

America's War against Iran: The Insidious Role of the Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) Terrorist Entity

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In 2015, the United States, several other nations and the European Union signed an agreement with the government of Iran that limited Iran's nuclear development program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions against Iran. During the final years of the Obama presidency, and the first year of the bizarre and erratic administration of Donald Trump, all parties were in compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This was attested to by the United Nation International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which inspected Iran's nuclear sites regularly, and the fact that many nations were now freely and profitably trading with Iran.

But as Trump attempted to undo everything his popular predecessor had accomplished, he violated the JCPOA by withdrawing from it completely. He reissued sanctions, and threatened the other signatories, including some of the U.S.'s oldest and closest allies, with sanctions if they continued trading with Iran. The deal collapsed, with all the parties except Iran in violation of it.

The U.S. violation was condemned around the world, by nearly every nation on the planet except apartheid Israel, whose racist prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, had addressed the U.S. Congress before that body voted, urging its members to defeat the agreement; despite his efforts, Congress agreed to support the JCPOA.

Wanting out of the deal, Trump sought some rationale that he felt would pass muster with the public, to enable him to violate both domestic and international law. His minions located an article by one Heshmat Alavi, saying that the deal allowed Iran to increase its military budget, something to which the U.S. objected.

There are a few things worth exploring a bit more deeply in this. First, since the United States has a bloated military budget that is equal to the military budgets of the next eight countries with the largest such budgets, it is a bit disingenuous for the U.S. to criticize any other country's military budget. And since Iran is surrounded by U.S. military bases, it is completely understandable for that nation to want to be sure it has what it needs to protect its people from U.S. aggression.

Next, let us look at the 'journalist' who wrote the article Trump cited, one Heshmat Alavi. His purported work has appeared in a wide variety of journals over the years. However, on closer scrutiny, we learn that Mr. Alavi simply doesn't exist! He is a creation of the political wing of the terrorist organization known as Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), which exists for the sole purpose of overthrowing the government of Iran. From 1997 to 2012, the MEK was officially designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States.

Despite that fact that many articles have appeared under the name Heshmat Alavi, and there are active Facebook and Twitter accounts under that name, a Google search of that name today exposes the fact that there is no such person. Yet the MEK has successfully fooled many journals; for example, at least sixty-one articles under that name appear in Forbes magazine from April of 2017 to April of 2018.

This raises even more questions: why does the U.S. need invented 'journalists' to sell its anti-Iran story? Could it be, possibly, because the truth is nothing like the U.S. says, and so relying on a made-up writer for made-up stories is the best it can do?

And what about journalistic integrity? One can imagine Forbes falling for one, or even two articles by a bogus, non-existent journalist, but sixty-one in one year? Does no one question this?

Most journalists (this writer included), don't hide from the public. In addition to writing, they speak at public forums, and their faces may be almost as well-known as their names. Where has the illusive Mr. Alavi been? Was he too busy writing all those articles for Forbes to crawl out of whatever hole he lived in to speak publicly about issues important to him? No, that is not the case; he was unable to speak at any conference, symposium, rally, etc., because he doesn't exist.

This is the 'writer' whose 'work' Donald Trump cited to justify violating international law, and to bring the threat of a devastating war to an area of the world that his predecessor had made significant progress in calming. This is the 'writer' that not only Forbes, but The Hill, the Daily Caller, the Diplomat and other so-called responsible news outlets gave a platform to.

And what is MEK? It is a well-organized terrorist group, which gets support from the world's foremost sponsor of terrorism, the United States, and seeks the overthrow of the Iranian government. It is described as "widely loathed"[1] among Iranians, yet one article ascribed to Alavi says it's the "main Iranian opposition group"[2]. How 'he' purports to speak for Iranians, when 'he' heads a group hated by most of them, is beyond rational comprehension.

The MEK has gained influence in U.S. government circles and has paid prominent politicians to speak on its behalf. The Intercept, on June 9 of this year, further reported that "...the MEK's messaging has emphasized regime change - and attempted to present the MEK as a viable alternative to the Islamic Republic's leadership..."[3] Articles under the name Alavi support these positions, and often put forward the name of Maryam Rajavi, MEK's leader, as the future leader of Iran.

This indicates the level of credibility that the U.S. has. How can anyone take seriously the pronouncements of a government that uses a non-existent journalist to establish policy? How can the U.S. news media be seen as credible, when it publishes numerous articles under the name of a non-existent person?

This is, of course, hardly the first time that the U.S. has increased and justified its aggression and belligerency based on lies, lies that the media heartily endorses. Prior to the Gulf War (1990 - 1991), President George H. W. Bush cited the moving testimony given to the Congressional Human Rights Caucus by a young woman named Nariyah, who claimed to be a teenage volunteer at a Kuwaiti hospital. 'Nariyah' said this:

“While I was there, I saw the Iraqi soldiers come into the hospital with guns. They took the babies out of the incubators, took the incubators and left the children to die on the cold floor. It was horrifying.”[4]

Bush and members of Congress cited this testimony repeatedly to gain support for the war. News outlets readily parroted these words. Yet it was all a lie. ‘Nariyah’ was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador. She eventually admitted that she had once briefly visited the hospital in question. Her testimony was arranged by the Hill and Knowlton (H&K) public relations firm, hired by an organization called ‘Citizens for a Free Kuwait’, which was financed mainly by the Kuwaiti government.[5]

Will the MEK have the same success as ‘Citizens for a Free Kuwait’ had nearly thirty years ago? Will it be instrumental in starting yet another unjust war in which countless innocent men, women and children will die by the mighty U.S. war machine? One hopes that cooler heads prevail, but in the Trump White House, there don’t seem to be any. An invasion of Iran by the U.S. or Israel would have disastrous consequences throughout the world. Leaders of all other governments should be doing everything in their power to prevent it.

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Notes

[1] <https://iran-interlink.org/wordpress/mek-cult-operatives-undermining-american-democracy/>. Accessed on June 17, 2019

[2] <https://theintercept.com/2019/06/09/heshmat-alavi-fake-iran-mek/>. Accessed on June 17.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Michael Kunczik, *Images of Nations and International Public Relations* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), 280.

[5] Ted Rowse, “Kuwaitgate,” *The Washington Monthly*, September 1992.

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