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Iran: The Mujahedin



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Iran: The Mujahedin

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An Intelligence Assessment

*Information available as of 30 July 1981
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

The author of this paper is of the
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This paper was coordinated with the National
Intelligence Officer for the Near East and South
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Mujahedin Strongholds



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Iran: The Mujahedin

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Key Judgments

The Islamic leftist Mujahedin-e Khalq (People's Crusaders) emerged in mid-1981 as the leading opponent of the Khomeini regime. They have won increasing support from Iranians of all opinions who are dissatisfied with the fundamentalist vision of an Islamic republic. The Mujahedin are not now strong enough to seize power unilaterally, but their use of terrorist tactics demonstrates the fundamentalists' weaknesses and helps create a sense of chaos. The group, however, appears to have been hurt—at least temporarily—by the regime's repression. In late July its leader fled into exile in France with former President Bani-Sadr.

The Mujahedin include approximately 10,000 well-armed and highly disciplined cadre and has shown it can bring out crowds of over 100,000 people for demonstrations in Tehran. Its blend of reformist Islam and new-left concepts strikes a sympathetic emotional chord, particularly among Iranian youth, who make up a majority of the population. Groups advocating its ideology are likely to be prominent on the Iranian political scene regardless of the fate of the Mujahedin.

The Mujahedin probably hope to gain a prominent role in local power centers throughout Iran so that if central control continues to deteriorate, they will be included in a broad anticlerical alliance able to succeed the Khomeini regime. In that event, the Mujahedin's popularity should allow their leaders to influence the shape of the next government.

Although the Mujahedin played an important role in the battles that brought Khomeini to power, the fundamentalists consistently have sought to exclude them. Since mid-1980 Mujahedin leaders have responded by gradually increasing pressure against the fundamentalists, and in May 1981 they launched a major terrorist campaign against the regime.

The Mujahedin are xenophobic. Anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism provide cornerstones for their policies. Their publications frequently and consistently express hostility toward the United States and the corrupting influence of Western culture in Iran. The Mujahedin have had sporadic contacts with the Soviets in Tehran and elsewhere. They are not openly pro-Soviet but rarely criticize the USSR. If in power, the group's leaders would probably sympathize with most Soviet positions and might call on Moscow for aid to prevent the return of Western influence to Iran. On

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some issues, however, the Mujahedin seem more inclined toward a stubborn independence directed against all industrialized nations. The Palestine Liberation Organization has provided training, supplies, and information since the early 1960s and has acted as an intermediary in dealings with the USSR.



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Iran: The Mujahedin

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During the Revolution

The Mujahedin, the Islamic leftist group which has become the leading opponent of the Khomeini regime, played a significant role in the unrest that toppled the monarchy.¹ Mujahedin members were well armed. They published prolifically, spreading an ideology especially attractive to the youth who were pillars of the anti-Shah movement. They recruited actively at the universities and were influential in the lower schools and factories. [redacted]

The Mujahedin were unable to stage large demonstrations by themselves. They were weakened by factionalism and had relatively few disciplined followers. Leaders concentrated instead on preparing for the political struggle after the fall of the Shah. The Mujahedin did help organize and direct demonstrators and, along with various other groups, carried out small-scale attacks on Americans and officials of the Shah. [redacted]

The Mujahedin played a key role in early February 1979 during the mutiny at Tehran barracks which led to the collapse of the Bakhtiar government. After beating off government counterattacks, the Mujahedin and others raided prisons, police stations, armories, and other military bases in Tehran, released imprisoned comrades, and seized weapons throughout Iran before Khomeini and his colleagues could organize a new government. Mujahedin members may have been involved in the short-lived seizure of the US Embassy in February 1979 that was dispersed by progovernment irregular forces. [redacted]

Under the Khomeini Regime

The Mujahedin have never accepted the Khomeini regime as an adequate Islamic government. When Khomeini took power, the Mujahedin called for continued revolution, but said they would work for change within the legal framework of the new regime. Mujahedin publications emphasized their unique role

¹ See appendix B for a discussion of the activities of the Mujahedin before the revolution. [redacted]

as an urban guerrilla force that promised to enter candidates for the highest offices under the new political system. [redacted]

The Mujahedin had significant assets for the political competition. It had sympathizers in Bazargan's provisional government, in some revolutionary committees, and even in Khomeini's entourage. Bazargan may have recommended the Mujahedin be given one or two minor ministries, but if so, he was overruled by the fundamentalists. The group's ideology was attractive to many segments of the population, particularly the young. Its intimate links with Ayatollah Taleqani, then Tehran's most prestigious cleric, made the Mujahedin attractive to the urban lower classes, the heart of Khomeini's constituency. [redacted]

The fundamentalists clearly viewed the Mujahedin as a threat and began to whittle away at its support. The fundamentalists enlisted the most loyal armed Mujahedin units in Tehran into the first elements of the Revolutionary Guard, which was designed to be the armed mainstay of the new government. [redacted] the losses to the Revolutionary Guard left the Mujahedin with about 3,000 committed cadre scattered throughout Iran. They could not effectively manipulate their remaining sympathizers. Much of the Mujahedin effort in the early months of the new regime was, therefore, devoted to rebuilding and strengthening their national organization. [redacted]

The fundamentalists used clashes during the summer of 1979 as an excuse to expel the Mujahedin from their Tehran headquarters. Masud Rajavi and other Mujahedin leaders went into seclusion. Ayatollah Taleqani's death in September 1979 further hurt the group's efforts to gain acceptance [redacted]

Despite these setbacks the Mujahedin entered avidly into the national debate on the structure of the new Islamic regime. The Mujahedin unsuccessfully sought a freely elected constituent assembly to draft a constitution. [redacted]

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The Mujahedin made another attempt at political participation when Mujahedin leader Rajavi ran for the presidency in January 1980. He was forced to withdraw when Khomeini ruled that only candidates who had supported the constitution in the December referendum—which the Mujahedin boycotted—were eligible. Rajavi's withdrawal statement emphasized the group's efforts to conform to election regulations and reiterated the Mujahedin's intention to advance its political aims within the new legal system. [redacted]

In March and May, Rajavi and several other Mujahedin ran in Tehran for the Islamic Assembly. Musa Khiabani, Rajavi's deputy, ran in Tabriz, and others probably ran in the north, where the group was strong. The Mujahedin demonstrated their broadened appeal by running on their ticket several moderate political figures—such as Ahmad Haj Seyyed Javadi, who was elected from Qazvin. [redacted]

The Mujahedin was the only leftist group with enough first-round votes to qualify candidates for the runoff. Rajavi and Khiabani seemed assured of winning. Rajavi's candidacy was endorsed by President Bani-Sadr, who indicated he "might" be able to work with the Mujahedin; former Prime Minister Bazargan, a friend from the earliest days of the organization's existence; and the Tudeh Party. [redacted]

Between the two rounds the group announced its members would disarm to prove they were not initiating the clashes with fundamentalists that had become routine during campaign periods. The fundamentalists responded by again banning Mujahedin representatives from the campuses. Only the daughter of the late Ayatollah Taleqani was elected. The group's protest—probably accurate—that the fundamentalists had altered vote totals to deny Rajavi and Khiabani a legitimate national platform came to naught. [redacted]

Into Opposition

Rajavi hinted that the Mujahedin were considering active opposition to the Khomeini regime. In the early summer of 1980 the Mujahedin staged several rallies in Tehran, drawing up to 150,000 people to hear Rajavi promise to carry on the opposition to fundamentalist dominance. [redacted]

During this period he or another Mujahedin spokesman apparently met daily with Khomeini in private, but failed to convince the Ayatollah of the group's legitimacy. On 25 June Khomeini issued a major blast against the Mujahedin, claiming their activities would derail the revolution and bring back "US dominance." [redacted]

Immediately after the speech, Mujahedin leaders withdrew from sight to map a new political strategy. Mujahedin offices were closed, editorials in the group's newspaper, *Mujahed*, no longer addressed significant issues, and the organization as a whole went underground. [redacted]

Mujahedin deliberations focused on the basic conflict between their Islamic and revolutionary principles. Continued acceptance of Khomeini as the ultimate arbiter left the Mujahedin with little choice but to disarm and blend into the fundamentalist crowd. In contrast, loyalty to their revolutionary program required challenging the fundamentalist regime and, ultimately, Khomeini himself. [redacted]

The Mujahedin apparently decided to oppose Khomeini, but before their campaign took hold, Iraq invaded and the Mujahedin again sought a legitimate place in the new regime. Mujahedin units went to the front immediately. They were tolerated by the fundamentalists only in the first hectic days of the war, and most were soon expelled. The Mujahedin used the opportunity to improve its image, reestablish contacts in southwestern cities, and proselytize in the armed forces. [redacted]

By mid-November 1980 the Mujahedin were again calling for "preparation of a general movement to topple" the fundamentalists and were heavily involved in the pro-Bani-Sadr demonstrations that were erupting across Iran because of fundamentalist efforts to control the war effort. *Mujahed* also reappeared regularly and resumed addressing significant political, economic, and social issues. [redacted]

Test of Strength

The Mujahedin became steadily more aggressive in challenging the Khomeini regime. Supporters in Tabriz and Mashhad, and presumably elsewhere, began stockpiling weapons in January 1981 and planning for

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attacks on fundamentalist forces. They were also active in Tehran, staging a large rally protesting the release of the US hostages. The Mujahedin apparently intensified recruiting in hopes that they could play the deciding role in the power struggle between Bani-Sadr and the clerics [redacted]

The Mujahedin took the offensive in early March when, at an antifundamentalist rally in Tehran, its members fought fundamentalist hecklers. Mujahedin sympathizers turned out in record numbers in the days immediately after the rally to distribute propaganda in Tehran. Other units seized key locations in Lahijan on the Caspian coast and announced the formation of a "government" based on Mujahedin programs. After two days the Mujahedin withdrew to the hills [redacted]

In the next several weeks fundamentalist and Mujahedin clashes increased in intensity and frequency. The Mujahedin effort reached a peak on 27 April when an estimated 100,000 well-organized sympathizers marched through Tehran. The demonstration had been organized without access to any of the major media outlets and announced only in Mujahedin publications and by word of mouth. Simultaneous Mujahedin demonstrations took place throughout Iran. [redacted]

The rally and the abrupt drop in incidents throughout Iran involving Mujahedin seemed to demonstrate the group's ability to orchestrate antiregime activity on a broad scale. The official fundamentalist newspaper labeled the events of late April the "most ominous and organized conspiracy . . . since the revolution." Some leading fundamentalists called for a cautious response, fearing the Mujahedin would initiate a series of protests like those that had been so effective against the Shah. Hardliners, however, demanded an immediate confrontation with armed opposition groups. [redacted]

Rajavi issued a statement evoking themes of official cruelty and corruption that had been used effectively against the Shah and labeling the Mujahedin, for the first time, "an important opponent of the regime." The Mujahedin statements demanded:

- Freedom of political activity for all groups.
- Autonomy for all ethnic minorities.
- Abrogation of all agreements with imperialist countries.

- "Just" actions by the government "that benefit all the people." [redacted]

The fundamentalists' ouster of Bani-Sadr prompted the Mujahedin to accelerate their antiregime campaign. The group's leaders were probably eager to rally the opposition before the fundamentalists could ready a strike against the left. [redacted]

The Mujahedin almost certainly was responsible for the bombing of Islamic Republican Party (IRP) headquarters on 28 June. [redacted]

The [redacted] Khomeini regime claims that a young Mujahedin member employed at the headquarters actually placed the bomb. In the wake of Bani-Sadr's dismissal and the IRP bombing, the regime launched a campaign of repression that apparently has taken its toll. Although the Mujahedin have maintained their terrorist pressure against the regime, Rajavi fled into exile with Bani-Sadr in late July, and his initial comments suggest he intends a long stay outside Iran. [redacted]

Structure

Most of the Mujahedin in the prerevolutionary period were from west-central Iran, although over half of the group's founders were from Tehran or farther north. Several Mujahedin leaders have been Azarbayjanis—its deputy head, Khiabani, for example, is from Tabriz—and the group has always been strong in the heavily Azarbayjani-populated north. Many Mujahedin have been children of pious bazaar merchants, clerics, and other members of the traditional middle class. Almost all have been drawn from the young intelligentsia and are Shias; few have been female or of working class origin. A disproportionate number have been physical science students at Tehran colleges and universities, some of whom used their expertise to build communications equipment and explosive devices as well as to produce ammunition. Many were further politicized after being drafted into the armed forces. [redacted]

After a Marxist faction split off in 1975, the Mujahedin developed a tightly knit, well-educated cadre in the major cities. Still appealing to the better educated, it developed strength in the educational system—

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drawing strong commitments even from teenagers— among professionals, and apparently among younger clerics. Outside urban centers, Mujahedin membership remained more traditionally Islamic, less educated, and more likely to be drawn from workers and farmers. [redacted]

The Mujahedin draw potential cadre from their pool of Islamic sympathizers. Promising candidates are moved gradually into more sophisticated ideological groups as they become more politicized. [redacted]

The Mujahedin is headed by an “organizational staff” with 20 members. The group’s leader, Masud Rajavi, is the chief ideologue. His deputy is Musa Khiabani, who may also be the military commander. Also at the top are Rajavi’s wife, Ashraf Rabiei, and Abbas Davari. The staff has three advisers: Khalil Rezai (father of three well-known Mujahedin martyrs), Modir Shanechi, and Taher Ahmadzadeh. The staff is divided into several committees: labor, social, economic, political, and presumably, military. [redacted]

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Mujahed is published in Tehran, other large Iranian towns, and in Western Europe. Estimates of its circulation run up to 200,000 copies. Rajavi, Khiabani, Davari, and Mehdi Abrishamchi have been prominently featured in *Mujahed*. [redacted]

Supporters

The group's avowedly Islamic orientation has given it a broader recruiting base than its leftist rivals. The Mujahedin probably has around 10,000 committed, fully trained cadre throughout Iran. It has many thousands of other members and sympathizers throughout the country [redacted]

The Mujahedin competes effectively by using religious symbols and offering the prospect of an apparently familiar, idealized future. The group emphasizes close contact with the people in contrast to its leftist rivals. In the early years, for example, many Mujahedin lived at home rather than in "safe houses." [redacted]

The group has been able to draw on support that crosses class lines from Iranians dissatisfied with the pace and direction of the fundamentalist-dominated Islamic revolution. The group is very active in the schools at all levels. It regularly uses students—often female—to distribute propaganda [redacted]

The Mujahedin has used several means to broaden its appeal. Its detailed labor and peasant programs have been widely publicized, and members have been sent to the factories and countryside to practice what they preach. [redacted]

The Mujahedin says it has "no strong organization" among the ethnic minorities. Mujahedin ideology supports ethnic autonomy and Sunni-Shia equality, but contains hints of disdain for Sunnis. Cooperation between the Mujahedin and the dissident ethnic groups seems to have increased in 1981. Some reports allege an alliance between the group and the Kurdish Democratic Party, the major dissident force in the far northwest and the strongest ethnic dissident group. The Mujahedin is also active among the Baluch in the southeast. [redacted]

Mujahedin leaders have had close ties with several prominent clerics. These links were begun or enhanced when Mujahedin leaders and the clerics were

imprisoned together for anti-Shah activities. Until his death, Ayatollah Taleqani served as the principal bridge between the Mujahedin and the fundamentalists around Khomeini. [redacted]

Ayatollah Ali Tehrani—exiled to Mashhad by the Khomeini regime in early 1980—remains a prominent Mujahedin supporter. Tehrani, who was the instructor of a popular Islamic modernist, Ali Shariati, has been an outspoken critic of the Khomeini regime over the past 18 months, and Mashhad has become a center of opposition to the fundamentalists. [redacted]

Other clerics, such as Azarbayjani spiritual leader Ayatollah Kazem Shariat-Madari, who are unenthusiastic about Khomeini's brand of fundamentalism, have mixed feelings about the Mujahedin. While they approve of its determined opposition to the Khomeini regime, the Mujahedin's Marxist leanings and its advocacy of violent dissent strongly limit the more moderate clerics' willingness to offer support. [redacted]

Relations With Other Leftists

The Mujahedin have periodically cooperated with the Fedayeen—a Marxist guerrilla group that has no Islamic allegiances—but have rejected overtures from the pro-Soviet Communist Tudeh Party. [redacted]

The Mujahedin and Fedayeen have been both attracted to and repelled by each other since they emerged in the 1960s. Before the revolution they had similar tactics, foreign contacts, and immediate goals—to bring down the Shah in favor of a radically revolutionized society. Although ideological differences kept their relations cool, the Mujahedin obtained guerrilla training from the Fedayeen and later provided them with funds and weapons. [redacted]

At times supporters of the Mujahedin and Fedayeen have been reported to move between the groups comparatively freely. It is likely, however, that much of the Mujahedin leaders' organizational effort has been directed toward preventing losses while attracting and retaining the loyalty of incoming sympathizers from rival groups. [redacted]

Throughout 1979 the Fedayeen tried to convince the Mujahedin to join in an opposition front. At the time the Fedayeen was the stronger of the two groups,

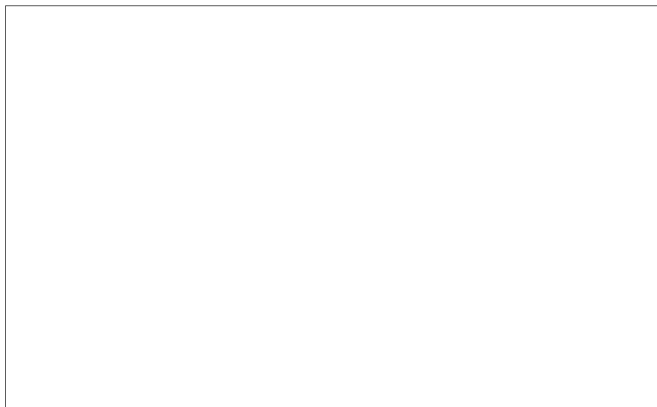
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which made an opposition front unattractive to Mujahedin leaders. [redacted]

During the presidential and legislative elections, Fedayeen leaders urged their sympathizers to vote for Mujahedin candidates. At the same time, Fedayeen organs published extensive critiques of Mujahedin platforms. Over the past 18 months the balance of power between the two groups has tilted in favor of the Mujahedin, and little has been heard from the Fedayeen about cooperative activity. [redacted]

The Mujahedin and Tudeh are not close. Probably at Moscow's behest Tudeh tried to woo the Mujahedin and then turned against them when its efforts were unsuccessful. Tudeh supported Mujahedin candidates in 1980 and sought Mujahedin adherence to a Tudeh-led leftist front. During the second round of the 1980 legislative election, Tudeh characterized Rajavi as representing a "true part of the revolutionary forces" whose presence in the Assembly would "help unite revolutionary forces and boost Iranian independence and freedom." [redacted]



External Ties

Mujahedin's mixture of radical Islamic, Iranian nationalist, and revolutionary Third World views suggests that a detailed statement of their foreign policy approach would include:

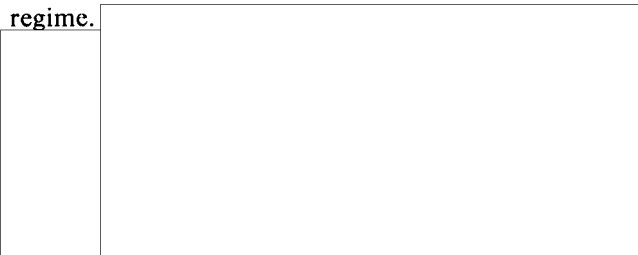
- Support for the Palestinians on most regional issues.
- Backing for the USSR and its allies on some global matters, particularly those that allow a clear stand against "US imperialism."
- Stubborn independence, like that of the Khomeini regime, on other questions such as Third World opposition to the industrialized nations. [redacted]

Mujahedin leaders and committed cadre read widely in international revolutionary literature and identify with the goals of most revolutionary groups, Islamic or not. With the exception of the Palestinians and Algerians, however, this interest has not translated into continuing ties [redacted]

The Mujahedin's closest relations are with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Mujahedin publications often carry articles on Palestinian issues and statements of support for Palestinian initiatives. [redacted]

Ties to the PLO were an outgrowth of the Mujahedin's early need for guerrilla training and an external source of arms and supplies. They also grew out of the Mujahedin's deeply rooted hatred of Israel and resentment of "Zionist imperialist interference" in Iran under the Shah. Contacts date back to the mid-1960s when three of the nine founders of the group and several recruits went to Jordan for PLO training and aid in setting up arms supply networks. [redacted]

The relationship cooled in early 1979 when the fundamentalists around Khomeini turned against the Mujahedin. It was probably rekindled, however, as PLO leader Arafat became disillusioned with the Khomeini regime. [redacted]



The Mujahedin may have received aid from Libya, Iraq, and Syria during the Shah's rule, but recent Mujahedin propaganda indicates that it views such states as "stooges" of the United States. [redacted]

In the late 1970s the Mujahedin established relations with radical Islamic student organizations in the United States and Western Europe. [redacted]



[redacted] Mujahedin members in Western Europe and the United States have staged

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demonstrations at Iranian installations in support of their colleagues in Iran and actively circulate Mujahedin publications among expatriate Iranians and leftist sympathizers. [redacted]

[redacted]

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Attitude Toward the Soviets

Little information is available concerning Mujahedin attitudes toward the USSR. An extensive survey of Mujahedin texts published over several years has revealed only one mention of the USSR, in early 1980, when the Mujahedin criticized—mildly—the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. They were under pressure from other leftist Iranian groups to join in condemning Moscow, but the Mujahedin statement reduced the Soviet action to a secondary concern. The Mujahedin stated their opposition to “Soviet military presence on Afghan soil” and called for its “rapid departure.” They then reasoned, however, that any move that thwarts imperialism should be supported. The Mujahedin statement concluded that the invasion should be seen primarily as an obstacle to US interests in South Asia. The Mujahedin criticized Tehran’s support of the Afghan rebels, who, the group said, help US, not Islamic, interests. [redacted]

Attitude Toward the United States

The Mujahedin’s view of the United States is unremittingly hostile. The group’s publications frequently and consistently label the US and Western culture as the source of the problems of Iran and the Third World. The Mujahedin focus their attacks on the United States and those countries Washington would be most likely to use to approach Iran. [redacted]

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The Mujahedin claim they have compelled the Khomeini regime to resist the impulses of some Westernized members to reestablish relations with the West. The group urged the Khomeini regime not to release the US hostages without first holding spy trials and criticized the financial arrangements associated with the hostage release. [redacted]

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Isolated comments on revolutionary tactics suggest that the group might appeal to Moscow for “support”—diplomatic pressure and various types of economic and military aid—to prevent a resurgence of Western influence in Iran. [redacted]

A series of articles published in *Mujahed* in early 1981 by a militant who has since become openly pro-Mujahedin asserts that the militants who seized the US Embassy would have held out only a few days if they and the regime had not been compelled to stay longer by the emotions stirred in the Iranian people, especially by the Mujahedin’s anti-American propaganda. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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[redacted] The current Soviet position, expressed on National Voice of Iran programing beamed into Iran, opposes the Mujahedin leaders because of their opposition to the Khomeini regime, but has sought to attract the movement’s sympathizers. [redacted]

[redacted] Mujahedin statements and slogans after the seizure evoked themes like those of other Iranian radical groups. Their demonstrations outside the Embassy were not significantly different from those staged by their rivals [redacted]

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[redacted]

Domestic Policies

The Mujahedin base their domestic policy on the belief that the least that can be expected from an Islamic government is the elimination of all vestiges of Western—especially US—influence.² They add that an acceptable government would also be opposed to

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² Annex C provides a review of the ideological underpinnings of Mujahedin policies. [redacted]

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dictatorship and would be antireactionary—issues on which they fault the Khomeini regime. The Mujahedin program is not far distant from that of the fundamentalists who have tried to undercut the left by co-opting large parts of its platform. [redacted]

Detailed outlines of Mujahedin proposals have appeared in several of their publications and in the presidential platform of Mujahedin leader Rajavi. The group advocates:

- Providing a popular voice in all aspects of national life through “a truly democratic power structure” based on control by democratically elected people’s councils in all sectors of society. Trade unions must be political as well as professional. The National Assembly is the most senior council.
- Creating an informed public opinion through open communications from the government.
- Nationalizing all “exploitative investments,” especially those used to send abroad capital generated in Iran, and ending the role of “foreign colonial banks” in Iran.
- Asserting the people’s right to use Iran’s resources—especially oil—to better their lives and spread the revolution. “Imperialist-linked” agreements of all kinds would be nullified.
- Promoting small and medium industries, especially those outside urban areas, through diversion of capital expenditures from large industry. This would prevent the reemergence of “class profit” and “exploitative capitalism.” The Mujahedin would also remove government restrictions on the bazaar.
- Abrogating all agreements not in the interests of the workers and formulating new laws favoring worker interests. These laws should provide housing, education, employment, and health care to the lower classes. The Mujahedin say that workers should share in profits in proportion to any increase in the total profit of their individual employer.
- Diverting financial and technical resources to agriculture to end dependence by foreign suppliers and create a balance between agriculture and industry

necessary for solid economic growth. Debts owed by peasants and villages would be canceled and lands restored. Migration to the cities would be discouraged by providing needed services in rural areas.

- Guaranteeing “complete” freedom of speech for the media, political and religious groups, and individuals. Promoting equality between Sunnis and Shias and all other monotheistic groups, as well as between men and women.
- According cultural and political freedom “within the framework of national unity” to the ethnic minorities, especially the Kurds.
- Fostering law and order and “resolving class struggles as peacefully as possible.” [redacted]

Special attention is given to the structure of an Islamic defense force—the people’s army. Mujahedin theorists argue that there is no place for a professional army equipped with sophisticated weapons in a “just and humane” Islamic society because it would “grow at the expense of other economic and social sectors.” The army would tend to serve its own interests or those of the upper and middle classes, as well as foreigners, rather than “the people.” Citizens would not support such an armed force, and it would, therefore, rely on its sophisticated weapons and the imperialists who sell and service them. [redacted]

Rajavi’s platform called for a “20-million-strong people’s militia to protect the nation against imperialist attack.” Other Mujahedin texts describe the force in more detail and blur the distinction between militia and regular army:

- The army would serve the national interest, particularly that of the lower classes, and not serve as “a link in a chain of imperialist alliances.” It would not participate in an “unjust or antirevolutionary war,” but would help revolutionary movements such as the Palestinians.
- Foreign advisers would have a limited role; advisers from imperialist nations would be banned.
- “Barbaric” differences between officers and men would not exist. Lower ranks would be free to

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criticize, and decisions would be made by consultation. "Blind" obedience would be eliminated because the men would understand the policies of an Islamic government.

- Military service would not be compulsory, and promotion would be based on piety, not seniority. (Ability does not seem to be a factor for the Mujahedin.) [redacted]

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Prospects

The Mujahedin are the leading element in the diffuse opposition to the Khomeini regime. The regime's repression has so far discouraged a coalescence around the Mujahedin. Through apparently indiscriminate arrests and executions, fundamentalist efforts have had some success in breaking down Mujahedin security. Over the longer term, however, the Mujahedin's continuing resistance is likely to win them additional sympathy and support. [redacted]

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The Mujahedin have several advantages, including their members' ability to strike and then retreat underground; their popular ideology; secure financing; urban guerrilla skills; and penetrations of fundamentalist institutions. [redacted]

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The Mujahedin cannot assume power unilaterally in Iran nor can they hold Tehran. The group probably hopes to play a leading role in local power centers and in building a national coalition that can oust the fundamentalists and ensure that the Mujahedin will play a prominent role in any successor regime. [redacted]

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The Mujahedin blend of reformist Islam and new left concepts strikes a sympathetic chord among Iranians. The Mujahedin group or others advocating a similar ideology, are likely to remain a force in Iranian politics regardless of their immediate fortunes. [redacted]

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Appendix A**CHRONOLOGY****1963**

Shah represses opposition; Khomeini exiled to Iraq.

1965

Mujahedin organization formed by militant anti-Shah youth.

1967

Shah's coronation.

1969

First Mujahedin go to Lebanon for training by Palestinians.

1971

Mujahedin begin terrorist strikes; many arrested and executed.

1973

Mujahedin kill US military advisers.

1975

Mujahedin organization splits; Mujahedin kill US military adviser.
Iran-Iraq border treaty signed.

1976

Mujahedin kill US civilians assigned to defense projects; suffer large losses in government's antiterrorist campaign.

1978

Anti-Shah movement gains strength; Khomeini leaves Iraq for France; martial law declared; Mujahedin active in anti-Shah struggle; leaders released from prison under Shah's amnesties.

January 1979

Shah leaves Iran.

February 1979

Mujahedin help rout Iranian military; Bakhtiar regime collapses; Khomeini returns to Iran; Mujahedin possibly involved in first seizure of US Embassy.

November 1979

US Embassy seized a second time.

December 1979

New constitution approved.

January 1980

Mujahedin leader Rajavi ordered out of presidential race by Khomeini; Abol Hasan Bani-Sadr elected president.

March-May 1980

Fundamentalists dominate two-round Assembly elections.

Summer 1980

Mujahedin leaders go underground; reassess tactics.

August 1980

Mohammad Ali Rajai named prime minister.

September 1980

Iraq invades western Iran.

November 1980

Arrest warrants issued by Revolutionary Court for Mujahedin leaders.

January 1981

US hostages released.

April 1981

Mujahedin stage largest demonstration in Tehran in almost a year.

May 1981

Mujahedin openly challenge the Khomeini regime.

June 1981

Khomeini dismisses Bani-Sadr; bomb probably set by Mujahedin kills fundamentalist leaders.

July 1981

Rajavi accompanies Bani-Sadr into exile in France.

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Appendix B

The Mujahedin Before the Revolution

The founders of the Mujahedin were disaffected young members of the Liberation Movement of Iran. The Movement grew out of intellectual groups opposed to the Shah during the 1950s. It advocated the use of peaceful means to create a new regime that combined a constitutional monarchy with West European-style socialism. Movement leaders hoped to reconcile religious and secular opposition groups with a program based on Shia ideals, modern Iranian cultural values, and 20th century political and economic theories. [redacted]

The Shah's repression of opposition demonstrations in 1963 alienated militant young Movement members, many of whom were probably also irritated by the personal rivalries among older Movement leaders. Some longstanding relationships with Movement leaders persisted, however, such as those between the Mujahedin and the late Ayatollah Taleqani and Mehdi Bazargan, who later became Khomeini's first Prime Minister [redacted]

The original Mujahedin leaders were profoundly influenced by the religious fanaticism of fundamentalist Iranian clerics and the anti-Shah terrorist groups they supported. They were also impressed by the Marxist-Leninist theories and vocabulary popularized by revolutionary literature. [redacted]

The young militants—led by nine recent Tehran University graduates—formed a secret discussion group that eventually became a separate organization called the *Sazeman-e Mujahedin-e Khalq-e Iran* (The Organization of Crusaders of the Iranian People). Its basic principles were:

- Islam is a dynamic and revolutionary religion that can be reinterpreted through Marxist dialectics.
 - Armed struggle is the only effective tactic in the struggle against imperialism.
 - Other Iranian opposition movements have failed because they lacked an effective Marxist structure.
- The Mujahedin organization slowly expanded, almost entirely in urban areas—Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, and

Tabriz, which were among the hometowns of its founders. [redacted]

For the first five years its leaders concentrated on developing their ideology and creating the groundwork for armed opposition. In the late 1960s the Mujahedin helped set up a public hall in Tehran to broaden the reach of their ideas. Conservative clerics in Qom were outraged at the revisionist Islam taught at the hall, but the more modern clerics from the Tehran divinity school were willing to speak there. SAVAK investigated the hall, but apparently concluded that it represented a welcome irritant to the traditional clergy, not a threat to the Shah's regime. In 1973, after the security service made the connection between Mujahedin terrorist activity and operation of the hall, it was closed. [redacted]

The hall provided a forum for Dr. Ali Shariati, the young prophet of Iranian socialism. The group's recruitment effort was helped significantly by its association with Shariati, whose pamphlets and taped talks were enormously popular among Iranian students. [redacted]

Mujahedin concepts were close to, but not identical with, Shariati's. Shariati preached the creation of the classless society planned by the Prophet Mohammed as well as the duty of all Muslims to fight "world imperialism, international Zionism, colonialism, exploitation, oppression, class inequality, cartels, multinational corporations, racism, cultural imperialism, clerics who advocate subservience, and the blind worship of the West." Shariati held that an Islamic jurist (Imam) would be the leader of an Islamic society, while the Mujahedin maintained that such a regime should be controlled by the "aware masses." Shariati also included the clergy as an oppressor class along with landlords and capitalists, while the Mujahedin omitted them. [redacted]

The Mujahedin began terrorist operations in Iran in mid-1971 with efforts to disrupt the Shah's celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian

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monarchy. The group's plans went desperately awry. A captured Mujahedin member gave information under torture that led to the arrest of about 70 of his comrades. A SAVAK penetration at about the same time led to the imprisonment, death, or execution of many other members, including all the Mujahedin founders. [redacted]

A brother of one of the nine founding members then took over the group. Rajavi and Khiabani also became influential in this period, according to their Mujahedin biographies, although both were imprisoned by the end of the year. When the second Mujahedin leader was killed in 1974, the group fell largely under the control of three young militants whose disagreements over the importance of Marxism in their ideology eventually split the Mujahedin [redacted]

The group's new leaders—most of whom were later eliminated by Iranian security forces—began to publish an underground newspaper, *Jangal*, in the early 1970s. The Mujahedin benefited from an order issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, then in exile in Iraq, that called on faithful Muslims to support the Mujahedin. Khomeini relayed to the Mujahedin and other opposition guerrilla groups money from pious Shias. The Mujahedin also received funds from wealthy bazaari relatives of some of the members. [redacted]

By late 1973 Mujahedin leaders had developed a deeper interest in Marxist theory and were reading extensively in Asian and Latin American revolutionary writings and early Soviet publications. In mid-1974 they began sending agitators to Iranian shops and factories. Some of the group's leaders began to talk openly of the necessity of incorporating Marxist theory into Mujahedin ideology. [redacted]

Factionalism

A Marxist faction—mainly in Tehran—broke away in 1975 and murdered several leaders of the Islamic faction, which retained the allegiance of the Mujahedin's provincial units. The Marxists claimed that Islam appealed mainly to the middle class while Marxism was the "salvation" of the working class. Mujahedin documents indicate the split was partly engineered by SAVAK agents who had been ordered to create dissension within the group's leadership. Both factions covered up the split until after the Shah

fell "to preserve the unity of the people." Leaders knew the vast majority of their sympathizers were not disciplined and might bolt to rival organizations. [redacted]

After the revolution, the Marxist faction adopted the name *Sazeman-e Paykar Bara-ye Azadi-e Tabaqeh-e Kargar* (Fighting Organization for Liberating the Working Class), or commonly, Paykar. Its principal leader is Ali Reza Sepassi-Yadani. The group's major organ is a weekly newspaper, *Paykar*. It is largely devoted to articles opposing "US imperialism." [redacted]

Paykar ideology rejects the Mujahedin concept of the importance of human will in social development and claims it is solely a matter of materialist determinism. It emphasizes urban activism designed to mobilize the urban proletariat and tactical alliances with other opposition groups to strengthen the left. It advocates a people's democracy in Iran and supports the demands for autonomy of Iran's ethnic minorities, among whom it became active. Paykar sees the Mujahedin as bourgeois and liberal. In the view of the Mujahedin, Paykar is opportunistic and not deeply committed to the "welfare of the masses." [redacted]

Paykar leaders considered a merger with the independent Marxist Fedayeen, but soon broke off talks because of irreconcilable ideological differences. Paykar publications have denounced the Fedayeen's refusal to criticize "Soviet imperialism" as well as its refusal to end contacts with "dubious entities" such as Tudeh. [redacted]

Terrorism

Targets of Mujahedin terrorist attacks after their abortive maiden effort in 1971 included US military advisers killed in 1973 and 1975, US civilians associated with defense projects killed in 1976, and Iranian security officials. The group was also responsible for the bombings of air and oil company offices in Iran. These attacks were well executed and were designed to attract increased attention to the anti-Shah opposition, frighten US residents, and make SAVAK appear vulnerable. [redacted]

By early 1976 Mujahedin and Paykar losses in such operations had become severe enough to compel a reconsideration of tactics. Both decided to concentrate

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on recruiting new members. The Mujahedin focused on students, while Paykar targeted workers.

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Soon after the split in 1975, Masud Rajavi—then imprisoned for anti-Shah activities—was accepted as the Mujahedin's leader and chief ideologue. This faction retained its full commitment to armed struggle, but Paykar became critical of what it claimed was an excessive reliance on such activity.

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Appendix C

The Ideology of the Mujahedin

"After years of extensive study of Islamic history and Shia ideology, our organization has reached the firm conclusion that Islam, especially Shiism, will play a major role in inspiring the masses to join the revolution. Shiism has both a revolutionary message and a special place in our hearts." Mujahedin text

"A man is a true Muslim only if he is a revolutionary. A Muslim is either a revolutionary or not a true Muslim. In the whole of the Qoran, there is not a single Muslim who was not a revolutionary." Mujahedin text

Mujahedin ideology is a major source of the group's wide popularity in Iran. It has been crafted with care and is applied with consistency to domestic and foreign issues—often in great detail. It reinterprets the Qoran and several classic Shia theological texts using concepts from a wide range of international revolutionary literature. The Mujahedin present their program and the theories behind it as a dynamic response to the problems of modern Iran and a model for international revolutionary groups.

Central principles underlying their views include:

- Total opposition to "US imperialism," which is the principal enemy of revolutionaries. All events occurring in Iran advance or impede this confrontation.
- Political, economic, and social power must be used in the service of ideology. If "practical considerations" take precedence over ideology, progress cannot be made toward the ideal Islamic society.

Other recurring themes are the superiority of collective interests over those of individuals, the primacy of Iranian models over those originating abroad, and the necessity of remolding the attitudes and behavior of the people to remove the effects of corrupting influences.

These basic ideas can be traced through the several major theoretical documents produced by the Muja-

hedin. One of the most influential is a detailed reinterpretation of early Islamic history. Its basic premise is that the ideal Islamic society is monotheistic and classless and strives for the common good. Within such a society citizens share in the benefits of their work to the extent of their needs, but no one is allowed to profit from the labor of others.

According to the Mujahedin, such a society existed under the Prophet Mohammed, but was corrupted by the feudal landowning class and the capitalist merchant class. The text strongly emphasizes the necessity of armed struggle and flexible tactics in changing circumstances to reestablish the ideal society.

Another major work focuses on the necessary triumph of the oppressed over the oppressor and emphasizes that it does not occur independently of man's will. This concept underlies what is probably the basic disagreement between the Mujahedin and the fundamentalists. The Mujahedin believe that the Qoran is the source of truths on which the ideal government is based and that it is open to interpretation by the "aware masses" (such as Mujahedin cadre) who are the most suitable citizens to govern wisely. The fundamentalists hold that the basis of Islamic government is the truth expressed in Islamic law and that only persons with specialized knowledge of the law (clerics) can lead an ideal government.

In their analysis of 20th century Iran, Mujahedin theorists argue that the 1905 revolution transformed Iran from a feudal society into a bourgeois system heavily dependent on Western capitalism and under the domination of imperialism—especially US imperialism. They believe that by the late 1960s, cultural, economic, political, and military imperialism threatened the very existence of Iran. The Mujahedin say that the Pahlavi regime had little support outside the Westernized middle and upper classes and ruled by terror and propaganda. Mujahedin texts call for "heroic acts of violence"—such as their own terrorist attacks—to awaken the people and begin the breakup of oppressive societies.

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In the Iranian context, the fundamentalists are guilty of "pragmatism," believing that their end (the Islamic Republic) justifies temporary use of unacceptable means. They have corrupted their ideological principles. The Mujahedin's rivals—the other leftists such as Paykar and Tudeh—are "opportunists" who openly disregard principle in guiding their activities.

The Mujahedin strongly endorsed the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini over the "unified masses" that toppled the Shah, but they argue that he has not provided the necessary force to prevent the fundamentalists' corruption of the principles of the 1978 revolution which will allow imperialism to reassert itself in Iran. In the Mujahedin view, the fundamentalists turned away from Khomeini's emphasis on the will of the people at the beginning of the new regime. They have allowed their "pragmatic" fear of the return of imperialist influence and their "opportunistic" fear of losing control of the revolution both to restrict the choices and information open to the people and to oppress them.



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