

WORLDPOST

From Iran to Nice, We Must Confront All Terrorism to End Terrorism

🕒 07/21/2016 09:46 pm 21:46:37 | Updated 13 hours ago



Like 40



Seyed Hossein Mousavian
Head of Foreign Relations Committee of Iran's National Security Council
(1997-2005)



ASSOCIATED PRESS

France has unfortunately been the epicenter for two terrorism-related events in recent weeks. The [tragic truck attack](#) in Nice, which received international attention, and a [rally](#) recently held in Paris by a notorious Iranian opposition group — the “[Mujahedin-e Khalq](#),” or MEK, which for years has committed [acts of terrorism](#) against Iran. While it might not be immediately evident, there is a connection between the events — the groups behind them have been accused of atrocities and have historical ties to **Saudi Arabia**.

Both the MEK and the self-proclaimed Islamic State, which [claimed the attack in Nice](#), are groups with a history of terrorism, and both, in some way or another, are influenced by the kingdom.





People light candles at a makeshift memorial on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice on July 19, 2016 in tribute to the victims of the Bastille Day attack. (VALERY HACHE/AFP/Getty Images)

MEK's Terrorism in Iran

While the group no longer has the distinction of a [terrorist group](#) in the United States and is not related to or as widely destructive as ISIS, in Iran the MEK is still very much a perpetrator of terror.

Since its founding in the late 1960s, the MEK's favored tactic has been terrorism, which for years it [directed towards Americans](#). An MEK leader by the name of [Massoud Rajavi stated](#) in 1972 that the group's "main goal" was to "free Iran of U.S. imperialism." As I documented in my [2014 book](#), "Iran and the United States," the MEK's assassination campaigns in the 1970s claimed the lives of several high-profile Americans. Among the victims [were](#) one colonel and one lieutenant colonel of the U.S. Air Force, along with other servicemen.

The MEK's hands are tainted not only with American blood, but also with the blood of countless [Iranians, Iraqis and Kurds](#). Since Iran's 1979 revolution, the MEK has been responsible for the deaths of [upwards of 17,000](#) Iranians, [including](#) senior officials and ministers. During the [Iran-Iraq War](#), the MEK also [sided with Saddam Hussein](#), earning the enmity of the vast majority of Iranians. An Iranian NGO, the [Habibian Association](#), has gone so far as to document all the Iranian victims of the MEK in a comprehensive database that includes [photos](#) and biographies of each of the victims.

In the '80s and '90s, the MEK was responsible for several terrorist [campaigns](#) within Iran, one of which killed some 70 Iranian officials in 1981, including both the president and prime minister at the time.

TRENDING

HE'S BACK! Jon Stewart Returns With A Message For Fox News And GOP 'Conservatives'

Here's What Bernie Sanders Had To Say About Donald Trump's RNC Speech

It's Donald Trump's Party Now

George Harrison's Estate Burns GOP Over



From Iran to Nice, We Must Confront All Terrorism to End Terrori...



distinction of a terrorist group in the United States, in Iran the MEK is still very much a perpetrator of terror.

Former George H.W. Bush Speechwriter Calls Trump's RNC Speech 'Very Dark And Frightening'

After the Iran-Iraq War, the MEK [resided in Iraq](#) and took on the role of Saddam's henchmen. An October 1994 *Wall Street Journal* [report](#) quoted a Clinton administration official as saying, "Saddam looked on the Mujahedeen as more loyal than some of his own army units." After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Massoud Rajavi lambasted the U.N. coalition that pushed Saddam out of Kuwait, [stating](#), "Iranian national movements and their masses strongly denounce the Iranian regime's alliance with U.S. imperialism, world Zionism, and regional reactionaries to launch aggression against Iraq."

In recent years, Iranian nuclear scientists have been assassinated — in some cases murdered while [driving to work](#). MEK is [thought](#) by many to be involved in these attacks, perhaps with the assistance of Israel. According to a 2012 NBC News [report](#), Israel was "training MEK members" to carry out the killings. The group has also been held responsible for an April 2000 [assassination attempt](#) on the leader of the Iranian policy making center for the war in Iraq.



Mourners carry the coffin of an Iranian nuclear scientist on January 13, 2012. Some believe MEK is involved in the deaths of the nuclear scientists. (Atta Kenare/Getty Images)

The Saudi Connection

This year, the annual gathering of the MEK in Paris featured [Prince Turki al-Faisal](#), the former director of Saudi intelligence, as a speaker. The conference typically draws the attendance of politicians of many nations, including the U.S., Egypt, and this year, Saudi Arabia. In his remarks, al-Faisal [praised](#) the [pseudo-Islamist-Marxist](#) group and emphatically supported its objective of toppling the Iranian government. Al-Faisal's comments, which come at a time when Saudi-Iranian relations are at an [all-time low](#) and have even been

SUBSCRIBE AND FOLLOW

Get top stories and blog posts emailed to me each day. Newsletters may offer personalized content or advertisements.



From Iran to Nice, We Must Confront All Terrorism to End Terrori...



Tehran-Riyadh relationship going forward.

During my trip to Iran a few weeks ago, I spoke with a senior official about the necessity of improving Iran-Saudi relations. He told me that Iran was willing to engage the Saudis but that Riyadh had devoted itself to a confrontational approach. This official informed me that Iran had detailed intelligence about Riyadh's financial support to the MEK, which he said had increased 800 percent in the past two years. He also noted that **Saudi Arabia** would cover the cost of this year's MEK conference in Paris and that Prince Turki would be present to publicly declare **Saudi Arabia's** support.

address@email.com

Subscribe Now →



845 K



90.3 K



381 K



Podcast



Add us on Snapchat

“

In the fight against terrorism, European and Saudi leaders should know better than to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ terrorism, or tolerate any form of terrorism in the service of cheap geopolitical gains.

With Prince Turki's speech to the MEK, **Saudi Arabia** has elected to destroy any chance of de-escalating tensions between the two nations. In pursuing this approach, Saudi leaders should be cognizant that not only are they imperiling regional and global security, but they are also following in the footsteps of Saddam Hussein. **Saudi Arabia** has already separated itself from its traditional regional allies with its hyper-anti-Iranian posture, so much so that only Bahrain— which is [effectively under Saudi occupation](#) — is standing fully with it. Global powers, on the other hand, are pursuing ways to [enhance ties with Iran](#). It is truly a shame that Prince Turki al-Faisal, a man of significant ability and experience, has committed himself to this doomed cause rather than searching for peace and friendship between Iran and **Saudi Arabia**.

Riyadh's now open alliance with the MEK only solidifies its position as the sponsor of [yet another extremist group](#) that espouses perverted views of Islam. The barbaric Nice terrorist attack— later claimed by the self-proclaimed Islamic State — and Prince Faisal's [endorsement](#) of the MEK have a common denominator: [a connection to Saudi Arabia](#).





Saudi Arabia's Prince Turki al-Faisal looks on during the National Council of Resistance of Iran annual meeting on July 9, 2016. (Alain Jocard/Getty Images)

Saudi Arabia and ISIS

It has long been evident to the global community that Saudi Arabia is a [benefactors of Islamist militant groups](#), including likely the group that [evolved into ISIS](#). Many U.S. officials have publicly acknowledged this reality. Even former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [stated](#) at the Brookings Institution last year that, “Much of the extremism in the world today is the direct result of policies and funding undertaken by the Saudi government and individuals.” A recent British parliament [report](#) also stated that it is “very likely” that individuals close to the royals of the Arab monarchies of the Persian Gulf have donated money to ISIS, though it is unclear how directly those funds have been given. Historically, too, the ideology of the group has ties to Saudi Arabia’s own identity via [Wahhabism](#).

While ISIS wreaks havoc on the world with its global acts of terror, the MEK ravages Iran. In much the same way ISIS is a twisted offspring of the Sunni world that has ravaged, among others, Sunni-populated areas, the MEK is its counterpart for Iranians in the Shia world. Iranians thus expect the world community to confront the MEK just as it confronts ISIS. At the very least, the group should not be hosted by countries like France and [endorsed](#) by Saudi Arabia. In the fight against terrorism, European and Saudi leaders should know better than to distinguish between “good” and “bad” terrorism, or tolerate any form of terrorism in the service of cheap geopolitical gains.

“

The Nice truck slaughter — indeed the slaughtering by ISIS in general — and the MEK’s killing of thousands of Iranians are



From Iran to Nice, We Must Confront All Terrorism to End Terrori...



In light of the Nice terrorist attack, the international community should also view the threat from other groups such as the MEK as an interconnected phenomenon. The [scourge of terrorism](#) currently threatening the whole world can only be alleviated if it is addressed in a holistic way. The Nice truck slaughter — indeed the slaughtering by ISIS in general — and the MEK's killing of thousands of Iranians are both worthy of our attention and condemnation. The territory the perpetrators of such violence use to plan and launch attacks, as well as the flow of cash, equipment and ideology they draw their support and influence from should all be considered as pieces of the same terrorism "puzzle." The global terrorist threat simply cannot be solved until all these pieces are recognized as being a part of the same puzzle and dealt with in an effective and simultaneous manner. This means not only increasing security to prevent attacks, but also seriously confronting those who aid terrorism in any way — from the MEK to ISIS.

Earlier on WorldPost:

Fighting Rocks Kirkuk

More: [Iran](#) [Islamic State](#) [Paris](#) [Saudi Arabia](#) [Worldpost Middle East](#)

[Comments](#)

SUGGESTED FOR YOU



From Iran to Nice, We Must Confront All Terrorism to End Terrori...



American Sentenced To Life For Murders That Wiped Out Entire Czech Family

Spanish Bullfighter Gored To Death In The Ring

When A Woman Is Gang-Raped Twice By The Same Men, What Does That Make This Country?

Mikhail Gorbachev says Nato is escalating Cold War with Russia 'into a hot one'

Russia Expels 2 American Diplomats

WHAT'S HOT

POLITICS

POLITICS

POLITICS

BLACK VOICES

Photoshop Armageddon Breaks Out Over THAT Photo Of Donald Trump's Family

Listen To Bill Maher Spend 30 Glorious Minutes Railing Against Donald Trump

Donald Trump Promises Not To Lie, Right Before Lying A Bunch Of Times

Video Shows Brutal Arrest Of Black Schoolteacher In Austin

POLITICS

POLITICS

POLITICS

POLITICS

There's Something Disturbing About The Way Cops Act Just After They've Shot Somebody

Republicans Mourn The Death Of The Grand Old Party

HuffPost Rise: What You Need To Know On July 22

Alex Jones, Roger Stone Hijack Liberal Livestream At RNC — And Things Get Very Real, Very Fast

CONVERSATIONS

2 Comments

Sort by



Add a comment...



Babak Azadyar

Iran is the mother of all terrorists! After Khomeini took control of Iran, he committed himself to expand the Islamic revolution to all over the world.

The only way to get rid of terrorism is to change regime in Iran. Defending Iranian government or trying to make them look good is should be a international crime!

Appeasing Iran will only lead to more terrorism!

Like · Reply · 1 · 1 hr

[Load 1 more comment](#)



[Advertise](#) [RSS](#) [Careers](#) [FAQ](#)

[User Agreement](#) [Privacy](#) [Comment Policy](#) [About Us](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Contact Us](#) [Archive](#)

Copyright © 2016 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.
Part of HuffPost • HPMG News