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# **Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, May 15, 2012**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Scott Reid**



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1305)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)):** I'm going to encourage members to take their seats. We always have to wait until we've got a certain quorum before we begin taking witness testimony. We've now achieved that quorum and as always I'm anxious to ensure that we start in as timely a fashion as possible so that we can have as fulsome a set of hearings as possible.

Let's start.

[Translation]

Welcome to the 38th hearing of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, on this Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

[English]

We are televised today, a practice that I plan to continue, seeing that we are always in a televised room whenever we have a witness providing testimony—unless the committee instructs me otherwise. But I'll make that assumption pending any contrary motions by members of the committee.

Towards the end of the meeting today we will be dealing with a motion introduced by Professor Cotler, for which adequate notice was given. Hopefully you've all got that. If not, the clerk can get it to you. It relates to Iran. We'll return to that at the end of our committee hearings today.

We have as our witness today Colonel Wesley Martin, who is returning for his second visit to our committee. He was here late last year as the situation in Camp Ashraf seemed to be spinning out of control, and we requested that he come back to provide additional testimony to bring us up to date. He is here today to do that.

Colonel Martin, we are glad to have you here again. We invite you to begin your testimony and we'll follow it with questions. Thank you.

**Col Wesley Martin (Colonel (retired), Military Police, United States Army, As an Individual):** Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, and members of Parliament, I greatly appreciate the honour to once again testify before you on the situation in Camp Ashraf and the former National Liberation Army of the MeK and the many events that have transpired since our last meeting on December 8.

As you are aware, the December 31 arbitrary deadline for all former NLA to be out of Iraq was postponed by its generator, Prime Minister al-Maliki. This was not an action of his choice, but a reaction to the pressure and attention created by North American and western European governments. Al-Maliki had his forces in place and was ready to move against the camp. Every member of the MeK appreciates the involvement of the Canadian government in preventing the disaster that was most certain to happen at Camp Ashraf if al-Maliki had not found himself under international scrutiny.

Not without determination to consolidate his ever-growing power inside Iraq, al-Maliki turned his attention to his two most senior Sunni government officials, Deputy Prime Minister Mutlaq and Vice-President Hashimi. Immediately after U.S. troop withdrawal and al-Maliki's visit to the White House, arrest warrants were issued for both officials under the charges of supporting terrorist activities. Tariq Hashimi, who for a long time has called for proper treatment of the MeK, has been accused by Maliki of operating death squads. I personally worked with Vice-President Hashimi and personally witnessed his commitment to protecting both Shias and Sunnis from death squads. The charges against Vice-President Hashimi are nothing more than tools being used by Maliki to eliminate political rivals.

The invasion of Iraq only succeeded in replacing one brutal dictator with another. As with Saddam during his early days of power, Maliki has the support of the United States government. Unlike Saddam, every day Maliki aligns himself closer with Tehran while the U.S. administration downplays this connection. To claim that Iranian influence is anything less than significant is a discredit to all coalition forces, Iraqi citizens, and the residents of Ashraf, who have paid the price of that influence with their blood and their lives.

To be part of the solution and show good faith in the UN refugee determination process, MeK leadership agreed to the transfer from Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya, formerly known as Camp Liberty. In the past four months, approximately 2,000 former NLA members have completed the move, with 1,200 more pending transfer. Camp Hurriya is located immediately to the east of Baghdad International Airport. The reason stated by the Iraqi government for the transfer was to ease the UN vetting process.

This location has come with numerous problems. Continually the call is rendered by the United Nations and the U.S. State Department that this relocation requires cooperation of all parties concerned. Unfortunately, the party always conceding has been the MeK. The Iraqi government has created one difficulty after another. It should not be forgotten that it was the Iraqi government that prevented the UN from traveling to and conducting the process at Camp Ashraf. Furthermore, the officer in charge of this transfer mission is the same person who commanded the 2009 and 2011 Iraqi military attacks on Camp Ashraf, General Qassim.

Camp Hurriya, less than one-half square mile in size, is correctly referred to by Rudy Giuliani as a concentration camp. Before the arrival of the first bus from Ashraf, Camp Hurriya had already been looted by the Iraqi military. Cabinets that could have been used for storage were intentionally damaged. The black water storage tank ruptured the first day due to lack of maintenance. The water treatment plant built in 2006 by U.S. forces had been stripped by the Iraqis. Now the MeK must pay for water to be shipped in. The quantity of water has never met the needs of the growing population.

Often part of the problem has been UN Ambassador Kobler himself. He has proven himself to be very quick to accept Maliki's words on most everything, even assuring everyone involved that Hurriya was in good shape. The pristine photos he provided to support his claim did not show the same facilities the Ashraf residents found upon arrival. He criticized the residents for the black water tank breaking down and blamed them from bringing in trash to Hurriya to stage a photo opportunity of unsanitary conditions. In doing so he overlooked the fact that it was U.S.-generated trash. His theory also required it to have been overlooked in the multiple Iraqi searches of the Hurriya-bound convoys.

• (1310)

Even getting from Ashraf to Hurriya has been loaded with obstacles. The Iraqi government has not honoured the formal agreements for what may be brought forward to Hurriya. This includes generators for power, vehicles for transporting disabled people, medical equipment and supplies, and personal items.

Having worked with both the Iraqi government and the former NLA, I can understand what is happening. The denial of supplies and equipment will make life that much more difficult for the residents. Also, the more that is left at Camp Ashraf means the more property Iraqi officers will be able to claim for themselves once Ashraf is clear of MeK.

On the very last convoy, two trucks of personal clothing disappeared. When MeK leadership directly questioned General Qassim about this, he responded that the clothing belonged to the prime minister's office.

The very searches of the convoys and people, prior to departure, have been exercises in harassment and brutality. What has been searched gets searched again and again. That process lasts for a day and a half without rest. It was from this process that a 48-year-old engineer, Baardia Amir Mostofian, died of a stroke. In another incident, the Iraqi military commenced beating Ashraf residents with batons, resulting in 29 MeK members injured.

There have been meetings between the Iraqi military and the MeK. The meetings have addressed all the problems mentioned here and in each case the Iraqi military response is either a pledge to look into the issue or a flat-out refusal of correction. The person sent to the meetings by the Iraqis does not have the authority to promise or change anything. He is a lieutenant. In Middle Eastern protocol, sending the most junior officer possible to a meeting is an intentional snub. Even before the meeting starts, Iraqi military representation by a lieutenant is a message in itself, specifically that you are not worthy of senior officer attention.

Secretary Clinton and her department blatantly ignore the three standards set by the U.S. Congress in 2004 as to what constitutes a foreign terrorist organization, an FTO. First, it must be foreign to the U.S. The MeK satisfies that one standard. Second, it must also be a threat to the U.S. or its citizens. Third, it must have the means to carry out that threat. Neither of these are anywhere close to being achieved.

Moqtada Sadr's Mahdi Army has been directly responsible for killing hundreds of U.S. and coalition warriors and has never been identified by the U.S. State Department as a foreign terrorist organization. Hypocrisy runs deep at Foggy Bottom and intentionally fails to consider what has really caused the loss of American blood.

For Secretary Clinton to associate the move from Camp Ashraf to Hurriya as being a criterion for the de-listing, violates the congressional mandate and somehow assumes that the former NLA is capable of breaking through the Iraqi military perimeter around Ashraf to launch an attack, with resources it does not have, on the U.S. or its citizens. One of the most disturbing things about Secretary Clinton's position is that the MeK served beside U.S. forces in Iraq.

Not to be outdone by his boss, in April State Department Ambassador Benjamin stated before Congress that the foreign terrorist determination is dependent upon seeing what weaponry the MeK still has at Ashraf. He claimed to Congressman Poe that the U.S. has not had a chance to see what was at Ashraf.

To this, General Phillips, Lieutenant Colonel McCloskey, and I wrote an editorial that every one of us conducted multiple inspections. Of note, I have all the photographs of the real estate that Ambassador Benjamin said we never had access to. I took those photographs myself. While it may have been an expedient opportunity for him to escape further questioning from Congressman Poe, to make such a statement was misinformation at best.

On May 8, in presenting his oral argument to the U.S. Court of Appeals, State Department representative Robert Loeb continually repeated this claim of Ashraf never having been searched. He even validated this claim by presenting Ambassador Benjamin's testimony to Congress as being the source of accurate information. This use of logic is quite similar to the issue that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, and that we can use Colin Powell's testimony before the United Nations to justify the fact that Saddam did have the weapons.

Not only was Camp Ashraf searched multiple times by U.S. forces, but also by Iraqi forces in 2009 with the use of canine. All the results came out the same—no weapons were found at Ashraf.

In his presentation to the Court Of Appeals, Robert Loeb stated that the Secretary needed to receive the results of the search after all Ashraf residents have departed. What will happen after all the Ashraf residents have departed is that we will see throw-down weapons of a mass group put at Camp Ashraf.

• (1315)

Meanwhile, the State Department continues to ignore the congressional standards on what constitutes a foreign terrorist organization, but the legislative branch is not alone. In July of 2010, the judicial branch ruled against the State Department. The result was a mandate that within six months due process of the FTO listing will be implemented. That was over 22 months ago. The United States spent less time in World War I than it's taking the State Department to make that one decision. Yet, the State Department continues to stumble along, offering appeasements in exchange for dialogue that always goes nowhere. The ultimate victims of these appeasements are the Iranian people, and right now the 3,200 former NLA members trapped inside Iraq when U.S. forces invaded.

Somehow, State Department bureaucrats think that continuing to demonize the MeK as terrorists will dissuade the Iranian government from becoming more difficult. I fail to understand this logic. Iran is developing a nuclear weapons capability, planned to kill the Saudi ambassador on American soil, is the primary supporter of the brutal Syrian government, is determined to destroy Israel, kidnapped American hikers for a half a million dollar ransom for each one, sentenced a Canadian citizen to death for alleged spying, sentenced 12 Iranian Christians to death on Easter Sunday, and the list goes on. It's time to stop appeasing the fundamentalist Government of Iran and start supporting humanity.

Concerning Ashraf, in achieving that goal the best thing Canada and the United States can do is to remove the MeK from the terrorist lists, hold the Maliki government accountable for its misconduct, and bring the former NLA members out of Iraq to safe locations.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you and look forward to your questions.

[Applause]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Colonel Martin.

Before we go to questions, you have a stack of photographs there; would you be able to either leave those with us or forward copies to us?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I'll make arrangements with Miriam or anybody on your staff. I think this might be my only set, but I do have the electronic copies and I can easily send a disk.

**The Chair:** All right, that would be very much appreciated.

Let's go to questions. We have sufficient time to allow us to have six-minute rounds. We will begin, I assume, with Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and thank you again, Colonel Martin, for giving us an update and, of course, for your previous trip here as well.

My first question is directly related to your testimony. I wasn't at the meeting, but you mentioned some testimony that was given by Ambassador Benjamin at a committee that would be similar to this one, I would think. He was trying to justify a determination by the United States government by saying that they were not able to inspect Camp Ashraf. That mystifies me. How is it possible that those people who are on the panel would accept that as an answer, knowing that Ashraf was always laid bare not only for U.S. troops but also Iraqi troops?

• (1320)

**Col Wesley Martin:** Congressman Poe was being very kind to him. Congressman Poe is a very great man, not only in Congress but also before as a judge. He let the conversation move on, but I don't believe Congressman Poe believed it. Tomorrow there will be hearings back in D.C., which Congressman Poe, Rohrabacher, and Filner will be attending. As soon as I leave here, I'll be heading to D. C. to visit with them before the hearings start, to make sure that Ambassador Fried doesn't try to repeat this latest version.

I was surprised that Congressman Poe allowed him to escape on that one, but unfortunately because we weren't there and didn't anticipate it, he was able to escape. When it came up in the court room, General Phillips and I were sitting beside each other, and we couldn't believe what we were hearing. The lawyer presented to the Court of Appeals that this camp had never been searched.

As I mentioned, over the course of the six years that the Americans had it, General Phillips put people on every metre of the ground and walked each one, and he also raided and inspected numerous buildings, as Lieutenant Colonel Leo McCloskey and I both did. It was a continual process. Unfortunately, what we're finding when dealing with the State Department is that they're dealing with the truth like this rubber band—they're stretching it, twisting it, bending it, and if I've got the strength, breaking it, but they never present it in the form that it really should be presented.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Colonel Martin, I want to ask you about any communications with UNHCR officials on the ground and also refer you to a BBC audiocast done regarding the MeK in Ashraf. There was a Colonel Steven Hambrick who was there in 2004, who I think preceded you, and he had a substantially different view about the MeK and what was going on in Ashraf. Can you give me an idea about why his perspective would be different from yours?

First off, did you see this BBC production?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I didn't see it, but there was one that came out about two months ago. We had gotten word, General Phillips, Colonel McCloskey, Colonel Norman and I, that this was coming out and we wrote a letter to the head of BBC and told them they were taking a very skewed look at it.

When I was at Ashraf, I heard the many rumours that were generated—also from the State Department—that these people had killed Americans and were very bad people. Unfortunately, the majority of the people did not go and check the foundation of those rumours and where they came from. For instance, there was the rumour they'd killed the American officers, Hawkins, Turner, and Shaffer. After doing thorough research through non-MeK sources, I found out that wasn't the case. It was a splinter element, the Marxist Mujahedin, that had actually done the killings.

I would challenge this person to a debate any time on any TV station, and I would compare my in-depth research and experience with the MeK with his, and I guarantee you the results would be that he's coming from a very skewed position based upon results and personal discontent.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Can you give us an idea of the geographic proximity of Camp Hurriya to Ashraf? How far is it? My understanding is that Ashraf is quite close to the Iran-Iraq border. How far away is Camp Hurriya?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Camp Ashraf is about 50 to 80 miles from the Iranian border. Camp Hurriya is much further away because of the way the Iraqi border is shaped, plus you're moving into the northeast towards the centre of Iraq, so it's more like 120 miles. But even then, given where both camps are, there is no physical way that the PMOI could launch an attack today against Iran. They couldn't break out of Iraqi security. That's why it was so ridiculous when Hillary Clinton said that we have to move them out before we delist them.

**Mr. David Sweet:** How many have been transferred now and have you had any dialogue with the UNHCR, which is on the ground processing the MeK? I guess they're going through them one by one to see where they can relocate them, right?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir. As of May 11, approximately 2,000 or very close to that were at Camp Liberty. Of those, 739 have been issued ID cards by the UN; 323 were interviewed, 53 of them women and 270 men, and as of right now, zero status has been determined.

**Mr. David Sweet:** You listed men and women, but how many children are there?

• (1325)

**Col Wesley Martin:** As I recall right now, they call them children, but they're probably in their very late teens or early twenties. I don't have the breakdown of that.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Mr. Marston.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Colonel, it's good to see you back again.

Your last testimony before our committee was very persuasive, and since then we've had other testimony on this file. So I'm going to

ask you some very hard questions, because I think the questions need to be resolved.

On December 13 we had an official from Foreign Affairs who told the committee that the MeK had been actively involved in committing several terrorist attacks in the past, including assassinations, hostage taking, hit and runs aimed at government buildings in crowded cities where civilians were caught in the crossfire.

Now your testimony before us—and I know your testimony has great conviction behind it—was that the MeK, the people in Camp Ashraf, are largely an innocent group of people who have been, for not very clear reasons, repeatedly attacked by the Iranian government and their secret police.

But, again, since our last meeting we've had news reports—and I presume you're aware of these—that have emerged concerning what they call deadly attacks on Iranian nuclear scientists that were carried out by the MeK in a very dramatic way. The assailants were riding motorcycles and attached magnetic bombs to the sides of a car. They also said there were five Iranian nuclear scientists killed since 2007 and that a missile research and development site may have been destroyed.

Also, the reports are indicating that training of these people was provided by the U.S. and the Israeli secret police—which seems to be a theme that we hear from time to time from certain circles—and that they have coordinated, armed, and financially supported these groups. What's your reaction to that, because I think it opens a whole different view of the situation and needs to be addressed?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Right. To peel back the onion one layer at a time, there was revolution going on inside Iran involving Communists, the Mujahedin-e-Khalq, and the supporters of Grand Ayatollah Khomeini. These three elements were all fighting against the Shah. What the United States especially tries to do is to ignore the fact that in 1953 it was the U.S. CIA that backed a very violent overthrow of the leader then and put a very brutal person in charge, the Shah. So a war was raging in that country during that timeframe, and then there were splinter elements from there.

I do know about the blame for the killing of the three American officers and three Rockwell employees. When the Shah's police captured the people responsible for doing it, they all stated they were from the Marxist PMOI. Now, there were battles between the government forces and even after Khomeini took power, within the MeK. That's where Mr. Rajavi's first wife, Ashraf, was killed in one of those attacks.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Can I interrupt you just for a second?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sure.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** The testimony we had, though, said that this was something that had happened closer to now. So that's why I thought I would give you the opportunity to—

**Col Wesley Martin:** I appreciate it. I know that testimony and I challenge it again, because from the time that Saddam gave them a place to be in 1986 as a military force—and that's why I emphasize the National Liberation Army of the Mujahedin-e-Khalq—they were oriented in a military manner toward the opposition, in all honesty, much like the Continental Army was during the American Revolution. They were fighting a war.

On the recent accusations that they were behind these attacks in Iran, I've heard the same accusations directed toward Israel. The Iranian government has a very capable propaganda machine, maybe not as good as Adolf Hitler had under Goebbels, but it is very, very good. And even when the Saudi ambassador plot was discovered, the Iranian government came out and tried to blame the People's Mujahedin for this act, and the U.S. government this time immediately stood up and said no, it wasn't them, but the Iranian government. There is a very strong disinformation campaign going on. And when anything bad happens inside Iran, the people who are automatically blamed are either Israel or the MeK.

● (1330)

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Or the Bahá'ís....

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** They were the national scapegoat for a long time, but from the point of view of this kind of situation, that's why I thought it was important to allow you the opportunity to clarify it because these news reports are fairly recent.

If we accept this disinformation from somebody, it would sound like the agenda for whoever it would be to prevent them from being delisted.

**Col Wesley Martin:** I do appreciate the question, and there is another reason. When the report on Iran was done by the United States, I found that what that report had listened to quite often had been news releases. And as members of government, you've all been victims of bad reporting. If somebody took every adverse article about you and printed it in a consolidated document as a fact, you would feel like the most hideous person around.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** You'd have trouble getting re-elected. But the point was, it would have been easy to propose these questions to you as an accusation, and I want to quite clearly put them out there. I believe in tabling things like this because you have to clear things up, and if there is a distortion, then it should be addressed.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir, and I sincerely appreciate it. Because, you're right: they are out there.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I heard the bell.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Mr. Hiebert now.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Thank you. It's good to see you again, Colonel Martin.

We appreciated the testimony you provided you were here, and we're glad to see that you're here for an update.

When you were last here you made a prediction. You suggested that the Iraqi government would take steps immediately after meeting with the president. Wasn't that the situation—

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** —in that they were making it look like there was a staged deal or agreement that had occurred to justify their violence? That didn't quite happen. But what did happen was a little bit surprising, that is, an extension of the deadline to some degree. But it was retroactive. So instead of giving them six months from that date forward, I understand they were given six months, but they started the clock a month earlier.

We're apparently facing another deadline, by the end of this month, if I understand correctly. I'm wondering what you think is going to happen now with this looming deadline and the fact that they still have 1,000 or 1,200 people to be transferred, and the UNHCR has not been very successful in getting people out of the country. What do you see unfolding in the next little while?

**Col Wesley Martin:** First, the reason that deadline slipped was international pressure. Maliki was going to do it, but the North American and Western European governments came down so hard that he couldn't.

There's a problem. The U.S. has stated that it needs to get in there and find out what a search reveals of that camp. Mrs. Rajavi is reluctant to send the next 1,200 to Hurriya, knowing the Iraqi government is going to come in and plant a bunch of weapons and say they found them there. She has stated that before this camp is vacant she needs a U.S.-led inspection team to come in and validate what the rest of us have said for so long. There's a problem brewing right there, created by our own state department.

Fortunately, the United Nations did come in and get involved. Their involvement has been weak. I was running the show at the time. The U.N. involvement reminds me a lot of what the U.N. failed to do in support of General Dallaire when he was in Rwanda. They've been a part of the problem a lot.

This is my assessment. The U.N. is now involved, so the majority of the 3,400 people there have a form of protection. But Maliki has now issued 122 arrest warrants. They can't have all of the former NLA, so he is focusing on the prizes. He's created some charges on them and that's why it started out with the Tariq Hashimi example. The charges are a source of hostility, like those placed on his own vice-president and prime minister. There is no foundation for the charges. They're going to go after the 122 most wanted. Iran is already saying they want those 122.

I remember one day in 2003 sitting in a U.N. meeting in which an Australian colonel who was running it made a correct assessment. He said the United Nations moves at the pace of a startled snail. That's what they're doing right now and they have no determinations.

The state department recently came out with a statement saying they're looking at opening the doors to some of the refugees and request others to do the same. That's a good first step, except they have to be moved off the terrorist list.

The U.N. is going to move very slowly. We have to get the people out of there, because they're living in hideous conditions. We're already seeing deaths. We're seeing problems from the heat, getting bit by snakes, and everything else. They're not getting the life support they need. Come summer, if it gets diseased, that whole camp could be in serious trouble. They need to be brought out.

But Iran and Iraq are going to go after the 122 prizes they want.

● (1335)

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** You don't see a hard deadline of any kind?

**Col Wesley Martin:** If they're all at Camp Hurriya, I don't see that hard deadline being met unless Maliki is ready to violate the United Nations agreements and take over the camp.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** In the BBC audiocast that's being circulated, one of the claims is that spokespeople are paid very well by the movement. They note that in March of last year Governor Ed Rendell of Pennsylvania acknowledged that he had received substantial payments to speak on behalf of the MeK.

What are your thoughts on these payments? Is this another attempt to discredit the organization? Is there some validity to these claims? Are you paid by the MeK?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I'm not, and I sincerely appreciate that question because I do not receive any fees for speaking, writing, working, or whatever. As a matter of fact, all of the officers who were working hard at Camp Ashraf have not received any fees. The State Department came out—starting with Ambassador Butler—and discredited people like General Clark, saying they were doing it only for money.

I know all these people, mostly through working with the MeK, but there is no way I can possibly believe that men of the integrity of FBI director, Louis Freeh; Secretary of Homeland Security, Governor Tom Ridge; Howard Dean, and all of these people, would sell out to terrorism. Another person who got attacked was General Hugh Shelton, the Omar Bradley of our generation. Accusing him of working for terrorism for money is like accusing Omar Bradley of supporting the Nazi government. It just doesn't happen.

Also, one of the accusations is directed at some of the members who don't have as much direct knowledge of terrorism. They don't have enough knowledge to speak of it. Without going into naming these individuals, it's really a third group. The first group is the people who worked with them. The second group is the people who did great work in America on terrorism and national security. The third group is subject-matter experts in American government who have come forward. Their role is to see to it that the United States does not make a serious mistake. They are being paid funds, but the funds are for speaking. I have been in numerous meetings and events with these people where they're not getting anything.

What I also saw and brought with me is the attack on Governor Bill Richardson in the *Albuquerque Journal*. This thing popped up in the *Albuquerque Journal* about 24 hours after the day the news came out that people were being paid. There is no way that was a follow-up. That was delivered to the journal, and the intent was to get these people off the bat because it came out just before the Secretary of State's office came over and said they didn't want the Court of Appeals to be involved "because the secretary is too busy to worry about these 3,400 people".

I saw it as trying to push these people away and scare them. Anybody who thinks you're going to scare those people away really got a surprise. What's interesting is that after Congressman Rohrabacher came out and said he was going to launch an investigation of the Treasury Department for doing this, and then suddenly everybody in the executive branch didn't know who had started it.

• (1340)

**The Chair:** All right. We'll now go to Professor Cotler.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I also want to welcome you back again, Colonel Martin. I recall your last compelling testimony before us. Today, you again eloquently described the harassment and brutality at Camp Hurriya, and perhaps the most graphic reference in your testimony was the one in which you referred to Mayor Giuliani's position that "this is a concentration camp". You noted that "One spark could easily set this camp ablaze with a slaughter that would dwarf the 2009 and 2011 attacks. Then Hurriya could become an extermination camp".

That to me is perhaps the most alarming testimony that I've heard on this issue. I just want to say that it dovetails somewhat with a statement or submission made by my colleague and friend, Professor Alan Dershowitz, who characterized the situation recently in a meeting in Washington as follows:

We have two emergencies: Now, we have the existing emergency of the facility itself. But we also have the continuing humanitarian emergency that every day, every day that a member of Camp Ashraf lives in Iraq is a day that they do not know whether they will complete that day in safety or alive.

**He went on to say:** Iraq has become basically a wholly-owned subsidiary of Iran—

—and then concluded on this main point: And therefore the main issue is to get these innocent people out of Iraq and to safety in places around the world where they can live in peace.

We are now awaiting the transfer of 1,200 more people into a situation that Professor Dershowitz has described as a dual emergency, underpinned by what you have described. My question is, should we be working not so much to facilitate the move of the other 1,200 to Hurriya but to remove those who are there, along with the 1,200, to a safe haven?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir. I appreciate your reading. As I was trying to speed up my testimony I left out a key part. I appreciate that.

We need to bring all the MeK out of Iraq now. In the United States we have the facilities. With the close-down, we have a lot of military bases; the facilities are there.

A friend of Louis Freeh's told him that there's room to put 3,000 people in Rota, Spain. We can bring them out, and they need to come out and need to be put under very safe and sanitary conditions. The situation at Hurriya and Ashraf for the past two years and the psychological torment and rage remind me of that cartoon I think we will all remember in which there's a blender with goldfish in it. One goldfish says to the other "I can't stand the stress", because at some moment somebody is going to hit that go button and the rotors are going to start. Also, the armoured vehicles showed up in April—the same anti-riot vehicles and same anti-riot equipment—and those people surrounding both camps right now are exactly the same people, under exactly the same leadership, who conducted the two previous raids. It's only going to take one spark, as it did with the convoy that was getting ready to leave when one of the MeK members asked a question and the next thing you knew, the Iraqis pulled out the batons and just started smashing skulls, and 23 of them ended up in medical treatment.

Here is one last point. As I mentioned before, the camp has asked to have pesticide control come in and has asked to have canopies that they will put up. Every time they ask to make a life enhancement in that camp, that first lieutenant says he has no answer and will have to check on it. This has been going on for two months.



**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** One of the other things that Professor Dershowitz speaks of is that both these humanitarian emergencies just described are exacerbated by the fact that the MeK continues to be listed as an armed terrorist organization.

Time has passed since you were here, but my colleague Alan Dershowitz is right now representing a group of distinguished Americans, including some of the people you mentioned—a former attorney general, a former mayor of New York, a former secretary for Homeland Security, and a group of generals, of whom you may be one—in an amicus brief before the courts.

My question is, after all this time has passed, with a court decision already, and with congressional testimony, why is the administration still not moving on this issue?

• (1345)

**Col Wesley Martin:** My feeling is that from the very get-go the listing of the MeK was not related to something that happened 20 years earlier in Iran; it was Madeleine Albright deciding that if she appeased the Iranian government—the appearance of a modern Iranian government—they would make concessions and work. As a result of Madeleine Albright's doing, they were made a terrorist organization on the State Department list. As we all know, Iran continued with their nuclear weapon and continued with the abuse of all power.

They know how to negotiate. Iran and the Middle East have a theory about negotiations: if I am not in a position of power, how can I negotiate; if I am in a position of power, why should I? Well, the western governments have always given in to Iran. Right now, our State Department is afraid that if we delist the MeK we're going to interfere with the nuclear talks. It's always something else.

They are listed for the wrong reason.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Professor Cotler.

We'll now go back to Mr. Sweet.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Colonel, thank you again for your testimony. I forgot to mention first up—I did so that last time you were here—thank you very much for your service too, as one of our good friends and allies to the south.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Thank you, sir.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I want to ask you about the RAND Corporation and Human Rights Watch. They've had some testimonials regarding grave human rights abuses that happened at Camp Ashraf.

Can you speak to that issue as well?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I can.

Here is the RAND report I was referencing earlier. All the yellow tabs that we see on it mark where I found discrepancies in what the RAND report was saying.

When they were developing this RAND report, they did not talk to General Geoffrey Miller, they did not talk to Bill Brandenburg, they did not talk to Lieutenant General Jack Gardner, or Brigadier General Dave Phillips, or me, or Julie Norman, and the list goes on

of who they did not talk to. They talked to a very limited number of people and, as mentioned, they used a lot of cyclic information.

When I was there, one day I got a report from the State Department saying that they have a secret training camp going on here where they're training Iraqis. I mounted up the marines and said we're going into that camp. Then a marine lieutenant and I went in, with the rest of the marines mounted up, machine guns ready to fire. The marine lieutenant and I went forward and we found out that it was where Iraqi workers were able to sleep at night to avoid being caught by Mahdi Army or Badr corps and being executed.

All these rumours I would dispel, but the State Department would not take those rumours off their record. Rather, they would maintain them—even the killing of the Kurds. I gave State Department—Jay Zimmerman and Steve Epstein, in Washington, D.C.—the letter from the foreign minister. They validated it with him, and it came out. He said, yes, I wrote that letter; they did not attack the Kurds. And yet the State Department still sees it, and it's still in this RAND report. And I gave them that letter two years earlier.

RAND usually does very good work. Unfortunately, they took a lot of cyclic information in this one.

Interestingly.... I love this one, from the RAND report:

...very few legislators in the West actively endorse the MeK or even know much about the group. An analysis requested by the Joint Chiefs of Staff during O [peration] I [raqi] F [reedom] found that the MeK's support in Congress was not significant. Individual members who appear to view the MeK in a positive light tend to be energetic opponents of the I [slamic] R [epublic of] I [ran] or have significant numbers of Iranian-Americans in their districts. Others are simply misinformed.

So according to RAND, any congressman who speaks favourably of the MeK either totally hates Iran, is out to please the voters, or just doesn't know what they're talking about.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Is it the same thing with Human Rights Watch?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I'm sure they did it for Human Rights Watch, yes. Was it 2009?

**Mr. David Sweet:** I don't have a date in my notes here right now.

**Col Wesley Martin:** I should have helped you there, sir. I'm sure it is.

• (1350)

**Mr. David Sweet:** One thing, which I may let you freely elucidate on, that is really troublesome in your testimony is regarding this growing relationship between al-Maliki and Iran. We've done an in-depth study; in fact, the members around here quoted from that study last night when we had a take note debate in the chamber regarding human rights in Iran. You seemed to indicate in your testimony that the State Department or the White House really is not cognizant of this, or consciously ignores it but hasn't taken any action in that regard, even though the President of the United States has spoken very strongly, saying that he's ready to take action and is keeping all of his options open with respect to Iran.

You're also politically savvy. Can you give us some indication of why this is going on?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. David Sweet:** It has to be more than just the history of Madeleine Albright.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Oh, it is, and when I look at the way the United States is handling this right now, especially the executive branch, it reminds me of that open mike that President Obama didn't know was live, when he started talking to the Russian president. He's handling this the same way: if we don't pay attention to Iraq and how it's deteriorating, then, come November, it will not be an issue.

Iraq is deteriorating very seriously. I received an intelligence report yesterday from a close friend of mine who is in Iraq—and he is an Iraqi. He wrote:

Iran is the king of Iraqi politics now. American officials should and must know the sad fact. Also they should tell American people the truth about what's going on. The al-Maliki government is starting to melt down, but he is still the Minister of Defence. He is the Minister of Interior and he has his six brigades of military assigned especially to him. He is using that to gain more and more power.

The last time I was here, Maliki was trying to work with Moqtada al-Sadr and give him 1,500 positions in the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defence. However, that break has been even greater. Maliki is now arresting people in his own party and, as he did with Tariq Hashimi and Mutlaq, he's getting rid of all his opposition, and he's doing it with the blessing of the United States and ignoring...

Moreover, I also mentioned when I was last here that when military came in and brutally beat down people in Tahrir Square, Hillary Clinton called for an investigation. I thought, great, she's going to investigate what happened in Tahrir Square, Baghdad. No, she was talking about Egypt. Both countries have liberty squares; they both have Tahrir squares. She focused on Tahrir Square, Egypt. She also called for an investigation of the brutal death of Gadhafi; but what about the death of Saddam, which was a lynching? Her department ignored U.S. military warnings that this was going to happen, and then when it did happen, her department, under Condoleezza Rice, backed out and let the military take the blame.

She doesn't talk about the secret hidden prisons inside Iraq and about people who go missing. Right now, Maliki's only major opposition is Barzani, in terms of a regional concern. Barzani came to the White House to speak to President Obama, who told him, "You just need to work it out. Give it time. We don't have time". So two weeks ago, Barzani met with Moqtada al-Sadr, trying to figure out how they could try to work together to save the government and the country from Maliki.

Ten years ago, Maliki was a street vendor in Damascus. About nine months ago, his son went around buying up properties in the Emirates and Damascus and every other place. Maliki claims he's worth only about \$10,000. He's worth several hundred million dollars. I made the comment one time that we sent Al Capone to jail for income tax evasion and too bad we couldn't do that with Maliki. The man is taking control. I'm waiting for the day for him to be sitting in front of their parliament, smoking a cigarette or cigar while names are called out and people are removed from the room and immediately executed. I don't see him doing this as badly as Saddam did. Saddam literally smoked a cigar while it was happening, but Maliki is basically doing the same thing, and the U.S. government is blessing him. I call it an open-mike situation.

• (1355)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Jacob, *s'il vous plaît*.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Colonel Martin, in your opinion, what are the next concrete measures that the international community or the Government of Canada should take in order to introduce a sustainable solution for the residents of the Ashraf and Hurriya camps?

[English]

**Col Wesley Martin:** Is there a technical problem?

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Mr. Jacob, I will ask you to repeat your question.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** I am going to ask my question again.

**The Chair:** It's my fault.

[English]

**Col Wesley Martin:** Okay, sir, I apologize.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** There is no problem.

In your opinion, what concrete measures should the international community or the Government of Canada or both take in the way of coming up with a sustainable solution regarding the residents of the Ashraf and Hurriya camps?

[English]

**Col Wesley Martin:** First, I apologize again. When we were stationed in Korea, we used to speak and then we would get direct translation, so I was looking for who was translating. I'm sorry.

I appreciate the question. Right now I feel there are two things that are very critical. One is that the Canadian government delist the MeK, bring it off the terrorist list. When I was in Iraq, I was very proud to serve with them and have them on my flank when I was the commander of Ashraf. I know they're not terrorists; they were trusted allies. Even before I worked with them at Ashraf, two years earlier, when I was the anti-terrorism officer of the whole country, I did an assessment of all the threats that were facing all coalition forces. I was able immediately to recognize them as not a threat, as people who were working with General Karpinski at the time. She told me herself. We had an opportunity. It's not a terrorist organization; it needs to be removed from the list.

I know we all want to respect the decisions of the United States and work with them, but this time the United States is wrong. We need to get it off the list.

Second, as many people as possible should be hosted in our countries. I have 30 acres in western New York. I figured that in my house and everything I have there, I could easily support a dozen. I am willing to take 12 MeK members in myself, where I live. I would encourage the western European, Canadian, and U.S. governments to do the same thing. Let's bring them all out. If those arrest warrants are valid, al-Maliki can go ahead and extradite them back, but I know they're not valid. I know that the one Spain has on al-Maliki for the attacks on Ashraf is valid. But I do know that the arrest warrants for the MeK will prove not to be valid. We cannot allow these warrants to be executed, because the people in turn will be executed, most likely in Tehran, sir.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** Thank you.

Toward the end of your statement, you said that the time had come to put an end to the appeasement policy toward the Iran fundamentalist regime, and that it was time to support a humanitarian intervention. What would you have to say, practically speaking, to Canada and to the international community?

[English]

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, what we need to do right now for those 2,000 at Camp Ashraf is to put at end to the situation they're in, the squalid conditions they're living in. We have to get them immediate assistance, get them the water they need, get them relief from the heat, get them insecticides, and take that little camp and remove them from it.

There's something very disturbing that also came in from that intelligence report I got from inside Iraq. Al-Maliki is looking at suddenly moving them further to the south, maybe towards the Diwaniyah area or farther down to Nasariyah. We have to make sure they are able to get medical supplies, which are being denied, and that they get all of the other resources they need for immediate life support. Then let's bring them out. I guarantee you, if they are brought out, the people who criticize them now will be amazed at how hard-working they are, how dedicated they are to the same principles we have.

I often point out that my own government, the executive branch, says these people have Marxist-Leninist beliefs because they believe in equality between those in power and those who are not. They believe clerics should not have total rule over the congregations and cannot be the sole interpreter of the Koran. Those were the three founding principles of the MeK. I don't find them offensive. I don't find them representative of Marx and Lenin; to me they are more representative of Madison and Jefferson.

People would be amazed at how their ideals are so close to ours, if we did the humanitarian thing and brought them out, sir.

• (1400)

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** Thank you very much, Colonel Martin.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**Col Wesley Martin:** Thank you.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Jacob.

[English]

This brings the questions to a conclusion.

Colonel Martin, we're very grateful that a you were able to come here. Before we wrap up, is there anything else we've missed that you'd like to leave with us?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I appreciate everything you're doing. I would like to close by saying that if at any time you would like me to return, or if you would like General Phillips to come, we will come back. If there is work that can be done to help remove the MeK from the foreign terrorist list and I get a call 48 hours out, I will be here. I know that it's the same thing for General Phillips: We will meet with anybody, any place you desire.

Finally, let's remove the MeK from the terrorist lists of both our countries. And let's bring them out of Iraq and do the right, humanitarian thing.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Colonel.

[Applause]

**Col Wesley Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cotler has a motion on an unrelated topic. Mr. Cotler, would you like to go ahead, please?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I believe that all members have a copy of this motion. The motion really is a reflection of the witness testimony before us and the take note debate that we had yesterday evening, which you, Mr. Chairman, and others on this committee participated in.

Basically, it summarizes the witness testimony on the matter of the human rights violations in Iran. Then it calls for, among other things, the dropping of all charges in the cases of two political prisoners in Iran who have a Canadian connection, Saeed Malekpour and Hamid Ghassemi-Shall.

**The Chair:** Is there any commentary on this?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Chair, there's one small addition we spoke about during the meeting. In the second to last paragraph, in the sentence that says "and who should be allowed to return to Canada", I would like to add the words "on humanitarian grounds".

**The Chair:** Let's see if that's a friendly amendment.

Is that acceptable, Professor Cotler?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** That's acceptable.

**The Chair:** Okay. It's a friendly amendment. That's now how it will read.

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

**The Chair:** I think it was passed unanimously; we're not very demonstrative about these things sometimes.

I appreciate that and all of the members who were here.

The meeting is adjourned.





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