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Character Assassination

Character assassination, a particularly repugnant political tactic, has been employed extensively throughout history. A recent extreme case in contemporary American history, McCarthyism, has since been condemned by the public and political circles, both Democrat and Republican. Unfounded charges were leveled to discredit certain artists and public figures, in a hysteric atmosphere. Slander, distortion, fabrication and sophistry are the tools of the trade. Hitler's propaganda minister, Goebbels, believed that the bigger the lie, the more convincing. Machiavelli taught that the ends justify the means. Both "principles" are applied in character assassination.

The State Department report on the Mojahedin presents a classic case. In previous chapters, we have discussed at length the Department's allegations against the Mojahedin and the Iranian Resistance. The common theme throughout the report, however, is character assassination of Massoud Rajavi, the Leader of the Iranian Resistance. Few, if any, slurs are left unsaid: Mr. Rajavi has fostered a "personality cult"¹ around himself, is a "revered leader,"² has an "authoritarian,"³ "autocratic style,"⁴ has maintained "firm control of the Mojahedin, *de facto* by 1975,"⁵ "hand-picked a new leadership from among his prison colleagues,"⁶ "unilaterally dissolved the PMOI Central Committee and personally appointed a 500-person Central Council,"⁷ "unilaterally decid[ed] to tie the Council to Iraq,"⁸ and "reorganized the Mojahedin into compartmentalized cells of activity that responded to his orders or those of his appointees"⁹; "Today his *fiat* (sic.) appears to be similarly unchecked"¹⁰; "Under Rajavi's leadership, Mojahedin exerted total control over the NCR, determined who could join... who was worthy of being given... voting rights,"¹¹

"forcing couples and families to separate, arguing that people should devote their love only to Masud and Maryam Rajavi."¹² And the list goes on and on.

Here, we do not intend to defend the person of Massoud Rajavi, whose record of thirty years of struggle against the shah's dictatorship and mullahs' religious, terrorist regime stands on its own. As far as the allegations *per se* are concerned, we have replied to them in detail in previous chapters. Here, the aim is to clarify the truth and expose a total lack of scruples to obtain certain political objectives.

The onslaught is reminiscent of the clerical regime. Unable to deny the Mojahedin's popularity, the mullahs and their backers have for years described the organization's leaders as "treacherous lackeys" of "U.S. imperialism, Israel, Iraq and the Soviet Union" (while it was still viable), all in the same breath. The Mojahedin's "unaware" supporters are herded to the gallows like sheep, with no will of their own, and are "obedient only to their leaders."

Apparently, the authors of the report have the same basic outlook, i.e. all the forces and distinguished personalities who are NCR members, all officials and members of the Mojahedin, and the majority of the Iranian people, who cooperate with the Resistance or support its goals, are unaware individuals under Massoud Rajavi's spell. While they levied most of the allegations at Mr. Rajavi in his position as the President of the National Council of Resistance, the authors felt no compulsion to ask even a single question from the NCR's representatives or members. At the same time, even the most trivial facts and simple research by scholars of whom they approve, confirm that the supporters of the Mojahedin and Iranian Resistance are essentially from the educated elite of Iranian society. Their slander of the Resistance's leader is an insult to the Iranian people and to the generation that has spared no sacrifice for Iran's independence and democracy.

Historical Examples

Slander and character assassination have been used against the national leaders of many countries by enemies seeking to make headway. Abraham Lincoln, known today as one of the "most revered American presidents," came under attack from both sides of the American political spectrum during the Civil War. They called him dictatorial, insane, irresolute and unqualified to be President and

Commander-in-chief. In his book, *Don't know much about history*, Kenneth C. Davis wrote:

During the war he faced opposition from one side by so-called radical Republicans and abolitionists for his moderation toward slavery. More dangerous opposition came from the Peace Democrats, the remnants of the northern Democratic Party who were given the name "Copperheads" by newspapers because they were so poisonous. Sympathetic to the South, the Copperheads wanted to stop the war and considered Lincoln a dictator for his suspension of the Writ of habeas corpus, the draft acts, and even the emancipation proclamation.

Lincoln surmounted these challenges, winning the election that cost him his life. By the time of his assassination, Lincoln had moved from resolute commander-in-chief, prosecuting the war at horrendous costs, to healing unifier. While some called him a dictator, there is little doubt that a weaker President might have failed in the most basic test of Lincoln's presidency... preserving the Union from its dissolution.¹³

A more recent case is that of Martin Luther King, whose opponents hurled all sorts of allegations, trying in particular to make an issue of his personal life, to push him from the spotlight. He was kept under surveillance, without the Attorney General's permission, and his hotel rooms and telephones tapped. When these tactics turned up nothing of substance, his detractors were not deterred from churning out more allegations. In the years since his assassination, history has passed final judgment, and Martin Luther King is considered one of America's national heroes, even by those of a different political philosophy.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, one of America's five great presidents, was called a communist and anti-republican. Davis wrote that for many, Roosevelt's actions were synonymous with socialism and communism: "Even though things were getting better, obscene whispers and cruel jokes were common about the crippled Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor... Some of these rumors were tinged with anti-Semitism, like the one that Roosevelt was descended from Dutch Jews who had changed their names."¹⁴

In the late 1940s and early '50s, America experienced McCarthyism. In his book, *A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn writes:

Speaking to a Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia, in early

1950, [Sen. Joseph McCarthy] held up some papers and shouted: "I have here in my hand a list of 205—a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department." The next day, speaking in Salt Lake City, McCarthy claimed he had a list of fifty-seven (the number kept changing) such communists in the State Department. Shortly afterward, he appeared on the floor of the Senate with photostatic copies of about a hundred dossiers from State Department loyalty files. The dossiers were three years old, and most of the people were no longer with the State Department, but McCarthy read from them anyway, inventing, adding, and changing as he read. In one case, he changed the dossier's description of "liberal" to "communistically inclined," in another from "active fellow traveler" to "active communist," and so on.¹⁵

Mr. Zinn adds that under pressure from Sen. McCarthy's propaganda campaign, the State Department issued directives to remove books by authors suspected of being communists from its overseas libraries. One of those removed was *The Selected Works of Thomas Jefferson*, author of America's Declaration of Independence.¹⁶

In the late nineteenth century, France was caught up for a decade in a political scandal that became its most famous case of character assassination. In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a French army officer, was convicted of treason and passing secret documents to a German military attaché. Two years later, documents surfaced proving his innocence, but in an atmosphere abounding in propaganda, the court again voted to condemn him. Finally, a decade later, the supreme court acquitted him in 1906 and he was given the Legion d'honor, the highest medal in France.¹⁷

General Charles de Gaulle, France's most famous president and the leader of the Resistance during the Nazi occupation, was slandered so often that in 1958, when he ran for president, he said that although he had fought for France's liberty, some people accused him of being a dictator.

From Mossadeq to Rajavi

Cases of character assassination in contemporary Iranian history include that of Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq. During his premiership, "democracy flourished" for the first time, wrote Mohsen Milan,¹⁸ but those whose interests Dr. Mossadeq hindered took to character assassination. According to Milani, "... Britain resorted to every conceivable method to undermine and denigrate Mossadeq. The

British press, and to lesser extent the Western press, portrayed Mossadeq, Iran's national hero, as an old, stubborn, deceptive, and demagogic prime minister who would eventually hand over Iran to the communists.¹⁹

These allegations were not limited to Western media. Within Iran, those collaborating with the coup that restored the shah's dictatorship criticized "his policies and bid to monopolize power."²⁰ They labeled him "a devious, old vulture and a feeble leader," describing his government as the "murderer of the people."²¹ Dr. Mossadeq was accused of "extending the apparatus of terror and creating an atmosphere of repression."²² Ervand Abrahamian writes in *Khomeinism*: "The British, refusing to accept nationalization, did their best to discredit Mosaddeq, categorizing him as a 'wily oriental' who was not only 'crazy,' 'eccentric,' 'abnormal,' 'unbalanced,' and 'unreasonable,' but also 'demagogic,' 'slippery,' 'cunning,' 'unscrupulous,' 'single-mindedly obstinate,' and 'opium-addicted.'"²³

Abrahamian adds:

The British government planted articles with similar themes in the newspapers. For example, the *London Times* carried a biography of Mosaddeq describing him as "nervously unstable," "martyr-like," and "timid" unless "emotionally aroused." The *Observer* depicted him as an "incorruptible fanatic," a "Xenophobic Robes Pierre," a "tragic" Frankenstein "impervious to common sense," and with only "one political idea in his gigantic head." To encourage similar views across the Atlantic, the British fed the American press with a steady diet of - to use their own words - "poison too venomous for the BBC." Typical of such character assassinations was an article in the *Washington Post* written by the venerable Drew Pearson falsely accusing Hossayn Fatemi, Mosaddeq's right-hand man, of a host of criminal offenses, including embezzlement and gangsterism. "This man," Pearson warned, "will eventually decide whether the US has gas rationing or possibly, whether the American people go into World War III."²⁴

The allegations against Dr. Mossadeq were not confined to official comments. To portray them as impartial, many appeared in articles and even the scholarly works of some orientalist. One of the main coup plotters was an academic by the name of Robin Zaehner, sent to Iran at the time because of his knowledge of the country. Abrahamian writes:

The central figure in the British strategy to overthrow Mosaddeq was another academic, Robin Zaehner, who soon became professor of Eastern religions

and ethics at Oxford. As press attaché in Tehran during 1943-47, Zaehner had befriended numerous politicians, especially through opium-smoking parties. Dispatched back to Iran by MI6, Zaehner actively searched for a suitable general to carry out the planned coup. He also used diverse channels to undermine Mosaddeq: Sayyid Ziya and the pro-British politicians; newspaper editors up for sale; conservative aristocrats who in the past had sided with Russia and America; tribal chiefs, notably the Baktiyaris; army officers, shady businessmen, courtiers, and members of the royal family, many of whom outstripped the shah in their fear of Mosaddeq.

Helped in due course by the CIA, Zaehner also wooed away a number of Mosaddeq's associates, including Ayatollah Kashani, General Zahedi, Hosayn Makki, and Mozaffar Baqai. Baqai, a professor of ethics at Tehran University, soon became notorious as the man who abducted Mosaddeq's chief of police and tortured him to death. MI6, together with the CIA, also resorted to dirty tricks to undermine the government...²⁵

Still others accused Dr. Mossadeq of "institutionalizing repression," "intolerance," "dependence," etc., describing the coup as a "glorious victory of right over wrong" and "the sacred resurgence."²⁶ On the morning after, they wrote:

Yesterday Tehran was trembling under the resolute marching of the Army and anti-foreigner Muslims. Mossadeq, the bloody old beast, resigned under the annihilating blows of the Muslims. That traitor Hossein Fatemi, who escaped the bullets of our brothers, was mutilated. The revolutionary and legal prime minister [meaning General Zahedi who was appointed to the post after the coup] spoke to the nation. All government centers were captured by the Muslims and the Islamic army, and the spies, those selling out the country and operatives of Mossadeq's treacherous reign escaped to their filthy nests to avoid retribution.²⁷

Today, Massoud Rajavi is under attack by the Iranian adherents and foreign backers of the same policy objectives that brought about the 1953 coup. Posing as politicians, academics and lawyers, they are supported by the mullahs' regime, affiliates of the shah's SAVAK, and those who have raised the white flag in their resistance against the regime. Their slander against the National Council of Resistance and the person of Massoud Rajavi is played up in the regime's media. The exchange goes both ways: The State Department report cites several remarks against the Mojahedin by individuals who officially work with the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence.²⁸

Since 1979, the Khomeini regime has kept up a steady stream of allegations against the Mojahedin and Mr. Rajavi. In the early years,

Khomeini used the Islamic Republican Party as his mouthpiece, whose propaganda against the Mojahedin was intended to counter the organization's growing popularity. The Mojahedin were accused of being "dependent on Iraq," "puppets of American imperialism," "morally corrupt," and of torturing their own members. The common denominator of all the propaganda were attacks on Massoud Rajavi intended to create a split within the organization. Everyday, the regime's dailies ran articles about opposition to Massoud Rajavi within the Mojahedin. In March 1980, *Le Monde* wrote:

The daily *Jomhuri Islami* has devoted entire pages to writings against the Mojahedin and its leadership. On the eve of the election, hundreds of thousands of newsletters abounding in vituperations were distributed. In one, Mr. Rajavi is described as a SAVAK agent. Doubtless, the fundamentalist clergy consider these leftist Muslims a greater enemy than the Marxist organizations, easily discredited with the label of atheist. Mr. Rajavi says that the reactionary clergy are trying to create an atmosphere of McCarthyism.²⁹

When such ploys proved ineffective, and Rajavi's popularity grew among the public, Khomeini intervened and spoke out against him. Today, the State Department accuses Mr. Rajavi of collaborating with the "enemy of the people of Iran." Meanwhile, leftovers of the shah's SAVAK, such as the "Flag of Freedom" organization and "Iran's constitutionalists," are described as democratic. Those individuals and groups who, for whatever reason, switched sides and cooperated with the dictatorship (like Mozafar Baqa'i at the time of Dr. Mossadeq) are portrayed as democratic forces which left the National Council of Resistance due to its lack of democracy and Rajavi's "authoritarian style."³⁰

In referring to Rajavi's incarceration in the shah's prisons, the report's authors avoid mention of the persistent tortures he endured at the hands of SAVAK. Nor is there any comment on United States support of the shah and his hated secret police during those years. Instead, they describe Mr. Rajavi's efforts to resist against the opportunist Marxists who had shattered the Mojahedin organization, and to revive the organization in those difficult circumstances, as follows: "The Mojahedin's future leader, Masud Rajavi, utilized his time in Qasr prison (1972-79) to indoctrinate and establish his authority."³¹

Who is Massoud Rajavi?

Massoud Rajavi was born in 1948 in the city of Tabas in the northeastern province of Khorassan. The youngest of five brothers, he is a graduate of political law from Tehran University. His brothers completed their higher education in France, Switzerland, Britain and Belgium. The eldest, Professor Kazem Rajavi, was assassinated in April 1990 in Geneva. His only sister, Monireh, was executed in 1988 after enduring six years of imprisonment with her two small children. Asghar Nazemi, her husband, had been executed two years earlier. Mr. Rajavi's elderly parents were arrested and imprisoned by the mullahs in 1981. His first wife, Ashraf, was also a Mojahedin prisoner during the time of the shah. She married Mr. Rajavi in summer 1979, and was slain in Tehran in February 1982 when the *Pasdaran* attacked her residence.

In high school Mr. Rajavi was a sympathizer of Ayatollah Taleqani and Mehdi Bazargan's Freedom Movement. He became acquainted with the Mojahedin at the university and became a member in 1967. He was in direct contact with the organization's founder, Mohammad Hanifnejad, and later became a Central Committee member. Mr. Rajavi was arrested in 1971 and sentenced to death. His elder brother, Professor Kazem Rajavi, organized a worldwide campaign to save his life, and his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. SAVAK, unable to execute him because of international pressure, kept Rajavi under torture throughout his incarceration. Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as distinguished European personalities such as François Mitterrand, intervened to save his life many times. He was released among the last group of political prisoners in January 1979.

Despite the difficult conditions of prison, Mr. Rajavi had to fill the vacuum of the Mojahedin's executed leaders and revive the organization, shattered by Marxists in an internal coup. He spent thousands of hours, under extraordinarily restrictive conditions, formulating and teaching the Mojahedin's positions. All his activities had to be kept hidden from the eyes of the SAVAK and the prison guards. Endemic illness and systematic torture aggravated the difficulties of his task. Every time SAVAK got wind of efforts, he was returned to the torture chambers, but he relentlessly continued his discussions with his fellow cell-mates. Afterwards, the imprisoned

Mojahedin passed on these positions to those members still outside.

Mr. Rajavi described the Marxist current, which had shattered not only the Mojahedin organization, but also the unity and trust among opposition forces, as treacherous and deviant. He censured their misappropriation of the name "Mojahedin" stressing that the ideology of the Mojahedin was Islam, and their goal to overthrow the shah and establish an independent, popular government. These decisive positions forced the Marxists to stop using the Mojahedin's name in 1977. He warned that the blow to the Mojahedin would give rise to backward interpretations of the religion, and advised the Mojahedin to keep their distance from the reactionaries, whose ideologue he identified as Khomeini. From the roof of Qasr Prison on the last day of his captivity, he spoke as the representative of the last group of political prisoners to thousands of Tehran residents who had come to secure his freedom. He expressed the hope that the prisons would be closed forever, and political freedoms established in Iran.

Several days prior to Khomeini's arrival in Tehran, his son, Ahmad, called Mr. Rajavi from Paris, telling him, "You have a lot of support in Iran and if you form a political party, millions will join you." Several weeks later, in a meeting in Tehran, Ahmad Khomeini told Rajavi, "If you support the Imam and oppose his opponents, all doors will be open to you, and you will be given all that you need." Rajavi rejected Khomeini's proposal, saying that the Mojahedin sought a nationalist, democratic government. If Khomeini took that route, the Mojahedin would do their utmost for him, he replied.

A year later, in spring 1980, Mr. Rajavi met with Hashemi Rafsanjani, then a member of the Revolutionary Council and Minister of the Interior, to file a complaint on the multitude of cases of fraud and rigging by the regime's operatives during the parliamentary elections. Rafsanjani told him: "Forget about all this. You have an organization, a very good reputation and a lot of respect. If you had accepted the Imam and the velayat-e faqih, all doors would have been open to you. You have forced us to bring ministers and Majlis deputies from abroad." Mr. Rajavi replied: "You should not expect us to accept club-wielding and monopoly of power under the banner of Islam."

Soon after the revolution, the Mojahedin launched their own cultural, ideological campaign among intellectuals and the younger

generation to counter Khomeini's despotic and reactionary interpretation of Islam. In late 1979, Rajavi began a series of lectures in philosophy at Sharif University of Technology. Every week, 10,000 students took part in these classes, and more than 100,000 others watched the video recordings of them across Iran. The transcripts were published weekly by the hundreds of thousands, and distributed throughout Iran. After just 16 weeks, Khomeini shut down the universities, his regime's leaders stressing that the universities had become a base for the Mojahedin.

In his book, *The Iranian Mojahedin*, Ervand Abrahamian writes:

Rajavi's candidacy was not only endorsed by the Mojahedin-affiliated organizations...; but also by an impressive array of independent organizations including the Feda'iyān, the National Democratic Front, the Kurdish Democratic Party, the Kurdish Toilers Revolutionary Party (Komula), the Society of Iranian Socialists, the Society for the Cultural and Political Rights of the Turkomans, the Society of Young Assyrians, and the Joint Group of Armenian, Zoroastrian and Jewish Minorities. Rajavi also received the support of a large number of prominent figures: Taleqani's widow; Shaykh Ezeddin Hosayni, the spiritual leader of the Sunni Kurds in Mahabad; Hojjat al-Islam Jalal Ganjehi...; fifty well-known members of the Iranian Writers' Association, including the economist Naser Pakdaman, the essayist Manuchehr Hezarkhani and the secular historians Feraydun Adamiyyat and Homa Nateq; and, of course, many of the families of the early Mojahedin martyrs, notably the Hanif-nezhads, Rezais, Mohsens, Badizadegans, Asgarizadehs, Sadeqs, Meshkinfams, and Mihandusts. The Mojahedin had become the vanguards of the secular opposition to the Islamic Republic.³²

In a speech in June 1980 at Tehran's Amjadieh Stadium, Mr. Rajavi criticized the regime's leaders about the suppression of liberties. The gathering in tribute to the victims of club-wielding was itself attacked, creating a major political scandal for the regime. Twenty deputies from the newly convened parliament issued the body's first statement, condemning the attack. Even Ahmad Khomeini denounced the assault. Many observers described Massoud Rajavi as the leader of the anti-Khomeini opposition. Several days later, Khomeini made his strongest speech to date against the Mojahedin, candidly expressing his concern at Rajavi's popularity,³³ who had begun a campaign to unite the democratic dissident forces. The daily *Mojahed*, with a circulation of 500,000, had the largest audience in Iran at the time. It allocated a section, entitled *Showra* (Council), for

other opposition groups and personalities to state their views.

In early 1981, in a series of lengthy interviews, Rajavi explained the Mojahedin's viewpoints about Khomeini and other political trends at the time, and proposed the formation of a front against religious backwardness. The same year, when Khomeini dismissed the President, Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr, and state agents began to hunt him down, Rajavi invited Bani-Sadr to stay at his secret residence in Tehran. "Now that Bani-Sadr has taken a step against Khomeini," he said, "we have a duty to protect him." After forming the National Council of Resistance in Tehran shortly thereafter, Rajavi along with Bani-Sadr departed for France aboard an Iranian military jet.

A Historical Leader

Despite Mr. Rajavi's decisive role in the Mojahedin's history, all important decisions within the organization have been adopted collectively after long discussions. Through this process, new members assumed greater responsibilities. Most members of the Mojahedin's Leadership Council and more than 90 percent of the organization's current Central Council joined the Mojahedin after 1979.

Since 1989, Mr. Rajavi has had no executive responsibilities in the Mojahedin organization. His role in safeguarding the principles of the Mojahedin as a Muslim, democratic, nationalist and progressive organization in the 1970s, and more importantly against Khomeini's all-out assault to destroy the Mojahedin, has made him a historical and ideological leader for the Mojahedin.

Since the formation of the NCR, most of Mr. Rajavi's efforts have been devoted to the Council. His patient, democratic manner of managing the NCR's affairs has been instrumental in the Council's expansion and resilience, and has earned him the trust of the NCR's members. Mohammad Hossein Naqdi, an Iranian diplomat, joined the Council in 1982. He was assassinated by the regime's terrorists in 1993 in Rome. Mr. Naqdi said of Massoud Rajavi in a December 1992 interview, following the Council's expansion:

We in the Council are hesitant to highlight the role of individuals, but complements aside, I really think that in the world of politics, (Mr. Rajavi's) presence has, more than anything else, been the cause of the advances of the NCR and Iranian Resistance. If we theorize about what would have

happened if he had not been the NCR's President, I believe if the Iranian Resistance existed at all, it would certainly be far less than it is today.³⁴

In the same series of interviews, Dr. Manouchehr Hezarkhani, a distinguished Iranian writer and Chairman of the Council's Culture and Art Committee, commented on the procedures of NCR meetings:

When we arrive at the meetings, we do not share the same views... When we meet in session, sometimes we have serious arguments about certain matters, about political solutions. It is generally well understood that the point is to hold such meetings, where differences can be talked about and a consensus reached, but the individual capable of chairing such meetings and keeping the delicate balance of cooperation between different groups, none of whom are professional politicians, is gifted with the art of leadership... We have this leadership, and I think that to a large extent, it smoothes out the bumps.³⁵

Whenever the interests of the Iranian people and democracy have been at stake, political considerations or concerns about protecting his personal prestige have never prevented Mr. Rajavi from making sensitive decisions. Launching the campaign for peace in the Iran-Iraq war in 1983, when Khomeini's belligerent nature had not been fully exposed, generated venomous propaganda by the regime and its internal and external allies. It was one of many examples of risks that few are willing to take. The formation of the National Liberation Army of Iran, as the most precious achievement of Iran's history and best guarantee and lever to overthrow the mullahs' regime, is another.

Rajavi has always stressed that there is no insistence upon the NCR or Mojahedin. "If at any time, any group or alternative is found to be better equipped to overthrow the regime and guarantee Iran's independence, democracy and popular sovereignty, we will definitely and wholeheartedly support it, even if it is opposed to our way of thinking," he says.³⁶

At one of the most sensitive junctures of Iran's history, Khomeini sought to revive an Ottoman-like empire by taking advantage of special circumstances and usurping both temporal and spiritual power. Massoud Rajavi launched an all-out resistance against him. For this reason, he no longer belongs to a specific group; Massoud Rajavi is a national leader, following in the footsteps of previous Iranian leaders, from Sattar-Khan³⁷ to Mirza Kuchek-Khan³⁸ to Dr. Mossadeq.

Iran's political forces and people have learned from history, and are not intimidated by the State Department's unfounded allegations against Massoud Rajavi. Over the past 14 years, despite the conspiracies of the Khomeini regime and its domestic and international allies, the NCR has remained intact to become the longest-lasting political coalition in Iran's contemporary history. With its expansion, it is able to represent the majority of the Iranian people. Precisely for this reason, the authors of the report reveal their alarm at the progress of the Resistance and the growing chance for democracy in Iran, by hurling allegations at the Resistance's leader, much like the mullahs, the remnants of the shah and the politically bankrupt Marxist groups.

In its December 1994 declaration, unanimously signed, the NCR stressed:

The National Council of Resistance vehemently rejects and condemns the report's inaccurate portrayal of the NCR, its history, and past and present members, as well as the unfounded allegations against its President and the redundant charges of a lack of internal democracy. The terminology has been taken straight from the notorious lexicon of the former regime's supporters and the current regime's operatives. As previously stated on numerous occasions, the NCR emphasizes: Mr. Massoud Rajavi is the NCR's President and spokesman. As such, his statements and stances should be regarded as the outcome of the Council's deliberations and decisions. Contrary to the hollow allegations raised in the report, the NCR's *modus operandi* and decision-making process are conducted in accordance with democratic guidelines and regulations that have been formally announced. Throughout the 13 years since the NCR's foundation, its President has unfailingly adhered to these guidelines and regulations.³⁹