

INTRODUCTION

A Policy Isolated

Section 523 of the 1994-95 Foreign Relations Authorization Act, adopted in April 1994, called on the President of the United States to prepare and submit a report to Congress on the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran. To ensure the impartiality of the report and preclude prejudgment, the bill urged those preparing it to consult and talk with the widest range of people possible.

Before the State Department's report was published on October 28, however, it had already been discredited. The Department had disregarded the congressional requests, and refused to hear the views of the Mojahedin and National Council of Resistance. Nor had it consulted with Iranians residing in the U.S. Members of the House of Representatives said the malevolent approach did not comply with the spirit of the law. In a bipartisan initiative, 110 members of the House and the Senate had written in early September to the Secretary of State, emphasizing the need for direct dialogue with the representatives of the National Council of Resistance and Mojahedin. In their letter, they had concluded, "The report will be of little value without such consultation."

Dozens of major newspapers, political magazines and local papers published analytical articles, criticizing the State Department's approach to the Mojahedin. *The New York Times* ran an editorial entitled "Listen to All Iranian Voices." On Capitol Hill, members described the report as a gift to the Iranian regime. *The New York Times* wrote that the report had drawn ire in Congress. *The Washington Post* noted that even prior to publication, the report's value was already being questioned because of the way in which it had been prepared.

The dictatorship ruling Iran was the only party to welcome the

report, calling it a sign of America's awakening to the truth of the mullahs' statements about the terrorist nature of the Mojahedin. Quick to take advantage of the circumstances, only a week after the report came out, the mullahs attacked an Iranian Resistance base on the Iran-Iraq border with three Scud-B missiles. Observers described the State Department's report as a green light for the assault. Although the U.S. Department of Defense confirmed the regime's firing of missiles, the State Department kept silent on this flagrant violation of international law.

The State Department claims that the report is the outcome of six months of research and consultation with numerous government agencies, academics and experts. But the evidence suggests otherwise. The allegations contained therein are identical to those stated in the Department's July 26 letter to Representative Robert Torricelli. In November, the Department sent a letter to congressmen, purportedly reporting on the outcome of its research, but the text was a reproduction of the same July 26 letter.

The sources of the report are very limited and selective. It contains some 40 cases of outright fabrication, distortion and contradiction. To arrive at their desired conclusions, the authors doctored or created events according to their needs.

The real question is why the State Department has adopted this malevolent approach to the Mojahedin and Iranian Resistance. The Department claims that it opposes the Mojahedin and Iranian Resistance because they are undemocratic, use violence against the regime, are present in the form of the Resistance's military arm at the Iran-Iraq border, carried out certain actions in the 70s, etc. These allegations surfaced for the first time in 1985. As revealed later, they were part of the Irangate swap with the religious dictatorship ruling Iran.

The Iranian Resistance has examined each and every one of the accusations, both in the past and in this book. It has provided sufficient documents and has clarified historical events, proving that the allegations are false.

Representative Torricelli has commented that the State Department has an excuse, and a real reason for its attitude. The accusations are only excuses. The reason is that the Department does not wish to offend the clerics. It is injudicious for the United States, or any other country or political party, to base its policies on events

alleged to have happened 20 years ago, and whose falsity has been confirmed by documents and evidence. Significantly, while the State Department uses these excuses to justify its opposition to the Iranian Resistance, State officials repeatedly invite the Iranian regime to engage in dialogue, although they acknowledge it is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American marines in Beirut.

A better understanding of the Mojahedin requires a better understanding of their ideology, which is based on a democratic and progressive interpretation of Islam. The Mojahedin believe that the key characteristic distinguishing humankind from animals is free will. Because man is free, he can accept responsibility and be held accountable. In this light, democracy and commitment to freedom are not mere political ideals, but ideological principles, guiding the Mojahedin's conduct, despite many ups and downs and complex circumstances.

Although they soon established themselves as the opposition to the new regime after the fall of the shah, the Mojahedin insisted on non-violence in their political struggle to promote democracy. Only after all means of peaceful political activity had been eliminated, and the Khomeini regime had opened fire on the demonstration by half a million people in Tehran on June 20, 1981, did the Mojahedin rise up. The Department's December 1984 report acknowledged these events.

The Mojahedin believe that just as the Americans had a right to take up arms for their independence, and the French had a right to resist against Hitler, the people of Iran, too, have a right to take up arms against a regime condemned 33 times by the United Nations for its violations of human rights and terrorism. This right is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

All members of the National Council of Resistance are in agreement on the essential need for democracy. The program of the NCR promotes individual freedoms, equality of the sexes, rights of ethnic and religious minorities, a free market economy, and support for the establishment of peace in the Middle East and stability in the region. The 235-member coalition of democratic Iranian forces and individuals is committed to political pluralism. The Council will administrate Iran for no more than six months after the overthrow of the mullahs' regime, during which time it will hold free elections

and transfer power to the people's elected representatives. The NCR program stresses that "freedoms are not restricted up to the point of armed struggle against the legitimate and legal system of the country." The ballot is the only criterion for political legitimacy, the NCR believes.

There is no basis to the claim in the report that the NCR's decision-making process is undemocratic. Nor is there any substance to the accusation that the NCR's decisions to no longer cooperate with certain individuals and groups reflect an undemocratic nature. In the world of politics, joining or seceding from a party or coalition is routine. More importantly, the cases mentioned in the report involve persons or groups expelled for violating the NCR's constitution. All debate in these instances was made public.

The State Department also cites the NCR's refusal to cooperate with remnants of SAVAK and groups like the Communist Tudeh Party -an ally of the regime and a KGB operative in Iran- concluding that the NCR has been rejected by Iranian political forces. The National Council of Resistance has always emphasized that it is a coalition of *democratic* forces. The State Department's suggestion that the NCR should cooperate with forces that are detested and rejected by the people of Iran is outlandish.

The NCR and Mojahedin's conduct over the years best attests to their commitment to their declared principles. This demand for democracy from the Resistance by persons inviting the mullahs to engage in a dialogue is but a ploy against democracy and human rights in Iran.

The Department's objection to the presence of the Resistance's military arm, the National Liberation Army of Iran, on the Iran-Iraq border strip is another excuse for its malevolent position. The Iranian Resistance's independence during the Iran-Iraq war, the Kuwait crisis, and other regional and international incidents disproves all allegations.

The State Department knows full well that the Khomeini regime will not be ousted without a fight, and the Iran-Iraq border region is the only location suited to an army with that aim. If resistance is the legitimate right of the people of Iran, maintaining an armed, organized military force is obviously a prerequisite to any serious resistance movement. Therefore, those criticizing the Iranian Resistance for having an army on the Iran-Iraq border strip are, in

fact, trying to discredit resistance itself. In other words, they advocate compromise with the mullahs, but dare not say so outright.

Choices

An examination of the U.S. State Department report on the People's Mojahedin of Iran reveals that its main argument with the Mojahedin is neither democracy, nor use of violence, nor the presence of the Resistance's military arm on the Iran-Iraq border, nor the Mojahedin's past. At issue are two different policies towards the mullahs' regime.

For a number of years, there has been a trend in the United States which has invested in the reformation of the mullahs' regime. On this basis, it advocates a policy of appeasing the mullahs and opposing an independent, democratic alternative. A few decades ago, essentially the same policy preferred the shah to Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq and engineered a coup which toppled his nationalist government and installed dictatorship in Iran.

American public opinion, and the mullahs' international terrorism, flagrant human rights abuses, etc., make the clerics difficult to defend. Appeasement advocates thus try to distort and tarnish the image of the independent, democratic alternative, the NCR. In the absence of a "suitable alternative," they believe, *Realpolitik* will dictate rapprochement with the religious dictatorship. Use of the reprehensible tactic of character assassination against NCR President Massoud Rajavi, is but part of this larger plan. The ploy, of course, is nothing new. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, one of America's most revered presidents, came under attack from both sides of the political spectrum, and was described as a dictator, insane, and unfit to be president. Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of the five greatest American presidents, was characterized as a communist and anti-republican. General Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the French Resistance and France's most renowned President, was also accused of being a despot by his enemies.

There is, however, another approach, which views the past policies of appeasement as counter-productive. The mullahs' regime does not represent the people of Iran. It exports terrorism and insecurity to the region, and endeavors to acquire nuclear technology. The correct policy, therefore, is firmness and the solution is the establishment of democracy. This view is supported by the American public and was

endorsed in a declaration by a House majority in 1992.

Over the past year, the Tehran regime has been engulfed in political and economic chaos, and further weakened by a leadership crisis. The Resistance has escalated nationwide, and the National Council of Resistance has elected a woman President for the transitional period and prepared itself for the post-Khomeini era.

Having no alternative to their liking, the appeasement advocates published this report to discredit the Resistance and undermine the prospect of the regime's overthrow. The report represents a bid to prevent change in Iran and placate the turbaned tyrants. Today, however, there is significant congressional and public support for democracy in Iran. In addition, the existence of the Resistance movement itself makes things very different than they were during the 1953 coup and 1985 Irangate affair. As the National Council of Resistance has declared, "Nothing can prevent this regime's overthrow and the victory of the democratic and nationalist alternative in Iran. In this path, the National Council of Resistance of Iran welcomes the friendship of all nations, governments, forces and personalities who respect the just rights of the Iranian people for democracy and independence."