



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

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

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SDIR • NUMBER 014 • 1st SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, December 8, 2011**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Scott Reid**



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

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• (1305)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)):** Today is Thursday, December 8, 2011 and the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is called to order.

[English]

Today I want to remind members of the subcommittee that we are televised, so keep that in mind. You're always on camera.

We have today as a witness retired Colonel Wesley Martin of the United States Army, to talk to us further on our study of the situation in Camp Ashraf. Colonel Martin was the commandant of the camp and had additional experience in Iraq as well as in other areas. He is in a position to provide us with considerable light on this subject.

Without further ado, Colonel Martin, I'll turn things over to you.

We'll allow you to make a presentation, and then we'll take questions. Depending upon the length of your opening statement, that will determine the length of the questions. We hope to give every member of the subcommittee a chance to ask you at least one question prior to wrapping things up.

Please feel free to begin.

**Colonel (Retired) Wesley Martin (Colonel (retired), United States Army, As an Individual):** Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss with you the situation in Camp Ashraf, Iraq, and the former National Liberation Army of the Mujahedin e-Khalq, the MeK.

Before I proceed, there is one thing that must be stated up front. As the first anti-terrorism force-protection officer for all coalition forces in Iraq, as the former operations officer for Task Force 134, detention operations, and as the first full colonel to command Camp Ashraf, I cannot say with enough emphasis that the MeK is not a terrorist organization. As a matter of fact, I found just the opposite when I was the camp commander of Camp Ashraf—they were my allies.

President Obama has announced the removal of all U.S. troops from Iraq by the end of the year, minus the embassy security detail. He has received criticism for leaving Iraq in a dangerous situation. In fairness, though, he had no choice. Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki's requirement for U.S. forces to be subject to Iraqi law is unacceptable.

Prime Minister al-Maliki knew this when he set the standard. He and his ally Moqtada Sadr want American forces out of Iraq so that the consolidation of power can be completed. In the end, the final outcome of the coalition invasion of Iraq is to replace one brutal regime with another, this time one that is aligned with Iran.

Last April there was a brutal attack on Camp Ashraf that was well documented in a video. I hope everybody had a chance to see the video. If not, I would recommend that you take a look. Viewing that video, we witness unarmed people being run over by American-made military vehicles and gunned down in cold blood by Iraqi soldiers. There is something else that warrants our notice and respect: Ashraf residents are rushing to the aid of their fallen comrades, braving the bullets and vehicles, knowing they may be the next to die. Having worked with the Iranian mujahedin, I see something further—I see the people I served beside. I recognize that if either I or the American warriors with me at Ashraf had been under such an attack, the residents of Ashraf would have been rushing equally fast to our rescue. Although unarmed, they were on our flank, and I was honoured to have them there. Yet my own government lists them as terrorists. Ironically, Moqtada Sadr's Madhi Army and Khamenei's Quds Force are not listed as terrorists.

We hear all the rumors about the MeK. We are told any number of things: they are a cult; they are Marxist-Leninists; people are held there against their will; they attacked the Kurds; they have American blood on their hands; they supported Saddam. Detractors take and twist the information back to 1965 and the founding of the MeK. They never go back to 1953 and the CIA-backed coup that placed the Shah in power. I hope we will have time to discuss these accusations in detail.

Last February Ambassador Jeffrey testified to Senators Levin and McCain that he was certain al-Maliki would keep his word and protect the residents of Ashraf. Al-Maliki's forces had already attacked Ashraf once. Two months later came the April attack. As we speak, al-Maliki has Ashraf residents under continuous psychological torture, with loudspeakers denying residents sleep and forcing them to listen to messages of impending doom. Logistics and medical support are being denied entry to the camp. The victims of the attacks, with open wounds and broken limbs, must endure the pain with no sedatives or medicines to prevent infection. Last month, in writing, al-Maliki stated his intentions to the European Union. A copy of that document is provided with my testimony.

The United Nations has recognized the residents of Ashraf as applicants for refugee status. But Maliki has blocked any actions from taking place, just as he blocked Congressman Rohrabacher's delegation from visiting Ashraf. One tool he continually uses to justify his actions is the terrorist designation.

• (1310)

Maliki has stated that Camp Ashraf will be emptied of the Mujahedin e-Khalq by the end of the year. He has already renamed the compound Camp New Iraq.

Should Maliki be allowed to overrun Camp Ashraf and transport the survivors back to Iran, where they will face prison and the gallows, the fight for democracy in Iran will take a severe blow. It will not die, any more than the cause for liberty in Texas died at the Alamo. Ashraf will become a rallying call: "Remember Ashraf".

Eventually democracy will come to Iran. Iranian citizens are too wired into modern technology and western communications for progress to be permanently denied. Unlike the western world, the Middle East did not have four centuries to go through an age of exploration, religious reformation, great awakening, and the Industrial Revolution. They're getting it all at once. They will come out of it. Iran will one day be a democracy. The question is, what role will the western world have in that? Right now it is not looking good.

The residents of Ashraf need to be pulled from Iraq as soon as possible. Many people have called upon Maliki to end the December 31 deadline and allow UNHCR representatives into the camp so they can complete their work on relocating the residents. Until that time, peacekeeping forces need to be on the ground with them. That stated, I don't believe Maliki is going to wait until December 31 to attack Ashraf for the final time. I predict he will attack any time after December 15. His attacks in 2009 and 2011 immediately followed visits with U.S. Defense Secretary Gates. Next week he visits President Obama. The sooner he does it following his return from the United States, the more he can make it appear as a U.S.-government-sanctioned operation.

Unfortunately, we entered Iraq without a good understanding of the region. We have replaced one brutal regime with another. This time the government is becoming more and more aligned with Iran. Khomeini once stated, "The road to Jerusalem is through Karbala". We have played a critical role in opening the passage. We've made a lot of mistakes, and many people have paid the ultimate price for those mistakes. Unless positive steps are taken very quickly, 3,400 residents of Camp Ashraf will be the next to pick up the tab.

Thank you for this invitation to speak, and I look forward to your questions.

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

We'll begin with a questioner from the government side. Given the time—it's now quarter past—I think we can get away with having seven-minute rounds, but I'm going to be pretty abrupt in cutting them off, making sure we stick to that. If we do that, we should have enough time.

Mr. Hiebert, please.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC):** Thank you, Colonel. We appreciate your testimony here. It's nice to have somebody who has been on the ground and seen it firsthand, and you've clearly done that.

In your testimony you talked about the arguments that others make. You briefly commented that they have been identified as a cult, as former terrorists, Saddam supporters. For the benefit of our committee, can you go over all the arguments that have been made to buttress the case that they should be listed as a terrorist organization and address those concerns for our committee? What is your perspective on those concerns?

• (1315)

**Col Wesley Martin:** Right.

The first one we should probably raise is the founding of the MeK, and that's what people like to go to and call it a Marxist-Leninist organization. The MeK was founded in 1965 by a group of students who did some study, and what they came up with was that there should be equality between the leaders and those being led, clerics should not have final say over the interpretation of the Koran, and clerics should not expect blind obedience from the congregation.

Okay, that does sound like Marx and Lenin, but that also sounds like Jefferson and Madison and the writing of our own Declaration of Independence and our own Constitution. Also, Ronald Reagan would not have had any problems with those three philosophies. I think we can all agree that Ronald Reagan was no communist. So when they say they're Marxist-Leninist, no, the original mujahedin was not.

There was a split that came in the seventies. There were actually two mujahedins at that time. There was a Marxist mujahedin and there was the People's Mujahedin of Iran, and they were fighting each other as much as they were fighting the Shah's brutal government.

That's where we get into the comment about there being American blood on mujahedin hands. Colonels Shaffer, Turner, and Hawkins were not killed by the organization represented by Maryam Rajavi and by the former national liberation army people of Ashraf who we know today. Two of the people who had killed Shaffer and Turner were captured by the Shah's police and they confessed they were from the Marxist mujahedin. The person who killed Hawkins later wrote that he was the one who did it, and he was Marxist, and the same thing went for the three contractors. Yesterday, in front of Congress, the State Department representative ignored this long-known knowledge that there were two mujahedins and he blamed Maryam Rajavi's organization, and then later Ambassador Bloomfield pointed out that was not the case.

We move to the fact of its being a cult. One of the accusations that came out recently is that Maryam Rajavi is a very charismatic leader. This is true. She is very professional in her approach. People like her style and they are very loyal to her. I have watched Maryam Rajavi viewing the video tape of the massacre at Camp Ashraf, and even though she's had to review it many times, I saw the wincing in her eyes and I saw the uncomfortable feeling when she was watching people being killed. Cult leaders don't feel pain every time they see one of their people being killed. So I could see the loyalty that people in the MeK have towards her. She has that same loyalty to them, and you don't find that in cults.

One of the comments made, especially at Camp Ashraf, is that they wear all the same clothing. But we are talking about the national liberation army. Of course all armies wear the same clothing. But now the men do not wear all the same clothing; they wear civilian-type clothing because the national liberation army does not exist any more.

Then comes the issue that, well, they divorced and they live separately of each other. Considering what's going on with the MeK right now at Camp Ashraf, it's a good thing. Massoud Rajavi saw the intensity of the problem and the fight ahead, and if he had a bunch of children to deal with during all these pending attacks and things that were going on, it would make the problem even more complicated. We're fortunate there are no children at Camp Ashraf. We're talking late teenagers, maybe. One of the young ladies killed and shown in the video was 20 years old, but that is pretty much the younger part of it.

●(1320)

Jesuit priests don't marry, but we don't call them a cult. So when we start to peel back the different accusations against them, they pretty much start falling apart. Unfortunately, we have seen cases where, no matter what you say—it's almost like the old Simon and Garfunkel song, *The Boxer*: "Still a man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest". Those are some of the things we're facing.

Also, they've been accused of supporting Saddam. Congressman Filner yesterday pointed out that so did the United States, during that time in the 1980s. When Iran and Iraq were slugging it out in the late 1970s, the United States was supporting Saddam. Congressman Filner then asked the State Department representative, "Does that mean we're also terrorists?" So when you start peeling them back they fall apart.

There's another rumour that they're being held against their will. I went through all the compounds when I visited them, and sometimes those visits did not have much notice to the PMOI, the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran. I'll explain in a minute. I would shake the hands of as many people as possible. If they wanted to leave, they could hold the hand and all we had to do was walk out.

We also had two written agreements. The MeK did not want to keep people who wanted to leave. They used the same philosophy that was used the night before the battle of Karbala: we will put the lights out, and if anybody wants to leave, they can. We had a facility set up for them to come to, and we had two written agreements to go ahead and accept them.

The last rumour to address was one of the many I ended up debunking myself. I got a message from the State Department. I had just returned from Germany. The MeK had a training site on the compound, and it was at this exact location. They were recruiting Iraqis at that time to be in it. I ordered my Marines to mount up, and we were ready to go straight to that compound. One of the liaison officers said I was welcome to go to any of their compounds any time I wanted; I didn't need to bring my Marines and force my way in. I said, "Okay, tell you what, I'm bringing one lieutenant with me and we're going to that compound now, and if what the State Department has told me is true, the rest of the Marines are coming."

We went to the compound and found a training site.... Excuse me; now I'm getting confused. It was a site where workers lived, and they hired a lot of local labour. The local labour would come in on Monday and they'd work through the week. If they came and left every night and came back the next morning, they had greater chances of one of the real terrorist organizations—al-Qaeda, Badacore, Mahdi Army—catching them and executing them. So for their own safety they had a lodging arrangement set up. I went through, and there weren't hundreds; there were somewhere between 50 and 80 at the most.

I went through every building in that compound except one, and when I was walking out the liaison officer said to me, "Colonel, you haven't checked this building yet." I said I had seen enough and that I knew what was not going on there. He asked me to do him a favour and check the building. I checked the building, and sure enough, it was just where workers were being allowed to live safely so they weren't putting themselves at five times the risk. If they had anything to hide, he wouldn't have asked me to check the other building.

I came back feeling totally stupid that the State Department report had got me into mounting up my Marines, ready to make a crash into a compound. I learned a lot that night.

**The Chair:** We have to go to our next question.

Mr. Marston, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Thank you.

Colonel, I really appreciate hearing your testimony, because it's matching testimony we've previously heard.

One of the things that came up here, which you indicated very early in your remarks, is the heavy influence that Iran now has in this area. When we go back to the MeK and the revolution and how you were referring to the students at that point, in my understanding, it was a student-led revolution that got hijacked by the clerics in Iran. Do you see a division along tribal lines, the tribes of Iran aligned with their own tribes in Iraq? Is it following that kind of path, sir?

●(1325)

**Col Wesley Martin:** From what I've seen, it's not tribal in Iran and Iraq. But at this point in time, it is religious, and at this point in time, there are a lot of opportunists.

I'll drop back to my role as the anti-terrorism officer for all of Iraq. The United States, before it invaded.... First off, our State Department had paid Chalabi \$33 million to provide information on Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction and his other great technologies. The Defence Intelligence Agency had also provided him with double-digit millions. Basically, Chalabi made about \$100 million off the American taxpayer to give us misinformation.

Then the State Department had Chalabi go to Tehran to make sure that it was okay with them for us to invade Iraq and bring down Saddam Hussein. Well, of course it was. But one of the conditions the State Department received and the American government received was that it also attack the Mujahedin-e-Khalq.

As the American forces and the British forces moved in—and I saw this personally—the Iranians were setting up. They already had Hakim's Badr Corps and Hakim's Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. They were already established in the country. As we went through dropping Saddam's forces.... Well, dropping? They disappeared on us, with the exception of the Fedayeen in Nasiriyah. As his rule was dropping, I came to realize, when I got there, that the Iranian government had come up and had started replacing the governments.

We talk about the Fallujah triangle, which is basically from Tikrit down to Fallujah and over to Baghdad. I developed another expression, and that was the Iranian wedge, which I was witnessing. It went from Al-Kut to Al-Diwaniyah to An Najaf up to Karbala and over to Al-Hillah and back. I could see this great—it was almost like a tidal wave—struggle in that location at that time. Diwaniyah was really the centre of gravity, because the tribal chief there was determined not to come under the control of Iran and he was also not coming under the control of al-Qaeda. He mobilized his tribe to try to secure the city. Unfortunately, that success fell. But that was the main area where I was having to deal with the Iranian influence as the anti-terrorism officer.

I came back to the States, and then I was, by name, requested to go back to Iraq to be the J-3 of detention operations. I started seeing that the influence had jumped from Iran, through Baghdad, and was now being struggled for in Diyala Province. What Iran was pushing for, if the country fell and went into three sectors, was this: Kurdistan would be up north; Al-Anbar Province would probably end up going to Saudi Arabia; and the Iranians would gather as much as they could of the Shia areas in the rest of Iraq.

Diyala was really the fight. Because in the 1920s, Baghdad only had about a 20% Shia population. By the time we arrived, it had jumped to 50%. In part, that was because of the Industrial Revolution, but in part it was because Karim Qasim, the general who took control of the government from the monarchy from 1958 to 1963, really wanted to do good things. He saw great poverty, so he built what is now Sadr City. It used to be Qasim City and then Saddam City.

By then, by the time I came back, that Shia population had pretty well taken control of a lot of the Baghdad area. Now we were finding that they were going after Diyala Province. Also, and I had to deal with this several times, in one case in particular, we got word that the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, which was a very corrupt organization, was

moving their forces into villages and telling the villagers that they had one hour to clear.

● (1330)

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Could I interrupt you for a moment, sir? I'd like to come back a little more to Camp Ashraf.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sure.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** One of the concerns that came through in the testimony we had here left me with the feeling that there was an orchestrated campaign to malign them. The second thing that came through was that we were astounded by the number of American officials who were saying that they had to be protected. Yet the government in the U.S. has seemed to be ignoring a plethora of people, across the board, who understand the situation and understand the gravity and the risks to these people. I hate to say this, but it almost sounds as if the U.S. government is prepared to sacrifice them.

**Col Wesley Martin:** I smile with a feeling of pain, almost, but I am very pleased that you have totally captured it.

Let me hit the second point first.

The people who are speaking out.... Tom Ridge, the former Director of Homeland Security, is saying that there was not a single document that came across his desk during his tenure. Louis Freeh, the former FBI director, told me himself that when he was in charge of the FBI, the State Department tried to get his organization involved in blessing that terrorist designation, and he refused. John Sano, former CIA director, has personally told me—and I've been with him when he's publicly stated this—that the Mujahedin e-Khalq was not a terrorist organization, and it was wrong.

Then you move to all these other generals. You have three former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. You have Wesley Clark. You have former Commandant of the Marine Corps, Jim Conway.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Perhaps I might jump in again, sir, because we've heard the testimony of the list of names here. At one point or other, because of the invasion of Iraq and the stories that many people felt were built up about weapons of mass destruction, which some people believed were there, and others did not believe were there, and the evidence seemed to support them.... It almost feels like the MeK has been sideswiped by the original campaign of misinformation that seemed to have come out of the Bush era.

The shocking thing to me—

**The Chair:** Do you have a question? We're actually past your time already.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Okay.

The shocking thing to me is how that seems to have carried over to the current administration.

**Col Wesley Martin:** That's a good point.

I've said publicly many times that I centre the problem down towards the State Department. I've said that this State Department is serving Hillary Clinton no better than they served Colin Powell when they sent him to those "weapons of mass destruction" speeches.

The MeK did get sideswiped during this. You pointed out all the disinformation towards them, and I pointed out all the rumours and everything else. There has been a lot of disinformation, and a lot of it has been to please Iran. I have yet to figure out why our State Department is so determined to please Iran, but they're doing it continually. Any rumour that Iran tells about the MeK is accepted as a fact—except the last one. And I was glad to see, finally, when the Quds Force was detected on their plan to kill the Saudi ambassador inside a busy restaurant, and it was discovered. The first thing that was said by the Iranian government was that it was the Mujahedin e-Khalq. Finally, the United States came back and said no, it wasn't. That was the first time that that slander wasn't allowed.

At the same time—and I'll deviate for a second—our own State Department stumbled twice. They stumbled when they said we need to figure how high up in the Iranian government this went. As the former anti-terrorism officer for all of Iraq, I can assure them, and I could have saved them some time, that something of that magnitude would not have been planned had not Khamenei and Ahmadinejad personally approved it.

The other thing is the State Department came out and said we need to place Iran on increased diplomatic isolation. Louis Freeh turned to me and said, "What is that?" I have a military police sense of humour, and I said, "Somebody at the State Department spent their college youth watching the movie *Animal House*, and now they want to put Iran on double-secret probation."

There was a third question you asked, sir.

•(1335)

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** We don't have time for that one, but thank you, sir. That was a very comprehensive answer.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We're actually out of time.

Mr. Sweet, you're next. I may have to shorten the rounds. It looks like we're running out of time, but right now you still have seven minutes.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Colonel, I just wanted to say thank you very much for your service. We appreciate the role that the armed forces play here in Canada, and I know that your people appreciate your service as a protector of the people of the United States of America, as well.

You've mentioned entering Camp Ashraf—you called it a compound—to check regarding this abduction of Iraqi citizens. Could you just explain a little bit more? What was the nature of your exposure? Because of the experience that you've had as an anti-terrorist officer, how much exposure did you actually have to these people? How much interaction did you have, and for what period of time?

**Col Wesley Martin:** With the Mujahedin e-Khalq it went over a period of years. When I was the anti-terrorism officer I went to the commanding general over all detention operations in October 2003, because I had a serious problem I had detected and needed to talk to her about. That was that she had a total lack of adult supervision at Abu Ghraib. She and I went through officer basic course together.

During that conversation—and unfortunately, nothing was done about what I had reported, and you know what happened there—we talked in detail about the mujahedin, and she told me she couldn't get people to understand that they were not part of the problem and they were a good source that we should be using both for information and as an ally. We went over in great detail about what they are, and I realized this is not a terrorist organization. So I was able to focus my attention on the other threats that I mentioned earlier.

Later, a report came in that they were building fighting positions up there. Okay, I checked into that one along with Major General Tom Miller. What we immediately realized was that they weren't building fighting positions. They were building trenches, but they were sewer and water trenches because of the sudden increase of population. It's a very sanitary organization, a very sanitary place. So those were the types of rumours we were putting out.

Later, when I became the J-3 of detention operations, the mujahedin Camp Ashraf was one of our five camps. I did pay attention to it there and I was dealing with issues concerning it.

**Mr. David Sweet:** So would you be exposed to the MeK folks on a weekly basis?

**Col Wesley Martin:** When I became base commander I was exposed to them on almost an hourly basis.

**Mr. David Sweet:** I want to make sure that we get your great expertise on the record, so I ask you, has there been any other group of 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 people that has been able to fool you in your career, that all of a sudden you, under security, found out that they actually were terrorists when you thought they were innocent people?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I had individuals who fooled me greatly, but as to an organization of that magnitude that I personally dealt with over that period of time, no.

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

We've also heard from sources that these folks continue to this day to be armed. Could you tell me, did you have exposure enough to check the camp? Were there hidden arms there? What's the situation with the MeK?

**Col Wesley Martin:** You're correct, and I owe the gentleman beside you an apology. That's one rumour I forgot to mention. We did have those rumours that they were still armed. I did have the ability to check all the camps, and even before I arrived there were inspections of all the camps. We had the rumours that they had underground bunkers. Every time we debunked a rumour, then somehow people would say "Oh, then, it must be this way".

The best evidence I can suggest to the fact that they were not armed was not only through my own inspections, but through the 2009-2011 videos. If they'd had arms, they would have gone and got them, and at least come into this with a fighting chance.

If I may, there's one other thing about them being held against their will: those 2009-2011 attacks prove they were not being held against their will, because what better time to escape than in the middle of an attack? And they didn't. They held firmly together. But no, they weren't armed.

• (1340)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you, Colonel, because that was going to be in my next question. In all these manufactured opportunities that you gave them to leave, from what I understand—they could shake your hand for an extended period of time, the lights were out and they could walk away unmolested—did anybody leave?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Not through shaking the hands. We did have another facility that had about 190 what we refer to as defectors, and those were the two of the agreements. Julie Norman worked one just before I got there, and I worked a clarification of one. The people did leave. We had a couple of walkaways.

What the Ashraf leadership and I worked out.... They didn't mind the people walking away. As a matter of fact, they even tried to give one to me who didn't want to come to us but he didn't want to be with them any more. He was living in a kind of twilight zone where he had all the food, he had private lodging and everything else. But we did have some that came.

The only thing the leadership wanted was to make sure they didn't come with documents, and to get debriefed before they went. And if they happened to come across, we worked out the situation where if the defector did not want to visit with the leadership again, I would personally counsel the guy and then I would tell the leadership the results of the conversation. They always took my word and I never lied to them. "He did not bring any documents. He doesn't want to see you again." And the leadership would accept that.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Colonel Martin, my time is limited, so I want to make sure I get as much as I can on the record.

In your opinion, what is going to happen to these 3,400 people when they shut down this camp?

**Col Wesley Martin:** That is the hardest of all. I have a philosophy that if you beat the enemy you feel good about it; if he beats you, you live with it. If we don't do something different we'll be living with their death. They will be rolled up by Maliki. We saw what was done in 2009, and it was more brutal in 2011.

Earlier I referenced the Alamo, where Santa Anna attacked twice. Maliki is going to attack the third time. It's going to be brutal, and the survivors are then going to be rolled up. Maliki has already put out in the press that he's going to take them to Nazaria and Samaha. They may be going to the old Japanese camp, which is an awesome camp and could be used very effectively to not only keep people out but to keep people in. Then they'll be processed for going to Iran.

Maliki has not cooperated with UNHCR, as he claims he has. He has commitments to Ahmadinejad and Khamenei. When he attacked before, he attacked with Sadr. As a matter of fact, I need to mention this to emphasize my point. Maliki is not only Prime Minister, but he has maintained himself as the Minister of Defence and Minister of the Interior. He has eight special brigades assigned directly to him and nobody else, even if he wasn't Minister of Defence. He's going to use his forces, and he's going to use them brutally.

Maliki also has secret prisons all through his country. We used to go busting them all the time. I wish I had come out of Iraq with the meat hook we took out of one of his compounds. On the fourth floor of the basement of the Ministry of Interior he had secret detention facilities where people were being tortured.

He is going to do the same thing to the mujahedin. Then he'll say, as he said in a letter to the UN, that he tried to cooperate with us, but we are not cooperating. The mujahedin is being accused of not cooperating. Madam Parsai, the leader, is willing to cooperate with us in any way possible with reasonable means.

On this thing about wanting to take them out of Ashraf to put them somewhere else, they have the logistical support there. They have everything else they need. They're supporting themselves—life support. By taking them somewhere else you break them up. It's divide and conquer. It's going to be brutal.

**The Chair:** The next questioner is Professor Cotler.

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

I also want to express our appreciation for having a decorated colonel who has been on the ground and can come here to share his experience and expertise, as you have today.

Colonel, your testimony graphically describes the killings in Ashraf. Then there was the denial of logistical and medical relief for those who had suffered from previous attacks. Then there was reference to ongoing harassment and intimidation. But what stuck out for me in all of your testimony is the likelihood that Maliki will attack after December 15.

In two previous situations, in 2009 and 2011, the attacks came after meetings with Defence Minister Gates at the time. As you mentioned, Maliki will be meeting with Obama and is likely to launch an attack after that meeting and make it appear as if the U.S. was part of a government-sanctioned attack.

I find it almost shocking how a United States government—a powerful government—that undertook the protection of Ashraf from 2003 to 2009 handed it over to Maliki. I assume that either assurances were received for their protection, or at least they should have asked for those assurances. I don't know. The United States would be said to have a continuing type of obligation here.

Shouldn't the alarm be sounded in the U.S. in advance of that meeting with Obama so that Maliki can't come out of that meeting and launch such an attack? The United States will have been publicly forewarned by the people you've mentioned with the kind of expertise and respect they enjoy, whether it be Tom Ridge, Louis Freeh, Michael Mukasey, or yourself. They are people at the highest level of American decision-making with that kind of experience and expertise on Ashraf.

Why can't the alarm be sounded so that Obama, instead of just meeting with Maliki, or even before the meeting, will make it clear what the consequences will be should Maliki ever decide to attack, and prevent that type of thing from occurring?

• (1345)

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, that is an excellent question. Also, at congressional hearings with Congressman Rohrabacher yesterday those same issues were brought up.

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson pointed out to the State Department that she feels the condition you just described should be set down, and if it is not made clear to Maliki and Maliki accepts it, then the President does not meet with Maliki. The United States Congress has taken on the same exact quest you mentioned.

You also mentioned the written agreements, sir. Here is the packet of all the protected person status agreements processed and the personal folders and the protected person cards of all these people. These are the people who were executed in 2009 and 2011. They had real names, real faces, real lives, and protected person status. Their protected person status was revoked and their lives we're taken from them.

I'm more than willing to pass the packet around, although 2009 includes photos of the bodies, and it is hideous. One shows a man's face caved in by a forklift.

You had mentioned the surrender. Some people are trying to play with words, saying they didn't surrender but they surrendered their weapons. A warrior needs only two things to fight and engage the enemy: a weapon and ammunition. He can do it without food, water, sleep, and a whole bunch of stuff, but he cannot fight and engage without a weapon and ammunition.

When they renounced terrorism, which was a formality, in my opinion—they weren't terrorists, but they renounced it—they surrendered their weapons. They surrendered all their weapons. And we assured them protected person status.

No one despises war more than the warrior. And no one despises the violation of a condition of surrender, whether it's the weapon or the person, more than the warrior who worked to secure it and who enforced it. To have our bureaucratic executive branch of government come in and say, "We ignore that now, and by the way, we're turning you over to the friend of your enemies", that was wrong.

• (1350)

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Colonel, it seems to me that nobody can say we do not know what has happened already to the residents of Camp Ashraf, and equally, that nobody can say at this point that we cannot foresee what will happen to the residents of Camp Ashraf.

Your testimony today is yet another compelling warning of the need to act urgently to prevent this disaster from occurring. I have to say that while I believe we here in Canada, as parliamentarians, have to join in the sounding of the alarm and do whatever we can with respect to this almost responsibility to prevent and protect, I still believe it is the United States that has both the capacity and the principal responsibility. And I hope it will undertake the necessary action—what you've just said, really, congressional testimony. Either Obama gets a clear and express undertaking that can be sanctioned or he should not meet with Maliki but put Maliki on notice that he will be held accountable, criminally responsible for what will occur. The U.S. could even refer the matter to the UN Security Council for reference at that point to the ICC, if need be.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, your comments are totally on target, and I agree with you 100%.

To show you how much Maliki is actually behind this, this is the magazine of his political party. The centre article is titled "MeK Organization: international terrorist from previous dictatorship and the depth of western hypocrisy". It goes on to blast not only the Mujahedin e-Khalq, but the west, Europe, and North America.

The Iraqis rely on the fact that most Americans do not read Arabic, and I don't. But they also rely on most Americans not pursuing this kind of information. It's wrong on my nation's part. And you're right: we have the responsibility.

They surrendered. These are American signatures on these documents. My job was to enforce the agreements of my predecessors. That's why I took a loyalty towards this. We did enforce it, and the MeK worked closely with me. I also have the documentation showing that they supplied us with water and other resources. As I said, they were allies.

Also, because we're drawing down from Iraq, and we're drawing down soon from Afghanistan, we have the resources in the United States to house the MeK. The base realignment commission has gone through and identified a lot of sources. My old command headquarters in Albuquerque, New Mexico, could easily fit 500 of them. It has the shower facilities, the kitchen facilities, and plenty of room to rest, and it's already fenced in. We have the facilities in the United States. The problem is convincing our government to do it.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Thank you, Colonel. Again, your testimony is very much appreciated.

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

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We are actually just a few minutes away from our closing time, so I think we're going to have to dramatically reduce the questions. We have one left for each of the Conservatives and the New Democrats. I apologize to the members, but let's keep it down to about three minutes.

We'll go to Ms. Grewal, please, and then to Mr. Chisholm.

Mr. Hiebert, on a point of order.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** I know that on occasion this committee has extended its time and has seen the clock as something other than what it is. Is that an option for us at this stage?

**The Chair:** We never see the clock as different from what it is. The clock is what we say it is. But that remains an option now, as always. I won't see the clock as being at two o'clock until I get an indication from the committee that it ought to be the time we see it as.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** The testimony is so valuable that I think we should extend the period of time we have for this committee to hear it, or at least everybody should have an opportunity.

**The Chair:** All right, we'll make sure of that.

I still can't give you the full seven minutes. We'll give you four minutes, Ms. Grewal.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Colonel, for your time and your presentation, and thank you for your service.

Colonel, are you able to estimate the percentage of residents of Camp Ashraf who have likely been involved in terrorist activities? Could you please tell us?

• (1355)

**Col Wesley Martin:** I can vouch for every one of those residents. There are only two people in Camp Ashraf who were in the PMOI at the time of the killings of the Americans back in the 1970s. And as I mentioned, it wasn't even their organization. I can say the names of those two people right now. The problem is that when it gets televised, the Iranian intelligence agency is going to work. I'm already fearful that I'm about to lose 3,400 friends and allies, and I don't want to put their names at the top. The rest I've been in the field of combat with. We've taken an IED together.

If I ever had a problem with the MeK, it was that they wanted to put themselves between us and danger, and that violated our procedures. We had the guns and the armoured vehicles, and they did not. I remember one day when I had to counsel a group of them, because as soon as the convoy stopped, they went out first. I hauled them back. I told them that they had to let my soldiers clear this area before they went out, and they said "Yes, sir, you're right."

I can personally vouch that they are not terrorists. As you can see, I have studied that organization and the environment around it. It's appalling that we're using this designation. When the designation of what constitutes a terrorist was originally assigned, it took three things: they had to be foreign and they had to be capable and have the intent of attacking the United States or its citizens. The MeK has not done that.

This thing is supposed to be reviewed and updated every two years. Even if they had been terrorists, after they surrendered their weapons and started working closely with the Americans, they certainly weren't terrorists. To say that they did this years ago, well, Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat both were self-proclaimed terrorists, and within 30 years of being self-proclaimed terrorists they jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Colonel, in your opinion, how could a durable solution be achieved for the residents of Camp Ashraf, and what would such a solution look like?

**Col Wesley Martin:** I think the solution that needs to happen is the United States needs to go into Balad, which is 20 miles from Camp Ashraf, with six or seven airbuses and have the residents of Camp Ashraf grab one bag each—and this would be pre-arranged, you're allowed to bring out one bag each—and then come across the Tigris. They would have to be lifted by chopper or go by a longer route. They have to be lifted out and brought to the United States. We have facilities. We've done it in Guam with refugees. We have other places, as I've mentioned.

Short of that, we need to allow the UNHCR time to do the refugee status review. My fear of doing that in Iraq is that it's only a matter of time before this government becomes more corrupt, and becomes

more under the control of Moqtada al-Sadr. I don't think I have mentioned the death of Saddam Hussein yet, have I?

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Colonel, in your opinion, if the residents—

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Let him finish.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, for going over the time on the questions, I'm at fault. I'm the guilty one.

**The Chair:** That was mainly meant to restrain our members, not to restrain you, Colonel.

**Col Wesley Martin:** I take total guilt, because I keep going on.

Moqtada al-Sadr informed his followers that Saddam would not live to see the light of a new year. He informed Maliki, "I want Saddam turned over to me tomorrow morning." Maliki contacted the commanding general of Task Force 134, who asked him, "Why do you want him tomorrow? We already plan to execute him on the 10th of January." "I want him tomorrow." "Why? Show me how you have this set up in an organized manner." "I want him tomorrow." The Task Force 134 detention operations commander pushed back: "No. This is going to be a fiasco." Our State Department weighed in, influenced his military leadership, and told him directly, "You will turn him over." The commanding general then had no choice. He turned him over, and you remember the fiasco that became. The State Department immediately backed up, and let the commanding general take all the blame. Not one person in the State Department stepped forward and said "We were the ones who ordered it to happen."

I see an identical situation happening with Camp Ashraf, as that country is going further down. With the exception of Kurdistan, which is actually becoming very productive—they have malls there, they're developing bridges, they're developing businesses—Iraq is going severely down further and further every day. Demonstrations in Tahrir Square are being brutally suppressed, and it just keeps on going. The people themselves, even the Shias in Najaf, Nasriye, and Basrah, are now saying it was actually better under Saddam.

• (1400)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Any time left?

**The Chair:** No, I'm afraid not. We have to go to our next questioner.

Mr. Chisholm.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, NDP):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Colonel. I certainly found your testimony very interesting.

Getting to the question of what gets done and doesn't get done in time, you've indicated that the concerns expressed seem to be falling on deaf ears in the United States. Would you give me some indication of what the options are if the U.S. is not going to listen and not going to act? Is there any opportunity of the UN being able to intervene, and is there anything that Canada can do to try to force this question?

**Col Wesley Martin:** With the UN, there is. Tom Ridge has said it probably more than anybody else: we need to get blue helmets on the ground. I am more than willing to go with that operation.

As I mentioned, we need to get the UN even more engaged in trying to protect the people that UNHCR is trying to move. We need to break down Maliki's artificial walls on cooperating with him, which he hasn't done.

I've talked personally with Maryam Rajavi with this, and Italy has accepted some of the MeK members. If Canada would be willing to accept MeK members, to include, and I know you would include, some Canadian citizens in the MeK.... I remember one young lady over there, her name I've long forgotten, who was a Canadian citizen, as was her brother. Her brother came back home. If they would accept some of the members and do what can be done to make it clear and help push back the 31 December deadline.... Although as I've mentioned, I don't trust Maliki unless he's put under great pressure to even honour that deadline, let alone push it back.

I know you're out of the cycle of revising your terrorist list, but I would greatly encourage removing the MeK from the terrorist list in Canada. That would help. It could be used to say to the United States: the United Kingdom and the European Union have said they're not terrorists, and now your ally to the north has stated they're not terrorists. It would help force the issue.

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** You talked about the deadline of December 31, but are we not in fact looking at a deadline much closer than that if Obama's going to have a meeting on the 15th and given what happened in 2009 and 2011?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Yes, sir, you're right.

When I was the anti-terrorism officer of Iraq, I used to have to sometimes examine the facts, look at the history as you've just pointed out, and also make some gut-feeling calls.

One day General Sanchez stopped me outside the office and asked, "What's going on?" I said, "Sir, Diwaniya is next", and sure enough, they got hit. Then we went over what I was doing was to help try to do defences down there.

My gut feeling, based upon everything I am looking at, is Maliki is going to move before December 31 and close to December 15.

As pointed out here, and as Sheila Jackson pointed out yesterday, to make it clear that you will get to meet the President.... Also, by the way, this meeting that Joe Biden had over there, and then Joe Biden comes back and says great things, and he also says the Iranian influence is greatly exaggerated—no, it's not. It's underestimated.

If I may close, one of the greatest humanitarian warriors is no stranger to any of you. He wrote a very special piece in a letter. I think everybody has seen this, but if you don't mind, I can read it:

The threat to the residents of Camp Ashraf is real and it is imminent. Within over a month, these 3,400 unarmed citizens will face a potentially mortal crisis—unless the international community fulfills its own moral and legal obligations. The humanitarian crisis is avoidable and must be avoided at all costs.

• (1405)

**Mr. Robert Chisholm:** Thank you very much, Colonel.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, thank you.

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

With the permission of the committee, I'd like to ask a question of my own in relation to the technical question of the status of protected persons. I gather this is a status that is awarded under the Geneva Conventions. Is that correct?

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

**The Chair:** Who actually makes the decision to give protected person status? What party does that?

**Col Wesley Martin:** In this particular case it was done by Rumsfeld. What happened, as I know everybody is aware.... Normally in a situation like that, as soon as the military operations cease, the State Department would go in and start building a government. Colin Powell did have a very extensive plan for building Iraq, but Rumsfeld, through his influence to President Bush, refused to allow that control to go to the State Department. As a result, Berman was sent over, and all the decisions were handled for a long time through the Department of Defense.

In this particular case it ended up being made by Rumsfeld. Normally, I believe it would be done by the State Department.

**The Chair:** So when we talk about the protected person status being revoked, that has actually happened in a formal way, has it—or has it not happened?

**Col Wesley Martin:** Are you asking if it happened formally?

**The Chair:** Has the protected person status formally been revoked?

**Col Wesley Martin:** It was.

**The Chair:** It was. And who was that done by, do you know?

**Col Wesley Martin:** That would have been by the State Department at that time, and let me leave it at that. It would have been done by the State Department.

**The Chair:** Okay, I don't need a precise answer. That gives me just some familiarity with an issue with which I wasn't familiar.

We very much appreciate your testimony, Colonel. It's been a real honour having you here, very illuminating. I think we're all very appreciative of that. Thanks very much.

**Col Wesley Martin:** Sir, I appreciate it.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

**The Chair:** I do have, for the rest of the committee, one item of business relating to our hearings next week. In order to accommodate some scheduling issues, we will now be hearing from the folks from the foreign affairs department on the issue of Camp Ashraf on Tuesday and we will be hearing from the witnesses regarding the Democratic Republic of Congo on Monday. So that shift will occur. Timing doesn't change, just who we're hearing from on which day. That's the only item.

Professor Cotler.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Chairman, I think a notice of motion was distributed regarding North Korea.

We heard testimony. I think people here are knowledgeable about it. I am bringing it up now because the Council for Human Rights in North Korea is meeting in Toronto tomorrow evening and was very much hoping it would be able to announce that this committee had adopted these motions.

They were previously brought forward by Mr. Hiebert, and then the matter lapsed.

**The Chair:** Perhaps what we'll do is allow these to be distributed. Then we'll see if there is a consensus on their adoption.

We're still in session and now dealing with a different item. May I ask everybody to just take a peek at these?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Colleagues, I'm just distributing a motion on North Korea that Russ had been involved with earlier. I was asked by Kyung Lee from Toronto, because the Council for Human Rights in North Korea is meeting tomorrow evening. They would like to announce that our committee, after we had heard the witness testimony, adopted this motion, which is based on the witness testimony, even based on Mr. Hiebert's work, which lapsed from the last Parliament. So at their request I am basically restating what was done. Their hope is that we could pass it today, so they can announce it at their meeting tomorrow evening.

• (1410)

**The Chair:** We'll just give people a moment to absorb.

While we're doing that, Professor Cotler, was one of these submitted by Mr. Hiebert earlier, or was it just the subject matter of it?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Well, we heard testimony and I think Mr. Hiebert wanted to move the motion, but I don't believe he ever got around to doing it.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** On North Korea, in the previous Parliament. Fair enough. Yes, that's true. I did bring forward a motion to that effect. I don't see a problem with this.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Yes, it's basically the same.

**The Chair:** Let's do this in the proper fashion, then. We'll take one of the motions. This is the one that begins with the statement "Whereas, the Subcommittee has heard graphic and compelling testimony...", etc.

Is there a consensus to adopt that one?

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

**The Chair:** And the other one, is there a consensus to adopt that one?

**Mr. David Sweet:** Mr. Chairman, how long ago was this testimony? Because I apologize, but with so many cases we deal with, I don't recall any of the details from this.

**The Chair:** Professor Cotler.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** It goes back to February of last year, and before that even.

**The Chair:** I do recall this testimony. I can't remember the exact details any more, but I remember the gist of the testimony.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Mr. Chair, I'll never forget the testimony. It was so graphic. This woman was talking about how she saw people murdered in front of her while she was in North Korea. She tried to get to China twice and made it once successfully. People were eating each other. I mean, it was just horrific.

Just for clarification—

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** Mr. Hiebert, you're the inspiration for what is being done here.

I want to credit him with that.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** To clarify, the second motion we're discussing, Ms. Shin Sook-ja and her two daughters, can you remind me who they are, and the context?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** They have been held in North Korea. We don't know if they're still alive. The situation is considered to be one of urgency, to determine if they're alive and their whereabouts and to bring about their release.

Because of this ongoing arbitrary situation they've been in prison in that notorious camp you spoke about, the Kwan-li-so, in North Korea. There is witness testimony to the effect that they have been held there, brutally tortured and imprisoned, and they may not be alive.

It's calling on our government to try to ascertain if they are indeed still alive and to secure their release from that brutal torture and imprisonment.

**Mr. Russ Hiebert:** Are they any relation to the witness we had?

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** I don't know if there's any relation to the witnesses.

It is something that the Council for Human Rights in North Korea, in Toronto, specifically requested. There has been a petition drive, which has been organized globally in South Korea and around the world, with regard to their case and plight.

• (1415)

**The Chair:** I think we've achieved consensus on that one as well.

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

**The Chair:** Both motions are adopted.

With that, we are adjourned.

Sorry, we're not adjourned yet. Mr. Marston has something to say and so does Mr. Cotler.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** I just want to credit Mr. Hiebert. I want it on the record that he brought this to our attention and I want to credit him with that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Marston.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I have a concern. We're coming up to the end of our session. If we want any kind of pronouncement on Camp Ashraf, we're going to have to do it very quickly. It's very compelling stuff, so whatever we can do to facilitate a response to that as quickly as we can.... I presume that means Tuesday.

**The Chair:** What's that?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I presume that would mean Tuesday.

**The Chair:** Tuesday we'll have the witnesses, and whatever else we do at that point is at the committee's direction.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** If we could think in terms prior to Tuesday, what we might want to do, because I think it's important—

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** The Obama meeting is December 15, so we have to act prior to that.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Any chance we have for influence is there.

**The Chair:** Okay, everybody has heard that. It's duly noted.

The meeting is adjourned.

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