

# ParsBrief

***Number 97***

***July 2017***

1. US Media & The Terrorists Who Cried Wolf
2. Iran and the Holy Warrior Trap
3. A communist terrorist group in Albania must be condemned by all friends of Iran
4. Secretary Tillerson Eschews Iran Diplomacy in Favor of Regime Change
5. Reacting to the Tehran Attacks in Europe and the US
6. US Legislator Brookings' "Path to Persia" II: The Proxy War Path through ISIS



Brief No.97

[WWW.nejatngo.org/en/](http://WWW.nejatngo.org/en/)

July, 2017

## US Media & The Terrorists Who Cried Wolf

Grean villepost , May 7, 2017

Right-wing, anti-Iranian figures and media in the United States have begun circulating claims that Iran had violated the JCPOA that resulted from the P5+1 nuclear negotiations, and indeed has a nuclear weapons program. Various pro-Israeli and anti-Iranian voices in the US echoed this claim. Mark Toner was even asked about the allegations during a press briefing in April. The source for this allegation was the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a front group for the Mujahadeen E-Khalq (People's Holy Warriors). Putting aside the group's shady history, terrorism, and bizarre cultish practices, the claims should have immediately been discredited. Why? These exact same forces were caught lying back in 2015, with similar claims. In 2015, as the nuclear negotiations were nearing their completion, the NCIR published photos of a safe, claiming it was in Iran and contained materials related to a secret nuclear weapons program. The photo the NCIR released was proven to have been taken from a French website selling safes. The group was caught in an obvious lie.

---

Iran's nuclear energy program has never been proven to have any military uses. The International Atomic Energy Agency has watched over all of Iran's nuclear activities, and following the negotiations in 2015, almost all of the peaceful nuclear energy program has been shut down.

---

### A Bizarre "Islam-Marxist" Terrorist Cult

The 2015 photo flub was not the first time the MEK has been caught lying about Iran. Over the last ten years they have continued to make claims that they have proof of an Iranian

nuclear weapons program. None of their claims have ever been verified. MEK did, however, cooperate with Israel's Mossad to assassinate peaceful nuclear scientists teaching at Iranian Universities. Who is the source of all these fraudulent claims that continue to be treated with credibility in the US media? So, who is the MEK? The Mujahadeen E-Khalq is a religious/political cult formed in Iran during the 1970s. At the time Iran was led by a US backed dictator, the Shah. While various groups organized resistance to the Shah in the form of guerrilla warfare, strikes, and protests, the MEK conducted adventurist acts of violence and terrorism. In addition to Iranians, Americans were also victims of MEK's terrorism prior to the Iranian revolution of 1979.

---

The Mujahadeen E-Khalq calls its belief system "Islam-Marxism." The founder, Masoud Rajavi, claims to be a prophet brought to earth by God in order to usher in some kind of Islamic Communist revolution. MEK's beliefs could almost be described as an Islamic version of Reverend Jim Jones "People's Temple," which reached its peak during the same time period. Like Rajavi, Jones also claimed to be some kind of prophet who could spiritually combine the world's religions with soviet-style Marxism in order to foment global revolution. Also like the People's Temple, many people have died as a result of Rajavi's fanatical and violent organization.

---

#### A History of Terrorism & War Crimes

After Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the MEK (also called People's Mujaheddin) briefly aligned with [Ayatollah] Khomeini, hoping they could influence the Iranian revolution from within. After one of their allied clerics was deposed, the MEK launched a bombing campaign against the Islamic Republic. In 1981, the MEK bombed a meeting of Iran's Islamic Republican Party, killing 72 people.

During the Iraq-Iran war, Saddam Hussein began funding and arming the MEK. The MEK formed an armed body called the Iranian National Liberation Army. In 1988, MEK fighters were airdropped into Iran by Iraqi aircraft. Its members proceeded to raze villages, slaughtering, men, women, and children, before ultimately being defeated by the Iranian military. It is estimated that tens of thousands of civilians were killed by MEK fighters during the Iraq-Iran war.

---

After the war, MEK set-up shop in Iraq, being coddled by Saddam Hussein's government. Hussein used the MEK as shock troops to suppress the Kurds and other uprisings against him during the 1990s.

MEK is now headquartered in France, with Maryam Rajavi, the wife of the cult's founder, claiming to be Iran's President in exile. During the 1990s, the cult ordered all members to divorce their spouses, as marriage was considered a distraction from achieving the cult's goal of toppling the Iranian government. MEK's base of operation, Camp Ashraf in Iraq, has been operated as a kind of mini-police state. According to Human Rights Watch, within Camp Ashraf, the death penalty and torture is frequently used against residents. Reports described individuals being dragged by ropes around their necks, among other routine atrocities.

---

### The Spirit of the Agreement

Throughout his presidency, the Tea Party and Republicans frequently accused Barack Obama of being a "Muslim" and a "Communist." Ironically, however, the Mujahadeen E-Khalq is a favored group of the Republican Party, despite being self-described as "Islam-Marxists." With the support of Hillary Clinton, the MEK was removed from the list of designated foreign terrorist organization in 2012 by the US State Department. The decision was based on claims that MEK had "renounced violence." However, at the very time the process of delisting was in the works, MEK assassinated Iranian Nuclear Scientists. The fact that the group was caught intentionally using a fake photograph against Iran in 2015, in addition to all of its terrorism and war crimes, should discredit its recent statements about Iran in the US media. However, despite their previous lies and horrendous record, certain US media outfits remain so biased and hostile to Iran, that they still repeat their claims.

While no evidence exists that Iran has violated the JCPOA, Donald Trump recently stated to the press that Iran had violated "the spirit of the agreement." How does one define "the spirit?" Will Iran be punished for such a subjective crime, despite fulfilling all of its written obligations? Only time will tell.

A communist terrorist group in Albania must be condemned by all friends of Iran

By Adam Garrie, The Duran, June 7, 2017

The Albanian based MEK could have helped Saudi funded ISIS to carry out the terrorist attack on Tehran.

ISIS has claimed responsibility for today's deadly terrorist attack in The Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran in turn has pointed a finger at Saudi Arabia which is well known as an agitator for aggression against Iran and also a major covert supporter of ISIS and al-Qaeda.

But it is another group that historically has waged terrorist atrocities against Iran. This group is Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) also known as the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran.

The group is an expressly stated communist terrorist group whose goal ever since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 is to overthrow the government of Iran. That being said, the group is often more than willing to forgo its ideology in order to make alliances of convenience with any state or group willing to help it pursue its penultimate goal of destroying the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Throughout the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s the group found shelter in Iraq, but the Shi'a dominated Iraqi government kicked the group out of the country in 2009.

The group then relocated to the NATO member state of Albania, a known sponsor of semi-secular Sunni terrorism in the Balkans.

The group now thrives in Albania as does ISIS. Under the radar of international scrutiny, ISIS has quietly co-opted much of the lucrative narcotics trade in Albania from local mafia lords. The result is the early stages of a perfect storm whereby Albanian political corruption and the effective Albanian mafia state are sharing the same political geography with a communist anti-Iranian terrorist group and also ISIS.

Although there is little doubt that as the Iranian Revolutionary Guard have said, Saudi has a hand in today's tragic event, but this does not preclude the MEK from having a hand in the attack.

Concerned parties must seriously examine whether the MEK and ISIS have forged some sort of pact beneath the radar. Such a thing is entirely possible for several reasons.

First of all, ISIS has never once carried out an attack on Iranian soil and given the secure and stable nature of Iran, it almost beggars belief that they were able to do so.

Secondly, if indeed the Saudi/ISIS hand was in play and was therefore able to penetrate deeply into Iran, in Tehran no less, which is geographically far from both Iraq and Syria, it

means that whoever did this had to penetrate deeply into Iranian territory before carrying out the crime. The MEK, although with difficulty, have managed to penetrate into Iran many times before and carry out terrorist atrocities. They know the internal geography of the country far more than the average ISIS commander. Furthermore, studies have shown that like ISIS, the MEK also receives funding from Saudi Arabia.

Consequently, there is every possibility that ISIS and the MEK have forged some sort of alliance or at minimum an agreement on the sharing of intelligence.

In either case, the NATO member state of Albania is guilty of harbouring and facilitating terrorism, something that Serbia has warned of for many years.

Albania is the place where the MEK, ISIS, NATO and Europe meet. If Iran wants to truly avenge this atrocity, it must focus on not only its traditional Middle Eastern enemies, but also on Albania.

#### Secretary Tillerson Eschews Iran Diplomacy in Favor of Regime Change

By Darius Namazi, Niacouncil.org, June 15, 2017

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson indicated he has no plans for negotiations with Iran and expressed favor for moving to support elements within Iran intent on regime change during testimony on the State Department budget in the House Foreign Affairs Committee yesterday. Tillerson's remarks are certain to ratchet up tensions with Iran, where elements remain deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions and have levied charges on ordinary citizens for alleged collaboration with hostile powers.

Tillerson's remarks were in response to questioning from Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), a vocal supporter of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), whose members were in attendance at the briefing. Rep. Poe (R-TX) asked Tillerson whether the U.S. supports "a peaceful regime change" and whether it is U.S. policy "to lead things as they are or set up a peaceful long-term regime change." Tillerson implied that, it was U.S. policy to move toward supporting regime change, stating the U.S. would "work toward support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of those governments."

The Obama administration was careful to avoid associating itself definitively and publicly with efforts to topple the regime, recognizing that it could undermine the cause of the Iranian people seeking to move their government in a more moderate direction as well as opportunities for negotiations. Further, given Tillerson's dismissal of Iran's elections when the moderate Hassan Rouhani trounced the hardline Ebrahim Raisi, it is unlikely Tillerson

is endorsing the method that Iranian voters have chosen – gradual change through participation. Such an endorsement is more likely to be a boon to groups seeking to violently overthrow the Iranian government, such as the MEK. As a result, the Trump administration could be headed toward repeating the mistakes of the U.S.-sponsored overthrow of Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953.

On top of Tillerson's effective endorsement of regime change, the top diplomat gave no indication that he had considered engaging Iran diplomatically. In response to a question from Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL) on whether he would press his Iranian counterparts on the whereabouts of his constituent, Bob Levinson, who disappeared in Iran in 2007, Tillerson stated "I have no current schedule to meet with the Iranians."

Similarly, in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Tuesday, Tillerson dismissed suggestions from Sen. Murphy to engage in direct negotiations with Iran over Yemen. According to Tillerson, "The Iranians are part of the problem...They are not directly at the table because we do not believe they have earned a seat at that table. We would like for the Iranians to end their flow of weapons to the Houthis, in particular their flow of sophisticated missiles to the Houthis. We need for them to stop supplying that, and we are working with others as to how to get their agreement to do that."

In a further departure from the Obama administration, Tillerson ascribed hegemonic aspirations to Iran, despite the fact that it is being outspent militarily 5 to 1 by Saudi Arabia. Tillerson stated that the U.S., "must counter Iran's aspirations of hegemony in the region." President Obama described Iran as a regional power and urged Saudi Arabia to learn how to coexist.

However, Tillerson did decline to endorse the designation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a terrorist organization when questioned by Rep. Poe, stating, "we continually review the merits both from the standpoint of diplomatic but also from international consequences of designating the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in its entirety as a terrorist organization." An Iran sanctions bill that just passed the Senate (S. 722) would push the Trump administration to issue such a designation, and Poe has been pushing a similar measure in the House.

While the Iran policy review is currently still underway, Sec. Tillerson's effective endorsement of regime change, disinterest in Iran negotiations and continued harsh rhetoric bodes ill for the administration's yet-to-emerge strategy.

## Reacting to the Tehran Attacks in Europe and the US

By Eldar Mamedov, LobeLog, June 20 2017

The European Parliament started its plenary session last week with a minute of silence to honor the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in London and Tehran. In this way, the EP has joined a number of other institutions, as well as leaders of the EU and its member states, in offering sympathy to the Iranian people.

For a country like Iran, which cannot boast of an abundance of international support and empathy, such a gesture from a leading Western institution was extremely valuable. The news and pictures of the minute of silence spread through the Iranian media immediately and boosted the good will towards the EU among the officials and general public.

There is a deep democratic significance for a parliament to offer its solidarity to a fellow parliament that was a target of a terrorist attack. In this particular case it also conveys a symbolic recognition by the European Parliament of the legitimacy of the Iranian parliament as a relatively democratic pillar of the Iranian political system.

This matters, given the background of intense efforts over the years to de-legitimize the Iranian institutions, including the elected ones, with the aim of building support for regime change. The well-financed exile dissident group Mojaheddeen-e Khalk (MEK), in particular, has developed a strong lobby in the European Parliament promoting this cause. The times, however, are changing. The images of Iranians voting in the last presidential elections, in a region where few other populations go to the polls, and re-electing their moderate president in a landslide, have certainly made an impact. They have also debunked, once again, the MEK's claims that the Iranian elections are void of any meaning. In fact, such efforts are provoking a growing backlash among the Euro MPs.

In this context, the fact that the European Parliament perceived the minute of silence dedicated to Iran as completely "normal" and appropriate is itself a testimony of the changing climate in EU-Iran relations.

Contrast this with the attitude in the United States. Although the State Department did issue a proper statement, the majority in the Senate rejected the proposal of Senators Bernie Sanders and Diane Feinstein to postpone the consideration of new anti-Iran sanctions. Instead, the Senate overwhelmingly approved the measures the week after the attacks in Tehran—despite a warning from former Secretary of State John Kerry that it could jeopardize the nuclear agreement with Iran.

Such an attitude reflects Washington's dominant view of Iran as a country unworthy of minimal sympathy even in such tragic circumstances. Hence, Trump's infamous words



about states becoming targets of the “evil they promote.” The sheer ignorance and insensitivity of these remarks is highlighted by the fact that the “evil” that hit Iran was also responsible for the terrorist attacks in America on 9/11 and in subsequent years in Paris, Brussels, London, Madrid, Manchester, and so on. Such attacks are not inspired by anything that has to do with Iran, but rather an extreme version of Wahhabism, the official creed of Saudi Arabia, whose vision for the Middle East Trump seems to have eagerly embraced.

In an irresponsible escalation shortly after the attacks, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has endorsed the idea of a regime change in Iran. He issued his comment, ironically, on the same day that his State Department released documents pertaining to the role the US played in overthrowing the popular government of Mohammad Mossadeq in 1953, an event to which today’s poisoned state of the US-Iran relations could arguably be traced.

EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini, by contrast, has reaffirmed once again the EU’s strong commitment not only to the nuclear agreement, but also to a deeper engagement with Iran in diverse areas, from economy and energy to conflict resolution in the Middle East.

Recent history, particularly the process leading up to the conclusion of the nuclear deal, suggests that when Iran is shown a modicum of respect and recognition, it is more likely to respond positively to the concerns of its international counterparts than when bullied and insulted. The EU way of showing such respect puts it in a much better position to persuade Iran to abandon some of its more objectionable ways than threats coming from Washington.

The US could have built on the channel established by Tillerson’s predecessor John Kerry with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in trying to solve outstanding issues, in particular regarding regional conflicts. Instead, the current administration is making sure not only to destroy that channel but also, with its callous and insulting response to the anti-Iranian terrorism, to create damage to US-Iranian relations that may well outlast Trump. This will not advance any of America’s core interests in the Middle East. However, there is nothing to suggest that this administration realizes that.

#### *About the Author*

*Eldar Mamedov has degrees from the University of Latvia and the Diplomatic School in Madrid, Spain. He has worked in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia and as a diplomat in Latvian embassies in Washington D.C. and Madrid. Since 2007, Mamedov has served as a political adviser for the social-democrats in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the*

*European Parliament (EP) and is in charge of the EP delegations for inter-parliamentary relations with Iran, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, and Mashreq.*

## US Legislator Brookings' "Path to Persia" II: The Proxy War Path through ISIS

New.euro-med.dk , June 13, 2017

Iran has just been hit for the first time by ISIS – the tool of the US, Turkey, the UK and Israel – so this is a declaration of war by those powers on Iran!

The BBC, 7 June 2017

Twin attacks on the Iranian parliament and Ayatollah Khomeini's mausoleum in the capital, Tehran, have killed at least 12 people and injured many more. The Islamic State (IS) group has said it carried out the attacks, which would be a first in Iran.

NATO-General Wesley Clark sagte im Jahr 2001 auf Pentagon-Insider-Informationen basiert voraus, der Iran sei die Letzte von 7 Regierungen, die die USA zu stürzen plane.

Brookings/US incredible hypocrisy to fool the world

On 29 Nov. 2013, I wrote, referring to Tony Cartalucci: The Brookings Institution is a very influential US think tank that has been building US policies over the past 70 years.

In Brookings' paper "Which Path to Persia?", 2009, Brookings writes on p. 39: "...any military operation against Iran will likely be very unpopular around the world and require the proper international context. The best way to minimize international opprobrium and maximize support (however, grudging or covert) is to strike only when there is a widespread conviction that the Iranians were given but then rejected a superb offer—one so good that only a regime determined to acquire nuclear weapons and acquire them for the wrong reasons would turn it down. Under those circumstances, the United States (or Israel) could portray its operations as taken in sorrow, not anger, and at least some in the international community would conclude that the Iranians "brought it on themselves" by refusing a very good deal."

Indeed, Iran may come under attack according to plan. Brookings writes: Goading Provocations for an Air Strike, p. 97-98): "...it would be far more preferable if the United States could cite an Iranian provocation as justification for the airstrikes before launching them. Clearly, the more outrageous, the more deadly, and the more unprovoked the Iranian action, the better off the United States would be. Of course, it would be very

difficult for the United States to goad Iran into such a provocation without the rest of the world recognizing this game, which would then undermine it. One method that would have some possibility of success would be to ratchet up covert regime change efforts in the hope that Tehran would retaliate overtly, or even semi-overtly, which could then be portrayed as an unprovoked act of Iranian aggression.”

Now the US is using proxies to bring about regime change in Iran – so far mostly letting ISIS fight against Iran.

However, the problem is that all Syrian anti-Assad warriors cooperate with IS(IS) and Al Qaeda! So, the Brookings article indirectly admits IS(IS) as a US ally.

This plan is not new in principle: Divide and rule – as already the ancient Romans said, using Muslim mujahedeens – in this case ISIS – as a tool to smash the order of states like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, indeed even Europe, and here and here

Tony Cartalucci, Activist Post 9 May 2017 writes: Armed Violence Targeting Tehran Was the Stated Goal of US Policymakers

The recent terrorist attacks in Tehran are the literal manifestation of US foreign policy. The creation of a proxy force with which to fight Iran and establishing a safe haven for it beyond Iran’s borders have been long-stated US policy. The current chaos consuming Syria and Iraq – and to a lesser extent in southeast Turkey – is a direct result of the US attempting to secure a base of operations to launch a proxy war directly against Iran.

In the 2009 Brookings Institution document titled, “Which Path to Persia? Options for a New American Strategy toward Iran,” Es gelang then US State Department-listed foreign terrorist organization Mujahedin-e Khalq Organization (MEK) as a proxy for instigating a full-fledged armed insurgency not unlike that which is currently unfolding in Syria was discussed in detail.

The report explicitly stated:

The United states could also attempt to promote external Iranian opposition groups, providing them with the support to turn themselves into full-fledged insurgencies and even helping them militarily defeat the forces of the clerical regime.

The United states could work with groups like the Iraq-based National council of resistance of Iran (NCRI) and its military wing, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK), helping the thousands of its members who, under Saddam Husayn’s regime, were armed and had conducted guerrilla and terrorist operations against the clerical regime. although the NCRI is supposedly disarmed today, that could quickly be changed.

Brookings policymakers admitted throughout the report that MEK was responsible for killing both American and Iranian military personnel, politicians, and civilians in what was

clear-cut terrorism. Despite this, and admissions that MEK remained indisputably a terrorist organization, recommendations were made to de-list MEK from the US State Department's Foreign Terrorist Organization registry – which happened in 2012 – so that more overt support could be provided to the group for armed regime change. and the group would receive significant backing from the US openly.

This included support from many members of current US President Donald Trump's campaign team – including Rudy Giuliani, Newt Gingrich, and John Bolton.

However, despite these efforts, MEK was not capable then or now of accomplishing the lofty goal of instigating full-fledged insurrection against Tehran, necessitating the use of other armed groups.

Under a section of the paper “Which Path to Persia 2009” titled, “Finding a Conduit and Safe Haven,” Brookings notes:

Of equal importance (and potential difficulty) will be finding a neighboring country willing to serve as the conduit for U.S. aid to the insurgent group, as well as to provide a safe haven where the group can train, plan, organize, heal, and resupply.

For the US proxy war on Syria, Turkey and Jordan fulfill this role.

Brookings noted in 2009 that:

A group not mentioned by Brookings in 2009, is the Islamic State. Despite claims that it is an independent terrorist organization propelled by black market oil sales, ransoms, and local taxes, its fighting capacity, logistical networks, and operational reach demonstrates vast state sponsorship.

The Islamic State reaching into Iran, southern Russia, and even as far as western China was not only possible, it was inevitable and the logical progression of US policy as stated by Brookings in 2009 and verifiably executed since then.

The Islamic State represents the perfect “proxy”.Surrounding the Islamic State's holdings are US military bases, including those illegally constructed in eastern Syria.

The use of terrorism, extremists, and proxies in executing US foreign policy, was demonstrated definitively during the 1980s when the US with the assistance of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan – used Al Qaeda to expel Soviet forces from Afghanistan. This example is in fact mentioned explicitly by Brookings policymakers as a template for creating a new proxy war – this time against Iran.

For the US, there is no better stand-in for Al Qaeda than its successor the Islamic State. With terrorists now killing people in Tehran, it is simply verification that this agenda is advancing onward.

In reality, the Islamic State – like Al Qaeda before it – depends on the state sponsorship the US, Europe, and its regional allies in the Persian Gulf are providing. It is also sponsorship they can – at anytime of their choosing – expose and end. They simply choose not to in pursuit of regional and global hegemony.

The 2009 Brookings paper is a signed and dated confession of the West’s proclivity toward using terrorism as a geopolitical tool. While Western headlines insist that nations like Iran, Russia, and China jeopardize global stability, it is clear that they themselves do so in pursuit of global hegemony.

### Iran and the Holy Warrior Trap

By F.W. Burleigh, [westernfreepress.com](http://westernfreepress.com), July 23, 2017

Is the West about to make the same mistake with Iran that it made with Afghanistan when it backed the Sunni mujahedin against the Soviet invaders? The Soviets ultimately were driven from Afghanistan by these Muslim zealots, but their support by the United States and NATO cleared the way for the emergence of the Taliban, and it helped spawn al-Qaeda and ultimately a hydra head of spin offs such as the Islamic State, al-Nusra, Boko Haram, and other violent Islamic groups.

The new mistake taking shape lies in the West’s growing support for Iranian Shiite mujahedin who are bent on overthrowing Iran’s clerical regime. These people go by various names, usually Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) or the People’s Mujahedin of Iran (PMOI), the translation of Mujahedin-e Khalq.

The name is revealing: mujahedin is derived from the word “jihad,” and it means “holy warriors fighting for the cause of Allah.” The word “people’s” signals the Marxist orientation. MEK, therefore, can be loosely translated as “Marxists Fighting for the Cause of God and the People,” or even more loosely, “Leftist Muslims Fighting for the Cause of God and the People.” They aggressively lobby the West for support through their political wing, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). This organization claims to be the political umbrella group of Iranian dissidents, but it is indistinguishable from the MEK so that MEK’s goals are NCRI goals.

The MEK charter for a future Iran, outlined in the biography of the movement’s perennial leader Maryam Rajavi, is certainly tailored to appeal to the Western mentality. It guarantees freedom of speech and assembly, religious freedom, the rule of law, respect for human rights, trial by jury, a pluralistic political system, leaders raised to power by the

ballot box, and other guarantees, such as a non-nuclear Iran. It claims to follow a modern and progressive Islam. It also advocates “national capitalism,” words that suggest national ownership or control of the means of production. The proposed charter is heavy on women’s issues: “Women will enjoy social, political, and cultural rights absolutely equal to those of men,” it states. The organization itself, however, is overly women-friendly. The 1,000-member central committee of the NCRI is exclusively female, and the military commanders of the MEK are predominantly female, making the MEK/NCRI essentially a matriarchy.

Western support for this group can be seen at the lavish “Free Iran” events the NCRI sponsors every year in Paris. These gatherings feature parades of the flags of countries allegedly supporting the NCRI, mind-numbing repetition of slogans, and a flow of speakers and entertainers championing the cause. This year’s event, held in a northern suburb of Paris on July 1, even featured a sizeable contingent of female mujahedin of rank wearing their signature blood-red head scarves.

The American speakers this year included Newt Gingrich, who declared, “You will someday be proud to say you were a part of what freed Iran,” and Linda Chavez, who said that the Iranian resistance organization “gives me hope.” They were joined by Rudy Giuliani, John Bolton, Tom Ridge, Michael Mukasey and other high profile American and European political figures. They lavished praise on the Iranian mujahedin and Rajavi, a controversial figure with a lot of terror and cult baggage she would prefer people didn’t know about.

The NCRI/MEK’s claim that it will be the champion of freedom, democracy, and human rights in a future Iran needs to be examined against the history of the mini-societies that it has already created where it enjoyed total control, most notably at former strongholds in Iraq where a social order based on the MEK/Rajavi ideology was established. These were MEK laboratories for a future Iran, particularly at a huge self-administered base called Camp Ashraf.

These camps in Iraq were the product of the falling out between Khomeini and his erstwhile leftist supporters that occurred after the collapse of the Pahlavi monarchy in 1979. The agitation and terror undertaken by the radical left were crucial to the Khomeini takeover of Iran. But once Khomeini gained control, the leftists found themselves excluded, and it then became a violent struggle between the Marxist/Socialist movements and Khomeini’s exclusive clerical rule. Khomeini was ruthless. He crushed the left in the streets. Many of those who were arrested were killed in prison. As a result, thousands of MEK supporters fled Iran, many of them ending up in Iraq where they created military

brigades armed by Saddam Hussein to fight against Iran during the eight-year Iran-Iraq conflict.

Under Saddam's protection, MEK leaders led by Maryam Rajavi's husband Massoud Rajavi, who took over leadership of the MEK in 1979, set up several self-governing camps. The largest was Camp Ashraf, started on barren land 40 miles north of Baghdad that MEK transformed into a functioning town of 3,500 people. After the American invasion of Iraq in 2003, the camp surrendered its weapons to American forces, but retained self-rule at Ashraf and other camps. The American military faced an unusual situation in that the U.S. State Department had labeled the MEK a terrorist organization for killing Americans and bombing American interests in Iran during the 1970s, yet the military had to protect the MEK due to its ambiguous legal status in Iraq.

A 2009 RAND study, commissioned to help the military understand what it had inherited, painted an unflattering, deeply disturbing picture of life in the camp:

“(Rajavi transformed) the MEK from an activist dissident group into an inward-looking cult. Rajavi instituted what he termed an “ideological revolution” in 1985, which, over time, imbued the MEK with many of the typical characteristics of a cult, such as authoritarian control, confiscation of assets, sexual control (including mandatory divorce and celibacy), emotional isolation, forced labor, sleep deprivation, physical abuse, and limited exit options.”

Based on interviews with former MEK members who were at the camp and American and Iraqi military authorities, the RAND study also found that the MEK practiced deceptive recruiting methods to lure Iranians to the camp:

“For example, Iranians taken prisoner by Saddam's forces during the Iran-Iraq War were promised repatriation to Iran if they transferred from Iraqi prison camps to MEK facilities. Iranian expatriates in third countries were told that they would be granted asylum in European countries. They were also given offers of employment as translators, along with promises of land and spouses. Some Iranians were enticed to MEK camps by offers of free visits with family members. Others who paid to be smuggled out of Iran found themselves trafficked to MEK camps rather than to their intended destinations. Although the exact figure is not known, it is estimated that approximately 70 percent of MEK members now in Iraq joined the group after its relocation there and subsequent decline in popularity. Many of them were victims of these fraudulent recruiting practices.”

Both real volunteers and people deceived into traveling to the camp were trapped in Ashraf's cult environment. The MEK leadership confiscated their identity documents, and if they asked to leave they were threatened with being sent back to Iran where they would

face persecution, or with prosecution in Iraq for illegal entry. They had nowhere to go. All were subjected to the grueling indoctrination of the camp.

These are spooky people. There are numerous videos on You Tube showing male and female mujahedin in large military formations at Camp Ashraf singing revolutionary songs, absorbing harangues by female MEK leaders, and listening to endless chants of Koran verses. The women, standing stiffly with severe appearance, wear blood-red revolutionary head scarves. Hours of videos show uniformed men stepping up one by one before a panel of female leaders to declare their willingness for martyrdom. Other videos show endless uniform applause for the leaders at mass events, and MEK soldiers, male and female, are seen goose-stepping through Ashraf parade grounds in precision formations. And we are to believe it is these people who will be the champions of freedom, democracy, and human rights in a future Iran? Given the extremely top-heavy female leadership of MEK/NCRI, one has to wonder if the organization contains the seeds of a future Iranian feminist tyranny.

One also has to wonder if Gingrich, Bolton, Giuliani and other Rajavi enthusiasts have done their homework. It's hard to find anything positive on the internet about the PMOI/MEK that wasn't generated by NCRI's propaganda machinery. Even Wikipedia slams it as a cult built around the personality of Maryam Rajavi and her husband Massoud, who disappeared in 2003 and was recently declared dead.

Or maybe the political grandees who show up in Paris every year to enthuse over Rajavi and the NCRI have done their homework. Perhaps they see these militant Shiite leftists as perfect tools to bring about the end of Iran's theocratic dictatorship, just as Sunni mujahedin were once used against the Soviets. Blood for power? Who knows what's cooking behind the scenes, but with the Trump administration allying itself with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and other countries with the expressed goal of bringing an end to the Iranian mullocracy, the kitchen is certainly getting hot.

Americans, however, should pause and look into the historical rearview mirror. It gives a lesson of unanticipated consequences for using holy warriors in the cause of Allah to achieve Western goals. If using PMOI/MEK/NCRI is part of an emerging strategy to overturn the Iranian theocracy, as Gingrich implied in his Paris speech, the world may well end up with Maryam Rajavi ruling for life over an Iran that she and her followers have transformed into one vast Camp Ashraf.