

The Iranian Pen Club

# Panorama



*Honorable and distinguished Secretary of state of the United States,  
Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton*



Milad Ariyaei



## *Iranian group's big-money push to get off US terrorist list*

Respectfully , first I would like to introduce myself . I am Milad Ariyaei who spent more than 20 years of my youth in pmoi and I would like to share my experiences with you about pmoi. the experiences which are the yield and the outcome of my life in there.

I ,as a result of living closely with pmoi , am completely familiar and acquainted with their violent and savage thoughts ,consequently I can inform you about the prospects , outlooks and objectives of this organization and I can be a very useful source of information in this regard and i hope you can utilize my experiences for a better judgment over pmoi file.

I ,as a critic and opposed to such thoughts which has developed in my country and has grown among the opposition groups of Iran and Iranian people , would like to speak to you and as the former member of the central council and committee of this organization, would like to draw your attention to the following vital facts :

### Prelude

As you know that the current world has been suffering a lot from the terrorism and the terrorist and fundamentalist thoughts which has jeopardized the routine and normal life of

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By Scott Peterson, Cristian Science Monitor, August 8, 2011

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East>

/2011/0808/Iranian-group-s-big-money-push-

to-get-off-US-terrorist-list

**SPECIAL INVESTIGATION:** A roster of influential former US officials is speaking at rallies in support of removing the MEK, an Iranian opposition group with a violent anti-American history, from the US terrorist list. A decision is expected within weeks.

The MEK's self-declared 'president-elect' Maryam Rajavi talked with former New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani at a June 18, 2011 rally in Villepinte, near Paris.

A high-powered array of former top American officials is advocating removal from the US terrorist list of a controversial Iranian opposition group with a long anti-American history.

With a decision due within weeks by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former US four-star generals, intelligence chiefs, governors, and political heavyweights are calling for the US government to take the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK/ MKO) off the terror list it shares with Al Qaeda and Hezbollah.

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every human beings.

As you know that the terrorist groups with their violent objectives are trying their best to compel and impose their retarded ideology and thoughts to the people and in case of any sign of resistance and opposition to their thoughts they will respond in the bloodiest way possible and they begin to physical removal and assassinate their opponents and anyone who has any dissent with their thoughts and ideology.

Our current world has been confronting with different challenges as a result of This retarded and fundamentalist ideology and thoughts, consequently the responsibility of all the world political figures specially the ones who have more influence in the world than others is doubled . I believe that you as the secretary of state of the United states with your expert diagnosis and timely decision making can beget the condition which the people of the world can live peacefully.

In the Middle East and in one of the most stressful countries of the world , Iran , the pmoi is one of the terrorist organizations which has been listed and designated as a terrorist organization in the US state department -terrorist list since 1997and since then This organization has tried its best to escape from justice by changing its face. Pmoi in the condition which there has not been any changes in its thoughts and objectives ,is trying hard in the current world to reach to its unjust objectives and needs which are wrapped in fake gold , by deceiving the political thoughts and they are ready to sacrifice thousands to reach to their unjust objectives.

Now I would like to inform you about this organization



nents and they believe that any dialogue with their opponents is futile and fruitless. They believe ideologically that anyone who is killed for their holy objectives and their cause will enter to the paradise.

### The formation of pmoi

Pmoi does not have the character , relations, formation or establishment and the leadership of an organization or a democratic party. This organization believes in the spiritual leader or in the Arabic expression , Amirol Momenin.

Massoud Rajavi is the permanent spiritual leader of this current and has connection with the 12<sup>th</sup> imam (Imam Zaman, The 12<sup>th</sup> imam of Shiites who is absent and will emerge someday in the current world ) . The spiritual leader of this organization with this way of thinking and ideology never believes in democratic election within its organization and for this reason till he lives he will be the permanent leader and the owner of this organization, consequently he will not be responsive to his members , supporters and even the Iranian people.

This formation and establishment runs like a confined reli-

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swiftly and simply.

### The ideology of pmoi

Pmoi in its ideology and intellectual basis believes in physical removal of its opponents and they do not believe in any political or ideological dialogue with their oppo-

gious cult(sect) which does not believe in the freedom of thoughts, votes , and public opinion and it tries its best to impose its will upon others.

In Massoud Rajavi's ideology and beliefs , he is the only one who has the ability to know the facts of our current world and he is the only one who can understand the reality

of creation , universe and political relations.

The leadership in this organization is sacred and the leadership is a belief and it is not a political matter and in comparison with Bin Laden , the political and spiritual leader of Al Qaeda, Massoud Rajavi has the same position as Bin Laden had.

Nobody has the right to discuss about politics and political issues. Any connection between 2 friends and family is completely forbidden. such connections are labeled as liberal links and they are totally forbidden. Gathering of 2 or 3 persons out of pmoi supervision is completely forbidden and will have harsh consequences for the perpetrators.

**It is unbelievable but you should know that in 21 century inside the pmoi relations nobody is allowed to have a radio and nobody is allowed to listen to the news and the only way that the members of pmoi can receive news is by pmoi formal channels.**

**Nobody inside the pmoi relations has no rights and everything in pmoi is compulsory and obligatory. Every person who enters to pmoi relations should be completely obedient and devoted.**

#### Pmoi and the issue of freedom and democracy

-The pmoi internal relations is based on religious beliefs and like the other ideological systems , they are not committed to any principled and fundamental basis of human rights, the definite freedoms mentioned in the United Nation's charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

-The dissidents and critics are severely suppressed and oppressed inside the pmoi relations.

-There is no individual and personal security and safety for the critics inside pmoi relations.

-The dissidents are confronted with harassment , insult, humiliation , torture and imprisonment.

-The individual freedom , the humane prestige and personality , individual security and safety, right to freedom of marriage and divorce and freedom of expression and opinion are all severely suppressed.

- They are so called courts of law inside pmoi for the dissidents and critics who desire to leave and maximum punishment is the death penalty.

#### The management systems and practices in pmoi

There is no communication whatsoever between the members of this organization with the outside world and any means such as radio , television , newspaper and magazines are not provided for the members. The intellectual and political feeding is carried out just by pmoi news sources such as internal bulletin , training within the organization, and closed circuit televisions .

The only way that we can value the pmoi internal relations is to compare their relations with the similar ideology in the medieval.

Madam Secretary of State

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Nobody inside the pmoi relations has no rights and everything in pmoi is compulsory and obligatory. Every person who enters to pmoi relations should be completely obedient and devoted.

Reading book in pmoi relations is completely forbidden and if someone has a passion to read a book he or she will be considered as dissident who wants to leave pmoi. Inside Ashraf garrison , there is a library but it is just for deceiving the guests and outsiders.

#### Pmoi and how they deal with other characters and Iranian opposition inside and outside of Iran

As a result of Pmoi suppressive and anti democratic nature and character, the pmoi does not recognize any move or action from other political oppositions and instead they attack to those political oppositions offensively . in pmoi point of view there are more than hundred political and open minded activists in United states and European countries who are working for Iranian intelligence service . the pmoi insult and accusations toward Iranian political activists is not confined just to Iranians even Mrs. Madeleine Albright the former Secretary of state of the united states was slandered by pmoi as an agent of Iranian intelligence service. Every one in Euro-

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pean parliament or in UK House of Lords also can be insulted , labeled and accused by pmoi as an agent of Iranian intelligence service . It is worth noting that these kind of accusations and insult are pmoi known tactics to escape from the revelation of their real entity and criticism and they have chosen this kind of tactic to escape from being responsive about their past and internal relations.

Pmoi deals and confronts with its opponents and critics in European countries by intimidation, slander , insult, violence and mace bearing. Up to now more than ten session and meeting of other political opposition and human rights activists have been attacked by the followers of Massoud Rajavi and the participants in those sessions and meetings have been badly beaten up by pmoi followers.



*Honorable Mrs. Clinton*

I am hoping that by this brief letter I would inform you about pmoi and I would like you to share my experiences about pmoi with your colleagues and experts in state department to determine their accuracy.

I hope that pmoi endeavors in delisting itself from your terrorist list by reading my letter is evaluated and scrutinized . I would like to announce that I am fully ready to answer any question in this regard.

Respectfully

**Milad Ariyaei**

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**... But the delisting of the MEK, Iran experts say, could benefit Iran's hard-line rulers by giving them more reason to brutally clamp down on Iran's internal, nonviolent opposition. The Green Movement – which led street protests in 2009 – steadfastly rejects the MEK as an anti-democratic and violent force."The people who are saying [the MEK] are no longer terrorists are also saying they are democratic," says John Limbert, a former US hostage in Iran from 1979-1981, who was US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iran until last year ...**



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Many of these former high-ranking US officials – who represent the full political spectrum – have been paid tens of thousands of dollars to speak in support of the MEK.

IN PICTURES: Speakers in support of the MEK

They rarely mention the MEK's violent and anti-American past, and portray the group not as terrorists but as freedom fighters with "values just like us," as democrats-in-waiting ready to serve as a vanguard of regime change in Iran. Some acknowledge that they knew little about the group before they were invited to speak and were coached by MEK supporters.

Their efforts may be working: Knowledgeable officials say the millions of dollars spent on the campaign have raised political pressure to remove the MEK from the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list to the highest levels since the group – whose record includes assassinations of US military advisers and attacks on US diplomats – was one of the first to be put there in 1997.

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Limbert, a former US hostage in Iran from 1979-1981, who was US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Iran until last year.

"The issue is, have [the MEK] changed their terrorist nature?" asks Ambassador Limbert. "If they say, 'We renounce terrorism,' I have no confidence in that. What is it in their past – or in their present – that leads you to have



confidence in such a statement?"

The State Dept. will be weighing many ramifications, from how this will play out in the streets of Tehran to how it will affect US strategic credibility.

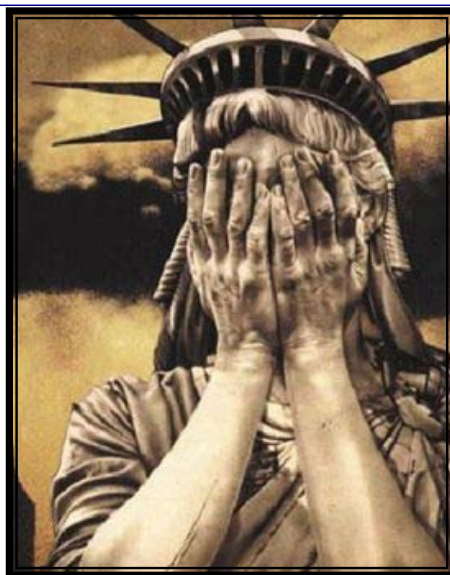
"The MEK, with its violent history, is exactly what the Iranian regime needs to legitimate its violence against the peaceful opposition," says Maziar Bahari, a journalist who was incarcerated in Iran during the 2009 protests. He spoke Aug. 4 in Washington at a panel organized to warn of the risks of delisting the MEK.

Reformist cleric Mohsen Kadivar and US-based academic Ahmad Sadri warn of broader dangers. Taking the MEK off the terrorist list, they have written, would "trigger a huge loss of US soft power in Iran, damage Iran's democratic progress, and help Iranian hardliners cement a long-term dictatorship."

Legal cases have seen the MEK removed from terror watch lists on procedural grounds in the UK and European Union

glorified from the start.

The group assassinated at least six US military advisers and citizens in Iran in the 1970s, supported the Islamic revolution and then the seizure of the American Embassy in 1979, and tried to block any deal with what it then called "the US, this satanic force threatening the world ... the main adversary."



US government documents frequently use the term "cult-like" when describing the MEK, and describe "years of ideological

**The MEK says it renounced violence in 2001, after claiming responsibility for 350 attacks in 2000 and 2001, according to a RAND tabulation. It is not known to have carried out any attacks for several years, though a 2004 FBI report found that the group was "currently actively involved in planning and executing acts of terrorism."**

in recent years. A decision on the US designation is now imminent; a federal appeals court in Washington last year ruled that the State Dept. had violated the group's right to due process, because it had not been allowed to contest unclassified information used to justify its designation.

That information, submitted in autumn 2009, disclosed that "the MEK trained females at Camp Ashraf in Iraq to perform suicide attacks in Karbala" – a charge the group called "manifestly implausible" in court. It also included a US intelligence community assessment that the MEK "retains a limited capability and the intent to use violence to achieve its political goals."

A detailed 2009 report, prepared for the US Department of Defense by the RAND Corp., notes further that the MEK has made "repeated requests ... to have its weapons returned" at Camp Ashraf, the military camp given to the MEK by Saddam Hussein, where 3,400 members remain, disarmed.

Roots of the American label

American antipathy to the MEK stretches back four decades, when it was first formed in the 1960s with an anti-US, Marxist-Islamist ideology. Violent "armed struggle" was

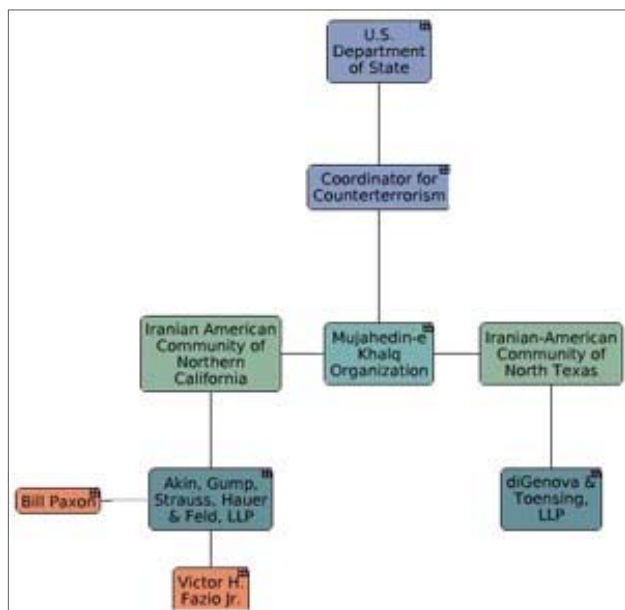
training" for members akin to "brainwashing." The MEK has long denied that it is a cult and routinely charges critics with being agents of the Islamic Republic.

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That conclusion was based on wiretaps of calls between MEK bases and headquarters in Iraq, France, and Los Angeles that discussed "specific acts of terrorism to include bombings" – and were corroborated by French intelligence and German police wiretaps, according to the FBI report

Militant groups can change. Both Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, for example, used violence before becoming influential political forces in their own right. The MEK is one of those, say its increasing number of American advocates.

Yet current US officials and many Iran experts – hawks and doves alike – question the MEK's ability to change in light of



the group's unique history and its cult-like characteristics. They say the fact that it is widely despised inside Iran also

Talking points for the former US officials often include demanding that the Obama administration "free" the MEK from the terrorist list and ensure "protection" of Camp Ashraf before the controversial enclave is closed at the end of the year by the Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

Some argue that the MEK "provided invaluable information" to the US during the Iraq war, as Gen. Hugh Shelton, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did last month. Yet current US officials have publicly disputed that view, and the 2009 RAND report states that "the CIA unsuccessfully attempted to persuade some MEK leaders to leave the group and provide intelligence information about Iran."

The group is often credited with announcing in 2002 the existence of Iran's undeclared uranium enrichment facilities at Natanz, but experts widely believe the intelligence came from Israel and was funneled through the MEK. The State Dept., in its October 2009 court filing, noted that UN inspectors say "much" of the information they receive from the MEK about Iran's nuclear program "has a political purpose and has been wrong."

Substantial fees

**The State Dept. official, who is familiar with the speech contracts, explains the mechanism: "Your speech agent calls, and says you get \$20,000 to speak for 20 minutes. They will send a private jet, you get \$25,000 more when you are done, and they will send a team to brief you on what to say."**

makes it a dangerous tool to change Iran's Islamic regime.

All have been stunned by the speed, heft, and sheer wealth of the current delisting campaign, after years of determined but fruitless efforts.

Dismissing the terrorist label

Removing the terrorist designation is critical to the MEK to bolster its legitimacy. It would also enable the MEK to openly fund-raise in the US – despite having used fraudulent techniques in the past that prompted FBI investigations into smuggling rings, forgery, and fraud schemes that resulted in prison time for dozens of members.

A host of former American officials, in speech after speech since December, dismiss the MEK's terrorist designation. At more than a dozen events in Washington and Europe since December, they assert instead that the group offers a popular "third way" between failed dialogue with the Islamic Republic and military action.

"With Al Qaeda and Hamas, you would never think they would be able to drum up this kind of support," one State Dept. official told the Monitor. "But with the MEK, they trawl the halls of Congress. Picture this with any other terrorist group; find one."

Former US officials taking part in MEK-linked events told the Monitor or confirmed publicly that they received substantial fees, paid by local Iranian-American groups to speaker bureaus that handle their public appearances.

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"Top-level national security officials never heard about the MEK; it never rose to their level until now," says another US official. "So when MEK representatives show them a political platform comprised of the '15 greatest ideas of Western civilization,' it looks pretty compelling."

The contracts can range up to \$100,000 and include several appearances. They sometimes explicitly state, according to the State Dept. official, that "We are not a front organization for the MEK."

The speaking events have created some extraordinary spectacles, including that of US heavyweights sharing the stage with the MEK's self-declared "president-elect" Maryam Rajavi. At a mid-June MEK rally in Paris, for example, Mrs. Rajavi was flanked by five rows of former top US and European officials.

The noisy throng of thousands of well-orchestrated MEK supporters, draped in yellow vests and waving flags, banners, and balloons as clouds of confetti fell, looked like an American political convention.

Rajavi said the US had "shackled the main force for change in Iran through an unwarranted label," which had "acted as a barrier to Iranian people's freedom." The MEK leader called on the US government to "heed" senior former officials demanding delisting and "recognition of the Iran resistance."

Those former officials lined up in Paris to voice their support for the MEK, and to criticize Washington's Iran policy:

\* "How about we follow an Arab Spring with a Persian Summer?" asked Rudy Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, during his speech, as an American flag waved on the screen behind him. "We need regime change in Iran, more than we do in Egypt or Libya, and just as we need it in Syria."

It wasn't Mr. Giuliani's first time speaking at a pro-MEK event: "Appeasement of dictators leads to war, destruction and the loss of human lives," Mr. Giuliani told a similar group of Iranian exiles in Paris last December. "For your organization to be described as a terrorist organization is just really a disgrace."

\* Michael Mukasey, the former US attorney general, declared: "There is one organization and one alone, that stands for immediate democratic change in Iran, and that is the MEK."

\* Andrew Card, former White House chief of staff under George W. Bush, told the crowd the gathering was a "great reflection of support for the people of the MEK. It is truly time ... for the people all over the world who care about democracy to stand with the Iranian people and the MEK in the struggle for democracy."

\* Tom Ridge, the former US homeland security chief, also took the podium: "It's an extraordinary honor for me, and a great privilege for my colleagues from the United States," Mr. Ridge said, "to have the opportunity...to work with an individual that we believe clearly is one of the most inspirational, great leaders of the 21st century: Viva Maryam!"

Rajavi has indeed inspired fanatical loyalty among some MEK members. Her brief arrest in France in 2003 on terrorism charges sparked a wave of self-immolations.

Her portrait – along with that of husband and co-leader Massoud Rajavi, who has been in hiding since 2003 – is as ubiquitous at Camp Ashraf as Saddam Hussein's once was across Iraq, and Ayatollah Khomeini's still is in Iran. Every day at the camp, the MEK motto is heard: "Iran is

Rajavi, Rajavi is Iran. Iran is Maryam, Maryam is Iran."

Such praise therefore often features at MEK-linked events addressed by prominent Americans, mixed with other MEK talking points.



Howard Dean, the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, hailed Rajavi in Berlin last March.

"Madame Rajavi does not sound like a terrorist to me; she sounds like a president," Mr. Dean said, gesturing toward the MEK leader from the dais. "And her organization should not be listed as a terrorist organization. We should be recognizing her as the president of Iran."

Mr. Dean confirmed to the Monitor that he received payment for his appearances, but said the focus on high pay was "a diversion inspired by those with a different view."

#### Influence and money

Lee Hamilton, former co-chair of the 9/11 Commission, told the Monitor he received a "good fee" to speak in Washington. He "approved" of the MEK's 10-point platform, which enshrines democracy, gender equality, and freedom, but added: "We all know it's a piece of paper.... Now is that in fact their practice? I don't think I am the one to judge that."

Hamilton told the audience he remains "really puzzled" about why the MEK remains on the terrorist list.

Former Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell also spoke at an MEK-linked event and was paid \$20,000 for a 10-minute speech. Mr. Rendell confirmed that figure to the Monitor, and said: "No amount of money could make me say something I didn't believe."

During his mid-July speech in Washington, however, Rendell stated that he had received a call on Monday, inviting him to appear the following Saturday. He told the audience that at first he declined, telling his would-be hosts: "I don't know hardly anything about this subject, so ... I don't think I'm qualified to come."

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against the Iranian nation."

"Newsweek" correspondent Maziar Bahari believes delisting the MKO could have damaging implications.

In the international arena, the group has proven to be a sticking point for decades. Following its founding in 1965, MKO members

## Iranian Activists Warn That MKO Delisting Would Send Negative Signal To Iranians

Golnaz Esfandiari, Radio Free Europe, August 09, 2011

[http://www.rferl.org/content/iranian\\_activists\\_warn\\_that\\_mko\\_listing\\_would\\_send\\_negative\\_signal\\_to\\_iranians/24291688.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/iranian_activists_warn_that_mko_listing_would_send_negative_signal_to_iranians/24291688.html)

Iranians hardly ever agree on anything. But there's at least one thing on that most Iranians share a common view, and that is their dislike of the Iranian opposition Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO).

For this reason, talk of removing the group's designation as a terrorist organization, which the United States is currently considering and which the European Union did in 2009, is sure to spark protests from Tehran.

But the issue also draws protests from a less likely source -- members of Iran's Green Movement who themselves are critical of the exiled group and are wary of attempts by the MKO (aka People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran) and by the Iranian government to portray them as allies in opposition.

And Green Movement members also warn that removing the MKO's terrorist designation could inadvertently send a negative signal to people in Iran and tarnish their view of the United States.

### Labeled As Traitors Among Iranians

The MKO's involvement in a series of violent acts in the 1970s and 1980s in Iran, and its decision to side with Iraq during the bloody 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, led to the group being labeled as traitors among Iranians.

So much so, that opposition member and former lawmaker Ali Mazrouei believes removing the MKO from the State Department's terror list would not be well-received.

"It will be definitely viewed very negatively by the people," he says. "This group is one of the most-hated political groups among Iranians, because during the difficult time of the war it joined the enemy that had attacked Iran's territory and fought

took up arms against the Iranian shah and were involved in the killings of several U.S. citizens working in Iran in the 1970s.

After initially supporting the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the MKO went underground when an uprising against the new regime failed. The United States put the group on the list of foreign terrorist organizations in 1997 in what was widely considered to be a goodwill gesture to former President Mohammad Khatami.

Nevertheless, following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, coalition forces considered MKO members on Iraqi soil a "protected people," in keeping with the Geneva Conventions.

MKO members were provided refuge at Camp Ashraf, where their numbers today stand at around 3,000. But the handover of control to the Iraqi government clearly exposed the controversy over their presence on Iraqi soil, with Iraqi officials openly suggesting that Iran's extradition requests be heeded, while the UN reminded the Iraqi government of the MKO members' rights as minorities.

The MKO, as the State Department reviews their status, has argued that it has renounced violence and claims to be working for democracy in Iran. It has also launched an extensive campaign to push for its reclassification.

According to Tehran-based political analyst Nejat Bahrami, the delisting of the MKO would make average Iranians frustrated with the United States.

"The messages [President Barack] Obama has sent to the Iranian people on several occasions, including for Nouruz, have been very encouraging," he says. "But I think



[the delisting of the MKO] would neutralize those positive statements. And it might lead to frustration with U.S. policies and even hatred."

#### Current Regime 'Preferable' To MKO

"Newsweek" correspondent Maziar Bahari, who was jailed in Iran amid the unrest that followed the country's contentious 2009 presidential election, believes the move could have damaging implications.

"Despite the historical mistakes the U.S. government committed -- from the 1959 coup d'etat to its full support for the shah's regime -- many Iranians still believe the U.S. can be their potential ally in their fight for freedom," Bahari says. "The delisting of the MKO would send the wrong signal to those young Iranians who have been pushing for democracy peacefully in the past 2 1/2 years."

The thought of MKO members portraying themselves as uni-

A student activist in Iran who did not want to be named says several of his friends who were arrested following the protests over the reelection of President Mahmud Ahmadinejad faced accusations over alleged ties with the MKO.



Golnaz Esfandiari

He maintains that the tactic was used by the Iranian government to intimidate the activists who he says were neither members nor supporters of the group.

Bahrami says the removal of the MKO from the U.S.

**Speaking on condition of anonymity, one Green Movement member in Iran claims that if he had to choose between the current leaders in Iran and the MKO -- which is led by Maryam Rajavi and Massoud Rajavi (who hasn't been seen or heard from in the past several years) -- he would definitely "keep" the current regime.**

**"I know they claim abroad they're part of the Green Movement [but] it's a big lie,"**

ted oppositionists does not sit well with Green Movement members.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one Green Movement member in Iran claims that if he had to choose between the current leaders in Iran and the MKO -- which is led by Maryam Rajavi and Massoud Rajavi (who hasn't been seen or heard from in the past several years) -- he would definitely "keep" the current regime.

"I know they claim abroad they're part of the Green Movement [but] it's a big lie," he says. "We don't want to have anything to do with them."

#### Recognition Could Fuel More Repression

Analysts and opposition members believe delisting MKO would also play into the hands of the Iranian establishment, which has a well-documented history of silencing voices of dissent.

"The Iranian establishment could use this as yet another excuse to repress the opposition and critics and imply that they're all the same as the MKO," says opposition member Mazrouei.

blacklist would give an even freer hand to the establishment to bring more of these accusations against critics and opposition members.

The Iranian government sees the MKO as one of its worst enemies. Thousands of MKO members and sympathizers were executed in Iran in the 1980s.

Yet Bahrami believes the Iranian government might actually benefit from the possible delisting of the MKO, because the move could feed Tehran's propaganda machine and give it more ammunition to attack U.S. policies.

"If the delisting takes place, Tehran would say U.S. policies are contradictory," he says. "At a time when the U.S. claims it fights terrorism, the Islamic republic can refer to MKO's past actions and challenge the U.S."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is expected in the coming weeks to make a final decision about whether to keep the MKO on the terror list or remove it

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## Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) and Camp Ashraf

The American Conservative

Mojahedin Khalq (MKO, MEK, Rajavi cult) and Camp Ashraf

Daniel Larison, American conservative, August 07, 2011

<http://www.amconmag.com/larison/>

2011/08/05/the-mek-and-camp-ashraf/

1978 of hundreds of fanatical followers of a self-styled prophet, Jim Jones.

Bahari, speaking at a conference in Washington on Thursday sponsored by the National Iranian American Council, a non-partisan group that advocates for Iranian Americans and opposes the MEK, expressed sympathy for MEK members but said it would be a mistake to take the group off the State Department list at this time.

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Camp Ashraf in Iraq belongs to the terrorist group Mujahidin-e Khalq (MEK), and recently the plight of the inhabitants of the camp has been used as a smokescreen to advance the argument to take the group off of the foreign terrorist organization list. Barbara Slavin relates the main issues concerning the camp:

American diplomats have been trying to arrange new homes for the camp residents but have been hampered by the fact that their leaders refuse to accept refugee status.

Maziar Bahari, an Iranian-Canadian journalist imprisoned in Iran after disputed 2009 presidential elections, said the MEK needs to keep the camp to maintain control of its foot-soldiers. He said that US officials feared a "Jonestown in Ashraf" if attempts were made to remove camp residents by force. He was referring to the mass suicide in Guyana in

Jasmin Ramsey wrote a long article on the push to de-list the MEK, and she explains why it is wrong to link the issues of de-listing with the treatment of the inhabitants of Camp Ashraf:

However, even the Bush administration had ignored neo-conservative entreaties to delist the MEK, which would make it strange for Obama to adopt a position that his predecessor found too risky. The humanitarian concerns at Camp Ashraf are legitimate, but they could be resolved through the assistance of organisations like the ICRC and UNHCR. To conflate this issue with the decidedly political question of delisting may only exacerbate the already fragile US-Iran relations.

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**Lee Hamilton, former co-chair of the 9/11 Commission, told the Monitor he received a "good fee" to speak in Washington. He "approved" of the MEK's 10-point platform, which enshrines democracy, gender equality, and freedom, but added: "We all know it's a piece of paper.... Now is that in fact their practice? I don't think I am the one to judge that."**

Rendell thanked them for convincing him to come anyway, for briefing him during the week, for the material they sent, and for further discussions that morning.

"It's been a great learning experience for me, and as a result of what I've learned, on Monday I will send a letter to President Obama and Secretary Clinton, telling them ... that the United States is morally bound to do everything we can to ensure the safety of the residents of Camp Ashraf," said Rendell.

**... Human rights defender and filmmaker Maziar Bahari explained that delisting the MEK would have serious negative implications for Iran's peaceful democratic movement. "The MEK, with its violent history, is exactly what the Iranian regime needs to legitimate its violence against the peaceful opposition," stated Bahari. He said that, by delisting the group, the U.S. would send a message to young Iranians who have embraced nonviolence in their struggle for democracy that they are wrong. Center for American Progress national security expert Brian Katulis agreed that support for MEK would contradict the Obama Administration's support ...**

That comment prompted a standing ovation, followed by Rendell's call for removal from the terrorist list if, as his fellow speakers had indicated, the "MEK is a force for good, and the best hope we have."

Judge Mukasey told the Monitor he received money for some of his appearances, but added that "the issue of fees is a red herring. Al Gore gets paid to speak about global warming; does anyone question the sincerity of his beliefs?"

One former US diplomatic official told the Monitor he was offered \$25,000 to speak in Paris last December, but declined. He was told he could deliver general remarks about human rights in

Iran and did not have to mention the MEK, though "the MEK link was clear; there was no hiding of it at all." In his case, he was told "rich Iranians in Europe" would foot the bill.

"Those who speak ... have every right in the world to issue statements and make speeches that say [the MEK] ought to be off the terrorism list," says this former official, who asked not to be named. "I just don't think they should do it for money."

Top-flight speakers include Bill Richardson, the former secretary of Energy; Gen. Peter Pace, former Chairman of the Joint

Chiefs of Staff; Wesley Clark, the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO; and James Jones, President Obama's former national security adviser.

"You are credible, you are connected, you are respected. And I am amazed that we've not reached out," Gen. Anthony Zinni, the former commander of CENTCOM, said at a January event in Washington. "No one is asking for money, for military support, and guns. They are asking for a hand to be reached out, a light to be shined on what they are doing."

## Mujahedin supporters mount U.S. lobbying effort

... The Iranian American Community of Northern California has paid Akin Gump \$100,000 in the past two months. Former congressmen Vic Fazio and Bill Paxon are among the Akin Gump advisers working on the campaign. Another group, Iranian-American Community of North Texas, hired diGenova & Toensing in February. The lobby shop has been paid \$100,000 this year. The State Department describes Mujahedin, also known as Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), as “the largest and most active armed Iranian dissident group,” with a history of anti-western activity ...

Laurie Bennett, Muckety.com, August 02 2011

<http://news.muckety.com/2011/07/30/mujahedin>

The House bill, sponsored by Republican Ted Poe of Texas, argues that members of the organization have ceased all military operations and reject terrorism.

The Financial Times reports that groups supporting the legislation have paid millions of dollars to former government officials to speak at their events.

Among those speaking on behalf of the groups, according to the FT, are Howard Dean, Rudy Giuliani, former U.N. ambassador John Bolton; former national security adviser Jim Jones; retired Army Gen. Wesley Clark, former homeland security secretary Tom Ridge; former congressman Lee Hamilton; and former Attorney Gen. Michael Mukasey



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Iranian American groups have launched an expensive campaign to have the People's

Mujahedin Organization removed from the State Department's list of terrorist organizations.

Two groups have hired Washington lobbyists to push a House bill calling for the change.

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