

TERROR BRIGADES AS AN INSTRUMENT OF WARFARE: Pentagon Trained M.E.K Terrorists In Nevada To Use Against Iran

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The Pentagon trained members of the dissident Iranian terrorist group M.E.K. in Nevada starting in 2005, after which they returned to Iran and may have engaged in covert activities, investigative reporter Seymour Hersh reports in the April 6th issue of “The New Yorker” magazine.

The group receiving the training incredibly had been listed in 1997 as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department, and remains on that list today, Hersh said. Hersh’s article, [“Our Men in Iran?”](#) says the training was conducted by the Joint Special Operations Command(JSOC)—a charge JSOC denies. “U.S. Special Operations Forces were neither aware of nor involved in the training of M.E.K. members,” a JSOC spokesperson said.

The Iranian operatives were trained in communications, cryptography, weaponry, and small-unit tactics over a six-month period, a retired four-star general familiar with the details told Hersh. The general said the training was done by JSOC.

U.S. officials have denied any role in the killings of five Iranian nuclear scientists since 2007 but have said that the M.E.K. assassins alleged to have been involved were trained and financed by Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

“The sources I spoke to were unable to say whether the people trained in Nevada were now involved in operations in Iran or elsewhere,” Hersh wrote, but a senior Pentagon consultant told him the M.E.K. training in Nevada had strengthened the M.E.K. network in Iran.

Massoud Khodabandeh, an information technology expert now living in England and former M.E.K. official, told Hersh other M.E.K. defectors trained in Nevada told him their training included communications intercepts, and that the U.S. provided M.E.K. operatives with the know-how to intercept telephone calls and text messages inside Iran and that the M.E.K. shared the information collected with U.S. officials. And a retired CIA agent told Hersh a private American company apparently working for the Bush administration asked him to work with M.E.K. to collect information on Iran’s nuclear program.

The Bush administration passed on funds to dissident organizations in Iran “for intelligence collection and, ultimately, for anti-regime terrorist activities,” Hersh writes. “Some American-supported covert operations continue in Iran today, according to past and present intelligence officials and military consultants,” Hersh reported.

The Nevada training operation, on a site 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, was shut down sometime before President Obama took office in 2009, the article said.

Allan Gerson, a Washington attorney for the M.E.K., says the group has publicly and repeatedly renounced terror. He added that if the story about M.E.K. training in Nevada is true it is ""incongruent." "How can the U.S. train those on State's foreign terrorist list when others face criminal penalties for providing a nickel to the same organization?"

M.E.K. stands for Mujahideen-e-Khalq. It began as a student Marxist-Islamist group in the 1970s that was "linked to the assassination of six American citizens," Hersh noted.

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