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PEOPLE'S MOJAHEDIN OF IRAN

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INTRODUCTION

The following report has been prepared at the request of Congress. Section 523 of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995, Public Law No. 103-236, requires the President to submit "a report detailing the structure, current activities, external support, and history of the People's Mojahedin of Iran. Such report shall include information on any current direct or indirect support by the People's Mojahedin for acts of international terrorism." The conference report noted that Congress intended no prejudgment of the organization and urged the Administration to consult with a wide range of people in the preparation of the report.

Responsibility for preparing the report was delegated to the Secretary of State by a presidential memorandum dated July 26, 1994. Government agencies that contributed informational records, intelligence, analysis, and expertise to the report include: the Departments of State, Defense (including the Defense Intelligence Agency and the four military services), Justice, Treasury, and Transportation; the National Intelligence Council; the National Security Agency; and the Central Intelligence Agency.

In preparing the report, we have consulted with a large cross-section of Iranian opposition groups and Iranian expatriates, including Mojahedin sympathizers. We obtained the viewpoints of prominent American academic specialists on Iran and the Middle East through personal interviews and research of their published works. We surveyed Iran experts at nongovernmental organizations and "think-tanks." We reviewed Western media coverage of Mojahedin activities. Finally, we drew upon the voluminous collection of Mojahedin publications and radio broadcasts, a public record that ranges from the 1960s through October 1994.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "Sazeman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran," or Organization of People's Holy Warriors of Iran, is a militant Iranian opposition group. Its Persian name is generally shortened to the Mojahedin-e Khalq or the People's Mojahedin.\* The Mojahedin were established in Tehran, Iran, in 1965, by young, middle class intellectuals. The Mojahedin revolutionaries developed and disseminated an eclectic ideology based on their personal interpretation of Shi'a Islamic theology and Marxist tenets. Then as now the Mojahedin advocated a two-pronged strategy of armed struggle and the use of propaganda to gain their political objectives.

The Mojahedin collaborated with Ayatollah Khomeini to overthrow the former Shah of Iran. As part of that struggle, they assassinated at least six American citizens, supported the takeover of the U.S. embassy, and opposed the release of American hostages. In the post-revolutionary political chaos, however, the Mojahedin lost political power to Iran's Islamic clergy. They then applied their dedication to armed struggle and the use of propaganda against the new Iranian government, launching a violent and polemical cycle of attack and reprisal. In 1981, the Mojahedin leadership fled to France and with other Iranian opposition movements formed the National Council of Resistance (NCR).

Yet within a few years the NCR became a mere shell as individuals and groups abandoned the organization because of Mojahedin domination. In 1986, France expelled the leader of the Mojahedin, Masud Rajavi. Rajavi was a member of the Mojahedin's original "Central Committee" and "Ideological Team." Imprisoned by the Shah's government from 1972-1979, he nonetheless remained influential within the group. He rose to command in 1975 after the Mojahedin experienced an internal schism. From his release from prison until today, he has maintained absolute control of the Mojahedin, the NCR, and its associated groups. In 1993, his wife Maryam Rajavi replaced him as the NCR's "future President" of Iran. Previously, she had held the appointed position of NCR secretary-general.

After his expulsion from France, Rajavi relocated to Baghdad, Iraq, adopting Saddam Hussein as his patron. In 1987,

\*Acronyms commonly used for the group include "MKO," for Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization, "MEK," for Mojahedin-e Khalq, and "PMOI," for People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. The Iranian Mojahedin should not be confused with the Afghanistan Mujahideen, the indigenous Afghan forces formed to fight the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Rajavi announced the formation of the National Liberation Army (NLA), the military wing of the Mojahedin, which conducted raids into Iran during the latter years of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. The NLA's last major offensive reportedly was conducted against Iraqi Kurds in 1991, when it joined Saddam Hussein's brutal repression of the Kurdish rebellion. In addition to occasional acts of sabotage, the Mojahedin are responsible for violent attacks in Iran that victimize civilians. They also engage in violence against Iranian government targets in the West.

Since their leadership's expulsion from Iran, the Mojahedin have conducted a public relations campaign among Western press and public officials, seeking political support and financial backing. Exploiting Western opprobrium of the behavior of the current government of Iran, the Mojahedin posit themselves as the alternative. To achieve that goal, they claim they have the support of a majority of Iranians.

This claim is much disputed by academics and other specialists on Iran, who assert that in fact the Mojahedin-e Khalq have little support among Iranians. They argue that the Mojahedin's activities since the group's leadership fled from Iran in 1981 -- particularly their alliance with Iraq and the group's internal oppression -- have discredited them among the Iranian polity. The clerical regime in Tehran, aware of the Mojahedin's unpopularity, attempts to discredit many of its opponents by falsely linking them to the MKO. The Mojahedin, for their part, often dismiss their critics as "agents of the regime."

Despite Mojahedin assertions that the group has abandoned its revolutionary ideology and now favors a liberal democracy, there is no written or public record of discussion or debate about the dramatic reversals in the Mojahedin's stated positions. Moreover, the Mojahedin's 29-year record of behavior does not substantiate its capability or intention to be democratic. Internally, the Mojahedin run their organization autocratically, suppressing dissent and eschewing tolerance of differing viewpoints. Rajavi, who heads the Mojahedin's political and military wings, has fostered a cult of personality around himself. These characteristics have alienated most Iranian expatriates, who assert they do not want to replace one objectionable regime for another. Given these attributes, it is no coincidence that the only government in the world that supports the Mojahedin politically and financially is the totalitarian regime of Saddam Hussein.

Shunned by most Iranians and fundamentally undemocratic, the Mojahedin-e Khalq are not a viable alternative to the current government of Iran.

## I. HISTORY

Established to overthrow the Shah, the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) developed an eclectic ideological blend of Islam and Marxism that dictated both a war of armed struggle and a war of propaganda to achieve political power. Enthusiastic supporters of Khomeini, they were active participants in the Iranian revolution. By 1981, however, the MKO had lost the post-revolutionary power struggle to Iran's Shi'a Muslim clergy. They responded to this defeat by turning their two-pronged strategy of armed struggle and propaganda against the Khomeini regime. This section traces the Mojahedin's political history, from the group's establishment in 1965 to its expulsion from Paris in 1986.

### ARMED STRUGGLE

As young students opposed to the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the founding members of the Mojahedin rejected nonviolent reformism. Instead, they established an organization dedicated to armed struggle. As they explained in a 1974 newspaper article, "We had to ask ourselves the question, 'What is to be done?' Our answer was straightforward: 'Armed Struggle.'"<sup>1</sup> Commitment to this strategic principle has defined the history of the Mojahedin, from the group's formal establishment in 1965 until today.

The founders, who kept the existence of the Mojahedin secret until 1972, organized members into compartmentalized cells subject to the authority of a central collective. They devoted their early years to the study and discussion of revolutionary theory and economics, reading such authors as Marx, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, and Frantz Fanon. They also analyzed Islamic history, interpreting early Shi'ism as a protest movement against class exploitation and state oppression.<sup>2</sup> The Mojahedin further were influenced by the teachings of Dr. Ali Shariati, a contemporary Iranian academic who developed an ideology arguing that Islam, particularly Shi'a Islam, is fundamentally revolutionary in outlook.<sup>3</sup> The MKO also claimed that the revolutions of Algeria, Cuba, and Vietnam had inspired them. Moving from theory to action, they established contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and sent members for training at Palestinian camps in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.

The Mojahedin's initial efforts to engage in armed struggle were ineffective. In 1972, after months of investigation, the



Shah's internal security organization, SAVAK, arrested dozens of Mojahedin members who had unsuccessfully planned to blow up Tehran's main electrical power plant. They had hoped to disrupt the extravagant festivities the Shah sponsored in 1971 to celebrate the anniversary of 2,500 years of the monarchy. The government organized mass trials of the suspects, who responded by formally announcing that they were members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq, an organization which they had formed to resolve the "fundamental contradictions between the people and the CIA-imposed regime."<sup>4</sup> The resulting executions and imprisonments of MKO members momentarily weakened the organization, but the survivors regrouped and restructured into an effective instrument of political violence. Even those imprisoned were active, forming communes, gaining recruits, and secretly coordinating with members who had escaped arrest. The Mojahedin's future leader, Masud Rajavi,<sup>5</sup> utilized his time in Qasr prison (1972-79) to indoctrinate recruits and establish his authority. Outside prison, the Mojahedin responded to the government persecution by commencing armed operations.<sup>6</sup>

Bombs were the Mojahedin's weapon of choice, which they frequently employed against American targets. On the occasion of President Nixon's visit to Iran in 1972, for example, the MKO exploded time bombs at more than a dozen sites throughout Tehran, including the Iran-American Society, the U.S. Information Office, and the offices of Pepsi Cola and General Motors. From 1972-75, when an internal MKO upheaval and more regime arrests temporarily slowed down their activities, the Mojahedin continued their campaign of bombings, damaging such targets as the offices of Pan-American Airlines, Shell Oil Company, and British organizations. They also attacked police posts and prisons.<sup>7</sup>

## IDEOLOGY

The MKO's embrace of armed struggle flows from the group's ideology. Its conceptual framework was painstakingly developed through years of study and discourse and aggressively disseminated throughout Tehran. A renowned scholar of the Mojahedin defines the group's ideology as: "a combination of Muslim themes; Shi'a notions of martyrdom; classical Marxist theories of class struggle and historical determinism; and neo-Marxist concepts of armed struggle, guerrilla warfare and revolutionary heroism."<sup>8</sup> The adoption of Marxist tenets distinguished the Mojahedin from other Iranian opposition movements; the Mojahedin argued that the struggle against the Shah was part of a larger struggle against imperialism led by the "world-devouring" United States.<sup>9</sup>

The intellectual contradictions between Shi'a Islam and Marxism, however, caused the Mojahedin to split in 1975. The organization broke down into Marxist and Muslim factions. The Muslim faction, under Rajavi's leadership, soon gained control

of the organization. But the religious disagreement between the secular and Islamic factions of the MKO did not undermine their fundamental agreement on the issue of imperialism, nor their strategy of armed struggle against the Pahlavi regime and American interests in Iran. In fact, both factions continued to endorse armed resistance, making the Mojahedin "the single most violent underground group and the principal killers of U.S. employees in Iran."<sup>10</sup>

The Mojahedin's enduring consensus on foreign policy is demonstrated by public statements of the group's current leader, Masud Rajavi. At his sentencing during the 1972 trials, for example, Rajavi argued that most of the world's problems had been created by imperialism and that "the main goal now is to free Iran of U.S. imperialism."<sup>11</sup> After his release from prison during the political chaos of January 1979, Rajavi delivered a series of lectures at the University of Tehran outlining the Mojahedin's program, which remained faithful to its Marxist roots.<sup>12</sup>

#### **WAGING PROPAGANDA**

Analysis of the Mojahedin's ideology is facilitated by examination of the group's own propaganda. Like their dedication to armed struggle, the Mojahedin's emphasis on propaganda reflects the influence of other revolutionaries, who sought both adherents and supporters through indoctrination. Since its inception, the group has made drafting and disseminating propaganda a priority.

In 1968, the Mojahedin established an "Ideological Team" charged with providing the group with its own theoretical handbooks. In addition to these texts, the Mojahedin published newspapers, journals, and pamphlets. They also broadcast clandestine radio messages from Baghdad from 1972-75. Those MKO members imprisoned during the 1972 trials also prepared manifestos and proclamations for outside publication. The MKO carefully controlled the contents of these documents, requiring permission from the Central Committee before one could be issued under the Mojahedin name. After the 1979 revolution, under Rajavi's leadership, the MKO reorganized and launched a weekly newspaper, Mojahed. In February 1979, the group issued a detailed fourteen-point program titled, "Our Minimal Expectations." Among other actions, it recommended that Iran cancel all agreements with the "racist" state of Israel.<sup>13</sup>

#### **"DEATH TO AMERICA"**

##### MKO Assassinations

In the period leading up to the revolution and its immediate aftermath, the Mojahedin carried out their strategy

of armed struggle. The results included the murder of Americans, support for the seizure of the U.S. embassy, and opposition to the release of U.S. hostages. The Mojahedin are known to have assassinated the following Americans in Iran during the 1970s:

Lt. Colonel Lewis L. Hawkins  
Killed: June 2, 1973

Air Force Colonel Paul Schaeffer  
Killed: May 21, 1975

Air Force Lt. Colonel Jack Turner  
Killed: May 21, 1975

Donald G. Smith, Rockwell International  
Killed: August 28, 1976

Robert R. Krongrad, Rockwell International  
Killed: August 28, 1976

William C. Cottrell, Rockwell International  
Killed: August 28, 1976

Reza Reza'i, a member of the Mojahedin's Ideological Team, was arrested and executed by the Shah's government for the murder of Colonel Hawkins. The attacks on the Rockwell employees occurred on the anniversary of the arrest of a Mojahedin member, Rahman Vahid Afrakhteh, for the murder of Colonels Schaeffer and Turner. In addition, Air Force Brigadier General Harold Price was wounded in a 1972 attack planned by Mojahedin Central committee member, Kazem Zul Al-Anvar. Widely credited in Tehran for these attacks at the time, the Mojahedin themselves claimed responsibility for these murders in their publications.<sup>14</sup>

#### Collaboration with Khomeini

Throughout 1977-79, the Shah, under international pressure, released political prisoners, including members of the Mojahedin. They played a significant part in the strikes and demonstrations that characterized that period. Like most anti-Shah elements, the Mojahedin fully supported Khomeini. When the Shah's army disintegrated in February 1979, the Mojahedin's guerrilla organizations played a critical role in fighting the remnants of the Pahlavi regime, appropriating government weapons in the process. Some observers claim the Mojahedin assisted in the identification, arrest, and execution of alleged supporters of the Shah's regime. Thousands of these individuals, presumed to be opponents of the new Khomeini government, were sentenced to death by Ayatollah Khalkhali, the



head of the Revolutionary Tribunal also known as the "hanging judge."<sup>15</sup>

### Mojahedin Support for Hostage-Taking

Under Rajavi's leadership, the Mojahedin entered the political fray in 1979, working to expand the group's membership and popularity. Mojahedin newspapers and proclamations published at the time confirm the group's leadership in renouncing the United States. The very day that 400 university students overtook the U.S. embassy, the Mojahedin issued a proclamation headlined, "After the Shah, it's America's turn."<sup>16</sup> Following the seizure of the embassy, the Mojahedin participated physically at the site, assisting in holding and defending the embassy against liberation. They also offered political support for the hostage-keeping. For example, the Mojahedin sent a telegram to Khomeini expressing allegiance to the Ayatollah's policy of "rooting out the aggressive, American imperialism of the traitorous Shah." The telegram closed with the following declaration: "(We are) awaiting the definitive command of the Imam (Khomeini) for uprooting all the imperialist and Zionist foundations."<sup>17</sup>

The Mojahedin responded to the failed hostage rescue attempt by announcing in Mojahed that they had placed their "military units," "part-time guerrilla units" and "militia" at the disposal of the Revolutionary Guards to fight U.S. imperialism.<sup>18</sup> After 444 days of captivity, the hostages were released in January 1991. The next issue of Mojahed reminded readers that "the Mojahedin-e Khalq were the first force who rose unequivocally to the support of the occupation of the American spy center," and further noted that Mojahedin members spent "days and weeks," "in heat and cold," in front of the embassy in an effort to ensure that the occupied embassy was "an active and zealous anti-imperialist center." It described the release of the hostages as a "retreat" and "surrender" and warned that resumption of diplomatic relations with the United States would be "treason to the people and to the blood of our martyrs."<sup>19</sup>

### **SWITCHING SIDES**

By 1981, the opposition groups which had formed the base of the popular uprising against the Shah had lost the post-revolutionary power struggle to Khomeini and his new regime. The anti-clerical Islamic theology espoused by the Mojahedin ensured the group's disenfranchisement. Like dismissed president Abol Hassan Bani Sadr, they had failed to secure a position in the new political structure. Although Rajavi and Bani Sadr fled to Paris in July 1981, the Mojahedin resumed their strategy of armed struggle internally. Only the target had changed. Against Khomeini, whom the Mojahedin had

supported for more than 15 years, they now declared war.

The Mojahedin initiated a wave of bombings and assassinations against the Khomeini regime that reverberates today. The most spectacular attack occurred June 28, 1981, when two bombs ripped apart the headquarters of the Islamic Republic Party (IRP, the party of the clerics), killing 74 members of the regime's top leadership, including the IRP's leader, Ayatollah Beheshti, 14 ministers, and 27 Majles deputies. On August 30, the Mojahedin reportedly bombed a meeting of the regime's National Security Council, killing the new president, Ali Raja'i, and his new Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar. In September, the Mojahedin engaged in direct military clashes with the government's forces but were defeated. Throughout the next few years, the Mojahedin assassinated Majlis candidates and members, clerics, judges, and others they identified as foes. The group also detonated bombs in Tehran and throughout the country.<sup>20</sup> The swath of terror cut by the MKO was matched by an equally ruthless response from the Khomeini regime, many of whose current leaders -- including Rafsanjani and Khamene'i -- were injured in these attacks. The regime hunted down and indiscriminately executed thousands of purported Mojahedin supporters.

During this period the Mojahedin and the Khomeini regime also established what was to become a defining characteristic of their cycle of violent attacks and reprisals. The Mojahedin selectively claimed credit for terrorist acts, identifying only with those incidents whose outcome they determined would enhance their image. The government, on the other hand, blamed the MKO for every act of violence. While the record has been obscured by hyperbole, it is important to remember that -- particularly during the early 1980's -- the Mojahedin maintained both the willingness and the capability to carry out their violent objectives.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, since 1981 the MKO themselves have claimed responsibility for murdering thousands of Iranians they describe as "agents of the regime."<sup>22</sup>

#### RISE AND FALL: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF RESISTANCE

Arriving in Paris in 1981, the Mojahedin and Bani Sadr established the National Council of Resistance (NCR). Exhilarated by the apparent weakness of the Khomeini regime, which was struggling with the internal instability generated by Mojahedin terrorism and the external threat posed by Iraq's 1980 invasion, the NCR initially included many elements of the Iranian opposition. Groups such as the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran, the National Democratic Front, the Hoviyat Group (an offshoot of a militant leftist group, the Fedayeen), the Union of Iranian Communists, the Workers' Party, the Union for Workers' Liberation, the United Left Council for Democracy and Independence, and other leftist organizations joined the NCR.

In an early demonstration of its intolerance for dissent, the Mojahedin refused to allow the participation of the Liberation Movement (also known as the Freedom Party), a prominent liberal opposition group.<sup>23</sup> The Mojahedin also refused the membership of the Fedayeen and Tudeh (Communist) Party. Other resistance groups were wary of the Mojahedin's brand of revolutionary Islam. The National Front (Mossadeq's nationalist party) refused to join the Council because it objected to the concept of Islamic government. Two other Marxist organizations, which similarly objected to the religious aspect of the Mojahedin's ideology, also refused to join.

Additionally, the NCR boasted the support of organizations already controlled by the Mojahedin, including the Muslim Student Association, the Tawhidi Society of Guilds, the Movement of Muslim Teachers, the Union of Instructors in Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning, and the Society for the Defense of Democracy and Independence in Iran.<sup>24</sup>

The early promise of the NCR as an effective resistance front soon receded, however. Defying the initial expectations of most observers, the Khomeini regime regained control and expanded its power. In Paris, the non-Mojahedin members of the NCR encountered the autocratic style of Rajavi. In particular, Rajavi's unilateral decision to tie the Council to Iraq alienated the others, who viewed the alliance as a traitor's deed. The Council's most important participant, former president Bani Sadr, formally split in 1984, castigating Rajavi as "a pawn in the settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict." (Bani Sadr asserts that the first formal pact between the Mojahedin and Iraq was negotiated during a January 1983 meeting between Rajavi and Iraqi foreign minister Tariq Aziz in France. Mojahedin publications also confirm this meeting.)<sup>25</sup>

#### RED CARPET IN BAGHDAD

In June 1986, France forced Rajavi to leave the country in what the media speculated was a deal with the government of Iran. According to these reports, Rajavi's departure was the price France paid for the release of French hostages in Lebanon. The MKO portrayed the ouster as Rajavi's "historic flight for peace and freedom."<sup>26</sup> Rajavi's former attorney, an Iranian jurist then resident in France, explained the move: "When Rajavi came to France, he and his supporters quickly ran out of money. The Iraqi government offered him support and they accepted. In the long run, they became proxies of the Iraqi regime and lost much of their credibility within Iran."<sup>27</sup> Military scholar Anthony Cordesman offered another analysis: "The end result of France's action, however, was to give Rajavi much better access to arms, training facilities near the border, and much larger financial resources."<sup>28</sup>

According to press reports, more than 1,000 Mojahedin members joined Rajavi in his relocation to Baghdad, where in a mocking gesture to the government of Iran, the Iraqis marked his arrival by hosting the type of ceremony normally accorded to a visiting government leader.<sup>29</sup> The Mojahedin's dedication to armed struggle had turned a new corner.

## II. CURRENT ACTIVITIES

Evidence of the Mojahedin's dual strategy of armed struggle and propaganda is visible not only in the group's publications and history but in its recent performance, as well. The following section traces Mojahedin operations in these two areas since the Mojahedin's flight from Iran in 1981 through its activities today. The group's most significant act during this time period was its 1986 relocation to Baghdad.

### PERSIANS AMONG ARABS

After Rajavi relocated to Baghdad in June 1986, he drew upon Iraq's assistance to create the National Liberation Army (NLA), which was formally established in 1987.<sup>30</sup> Subsequent reports indicated that Baghdad "provided training facilities and staging grounds for the (NLA) unit's operations, as well as headquarters facilities in the Iraqi capital."<sup>31</sup> One Western reporter trekked to Baghdad in 1988 to gauge the progress of the Mojahedin since their expulsion from France. He noted the Mojahedin's "softened ideology and assertions of battlefield prowess," and described their two-part strategy for gaining power. "The first (element), a military campaign, is supposed to establish the credibility of the Mojahedin, or Warriors of God. Another element ... is a political and propaganda drive designed to revise its anti-American history and to blur its near-total dependence on cooperation with Baghdad, Iran's enemy and the base of its military operations."<sup>32</sup>

To conduct a military campaign whose threat to Iran has been derisively compared to a "mosquito,"<sup>33</sup> the Mojahedin developed a lopsided alliance with Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Dependent upon Saddam for money, arms, bases (approximately five), and permission to strike, the Mojahedin's "National Liberation Army" became a tool in Iraq's conflict with Iran. In 1984 and 1987, for example, the Iraqi government cast ceasefire proposals as a response to the requests of the "peace-loving" Rajavi.<sup>34</sup> This exercise in public diplomacy was designed to undercut the Iranian government's internal support. The Mojahedin's actual military efforts have consisted of occasional strikes against border towns, industrial targets (particularly oil installations), and civilian targets.



## BROTHERS IN ARMS

### At the border

The Mojahedin's military record is limited. The group launched its most significant incursion in June and July 1988, when they coordinated an advance into Iran with Iraqi forces. During the same offensive, Iraqi units in other sectors of the front used chemical weapons against Iran. NLA units briefly seized the Iranian border towns of Mehran, Karand, and Islamabad-e Gharb. The Mojahedin claimed to have killed 40,000 Iranians, but other military observers said the NLA "just got wiped out" when Iranian reinforcements arrived.<sup>35</sup> The U.N.-brokered ceasefire between Iran and Iraq, which went into effect August 20, 1988, undercut the Mojahedin's utility to Saddam. But the Mojahedin remained in Iraq. "Mojahedin have learned to take proper tactics when and if necessary," one MKO spokesman said when questioned about the group's future in Iraq after the war. "We have always adjusted tactics in our fighting. The form of fighting is secondary."<sup>36</sup>

In March 1991, following Operation Desert Storm, the NLA reportedly fought against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards near the border town of Qasr-e Shirin. Analysts assume that Saddam permitted the NLA to cross into Iran at this time in order to signal that he would not tolerate Iranian support for a Shi'a uprising in southern Iraq.<sup>37</sup> At that time, the Iraqi Kurds also claimed the Mojahedin had assisted the Iraqi army in its suppression of the Kurds, "a claim substantiated by refugees who fled near the Iranian border."<sup>38</sup> The leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan of Iraq, Jalal Talabani, told reporters that "5,000 Iranian Mojahedin joined Saddam's forces in the battle for Kirkuk."<sup>39</sup> A recent Wall Street Journal report stated that the NLA's "only major offensive in the past six years came in 1991, just after the Gulf War, when Saddam Hussein ordered Mr. Rajavi to help quell a Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq, participants in that operation say."<sup>40</sup> A former MKO member who was in Iraq said his trouble with the Mojahedin leadership began when he questioned the MKO's operation against the Kurds.<sup>41</sup>

In April 1992, Iran bombed the MKO's primary base, Ashraf, located some 40 miles north of Baghdad and 30 miles west of the border -- territory which remained under Saddam's control. Military analysts said the Iranian attack confirmed the "phony alliance" incorrectly assumed to have developed after Operation Desert Storm.<sup>42</sup>

### Domestic Attacks

In publications distributed in the West, the Mojahedin

claim they do not target civilians in Iran. We are unable to confirm or refute this assertion. We do know, however, that in radio broadcasts of the "Voice of Mojahed," which are transmitted into Iran from Mojahedin bases in Iraq, the MKO has claimed responsibility for internal violence throughout Iran. On August 20, 1992, for example, "Voice of Mojahed" reported, "supporters of the Mojahedin-e Khalq in Kudasht (city), Lorestan (province), threw a grenade at the home of the regime's so-called Majlis deputy here and damaged it.... The grenade was thrown at one side of the house to warn him about his crimes. At an opportune time, he will be punished for them."<sup>43</sup>

On October 12, 1992, the Mojahedin claimed credit for bomb explosions (two out of three planted went off) at Khomeini's tomb, a site 10 miles south of Tehran visited daily by thousands of Iranians.<sup>44</sup> Then, on October 26, 1992, "Voice of Mojahed" claimed credit for blowing up a local Revolutionary Guard outpost in the town of Qasr-e Firuzeh. The broadcast further reported the exhortations of Maryam Rajavi, "While the enemy was reeling from the blow dealt a few days ago -- the bomb explosion at Khomeini's tomb -- he received another fiery and painful blow." It continued, "such sparks herald a massive volcanic eruption by the National Liberation Army, which will obliterate all vestiges of Khomeini's clerics and the Guards of his regime from this country -- a volcanic eruption which is being prepared today by the (Mojahedin)."<sup>45</sup> In a later broadcast that same day, the Mojahedin reported blowing up a gasoline station in Qom on October 13.<sup>46</sup>

In June 1993, the Mojahedin claimed responsibility for bombing oil refineries and other sites in southern and western Iran. The sabotage they described included "bombs and mines and booby-traps" which targeted a number of MKO-determined "enemy agents," including a "tyrant" whose residence was "attacked and destroyed." "Voice of Mojahed" lauded the "tyranny-destroying conflagration of the National Liberation Army."<sup>47</sup> "Voice of Mojahed" reported another "extensive series of operations" on March 18, 1994. It cited "epic-making attacks" with mortars, mines, booby-traps, bombs, and fire.<sup>48</sup>

A number of these self-described operations included attacks against clearly civilian targets, such as automobiles, highways, government buildings open to the public, businesses, and private homes. As a March 1994 broadcast claimed: "The exploding of bombs ... took place on the various streets and districts (throughout Iran)."<sup>49</sup>

#### LOYAL TO SADDAM

The Mojahedin have been able to undertake these raids and to support limited internal disruption because of their close

collaboration with Saddam. Visitors to Mojahedin bases in Iraq have identified their cache of weapons as Iraqi-donated arms, many of which were originally purchased from the Soviet Union. In a 1993 trip to a Mojahedin base in Iraq, one reporter saw "about 35 ageing tanks, armored personnel carriers, Chinese-made field guns and Russian multiple-rocket launchers."<sup>50</sup> In May 1988, the New York Times described the Mojahedin forces as "basically a light-infantry unit, equipped with Soviet-made armored personnel carriers and artillery. It is also said to follow Soviet-style tactics and procedures, which parallel those of the Iraqi Army."<sup>51</sup> During Iraq's summer 1988 campaign into Iran, the Iraqis reportedly turned over to the Mojahedin "large hauls of small munitions, mobile artillery, shells, tanks and other weapons" captured by the Iraqi forces.<sup>52</sup> Another reporter, visiting the Mojahedin in August 1994, noted, however, that "the weapons deployed ... (were) mainly of Russian manufacture," indicating they likely came from Iraqi stocks.<sup>53</sup> While the NLA claims to have captured all of its equipment from Iran, its limited military endeavours could not have yielded any significant amounts of weaponry.

In return for weapons and the use of approximately 232 square miles of Iraqi territory,<sup>54</sup> the Mojahedin provide Iraq with political support. Disregarding the casualties inflicted upon Iran after Saddam's 1980 invasion and overlooking his 1990 assault of Kuwait, the Mojahedin remain staunch supporters of Saddam Hussein. As one Italian reporter who visited MKO bases in August 1994 explained, "Support for the Iranian resistance is important to Saddam Hussein ... because the Mojahedin conduct diplomatic activity in favor of the abolition of the embargo against Iraq ..."<sup>55</sup> Government-controlled Iraqi media accounts of recent Saddam-Rajavi contacts provide further insights into the MKO's current relationship with Baghdad. Meetings between the two are announced to buttress Saddam's isolated position or to send a message to the government of Iran. For example:

- o On July 31, 1994, Rajavi sent Saddam a "message of congratulations."<sup>56</sup>
- o On January 26, 1994, Rajavi met with Saddam and Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister.<sup>57</sup>
- o On July 18, 1993, Rajavi sent "a cable of congratulations" to Saddam.<sup>58</sup>
- o On June 17, 1992, Rajavi and a Mojahedin delegation visited Saddam. In his statement, Rajavi said, "Iranian national movements and their masses strongly denounce the Iranian regime's alliance with U.S. imperialism, world Zionism, and regional reactionaries to launch aggression against Iraq, participate in the

blockade on it, and interfere in the domestic affairs of this safe, steadfast country in the interests of colonial schemes and conspiracies."<sup>59</sup> A day later, "Voice of Mojahed" reported the visit, noting that "the meeting between Rajavi and Hussein has been widely reported by international news agencies."<sup>60</sup>

- o On August 5, 1991, just one year after Iraq invaded Kuwait, Rajavi met with Iraq's vice chairman of the Revolution Command Council, 'Izzat Ibrahim, and Iraq's Interior Minister, Ali Hasan al-Majid.<sup>61</sup> The next day, Rajavi met with Iraq's Culture and Information Minister, Yusuf Hammadi.<sup>62</sup> These public meetings were undoubtedly an Iraqi signal to Iran that Baghdad would not tolerate Tehran's support of the Shia's uprising in southern Iraq.

#### ATTACKS IN THE WEST

While the Mojahedin's activities in the West since their expulsion from Iran have been focused primarily on the dissemination of propaganda and the lobbying of Western officials, they occasionally carry out violent attacks against Iranian government targets located in the West. The most spectacular incidents took place April 5, 1992, when in a wave of coordinated attacks members of the Mojahedin stormed Iranian diplomatic missions in New York City, Canada, Germany, France, Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Australia. "In New York," according to press reports, "five men armed with knives invaded the Iranian Mission to the United Nations, took three hostages, smashed furniture and computers and spray-painted slogans on walls in a two-hour rampage behind chained doors .... In Ottawa, Iran's Embassy was attacked and pillaged by about 35 people armed with sticks and hammers. And in Europe, hundreds of Iranian dissidents stormed Tehran's embassies and consulates ... and many of the Iranian missions were extensively damaged, some by firebombs."<sup>63</sup> The MKO acknowledged on "Voice of Mojahed" that they had "ransacked or set on fire" the diplomatic missions, and stated that the violence was a response to Iran's air attack on their base in Iraq the day before.<sup>64</sup> The similarities in the modus operandi and the rapidity with which the attacks occurred suggest a centrally planned action that was conceived and coordinated far in advance of Tehran's air raid.

On July 16, 1992, "Voice of Mojahed" reported an MKO attack on an automobile carrying Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati, who was visiting Potsdam.<sup>65</sup> Similar confrontations have occurred in other European countries since 1991, including France, Italy, and Switzerland. In December 1993, the Mojahedin stated they mistook two Turkish officials in Baghdad for Iranian diplomats and shot them dead.<sup>66</sup>



The Mojahedin also have been victims of Iranian government terrorism. For example, in 1990 Rajavi's brother, Kazem Rajavi, was assassinated in Geneva. Three years later, the Iranian government assassinated the head of the Mojahedin's office in Rome: On March 16, 1993, Mohammad Hussein Naqdi was shot by two men on a motor scooter who pulled up to his car while it was stopped in Rome's rush-hour traffic. The attack was described "as another episode in the underground war between Iran's Islamic leaders and their foes."<sup>67</sup> The regime's agents also have attacked MKO members in Turkey and Pakistan.

A more recent example of MKO armed activity in the West involved a Danish police raid on a Copenhagen villa used by the Mojahedin. The police arrested four Iranians and charged three with violating weapons laws. According to the September 4, 1994, issue of the Danish daily newspaper Berlingske Tidende, the Danish police suspect that the villa has been the center for international terrorist activities."<sup>68</sup>

## CAMPAIGN OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

### Seeking Support

After the flight of the Mojahedin leadership from Iran in 1981, the group internationalized its propaganda to gain new adherents and attract Western supporters. From his new post as chairman of the National Council of Resistance (NCR), a position he assumed in 1986 and still holds today, Rajavi commenced a campaign of public relations that developed into the formidable Mojahedin outreach program currently operating. Use of the media is key to this program. The Mojahedin issue numerous publications, including press releases, news bulletins, reports, brochures, books, and open letters (typically from Rajavi to the U.N. Secretary General or to Western leaders). Rajavi and his wife Maryam Rajavi (who since their marriage has held various high-level, appointed positions in Mojahedin organizations) regularly provide interviews to the press. The NCR also solicits the support of prominent public figures, and practices a determined lobbying effort among Western parliamentarians. Despite these efforts, the Mojahedin in fact are supported by only one government in the world -- Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

To conduct its propaganda campaign, the group has established offices throughout western Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and the Middle East. These offices are responsible for coordinating the public relations effort and through their activities have established the Mojahedin as the best organized Iranian opposition group. They sponsor public demonstrations and marches. Other types of publicity measures include television programming and musical concerts that feature prominent Iranian musicians. The Mojahedin claim



the audiences for these performances are indicative of MKO support.

As required by the Foreign Agents Registration Act, the Mojahedin must register a record of their public activities in the United States with the Department of Justice. With each registration, they submit copies of their press releases, as well as lists of editorial placements, speeches, and broadcast interviews to the Justice Department. The organization also transmits unsolicited faxes and mail of its publications to various U.S. government offices, including the State Department, on a regular basis.

The Mojahedin focus their public relations efforts on the objectionable activities of the Iranian government. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), for example, the Mojahedin stressed the horrors of the conflict and highlighted Khomeini's intransigence in negotiating peace. The Mojahedin publication, "Khomeini: The Enemy of Peace and Freedom," is one sample of such materials. The contents include a section on the "diplomatic activities" of the Mojahedin to end the war and maps of the Mojahedin's "resistance" activity in Iran. After the war, the Mojahedin stepped up its campaign to publicize the Iranian regime's dismal record on human rights, issuing, for example, "A Report on 64 forms of torture practiced by the Khomeini regime." Another common practice of the group is to collect statements issued by prominent individuals, Western governments, the E.U., and the U.N. condemning Iranian government abuses and to reissue them as a package under the Mojahedin name -- although the Mojahedin are not a factor in the Western condemnations. Likewise, the Mojahedin collect Western press reports that describe objectionable behavior by the Iranian government and re-publish them in Mojahedin documents.<sup>69</sup>

Mojahedin publications tend to mirror concurrent Western public diplomacy. For example, recent Mojahedin press releases have condemned Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie. The Mojahedin have also responded to Western concerns about Iran's regional foreign policy, highlighting Iran's program of rearmament and pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. One Mojahedin official explained the group's strategy to an Arab interviewer: "At political and international levels, the (Mojahedin) organization stress(es) to the region and the world that the main threat to the entire Gulf region (is) the Tehran expansionist regime."<sup>70</sup> Through such efforts, the Mojahedin attempt to transform Western opprobrium for the government of Iran into expressions of support for themselves.

As a result of their public relations campaign, the Mojahedin are also "well-known to Western journalists and officials for their single-minded lobbying."<sup>71</sup> Or as another American journalist opined, "By keeping on good terms with enough journalists, they hope to transform their public image

in America from terrorists to freedom fighters."<sup>72</sup> Yet because the Mojahedin are partisan, most academics and specialists on Iran have concluded that the majority of their propaganda is too selective and politicized to be a reliable source of information on Iran. After visiting Iran, a U.N. Special Representative on human rights, Dr. Reynaldo Galindo-Pohl, likewise found some Mojahedin allegations inaccurate.<sup>73</sup>

#### Recasting the Mojahedin Agenda

The major objective of the MKO's public relations campaign is to posit the Mojahedin as the alternative to the current Iranian government, or, in their words, the "face of Iran to be," and in so doing gain both new adherents and Western political and financial support. To achieve these objectives, they must ensure their organization and its espoused principles appeal to Western audiences and Iranian expatriates. This task requires that the Mojahedin renounce their anti-Western history and emphasize Western themes.

The first expression of Mojahedin ideology aimed at attracting Western support was published in 1981, when Bani Sadr and Rajavi issued a "Covenant" for the National Council of Resistance. Also known as the proposed platform of the "Provisional Government of the Democratic Islamic Republic of Iran," the covenant was prepared by Bani Sadr, who still retained the title of President of Iran, and Rajavi, as chairman of the NCR and future president of a provisional government. Under the proposed scenario, Rajavi and the NCR were to govern Iran until a new constitution could be drafted. Similar in many respects to the Minimum Expectations Program the Mojahedin had outlined in Iran in 1979, the Covenant promised simultaneously to establish a democracy and to declare Islam as the national religion. It further promised respect for civil liberties -- except for persons identified with either the Shah's or Khomeini's regimes. The document claimed that the new government would uproot imperialism and nationalize foreign trade.<sup>74</sup>

Current Mojahedin publications assert the group's advocacy of specific guidelines for a future provisional government, including: "democracy," "peace," "love, friendship, and unity," "separation of church and state," and "recognition of private ownership and a market economy." A recent addition has been the Mojahedin claim to support the Middle East peace process. The group also stresses its commitment to the rights of women and has drafted a "NCR Plan on Women's Rights."<sup>75</sup>

These claims present a revolutionary departure from the substantial written record of Mojahedin ideology. Examples of such reversals include the switch from revolutionary Islam to separation of church and state and from nationalization to private ownership. Yet the changes in MKO ideology occurred

without any public debate, and there is no public record of discussion or review of Mojahedin principles. It is also unclear when each change in policy occurred, and what internal factors motivated each shift. The absence of dialogue about this critical issue of ideology contrasts markedly with the group's earlier history of discourse.

Nor are these new claims substantiated by the record of the Mojahedin's activities throughout the last 29 years. Mojahedin organizations do not follow the principles outlined in their revised propaganda. In particular, the Mojahedin have never practiced democracy within their own organization, the Mojahedin-dominated NCR, or the NLA. The early Mojahedin was run by an appointed Central Committee. Rajavi and his appointees have ruled the Mojahedin since 1979 and the NCR since its establishment in 1981. Many Iranians who have dealt with MKO members assert that the Mojahedin suppress dissent, often with force, and do not tolerate different viewpoints. The Mojahedin's credibility is also undermined by the fact that they deny or distort sections of their history, such as the use of violence or opposition to Zionism. It is difficult to accept at face value promises of future conduct when an organization fails to acknowledge its past.

The Mojahedin's own publications further suggest the insincerity of their ideological alteration. In the past two years, the Mojahedin have begun to appropriate Iranian national symbols for use in their publications. One recently-issued journal is named "The Lion and the Sun" in reference to two symbols used by the monarchy throughout Iranian history. Yet the Mojahedin worked to overthrow the Shah's monarchy and today refuse to work with monarchist oppositionists, who likewise bitterly oppose the MKO. Similarly, the Mojahedin have abandoned their original flag, whose symbols include a Quranic verse, sickle, and Kalashnikov, in favor of the royal flag used during the Shah's rule. The Mojahedin have also begun incorporating the "Mossadeq" name into their publications. "The Lion and Sun" journal, for example, contains a report on "The Rising that Restored Mossadeq." In fact, the Mojahedin rejects the nonviolent, constitutional opposition exemplified by Mossadeq. The political party that was the heir to Mossadeq's policies, the National Front, refused in 1981 to work with the NCR because of the Mojahedin's revolutionary Islamic ideology. These cosmetic modifications appear to be aimed at expatriate Iranian audiences, among whom these symbols would resonate.<sup>76</sup>

III. STRUCTURE

The internal organizational structure of the Mojahedin has varied little throughout the group's history. Importantly, the autocratic decision-making style of the leadership and the cult-like behavior of its members -- two defining patterns of the organization's operations -- have combined to deny the Mojahedin the support of most Iranians, who fear that a "Mojahedin" alternative would be as bad as or worse than the current clerical regime.

## THREE IN ONE: MKO/NCR/NLA

The MKO's penchant for aliases has created some confusion. The group's original Persian name, the Sazeman-e Mojahedin-e Khalq-e Iran, has been shortened and translated into several commonly-used monikers: the Mojahedin-e Khalq, the Mojahedin, the MKO, the MEK, the People's Mojahedin of Iran, and the PMOI. Currently, the group favors the "PMOI" appellation.

The Mojahedin's deliberate use of the name of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCR) also is misleading. Once a bona fide coalition, the Council disintegrated in the 1980s, when many of the resistance groups that had joined in 1981 left the organization because of their objections to Rajavi's dictatorial methods and his unilateral decision to ally with Iraq.<sup>77</sup> The most devastating ruptures occurred in 1984, when former President Bani Sadr withdrew from the Council, and again in 1985, when the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I) withdrew its membership (the Kurdish organization formally ratified its decision in 1986). These two withdrawals, and their motivating factors, prompted a mass exodus and discouraged new membership. Other opposition groups which never became part of the NCR and with whom the NCR refuses to associate with include: the monarchists, notably the Iranian Constitutionalists and the Flag of Freedom Organization of Iran; and the main factions of the People's Fedayeen Guerrillas. The National Democratic Front, a leftist group that formed after the revolution, has remained a part of the Council, however. The "Revolutionary Leadership," a splinter group of the KDP-I, also has become a member.

Rajavi's authoritarian style rendered the NCR incapable of becoming a truly democratic and representative council. Bani



Sadr's version of their "difficult coexistence" in France, for example, is that Rajavi wanted "total control."<sup>78</sup> Other members of the council also realized that the Mojahedin did in fact have full control. "The Mojahedin determined who could join ... who was worthy of being given ... voting rights .... Critics were either squeezed out of the National Council or silenced."<sup>79</sup> In 1994, the KDP-I explained the rationale behind its early abandonment of the NCR: "In view of our working experience with the Mojahedin between 1981 to 1986 and of their attitude towards the Iranian democratic opposition since then, we consider the Mojahedin an anti-democratic and sectarian organization who can not be trusted to be faithful to democratic aspirations of the Iranian people." (sic)<sup>80</sup>

Rajavi's authoritarianism has its roots in the Mojahedin's organizational history in Iran. His firm control of the Mojahedin, de facto by 1975, was institutionally established in 1979, when upon his release from prison he hand-picked a new leadership from among his prison colleagues. Reviving the group's original structure, he reorganized the Mojahedin into compartmentalized cells of activity that responded to his orders or those of his appointees. In 1986, for example, after he had relocated to Iraq, Rajavi unilaterally dissolved the PMOI's Central Committee and personally appointed a 500-person Central Council. Today his fiat appears to be similarly unchecked.

The NCR now claims it includes 229 political dignitaries, most of whom are also members of the Mojahedin or the National Liberation Army, and six organizations, for a total of 235 members. From these members, it has appointed eight committees which it states will serve as the basis of future government ministries. Many of these member groups are actually shell organizations, established by the Mojahedin in order to make the NCR appear representative and the Mojahedin popular. Likewise, the NCR has formed associated groups with benign names, such as the "Association of Iranian Scholars and Professionals" and the "Association of Iranian Women." They have even usurped the names of unaffiliated, professional associations to promote their cause. In California, for example, the Mojahedin applied for a demonstration permit using the name of "The Society of Iranian Professionals." Alerted by the California state government, the Society issued a public letter which reads in part, "People of Mojahedin are using our name without our permit to promote their political activities. The Society of Iranian Professionals does not have any direct or indirect relationship to "Mojahedin." (sic)<sup>81</sup>

Although the NCR claims that it is a democratic organization, its practices do not sustain the rhetoric. For example, it is unclear what criteria are applied to evaluate whether or not a group or individual is eligible to become a member. Nor is it clear what standards are used to distinguish between group and individual memberships -- both of which have



equal voting rights. For a number of years in the 1980s, the Mojahedin described the council as a body of 12 organizations and representatives. Then, in 1986, Mojahedin publications claimed the NCR was a coalition of 13 political parties and personalities. In 1992, the NCR announced it had again expanded its membership from 21 to 150. In 1993, the NCR expanded to its current total of 235. This expansion to 235 members occurred just before the group replaced Masud Rajavi as the "future president of Iran" with his third wife, Maryam. Because the NCR membership appears to be chosen by NCR chairman Rajavi, it is a questionable source of political legitimacy.

The objective of these expansions appears to be an effort to bolster the NCR's claim that it "embraces all the political forces struggling against the terrorist-religious dictatorship ruling Iran and representing the unanimous majority of the various strata of people in the country."<sup>82</sup> Scholars and specialists knowledgeable about Iranian affairs, however, reject this claim as false. Among most experts -- whose work responsibilities require travel to Iran, discussions with Iranian expatriates, and acquaintance with the Mojahedin -- there exists a singular consensus that the Mojahedin have negligible support among Iranians.<sup>83</sup>

The third entity in the Mojahedin constellation is the National Liberation Army (NLA). Also a creation of Rajavi, the NLA was established by him in 1987 with assistance from Saddam Hussein. In addition to his leadership of the Mojahedin and chairmanship of the NCR, Rajavi moreover is the "Commander-in-Chief" of the NLA. His wife, Maryam Rajavi, now styled as the "future President of Iran," was previously deputy commander-in-chief of the NLA and secretary-general of the Mojahedin.

We could not find reliable estimates of the numbers of Mojahedin and NCR members or sympathizers in the United States, specifically, or worldwide. There are reports that a few thousand members reside at NLA bases in Iraq, but these estimates are unconfirmed.

#### CULT OF OPPOSITION

Masud Rajavi complements his authoritarian leadership by fostering a personality cult that revolves primarily around himself and secondarily around his wife, Maryam.<sup>84</sup> In 1988, Professor Ervand Abrahamian analyzed the factors underlying this situation:

By mid-1987, the Mojahedin organization had all the main attributes of a cult. It had its own revered leader whom it referred to formally as the "Guide" and informally as the "Present Imam." The Mojahedin had created a rigid

hierarchy in which instructions flowed from above and the primary responsibility of the rank-and-file was to obey without asking too many questions. It had produced its own handbooks, censorship index, world outlook, historical interpretations and, of course, distinct ideology -- an ideology which, despite the organization's denials, tried to synthesize the religious message of Shi'ism with the social science of Marxism.... It had its own history, martyrs, hagiographies, honored families.... The organization had adopted its own dress code and physical appearance.... It had set up in Iraq its own communes, printing presses, offices, militia, training camps, barracks, clinics, schools, and even prisons, known as 're-education centers.'<sup>85</sup>

The Mojahedin themselves have described the repressive conditions of the NLA bases in Iraq. A former member of the MKO, Hadi Shams-Haeri, who broke away from the organization in 1991 after 15 years of membership, wrote an insider's account of the group's activities which was published in 1993 as a two-part series in the Persian language section of the Iran Times newspaper. Shams-Haeri said, for example, that members who tried to leave were jailed, held either in an NLA camp or placed in an Iraqi prison. Moreover, they were condemned to execution for their dissent, but the orders are stayed until the MKO "reaches victory" in Iran. Shams-Haeri said that members were considered members "for life." He said they were only allowed to read Mojahedin publications and that they were monitored by informers. He also said the Mojahedin forced couples and families to separate, arguing that the people should devote their love only to Masud and Maryam Rajavi.<sup>86</sup>

Those who monitor Mojahedin activities have also found evidence of controlled behavior. A Wall Street Journal reporter interviewed former members of the MKO this summer who described an authoritarian environment. These individuals, who refused to give their names for fear of retribution, claimed that the Mojahedin jailed or beat dissidents at MKO bases in Iraq. They also said that the Mojahedin forced couples living at MKO bases in Iraq to divorce, and sent their children to live in MKO member homes in Europe.<sup>87</sup> The NLA reportedly prohibits physical contact between the men and women stationed in Iraq. Another journalist who has reported on the Mojahedin described similar conduct. "Members living in the West are sometimes said to reside in communal houses, permitted little money of their own and kept on tightly controlled schedules. At Ashraf camp (in Iraq), one official identified himself as a 'political officer' responsible for training 'the cadres.'<sup>88</sup>

Another glimpse of Mojahedin conduct can be gleaned from a review of their speech. The language used by Mojahedin members among themselves, in contrast with the dialogue they conduct with Westerners, is often hierarchical and apocalyptic.

Excerpts of broadcasts of the clandestine "Voice of Mojahed" are representative of MKO style: "Sister Maryam Rajavi ... has called on all our compatriots ... to raise the cry of protest.... (Protest by) setting fire to the centers of oppression, (and) pillaging and plundering the regime."<sup>89</sup>

Other "Voice of Mojahed" broadcasts describe those MKO members who are killed as martyrs who have "joined the caravan of eternal splendor."<sup>90</sup> In contrast, the Mojahedin have described all Iranian government officials as "mercenaries of the regime, doomed to annihilation."<sup>91</sup> They have further noted that all "who resist the tyranny-destroying conflagration of the National Liberation Army are warned that the flaming storm of the people's fury will not rest until it has wiped out the last foundation stones of the structure of the tyranny and repression of Khomeini! The flames that flicker from the weapons of the lionhearted combatants of the NLA manifest the firey wrath of God. Woe to those who cross its path."<sup>92</sup>

IV: EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Saddam Hussein has been one of the organization's primary financiers, providing weapons and cash totalling an estimated hundreds of millions of dollars.<sup>93</sup> Mojahedin offices in Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Australia are responsible for collecting donations from private citizens -- especially Iranian expatriates -- for the MKO. The Mojahedin claim that Iranian bazaari merchants have provided contributions to their organization. The Mojahedin also are alleged to have assigned members full-time to the task of earning money for use by the organization. An Italian reporter recently claimed the MKO's financial support was derived from international business: "The opposition has established a very flourishing network of international companies trading in carpets, gold, and automobiles."<sup>94</sup> Details about the identities and amounts of the MKO's sources of financial support are not available in open source reporting.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Ervand Abrahamian, The Iranian Mojahedin (New York: Yale University Press, 1989), 86. From Mojahedin Organization, "Armed Struggle is historical necessity," Mojahed I/4 (November 1974), 5-6. (This newspaper was published in Texas by an Iranian expatriate who was a prominent member of the liberal Iranian opposition group, the Liberation Party, also known as the Freedom Movement. Because of Mojahedin objections, he later changed the name. See note 23.)
- 2 See Nehzat-e Hosayni (Hosayn's movement), a Mojahedin book-length publication written in the late 1960s. Current Mojahedin leader Masud Rajavi was a primary author. Abrahamian, 92.
- 3 For a more detailed discussion, see Bahman Baktiari, "A Comparison of the Ideologies of Ali Shariati and the People's Mojahedin in Iran." Master's thesis accepted by the Woodrow Wilson Department of Government and Foreign Affairs at the University of Virginia, May 1981. Also see Abrahamian, Chpt. 4, "Ali Shariati."
- 4 Abrahamian, 129. From Mojahedin Organization, "Proclamation," Khabarnameh 26 (March-April 1972).
- 5 Current MKO leader Masud Rajavi was a member of the MKO's "Central Committee," the group's original leadership, and the MKO's "Ideological Team." Rajavi was born in 1947 in a small town, Tabas, in the eastern province of Khorasan. His father worked as a notary public in Mashhad. After studies in Tabas and Mashhad, Rajavi enrolled in political science at the Law College in Tehran University, where he joined the Mojahedin. Abrahamian, 89-91.
- 6 These operations were funded in part by Khomeini. See Shaul Bakhash, The Reign of the Ayatollahs (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 44.
- 7 R.K. Ramazani, The United States and Iran (New York: Praeger, 1982), 89. Abrahamian, 140-142.



- 8 Abrahamian, 100.
- 9 Mojahedin Organization, Mojahed, No. 107, January 27, 1981.
- 10 Ramazani, 84. During their early years, all members of the MKO had vehemently denied the label "Marxist," although they did acknowledge they had been consciously influenced by Marxism. They drew a distinction between dialectical materialism as a philosophy, which they rejected because of its atheism, and dialectical materialism as an economic system, which they accepted because it explained the Shah's regime as a tool of American-led imperialism. See Bahman Baktiari, "The Leftist Challenge: The Mojahedin-e Khalq and the Tudeh Party," Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies XIII, 1 and 2 (Fall/Winter 1989), 29-51.
- 11 Abrahamian, 135. From Mojahedin Organization, "Akherin Defa'eyat" (Final testimonies) 1972, 1-11.
- 12 Bakhsh, 121.
- 13 The major publications of the MKO's early work include Cognition, Imperial Hegemony and Imperialist Conspiracies, Evolution, Economics in a Simple Language, Studies on Marxism, and How to Study the Quran. From November 11, 1974, to April 4, 1975, the Mojahedin published a newspaper, "The Newsletter of the People's Mojahedin of Iran"; from February 1973, until August 1975, the group published its first journal. The Mojahedin also printed a number of pamphlets, including handbooks on how to establish underground cells. Abrahamian, 92, 136-139, 175. For a listing of the MKO's Minimum Expectation Program's 14 points, see 184-185.
- 14 "Most of the acts of violence were committed by the Mojahedin, whose favorite targets were U.S. employees in Iran.... This was only the start of the Mojahedin's acts of violence against U.S. citizens in Iran." Ramazani, 89-90. Abrahamian, 140-142. Also, see Mohsen M. Milani, The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), 147. From Mojahedin Organization, "Shah: Doshman-e Khalq, Doshman-e Mojahedin" (Shah: the Enemy of the Masses, the Enemy of the Mojahedin), 1979.
- 15 Ehsan Naraghi, From Palace to Prison (Chicago: Dee, 1994) English transl., 162-166.

- 16 Mojahedin Organization, "Suggestions of Mojahedin-e Khalq of Iran Regarding Necessary Steps Against American Imperialism," November 4, 1979.
- 17 Mojahedin Organization, "Telegraph of Mojahedin-e Khalq to Imam Khomeini," November 5, 1979.
- 18 Mojahedin Organization, Mojahed, No. 52, Ordibehesht 7-14, 1359.
- 19 Mojahedin Organization, Mojahed, No. 107, January 27, 1981.
- 20 The 1981 bombings are usually attributed to the MKO, but other opposition groups may have played a role. For a detailed discussion, see David Menashri, Iran (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), 188-192. Also, Haggay Ram, "Crushing the Opposition: Adversaries of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Middle East Journal 46, 3 (Summer 1992), 426-439. And, Bakhsh, 219-222.
- 21 "Bomb explosions were common during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war which ended in 1988. Many of them were claimed by the main opposition group, Mojahedin-e Khalq." Agence France Press, "One killed, four injured in Tehran blast," October 15, 1992. Also see Associated Press, "Terrorist bomb in Iran kills 17 and injures 300," April 24, 1984. And, Associated Press, "Car bomb kills 20 in Iran's capitol," August 20, 1986.
- 22 In one of their publications, for example, the Mojahedin claimed to have killed or wounded 7,500 "agents of the regime" from June 1982 to September 1985. Mojahedin Organization, "Iran," June 1986.
- 23 The Liberation Movement, also known as the Freedom Party, was a liberal political group founded in the 1960s by Mehdi Bazargan, who was Khomeini's first prime minister.
- 24 Abrahamian, 246.
- 25 Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, My Turn to Speak (New York: Brassey's, 1989), 192-194. Mojahedin Organization, "Khomeini," 46.

- 26 Mojahedin Organization, "Masud Rajavi's Historic Flight for 'Peace and Freedom.'"
- 27 Claude van England, Christian Science Monitor, "Iran, France gain from Iranian exile's exit," June 10, 1986.
- 28 Anthony H. Cordesman, The Iran-Iraq War and Western Security 1984-87 (New York: Jane's, 1987), 105.
- 29 Richard Bernstein, New York Times, "Opponents of Khomeini said to leave France for Iran-Iraq border," June 10, 1986.
- 30 When Rajavi relocated to Baghdad in June 1986, Saddam Hussein reportedly promised him that he would be allowed to administer Mehran, which would be considered "Iranian territory to encourage anti-Khomeini exiles." (Mehran is an Iranian town located near the Iraqi border; control of Mehran changed hands numerous times during the Iran-Iraq war.) Edgar O'Ballance, The Gulf War (New York: Brassey's, 1988), 189.
- 31 Kamran Khan, Washington Post, "Iran acknowledges rebel attacks; Mojahedin Liberation Army kills 'dozens' in West," October 26, 1987.
- 32 Alan Cowell, New York Times, "Exiled Iranians press a political cause from Iraq," February 7, 1988.
- 33 Caryle Murphy, Washington Post, "Iranian rebels train for unlikely invasion; Iraq-based Mojahedin stage occasional hit-and-run raids across border," July 17, 1993.
- 34 O'Ballance, 154. Also, Shahram Chubin and Charles Tripp, Iran and Iraq at War (London: Tauris, 1988), 62. "Peace-loving" is a Mojahedin adjective for Rajavi found frequently in their publications.
- 35 Alan Cowell, New York Times, "A gulf truce leaves rebels in a quandry," August 28, 1988.
- 36 Ibid.

- 37 Michael Theodoulou, The Times (of London), "Tehran troops fight Iranian guerillas on the Iraq border," April 2, 1991. Similarly, see Alan Cowell, New York Times, "Ashraf camp journal: Facing Iran, an army of resolve and day care," June 5, 1991.
- 38 Associated Press, "In Iraq, 'liberation' army waits," May 10, 1991.
- 39 Theodoulou, op cit.
- 40 Peter Waldman, Wall Street Journal, "Anti-Iran guerillas lose disciplines but gain friends in Washington," October 4, 1994.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 Michael Theodoulou and Michael Evans, The Times (of London), "Iran bombs rebel camps in Iraq," April 6, 1992.
- 43 FBIS: Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1700 GMT 20 Aug 92.
- 44 Associated Press, "Iran rebel group bombs tomb of Khomeini," October 12, 1992.
- 45 FBIS: NC1610202292 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 16 Oct 92.
- 46 FBIS: NC1610210092 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1830 GMT 16 Oct 92.
- 47 FBIS: NC1206162593 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 11 Jun 93.
- 48 FBIS: NC1803215194 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 94
- 49 FBIS: NC1803215192 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 94.

- 50 Murphy, op cit.
- 51 Bernard E. Trainor, New York Times, "Iran dissidents enter gulf war," May 16, 1988.
- 52 Patrick E. Tyler, Washington Post, "Iranian exiles' drive complicates cease-fire," July 29, 1988.
- 53 FBIS: BR0408133294 Milan Famiglia Christiana in Italian 10 Aug 94, 54-59.
- 54 Associated Press, "In Iraq," op cit.
- 55 FBIS: Famiglia Christiana, op cit.
- 56 FBIS: JN3107194394 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1913 GMT 31 Jul 94.
- 57 FBIS: JN2601145594 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 26 Jan 94.
- 58 FBIS: JN1807115393 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1000 GMT 18 Jul 93.
- 59 FBIS: JN1706171492 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1635 GMT 17 Jun 92.
- 60 FBIS: NC1906072992 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1630 GMT 18 Jun 92.
- 61 FBIS: JN0508102691 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0945 GMT 5 Aug 91.
- 62 FBIS: JN0608150291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1410 GMT 6 Aug 91.
- 63 Robert D. McFadden, New York Times, "Iran rebels hit missions in 10 nations," April 6, 1992.
- 64 FBIS: NC0604184992 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1530 GMT 6 Apr 92.



- 65 FBIS: NC1607195492 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1700 GMT 16 Jul 92.
- 66 FBIS: NC121095693 Paris AFP in English 0923 GMT 12 Dec 92.
- 67 Alan Cowell, New York Times, "Iranian is killed in Rome by 2 gunmen on a scooter," March 17, 1993.
- 68 Berlingske Tidende (Copenhagen, Denmark), "Exile army's HQ in Osterbro villa," September 6, 1994.
- 69 Mojahedin Organization, various publications.
- 70 FBIS: PM1501144693 London Al-Majallah in Arabic 13-19 Jan 93, 35-39.
- 71 Murphy, op cit.
- 72 Jack R. Payton, St. Petersburg Times, "Even terrorists take pains to present a good image," April 21, 1992.
- 73 Report on the human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran by the U.N. Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights, R. Galindo-Pohl, 1990, paragraph 184.
- 74 Bakhshash, 218. Abrahamian, 244.
- 75 Mojahedin Organization, various publications. Advocacy of women's rights is the one element of the MKO's "new" program that is present in their earlier writings, and women have been integrated into the MKO's military wing, the National Liberation Army. Academic analysts have concluded, however, that the original call for women's rights in Mojahedin ideology was advocated by the Marxist faction. Today's female "leaders" of the MKO are often presented not as individuals who have earned their positions on merit, but as dependents -- the wife, daughter, or sister of male MKO members. See Abrahamian, 168-169, 181-182.
- 76 Abrahamian, 247.

77 Bani Sadr, 191-193. Abrahamian, Chapt. 11, "Exile."

78 Bani Sadr, 191.

79 Abrahamian, 248.

80 The letter is dated July 18, 1994 and addressed to the State Department. It is on KDP-I letterhead and signed by Shaho Hosseini, Office of International Relations. The full text reads: "We deem it necessary to inform you of the position of Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran regarding the People's Mojahedin Organization and the National Council of Resistance. In view of our working experience with the Mojahedin between 1981 to 1986 and of their attitude towards the Iranian democratic opposition since then, we consider the Mojahedin an anti-democratic and sectarian organization who can not be trusted to be faithful to democratic aspirations of Iranian people.

"Both Mojahedin and Government of Islamic Republic of Iran have identical ideological background; neither could lead Iranian society to democracy and recognize the national rights of the Kurdish People within the framework of a democratic Iran.

Our representative in the U.S., Dr. Awat Aliyar, will be explaining the general position of the KDP-I with regard to various political issues in our region to the State Department and other branches of the U.S. government."

81 The open letter was published in the July 22, 1994, issue of the Persian-language newspaper Sobh-e Iran, which is published in Los Angeles. (The letter was published in English.) It is addressed to the California state GSA and signed by Manoucher Soheily, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Society of Iranian Professionals. The full text of the letter reads, "Per our telephone conversation and follow-up of the false request on behalf of the Society of Iranian Professionals by "People of Mojahedin" for demonstration permit, I hereby acknowledge that the Society of Iranian Professionals did not apply or request a permit for demonstration, if there is any application in our name for this purpose, it is false and we request for cancellation of above permit.

"The Society of Iranian Professionals is a non-profit organization, under Article 501C-3 Federal Law, involving charity, community support and educational activities. We

85

Ibid., 260.

86

Hadi Shams-Haeri, Iran Times, September 3 and September 17, 1993. Published in Washington, D.C., the Iran Times is considered "an independent weekly newspaper that tracks the foibles of the Khomeini regime as well as news of prominent Iranian exiles. Frank O'Donnell, Regardie's, "The Ayatollah's Exiles," October 1984.

87

Waldman, op cit.

88

Murphy, op cit.

89

FBIS: NC1706105792 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1000 GMT 16 Jun 92.

90

FBIS: NC1803215194 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 94.

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FBIS: NC1706105792 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1000 GMT 16 Jun 92.

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FBIS: NC1206162593 Voice of Mojahed in Persian 1800 GMT 11 Jun 93.

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For additional information, please refer to the classified section, located in Annex 1. Also, see: Chubin and Trip, 80. O'Ballance, 126. Cordesman, 105, op cit. Dilip Hiro, The Longest War (New York: Routledge, 1991), 246.

94

FBIS: Famiglia Christiana. op cit.