

The Iranian Pen Club

# Panorama



## MKO looted Iraqi munitions, lands after fall of Saddam

MKO looted Iraqi munitions, lands after fall of Saddam

By: Habilian Association

Tags: Defectors of Mujahedin khalq | Mujahedin Khalq, Saddam Collaborators | Membership in Mujahedin Khalq Cult | Camp Ashraf Affairs



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Habilian Foundation (families of Iranian terror victims) caught up with a former member of MEK leadership Council to talk about the terrorist Cult of Rajavi (also known as Mujahedin-e Khalq, MKO looted Iraqi munitions, lands after fall of SaddamMEK, and MKO) and her two decades of

experience in the terrorist cult.

In the first part of this serialized interview, Batoul Soltani talks about the way she and her 3-month-old baby were transferred to Iraq and then she further discusses the MKO's situation in the very first year of their arrival in Iraq. The following is a rough transcription of the interview.

Habilian: How the MKO members went to Iraq? Did they use legal ways? Did they have passport and visa or they went to Iraq illegally?

Soltani: In his dream to take power in Iran, Masoud Rajavi aligned with Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein who was at war with Iran. He left France for Iraq in a bid to overwhelm Iran, and spent exorbitant amounts of cash to draw together his members, opponents, even the addicts and poor people from all walks of life in Iraq.

Having Saddam's government as his supporter, Rajavi gathered troops in Iraq and in neighboring Iran by forging tra-

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## Mr. François Hollande the honorable and distinguished president of France

**Please begin your fight with terrorism from France!!**

**Close the terrorists' headquarter in Auvers sur Oise in France!!!**

Greetings,

Your country is known as the heritage holder of one of the most progressive democracy in the world but unfortunately , I should say at the present time , your country has become a safe place for the pmoi known terrorists who consecutively escape from the law and the justice on purpose. this cult and terrorist gang has assassinated and slew 12000 of Iranian citizens during the past decades besides that this notorious and savage cult had killed and slaughtered thousands of Iraqi people in 1991 by the direct order of the Iraq dictator , Saddam Hussein . is it in your country dignity as well as in your constitution to allow these pmoi cutthroats and murderers and torturers to live in peace in your country and enjoy all kind of freedom whereas they do not legalize and accredit these freedoms and laws for others?

The European union unfortunately had delisted these criminals from the terrorist list simply and by the wrong policy, but is it possible to ignore their criminal past and their terrorist record?

Who is exactly the justice enforcement? are the borders of justice distorted and altered in French constitution and is there a legal vacuum? In your opinion , do we have a good terrorist and a bad terrorist in the world we living? In fact , this is a big insult to the civilized people of France when these criminals and terrorist cutthroats known as mujahedin work and live like a king in your

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## MKO looted Iraqi munitions, lands after fall of Saddam

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vel documents and making fake passports with huge sums of money given by Saddam Hussein to help him overthrow Iran and make himself the full owner of Iran's soil. For instance, I and my husband have been transferred to Iraq by a fake Iraqi passport with names of Zahra and Abraham.

We did not know then the ominous thoughts of them for us, and we did deem it a right way and thought that we would be able to go to a European country, such as France and to enjoy a free life and well-being. But after our arrival, (Rajavi) took all our (travel) documents and destroyed the bridges behind us in a bid to compel us to remain in Iraq and to follow his organizational orders.

Habilian: How many members were in MKO in the first years of its presence in Iraq? What was the total number of members in the last year of Saddam Hussein's rule?

Soltani: Rajavi tried to take all the members to Iraq at all costs. The number of members in the great operations was 5000, 1000 of whom were killed in Forough Javidan (Mersad) operation.

lands and handed them over to Rajavi.

Later, the land which was about 36 square kilometers were laid down barbed wire and tall guard towers were built inside it. Electrical wiring and strong floodlights were installed on the sides of the garrison.

A prison was built inside it and a round-the-clock patrol and security forces made there a big and isolated prison.

Habilian: Did the Organization underwrite the building garrison and providing facilities? How did the Organization fund them?

Soltani: It was seemingly the Organization that underwrote the projects, but they took all the money from Iraqi government en masse. Notably before the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Organization was provided with so much money that immediately after the downfall of Saddam Hussein members of the Organization tried to buy companies in Iraq.

The Organization took out as far as it could the wretched peoples' assets, so that they could establish foreign investments companies.

Habilian: How did the Iraqi people treat MKO?

**We did not know then the ominous thoughts of them for us, and we did deem it a right way and thought that we would be able to go to a European country, such as France and to enjoy a free life and well-being. But after our arrival, (Rajavi) took all our (travel) documents and destroyed the bridges behind us in a bid to compel us to remain in Iraq and to follow his organizational orders.**

In the last year of Saddam's rule, Rajavi sent a group of members to France along with his third wife, Maryam Rajavi. A bunch of members escaped the Organization, and the remaining members were 3400 in the last year of Saddam's reign.

Habilian: How was the Organization provided with Camp Ashraf? How the facilities and infrastructure constructed there?

Soltani: After the meeting of Rajavi with Tareq Aziz, the then Iraqi foreign minister, known as Peace Meeting, and in his meeting with Saddam, Masoud Rajavi was gifted with Ashraf Garrison and several other garrisons at Iran-Iraq borders and in the deserts on the frontiers which previously belonged to Saddam's Army as well as some palaces inside Baghdad.

Ashraf Garrison known as Filq II was smaller than the present, so Rajavi said that he needed bigger land. Thus, Saddam confiscated the surrounding

Soltani: Since Iraqi Kurds remembered the Organization's alignment with Saddam's army in suppression of their uprising, they hated MKO members, and the rest of Iraqi people saw us as the members of (Saddam's) army and they hated and feared us.

We have been prohibited to have contacts with Iraqi people even at the time of Saddam Hussein.

The Organization tried to replace this hatred and fear to relation and friendship. So, Rajavi ordered large parties to be held and thousands of Iraqi people were invited to dinner or lunch.

He spent very huge amount of money in this way. He even managed to penetrate into Iraqi society by organizing roughly 500 Iraqis with big costs. He established an Iraqi militia, and held Persian language classes inside the Garrison and paid them money.

Habilian: How did the members

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saw the Iraqi imposed war on Iran and their cooperation with invading forces who assaulted their territory?

Soltani: Masoud Rajavi has spent thousands of hours convincing their presence in Iraq and cooperation with aggressive Saddam. In the first step he tried to pretend that it was Iran who invaded Iraq and he instead described Saddam Hussein as a civilized and good man. He has made an angel in our minds from Saddam who was a demon. Rajavi even white-washed Saddam's bloody hands in the massacre of Kurds, and said that Kurds are our enemies and (Iranian) regime's accomplices.

Everything was censored in Rajavi's Organization and we had no access to media, news, or free world. For example, he said: "we seek peace in order to prevent the killing of people, though, this is Iran which put all of their lives at stake and we want to prevent the war to stop killing people," thereby he legitimized his collusion with aggressive forces.

Habilian: Did the relationship between the Organization and Iraqi government changed after the Iraq's defeat in war?

Soltani: In his childish dream and of course with the help of his opportunistic personality, Rajavi attacked Iran after the

**ON 22 of June 2012, a number of the freedom lover Iranians who were the victims and critics of the Maryam Rajavi's terrorist gang and were imprisoned inside the garrisons of this organization in Iraq for years and had been tortured by the direct order of Massoud and Maryam Rajavi , they had a demonstration and peaceful rally in Paris which was completely lawful and authorized by the French**

defeat of Iraq in war with Iran, but he was rewarded with a strong slap in his face by Iranian people and his organization fled Iraq with 1000 casualties.

Then he said that children and wives prevented them from a good combat, so, he dismantled the families like a wolf sending the children to foreign countries and coerced wives to divorce. Thenceforth he himself married them.

He (Rajavi) had arguments with Iraqis too. He vituperated Saddam a lot, saying that his air support was not enough.

On the verge of Saddam's overthrow, Rajavi took away Iraqi people and government's properties, so that he got to extend the Camp (Ashraf) to the western (borders) by capturing Iraqi military forces headquarters. They also captured weapons and ammunition left around Iraqi Garrisons, and took them all to Ashraf Garrison claiming that they belonged to himself (Rajavi)!

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country and the law has not been implemented and carried out against them!

Mr. President!

The Rajavi's terrorist cult has perpetrated more crimes than the Al Qaeda terrorist organization, and why the French government has sent its troops as part of NATO mission thousands kilometer to Afghanistan soil to fight terrorism but in its soil can not implement and enforce the law and justice against the terrorists?!

The Rajavi's terrorist cult has perpetrated more crimes than the Serbian generals and we has witnessed that after many years the Serbian criminal generals have been incarcerated and arrested and they have been brought to justice in the international court of justice to be tried for the crimes they perpetrated against humanity , but the pmoi terrorists are free in



Farzad Farzinfar

Europe specially in France and in my opinion this kind of behavior towards these terrorists in France is like giving these criminal and cutthroat terrorists an award for their crimes and unfortunately I should say that the European union's decision upon the delisting this terrorist group from the European union terrorist list is an unbelievable and shameless act and it is a confirmation and ratification of terrorism and the organized crime!

Mr. president!

ON 22 of June 2012, a number of the freedom lover Iranians who were the victims and critics of the Maryam Rajavi's terrorist gang and were imprisoned inside the garrisons of this organization in Iraq for years and had been tortured by the direct order of Massoud and Maryam Rajavi , they had a demonstration and peaceful rally in Paris which was completely lawful and authorized by the French authorities , suddenly and unbelievably were attacked and as-

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saulted and beaten up by Maryam Rajavi's hoodlums and cutthroats in front of the eyes of the French people during their peaceful and legal rally in Paris. the scenes of their assault to these victims and critics were too awful and terrifying to see.

On June 2007, Maryam Rajavi's terrorists and hoodlums attacked the critics' session in FIAP building in Paris and they began assaulting the critics and created tension and fear and savagery in that building . obviously if the French police and the French tribunal was investigating and handling their assault and savagery perfectly , we would not have faced and confronted by Maryam Rajavi's arrogance and her bludgeoners and hoodlums' savagery and brutality in trampling the French constitution upon the freedom of speech and the freedom of the gatherings .

Mr. President!

justice ,and expel them from your soil.

Maryam Rajavi has perpetrated the crime against humanity , this criminal had ordered the killing and slaying and suppressing the Kurds and Shiais in Iraq who uprose against the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 1991. The killer Maryam had ordered the dispatch of the terrorist teams and mortar launchers to the cities in Iran specifically in Tehran for terrorist missions . The bloodsucker and cutthroat Maryam had directly ordered the eternal light operation witch was Saddam's proposal and as a result of that operation hundreds of pmoi members were killed and according to the terrorist Maryam and the criminal Massoud , in that operation 55 thousands Iranian soldiers were killed and wounded as well. I and hundreds of the former members of this organization were present in that organizational gathering before and after the mentioned military operation and we are eye witnesses of the crimes which were perpetrated by this terrorist cult and we are ready to testify in any court of law .

Mr. President!

**Maryam Rajavi has perpetrated the crime against humanity , this criminal had ordered the killing and slaying and suppressing the Kurds and Shiais in Iraq who uprose against the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in 1991.**

I am one of the victims of pmoi who was imprisoned and incarcerated in the Ashraf cultic and medieval garrison and as a result of my dissent and dissidence with the criminal leaders of this terrorist gang , Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, I was injected by the deadly and dangerous poison and I became poisoned and sick and I suffered a lot after that . have you heard such a savagery , brutality and inhumane deed in your life or in Europe and in European parties' history? This vicious and inhumane deed was ordered directly by this bloodsucker , executioner , imposture and deceitful woman , Maryam Rajavi and her executioner husband Massoud Rajavi.

Mr. President!

If your fight with Al Qaeda in Afghanistan is not just because of your coalition with the US government , please show your honesty and dignity to the humane basics in the name of the French constitution and in the name of human rights and in the respect of thousands of Iranian families who lost their loved ones during mujahedin's terrorist operations ,and take the terrorist Maryam Rajavi and her terrorist commanders to the French court of law and to the

With all these documents and crimes and evidence , is not possible to take Maryam Rajavi to the court of law? Unfortunately the French tribunal despite of all documents and concrete evidence and facts does not act to its duties correctly and it acts slowly . since 2003 , the terrorist Maryam Rajavi's file which all its aspects are clear and transparent and because of that she got arrested , is open and its investigation has prolonged and under the shadow of this prolongation the terrorists are enjoying themselves in France and by holding the sticks and bludgeons in their hands are mocking the French law and the people of France.

No to terrorism ! either Al Qaeda or Mujahedin Khalgh!!!

Please begin your fight with terrorism from France!!

Close the terrorists' headquarter in Auvers sur Oise in France!!!

All the best

Farzad Farzinfar

Sweden

## U.S. steps up warnings on Camp Ashraf in Iraq

Reuters, July 06 2012

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/07/06/>

uk-iran-iraq-mek-idUKBRE86510920120706



The United States warned an Iranian dissident group on Friday that time was running out for it to vacate its Iraqi base camp, and said its hope to be taken off the official U.S. blacklist of terrorist organizations could depend on its compliance.

Daniel Benjamin, the State Department's coordinator for counter-terrorism, said the Mujahadin-e Khalq (MEK) must complete its move from the Camp Ashraf facility, which the Iraqi government has vowed to close by July 20.

"It is past time for the MEK to recognize that Ashraf is not going to remain an MEK base in Iraq," Benjamin told reporters, saying Baghdad's patience was running out.

"The Iraqi government is committed to closing it, and any plan to wait out the government in the hope that something will change is irresponsible and dangerous."

### COURT DEADLINE

Last month, a U.S. appeals court asked U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to make her determination on the MEK's status by October, a ruling hailed as a victory by MEK supporters.

But U.S. officials have stressed that Clinton - who has herself said that the disposition of Camp Ashraf will be key to her eventual decision - may still find against the group.

"MEK leaders appear to believe that the secretary has no choice now but to delist them. That conclusion is quite plainly wrong," Benjamin said.

"The MEK's relocation will assist the secretary in determining whether the organization remains invested in its violent past or is committed to leaving that past behind."

Despite repeated U.S. appeals to close the camp and the successful relocation of some 2,000 MEK members to a new holding facility near Baghdad, the group continues to have 1,200-1,300 members at Camp Ashraf and has taken no steps to relocate them since May 5.

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The dissident group, which calls for the overthrow of Iran's clerical leaders, is no longer welcome in Iraq under the Shi'ite-led government that came to power after Saddam Hussein's downfall in 2003.

Also known as the People's Mujahideen Organization of Iran, the group led a guerrilla campaign against the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran during the 1970s that also included attacks on U.S. targets.

The United States added the MEK to its official list of foreign terrorist organizations in 1997, but the group has since said that it has renounced violence and has mounted a legal and public relations campaign to have its terrorist designation dropped.

The MEK has complained of mistreatment and poor conditions at the new facility, a large former U.S. military base, and U.S. officials say they have urged the Iraqi government to take steps to address some of the group's concerns.

Daniel Fried, Clinton's special advisor on Ashraf, said that while the Iraqi government had shown flexibility on earlier deadlines for Camp Ashraf, there was no indication it would do so again unless there were signs of significant movement from the camp by July 20.

"That date should put everyone on notice, and the MEK on notice, that it needs to proceed with the next convoy of people out of Camp Ashraf," Fried said.

(Reporting By Andrew Quinn; Editing by Paul Simao)

## High-priced advocacy raises questions for supporters of Mojahedin Khalq

Washington Post, July 06 2012

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/high-priced-advocacy-raises-questions-for-supporters-of-iranian-exile-group/2012/07/05/gJQABoacQW\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/high-priced-advocacy-raises-questions-for-supporters-of-iranian-exile-group/2012/07/05/gJQABoacQW_story.html)

Joby Warrick and Julie Tate, Friday, July 6, 2:45 AM

A well-financed lobbying campaign by prominent U.S. politicians and former officials on behalf of a designated terrorist organization is focusing new attention on the group and its influential advocates.

Supporters of the Iranian -opposition group Mujaheddin-e Khalq, or MEK, have met with senior Obama administration -officials to push for the organization's removal from the State Department's terrorist list and better treatment of its members at a camp in Iraq.

Public appearances on behalf of the MEK by such people as

exempt from registration requirements.

But scholars of lobbying regulations say the contacts with administration officials easily meet the definition of lobbying under the Foreign Agent Registration Act, a law that has sometimes led to criminal charges.

"The law applies to anyone engaged in political or lobbying activity — or even propaganda — on behalf of a foreign 'principal,' a term that is defined broadly," said David Cole, a professor and expert on criminal and constitutional law at Georgetown University Law School. "It's a very low bar."

The new questions are the latest challenge for the MEK, which has been listed by the State Department as a terrorist



**... Under federal law, advocates for foreign organizations are required to register as lobbyists and provide details about their clients and income. But the MEK supporters have not registered, which would require disclosing the amounts they are paid and the identities of officials with whom they meet. The supporters argue that they are acting legitimately to facilitate U.S. policy decisions, which could make them exempt from registration requirements. But scholars of lobbying regulations say the contacts with administration officials easily meet the definition of lobbying under the Foreign Agent Registration Act, a law that has sometimes led to criminal charges ...**

former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, former Pennsylvania governor Edward G. Rendell and former Obama national security adviser James L. Jones had already sparked an investigation by the Treasury Department into whether payments of tens of thousands of dollars to some of them violated anti-terrorism laws.

In recent weeks, new questions have been raised about whether private meetings, conference calls and other contact with officials at the State Department and elsewhere in the administration over the past year require the advocates' registration as lobbyists or agents of a foreign entity.

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The supporters argue that they are acting legitimately to facilitate U.S. policy decisions, which could make them

organization since 1997 and was linked to the deaths of six Americans in the 1970s.

### Trying to reshape image

The MEK has been campaigning for years to get off the terrorist list, including buying advertisements in The Washington Post and other publications. A federal appeals court has given Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton until October to make a decision on whether to remove the group.

At the same time, the MEK and its advocates have been clashing with the Iraqi government over efforts to relocate 3,300 MEK members living in exile at a former Iraqi military base since the mid-1980s.

The MEK has enlisted some of the biggest names in U.S. politics and national security. In addition to Giuliani, Rendell and Jones, the group's advocates have included former homeland security secretary Tom Ridge, former Vermont governor Howard Dean, former U.S. attorney general Michael Mukasey, former FBI director Louis Freeh, former Joint Chiefs chairman Hugh Shelton, former U.N. ambassadors

## High-priced advocacy raises questions for supporters of Mojahedin Khalq

John Bolton and Bill Richardson, and Mitchell Reiss, a former State Department official who has been among Republican president candidate Mitt Romney's top foreign policy advisers since 2008.

Rendell, Giuliani and Mukasey were among 16 prominent former U.S. officials who flew to Paris for a pro-MEK rally last month. Also in Paris was Newt Gingrich, the former House speaker and Republican presidential candidate. In a video, Gingrich is seen bowing to the MEK's co-founder. Afterward, Gingrich appealed for "decisive action" by the United States on the group's behalf.

The MEK and its umbrella group, the National Council of Resistance of Iran, denied asking anyone to lobby for them

The dissidents "have not asked anyone in the United States to advocate for them, nor do they have any agents or lobbyists in that country," said Shahin Gobadi, a spokesman. He said State Department officials had asked U.S. supporters to intervene to prevent a "humanitarian catastrophe" at the MEK's Iraqi camp, and noted that more than 100 U.S. lawmakers have co-sponsored legislation to remove the MEK from the terrorist list.

Still, some of the MEK's prominent surrogates have acknowledged accepting travel expenses from MEK-allied groups as well as speaking fees of \$10,000 to \$40,000 per engagement. Rendell has acknowledged accepting more than \$150,000 in expenses from MEK supporters. Before he began speaking on their behalf, he says, he knew very little about the MEK.

The supporters, some of whom have acknowledged intervening on the MEK's behalf with U.S. officials, say their motives are humanitarian. They say pro-Iranian elements in the Iraqi government have attacked the group's followers since U.S. troops who had protected them left Iraq.

"A number of us are working with the State Department to facilitate the removal of the Iranian dissidents" from the MEK's base in Iraq, Dean said in an e-mail response to a Post query. "Since this is an effort to facilitate U.S. government policy, it does not require any form of registration."

None of the other participants responded to requests for comment.

Federal lobbying law defines a foreign "agent" as someone who acts "at the order, request, or under the direction or



control, of a foreign principal, or of a person any of whose activities are directly or indirectly supervised, directed, controlled, financed, or subsidized in whole or in part by a foreign principal." It covers activities that include acting as a publicity agency or political consultant or representing the interests of the foreign group "before any agency or official of the government of the United States."

"The only defense would be if you can claim that you're doing it on your own, unpaid," said a retired senior U.S. official and expert on lobbying law, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss hypothetical cases covered by the statute. "But if you're getting money from the same group to make speeches, it's pretty hard to make the case."

Although the foreign agents act is often flouted in practice, "the fact that it's a criminal statute shows how the government regards this kind of activity," the former official said.

In addition to meeting with the MEK supporters, State Department officials have acknowledged that they have used them to relay messages directly to the MEK leadership to try to resolve what has become a dangerous standoff over the closing of Camp Ashraf, the former Iraqi army base northeast of Baghdad that has served as the group's home in exile since 1986.

With the Iraq government vowing to close the camp by July 20, U.S. and U.N. officials are seeking to relocate its 3,300 residents to the grounds of what was once Camp Liberty, the former U.S. military base near Baghdad's airport.

The controversy over lobbying is the latest wrinkle in an ongoing dispute over U.S. policy toward the MEK, whose name translates as "People's Holy Warriors of Iran," befitting its self-described status as the leading Iranian opposition group dedicated to overthrowing the country's ruling mullahs.

Founded by Iranian students in the 1960s as a Marxist-Islamist movement, the group is accused of killing six Americans in terrorist attacks in the 1970s during its struggle to topple the U.S.-backed shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Some of its members participated in the takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979 before the MEK broke with Iran's new Islamic rulers and began attacking the regime with suicide bombings and assassinations. Many of the group's leaders were captured, tried and executed.

MEK officials sought exile abroad, first in France and later in

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Iraq, where the group found common cause with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. The dictator provided the movement with a sanctuary — later dubbed Camp Ashraf — as well as weapons, tanks and other equipment. MEK troops fought against their countrymen during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war.

### Connections to Iraq

MEK leaders officially renounced terrorism in 2001, but ties to the Iraqi dictator earned the group the hatred of Iranians and many Iraqis. In 2003, the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq left the group without its powerful sponsor and with few appealing prospects, unable to return to Iran and detested by the new Iraqi leadership. No other countries offered refuge to a group that, in addition to the terrorism stigma from the 1970s, had gained a reputation for cultlike behavior — MEK members at Camp Ashraf wear military clothing and adhere to a doctrine that requires mandatory divorce for married members as well as celibacy, enforced separation of the sexes and unquestioned allegiance to the MEK's leadership.

"I see them as a cross between Hezbollah and the Branch Davidians," said Karim Sadjadpour, an Iran expert with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "It is legitimate to debate whether the MEK meets the Justice Department's legal definition of a terrorist organization. But it is outright false to claim that they are a legitimate, democracy-minded opposition group with a wide base inside Iran."

The group did possess two attributes that would eventually allow it to build a network of allies and friends. One was an extensive cash reserve, some of it donated by wealthy Iranians in the West, and the rest acquired from still-unknown sources, something MEK leaders decline to discuss. The other was a deep antipathy for the Iranian government, a view widely shared by many conservative Republicans as well as more hawkish Democrats.

The MEK's appeal as a potential partner against Iran sharpened in 2002 when the group exposed the existence of a secret uranium-enrichment plant near the Iranian town of Natanz. Slowly, a small band of influential Americans began advocating direct U.S. support for the dissidents as a tool for undermining Iran's theocratic government.

"What's the answer? Regime change," said Ridge, the former homeland security secretary, in a speech on behalf of the MEK in late May. "The heart of this effort, we all believe, is to recognize democratic opposition — it is the MEK."

Rendell and other MEK supporters also have acknowledged that their advocacy has attracted the attention of federal prosecutors. Since the spring, Treasury Department officials have inter-



viewed several of the group's supporters to determine whether they violated U.S. law by providing support to an organization on the U.S. terrorist list. A Treasury spokesman, John Sullivan, said the department does not comment on "potential investigations." Other U.S. officials familiar with the group said the inquiry remains essentially on hold while awaiting a formal decision on the MEK's terrorist status.

"The MEK is a designated terrorist group," Sullivan said. "Therefore, U.S. persons are generally prohibited from engaging in transactions with or providing services to this group."

### State Department view

Depending on events at Camp Ashraf, the MEK could soon lose its terrorist label. Clinton told Congress in May that the State Department would look favorably toward delisting the group if it complies with U.N. efforts to relocate its members in Iraq to new temporary quarters.

More than half the members have completed the move, but transfers of the remaining 1,200 have stalled amid complaints from the MEK about poor conditions and mistreatment by Iraqi officials. MEK leaders are balking at sending additional convoys to Camp Liberty, having apparently calculated that their Washington advocates can secure better terms for them.

In recent days, tensions between Iraqis and MEK officials have escalated, raising fears that the situation could turn violent if the exiles refuse to vacate Camp Ashraf by the July 20 deadline, U.S. officials say.

"The great tragedy is that people who say they want to help the MEK have instead emboldened their sense of entitled status, and that could get them into serious trouble," said a senior State Department official involved in MEK policy discussions. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter.

"If the supporters want to save lives, they could do the MEK a great service by getting them to focus on real issues and not stage extravagant provocations," the official said.



## June23, Where are Iranians?

Mazda Parsi, Nejat Bloggers, June 30 2012

<http://www.nejatngo.org/en/post.aspx?id=4580>

Purple flags and purple vests were waiting for people to take



them in Villepinte, a hall in Parisian suburbs. Who is supposed to take these “Maryam & Massoud” – printed purple flags and vests? The Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO)

Parisian outskirts. For ordinary Afghan Arab or Polish citizens a free bus-trip to French capital seems enough to wear those purple vests and wave those purple flags.

The world media should be careful about how to deal with the MKO and even how to name it. They should never call them Iranian dissidents or opposition group or exiles. Do they ever call Cambodia extremist followers of Pol Pot, “dissidents” or “activists”? Mujahedin e khalq are at best a group of zealous members of the cult around Massoud Rajavi's personality who betrayed their countrymen to one of the most notorious dictators of the history, Saddam Hussein and unsurprisingly, lost the majority of its supporters.

The group propaganda machine had to work hard to magnify Villepinte gathering. Days before the event they publicized for the rally spending huge amounts of money to bring rented crowds to Paris. A week after the event held you can find on the group's websites very few photos and highly edited videos of the gathering. You may see the 1300 buses the MKO propaganda claimed of but you never see who got off the buses, Iranian exiles or hired Arabs and black Africans.

The MKO's last rally proves that the group's impact and

**... Days before the event they publicized for the rally spending huge amounts of money to bring rented crowds to Paris. A week after the event held you can find on the group's websites very few photos and highly edited videos of the gathering. You may see the 1300 buses the MKO propaganda claimed of but you never see who got off the buses, Iranian exiles or hired Arabs and black Africans. The MKO's last rally proves that the group's impact and credibility has dwindled to a trickle and it is totally far from a pro-democracy popular political organization. Regardless of its prominent powerful western supporters, the MKO has no base among Iranians ...**

says “tens of thousands of Iranian”! A look at several pictures taken by some of the attendees verifies that the hall was -- not fully-- crammed by travelers of countries around Europe. Not a single photo shows a large group of Iranian exiles but one can see groups of black people, Afghans, Arabs, etc... The gathering was held after a long-term multi-million propaganda campaign publicized it. The MKO's propaganda arm, National Council of Resistance called it “the largest Iranian pro-democracy gathering”! Organizers of the rally said that more than a thousand buses arrived bringing Iranians from all over Europe. But, the buses brought people not Iranians.

The MKO spokesman wrote a report of his organization's so-called gathering. He presents a list of guest speakers who spoke at the event to call Secretary Clinton to remove the group from the FTO list of the State Department. It doesn't seem odd that dozens of former Western politicians accepted a free first-class flight to Paris with a luxurious hotel room and tens of thousands of dollars for a 10 minute speech in a



credibility has dwindled to a trickle and it is totally far from a pro-democracy popular political organization. Regardless of its prominent powerful western supporters, the MKO has no base among Iranians whether inside or outside Iran.

By Mazda Parsi

**Ambassador Daniel Benjamin and Ambassador Daniel Fried on Mojahedin Khalq Terrorist designation and Camp Ashraf**

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And with that, I'll be happy take your questions.

MR. VENTRELL: Operator, if we can go ahead and get the first question OPERATOR: Thank you. Once again, if you would like to ask a question, please press \*1 on your touchtone telephone. You will be prompted to record your name in order to be introduced. Once again, press \* and 1. One moment.

Our first question comes from Bahman Kalbasi from BBC Persian. Your line is open.

QUESTION: Thank you. I have two questions for the ambassadors. You talked about tangible change in their behavior. If the criteria for removing them from the FTO is to not have the capability and the intent, how does changing the location from Ashraf, as the Secretary has indicated, gets them closer to that removal? U.S. Government has said to NBC, for instance, that as late as February, that they were involved with



nization remains invested in its violent past or is committed to leaving that past behind. And that really is going to be a very important illustration – or demonstration, I

**... The MEK seems to have misinterpreted the June 1 order by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. MEK leaders appear to believe that the Secretary has no choice now but to delist them. That conclusion is quite plainly wrong. In short, the court did not order the Secretary of State to revoke the MEK designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. ...**

the assassination of scientists in Iran.

And my second question really is that if you end up removing them, mindful of the unprecedented lobbying that is going on, are you worried that this will politicize the FTO? It will show that at the end of the day, politics trumps everything else?

AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN: Let me take the second question first. The – any decision, one way or the other will be taken entirely on the merits, and we're committed to doing it that way and no other way. And that's our requirement under the law.

On the other point, I can assure you that I have never said that they were involved in current assassinations in Iran. That was a story that ran, and I have no information to confirm that, so I certainly wouldn't have said it. What I have given you is the established record, and nothing more and nothing less.

QUESTION: But how does it – removing them from Ashraf change the issue of intent?

AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN: Right. Well, the history and the use of Ashraf is that of an MEK paramilitary base. It's where the MEK had its heavy weaponry and from which it carried out a number of military operations during the reign of Saddam Hussein. The MEK's relocation will assist the Secretary in determining whether the orga-

should say – of what the MEK's orientation in the future will be.

So I do want to say that it is an absolutely essential move and we hope that they will get – move forward with it.

MR. VENTRELL: Operator, can we get the next question?

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from Robert Burns – your line is open – from the Associated Press.

QUESTION: Yes, thank you. Regarding your encouragement for them to complete the relocation, if they don't complete the move by October, is it the case that they won't be de-listed?

AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN: I'm not going to prejudge the Secretary's action on this, but she has made it extremely clear how important this step is. And she is sticking by that and this is the message everyone involved needs to understand.

OPERATOR: Our next question will come from Mehrnough Pourziaiee from BBC. Your line is open.

QUESTION: My question is regarding the dates that Iraqi Government has given, which is 20th of July for the closure of Camp Ashraf. And has

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there been any communication with U.S. Ambassador in Iraq and Iraqi Government on the Iraqi side plans in case the relocation is not complete by that time?

AMBASSADOR FRIED: This is Daniel Fried speaking. Our charge in Baghdad, Steve Beecroft, has been in contact with the Iraqi Government at senior levels on more than one occasion recently about the situation with respect to Camp Ashraf. Specific to your question, you are right that July 20th is a date set by the Iraqi Government by which they want Camp Ashraf to be emptied.

Now, in the past, the Iraqi Government has extended deadlines when there has been significant progress in moving people out of Camp Ashraf, and it is our hope – though only a hope – that if there is significant progress in the next two weeks, that deadline could be extended. However, that puts – that date should put everyone on notice and the MEK on notice that it needs to proceed with the next convoy of people out of Camp Ashraf. There have been five convoys. All have been successful; that is, they went from Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya peacefully, without roadside bombs or attacks. And this process needs to resume.

QUESTION: And in the previous briefing, the officials of State Department mentioned that there has been no communication from MEK with UN officials or Iraqi Government, and they have stopped all the communication. Have you tried different channels to get this message to them, or what are you doing to make sure that they get the seriousness of this issue?

AMBASSADOR FRIED: Well, I'm happy to tell you that after a lot of work, communications have resumed. It took a frustratingly long period of time to arrange it. But Ambassador Kobler, the head of the UN Mission in Iraq, is back in contact with the MEK, has allowed this contact to resume. So these messages have been sent.

It is – we are all – that is, the U.S. Embassy – we at the State Department and the UN are all working hard to address as many legitimate concerns of the residents of Camp Hurriya and Camp Ashraf as we can in order that conditions be met for convoys to resume. And we do think that the Government of Iraq could and should do more to address these legitimate humanitarian concerns and show generosity to the residents. And there has been some progress in that regard. We hope that this progress – in fact, it's imperative this progress be made swiftly and that the convoys of residents resume.

QUESTION: And Ambassador Fried, I have a question regarding Camp Ashraf itself. We have various accounts of people who have been a member of MEK before talking about the horrible situation in the organization and relations which is in Camp Ashraf and the relation between the members and how the human conditions of the Camp and the situation they live in because of the setup from the MEK. Can you elaborate on living condition in Camp Ashraf a little and tell us if all these stories are true or there's no truth into them?

AMBASSADOR FRIED: Well, I am familiar, as you are, with all sorts of stories about life in Camp Ashraf. I can't confirm or deny any of them. We just don't know, but I'm familiar with them. Our purpose is humanitarian, however. Our purpose is neither to advance the interests of the organization – hardly – nor is it to fight the organization. Our interest is in saving the lives of the people that are there as individuals and helping them find – helping them get out of Ashraf safely to Camp Hurriya, and then out of Camp Hurriya to a life outside of Iraq. That is our purpose; it is humanitarian.....

MR. VENTRELL: All right. Thank you all. Have a good afternoon.

## Ambassador Daniel Benjamin and Ambassador Daniel Fried on Mojahedin Khalq Terrorist designation and Camp Ashraf

U.S. Department of State, July 10 2012

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/07/194656.htm>

Coordinator for Counterterrorism Ambassador Daniel Benjamin and Special Advisor to the Secretary on Camp Ashraf Ambassador Daniel Fried on the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) Designation and the Current Situation at Camp Ashraf

Special Briefing

Office of the Spokesperson

Via Teleconference

July 6, 2012

MR. VENTRELL: Hey. Good afternoon, everybody, and thanks for joining us. Today, we've got an on-the-record conference call with Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator for Counterterrorism, and Ambassador Daniel Fried, our Special Advisor on Camp Ashraf.

And so we're going to go ahead and start this on-the-record call. I believe Ambassador Benjamin will make some remarks at the top, and then we'll turn it over to both of our speakers for questions. So let's go ahead and start.

### Ambassador Benjamin.

AMBASSADOR BENJAMIN: Yes. Thank you very much. I wanted to talk today a bit about the situation in Iraq, where there is an impasse between the Iraqi Government and the Mujahedin-e Khalq, the MEK, over the relocation of residents from the group's paramilitary Camp Ashraf to the temporary transit facility at Camp Hurriya. The Iraqi Government and the United Nations continue to encourage the secure, humane relocation of residents to Hurriya for refugee status determinations by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. Almost 2,000 individuals have already relocated, but the remaining 1,200 to 1,300 are holding at Ashraf until various MEK demands are met by the Iraqi Government. The last convoy of individuals, about 400 people, was on May 5th. And the patience of the Iraqi Government is wearing thin.

The MEK seems to have misinterpreted the June 1 order by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. MEK leaders appear to believe that the Secretary has no choice now but to delist them. That conclusion is quite plainly wrong. In short, the court did not order the Secretary of State to revoke the MEK designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. As the Secretary has made clear, the MEK's cooperation in the successful and peaceful closure of Camp Ashraf will be a key factor in her decision regarding the MEK's FTO status. The court has told the State Department that it must act by October 1, but it did not mandate a particular result.



I think that's very important to underscore. The Secretary thus retains the discretion to either maintain or revoke the designation in accordance with the law. It is past time for the MEK to recognize that Ashraf is not going to remain an MEK base in Iraq. The Iraqi Government is committed to closing it, and any plan to wait out the government in the hope that something will change is irresponsible and dangerous.

The MEK is a group whose violent history against the United States includes the bombing of U.S. companies in Iran, the assassination of seven U.S. citizens, and the provision of support for the attack, occupation, and hostage-taking at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. The MEK is also one of the few foreign groups to attempt an attack on U.S. soil when, in 1992, it launched near simultaneous attacks in 13 countries, including against the Iranian mission to the UN in New York. Even the MEK itself has admitted to continuing violent attacks until 2001.

With such a history, cooperating fully with the UN's efforts in Iraq would be a tangible demonstration that the MEK has left its violent past behind and that it no longer retains the capability and intent to engage in acts of terrorism. This is the MEK's moment to show that it has taken on a fundamentally different character. It should act quickly and complete the relocation and close Camp Ashraf.

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