

Why the United States Has Not Won a Real War Since 1945

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If anyone is still wondering why the United States has not won a real war since 1945, I offer up the example of retired U.S. Army Colonel Wes Martin, who writes for Town Hall and reportedly also has appeared as an expert commentator on Fox. Town Hall is a purveyor of a certain type of "American conservatism." It was founded by the Heritage Foundation on the principle that the United States is ordained by God as uber alles. Though it features many good writers and even genuine conservatives it occasionally goes off the rails. Its latest incarnation features an article entitled ["Obama-loving country music star Tim McGraw partners with terror-sponsoring communists."](#)

Colonel Martin's bio includes his service as the Senior Antiterrorism Officer for all Coalition Forces in Iraq and Commander of Camp Ashraf, which is where the military arm of the [Mojahedin e Khalq \(MEK\)](#) terrorist group was camped while Saddam Hussein was still in power. MEK, consisting of Iranian dissidents, was being used by Saddam to carry out low-intensity warfare against Iran. It was placed under American military protection after the fall of Baghdad in 2003.

Martin's latest foray in Mullah-bashing is a December 10th article entitled "Iran's Continuing Misinformation Campaign." It is a [defense of MEK](#), which he describes as a victim of Iranian propaganda. Martin frames his argument around a critique of a November 9th report entitled "Terrorists, cultists – or champions of Iranian democracy? The wild, wild story of the MEK" that appeared in *The Guardian*, but, in reality, most of his piece is about himself. The [Guardian article](#), written by Arron Merat, provides an in-depth analysis of MEK, how it developed, and what it is doing today. It does, to be sure, come down on the side of MEK being both a cult and a terror organization, which is what Martin disputes.

Martin's article, like all of his pieces appearing on *Town Hall*, is nearly unreadable. It includes gems like "The Iranian dissidents have a primary target of the ayatollahs misinformation campaign" and also "This was the first time in U.S. history, and perhaps world history, where one country was invaded and with it came the entrapment of a large military force dedicated to the removal of a third of the country's leadership." I'm sure Colonel Martin actually meant something in those two sentences but I am at a loss to figure out what it might be.

Martin reports that MEK first came on to his "radar" in 2003 after the invasion of Iraq by U.S. forces, which is part of his problem, which might be described as seeing what one wants to see. He conducted "an assessment on the MEK and determined they were not a threat." But other evidence, which Martin should have considered, suggests that MEK was not just a group of Iranian dissidents. A [study prepared by the Rand Corporation for the U.S. government](#) conducted interviews at Camp Ashraf and concluded that there were present

“many of the typical characteristics of a cult, such as authoritarian control, confiscation of assets, sexual control (including mandatory divorce and celibacy), emotional isolation, forced labor, sleep deprivation, physical abuse and limited exit options.”

MEK made the transition from terrorist group to “champions of Iranian democracy” by virtue of intensive lobbying of Iran haters. The *Guardian* article also describes how “A stupendously long list of American politicians from both parties were paid hefty fees to speak at events in favor of the MEK, including Giuliani, John McCain, Newt Gingrich and former Democratic party chairs Edward Rendell and Howard Dean – along with multiple former heads of the FBI and CIA. John Bolton, who has made multiple appearances at events supporting the MEK, is estimated to have received upwards of \$180,000. According to financial disclosure forms, Bolton was paid \$40,000 for a single appearance at the Free Iran rally in Paris in 2017.”

It apparently never occurred to Martin that the group had a whole lot of history before he appeared on the scene and it began buying American politicians. It may not have been an active threat in 2003, when confronted by overwhelming U.S. military force, but it sure was anti-American back in the 1970s, to include the assassination of at least six U.S. Air Force officers and civilian defense contractors. The ambush in which two air force officers were murdered by MEK was reenacted for each incoming class at the Central Intelligence Agency training center in the late 1970s to illustrate just how a terrorist attack on a moving vehicle might take place.

Colonel Martin is inevitably a harsh critic of President Barack Obama, mentioning in passing that

“Unfortunately, the State Department policy under the Obama administration was intent on appeasing the Iran regime.”

It is an assertion for which there is scant evidence apart from Obama’s clearly expressed reasonable desire to negotiate an end to any possible Iranian nuclear weapons program. In fact, Obama’s Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [removed the group from the State Department terror list](#) in 2012, and then arranged for its relocation to a safe site in Albania, where it still resides.

In [another article](#) on “evil” Iran, obviously an obsession with Martin, he states that

“The fundamentalists in Tehran were almost overthrown during the vast national uprisings of 2009 (predating the Arab Spring). While former President Obama and former Secretary Clinton stayed silent, in favor of their nuclear deal with the regime...”

Martin is dead wrong that the regime was almost overthrown. It was never threatened. And, of course, it would have been difficult for Obama to have remained silent in 2009 over the “nuclear deal” which was not signed until 2015.

Martin also has problems with the *Guardian* article’s assertion that MEK derives from an “Islamist-Marxist” ideology. He observes “In other words, the MEK is composed of God-fearing atheists. He needs to pick one or the other, because Islam and Marxism do not

mix.” Actually Marxism, as a primarily social and economic framework, is not necessarily anti-religious, particularly when religion inspires the workers as part of the class struggle. Political Marxism and religious zealotry can coexist. The communist Tudeh Party of pre-revolutionary Iran was reportedly full of Islamists. And MEK does indeed have both Marxist and Islamic roots. It helped to overthrow the Shah in 1979 through cooperation with the religious parties but then turned against the clerics after they had succeeded in assuming control of the revolution.

Martin also completely ignores MEK’s anti-American, anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist roots. It began as a radicalized student group in Iran in the 1970s that attacked U.S. businesses and was viscerally opposed to the United States presence. The *Guardian* article describes how one of its songs went “Death to America by blood and bonfire on the lips of every Muslim is the cry of the Iranian people. May America be annihilated.”

Colonel Martin saves his best for last as he fulminates

“Iran, the number one nation-state exporter of terrorism, is also the number one exporter of propaganda. Iran’s MOIS [Ministry of Intelligence and Security] will fight the truth with lies, deceit, and manipulation of facts. MOIS expends great effort to neutralize the MEK as the primarily threat to the Iranian regime.”

That Iran is the leading state sponsor of terrorism is often asserted by folks like Colonel Martin and John Bolton but rarely elaborated on, particularly given the fact that the United States operates worldwide with intelligence officers, spec ops and drones that kill lots of people on a regular basis without any declarations of war. Who has Iran killed lately? And when it comes to propaganda, no one does it better or more aggressively than the U.S. and Israel, even if no one believes any of it anymore.

What it comes down to is that people like Colonel Wes Martin, unfortunately proliferating in the U.S. government, hate Iran for a whole lot of reasons that have nothing to do with national security. Israel and its lobby are certainly an element as is the need for enemies to feed the paranoia that drives and funds the military industrial complex. Martin reveals his ignorance when he objects to what he believes to be Iranian government efforts to “neutralize the MEK as the primarily (*sic*) threat to the Iranian regime.” That claim is complete nonsense. MEK worked with Saddam Hussein to kill Iranians, just as it earlier killed Americans. It is hated in Iran and has little support inside the country. It is a terrorist group, currently being used by the CIA and Israel’s Mossad to assassinate and otherwise [kill still more Iranians](#). This is why luminaries like Mike Pompeo and John Bolton and Colonel Martin love it, not because it is poised to bring democracy to Iran.

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Featured image: Col. Wesley Martin Speaks in front of the White House, April 14, 2015. Image credit: usflhr.org

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