

IX

Mojahedin Structure

The State Department's report examines the structure and inner workings of the National Council of Resistance and the Mojahedin. The authors have intentionally interpreted these two very different entities as one and the same, to reach foregone conclusions.¹

The National Council of Resistance is a coalition of organizations, groups and personalities with different ideologies and outlooks who have voluntarily joined forces for a limited period of time (no longer than six months after the overthrow of the Khomeini regime) on the basis of a specific program to which they are all committed. Their relationships are based on pluralistic democracy.

The Mojahedin, on the other hand, is a political organization with a specific ideology and strategy, and a defined political and organizational methodology. People join it voluntarily on the basis of their ideals and objectives. It is, therefore, very different from a broad political coalition.

On behalf of the Mojahedin, Massoud Rajavi proposed the formation of such a coalition, and founded the National Council of Resistance of Iran. In contrast to the dictatorships of the shah and Khomeini, all Mojahedin members believe that a single political organization or party cannot establish democracy in Iran; only with the participation of all advocates of democracy, independence and national sovereignty is such a task possible.

Ideology

The Mojahedin's ideology is based on a democratic, progressive interpretation of Islam, according to which elections and public suffrage are the sole indicators of political legitimacy.² As

unambiguously explained in the Mojahedin's statements and publications,³ propagating the Word of God and Islam is meaningless without freedom and respect for individual volition and choice. The Quran says the most important characteristic distinguishing man from animals is his free will. It is on this basis that human beings are held accountable. Without freedom, no society can develop or progress.

The Mojahedin believe that the human right of freedom is the hallmark and guarantor of genuine social progress. Otherwise, the stage is set for the emergence of dictatorship, which does not necessarily remain independent. From the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as well as of those of Imam Ali, his designated successor, the Mojahedin have learned that there must not be any limits to the people's freedom, up to the point of armed rebellion. This belief is reflected in their public statements and publications. For the Mojahedin, freedom is not a luxury, but an indispensable necessity. Massoud Rajavi elaborates on the Mojahedin's views:

With the victory of our Resistance, we will overcome one of the major obstacles to the success of contemporary revolutions. This same obstacle has been the most important factor in their deviation and failure. It is the concept of invading (under any pretext) the sacred limits of freedom. Our worldview is monistic, and the eminence of our species lies precisely in mankind's freedom of choice; hence, the revival of freedom is in essence the revival of mankind and man's vanquished revolutions...

We are not anyone's liberator. For a nation to appreciate the value of her freedom, she must free herself. Therefore, we are not anyone's liberator. Everyone, both as an individual and as a member of society, can free himself only if he tears asunder the chains of coercion and compulsion on his own."⁴

According to the Mojahedin's interpretation of the Quran, and the traditions of the Messenger of Islam and historical leaders of Shi'ism, freedom, equality of the sexes, equal rights for ethnic and religious minorities, human rights and peace are not mere political commitments, but ideological principles. The lives and struggles of the great prophets of God, such as Moses, Jesus and Muhammad, are brilliant examples of unrelenting commitment to these principles. They never advocated, either in words or deeds, ruthlessness, war, aggression or oppression. All but one of the chapters in the Quran begin with the phrase, "In the Name of God, the Merciful, the

Compassionate." This God is the exact opposite of the God Khomeini and the mullahs preach. Therefore, tolerance of dissent is part and parcel of the Mojahedin's ideology. The Quran gives glad tidings to those "who give ear to the Word and follow the fairest of it."⁵ Likewise, during the ten years (622-632 A.D.) he ruled over large parts of Arabia, the Prophet of Islam never made any important decision without consulting the Muslim *ummah* (society). On many occasions, he submitted, against his better judgment, to the views of his disciples.

Ali, the first Shi'ite Imam, presents another historical example. Urged by his companions to take harsh action against the *Kharajites*,⁶ who opposed him, Ali replied: "So long as they do not harm us, we will not take any action against them. If they debate with us, we will do likewise. We will continue to pay them their share of the treasury. We will allow them to go to the mosques to pray. Only if they resort to violence and killing will we reluctantly fight them."

The Mojahedin reject any form of religious dogmatism or rigid interpretations of the Quran and Islam. According to the Muslim Holy Book, there are two types of verses in the Quran, *Muhkamat* and *Mutashabehat*: "He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book: In it are verses, Basic or fundamental; They are the foundation of the Book, others are allegorical."⁷ Muhkamat or Basic verses form the ideological precepts of Islam, and contain the philosophical essence of Islam's worldview and outlook on mankind. Mutashabehat or the allegoricals basically relate to the methods and rules of conduct of daily life and, as such, are never rigid. While preserving the same monistic essence and spirit, they are adaptable to human progress, technological advancement and the social norms of the time. Otherwise, they become a useless, inflexible set of canonical laws. Therefore, any rigid and reactionary interpretation of Islam, exemplified in our times by Khomeinism, is totally anti-Islamic and contrary to the spirit of the Holy Scripture.

The Mojahedin believe that genuine Islam is so dynamic it never impedes social progress. Contrary to what the mullahs say, not only does Islam not oppose science, technology and civilization, but it also cherishes them. The basic principles of Shi'ism accentuate this point. Although the mullahs abuse and take advantage of the concept of *Ijtihad* (contemporary interpretation of Moteshabeh verses by qualified scholars), it is a distinctly Shi'ite principle which requires Islamic scholars and sociologists to develop Islamic methods and rules

appropriate to the times. Contrary to what the mullahs preach, it is not a skill to be monopolized by the clerics or any other group. Far from it, Ijtihad is a guiding principle for all adherents, encouraging public participation in the administration of social affairs. Profoundly committed to democratic freedoms and man's right to choose, Islam calls for social justice, fair distribution of wealth, and, in the long run, a society devoid of oppression, discrimination and exploitation.

Praxis

The above-mentioned principles form the ideological bond which binds the Mojahedin internally and guides them in the political, social and economic spheres. The organization has striven to its utmost to adhere to these principles over the past 30 years. According to this ideology, God alone is perfect, devoid of deficiency and shortcomings. Man influences and is influenced by circumstances. For this reason, the Mojahedin have never claimed, as individuals or as a political or social movement, to be above reproach or immune to mistakes. In today's world, no one dares to make such ludicrous, pitiful claims, but the Khomeini regime's Vali-e faqih.

From the beginning, the Mojahedin's battle with Khomeinism was purely ideological, for which reason their first assault on Khomeini's religious dictatorship focused on ideology. They exposed and rejected Khomeini's views by citing the Quran, the conduct of the Prophet of Islam and of the Shi'ite Imams and leaders. In his first and last meeting with Khomeini on April 26, 1979, Massoud Rajavi refused to kiss Khomeini's hand, a customary gesture in meeting the supreme religious authority. Khomeini was outraged. Citing Imam Ali's conduct, Mr. Rajavi then pointed to the heart of the problem: the Islamic viewpoint on the crucial need for democratic freedoms. As later reflected in the capital's press, Khomeini reluctantly replied that "Islam respects freedom more than anything else. Islam does not oppose freedom, unless it contradicts social mores."⁸

In early 1980, Khomeini went on television and begged the Mojahedin not to use the term "reactionaries" in describing the mullahs. In light of Khomeini's clampdown on freedoms and demagogic abuse of Islam to deceive the public, however, the Mojahedin could not forgo the term. In spring 1980, Khomeini stopped Massoud Rajavi's lectures on philosophy in Tehran's Sharif University

of Technology. Then he launched a coup in the universities nationwide, the nefarious "cultural revolution." All universities, a bastion of support for the Mojahedin, were closed down in a brutal clampdown by club-wielding hoodlums, in which many students were wounded and killed.

A few weeks earlier, *Le Monde* had written, "One of the most important events not to be missed in Tehran are the courses on comparative philosophy, taught every Friday afternoon by Mr. Massoud Rajavi. Some 10,000 people presented their admission cards to listen for three hours to the lecture by the leader of the People's Mojahedin on Sharif University's lawn." Rajavi's ideological and political message was that "freedom is the essence of evolution and the principal message of Islam and revolution."⁹

"In the weekly conferences at Sharif University," *Le Monde* continued, "Mr. Rajavi gets help from the Quran, the Old Testament and the Bible as well as from Plato, Socrates, Sartre, Hegel, Marx, etc. to explain the Mojahedin's ideology. The courses are recorded on video cassettes and distributed in 35 cities. They are also published in paperback and sold by the hundreds of thousands of copies."¹⁰

Early on, in March 1979, Khomeini ordered a referendum on his "Islamic Republic." With the motto, "Islam yes, reaction never," the Mojahedin called on Khomeini to specify what he meant by "Islamic Republic", before taking public polls. Khomeini replied that the content would be specified later on.¹¹ In summer, shortly before Khomeini formed an ersatz Assembly of Experts instead of the promised Constituent Assembly, Rajavi delivered a series of speeches about the government of Imam Ali and the constitution of an Islamic government. He declared in his lectures during the holy month of Ramadan at Tehran University, "The very essence of our republic, which must be specified in the constitution, is enmity to despotism."¹²

The most prominent distinction between the Mojahedin's interpretation of Islam and Khomeini's, therefore, is democratic freedoms. It is over this issue that the two sides have been engaged in a full-fledged ideological battle from day one. Citing Imam Ali's opposition to the expansionist wars waged under the name of Islam, the Mojahedin opposed the mullahs' policy of "export of revolution" from the outset, describing it as anti-Islamic and contrary to national interests. To substantiate their argument, they also cited from the Quran, which says, "No compulsion is there in religion".¹³

Tomorrow's Iran

Committed to the principle that the sole criterion for political legitimacy is the vote, and that resistance is legitimate only against repression and dictatorship, the Mojahedin proposed a maximum tenure of six months for the Provisional Government to take power after the mullahs, during which time sovereignty will be transferred to the people. The NCR program also affirms "complete freedom of thought and speech, and the banning of censorship and inquisition... This freedom is not bound by any principal restriction, up to the point of armed struggle against the legitimate and legal system of the country." Likewise, it is stated, "Achieving national sovereignty through the instrumentality of the provisional government of the Democratic Islamic Republic of Iran is the most valuable product of the just Resistance of the Iranian people." The program emphasizes that the Khomeini regime's worst crime was its usurpation of the Iranian people's most vital legitimate right, the right to popular sovereignty. In such circumstances of absolute repression, political legitimacy has no real indicator other than resistance to restore these trampled rights.

The experience of other movements which refused, under various pretexts, to yield to public suffrage after the overthrow of dictatorship, show that free elections and commitment to the vote are the only means of keeping democratic movements from deviating from their original courses. In the words of Massoud Rajavi:

The Mojahedin profoundly believe that to avoid the deviations that beset contemporary revolutions throughout the world, they must remain wholeheartedly committed to the will of the people and democracy. If they are to act as a leading organization, before all else the populace must give them a mandate in a free and fair election. It is not enough to have gone through the trials of repression, imprisonment, torture, and executions under the shah and the mullahs. The Mojahedin must also pass the test of general elections. If the Mojahedin were to choose to compensate for the lack of popular mandate by relying on their past sacrifices, organizational prowess or arms, their resilient, lively, and democratic organization would soon become a hollow, rotten bureaucracy... If the people don't vote for us (after we have overthrown the mullahs' regime), we shall remain in the opposition, holding firmly to our principles.¹⁴

Many western observers criticize the National Council of Resistance for setting a six-month limit on the Provisional

Government, saying it is too short a time to install a parliamentary system of government. The Resistance's response is very clear: Khomeini betrayed the trust of the nation, whose goal in overthrowing the shah was crystallized in the motto "freedom and independence." To restore this trust, necessary for the reconstruction of tomorrow's Iran, the people must be assured that the past will not be repeated. The Mojahedin had to choose between their own interests and consolidating their power, on the one hand, and their principles, commitments and the public trust, on the other. They chose the latter, and thus argue that the people's elected representatives must quickly take the reins into their own hands and determine what government, system and constitution they have in mind.

Contrary to what the State Department report tries to convey, the Mojahedin's ideology is nothing mysterious. For many years, they have unambiguously set forth the foundations of their beliefs and ideological principles, briefly reviewed here, in their publications.

Neither the Mojahedin nor NCR are naive about establishing democracy in a country ruled for several decades by two dictatorships. The difficulties have been aggravated by the mullahs' attempts to disrupt and destroy all social relationships through brutal suppression and religious tyranny. Under the clerical dictatorship's omnipresent repression, many relationships of trust, such as ethnic and regional ties and even family bonds, have been disrupted. The Resistance envisions a difficult time ahead, when it must try to heal the open wounds of a society whose rulers sought to imprison even human emotions within their narrow, intolerant bounds. The going will be equally rough for any attempt to restore peace and calm, and to universalize democracy after the overthrow of the Khomeini regime. The endeavors of the Mojahedin, NCR, and particularly the Resistance's President-elect to promote solidarity among various sectors of the society are rooted in this reality.¹⁵

Relations Within & Without

We know from the history of liberation movements, and can logically and scientifically deduce from social and historical developments, that political movement can offer nothing to a society that it does not of itself possess. One can believe the promise of democracy and flourishing talents in tomorrow's Iran only if the Resistance movement's internal relations are democratic today.

Particularly after the overthrow of the shah and their leader's freedom from prison, the Mojahedin had the opportunity to experience full-fledged democracy within the organization. The unity, coherence and rapid growth, including the influx of hundreds of thousands of members and full-time sympathizers, as well as the organization's open political campaign from 1979 to 1981, attest to its internal democracy. For fourteen years, the Khomeini regime, with the backing of its domestic and foreign allies, has tried to divide and somehow destroy the Mojahedin. The mullahs have unfortunately succeeded with many other political currents, which suffered several splits and were eventually dismantled. As acknowledged by friend and foe alike, however, the ploy has failed dismally with the Mojahedin, despite various military, political, regional and international pressures, and despite 100,000 martyrs and 14 years of torture and imprisonment. The Mojahedin were not annihilated, nor did they disintegrate; rather, they increased in power, prowess and credibility.

One reason is that the Mojahedin adhered to their political principles and insisted on democracy and political freedoms, as the Resistance movement's pivotal demands. More importantly, they remained profoundly committed to safeguarding democracy within the movement. It would have otherwise been impossible for them to withstand the intolerable pressures and tortuous circumstances of these past years.

Those genuinely interested in fighting the ruling medieval dictatorship and establishing democracy and a popular regime in Iran, have found ample opportunities and facilities in their democratic relations within the Mojahedin. It is a Mojahedin tradition to hold open discussions about sensitive issues of the day, some lasting hours, or even days and weeks, depending on the subject. Eventually, they conclude with a common viewpoint. Those familiar with the Mojahedin first hand know that a major part of their time is spent in lengthy meetings, devoted to arriving at a common ground for every decision. It is no accident that despite the intense suppression and pressures of the past 14 years, divergent views and ideas have not led to splits in the organization. The discussions on restructuring the organization and forming an all-female Leadership Council of 12 members and 12 candidate-members in 1993, for example, lasted two months.¹⁶

Structure

The People's Mojahedin of Iran is the first and only of Iran's political parties to make public the names and particulars of its officials and their manner of election. This has been the case over the past decade, despite the organization's involvement in a clandestine nationwide armed resistance.

In 1979-81, the names of all members of the Mojahedin's Central Committee as well as officials who administered the organization's affairs in various cities were made public. They were published in *Mojahed* on different occasions, such as their nomination as candidates in the elections, or identifying them as speakers or as hosts of a meeting in the course of the extensive political and social activities of the time. Even after the beginning of the armed resistance, in the second half of 1981, the names of the members of the Political Bureau and Central Committee were made public. Despite the harsh conditions, the members of these organs were elected every two years by the membership and available lower-ranking officials. The difficult, tortuous conditions they had endured of imprisonment and struggle shed light on their qualifications and accountability, facilitating the voting. This is not to suggest that mistakes were not made in choosing officials; rather, despite the Mojahedin's unusual practice of encouraging all members to openly criticize one another and higher officials, there were very few cases of lower officials and members not concurring in the election of members to the Political Bureau and Central Committee.

The Mojahedin's Central Council functions as the parliamentary body within the organization. Even in the difficult circumstances of these years, when members have been scattered, the Central Council has met regularly; absent members participated in the discussions through advanced communications. The Council's meetings take place in the form of a forum, where members express their views, debate issues, and try to convince each other on policies and strategy, elections of higher officials, and reviews of the conduct and status of members. An internal pamphlet put out in October 1982 articulated the hierarchy within the Mojahedin and the ways and means of administrating affairs. It was studied, discussed and adopted by all members. Accordingly, the Central Council was made up of the heads of different departments, deputies to the Central Committee, the

Central Committee and Political Bureau and their advisors. Then as now, candidates for membership in the Central Council were nominated by members and officials of the sections where they worked. Those elected by a majority vote in the Central Council had a two-year tenure. Reports and appraisals of the Political Bureau and Central Committee were regularly conveyed to all Central Council members, and measures or policies were implemented only after amendments and general ratification in the Central Council.

In autumn 1984, the annual meeting of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee was held in Paris, as in 1982 and 1983. It was followed by the meeting of the Central Council, which then had 160 members. Together, the meetings lasted more than two months. At the time, 30% of the Mojahedin's members were women; 15% of the Central Council were women. Tens of thousands of Mojahedin women had been imprisoned or executed by the Khomeini regime, many of them viciously tortured.

In these sessions, the Political Bureau and Central Committee nominated Maryam Azodanlou, later to become Mrs. Maryam Rajavi, as co-leader of the organization. She had come to France from Iran two years earlier. A graduate of metallurgical engineering, she began her political activities with the Mojahedin in the 1970s. After the revolution, she became an official of the social section and head of a major network of organization's sympathizers in Tehran. The Mojahedin had nominated her as a candidate from Tehran for the 1980 parliamentary elections.

The Central Council and other members of the Mojahedin welcomed her nomination, electing her in view of her competence, qualifications and experience. She had come to symbolize all the Mojahedin women.

In June 1985, after the marriage of Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, the Mojahedin Central Council, which had expanded to 575 members, issued a message of congratulations, bearing the signatures of all its members. Expressing abhorrence at the Khomeini regime's "frenzied lies and political assaults" on the Mojahedin and their leadership,¹⁷ the statement, published in *Mojahed*, emphasized that all the members of the Central Council had "freely and in full knowledge" elected their leaders. Therefore, the "barrage of ill-intentioned assaults against the Mojahedin" from "remnants of the shah and Khomeini and their allies, both rightists and so-called leftists" were

in vain. The Central Council also stressed:

The political alternative to Khomeini's dictatorship has emerged, without doubt, from among the forces of the Iranian people's anti-monarchic revolution, and not from within the Khomeini regime. The era of ignorance and of spontaneous movements, however victorious, has passed. The complexities of our national situation... dictate that this alternative be aimed and organized, and that it respect Islam, the faith of the greater majority of the people of Iran.

This alternative's legitimacy derives from its resistance against the suppressive regimes of the shah and Khomeini. It must be capable of preventing bloodletting, and of guaranteeing peace, democracy and national security as well as territorial integrity and socio-economic development. This alternative must have a program with specific deadlines for the transfer of power to the people and establishment of national and popular sovereignty.¹⁸

The statement concludes, "Given the present polarization of forces and political status quo at this historical juncture, the National Council of Resistance is the only democratic alternative for post-Khomeini Iran."

Six months later, at the conclusion of their annual session in Paris, the Political Bureau and Central Committee announced that they had dissolved to form a single organ, the Executive Committee, to administrate the organization's affairs.¹⁹ From then on, the Central Council consisted of the heads of sections, as well as the Executive Committee members and their deputies. As for the election of the organization's leaders, they concluded that every member must make this choice "directly, without intermediaries."

Massoud Rajavi, then the Mojahedin's Secretary General, elaborated on this point before a gathering of 3,000 members and sympathizers in Paris.

The experience, conduct, *modus operandi*, and mechanisms of electing the leadership in traditional parties of both the left and right have shed light on a fundamental point in the concept of organization. In view of our ideological principles and the numbers and quality of the Mojahedin's membership, the leadership's election should be direct, without intermediaries, free, and undertaken in full awareness by each and every member.

Therefore, members should study and examine, research, question and criticize the leadership, so that their relationship has a real basis. We do not accept blind trust. Likewise, everyone is free to cancel his or her allegiance to the leadership, whenever he or she wishes, to choose a better ideology,

strategy or organization. Let every individual follow his own ideals. Our only condition is that he respect our organizational rights and protect our intelligence and security.²⁰

Four months later, Mr. Rajavi departed for Iraq. There, too, the Mojahedin regularly announced in their radio and television programs as well as in their publications, the names of the Executive Committee members, their deputies, and other officials of the organization elected according to the Mojahedin's ratified regulations.²¹

In October 1989, Mrs. Maryam Rajavi was enthusiastically elected Secretary General of the Mojahedin by the entire membership.²² "This is the supreme ideological and organizational fruit of the efforts of a generation who rushed to do battle with the anti-human enemy and its evil regime on a scale far beyond human limits and tolerance. This generation has kept aloft the standard of our nation's honor in the darkest era of her history."²³

In October 1991, Mrs. Rajavi invited all members of the National Council of Resistance to be her guests at a Central Council meeting to witness the election of new members and of a deputy secretary general. The audience also listened to the Secretary General's report on political, military and organizational matters, and discussions within the council on strategy. At the conclusion of this session, 54 new members were added to the Mojahedin's Central Council, bringing the total to 837. The members had between 10 and 25 years of experience within the organization.²⁴ Mrs. Fahimeh Arvani was elected Deputy Secretary General, as announced by the Central Council in a statement in this regard.²⁵

In the decade from 1981-91, some 30% of the Mojahedin's Central Council members lost their lives in the battle with the Khomeini regime. Five percent could not endure the difficult conditions of the struggle and returned to normal life. Some 10 to 12 people committed treason and collaborated with the enemy.

In the same session, reported by all of the Mojahedin's media outlets, Mrs. Rajavi formulated the tasks of the Central Council, henceforth to be headed by the Deputy Secretary General, as follows:

First responsibility : Biannual determination of membership of those officials proposed for the Central Council...

Second responsibility : Deciding basic policies and strategies...

Third responsibility : Examining the conduct and status of members, and

reviewing their performances in their specific responsibilities...

Consequently, in summer 1993, Mrs. Rajavi suggested fundamental changes in the management of the organization, which were unanimously endorsed by members and officials. In the Central Council meeting of October 1991, seventy-five of the 149 members of the Executive Committee were women. In other words, in the six years since Maryam Rajavi's emergence as leader of the Mojahedin, women had gradually undertaken more and more political and military posts, and competently passed their tests of leadership. Eight years after her election as co-leader of the Mojahedin, Mrs. Rajavi was now proposing a "Leadership Council" of qualified women. The proposal contrasted radically with the mullahs' backward outlook, and went straight to the heart of their anti-democratic, misogynous culture. After 28 years of political and military struggle with two dictatorial regimes, the Mojahedin elected 12 women to a two-year term on the Leadership Council; 12 others were nominated as candidate members. The election marked a climax in the ideological and intellectual revolution within the Mojahedin, and may be viewed as a gauge of the profound depth of democracy in the organization.²⁶

On August 28, 1993, the National Council of Resistance of Iran elected Maryam Rajavi as President for the transitional period during which power will be transferred to the people of Iran. On September 17, Mrs. Rajavi resigned from her posts in the Mojahedin Organization and National Liberation Army of Iran. On the same day, in a large gathering of thousands of Mojahedin and the NLA combatants and attended by Massoud and Maryam Rajavi, Ms. Ozra Alavi Taleqani was elected as the Deputy Commander in Chief of the National Liberation Army, and Mrs. Fahimeh Arvani as the organization's Secretary General.²⁷ A month later, the Resistance's President-elect moved her headquarters to Paris.

Members and candidate members of the Leadership Council are elected in three stages in three consultative sessions. In the first stage, a proposal is discussed within the Leadership Council. In the second stage, the issue is taken to the meeting of heads of departments and their deputies. Finally, a nomination is discussed in the meeting of all members, and then voted on.

In August 1994, simultaneous with the opening of offices of the Iranian Resistance's President-elect, the Mojahedin announced that

all their offices and organizational networks outside Iran, with the exception of their press offices, had been dissolved. By then, the number of members and candidates for membership in the Leadership Council had increased threefold. Fifty-four members and candidate members announced their readiness to serve in the offices of the President-elect, and resigned their posts in the Mojahedin. Twenty-three women formed the Mojahedin's new Leadership Council.²⁸

In view of the reports published and publicized on the mechanisms of election to positions of leadership in the Mojahedin, summarized here, it is very naive to speak about lack of democracy within the organization.

Astonishing Charges

The structure and conduct of the Mojahedin has been examined in two separate sections in the State Department report, the section on history and the section on structure. The authors of the report have not lost any opportunity to label the Mojahedin as "undemocratic," hurling a barrage of accusations: The Mojahedin are organized into "compartmentalized cells of activity"²⁹ which respond only to central authority. They acquire "adherents and supporters through indoctrination."³⁰ They are subject to "authoritarian leadership,"³¹ have formed a "personality cult,"³² and have 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."³³

They produce their "own handbooks, censorship index, world outlook, historical interpretations and, of course, distinct ideology."³⁴ Those "members who tried to leave were jailed... Moreover, they were condemned to execution for their dissent, but the orders are stayed until the MKO 'reaches victory' in Iran... [Members] were only allowed to read Mojahedin publications" and "were monitored by informers... the Mojahedin forced couples and families to separate."³⁵ "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."³⁶

"The language used by Mojahedin members among themselves, in contrast with the dialogue they conduct with westerners, is often hierarchical and apocalyptic."³⁷ "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."³⁸

"Female 'leaders' are presented not as individuals... but as dependents— the wife, daughter, or sister of male MKO members."³⁹

One wonders whether the report belongs to the State Department, or is a joint publication of the Khomeini regime's Guards Corps and Intelligence Ministry.

Women

The Mojahedin believe in complete equality of the sexes, and demand active participation of women in the nation's social and political life. This has been clarified at length in the plans adopted by the National Council of Resistance and the program of the Provisional Government.

From the very first days of Khomeini's rule, the Mojahedin opposed all restrictions on women, including the compulsory *hejab* (veiling). Though committed to Islamic covering, like other Islamic rites, the Mojahedin view any form of compulsion in this regard as contradictory to their beliefs. For this reason, in 1979-80, when women were attacked by Khomeini's club wielders chanting "either the veil or a hit on the head," the Mojahedin demonstrated in protest. In these same years, tens of thousands of women sympathizers were recruited and organized throughout the country. In the 1980 parliamentary elections, many of the Mojahedin candidates were women.

Thousands of female officials, members and sympathizers were executed in subsequent years.⁴⁰ The mullahs' brutal suppression of women attracted more women to the Resistance, who continued to occupy more key positions and higher posts in the movement. "I don't know of any other example in history where a resistance group has been so bolstered by the participation of women," says American expert Dr. Joyce Starr, of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.⁴¹ Today, all 23 members of the Mojahedin's Leadership Council, the majority of commanders in the National Liberation Army, and one-third of the NLA's combatants are women.

The report claims, 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.⁴² The assertion that “the Marxist faction” promoted women’s rights is a sheer lie. The Mojahedin have never had a “Marxist faction,” and the Marxists who launched a coup in the organization in the 1970s never called for women’s rights. Rather, they ravaged the Mojahedin’s achievements and sowed distrust among the organization’s members and sympathizers, particularly the women.

The assertion that women have risen to positions of leadership because of family ties is another cowardly lie. The report offers no evidence to back up its claim. A list of the names of high-ranking female members of the Mojahedin would have precluded such a statement. None of the members of the Leadership Council or commanders of the National Liberation Army has been appointed because of family relationships, and only a small percentage (some 15%) are related to veteran male officials. Rather than repeating Ervand Abrahamian’s baseless conclusions about the 1970s, the State Department could easily have investigated the claim.

More importantly, these women have emerged from a multi-dimensional, 16-year political, social, cultural and military battle with the Khomeini regime. The Mojahedin and Iranian Resistance are a responsible and deadly serious movement, which has taken on a medieval dictatorship. Such a movement cannot pass the reins of authority to unqualified men or women.

In the ideology of Khomeini and the fundamentalism ruling Iran, women are considered inferior and of negative value. The most distinctive feature of the mullahs’ enmity to democracy is their antagonism towards women. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Mojahedin, both in their ideology and in their political and social conduct, accord women the greatest of respect. This serves as a measure of their devotion to democracy. The growing role of women in the Resistance, particularly the role of President-elect Maryam Rajavi, has had tremendous political, social and organizational impact. In addition, the women of the Mojahedin pose a cultural and ideological challenge to the fundamentalist rulers of Iran. Through them, the Mojahedin have demonstrated in practice that, in contrast to the mullahs, Islam does not deny women’s rights and freedoms. Furthermore, Islam holds free, combative and responsible women in the highest regard.

Sectarian Behavior

The report has tried very hard to portray a negative image of the Mojahedin's internal relations. The terms used are same as those applied by the shah and Khomeini's dictatorships. From the viewpoint of an impartial observer, however, the Mojahedin's internal structure, relationships and decision-making procedure leave no room for such accusations. At best, they reveal the authors' true intentions.

There is one question, of course, that the report of necessity avoids: How has this organization, characterized as a sect lacking popular and international support, survived despite 30 years of suppression by two dictatorships, the execution of its leaders and members under the Shah, the execution of some 100,000 of its members and sympathizers, and the imprisonment of an even larger number of them under the Khomeini regime? Indeed, not only has it survived, but it has remained the main, most active and most effective opposition force to the mullahs' regime.⁴³

The report's rationale to prove that the Mojahedin are a sect is more ridiculous than the allegation itself. For example, "they have their own books."⁴⁴ All organizations, institutes and societies publicize their views in their publications and books. How is that undemocratic and indicative of "indoctrination"?

The report has also tried to convince the reader that the Mojahedin are dependent on Iraq. Such statements, however, are contradicted by those alleging that the Mojahedin are a "sect," such as the Mojahedin Organization has "set up its own communes, printing presses, offices, militia, training camps, barracks, etc. in Iraq..."⁴⁵ Clearly, independent Mojahedin barracks, schools, etc. do not suggest dependence on Iraq. Aside from that, in what way is possession of printing presses and offices tantamount to behaving like a "sect"? According to this logic, most political parties in Europe should be called "sects."

It is further alleged that the Mojahedin have forced couples in Iraq to divorce and send their children to Europe and the United States.⁴⁶ The State Department must be held accountable for having given the task of preparing this report to individuals who have repeated, verbatim, allegations used by the mullahs and remnants of the shah's regime. The National Liberation Army is based on the territory of a country where family life on or near military camps

became impossible during the unprecedented bombardment of the Persian Gulf War, and has remained so since due to the international embargo. In the midst of the bombardment, families, voluntarily and sometimes in writing, asked the organization to help send their children to Europe and the United States to live with relatives or sympathizers. Despite many difficulties and dangers, the movement spent millions of dollars to move these children to safe places. The alternative was to accept the possibility of extensive casualties among them. Would not such a choice have warranted the disapproval of the State Department?

Furthermore, the policy is not without precedent. In World War II, children were separated from their families and sent out of London during the bombardment. If the practice is objectionable, the State Department should have issued a statement criticizing Winston Churchill.

Clearly, the military camps bombarded in May 1988, April 1992 and May 1993 by the Khomeini regime's air force, shelled with mortars in November 1993 and October 1994, and attacked with Scud-B missiles in November 1994 are no place for family life or for children. Where in the world is family life carried on in military camps during wartime or when military missions are being conducted? Although their work is peaceful, even Red Cross employees voluntarily avoid marriage and family life during their missions in various parts of the world. How is it that a Resistance movement is expected to provide for family life and the protection and care of small children?

In the past four years, the Khomeini regime's guards and terrorists have launched 30 armed attacks on the Mojahedin on Iraqi soil.⁴⁷ They have repeatedly launched armed attacks on families whose residences had been moved from the Iran-Iraq border strip to Baghdad. In summer 1993, the Khomeini regime's agents even attacked the Baghdad residence of elderly mothers of the Mojahedin's martyrs with RPG-7 rockets. In a word, today, all of Iraq has become the "frontlines" for Mojahedin and NLA combatants. Unlike the past, no place is "behind-the-lines."

This slandering of parents who have made such sacrifices for their country's freedom, is all the more outrageous because the detractors are unwilling to do anything to prevent these attacks by the mullahs' regime, or even to voice some protest to the regime's missile attacks and air raids, violating international law and

agreements. Had it been otherwise, perhaps these parents would not have been forced to remain apart. Rather than insulting the mullahs' victims, our detractors would do better to stop buying millions of dollars of oil, providing Tehran with the funds to step up its crimes and export terrorism and religious despotism. As the Persian saying goes: "If you do not want to heal our wounds, at least do not pour salt on them."

The charge of being a "sect" is further discredited by the fact that the Mojahedin is obviously willing to expand its relations with the outside world. In the course of the report's preparation, the organization insisted on presenting its views directly to the authors of the report. Actually, in dealing with the Mojahedin, the officials of the State Department's Near East Bureau have been behaving more like a sect, ignoring the views of the American people, their congressional representatives, the press, and other countries, and disregarding the will of the Iranian people. The wholesale barrage of accusations and slander against this Resistance itself smacks of fanaticism.

Intolerance

The State Department offers an autocratic image of the Mojahedin's inner workings, intolerant of dissenting views. According to the report, dissidents are treated badly, even imprisoned and sentenced to death. In response to these allegations, repeated for years by the mullahs' regime, the Mojahedin have frequently declared that they welcome visits by impartial international delegations, to which they have set no preconditions, other than guarantees regarding intelligence and security matters.

In August 1991, the NCR Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman declared in Geneva: "In reply to the fabrications of the anti-human enemy and its operatives, who have brazenly claimed, to cover up their own torture and massacre of political prisoners, that the Resistance maintains prisons where 800 Mojaheds are incarcerated, we invite a delegation of lawyers, reporters and representatives of international organizations to visit the bases of the Mojahedin and the National Liberation Army of Iran along the Iran-Iraq frontier. The delegation can see first hand the Mojahedin and the National Liberation Army, and meet the combatants of freedom, who long for liberty and democracy in Iran. The doors to all offices and bases of

the Mojahedin are open to all, because they have nothing to hide. Even the Khomeini regime's representatives can join the delegation, on the condition that Rafsanjani also promises to accept the very same delegation, accompanied by representatives of the Resistance, to visit the regime's prisons and torture centers in Iran, and commits his regime to opening all doors to this delegation."⁴⁸

If the authors have even one case or one person who they think has really left the Mojahedin due to internal despotism, one person who was denied the possibility of engaging in a dialogue about political, strategic and ideological problems or a lack of freedoms, we suggest that they take him or her along, so that this individual can see or talk to anyone he or she wishes, and they can publish the results in their next report.

The Mojahedin is a living entity. New individuals and groups join the organization everyday, while others, for specific and quite understandable reasons that relate to their personal conduct, are dismissed or leave voluntarily. All such cases in recent years emanate from an inability to tolerate the difficult conditions of struggling against a religious fascism unprecedented in Iran's history. With few exceptions, most people who cannot endure these difficult conditions continue their political support for the Resistance, as the only solution to the mullahs' regime.

The Mojahedin's record in this respect is so far above reproach and the avenues for dialogue so readily available that there is no room for complaint. The falsity and absurdity of such claims by persons who have broken ranks with the Mojahedin are laid bare by the very fact that a short while after leaving the Mojahedin, these same individuals have been sent to Europe or the United States with Mojahedin money, subsequent to which they have sold their services to the Khomeini regime or joined ranks with the mullahs against the Resistance.

If the Mojahedin are to be criticized, it should be for exercising undue flexibility to safeguard these person's reputation. Otherwise, they could have taken preemptive measures, by exposing the dismissed individual *a priori* so that he or she could not be used as a weapon in the hands of the enemy or others hostile to the Resistance. The Mojahedin have, however, exposed such persons whenever necessary, by publishing in their newspapers the reasons, in these persons' own writing and bearing their signatures, when they have

collaborated with or joined the enemy.

There is no combative force to rival the Mojahedin in the Iranian political landscape today, within or without the framework of the nationwide Resistance. This has been the case for many years. Thus, anyone within the Mojahedin normally does not challenge the war of liberation against the mullahs which the Mojahedin have undertaken, other than to admit his or her own inability to tolerate the conditions of armed struggle against the mullahs. The first question confronting such an individual is what strategy is more effective, and which political organization is offering that option. In other words, since no such strategy and no such political organization espousing it exist, the point is moot. Armed Resistance is the last resort against the mullahs' regime, after all other methods of struggle have proven futile.

The Mojahedin are combatant Muslims, a fact clarified twenty years ago, when they confronted the opportunist Marxists who had shattered their organization. Hence, anyone opposed to the Mojahedin's ideology does not become a member in the first place. Ideological differences, therefore, are not a viable excuse for leaving the ranks of the organization.

Nor can one imagine that multitudes of Mojahedin or their supporters residing in different cities in Europe, the U.S. and Asia, are being compelled to do anything. How could anyone be held within the Mojahedin's ranks against his/her will for even a day, let alone for many years, given the propaganda barrage of the Khomeini regime, its allies and the likes of the State Department report? Unless of course, the report's authors are suggesting that the Mojahedin exercise a far greater influence than such propaganda, to the extent that they can mesmerize tens of thousands of their fellow compatriots, body and soul, compelling them to turn out for large-scale demonstrations in 15 countries of the world.

From a political standpoint, the individual who has left should have a political alternative in mind, which regrettably does not exist. If one did, those preparing the report would not have gone to the trouble of writing 41 pages of slander and vituperations against the Mojahedin and Iranian Resistance. They are fully aware that, under the current circumstances, the National Council of Resistance is the only viable alternative to the mullahs' regime.

One must conclude that logically, the real reasons why certain persons have been dismissed or chosen to leave the Mojahedin in

recent years are to be found in the personal choices of the individual(s) in question. It is unjustified to blame the Mojahedin for an individual's inability to tolerate a tough, bloody war against a regime which the U.S. Secretary of State has described as "an international outlaw" and "the leading sponsor of terrorism in the contemporary world."

If the State Department of the sole superpower in the world claims to be fully knowledgeable about the Mojahedin and to have access to comprehensive information, it should be able to make public the names of the "dissidents" being held against their will in the National Liberation Army's bases, and assist them by publicly offering them political asylum. Obviously, the authors are themselves aware that their allegations are unfounded. When speaking about "death sentences" for "dissidents," they are compelled to offer the ridiculous explanation that the Mojahedin sentence dissident members to death, but postpone carrying out the verdict until after the regime's overthrow.⁴⁹

The Mojahedin and National Liberation Army of Iran informed the International Committee of the Red Cross of the release of some 2,650 officers, non-commissioned officers, soldiers and *Pasdaran* of the Khomeini regime who had been captured in the course of the NLA's military operations. Meanwhile, Mojahedin members and sympathizers were being executed *en masse* in the regime's prisons. The ICRC had been kept informed of the Mojahedin's treatment of these prisoners through repeated meetings with them, and has always lauded the Mojahedin for its humane conduct. It should be recalled that although some of these prisoners had killed a number of the Mojahedin's or NLA's combatants, they were released on the orders of the army's Commander in Chief. As for the members of this group who voluntarily joined the NLA, the ICRC paid repeated visits to the NLA's bases and spoke privately with them. There was never a single complaint about the Mojahedin's treatment.⁵⁰

In summary, the ICRC has monitored all affairs pertaining to the POWs, and has officially confirmed the humane nature of their treatment.⁵¹ In this light, are these allegations about mis-treatment of its own members by a movement that has humanely treated its enemies to be viewed as anything other than a repetition of the clerical regime's propaganda? Furthermore, the authors have regrettably demonstrated their unwillingness to listen to the replies of the "accused," whereas in any court of law, even if the case is cut and

dried, the accused and his counsel have the right to reply. Despite having the Mojahedin's written replies at their disposal, the authors have felt no obligation to make the slightest reference to them. Political expediency has taken precedence over the first principle of justice.

Solely from a humanitarian standpoint, the Department would have done better to grant at least one entry visa in the past 14 years and pay the travel expenses for someone who, for whatever reason, had left the Mojahedin and intended to return to normal life as a refugee. Having done so, the Department would be in a better position to criticize a Resistance movement which has given its life's blood in this struggle. To date, the Mojahedin have been obliged to assist such persons on their own. Which should we believe: All this compassion and detailed discourse about individuals who left the dictatorial Mojahedin whose strategy, ideology, and policies have failed, or the refusal to give visas or asylum to the mothers, wives or children of the martyrs?

We suggest that to alleviate the authors' concern about the fate of former members who want to pursue a normal life, the State Department set aside a quota for their political asylum, and inform the Mojahedin thereof. We would be most grateful.

Censorship

Another accusation involves the Mojahedin's "censorship index"⁵² and charges that their members "are only allowed to read Mojahedin publications".⁵³ If this allegation pertains to Mojahedin members who live in the West, it is particularly ridiculous. The report's authors are asked to please present their documents and explain how Massoud Rajavi manages to enforce such authority and censorship from the Iran-Iraq border on people mainly educated in Western universities. If the allegation pertains to Mojahedin sympathizers inside Iran, where the mullahs' regime is ruling, the State Department is barking up the wrong tree.

If, however, the Department is referring to a third group, those members and sympathizers who are in the Iran-Iraq border strip with the rest of the NLA's combatants, we may state in response that the many observers who have visited the NLA camps have seen for themselves that the combatants' personal belongings include portable radios, and they are free to listen to the Khomeini regime and foreign

broadcasts. In addition, a daily news bulletin is provided for all combatants. The bulletin contains reports from all international media. This has been the practice since the foundation of the National Liberation Army, eight years ago.

The authors of the report may interpret this as another form of censorship or indoctrination, in which case they are free to examine any number of the news bulletins, several thousand if they so desire, to make sure there has been no censorship. If they find anything to the contrary, indicating censorship, propaganda or indoctrination, they can expose the Mojahedin by revealing these documents.

In addition, all NLA bases, and all offices of the National Council of Resistance and Mojahedin in various countries have public libraries containing books and articles from different sources, not necessarily compatible with the principles of the NCR and Mojahedin. Any visitor can examine them for himself. It should, further, be noted that a political organization cannot have contradictory rules and regulations relevant to geographic location, allowing its members in the West complete freedom, while censorship abounds elsewhere, particularly since individuals are often assigned from place to place.

If none of these points is sufficient, a glance at the weekly publication of the Mojahedin, the monthly publication, *Showra* and the weekly paper, *Iran Zamin*, will attest to the falsity of the allegation.⁵⁴ To further allay the fears of the authors of the State Department report, we should point out that of all the publications by Iranian political groups, *Mojahed* most frequently reflects the exact statements, articles and viewpoints of its enemy, the Khomeini regime, and opponents. In describing censorship in the internal relations of the Mojahedin, the State Department is apparently taking a leaf out of its own book.

The fact is that in carrying out their policies, the Mojahedin do not hide anything from anyone, particularly their members and sympathizers. The Iranian Resistance's success in recruiting members and activists depends on their full knowledge and proficiency with details. Otherwise this Resistance would not have lasted for a day under the mullahs' propaganda barrage. Nor could it have overcome the State Department's malicious attack for ten years.

As a liberation movement, with legitimate democratic aspirations, the Mojahedin have been able to stand on their own and carry out their policies against the mullahs, remnants of the shah and their

allies, only by making their positions public, in total honesty. In this light, it is understandable why the State Department, which seeks to advance an unjust and illegitimate policy against the Iranian people's Resistance and in favor of the Khomeini regime, has no option, despite its power and facilities, but to resort to censorship, violate the principles of impartiality, distort the facts, and fabricate lies.

Blind Obedience

The claim that decision-making in the Mojahedin takes place at the top and members must carry out the decisions without asking any questions, is another cheap fabrication. Any form of cooperation with the Mojahedin or recruitment into its ranks is entirely voluntary. According to Ervand Abrahamian, on whose writings the larger part of the report is based, the majority of the Mojahedin's members are from the intelligensia. For more than a decade, many members of the Mojahedin have resided for years in Western countries, where they are currently working. During this period, the organization has maintained an extensive network in various countries, with numerous offices, branches and support societies. Its members, therefore, inside Iran, at the Iran-Iraq border-strip, and in Europe and North America, have been in continuous contact with the outside world. So we are not talking about an isolated group, but an organization which, as acknowledged in the State Department report, has been able to attract much support among congressmen and parliamentarians through the activities of its members.

The question arises, therefore, if the structure of the organization denies members the right to ask questions, let alone make comments or criticisms of higher officials, how are these decisions made at the top carried out, particularly since, again according to the State Department, the organization does not pay its members and they have no financial motivation to submit to such authority. At the Iran-Iraq border, where people have converged from Iran and abroad to form the National Liberation Army, what motivates them to join a movement which does not allow them even to ask a question? Why should they make such sacrifices, endure so much pressure and torture, and even forego their spouses and children? Obviously no one in his right mind would accept such nonsense. The people of Iran have heard many such claims by the dictatorships of the shah and Khomeini, who contend that Iran's freedom fighters are "linked to

foreigners," or have been "brainwashed" by the "Great Satan."

These farcical allegations aside, the National Liberation Army, like any other army in the world, including the U.S. Army, has its own rules and regulations, and its own command hierarchy. Of course, there is a significant difference between the NLA and conventional armies. The U.S. or other conventional armies reprimand and severely punish officers and soldiers who desert the battlefield, or even in peace-time refuse to perform their duties.

In the NLA, combatants fill out forms in which they voluntarily agree to serve in the army until the overthrow of the Khomeini regime.⁵⁵ In practice, however, even in time of war or maximum alert, whenever someone has broken his or her vows, or could not tolerate the conditions, the individual, without exception, was immediately sent abroad or to the refugee camps in Iraq (supervised by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees). The Mojahedin have even gone so far as to spend large sums of money to send hundreds of Iranian refugees from Iraq's Ramadi refugee camp to Europe, as the UNHCR in Baghdad is fully aware.⁵⁶ Obviously, the Mojahedin had no moral, political or organizational commitment to do so.

Regrettably, the report also criticizes the Mojahedin for paying tribute to their members and officials executed by the Khomeini regime, accusing them of "sectarianism." The State Department's rationale is that those who have been martyred by the Khomeini regime for the cause of democracy in their country were obsessed by Mr. Rajavi's "personality cult"⁵⁷ and had to "obey without asking too many questions."⁵⁸ How can hundreds of thousands of blindly obedient people endure execution and torture? This is an unforgivable insult to all those who gave their lives for Iran's people and freedom. Is there any message in the State Department's logic other than to defile the Resistance in favor of the Khomeini regime? How do those who have not yet apologized to the people of Iran for launching the anti-democratic coup of August 1953, against the legal and democratic government of Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq, dare pretend such concern about democracy or the lack thereof in the Mojahedin?

Intelligence & Security Risks

In evaluating the structure and conduct of any political group, including the Mojahedin, it is very important to take their

circumstances into account. The Mojahedin were founded under a dictatorial regime. After the overthrow of the Shah, they were subject to the new regime's harassment. Shortly thereafter, a religious decree was issued for the execution of the Mojahedin's members, sympathizers, and even their families. In such circumstances, it is naturally misleading to compare the organization to political parties in democratic Western countries. In a democratic country, the police do not raid a political party. They do not arrest and execute its members in large groups, assassinate its activists, or launch air raids, mortar and missile attacks on its centers. Members do not keep cyanide pills under their tongues as a precautionary measure in case they are arrested or abducted while in the street. The Khomeini regime tortures Mojahedin members for days, weeks, months and even years to extract information and obtain even one more address of their sympathizers. Even outside Iran, as in the case of Ali Akbar Ghorbani in Turkey (June 1992), the Khomeini regime has no qualms about kidnapping, lengthy torture, mutilation and assassination of its opponents.

Because they are at war with the mullahs' brutal regime, the Mojahedin must be very careful about safeguarding intelligence, and enforce strict security and safety regulations. Obviously, the enemy is always conspiring to obtain more information and strike at them in any way possible. Nevertheless, throughout these years, the Mojahedin have never prevented the departure of people who could no longer tolerate the conditions of struggle. Of course, this entailed many risks for their members and combatants. The regime's Air Force raided the NLA's camps by using intelligence obtained from some people who had left the army and subsequently cooperated with the regime.⁵⁹

All countries, including the democratic countries, have very strict regulations for their military forces and other organs which could yield intelligence jeopardizing national security and the lives of their citizens. Joining any of these organs requires observation of certain rules and regulations. Leaving them is even more difficult, especially in wartime. The fate of Shapour Bakhtiar, the shah's last prime minister, exemplifies the mullahs' extraterritorial terrorist plots, underlining the need for strict security measures and protection of intelligence. Bakhtiar was murdered at his home in a Paris suburb in August 1991 by one of his close associates, an agent of the Khomeini

regime. This person was able to lead two of the mullahs' terrorists into the house to murder him.⁶⁰

Playing the Mullahs' Game

What is the State Department's problem? Can all this clamor about no democracy in the Mojahedin while inviting the mullahs to engage in a dialogue be interpreted as anything but a step against democracy and human rights in Iran? In determining its relations, support, money and facilities for countries, parties and opposition groups the world over, the State Department is not known for being overly mindful of their observation of democracy. Was the shah's dictatorship, which brutally suppressed Iran's people for years, not supported by the United States? During the Cold War, were the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot not tacitly endorsed by the United States as part of its policy to counter Soviet influence? Does the U.S. desire to improve relations and establish dialogue with Iran's ruling regime because it is democratic?

The problem, therefore, is not with the Mojahedin, but with the political landscape in today's Iran. The medieval regime is falling apart, and a democratic, independent and popular alternative is about to take power. Those factions whose interests are threatened by the establishment of democracy in Iran, who for years have insisted that Iran's medieval rulers will reform if conciliated, find their only answer is to reject and undermine this Resistance. They use democracy like a club to strike at this Resistance and its leadership, both of which have proven their commitment to democracy in thirty years of struggle. They will tell any lie, however fabricated or distorted. They use character assassination, much like during the Mossadeq era, to obstruct the establishment of a democratic and independent Iran.

Today's Iran, however, is a whole different set of circumstances. The existence of a just, nationwide, legitimate and organized resistance will reduce their animosity to wishful thinking. Many analysts, personalities and representatives of the American people strongly oppose their policy, evaluating it as harmful to the United States' interests. Addressing a hearing of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the House of Representatives, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher indicated the increasing U.S. concern about Iran's nuclear activities: "Those who help, make it easier for Iran to sponsor terrorism and threaten peace. These countries must suffer the

consequences of their actions. We believe that the international community must take ever firmer steps in countering Iran's outlaw behavior. For this reason I propose to other countries to stop granting credit to Iran and refrain from every nuclear cooperation with Iran."⁶¹

The Secretary is absolutely correct, but everyone knows that the best way to help is to give political concessions to the mullahs' regime by brazenly attacking the Iranian people's just and legitimate Resistance, the sole democratic alternative to this terrorist outlaw. Therefore, the authors of the report and some officials of the Near East section of the State Department should be the first to take Mr. Christopher's advice seriously, and avoid "any form of cooperation" with the mullahs' regime, as contrary to the interests of the Iranian people and resistance. Anything short of this will encourage more of the mullahs' terrorism and violations of human rights, and, as they did in the Irangate affair, they must "suffer the consequences of their actions."

