert in 1986, in the desert of Iraq, fairly isolated, and they had a hard time recruiting any new recruits after their participation with Saddam in the Iran-Iraq War because they had lost their support in Iran.

So the new members who were joining after that time, at least some of them cannot be believed to have been true volunteers. But from a lot of former members I spoke to, it appears that lots of them were actually duped into ending up at MEK camps—promises of jobs, wives, and help of getting asylum or residency rights in other European countries. So you have lots of people who have now been trapped in

these Iraqi camps, MEK camps in Iraq, and have been enduring various forms of cult behavior, such as sexual control, thought control, brainwashing, limited access to other media, limited food, limited sleep, make-work projects.

JAY: And there's supposed to be celibacy and various sorts of things, unless you're the leading couple, I guess.

GOULKA: Exactly. That's one of the big parts of it is the mandatory divorce and celibacy,—

JAY: Of course, no one—

GOULKA: —as well as gender segregation.

JAY: Now, what evidence is there that they have been, over the years, conducting terrorist actions against Iranians, Iranian officials? Is there evidence of assassinations or such?

GOULKA: Well, they took credit for it for years. The difference happened after the invasion of Iraq in 2003, that—well, actually, they say that as of 2001 they stopped committing violent attacks, that they've decided to basically change course and pursue what they were doing with more of a kind of a democratic approach. Starting in 2003, that became more in earnest, as they were now being—actually taking—. Well, it's a confusing thing to describe, and I explained it in the



they're using—one of the ways that they say they should not be on the group—on the list is that they say that those assassinations back in the '70s were done by a splinter group or a different MEK, and that they're not, you know, responsible for those, and therefore they don't fall under the requirements of the act. And since Iran has not been an ally of the U.S. in many, many years, therefore attacks done against Iranians don't count as being against the interests of the United States or its allies.

JAY: And that—I suppose that is the true definition of how United States looks at terrorism: if it's against an ally, it's terrorism; if it's against an enemy, it's not terrorism. So within the lines of Washington rhetoric and politics they may

...Exactly. And, of course, that raises the issue now that since their goal is—. Their immediate goal is to get off the FTO list, but their big goal is to get into power in Iran, and they want to use the United States's military to get that. So as they've been promoting the fears of a nuclear Iran—the MEK in 2005 were the ones to have a press conference announcing to the public the existence of the Natanz nuclear facility. You know, as a side note, then that information came to them,

RAND Corporation report, that when we invaded Iraq in 2003, the perception of the U.S. government was that the MEK was going to participate with Saddam as, quote, "a wholly owned subsidiary", end quote, of the Saddam army, when there was a quick ceasefire soon thereafter and the U.S. consolidated the MEK at one of its several camps near the Iranian border. And since then there has been a very focused effort by the MEK to earn U.S. pleasure, approbation. And of course this makes sense, because in 2003 you had the administration saying on to Tehran. And so the MEK quickly realized that Saddam failed to put them into power into Iran—maybe the U.S. could.

JAY: So, again, just to be—are there specific examples of how this organization qualifies to be on the terrorist list?

GOULKA: So they're putting a big push now to get off of the list. And, of course, getting off of the list matters, because that frees up their ability to raise money, and they would certainly use it to make it seem like the U.S. actually supports them. But what

not be so wrong.

GOULKA: Exactly. And, of course, that raises the issue now that since their goal is—. Their immediate goal is to get off the FTO list, but their big goal is to get into power in Iran, and they want to use the United States's military to get that. So as they've been promoting the fears of a nuclear Iran—the MEK in 2005 were the ones to have a press conference announcing to the public the existence of the Natanz nuclear facility. You know, as a side note, then that information came to them, it appears, from the Israeli government, which wanted also to have this be put into the public arena, and the U.S. already knew. But the MEK's been waving the flag of fear about Iran since then.

And why do they want this fear promoted? It's to get the U.S. to invade Iran to put them in power. And I can't think of anything that would be more against the interests of American national security than for us to actually have an actual invasion of Iran. Considering the tragedy of

Continued on Page 10

Former U.S. Officials Investigated for Receiving Payments to Promote a Designated Terror Group

Continued from Page 9

the Iraq War, to expect anything else other than a protracted occupation and reconstruction would be foolish.

JAY: The MEK is still on the State Department's foreign terrorist organization list. And now you've got all these government officials taking money and essentially—what is it?—they're getting paid for speaking engagements and they're lobbying to get the MEK off the list. But that in theory is illegal, is it not?

GOULKA: In theory. So the material support law created in the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 is something that's been viewed from the start as having a very low threshold of activity to count as being material support, and that's a, you know, federal crime. And this law has been sort of broadly interpreted by the Supreme Court since then, and so you've seen a number of people who have gone to prison for fairly minor things.



have your say, taking money from—or taking money from a terrorist organization or a foreign government. There was just a Pakistani fellow who I think just got sentenced to two years 'cause he was taking ISI Pakistani money to try to lobby in the United States and—but

...Well, I think you're right that no bureaucrat is going to go step on the toes of prominent officials like this without serious approval from above. I mean, I can attest to that from when I used to work at the Justice Department. I think that—just speculating, I think this is probably linked to what Obama said in his AIPAC speech, that there's a lot of loose talk of war, and I see this as being a statement to these officials that they need to watch their step....

So here you have these prominent former officials taking money to speak on behalf of the MEK at events organized by the MEK. And are they committing a crime? Well, what's particularly interesting here is: on one end you have the notion of equal enforcement of a law. If you're going to enforce it against Muslims in America, why would you not enforce it against prominent public officials? And, you know, we can wonder then about the impunity that prominent powerful officials can enjoy.

On the flipside, there is a First Amendment question here that, aside from their taking money and doing this in concert with a designated foreign terrorist organization, they are—these officials are making their own political statements, and maybe those should be protected by the First Amendment.

So I think this does raise questions about how well tailored that statute actually is.

JAY: But that's quite a different thing, to take money and

hadn't declared himself, you know, an agent of a foreign government and such. I mean, similar issues. Once you take money, you're not in the same category as just free speech, no?

GOULKA: That's true. But, of course, money and speech have been heavily linked in the last few years.

JAY: Yeah. So what—just to final—to sum up or to end with, what do you make of the Treasury Department actually going after these guys, including two prominent Democrats? This doesn't happen without the White House signing off, one would think, and it's very hard to believe such serious high-level people get investigated and the White House doesn't get consulted. What would be their interest in pushing this?

GOULKA: Well, I think you're right that no bureaucrat is going to go step on the toes of prominent officials like this without serious approval from above. I mean, I can attest to that from when I used to work at the Justice Department. I think that—just speculating, I think this is probably linked to what Obama said in his AIPAC

CONTENT

Open letter to Mr. Nouri al Maliki the honorable prime minister of Iraq **1-2**

speech, that there's a lot of loose talk of war, and I see this as being a statement to these officials that they need to watch their step. They've responded by giving public speeches since, so they are saying sort of bring it on, we're going to keep doing this. But it—you know, we'll see what actually happens.

JAY: They've responded by making public speeches that they got paid for? Or just public speeches?

An Iranian mystery: Just who are the MEK? **1-3**

GOULKA: I don't actually know, but they were at at least one MEK-organized event where these folks have been paid to speak previously.

JAY: The MEK is able to organize events in the United States even though it's on that list. How is that?

Our Men in Iran? **4**


GOULKA: Oh, they—everything is done through organizations—they claim that they're not connected to the MEK, that they just happen to have similar viewpoints, they happen to support the MEK. They're often involved with people who actually used to be members of the MEK or the National Council of Resistance of Iran, the MEK's political arm, until those were listed on the FTO list, and then they promptly cut their ties and say that they're independent or have their own new, you know, little think tanks to promote the interests of the MEK. And there is also a group called the Iran Policy Center that was founded by several ex-Reagan officials that has been promoting the interests of the MEK for the last while, and, you know, they have to pay close attention to not running afoul of the law. How exactly that's happening, how we're doing that, I think the Treasury Department's checking that out.

U.N. Iraq chief: The countries of the world must take MEK 'refugees' **6**

JAY: And I guess the next step—if this gets serious, at some point the Justice Department steps in. If there's going to be any charges, does it come from the Justice Department? Or can the Treasury Department actually lay charges?

Former U.S. Officials Investigated for Receiving Payments to Promote a **7-10**

GOULKA: Well, as I understand it, the Treasury Department can take action such as freezing accounts. But if there's going to be actual criminal charges, that's in the Justice Department's field.

JAY: And then that's when we'll find out how serious they're really pushing this.

GOULKA: That would be a big step.

JAY: Thanks very much for joining us, Jeremiah.

GOULKA: Thanks so much for having me.


Open letter to the US secretary of state , Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton **12**

JAY: And thank you for joining us on The Real News Network.

End

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Open letter to the US secretary of state , Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton

.Hassan Piransar, Faryade Azadi, Paris, April 18 2012

<http://www.faryade-azadi.com/2Haupt/Na.Hassan%20Be%20Kelinton.HTM>

Greetings

These days, we are watching the unbridled endeavors of the members of the Rajavi terrorist-religious cult and their lobbies in USA and Europe to force you to delist their organization from the US state department terrorist list. The pmoi or Rajavi's terrorist-religious cult always intends to reach to its goals by using force, pressure and imposition. I congratulate you because of your resistance and persistence for the continuation of the US state department research and investigation about this notorious organization. I as a former member of Rajavi's national liberation army and a veteran of pmoi with 25 years record of service in this organization besides my appreciation for your resistance and US state department, am ready to fully cooperate with you and US state department as a reliable source and witness to show you the reality of this cult and its real essence whenever and wherever is suitable. The reason that I want to cooperate with you is because I believe the silence of the people like me who has witnessed the terrorist essence of this cult is a treason to the future generations and Iranian people as well as other countries specially USA.

Mrs. Clinton, everyday I follow the news about this cult and unfortunately I see sometimes that the members of this cult unilaterally in your country by the support of their American lobbies (former politicians and prominent figures) participate in variety of sessions, meetings in Washington and unilaterally they define and admire themselves without any objections because the scene is full of their supporters so the reality of their essence is not revealed because there is no dissident and witness in that meeting to stand up and show his or her complaint against the lies which this cult says about itself and reveal the real entity and essence of this cult and then we will see by the revelation of the real entity of this cult, the lobbies (sometimes hotter than the soup bowl) who support them will still continue their support or not?!

For this simple reason, I am urging you to allow some of the separated members of this cult to come to USA and participate in these sessions and meetings specially in Washington to debate with the supporters of pmoi and their lobbies face to face and testify about the real essence and entity of this cult in front of the US officials so truth and untruth can be revealed and clarified. I believe this is the best facility for you and the state department to become more acquainted with the dark and grim essence and content of this organization and I emphasize that no one except the separated members in this world can be useful for introducing and recognition of the essence of this cult. For this reason the leadership of this terrorist religious cult have issued the death decree of all separated members throughout the world and they

have begun destroying their prestige and personalities by labeling them as agents of Iranian intelligence service to shut their mouth.



Hassan Piransar

Once more I appreciate all your efforts and your tolerance and resistance against the pmoi propaganda which is accompanied by force, pressure and imposition, and I should say that keeping the name of this organization in your terrorist list is the least and besides that all pmoi activists who are living in USA without mentioning their affiliation with this terrorist organization should be expelled from the US soil or confined and believe me the presence of such people on your soil is the overt and clear breach of the US Home Security regulations and rules of law.

Respectfully

Hassan Piransar the former veteran member of Rajavi's cult



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