

Ashcroft Terror Links Expose 'Patriot Act' Hoax

by Michele Steinberg

Attorney General John Ashcroft was “visibly angered,” reported Reuters on Aug. 21, when a supporter of Democratic Party Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche in Detroit, Michigan exposed Ashcroft’s collusion with Vice President Dick Cheney in orchestrating a “new 9/11” terrorist atrocity to justify ramming through further police state measures known as the the “Patriot II” and “VICTORY” Acts. The *Detroit Free Press* reported that the LaRouche’s associate likened Cheney’s and Ashcroft’s use of terrorism to the way that “Hitler used the fire of the Reichstag—the German Parliament building—to seize power in Germany in the 1930s.”

Outside the Ashcroft meeting in Detroit, a high-spirited LaRouche Youth Movement rally distributed thousands of copies of an Aug. 9 statement by LaRouche called, “When Cheney Spoke of Terrorists, Which Terrorists, Dick?” LaRouche warned, “Cheney has promised an early terrorist attack on the U.S.A., comparable in political effect to that of Sept. 11, 2001. He does so at a time when his own failing political position requires some lucky such event to put him firmly back in the position he had prior to the recent developments in the Iraq war. He claims to be the expert in such matters. Is he bluffing, or do his advisers know something relevant?”

Cheney’s speech promising a new terrorist act in the United States was given on July 24 at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI). It is no accident that on Aug. 19, Ashcroft spoke at the same AEI to launch phase two of Cheney’s terror tour—a 10-day, 20-city Ashcroft road-show promoting new police state laws.

There’s one thing wrong about this picture of the anti-terrorism crusade by John Ashcroft—he is on record as supporting, protecting and promoting one of the largest terrorist groups operating inside the United States—the Mujahideen-Khalq (MEK), also known as the National Council of Resis-

tance in Iran (NCRI) and the National Liberation Army (NLA). Ashcroft’s game of support for the MEK ended abruptly on Aug. 15, when the State Department and Treasury Department closed down the offices of the MEK/NCRI and froze its bank accounts. A State Department release said that the MEK/NCRI “function as part of the MEK and have supported the MEK’s acts of terrorism.”

According to a well-informed Washington source, who spent many years on Capitol Hill, Ashcroft can—and should—be dumped, held accountable for supporting the MEK, a terrorist group that assassinated U.S. military personnel and defense contractors in the early 1970s in Iran; fought for Saddam Hussein against Iran in the Iran-Iraq war; carried out simultaneous bombings of Iranian embassies and offices in 13 cities in 1992; fought against U.S. troops in Iraq during the March 2003 invasion; and whose members and leader, Miryam Rajavi, were arrested in France in June 2003 for plotting terrorist attacks against a series of embassies in Western Europe. More than \$1.3 million was seized in the French raids.

Bush Named MEK in National Emergency

The official record of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies shows that John Ashcroft had no excuse to protect the MEK/NCRI—it was a coverup. And the “Big Lie” spread by the disinformation specialists of the Cheney cabal—that the MEK was only deemed a terrorist organization “in 1997” by the Clinton Administration in order to kiss up to the Iranian leadership—is a hoax! Investigations by *EIR* into official U.S. records show repeated references to the MEK and all its front groups in the State Department’s *Patterns of Global Terrorism* going back to the early 1990s. After the Sept. 11, 2001 irregular warfare attacks, which resulted in the Cheney cabal’s coup d’état over the U.S. government,

the reports about the MEK's terrorism were even more explicit.

On Sept. 23, 2001, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13224, which found a "continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on the United States" and declared "a national emergency to deal with that threat." Hundreds of organizations and individuals were named in an annex to 13224, which called for "Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism." EO 13224's "national emergency" served as the basis for Ashcroft to round up thousands of Arab and Muslim targets in the United States, both citizens and non-citizens, holding many of them incommunicado and without charges. On Oct. 31, 2001, the MEK/NCRI/NLA were added to the list of terrorist groups annexed to EO 13224, along with the other names under which the group operates: the Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization (MKO), and Peoples Mujahideen of Iran (PMOI).

Yet, for the last 21 months, from Oct. 31, 2001 until Aug. 15, 2003, when the State Dept. and Treasury closed down the MEK/NCRI, Ashcroft *did nothing* against the MEK's operations in the United States, despite the fact that the group operated openly in Washington.

Indeed, the special treatment afforded the MEK by Ashcroft, Cheney, and the neo-conservative cabal in the Pentagon around Paul Wolfowitz and Doug Feith, could yet become another scandal of the magnitude of the "yellowcake uranium" hoax.

As the Cheney cabal and Ashcroft often repeat, invading Iraq was necessary to protect Americans from terrorism. In fact, with no "weapons of mass destruction" found in Iraq, the only fall-back the Bush Administration has to defend its illegal and unjust war, is Iraq's links to terrorism. But on Sept. 12, 2002, when the Bush Administration released its "White Paper" on Iraq, to back up Bush's anti-Iraq speech to the UN General Assembly, the *only major* concrete charge about a terrorist organization was against the MEK. The White Paper, called "A Decade of Deception and Defiance," says, "Iraq shelters terrorist groups including the Mujahideen-e-Khalq Organization, which has used terrorist violence against Iran and in the 1970s was responsible for killing several U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilians."

That snippet hardly does justice to the MEK's bloody record. According to the Federation of American Scientists report of Aug. 18, 2003, "During the 1970s, the MEK killed U.S. military personnel and U.S. civilians working on defense projects in Tehran. . . . In 1981, the MEK detonated bombs in the head office of the Islamic Republic Party and the Premier's office . . . killing some 70 high ranking officials. . . . In 1991, it assisted the Government of Iraq in suppressing the Shia and Kurdish uprisings." According to a 1994 State Department report, "In April 1992, the MEK carried out nearly simultaneous attacks on Iranian Embassies in 13 different countries in North America, Europe, and the Pacific Rim."

Not only does the group have a long record of stone-

cold terrorism, but both the *Washington Post* and *Le Figaro* described the MEK—run by Massoud Rajavi, its founder and supreme commander, and his wife Miryam, as a cult. Gruesome evidence of this cult allegation was amply provided in June, when several members of the MEK in Europe set themselves on fire in protest—one of them died—until Miryam Rajavi was freed.

Ashcroft's 'Passionate' Support

With this record, it is incredible but true that in mid-April, the MEK again landed on its feet when its weapons, including artillery and tanks, were returned to its forces in Iraq by the U.S. Occupation authority. The move reportedly came from the Defense Department's neo-conservative cabal—Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Doug Feith—which wanted the MEK to be its "mercenary" team, a secret army organization for war against Iran, without the knowledge of Congress, or perhaps even the President.

This adventure, to allow the MEK to keep its arms, was rapidly ended by Bush's National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. But, Washington-based investigators have told *EIR* that there is much more to the MEK's relationship to the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans.

The Pentagon neo-cons were just continuing Ashcroft's "passionate" support, which, as described by *Slate* magazine, goes back to at least the late 1990's. Ashcroft's activism for the MEK reached new heights in 2000, after MEK leader Mahnaz Samadi was arrested for belonging to a terrorist group, as she tried to enter the United States from Canada in December 1999, during a "high alert" for terrorism around the Y2K New Year's Day. In May and June 2000, Ashcroft and former New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli led the Congressional effort to pressure Janet Reno to release Samadi. Ironically, totalitarian Ashcroft lambasted Reno, according to the *Washington Times*, for detaining Samadi, whom Ashcroft praised as a "human rights" defender. It went further. *Newsweek* reports that in September 2000, Ashcroft sent a "statement of solidarity" that was "read aloud to the cheering crowd" at an MEK/NCRI rally at the UN protesting the visit by Iranian President Khatami. The NCRI's spokesman in Washington, Alireza Jafarzadeh, is quoted by *Newsweek* saying "he had 'several' meetings with Ashcroft aides" about Samadi, and he considers Ashcroft to be "a supporter of his group."

Another major MEK defender is Islam-basher Daniel Pipes, who says the MEK is a valuable ally which stopped its anti-American terrorism "decades ago," and whose "only violent actions have been directed against the Iranian regime" for the last 15 years. As of Aug. 22, reports were that Pipes is to be awarded a "recess appointment" by Bush to the U.S. Institute for Peace, in order to bypass the Senate's blocking his appointment.

Such an appointment would be another danger to the country, given Pipes' support for John Ashcroft's terrorist gang.