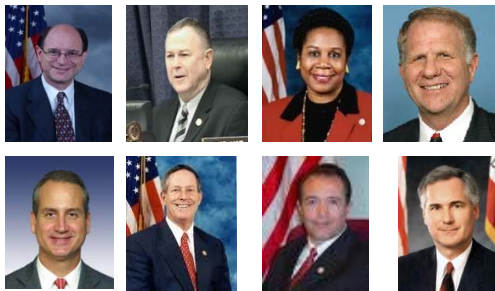


CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

110 House members from 37 states

call for de-listing MEK/PMOI

(November 16, 2010)



Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA): “We sent a bipartisan letter to secretary Clinton that tells her about H.Res. 1431 and states the number of members that we have cosponsoring it ...and that Iranian officials should not be seen as exploiting an unjust us designation to further justify their draconian punishment on prisoners of conscious.”

Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA):

“Now our focus is on should the MEK be on the foreign terrorist list. The European union says no, the US court of appeals says that the State Department failed to do its job,...but being chair of the subcommittee...I asked the state department for a classified briefing on this issue...The refusal to provide this not just to me, but to the relevant subcommittee was received just yesterday..”



Congressman Dana

Rohrabacher (R-CA): ” There are millions of people in Iran who are waiting for a signal, and the last thing we need to give them is to be declaring people who are fighting against them as terrorists.. “

Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX):

“There are 110 members of the United States Congress agree ..through legislation that we have filed as co-sponsors - House Resolution 1431, that MEK needs to be taken immediately off the terrorist list

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 16, 2010

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Hillary:

We are writing to bring to your attention a House resolution co-sponsored by over 100 bipartisan colleagues inviting you to remove the main Iranian opposition group, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO).

Like thousands of other members of parliaments around the world, we believe that this organization does not currently merit being kept on the FTO list both on legal and political grounds.

In recent years, some of the highest judicial authorities in Europe have made the same recommendations to their governments, and as a result, in 2008 and 2009, the MEK was scratched off the lists in Britain and the 27-member European Union, respectively. It is imperative to bring Washington's policy in sync with that of our allies across the Atlantic regarding Iran and the Iranian opposition. Otherwise, the regime will continue to have fertile grounds to exploit these policy divergences to its benefit.

The MEK's continued designation in the US has had deadly consequences. The Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, for example, has invoked the listing to deny the residents of Camp Ashraf, home to 3,400 MEK members, including 1000 women, their fundamental rights guaranteed under international law. In July 2009, Iraqi forces carried out a violent raid against the camp residents, which left 11 residents dead and hundreds injured.

The Iranian regime has also exploited the designation to crack down on the MEK at home. Anyone perceived to be affiliated with the organization is charged with "moharebeh" (waging war on God) and sentenced to death. In your August 10, 2010 statement you correctly alluded to the fate of Jafar Kazemi, Mohammad Haj Aghaei, and Javad Lari who had been sentenced to death for participating in peaceful demonstrations last year and because of their affiliation with the MEK.

In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, President Obama referred to "the hundreds of thousands who have marched silently through the streets of Iran," and emphasized that "it is the responsibility of all free people and free nations to make clear that these movements – these

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
November 16, 2010
Page 2

movements of hope and history – they have us on their side.” As such, Iranian officials should not be seen as exploiting an unjust US designation to further justify imparting their draconian punishments on prisoners of conscience.

We understand that the State Department is in the process of reviewing the designation following the July ruling of the US Federal Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

In the course of your review, we respectfully submit that you consider our strong desire for the delisting of the MEK, reflected in a bi-partisan resolution, H.Res.1431, which has 101 cosponsors so far.

Removing the MEK from the FTO list is not only the right thing to do, but it also sends the right message to Tehran. The Iranian regime and its President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad have rebuffed offers of negotiations, and stepped up their intransigence in every sphere of contention with the United States, including human rights, the nuclear weapons program and support for terrorism in the region.

We are confident, Madame Secretary, that the rule of law will prevail in this case and that our growing bi-partisan voices in Congress will garner the attention they deserve at the State Department under your capable leadership.

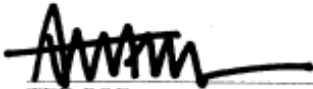
Sincerely,



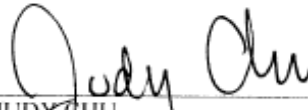
BOB FILNER
Member of Congress



DANA ROHRABACHER
Member of Congress



TED POE
Member of Congress



JUDY CHU
Member of Congress



ED TOWNS
Member of Congress



MIKE COFFMAN
Member of Congress



Remarks by Chairman Bob Filner (D-CA)

(Chair, House Veterans Affairs Committee;
Co-Chair, Iran Human Rights and Democracy Caucus)



Good afternoon, it's wonderful to see you all. We have to keep the pressure as Judge Poe said. So thank you all. I was just told, by the way, that of all these flags there will be 37 of them representing states from which we have cosponsors for this legislation. So hopefully we'll have all 50 at some point.

As you know, we have introduced Resolution 1431, which calls upon the US government, the president, the Secretary of State to condemn human rights violations in Iraq and to support the Iranian people endeavors toward democracy. In addition, it asks the Secretary of State to remove the Peoples Mojahedin Organization of Iran, which is the MEK from the State Department list of foreign terrorist organizations. I think you all know that soon after the United States handed responsibility for Camp Ashraf over to Iraq, the forces in Iraq in January 2009 carried out violent rage in Camp Ashraf, which left 11 residents dead and hundreds injured. Despite the promises to protect the residents, the Iraqi government continues to violate human rights with members estimated to be over 3400 including over 1000 women. This needs to stop. My resolution which I am proud to say has bipartisan support with over 100 co-sponsors, 9 of which sit on the floor with on Foreign Relations Committee of our Congress, seeks to have the MEK removed from the terrorist list which has served as the pretext for the Iranian regimes agents in Iraq to act against the residents of Ashraf. Like other parliaments around the world, we in the United States Congress believe that this organization does not qualify to be on the FTO list both on legal and political grounds. Removing the MeK from the FTO list is not only the right thing to do but sends the right message to Iran. We know that the Iranian regime has rebuffed offers of negotiations and appeals, and stepped up there intransigence in every sphere of cooperation in the United States including human rights, nuclear weapons program, and support for terrorism in the region.

This morning we sent a bipartisan letter to secretary Clinton that tells her about HR 1431 and state the number of members that we have cosponsoring it and we know that Iranian officials should not be seen as exploiting an unjust US designation to further justify their draconian punishment on prisoners of conscious.

We know that the MeK's continued designation to the United States has deadly consequences. Our resolution sends a message to the world that violations of human rights will not be tolerated. I would like to of course thank the president elect of the National council of resistance of Iran, Mrs. Rajavi, who has not only led this fight, but has also offered all kinds of assistance and aid to the residents of Camp Ashraf. After the members of congress speak we will hear a message from Mrs. Rajavi from her home in France.

Remarks by Mrs. Maryam Rajavi

President Elect – National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)



Distinguished Representatives,

It is a great pleasure for me to be able to speak to you once again. Allow me first to congratulate you on being re-elected by the American people. I would also like to thank all of you, friends of the Iranian people and Resistance, for sponsoring the resolution on Iran.

This resolution offers a viable and practical solution to the US government for handling the most serious challenge the world is facing. Apart from the lobbies and supporters of the Iranian regime, there is a consensus that the mullahs' regime is the most serious threat to regional and global peace and security.

Your resolution offers the solution to this crisis. This resolution rightly suggests relying on the Iranian people for change, supporting their efforts to establish democracy, freedom and human rights; at the heart of which is revocation of the State Department's terrorist designation of the PMOI. By highlighting the role of the democratic opposition, you have rightly identified the shortcomings of the current US policy. The solution for this crisis is regime change by the people of Iran and their Resistance. Any policy which disregards this decisive factor is doomed to fail.

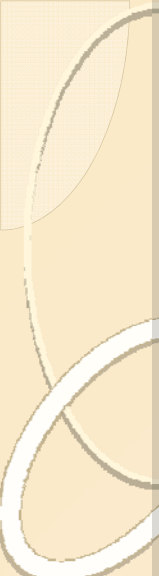
The driving force for change is the Iranian Resistance and its pivotal force the PMOI.

That is why demonizing the opposition and wiping out its members at Camp Ashraf is the prime objective of the regime and its lobbies. That is why the main demand of the Iranian regime is maintaining the PMOI (MEK) on the State Department's terrorist list and to use it as a justification for executions in Iran. The US policy has so far acted as a major barrier to change in Iran.

The FTO designation of the PMOI has prevented the Iranian Resistance to fully use its abilities and potentials to bring about change. That has led to a lack of a proper understanding of the balance of power in Iran and the regime's feeble state. Similarly, handing over the protection of Ashraf to Iraqi forces was a major favor to the Iranian regime and another great obstacle in the path of change in Iran.

The mullahs' regime is a serious threat but suffers from internal instability. The regime's apparent strength is due to the policy of appeasement by the West and in particular the clampdown on the main Iranian opposition group. Maintaining the FTO designation on the PMOI serves as the biggest assistance to the mullahs' regime in its struggle to survive. It is in effect siding with the regime's suppressive apparatus.

There is no factual basis for the PMOI designation. The DC Circuit in its opinion in July 2010 expressed its dissatisfaction with the Department's evidence. The court also concluded that the Secretary Rice's decision to maintain the designation violated PMOI's due process rights. Thus, it ordered the Secretary to review the decision.



The European Union, the UK, Members of Congress and many prominent US figures have rejected the terror label on the PMOI. The time has now come for the State Department to end its isolation and remove this disgraceful label.

Once again, there is talk of a new round of dialogue with the Iranian regime; a regime the Revolutionary Guards dominate. This is the repeat of the past mistakes. It only provides the mullahs with more time to continue their rogue policies. Over the past two years, all possible incentives, short of a nuclear bomb, was offered to the regime. The regime rejected them all. I take the opportunity today to warn that continuing this approach, under any pretext, would be a recipe for disaster.

Although sanctions have created certain problems for the regime, it is not enough and will not stop the regime's nuclear weapons program. Sanctions must target the main source of the regime's revenues. All purchases of oil from the regime must be stopped. The time has come for the US government to adopt a new policy towards the Iranian people and the democratic opposition.

One aspect of such policy as stated by resolution 1431 is the removal of the PMOI's FTO designation. Another aspect of that policy as stated by a House majority in resolution 704, is correcting the mistaken policy of handing over protection of Ashraf to Iraqi forces and ensuring the protection of the Camp. In Resolution 704 you have rightly reminded the US government of its legal and moral obligations regarding the residents of Ashraf.

The experience of the past two years shows that Maliki's government is not competent to protect Ashraf. His government is greatly influenced by the Iranian regime, which had made its support for Maliki's premiership conditional on the destruction of the PMOI in Ashraf. This clearly shows the regime's fear of the PMOI.

The recent revelations show that at the time of transferring the protection to the Iraqis, the US was aware that Iraqi authorities were not competent to protect the residents of Ashraf. Therefore, this is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. As such, based on Article 45 of this Convention, the US must re-assume the responsibility for protection of Ashraf residents and adopt the necessary measures to protect Ashraf residents. The inhumane restrictions imposed on Ashraf by Iraqi authorities must end. Finally, the status of the residents of Ashraf as protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention must be reaffirmed.

I urge President Obama to heed the call of the American people, which you represent, for a new policy towards Iran. I call on him to make the right choice and stand with the Iranian people. Democratic change in Iran is what the whole region needs. This is a choice for peace and security in the region. Failing to make the right choice will have dire consequences for peace and security in the world. Once again I thank you. And God bless you.

Remarks by Congressman Brad Sherman (D-CA)

(Chairman, House Subcommittee on Terrorism,
Non -Proliferation and Trade)



Hello, I'm Brad Sherman from California's best-named city, Sherman Oaks. It is a pleasure to be with you yet again. I thank you for the promotion that I got at the introduction. I'm currently the Chair for the Subcommittee on Terrorism and Non-Proliferation and Trade and a senior member of the FA committee. As all of you know that means in 2 months, we put in the word "ranking member" right where chairman when it comes to the subcommittee...

So I should address the subject of that. Of course I've done everything possible to try to protect the residents of camp Ashraf, but now our focus is on should the MeK be on the foreign terrorist list. The European union says no, the US court of appeals says that the State Department failed to do its job, and sent them back to do their job. Ordinarily, that would be enough for me, but being chair of the subcommittee, I have to weigh these decisions a little more closely. So, what I did is I asked the state department for a classified briefing on this issue. Any of you who have gotten to know foreign policy from a congressional standpoint will understand when I say, "sometimes you learn more from the classified briefings they won't give you than from the classified briefings they do give you." That is especially true for those of us who've attended classified briefings only to be told something slightly less definitive than what's in the New York Times the same day.

The refusal to provide this not just to me, but to the relevant subcommittee was received just yesterday. I therefore asked the intelligence community to provide such a briefing and will see...well, it's been interesting. I've been pressing for this briefing for over a month and the variety of different excuses that I got shows that creativity is alive and well in the State Department. I was told that the judge in the court case had prohibited them doing a briefing of congress. I know that there are a few judges that would step a little bit on the prerogatives of congress but none against the first article of our constitution to quite that degree. What it comes down to is that the state department doesn't know which way they want to slant the facts before they present it to us because they haven't figured out what they're going to do. So, they can't present the facts until they know which way they want to slant them. We'll see if we can get the intelligence community to provide that briefing instead, and if not then members of Congress are just going to have to work with the knowledge that we have.

One of the most important bits of information that we do have is the role the MeK took in August 2002 in disclosing the Iranian nuclear program to the world and giving the world a fighting chance to stop that program. My subcommittee is not by coincidence that it's terrorism and non-proliferation. Those two goals go together and the MeK has done for nonproliferation than any group I know that isn't getting subsidies from the federal government, and perhaps from those as well. I want to thank you for your interest in bringing democracy to Iran. Democracy also needs to be brought to the United States. An essential part of that is for the executive branch to keep Congress informed and I look forward for the restoration of full democracy in America.

Remarks by Congressman Ted Poe (R-TX)

(House Foreign Affairs Committee)

Good morning...I'm glad to be here today with some other bright-thinking people about the most important thing any of us can desire and any of us will ever have,...Here in this country, we love the concept of liberty and freedom,

but half way around the world, places that you know exist, out in the middle of the desert - a place called Camp Ashraf, there are people, good people, who don't live in freedom. They are not only oppressed by really one government, they are oppressed by two governments: first the Iraqi government, and then the government of the little tyrant of the desert Ahmadinejad and his Iranian government oppressing the folks at Camp Ashraf. We have this message for both of those governments: that those people in Camp Ashraf have the absolute human right to live in freedom and safety and those of us here in the United States who are concerned for human rights, we are watching both of those governments, to make sure that those people are protected and that those families, your families are kept safe. I've also got news for those two governments: that this issue is not going away. We are going to continue to press the issue of safety for the people in Camp Ashraf, contrary to the wishes of Ahmadinejad, and maybe contrary to the wishes of Iraq. We are not going away, they are not going away, and you are not going away.

We also are here today to make sure that the Iranian government and other governments understand that there are 110 members of the United States Congress from both parties, bipartisan, that are saying that, through legislation that we have filed as co-sponsors - House Resolution 1431, that MEK needs to be taken immediately off the terrorist list here in the United States. It's long overdue; it has not been done, and now is the day of reckoning where we want MEK and its designation delisted from the terrorist list in the United States. We need to make sure that the folks in Iran know that, the people in other countries know that, but also that our State Department knows that...that a vast number of members of the congress support this legislation. At the end of this term, if this legislation doesn't pass, it will reintroduce in January in a bipartisan manner because we are not going away, and neither are you, and neither is this legislation.

I also want to congratulate and thank Mr. Bob Filner and others who have today sent a letter to Secretary Clinton again urging her to remove the MeK from the terrorist list. I've also sent a personal letter to her as well requesting that the State Department get it's house in order and remove the MeK designation as a terrorist group... I want to thank all you folks from the state of Texas, you Iranian Texans that are here. You know some folks who go to Texas or are born in Texas...I want to thank you for being very vocal and making this issue one that is an important international Human Rights issue to delist MeK, to make sure that we watch with a watchful careful eye what takes place in Camp Ashraf. The last comment I would make is this to the people: your family and friends that are still in Iran, that we are concerned...The human rights violations must cease to operate against the Iranian people. Our quarrel as a nation of the United States is not with the Iranian people. Our quarrel is with the government of Iran and the rogue that's illegitimately part of the regime and that runs roughshod over the people who live in Iran. I want to encourage those good folks in Iran who want to control their government to not give up, to not be weary, to be strong and courageous. Sometimes you have to fight a battle more than once to win it. So continue to fight that battle, to regain the human dignity, the freedom that you rightly deserve, and control over your own country because we are not going away.



Remarks by Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) (House Foreign Affairs Committee)

What we do will determine not only what goes on in Iran and not only what goes on in the Middle East, but whether our own country lives in peace. We make a lot of mistakes in the past years we have supported people and not supported people, other people, in far off countries and have descended out as we say “biting America in the ass”. The fact is that the US should be supporting those elements who opposed the Taliban all along. There were a few of us in congress during the 1990s that tried to do that. It was the Clinton admin that determined however that it was the Taliban was the government that we would support even though it was made up of tyrants and gangsters and radicals and nutcases, for short, It came back to hurt us in 911 in a big way.

What we do now concerning a very similar regime in Iran is either going to further the cause of peace, be the right thing, or is either going to hurt the United States of America not only the people of Iran. We got to determine whose side we are on. America should always be on the side of those people who are struggling for democracy, not necessarily because we are the friends of those people but because we are defining ourselves, and lighting our own future in those decisions. Today the United States has got to determine whose side we are on in Iran. And I would say, “whoever is fighting the mullah regime is a friend of the United States, and to put anybody whose fighting the mullah regime on a list of terrorists is a travesty.”

We must make sure that America stands firm right now with the mullahs and with everybody else in letting them know exactly whose side we are on. And if we do, I will tell you, we will find that the mullah regime is a lot weaker than people think. There are millions of people in Iran who are waiting for a signal, and the last thing we need to give them is to be declaring people who are fighting against them as terrorists. In fact, whether it's at Camp Ashraf or the streets of Tehran, those people who are struggling against the regime are heroes not only in Iran but heroes of all the people in the world including the United States of America.

So, today I am honored to stand with you as a bipartisan stand but as Americans to reaffirm to our government we expect you to support those who are fighting for freedom in Iran we expect the terrorist list that we have not to include anyone who's fighting that regime. Because those by definition those who were fighting the Taliban back in the 1990s were our friends and not terrorists were fighting an illegitimate dictatorship and that's the same situation that lives in Iran today. So I want to take a step forward, step forth a little bit and say that Camp Ashraf is something that we are watching very closely and our policies towards Camp Ashraf will in the long way, in the long run, determine not just the security for the people there, but for the security for the people in United States of America. It is our duty to raise the cause of freedom but also because it works for our benefit for our people to support the people of Camp Ashraf and those brave souls in Iran who are fighting the mullahs. Thank you very much.



Remarks by Congressman

Trent Franks (R-AZ)

(House Armed Services & Judiciary Committees)

You know, we always have to say nice things about each other because there are so many people that say bad things about us, and I appreciate it. I appreciate just the people I get to stand with today. You know I guess I would begin today by thanking all of you for being here on behalf of all the oppressed people in Iran.

Sometimes we forget in America how blessed we are. We wake up

everyday and we have no thought, that somehow our freedoms would be truly attenuated or taken from us like in Camp Ashraf and other places in Iran, and I just want you to know that I believe that the Iranian dissidents, those that are fighting the immoral government of Ahmadinejad, may be one of the greatest hopes in the world of keeping the human family from stepping into the shadow of nuclear terrorism. I can't express to you how much I believe what you're doing is vital to the stability of the whole world.

Most of you understand that Ahmadinejad's government is an illegitimate government. It is a government that has now become the largest state sponsor of terrorism in the world, and this is not the heart of the Iranian people. I guess if there's anything I would hope that the Iranian people would hear, it's that they need to understand that: the American people are with you. We have no desire to exploit you or take from you. We want you to be able to walk in the sunlight of freedom as we are blessed to do. We understand that Ahmadinejad is as much your enemy as he is the enemy of peace in the world. I just hope somehow that, in America and across the planet, we can understand that not only the plight of the Iranian people but how this Iranian government has twisted things to the extent that they tried to make MEK and other major opposition leadership in Iran to be terrorists. They try to push that off limit, and for Ahmadinejad to call anyone terrorists in an absolute irony that beggars my ability to articulate.

So let me just say to you that I thank God for every each one of you and I hope that somehow this administration wakes up in time and takes away the Iranian government's, the existing government, ability to label as terrorist those who are truly fighting for not only the freedom of Iran, but the freedom of the whole world. It is so vital that you succeed because no missile defense system that we will have will be able to defend us against certain types nuclear terrorism. The missile defense system we've talked about a great deal has been to try to dissuade the whole nuclear goal in the first place from coming to pass. That is still a noble goal and we want to see that happen but if Iran gains nuclear capability, it will change the world as we know it and it will be absolutely something that we will wish that we had these days back again. But they are here now and you are here. I truly believe that freedom has a great future but I just want you to know that I thank you for your part in it. Those of us in congress that are committed to this stand ready to help you if you will help us know how to do things that we're not doing, that we should. And Mr. Filner and others have started that effort and I applaud them, but most of all I applaud the gallant people of Iran who are standing up to this totalitarian government that seeks to threaten the peace of the entire human family.

God bless them and God bless you.



Remarks by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)

(House Foreign Affairs Committee)



Thank you very much for including me in today's congressional briefing on Iran's pro-democracy movement. It is truly my pleasure to discuss the future of Iran and the future of US policy towards Iran.

In the increasingly sensitive international climate, our dialogue and communication with each other is the most important tool towards fostering a peaceful international environment.

As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I know and understand how difficult a situation the US and Iranian government relations poses to the people of both countries.

Today, we are here to encourage the pro-democracy movement in Iran, and to help that flourish from within. The Iranian democratic movement is vibrant, secular, and a strong-willed. It is one that requires international support, so that all Iranians can benefit from a democratic government.

Working with the National Coalition of Pro-Democracy Advocates is an important step towards achieving this noble goal. The NCPDA unites Iranians and Americans who share the goal of ending fundamentalism in Iran and who want to see the formation of a democratic government that represents all Iranians.

The NCPDA is working with other like-minded, pro-democracy groups that see the need for addressing human rights concerns in Iran. All people of Iran should have the human rights, as detailed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I have long been an advocate of a free, independent, and democratic Iran. I believe in an Iran that holds free elections, follows the rule of law, and is home to a vibrant civil society; an Iran that is a responsible member of the region and the international community, particularly with respect to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. An Iran that, unfortunately, we do not see today.

Establishing a diplomatic dialogue with the Government of Iran and deepening relationships with the Iranian people would help foster greater understanding between the people of Iran and the people of the United States.

I look forward to working with the NCPDA and my colleagues towards furthering this goal and to hopefully one day seeing a democratic Iran. Thank you, once again, for including me in this important conversation.

Remarks by Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC)

(House Committee on Foreign Affairs & House
Armed Services Committee)

I want to thank Congressman Filner for his leadership and Congressman Poe who you heard earlier. These are two of the most respected members of congress who are truly interested in the people of Iran. That's why we're here. My appreciation of people of Iran really developed from Iranian Americans who live in my home state of South Carolina.

They are leaders in medicine and they are leaders in business and they have told me and educated me of the great culture, of the great civilization of Persia. So we know how important the country of Iran can and should be.

I was particularly pleased that Congressman Filner pointed to the state flag. To some people who may not be familiar, the flag of my home state of South Carolina is a palmetto tree. The palmetto tree looks very much Middle Eastern, but I want you to know that the palmetto tree is a symbol of the American Revolution.



Remarks by Congressman Mario Diaz Balart (R-FL)

(House Budget and Science Committees)

I'll be very brief. I wanted to just come back once more. When you look around this room I see the threats that exist, and the suffering that exist. It's so easy to sometimes get disheartened because we see time going by and the suffering continues in this oppression. But, I always feel invigorated when I'm with you because you understand a few things. Firstly you understand the intense oppression that the people of your country are going through. You also understand that despite the suffering, despite pain, despite the repression, that ultimately freedom will prevail. Ultimately the people of Iran who are stepping up and they're doing everything they can, they're stepping up and ultimately they will prevail. It is up to us here, you and those who support, to do whatever we can to express our solidarity with the people in Iran. To show them we care and to support them, really, seriously, to support the opposition, to support the internal opposition in everyway we can in their heroic efforts for that freedom. So, I feel reinvigorated by the Iranian people and my friends and I know that the struggle for Iranian people will have the result that we all expect, will have the result that the Iranian people deserve, and that is: the reunification of Iranians in a free Iran where people can speak out, where they can elect their government, where they can once and for all, forever, get rid of that tyranny that has been so devastating for Iran, for the region, and for the world. So I thank you for your optimism, I thank you for you patriotism, I thank you for your caring, your love, your persistence, and yes I am so confident that, hopefully it will not take very long but, as long as it takes you know you can count on me in supporting the brave freedom fighters.



Remarks by Congressman Tom McClintock

(House Committee on Education and Labor)

It's an honor to be here in the company of these leaders for freedom in congress, to be here among these representatives of the men and women of good will throughout Iran who are now engaged in the great struggle for their liberty. For 8 long hard years, the Americans fought for theirs in one of the darkest moments of those 8 years, the winter 1776, Thomas Paine wrote words that were meant to be a spur and a call to the men and women around the world fighting for their freedom. He said, "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this hour, shrink from the service of their duty; but he that stands it now, deserves the thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; but we have this consolation with us, that the more difficult the struggle, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value."



The struggle for the people of Iran for their liberty touches a particular response of cord among those of us who are descendants of the patriots of 1776. What's particularly rankling for us to watch what Abraham Lincoln called the last group of mankind, the American republic, listed as a terrorist the MeK, which is one of the great agencies for freedom that exists in the world today. That is an injustice that we will not rest until right. To the people of Iran I simply wish to convey the broad bipartisan sediment throughout the united states of the injustice of your struggle with tyranny and the certainty that ultimately all will be well.



REUTERS

America, Iran and a terrorist label

Nov 19, 2010 11:52 EST, By Bernd Debusmann

Who says that the United States and Iran can't agree on anything? The Great Satan, as Iran's theocratic rulers call the United States, and the Islamic Republic see eye-to-eye on at least one thing, that the Iranian opposition group Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) are terrorists.

America and Iran arrived at the terrorist designation for the MEK at different times and from different angles but the convergence is bizarre, even by the complicated standards of Middle Eastern politics. The United States designated the MEK a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997, when the Clinton administration hoped the move would help open a dialogue with Iran. Thirteen years later, there is still no dialogue.

But the group is still on the list, despite years of legal wrangling over the designation through the U.S. legal system. Britain and the European Union took the group off their terrorist lists in 2008 and 2009 respectively after court rulings that found no evidence of terrorist actions after the MEK renounced violence in 2001.

On July 16, a federal appeals court in Washington instructed the Department of State to review the terrorist designation, in language that suggested that it should be revoked. But Hillary Clinton's review mills appear to be grinding very slowly.

A group of lawmakers from both parties reminded Clinton of the court ruling this week and drew attention to a House resolution in June — it has more than 100 co-sponsors and the list is growing — that called for the MEK to be taken off the terrorist list. Doing so would not only be the right thing, the six leading sponsors said in a letter, it would also send the right message to Tehran. Translation: using the terrorist label as a carrot does not work, so it's time to be tough.

Come January, when a new, Republican-dominated House of Representatives begins its term, Clinton and President Barack Obama are likely to come under pressure from hawkish members of congress to act tough towards Iran, further tighten economic sanctions and ensure that those already existing don't erode.

The influential House Foreign Affairs Committee will be headed by Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, an enthusiastic MEK-backer, who said in a recent interview with Reuters correspondent Pascal Fletcher that the West must make clear it means business about implementing sanctions against Iran. "If...we convey a sense of weakness and a lack of resolve, the centrifuges (in Iran's uranium enrichment program) keep spinning."

GROUP BLEW WHISTLE ON NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Ironically, it was the MEK which gave the first detailed public account of Iran's until-then secret nuclear projects at the cities of Natanz and Arak, in 2002. The disclosure greatly turned up the volume of the international controversy over Iran's intentions. (Iran's leaders firmly deny that work on nuclear bombs is underway).

Iran's nuclear program is likely to rise close to the top of Obama's foreign policy agenda in the second half of his mandate, particularly if there are no signs of progress in the on-again, off-again attempts to break the present stalemate. The next talks are scheduled for Dec. 5, between the so-called P5+1 (U.N. Security Council members Britain, France, Russia, China and the United States, plus Germany) and Iran.

Other than getting the United States in sync with its Western allies on their assessment of the MEK, what would taking it off the 47-strong American list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations change? In the United States, it would unfreeze frozen funds and allow the group to reopen its office and operate freely as an advocacy group.

In Iran, it would deprive the government of an all-purpose scapegoat to taint all reformists with the MEK brush. In arresting alleged members or sympathizers, Iranian authorities routinely mention that even the United States considers the group terrorist. In their letter to Clinton, the legislators argued that the U.S. designation allowed Iranian officials to "further justify their draconian punishments".

How much support the MEK, whose leadership is based in Paris, enjoys in Iran is a matter of dispute and many experts rate it as insignificant. But there is no dispute over draconian punishments for Iranians judged to be members or sympathizers. That prompts charges of "waging war against God", which is punishable by death.

The MEK's appeal to the Washington court in summer was its fifth petition. It remains to be seen how long the United States. and Iran will stay on the same page on the matter.