



IRAN LIBERATION

No. 327

News Bulletin of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran

8 August 2011

Decisive call by senior military, political, and academic officials of the Bush and Clinton Administrations on U.S. responsibility for protection of Camp Ashraf & delisting of the PMOI/MEK from the FTO list



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General Hugh Shelton, Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff



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"If the President of Iraqi Parliament believes that it is a foolish idea to move the people from Ashraf to another location inside Iraq because they won't be adequately protected, then why is it the policy of the United States to move people from Ashraf to another location inside Iraq? ."

Howard Dean, Former Governor of Vermont, DNC



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Ambassador Mitchell Riess, Former policy planning Director, State Department
Honorable Anita McBride, Chief of Staff, First Lady Laura Bush
Honorable Ed Rendell, Former Governor of Pennsylvania, DNC Chairman
Honorable Sara Sewall, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense*

Middle East, Iran Spring, Obstacles, Opportunities and U.S. Policy

Decisive positions taken by senior military, political, and academic officials of the Bush and Clinton Administrations against relocation of Camp Ashraf residents inside Iraq, stressing U.S. responsibility for their protection, and removing PMOI/MEK from the FTO list

On Saturday July 16, on the anniversary of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals decision indicating that listing PMOI/MEK as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the State Department is illegal, and its order to reviewing the list, senior military, political, and academic officials of the Obama, Bush, and Clinton administrations took a decisive position against relocation of Camp Ashraf residents inside Iraq and described statements by U.S. Ambassador in Baghdad, James Jeffrey as preposterous and unacceptable.

The panelists stressed the U.S. responsibility for full protection of Ashraf residents and characterized the delay in delisting PMOI/MEK by the State Department as contempt for law and contempt of the appellate court.

The symposium was attended by hundreds of Washington, D.C. residents, representatives of academic societies, non-governmental organizations, and media as well as representatives of Iranian Societies of Specialists from various states.

Ambassador Mitchell Reiss, President of Washington College and former Policy Planning Director, State Department



Today, we're gathered once again to bear witness and to speak out in defense of the people at Camp Ashraf and their continuing fight for freedom and dignity and justice.

In the past few months, sadly, we have seen some discouraging developments. We have seen the increasing assertion of Iranian influence in the region and inside Iraq, and we have seen American influence with the Maliki Government decline as the United States draws down its forces by the end of this year.

But in the past few months, we have also

seen some encouraging developments as well, developments which allow us to take heart to hope that the people at Camp Ashraf will one day soon receive the freedom and dignity they justly deserve.

We've seen Congress become more actively and directly engaged on this issue. We've seen Congressional hearings and the promise of ongoing investigations into the brutal treatment of Camp Ashraf's residents by the Iraqi Government and the delisting of the MEK.

We have seen a Spanish Court draw international attention to those Iraqi officials responsible for the murders at Camp Ashraf this past April.

We've seen a greater appreciation by the international community that negotiations are not possible with the Iranian regime over its nuclear weapons ambitions.

We've seen a greater willingness by some American officials to assign direct responsibility to Iran for its actions, including the recent statement by Admiral Michael Mullen, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said that "Iran is very directly supporting extremist Shia groups which are killing our troops."

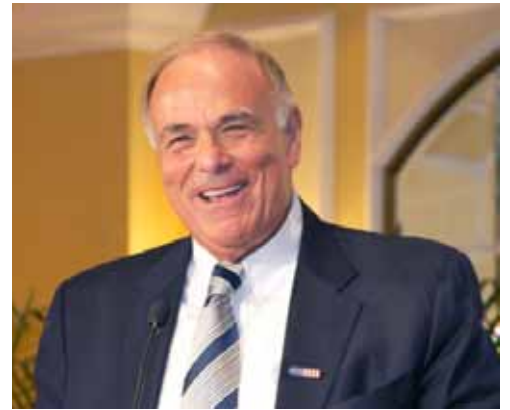
Anita McBride Chief of Staff, First Lady Laura Bush

We have to continue to use sanctions, spotlight regime abuses and understand the leverage points that undermine authoritarian regimes, such as military loyalty, nonviolent resistance, social media and economic decline.

We also have to educate journalists about the realities in Iran. The President of Iran is a nobody; we know it's the Revolutionary Guards and the clergy that control the country, and the situation is unsustainable for them.

The economic crisis is getting worse every day. Why should the citizens of a country so rich in gas and oil be facing this kind of hopelessness? Targeted sanctions should be imposed, and they should be tied directly to human rights.

If human rights improve, sanctions can perhaps be lifted, and the pressure to stop nuclear program must continue. In the fledgling democracies in the region, we have to strengthen prospects for success by deepening commitments to ideas and policies favorable to freedom.



Governor Edward Rendell

Former Governor of Pennsylvania, DNC Chairman

I will send a letter to President Obama and to Secretary Clinton telling them, one: that the United States is morally bound to do everything we can to ensure the safety of the residents of Camp Ashraf, and, two: if, Director Freeh and General Shelton and General Conway and Governor Dean and the rest of these great panelists say that MEK is a force for good and the best hope we have for a third option in Iran, then, good Lord, take them off the Terrorist list. Take them off the Terrorist list... Let's take what happened at Camp Ashraf. To me, it's an absolute disgrace that so few Americans have a clue that it happened... If the American people knew that every single resident, including the 34 who died or 36 who died and all those who were injured signed a piece of paper with the American Government saying give up their weapons because we promised to protect them and we failed miserably, we were either directly or indirectly complicit in what happened, the American people would be outraged, would be outraged.

We can win this battle in the short run about Ashraf and in the long run about what's going to happen to Iran, because the American people have to be told that there is a force out there that wants to make change, that those young people that you described and the women are ready to make change, that they just need a little assistance. And they will create a Government that will give women their rights. There is a Government that will treat Arab, Jew and Iranian equally. There is a Government who will respect religious freedom and tradition.

General Hugh Shelton, *Former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff*

There have been some substantive changes that have occurred in the political landscape and in the challenges that the Ashraf residents face, but some things have not changed.

First is the United States' guarantee of protection for the residents of Camp Ashraf. It is a commitment that we, as a nation, made and that we must honor if we are to sustain our reputation as a great nation and one that can be trusted to honor its commitments.

Unfortunately, another thing that has not changed is that the largest, best-organized resistance to Iran's current regime, the PMOI or the MEK, is still on the foreign terrorist list here in the United States.

Our great ally, the UK, took them off their list in 2008, followed very quickly in 2009 by the EU. In the United States, we have former Ambassador Dell Dailey, another colleague who is as the ambassador for counterterrorism to the State Department and as an individual who commanded our Joint Special Operations Command who knows more about terrorism and the and the various organizations in this country than anyone in the State Department today, also previously recommended that the MEK come off the FTO list.

I say, Wake up, State Department, take the MEK off the FTO list today.

Ambassador Jeffrey in Iraq, his idea that Ashraf residents should be relocated somewhere else in Iraq without any assurance or even any apparent concern for their safety or providing rationale as to why this is a good idea, other than said it moves it further away from the Iran border, is appalling.

This idea is a recipe for disaster. It is a recipe for slaughter. It is a recipe for ethnic cleansing, far outside the reaches, now, of the international community.

Equally appalling to me is the fact that when you look at the fact -- that we have not used the tools of our national power to make sure that the Ashraf residents who are provided proper medical treatment is absolutely astonishing.

As we look ahead, you say, okay, those are the problems, what do you recommend? Well, my recommendation would be, first of all and first and foremost, take the MEK off the list.

Secondly, we need to remember that the Ashraf residents are part of the group that the United States recognized as protected citizens under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and that we, ourselves, provided protection for six years.

Third, we need to pressure the Iraqis to stop all harassment and suppressive measures against the Ashraf residents today.

Fourth, given that the Ashraf residents have accepted relocation as an option, we should let



the Iraqis know in no uncertain terms, and by that, I mean, use maybe what I would characterize as "coercive diplomacy," that forcible displacement inside Iraq is totally unacceptable.

We should use the tools of our national power, particularly our diplomatic and our economic tools, to ensure that the Iraqis live up to the commitments that we made to the Ashraf residents if we are not going to do it ourselves. Fifth, we, in the United States, should step up to our responsibilities and guarantee temporary protection to the residents of Ashraf until they are resettled in third countries.



General James T. Conway *Former Commandant of the Marine Corps*



I endorse the third option, and I hope I inject in you a bit of a sense of urgency that sooner is better in terms of whatever influences can be manifested to try to make a difference.

Let me, if I can, as a final comment, just speak for a moment about the MEK and Camp Ashraf and my own observations and experiences.

I guess I'm the only member of the panel that may have had physical responsibilities for their security. And I'll go back with you and tell you that in 2004, when my expeditionary force went back into Iraq, we went into the western province and had responsibility for securing a couple of elements of MEK that were first around Fallujah and then relocated down southwest of a place we call Takok.

I asked my superior, what kind of bag of worms are you handing me here? Our job is tough enough to have a, quote, Terrorist group in our midst is something I was not prepared to -- to take aboard.

But as I dispatched some of my commanders to sit down and talk with these folks, as I visited myself, these people are not Terrorists. They're no more Terrorists than the people here on the panel.

There was an obvious contradiction. On the one hand, we knew they had been listed by our State Department, and I have tremendous confidence in our State Department. On the other hand, we were told, and the mission remained for five years in Iraq, to provide them security.

Howard Dean, *Former Governor of Vermont, DNC Chairman*



I was delighted to see the Spanish judge announce that he was going to investigate Prime Minister Maliki as soon as he stepped down. And the Spanish judge has announced that he will investigate Prime Minister Maliki as a war criminal. I was delighted to see that Genral Wesley Clark has said and then was quoted in the testimony before the Congressman Rohrabacher's Foreign Relations Subcommittee that he knows a war crime when he sees it, and what happened at Camp Ashraf was a war crime.

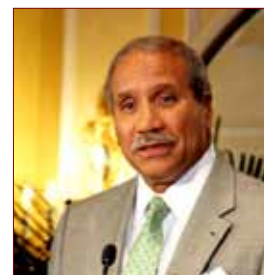
What are the reasons for keeping the MEK on the Terrorist list? In 2006, when we disarmed the members of the MEK in Ashraf, we gave a signed -- our commander on the ground gave a signed piece of paper to every single resident of Ashraf saying that the United States would protect them. We did not say we will protect you until the Iraqis will take over, we will protect you until Maliki takes over or if he changes his mind, then we reserve the right -- we said that we would protect them. That is the word of the United States of America.

So now we have a group of people who are under siege by supposedly our ally, who have been found by the Federal Bureau of Investigation not to be Terrorists, who have been promised the protection of the greatest nation on the face of the earth, and 35 of them were massacred in cold blood a few months ago. And the threat now is to get the other 3365 at a later time. These people are not Terrorists. This is not a rhetorical game.

The president of the Iraqi Parliament recently visited with Struan Stevenson, who chairs the European Parliament Committee on Iraq. The President of the Iraqi Parliament, in his delegation, said that it was an extraordinarily foolish idea to move the people from Ashraf to another location inside Iraq.

If the President of Iraqi Parliament believes that it is a foolish idea to move the people from Ashraf to another location inside Iraq because they won't be adequately protected, then why is it the policy of the United States to move people from Ashraf to another location inside Iraq?

Honorable Togo West Jr., *Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs*



I am less than clear on what our Government is going to do about Camp Ashraf, and it troubles me greatly. We have already stepped away. We have already turned it

over to the Iraqi forces. I think that as strongly and as loudly and as vigorously as we can, we need to continue to pressure the Administration to pressure anybody with any ability to have an influence on this to see that the residents are not just protected, but are provided for going forward.

I agree with what has been said about the disaster that arises if they are forced to relocate inside Iraq. I agree that the United States continues to have a responsibility for that, and I urge the United States to step up to that responsibility.

We owe our democracy as much to the assistance from other countries as we do to our own spirit. Can we do any less for the good people of Iran whose only wish, whose only ambition is to produce the very same effort to decide for themselves how they will be governed?

Louis Freeh, *Former Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation*



And I want to compliment you and your colleagues, Mrs. Rajavi and the hundreds of people that will watch this, particularly the residents and victims in Camp Ashraf. And you are leading the fight for freedom in Iran.

Just as our military forces fight for freedom on the battlefields, you fight in a much more difficult and much more dangerous place, and we compliment you on your bravery. We offer our condolences for your sacrifices, but we

offer you our encouragement.

As my colleagues have said, the MEK/PMOI is not a Terrorist group. Do you think for a moment that the likes of the people on this panel would be here if there was even a remote possibility that this organization was a Foreign Terrorist Organization?

This is not just a case of does the Department of State and the

U.S. Government not acting? It's not just the fact that they have not made this decision; the fact that they have maintained this organization improperly without legal or factual basis on the Foreign Terrorist Organization List has given the Iranian regime, through its proxy in Baghdad, a license to kill. for some time. I am very frustrated.

I am very disappointed with our Department of State, and I am very disappointed with our Government.

This is not a difficult call. And my fear here is that a continued period of inaction will result not in the massacre that you saw in the video, but a much broader wholesale massacre of not just 3400 people, but many of their supporters.

The United States has a moral and legal obligation to act here. These people are protected under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The U.S. has a promise in writing to protect them, and to defer to President Maliki and his masters in Tehran who fear this organization.

Sara Sewall, *Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense*



I think the humanitarian issues are ones in which there is broad consensus and, again, not a simple set of solutions.

And so the academic in me... cautions us to not downplay the complexities that you all live and breath vis-a-vis, Camp Ashraf, but at base, it's very, very simple. And this is the strongest point to move forward at this moment, because we are at risk of an extraordinary humanitarian crisis by the end of this year unless we are able to rally the international community to step up to the plate. The United States bears a special

responsibility. I do not think that we can, regardless of the legality, hide behind Iranian sovereignty to escape the moral obligation that comes from the history that we have had with Camp Ashraf. That is a significant concern.

And the cold-blooded murder of unarmed people is wrong no matter where it happens and no matter who commits it. It is simply wrong. It is anti-Democratic, it is anti-American, it is against international law. It is wrong. And so that piece is very, very simple.

Now, a lot of my work has been on preventing mass atrocity... Mass atrocity is the slaughter of unarmed civilians. That is what has happened in Camp Ashraf, and it is wrong.

What I would like to say in conclusion is that I do see a very special American responsibility to ensure the safety of those in Camp Ashraf until their final status is determined.