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# IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ AND THE CASE OF CAMP LIBERTY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

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## HEARING CONTENTS:

### *MEMBER STATEMENTS:*

**Sen. John McCain (R-AZ)** [\[view pdf\]](#)  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Armed Services

**Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI)** [\[view pdf\]](#)  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Armed Services

### *WITNESSES:*

**General James Jones, USMC (Ret.)** [\[view pdf\]](#)  
Chairman, Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security  
Atlantic Council  
Former National Security Advisor

**Hon. Joseph I. Lieberman** [\[view pdf\]](#)  
Lieberman Chair of Public Policy and Public Service  
Yeshiva University  
Former United States Senator

**Colonel Wesley Martin, USA (Ret.)** [\[view pdf\]](#)  
Board of Advisors  
U.S. Foundation for Liberty  
Former Commander  
Forward Operating Base Ashraf

*AVAILABLE WEBCAST(S)\*:*

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Before the

COMMITTEE ON  
ARMED SERVICES

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON IRANIAN  
INFLUENCE IN IRAQ AND THE CASE OF CAMP  
LIBERTY

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

Washington, D.C.

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HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON  
IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ AND THE CASE OF CAMP LIBERTY

Wednesday, October 7, 2015

U.S. Senate  
Committee on Armed Services  
Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:32 a.m. in Room SH-216, Hart Senate Office Building, Hon. John McCain, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Committee Members Present: Senators McCain [presiding], Sessions, Ayotte, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds, Ernst, Tillis, Reed, Manchin, Shaheen, Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Donnelly, Kaine, and King.

1           OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN McCAIN, U.S. SENATOR  
2 FROM ARIZONA

3           Chairman McCain: Well, good morning. The committee  
4 meets today to consider the issue of Iran's influence in  
5 Iraq and the case of the residents of Camp Liberty.

6           I'm pleased to welcome this distinguished group of  
7 witnesses: Colonel Wes Martin, who retired from the U.S.  
8 Army in 2010 after a military career that concluded years of  
9 service in Iraq, where he was, among other positions, senior  
10 anti-terrorism and force protection officer for coalition  
11 forces and commander of Forward Operating Base Ashraf;  
12 General Jim Jones, who has previously been National Security  
13 Advisor, Special Envoy for Middle East Security, Supreme  
14 Allied Commander, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and, most  
15 importantly, the marine liaison officer as part of a Navy  
16 team led by Captain John McCain.

17           [Laughter.]

18           Chairman McCain: I can't make that up.

19           [Laughter.]

20           Chairman McCain: And finally, it's with profound  
21 regret that I welcome back Senator Joseph Lieberman.

22           [Laughter.]

23           Chairman McCain: Thank you for taking some time away  
24 from your bingo games at the old-folks home to join us  
25 today.

1 [Laughter.]

2 Senator Lieberman: Remember, we have a seat, you know,  
3 anytime you want to stop by. It's a lot of fun there.

4 [Laughter.]

5 Chairman McCain: I like the blackout game.

6 [Laughter.]

7 Chairman McCain: Anyway, I appreciate the chance for a  
8 little levity, because there's none to be found in the  
9 matter before us.

10 As my colleagues know, Camp Liberty is the location in  
11 Iraq where more than 2,000 Iranian refugees currently live  
12 since they were internally relocated from their previous  
13 location at Camp Ashraf. The residents of the camp are  
14 dissidents who have long since opposed the regime in Tehran,  
15 at one time violently so.

16 When U.S. forces entered Iraq in 2003, the residents of  
17 what was then Camp Ashraf renounced violence, gave up their  
18 weapons, and agreed to come under U.S. military protection  
19 as, quote, "protected persons" under Article 4 of the Geneva  
20 Conventions. For several years, the U.S. military provided  
21 security for the camp's residents. This responsibility  
22 ultimately transferred to the Iraqi government, and things  
23 took a turn for the worse, especially in the aftermath of  
24 the full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq in 2011.

25 In recent years, the residents of the camp have been

1 the victims of frequent harassment, the decreased quality of  
2 life, hindered access to food and medicine, and rocket  
3 attacks, and violent raids that have resulted in the deaths  
4 of more 100 men, women, and children. Most of these attacks  
5 are reportedly the work of radical Iraqi military -- militia  
6 groups and agents of the Iranian regime. It's our hope  
7 today that today's hearing can enhance the committee's  
8 understanding of several issues:

9       First is the basic humanitarian element of this story.  
10 Whatever one thinks about the organization to which the  
11 residents of Camp Liberty belong, there is a basic standard  
12 of human dignity that must be upheld. The U.S. Government  
13 and military made a commitment to protect thousands of  
14 people who surrendered their weapons and came under our  
15 protection as a result. Clearly, this commitment has not  
16 been sustained. U.S. policy is now to assist in relocating  
17 the camp's residents to foreign countries, including the  
18 United States, and that goal deserves support. Until then,  
19 with U.S. forces now reengaged in Iraq, I hope our witnesses  
20 could address whether the Department of Defense could play  
21 any role to help improve life and security at Camp Liberty.  
22 This is not just a matter of our ideals, but also our  
23 interests. The group to which the residents of Camp Liberty  
24 belong has provided some very useful intelligence on Iran's  
25 nuclear program, specifically revealing the existence of

1 covert Iranian nuclear activities. At a time when we need  
2 the best information on whether Iran is meeting its  
3 commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action,  
4 the issue we are discussing today must be a consideration.

5 Then there is the issue of U.S. credibility and whether  
6 our friends feel they can trust us. If we make our  
7 commitments, we must follow through. But, in this case, or  
8 in breaking promises made to Ukraine in the Budapest  
9 Memorandum or repeatedly during the ongoing conflict in  
10 Syria or in the concessions that were made to get the  
11 nuclear deal with Iran or other reasoned cases where our own  
12 red lines are crossed, it weakens our country, harms our  
13 friends, and emboldens our enemies.

14 Finally, the case of Camp Liberty is symptomatic of a  
15 larger problem that we face in Iraq, and indeed across the  
16 Middle East. The problem of Iran's malign influence, which  
17 has been growing in recent years, in part due to a lack of  
18 an effective U.S. regional strategy to counter it. In Iraq,  
19 Syria, Lebanon, and Bahrain, Yemen, and elsewhere, the  
20 Iranian regime is arming, training, and, in some cases,  
21 fighting alongside militant groups that are destabilizing  
22 U.S. partners, threatening Israel, and seeking to establish  
23 forward outposts across the Arab world. Indeed, recent  
24 reports suggest that thousands of additional Iranian ground  
25 forces are moving into Syria to shore up the Assad regime as

1 part of an anti-American coalition of Syrian, Hezbollah, and  
2 Russian forces. Despite crushing international sanctions,  
3 the Iranian regime has been able to expand its influence in  
4 Arab capitals across the region, most of all Baghdad.  
5 Thousands of radical militia fighters, backed and mostly  
6 controlled by Iran's Revolutionary Guard, are expanding  
7 Iranian influence in Iraq, often in the form of human rights  
8 violations and reprisal killings. We should fully expect  
9 the sanctions relief that Iran's rulers receive under the  
10 nuclear agreement to empower them to meddle further  
11 throughout the Middle East in ways that harm our national  
12 interests.

13 It's more important than ever for the administration to  
14 work with Congress to develop a strategy that can weaken  
15 Iran's efforts to destabilize the Middle East and threaten  
16 our partners. I hope our witnesses today can offer some  
17 concrete ideas to assist the committee in that final --  
18 vital work.

19 Senator Reed.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM RHODE  
2 ISLAND

3           Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.  
4 I want to welcome back the witnesses.

5           It's great to see Senator Lieberman again, and thank  
6 him for his collegiality and kindness and friendship. Thank  
7 you very much. We are having a bit of back-and-forth  
8 recalling the many interesting circumstances and  
9 personalities that we miss. It's always good to see you,  
10 Senator.

11           And thank you, General Jones, for your extraordinary  
12 service to the Nation as a marine, as the Supreme Allied  
13 Commander in Europe, and as someone that we all admire and  
14 respect immensely.

15           And, Colonel Martin, thank you for your service, too,  
16 sir.

17           So, thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony today.

18           This morning, our hearing focuses on Iranian influence  
19 in Iraq and the plight of the nearly 2,400 residents at Camp  
20 Liberty, Iraq, members of the Iranian dissident group, the  
21 Mujahedin-e-Khalq, or MEK. The Iranians dissidents at Camp  
22 Liberty are in an increasingly perilous situation, having  
23 repeatedly come under attack. And these attacks, which have  
24 killed more than 100 MEK members since 2009, clearly  
25 indicate the threat to this group from Iran and Iranian-

1 backed militias seeking to eliminate and silence these  
2 dissidents.

3       The deteriorating security situation of Iraq only  
4 highlights the urgent need to find safe refuge for these  
5 individuals outside the country. The United States has had  
6 a special relationship with the MEK, dating back to the  
7 height of the Iraq war in the mid-2000s. This stems, in  
8 part, from the MEK's agreement, at the U.S. military's  
9 request, to disarm and move into Camp Ashraf in northeastern  
10 Iraq. The U.S. military extended protections under the  
11 Geneva Conventions for Camp Ashraf residents. However, as  
12 the United States drew down its forces, consistent with its  
13 obligations under the 2008 security agreement signed by  
14 President Bush and Prime Minister Maliki, U.S. forces were  
15 no longer well positioned to provide for the safety and  
16 security of the Camp Ashraf residents.

17       In December 2011, the Government of Iraq signed a  
18 memorandum with the United Nations in which the Iraq  
19 Government committed to ensure the safety and security of  
20 these residents as part of the process of relocating them to  
21 Camp Liberty outside Baghdad to facilitate the resettlement  
22 process. However, the United States, through the State  
23 Department, has had to repeatedly press the Government of  
24 Iraq to live up to its obligation to provide for the safety  
25 and well-being of the Camp Liberty residents. And camp

1 residents remain in fear that the Government of Iraq will  
2 extradite them to Iran, at Tehran's request.

3 The State Department now is the lead U.S. Government  
4 agency advocating on behalf of the Camp Liberty residents.  
5 The State Department is working with the United Nations  
6 assistance mission in Iraq and the United Nations High  
7 Commission for Refugees to find resettlement options for  
8 these residents outside of Iraq.

9 It is my understanding that, as of the beginning of  
10 this month, nearly 800 Camp Liberty residents have been  
11 processed by the UNHCR and resettled outside of Iraq.  
12 Unfortunately, this resettlement process has dragged on for  
13 years and much more still needs to be done to find homes  
14 abroad for the remaining Camp Liberty residents. I would  
15 urge all participants in the resettlement process to  
16 cooperate fully to advance the relocation of these very  
17 vulnerable individuals.

18 One issue that I expect will arise this morning is  
19 whether the United States should accept more Camp Liberty  
20 residents for resettlement. While the MEK was removed from  
21 the U.S. list of foreign terrorist organizations in 2012,  
22 group members continue to be barred from admission to the  
23 United States because of their Tier 3 status under U.S.  
24 antiterrorism laws. Nonetheless, I understand that the  
25 administration has adopted a policy that would allow Camp

1 Liberty residents to be paroled into the United States if  
2 they renounce their affiliation with the MEK. Under this  
3 policy, some 29 Camp Liberty residents have ultimately  
4 resettled in the United States, making the United States one  
5 of the larger recipient countries for these refugees.

6 I hope the testimony of our witnesses this morning will  
7 help shine a light on what more can be done to accelerate  
8 the resettlement process so that the residents of Camp  
9 Liberty can be brought to safety outside of Iraq once and  
10 for all.

11 Again, thank you, and welcome.

12 Chairman McCain: I welcome the witnesses. And maybe  
13 we could begin with you, Senator Lieberman.

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1           STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, LIEBERMAN CHAIR  
2           OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC SERVICE, YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, AND  
3           FORMER UNITED STATES SENATOR

4           Senator Lieberman: Thanks, Mr. Chairman, Senator Reed.  
5           Thanks very much for convening this hearing and for your  
6           opening statements.

7           It would be easy to ignore the condition and plight of  
8           2400 Iranians who are at Camp Liberty in Iraq. There's so  
9           much before this committee, there's so much disorder in the  
10          world. But, the plight of these 2400 really involves some  
11          important considerations for our country.

12          The first is, as you've said, What does a promise from  
13          the United States of America mean, particularly if it comes  
14          under local -- that is, in Iraq -- political pressure and  
15          the promise is reneged?

16          And the second is, What does the plight of these 2400  
17          Iranian dissidents, who are opponents of the dictatorial  
18          regime in Tehran == what does it say to us about larger  
19          policy questions for the United States in the region?

20          So, I thank you, first, for holding the hearing. As I  
21          say, it would be easy to ignore, but it would be wrong to  
22          ignore. And, secondly, thanks for your opening statements,  
23          both of which show a real understanding of what's happening  
24          at Camp Liberty and why it matters.

25          Secondly, I'm honored to be here with General Jim Jones

1 and Colonel Wes Martin. Both have served our country with  
2 great honor and courage and distinction. I'm also grateful  
3 to be with them because they are really experts at the  
4 history, here. And, to some extent, it allows me to speak  
5 more broadly about what I think the policy implications are  
6 of what's happening there.

7 I thought, in the interest of time, it might be most  
8 helpful if I began, in terms of the background here, by  
9 quoting a statement from former attorney general and Federal  
10 judge, Michael Mukasey, at a public briefing on Camp Liberty  
11 on October 9th of 2013. It's quite direct and personal. He  
12 says, "The United States Government asked the MEK to move  
13 from Ashraf to Liberty, asked 3,000 people to move, and left  
14 100 behind, by agreement, to watch over the property that  
15 belonged to the people of Ashraf and the valuable  
16 installation there. The U.S. Government hinted that this  
17 was the price for removing the organization from the list of  
18 foreign terrorist organizations" -- again, I'm quoting from  
19 Judge Mukasey -- "a list on which it should never have been  
20 and was put on only because of an ill-conceived SOP to the  
21 Iranian government that didn't work."

22 And then Judge Mukasey tells a personal story. He  
23 says, "I went along with Rudy Giuliani to Paris and met with  
24 Mrs. Maryam Rajavi," who's the head of the National Council  
25 of Resistance of Iran, also known as the MEK. "We looked

1 Mrs. Radjavi in the eye and asked her to cooperate in that  
2 move, and told her that she could trust the assurances of  
3 the United States Government. And she agreed. It's hard  
4 for me to say that," Mukasey says, "without my voice  
5 breaking or without my conscience breaking. Those  
6 guarantees have not been fulfilled." As the U.S. Government  
7 withdrew, the Iraqis refused repeatedly to protect the  
8 residents, and repeatedly launched attacks. There were  
9 rocket attacks on Camp Liberty, and he goes on to talk about  
10 that, and then the attacks on Ashraf, which killed 52 of the  
11 hundred people who were remaining there.

12 If you look at the history of these Iranian dissidents  
13 -- you could call them "freedom fighters" -- in Iraq, you  
14 see that their status rises and falls, is secure and then is  
15 jeopardized based on the extent of influence that the  
16 Iranian government has in Iraq. And that's why they've been  
17 treated like pawns in a much larger battle -- struggle that  
18 now requires us again, through the State Department, as  
19 Senator Reed has said, to make it clear to the Government of  
20 Iraq, Prime Minister al-Abadi, that the status of the people  
21 in Iraq -- in Camp Liberty really does matter to us, that  
22 they have to be protected, they have to be allowed to leave  
23 the country. If the Iraqi government can't do it, the  
24 United States Government should offer to do it until they  
25 can be taken safely out of the country.

1           If you look at this story, you see a lot that may be  
2   obvious, but I just want to say it quickly, that  
3   distinguishes the current government of the Islamic Republic  
4   of Iran from a democratic government like our own. We've  
5   all got political opposition, we enter into campaigns, we  
6   battle back and forth, et cetera, et cetera. In the Islamic  
7   Republic of Iran, if you're the political opposition, the  
8   government is likely to try to put you in jail or, worse, to  
9   kill you. And that's happened inside the country, as the  
10  human rights violations continue, but it's also happened  
11  with this particular group outside.

12           There's a history here. I'm going to state it very  
13  summarily. This -- the antecedent to this group,  
14  interestingly, began as a matter of principle in opposition  
15  to the Shah. They were fighting for more freedom from the  
16  Shah. They then actually joined -- and again, I'm making a  
17  complicated story simple -- with the revolution in the late  
18  '70s. Not so long after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power,  
19  they decided that the Shah had been replaced by a different  
20  form of dictatorship, of a religious dictatorship, and they  
21  went into opposition, and the government, ever since, has  
22  targeted them.

23           I've come to know them very well. And it seems to me  
24  that we ought to not only -- it was right and just that we  
25  took them off the foreign terrorist organization list, but

1 the truth is, now, that we ought to be supportive of them  
2 and others in opposition to the government in Iran more than  
3 we have been, because this group is not -- not just because  
4 they're the enemy of our enemies in Tehran; these people are  
5 our friends. They have quite literally, as many of you know  
6 provided extraordinarily important intelligence to American  
7 forces in Iraq during the period after the overthrow of  
8 Saddam, they have been the source of some of the most  
9 credible information that we did not have from our own  
10 intelligence about the Iranian nuclear program, and they're  
11 -- they believe in freedom. I mean, their leader -- it's  
12 quite remarkable, they're a moderate Muslim group, they're  
13 against the extremism of the current regime. They are quite  
14 refreshingly led by a woman who has put out a 10-point plan  
15 that embraces freedom of speech, separation of church and  
16 state, free elections, and a non-nuclear Iran.

17 So, let me wind up with this -- or conclude with this  
18 observation and, hopefully, suggestion. The Iranian nuclear  
19 agreement with Iran has been -- is about to be executed.  
20 It's going to go into effect. What has struck me with a  
21 clarity is that the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Government  
22 of Iran, has compartmentalized this agreement. I think it's  
23 a bad agreement, but -- and we'll see whether it actually is  
24 adhered to -- but, whatever one things of the agreement, the  
25 Islamic Republic of Iran has sort of put it in a box, and

1 they haven't changed anything else about their program. And  
2 they've been very explicit about it. They're continuing to  
3 support terrorist groups throughout the region. Even before  
4 the nuclear agreement goes into effect, as Chairman McCain  
5 said, there -- they made a deal with the Russians to move  
6 more aggressively into Syria to back Assad, who we have said  
7 we feel definitely has to go. They continue to say, "Death  
8 to America." And it's not just a chant. If you listen to  
9 the Ayatollah or others there, they're quite clear that they  
10 consider us to be their ideological, civilizational enemies.

11 And here's my point, Mr. Chairman. We ought to  
12 compartmentalize that agreement also -- that nuclear  
13 agreement. We ought to put it over there and not let it  
14 stop us from confronting what they're doing in Syria,  
15 continuing the sanctions for human rights violations in Iran  
16 and support of terrorism. And here's the point I want to  
17 make about the National Council of Resistance of Iran and  
18 other democratic opposition groups that are Iranian. We  
19 ought to be supporting them. This regime in Tehran is  
20 hopeless. It's not going to change. There's no evidence  
21 it's going to -- every piece of evidence is the contrary.

22 So, I hope we can find a way -- we used to do this, not  
23 so long ago, supporting opposition groups in Iran. They  
24 deserve our support, and actually they're a -- they would  
25 constitute a form of pressure on the government in Tehran

1 that would unsettle them as much as anything else we could  
2 do, because it would threaten the survival of the regime,  
3 which, from every objective indicator I can see, is a very  
4 unpopular regime in Iran.

5 President Reagan provides an example, here. He was  
6 negotiating -- his administration was negotiating nuclear  
7 arms agreements with the former Soviet Union, but that did  
8 not stop us during that period of time from supporting the  
9 Refuseniks in Russia, the Solidarity Freedom Movement in  
10 Poland, and on and on. And I think it's time for us to do  
11 that in Iran. And there's no better place to begin than by  
12 securing the residents of Camp Liberty and assuring their  
13 safe passage away from the Iranian thugs.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 [The prepared statement of Senator Lieberman follows:]

16 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you.  
2 General Jones.  
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1           STATEMENT OF GENERAL JAMES JONES, USMC (RET.),  
2 CHAIRMAN, BRENT SCOWCROFT CENTER ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY,  
3 AND FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

4           General Jones: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for  
5 recalling our days together in the Senate Liaison Office in  
6 1979 and -- it was a -- beginning of a 5-year period for a  
7 young major of the Marines who was lost in the Senate of the  
8 United States. I had no idea why I was assigned over here.  
9 I had no idea what I was supposed to do. Captain McCain  
10 helped me a great deal, and the Senate staff, who became  
11 friends over my 5-year tour here. I actually went over to  
12 the Marine Corps Headquarters, reminded them that I was  
13 still over here, because I thought they had lost my file and  
14 --

15           But -- and then the privilege of coming back as  
16 Commandant of the Marine Corps and Commander of NATO,  
17 working with the committee and the staff, was certainly a  
18 highlight of my life. And, although I have nothing but fond  
19 recollections of it, I'm very sorry that we're here today  
20 talking about something that I think should have been taken  
21 care of a long time ago.

22           So, I'm honored to be with Senator Lieberman and  
23 Colonel Wes Martin --

24           Chairman McCain: May I also say that you served  
25 distinction -- with distinction as the President's National

1 Security Advisor, as well, General.

2 General Jones: Thank you. I haven't forgotten that.

3 [Laughter.]

4 General Jones: With Ambassador Linc Bloomfield, also,  
5 whose work has -- I would recommend for anyone who wants to  
6 understand the full history of the MEK and the Iran/Iran  
7 relationship. It's -- it should be required reading. It's  
8 -- it -- I have copies of it here. And Linc has done a  
9 wonderful job.

10 I'm -- I want to thank you for holding this important  
11 hearing; in particular, thank you for focusing a long-  
12 overdue focus on the plight of approximately 2500 refugees  
13 who still languish at Camp Liberty in Iraq. They -- and  
14 this is a group, as Senator Lieberman pointed out, to whom  
15 our country made a solemn and, I'm sorry to say, still  
16 unkept promise years ago.

17 The committee has my statement on the topic of the  
18 Iranian refugees in Iraq, detailing the outrageous campaign  
19 of harassment, intimidation, and murder visited upon them at  
20 the behest of the Iranian regime and with the complicity of  
21 the Iraqi government. So, I'd like to just briefly  
22 highlight several key points, first on the larger topic of  
23 Iran's influence and objectives in Iraq, and then address  
24 the related matter of the refugees' ongoing tragic  
25 situation.

1           It will surprise no one when I say that the Iranian  
2 regime remains among the world's most consistent threats to  
3 global peace and stability, as Senator Lieberman just  
4 eloquently pointed out. It's a regime that artfully dodges  
5 its commitments, generates international friction to exert  
6 greater domestic control on its citizens, and constantly  
7 hardens its grip on its country. The Tehran government  
8 seriously violates human rights, U.N. Security Council  
9 resolutions, and international law. It rejects the right of  
10 Israel to exist by both opposing and actively undermining  
11 any and all Middle East peace processes. The mullahs remain  
12 the chief antagonists of democracy and liberalization across  
13 the Middle East, where a better future for millions of  
14 people struggle to emerge. To them, human rights, the rule  
15 of law, international norms of responsibility and modernity  
16 are threats to be snuffed out rather than virtues to be  
17 embraced. Its retrograde doctrine is one of power,  
18 dictatorship, and domination over its people in the region,  
19 no matter the human cost.

20           The Iranian regime knows that the fall of Assad and the  
21 loss of Syria as a client state would be an enormous  
22 strategic loss. It continues to do everything within its  
23 power to avert that end and to pursue its hegemonic  
24 ambitions, in part by supporting international terrorist  
25 organizations and -- that pose clear and direct threat to

1 the United States and our friends and allies.  
2 Unquestionably, Iran's grand strategy, one that  
3 constitutionally compels it to export its brand of Islamic  
4 revolution, entails consolidating the hold it has gained in  
5 Iraq, a grip it seeks to tighten, both directly and through  
6 proxies, by widening the sectarian divide that has been such  
7 a gross impediment to the brighter future for which the  
8 Iraqi people, the United States, and our allies have  
9 sacrificed so much.

10 I recall, early in this administration, King Abdullah  
11 of Saudi Arabia and his warning to our Government that then-  
12 Prime Minister Maliki was, quote, "not our friend," but,  
13 rather, an Iranian sympathizer under Tehran's influence. He  
14 has been proven right, unfortunately for us and for the  
15 entire region.

16 What might not be as well known is that part and parcel  
17 of Iran's subversive program in Iraq has been the  
18 persecution of nearly 3,500 Iranian objectors to the region  
19 housed first at Camp Ashraf and now at Camp Liberty. The  
20 timeline provided to the committee tells a grim story.  
21 Colonel Martin, testifying here today, commanded the unit in  
22 charge of protecting the refugees at Camp Ashraf as part of  
23 Operation Iraqi Freedom. No one knows more about the  
24 antecedents and the course of this tragic situation than he  
25 and Ambassador Linc Bloomfield, who is also here today and

1 who I mentioned just a few minutes ago.

2 Ambassador Bloomfield has a statement on the MEK that I  
3 respectfully request be made part of the record.

4 Chairman McCain: Without objection.

5 General Jones: All me to briefly hit some strategic  
6 highlights about this tragic matter.

7 The MEK is a group that has consistently opposed the  
8 Iranian regime and resided at Camp Ashraf since 1986.  
9 During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the group welcomed American  
10 troops, voluntarily disarmed themselves, cooperated with the  
11 coalition willingly and fully, and aided us by providing  
12 highly significant intelligence, and, as Colonel Martin will  
13 point out, by helping to protect U.S. servicemembers. In  
14 exchange, the United States promised to ensure the refugees'  
15 safety and protection. This solemn obligation transferred  
16 to the Iraqi government as part of its sovereign commitments  
17 in the terms of the 2009 U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces  
18 Agreement.

19 As you will see from the timeline, what followed these  
20 commitments has been a litany of bloodshed and mistreatment  
21 at the bidding of the Iranian regime, with the complicity  
22 and elements of the Iraqi government all too eager to  
23 accommodate Iranian wishes.

24 I would note for the committee the three most lethal  
25 events: the ground assault on Camp Ashraf that took place

1 in July 2009 in which 12 unarmed residents were killed,  
2 another attack in April 2011 in which 36 unarmed residents  
3 were killed, and a third attack in September 2013 in which  
4 52 unarmed residents were killed. And many of these were  
5 captured on video, which can be provided to the committee if  
6 you so desire to see them. Again, Mr. Chairman and members  
7 of the committee, the victims were unarmed men, women, and  
8 children who we promised to protect, a duty vested in the  
9 Government of Iraq upon our departure.

10 Despite these atrocities, we have remained slow,  
11 ineffective, and sometimes even reluctant in responding to  
12 our humanitarian obligation to facilitate the swift  
13 relocation of refugees out of harm's way. Unfortunately,  
14 this is exactly where the vast majority of refugees remain,  
15 at Camp Liberty and in harm's way. We can get into all the  
16 factors that have been held up -- that have held up  
17 humanitarian relocation. In part, it's been complicated by  
18 the hesitancy of some refugees to leave brethren behind at  
19 risk or to renounce their association with a group which was  
20 removed from the U.S. and European terrorist list over the  
21 course of time.

22 Primary problem, however, has been our slow and  
23 seemingly indifferent response to our commitments and to the  
24 refugees' perilous situation. Legal impediments have been  
25 erected and allowed to let stand. Some may wish to debate

1    them or the group's history and structure. We can certainly  
2    have these discussions. But, Mr. Chairman and members of  
3    the committee, none of it will distract from what remains  
4    the primary fact and our chief duty, to find the legal means  
5    and the moral courage to fully aid a group of people who  
6    have cooperated with us, who have helped us and protected  
7    us, and who promised to protect -- and who we promised to  
8    protect, and who remain in mortal danger in spite of such a  
9    large and growing bipartisan chorus in our country calling  
10   for action.

11         Before further tragedy ensues, we can and we must meet  
12   our duty by expeditiously accepting an appropriate number of  
13   the remaining refugees here under fair and responsible  
14   terms, by exercising our leadership to get allies to do the  
15   same, and, above all, by keeping a solemn promise we made to  
16   our friends of the United States. That is what a good and  
17   great country does.

18         Congressman -- former Congressman Lee Hamilton made a  
19   stirring speech, about 2 years ago, in which he recited Mrs.  
20   Radjavi's 10-point plan for the future of Iran. I won't  
21   read the -- read it, but let me just give you the highlights  
22   of the 10 points. First is democracy, pluralism,  
23   abolishment of the death penalty, separation of church and  
24   state, gender equality, rule of law, human rights, respect  
25   for private property, peaceful coexistence, and a nuclear-

1 free state. Congressman Hamilton looked up at the audience  
2 and said, "What's wrong with that?"

3 Thank you, sir.

4 [The prepared statement of General Jones follows:]

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1 Chairman McCain: Colonel Martin.  
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1           STATEMENT OF COLONEL WESLEY MARTIN, USA (RET.), BOARD  
2 OF ADVISORS, U.S. FOUNDATION FOR LIBERTY, AND FORMER  
3 COMMANDER, FORWARD OPERATING BASE ASHRAF

4           Colonel Martin: Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed,  
5 and members of the committee, I thank you for this  
6 opportunity to address the situation endured by the  
7 residents of Camp Liberty, Iraq.

8           Having served as the senior antiterrorism officer for  
9 all coalition forces Iraq and as the base commander of Camp  
10 Ashraf, where the residents were located before resettlement  
11 to Camp Liberty, I came to know and understand them very  
12 well. When I was outside the perimeter in missions with the  
13 residents, I found them to be a solid ally. Inside the  
14 perimeter, I found them to be a major learning opportunity.

15           While serving as the Ashraf base commander, I  
16 personally witnessed the residents doing everything possible  
17 to protect and support the soldiers and the marines assigned  
18 to my base. They provided critical intelligence that helped  
19 reduce danger to American service members. Without their  
20 help, I have no doubt that many Americans would not have  
21 survived their tour of duty. That is a debt that we can  
22 never repay to these fine people.

23           Even concerning logistics, when we were running short  
24 of water, the residents pumped 50,000 gallons of water to us  
25 every day. There was never-ending cooperation between the

1 residents and the Americans. With pride, every resident  
2 carried a Protected Person identification card issued to  
3 them in 2004 by the United States Government.

4 The MEK was an intelligence source that we didn't learn  
5 fully how to use for a long time, even though they were  
6 willing to share the information. Their relationships in  
7 the local area were bringing in continual reports of al-  
8 Qaeda, Badr Corps, and Mahdi army activities throughout the  
9 region. Not until the arrival of the Marine Corps Human  
10 Exploitation Team were we able to get the information  
11 properly into the intelligence network.

12 In 2009, the Protected Person Status was revoked  
13 without warning, and security of the residents was turned  
14 over to the Government of Iraq. The U.S. and the Iraqi  
15 governments provided written assurances that the residents  
16 would be treated with full security and full humanity. As  
17 you are aware, that has not been the case. Three ground  
18 attacks at Ashraf and three rocket attacks at Camp Liberty  
19 have resulted in 117 residents killed, every one of them a  
20 holder of those Protected Person Status cards.

21 Per agreement worked out with the Government of Iraq,  
22 100 residents were approved to remain at Ashraf to serve as  
23 property custodians when the rest of the residents moved to  
24 Camp Liberty. The 2013 ground assault resulted in the  
25 murder of 52 property custodians and the kidnapping of 7

1 others. At this point, let me leave no doubt, per my  
2 investigation, there is -- the Iraqi government was fully  
3 involved, and the Iraqi government conducted those murderous  
4 assaults, to include the 2013 massacre.

5 Senator McCain, it's my understanding Governor Tom  
6 Ridge has provided you a copy of this document.

7 Chairman McCain: He had.

8 Colonel Martin: Since the residents relocated to Camp  
9 Liberty psy-op initiatives by the Iraqi government and the  
10 Iranian governments have reoccurred. Most recent took place  
11 within the past month, causing the residents scheduled for  
12 relocation to Albania to decline safe passage in the face of  
13 clear danger to their fellow residents remaining in harm's  
14 way. Although it is possible to criticize the residents'  
15 actions after much effort to arrange their safe exit from  
16 Iraq, it is understandable that those bearing tickets to  
17 safety would feel guilty about abandoning their fellow  
18 exiles to a fate suggested by the same menacing harassment  
19 that preceded previous slaughters.

20 On a daily basis, Liberty residents endure numerous  
21 forms of harassment. Camp Liberty was never intended to  
22 house people 24 hours a day. It was an area for American  
23 soldiers to rest when off duty. The infrastructure was  
24 never intended to last long and support so many people  
25 consolidated into such a closed area. The T walls that

1 provided shelter from rocket attacks were removed after the  
2 residents arrived at the camp. Despite what is claimed, the  
3 residents never wanted those walls removed. The sewage  
4 tanks are rupturing. Preapproved logistical support items  
5 purchased at very inflated prices are being denied entry  
6 into the camp. Artificial delays in being escorted to local  
7 hospitals result in missed appointments. Several deaths  
8 have occurred due to denial of access to medical service.  
9 There have been at least two food blockades. Their vehicles  
10 are breaking down, and replacement parts are forbidden  
11 entry. Freon and parts for refrigeration are not being  
12 allowed into the camp. The harassments continue. They're  
13 not being allowed to sell their Ashraf property, as was  
14 agreed by the U.N., the United States, and the Iraqi  
15 government.

16 Senator, the residents of Camp Liberty have asked me to  
17 provide this book to be included in the record of the  
18 hearing. It's titled "Property in Ashraf."

19 Chairman McCain: Without objection.

20 [The information referred to follows:]

21 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1 Colonel Martin: Thank you, sir.

2 As Iraq and the surrounding region face deeper crisis,  
3 there remains the possibility that Camp Ashraf residents can  
4 avoid becoming further casualties in the Iranian-directed  
5 aggression, but time is surely not on their side. Secretary  
6 Kerry has the authority to accept the residents into the  
7 United States without them having to renounce the MEK. The  
8 claim that they were once members of a terrorist  
9 organization is now widely understood and documented to have  
10 been the result of diplomatically inspired designations in  
11 the United States and allied countries, all of which have  
12 been fully investigated and undone by judicial and scholarly  
13 review.

14 As I close, concerning the future of the residents,  
15 former Special Representative for the United Nations,  
16 Secretary General for Iraq Ad Melkert, stated it best,  
17 "Hardly has a humanitarian issue been politicized as much as  
18 this one, yet already for many years the victims are not the  
19 players. It is essential for the international community to  
20 understand this and, thus, consider it a duty to intervene  
21 in defense of international law and human rights, regardless  
22 of political interest or bias. This, therefore, should be  
23 the moment for government and lawmakers to step up and let  
24 reason and compassion prevail."

25 Senator, thank you.

1 [The prepared statement of Colonel Martin follows:]  
2 [COMMITTEE INSERT]  
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1 Chairman McCain: Thank you.

2 And I thank the witnesses.

3 There is language in the defense authorization bill,  
4 which we'll be voting on this afternoon, that calls for the  
5 kind of actions that the witnesses have today.

6 Colonel Martin, did you personally provide this card to  
7 the residents at the camp?

8 Colonel Martin: Sir, that was provided by General Dave  
9 Phillips in 2004. I had finished up my tour of duty --

10 Chairman McCain: And did that --

11 Colonel Martin: -- as the Antiterrorism --

12 Chairman McCain: Did that card specifically guarantee  
13 those individuals safety?

14 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

15 Chairman McCain: In other words, the word of the  
16 United States of America that they would be protected.

17 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

18 Chairman McCain: General Jones, in the last few days,  
19 we have seen -- actually, a couple of weeks -- a  
20 announcement by the Iraqi government that they will be  
21 having an intel-sharing arrangement with Russia, Syria,  
22 Iraq, and Iran. Then we hear, just today or yesterday, that  
23 Prime Minister Abadi is saying he would welcome Russian air  
24 strikes into Iraq against ISIS. Does this indicate to you  
25 the increasing influence of Iran in the affairs of Iraq?

1 And where does it leave -- oh, and -- a Shi'ite leader  
2 yesterday was quoted as saying that the United States  
3 airstrikes were ineffective, so, therefore, they needed the  
4 Iranian assistance and the Russian assistance. What is your  
5 assessment of the Iranian influence now in Iraq and how it  
6 may more endanger the lives and welfare of the residents of  
7 the camp?

8 General Jones: Sir, I -- as I mentioned in my prepared  
9 remarks, I was present when the former King of Saudi Arabia  
10 issued his warning about then-Prime Minister Maliki, which  
11 was proven to be correct. It was my hope that the new Prime  
12 Minister and the leader of Iraq would have shown more  
13 appreciation for the sacrifice that was made on behalf of  
14 his country by the United States. I think that such  
15 statements are not only insulting to our commitment, but  
16 also just show -- show just how deeply the Iranian influence  
17 has permeated the -- Baghdad -- the capital of Iraq and its  
18 leadership, unfortunately.

19 Chairman McCain: Would -- suppose that the Russians  
20 begin air attacks in Iraq. What -- one, what does that  
21 mean? And, two, what should the United States reaction be?

22 General Jones: Well, the United -- in my view, it  
23 means, unless the Russians agree to join the international  
24 coalition and cooperate under the Air Tasking Orders and  
25 bring a certain military competence and coordination to the

1 fore, you run the risk of having chaos in the skies. The  
2 United States -- with all due respect, the United States  
3 should do everything in its power, I think, to avert that  
4 situation and make sure that what's happening in Syria does  
5 not happen in the skies of -- over Iraq, regardless of  
6 whether the Prime Minister welcomes the addition of the  
7 Russians.

8 Chairman McCain: But, he does have a point about the  
9 effectiveness of the air campaign against ISIS.

10 General Jones: Yes. It does, in the sense that the  
11 United States has made its decision as to what it's going to  
12 do. My understanding is that we are relooking at our  
13 commitment, and we'll hopefully ramp it up a little bit  
14 more. As you know, my personal belief is that the longest  
15 road to victory here is purely an air campaign. But, if  
16 that's all we have, then we ought to make it a massive air  
17 campaign.

18 Chairman McCain: And didn't we learn in a camp -- in a  
19 conflict that you and I were long ago engaged, that  
20 incrementalism doesn't work and air campaigns alone don't  
21 work?

22 General Jones: That's correct.

23 Chairman McCain: Senator Reed.

24 Senator Reed: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

25 And thank you, gentlemen, for your testimony.

1           Senator Lieberman or General Jones or Colonel Martin,  
2 is there a plan existent today to transfer these individuals  
3 from Camp Liberty to safe havens around the globe? Is there  
4 no plan?

5           Senator Lieberman: Yeah. So, I'll start and then  
6 yield to my colleagues.

7           My impression is that there's not really a plan. It's  
8 had a stop-and-start quality to it, depending on a lot else  
9 going on. Also, my understanding is -- and Colonel Martin  
10 and maybe General Jones can speak to this -- that the MEK  
11 has actually been financing the resettlement of people from  
12 Camp Liberty, and they've reached the limit of what they can  
13 do. And that's why one of the requests now is that we use  
14 our influence on the Iraqi government to allow the people in  
15 Liberty who have title to property in Ashraf to sell it.  
16 And they lived in a beautiful town in Diyala Province when  
17 they got -- as part of this deal we talked about, got moved  
18 out. So, no, I don't see a real plan, and certainly not one  
19 that's financed.

20           The other thing that Colonel Martin, I believe,  
21 testified to, there's a lot of loyalty to one another at  
22 Camp Liberty, and there's a fear of some of the people  
23 leaving, and leaving a lot of others behind and, they think,  
24 making them more vulnerable. So, the ideal would be a mass  
25 departure from the camp.

1 Colonel Martin, do you want to add to that?

2 Senator Reed: Can I just interject one point --

3 Senator Lieberman: Yeah, I'm sorry.

4 Senator Reed: -- so that both you and Colonel Martin  
5 and the General can comment, is that -- and again, this  
6 might -- my understanding -- correct it if it's inaccurate  
7 -- is that there was a significant movement of members of  
8 the MEK to Albania --

9 Senator Lieberman: Right.

10 Senator Reed: -- initially.

11 Senator Lieberman: The largest group.

12 Senator Reed: Largest group. And then, from there,  
13 there was a -- they moved to other places that were  
14 accommodating. Does it make sense to -- if we're eventually  
15 getting down, I hope, to the stage of planning to focus not  
16 only an ultimate destination, but a place where a large  
17 number could leave, so, therefore, they wouldn't have to  
18 leave behind friends and family, et cetera, and then from  
19 there begin to share the disposition of the personnel?

20 But, with that interjection, Colonel Martin.

21 Colonel Martin: Sir, thank you.

22 As of right now, 800 residents have been resettled out  
23 of the camp. Considering it's taken 3 years and we were  
24 assured by Ambassador -- U.N. Ambassador Martin Kobler and  
25 U.S. Ambassador Dan Fried that it would be a temporary

1 transit location, and they would quickly be expedited.  
2 General Jones and I were on the telephone calls with Dan  
3 Fried when he said, "As fast as the residents come in, it'll  
4 be like a conveyor belt, they'll be going out." That didn't  
5 happen, sir.

6 To answer the question, right now, in addition to the  
7 800 resettled, 480 more are scheduled to go ahead and depart  
8 Camp Liberty and go to Albania. Asking them to renounce  
9 their conscience and -- Senator McCain, you know better than  
10 anybody else in this room what it's like to be in a military  
11 prison and you're bonded to the people beside you. And to  
12 tell them, "Well, you have to leave. You don't know what's  
13 going to happen to the other people," that caused them a  
14 pause. And, fortunately, working with Jonathan Winer at the  
15 State Department, Maryam Radjavi, Senator Torricelli, and  
16 others, we were able to get past that, and the resettlement  
17 process has begun again. But, they have been resettling in  
18 small amounts.

19 The United States -- my position is, and I've polled --  
20 and behind me are a bunch of people that would accept two or  
21 three residents all across the United States. We could take  
22 all 2400 residents left right now, and bring them to safe  
23 haven. It can be done, sir.

24 Senator Reed: But, it requires, one, a plan, and, two,  
25 some resources to get that plan going. And I think, again,

1 just from my perspective, the -- if there was a transition  
2 point -- not an end point, but a transition point -- that  
3 might be helpful to all concerned, because it'll allow a lot  
4 of security checks as well as immediately moving people out  
5 in a much safer environment so that they could be placed.

6 Colonel Martin: Sir, the security checks have already  
7 been done by the FBI, twice. The FBI came in, in 2004, and  
8 did a thorough investigation, convinced they were going to  
9 find residents at that camp involved in terrorism. The FBI  
10 cleared all of them and said, "No, they're not." And even  
11 one of the strongest defenders of our group is former FBI  
12 Director Louis Freeh, and he has gone through and said  
13 they're not terrorists, as well. The security checks have  
14 been done.

15 Senator Reed: Very good.

16 Colonel Martin: The real issue -- and Secretary Kerry  
17 has the authority right now to say, "I waive this, bring  
18 them in."

19 Senator Reed: Thank you, gentlemen.

20 Senator Lieberman: Senator Reed, let me -- I'd just  
21 add that I think this requirement that these people, who  
22 have been very loyal to the United States, renounce  
23 membership in a group that is off the terrorist list -- and  
24 there really is some question about whether it ever should  
25 have been on there -- is unfair to them, and it's an

1 unnecessary obstacle to a group of people who are very loyal  
2 to America, who I think would -- and have family and  
3 friends, including people here in the room today, who would  
4 take them in and, I think, would make a great contribution  
5 to our country. So, I'm not sure what can be done, but I  
6 wish, together, we could find a way to get the U.S.  
7 Government to stop, essentially, requiring the rejection of  
8 a previous status that no longer is accepted by American  
9 law.

10 Senator Reed: Thank you.

11 Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis.

12 General Jones: If I could just add to that, we  
13 wouldn't be sitting here today if we just had an airlift a  
14 couple of years ago. The -- there's just some other points  
15 that just, I think, are outrageous. The officers -- the  
16 Iraqi officers that led the attack on Camp Ashraf and killed  
17 -- responsible for killing men, women, and children -- are  
18 the ones that deal with Camp Liberty today. And when you  
19 talk about an insult -- adding insult to injury, it's  
20 incredible. And I just find it unbelievable that this  
21 problem has not been resolved 3 or 4 years ago. And,  
22 although the numbers are going down, and the Albanian  
23 government deserves a lot of credit -- and, by the way, the  
24 cost for relocation is being borne by the MEK. It's not  
25 being borne by us, it's not being borne by the U.N. The

1 money has been allocated -- I forget the number, but it's --  
2 \$20 million, so far, out of their funds to relocate their  
3 wives or their brothers, their sisters, their family  
4 members, and their colleagues.

5 I think that -- I just think the United States should  
6 show more responsibility for the commitment we made, and  
7 should exert more leadership in bringing this to a close.

8 Senator Reed: Thank you.

9 Chairman McCain: That's very eloquent.

10 Chairman McCain: Senator Tillis.

11 Senator Tillis: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Gentlemen, thank you all for being here.

13 Colonel Martin, I'd like to start with you. Could you  
14 give me some sense -- and I know that maybe your time there  
15 is somewhat dated, but give me some sense of what the -- a  
16 day would be like for the some-2400 people that are still in  
17 Iraq.

18 Colonel Martin: I can do that, sir, because I am in  
19 continual contact with the residents; and, when I talk to  
20 them on the phone, when I get their emails, I -- their faces  
21 automatically pop up in my memory.

22 When I was the senior operations officer for detention  
23 operations, I lived at Camp Liberty. And, as I've  
24 mentioned, that camp was not designed for housing people 24  
25 hours a day. Their daily life is one that they make it,

1 make it useful. They keep themselves physically fit.

2 They're always building upon the camp to make it better.

3       Unfortunately, they're living in a life of tyranny. I  
4 remember, back in the '70s, there used to be this little  
5 cartoon of a pair of goldfish in a blender, and they're in  
6 the water, and there's a little button for the blender,  
7 waiting for it to be turned on. And one goldfish says to  
8 the other, "I can't handle the stress." That's what it  
9 reminds me of for the residents. They make the best of the  
10 situation, but they're living under a dark cloud of tyranny.  
11 They're being denied critical resources, over and over.

12       Senator Tillis: Well, I want to be clear, then. So,  
13 they're living in horrible conditions every day, worrying  
14 about whether or not they're going to be alive the following  
15 day. And these are people who peacefully disarmed --

16       Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

17       Senator Tillis: -- and protected American soldiers  
18 when we came into Iraq. And we made a promise that we would  
19 take care of them.

20       Colonel Martin: That is correct, sir.

21       Senator Tillis: Senator Lieberman, about -- sometime  
22 in September, Secretary Kerry said that we were going to  
23 allow the relocation of, I believe, 75,000 refugees from  
24 various countries. A couple of weeks later, he said it  
25 would be 85,000, and that that was a floor, and that at

1 least 10,000 of those would be Syrian refugees fleeing the  
2 Assad regime and the violence in Syria. What would lead  
3 Secretary Kerry to such -- to the conclusion that these  
4 people -- and incidentally, those 85,000 that we're talking  
5 about bringing in this country haven't been vetted. We  
6 don't know who they are. We've got to protect the safety  
7 and security of America, and we should absolutely welcome  
8 refugees that are fleeing hostile regimes.

9 Colonel Martin, you said that the FBI's vetted this  
10 population twice.

11 Colonel Martin: That is correct, sir.

12 Senator Tillis: Senator Lieberman, can you give me any  
13 idea of why our Secretary of State would take a position  
14 that he's taken today, with the imminent threat that these  
15 men and women and children face every single day? Why are  
16 they different, and why can't they be included in this some-  
17 6,000 more unallocated refugees that the capacity that the  
18 administration says that they want to make available to get  
19 people to a safer place -- why on earth are we even having  
20 to have this discussion?

21 Senator Lieberman: Well, I totally agree with you.  
22 There's -- to me, there's not, Senator, an acceptable answer  
23 to that question. I mean, they're -- these are people  
24 seeking political asylum. They have proven their loyalty to  
25 the United States of America, beyond what we could imagine.

1 They have been vetted. The problem here -- and this is why  
2 the fact that this committee is holding this hearing and  
3 that so many of you have been advocates for the residents of  
4 Camp Liberty is so important, because they could easily --  
5 these people are pawns of a larger power struggle in which  
6 Iran, which despises them and wants to get rid of them,  
7 whenever it has the opportunity to exercise influence,  
8 including in international diplomacy and, of course, with  
9 Iraq -- Iran's the big country next door. It's now -- it  
10 has political influence in Iraq. It's providing arms, et  
11 cetera, et cetera. So, you can imagine, without having a  
12 conspiracy theory, that they are behind what -- a lot of  
13 what's happened in -- what's happening to the residents.  
14 But, that shouldn't affect us. We're the United States of  
15 America. Remember the words on the Statue of Liberty about  
16 the masses yearning to be free. Boy, if that was ever true,  
17 it is this group.

18 And, Senator, your comparison of what Secretary Kerry  
19 said of these 24- or 2500 is very powerful. They ought to  
20 be put at the top of that list.

21 Senator Tillis: They're fully vetted.

22 Senator Lieberman: Yeah.

23 Senator Tillis: They're people who have been friends  
24 of the United States.

25 Senator Lieberman: Right.

1           Senator Tillis: They're in an area where they, every  
2 single day, face an existential threat. And this  
3 administration doesn't recognize that that --

4           Their policy right now is despicable, and I appreciate  
5 Senator McCain holding this hearing. And I think we need to  
6 put the pressure on. This is wrong. It's not what America  
7 stands for.

8           Senator Lieberman: Thank you.

9           Senator Tillis: Thank you.

10          Chairman McCain: Senator Manchin.

11          Senator Manchin: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12          First of all -- I'm trying to get my head around all of  
13 this and what's going on, and I think I got a little bit of  
14 a flow of it. What has happened to the leader of MEK? I  
15 know Maryam Rajjavi is the --

16          Senator Lieberman: Right.

17          Senator Manchin: -- leader now. What happened to her  
18 husband, Massoud? We haven't heard from him since 2003.  
19 Does anybody know what happened to him?

20          Colonel Martin: Sir, he was wounded in an attack. And  
21 --

22          Senator Manchin: Is he alive? Is he still alive?

23          Colonel Martin: The information I have, yes, sir.

24          Senator Manchin: Is he in the camp? Camp Liberty?

25          Colonel Martin: No, sir, he is not.

1 Senator Manchin: In the United States?

2 Colonel Martin: No, sir.

3 Senator Manchin: He's somewhere.

4 Colonel Martin: He's in -- the information I've been  
5 provided, he's in France.

6 Senator Manchin: He's not consider the leader anymore?

7 Colonel Martin: He is still the co-leader with Maryam  
8 Radjavi.

9 Senator Manchin: But, she's the front person.

10 Colonel Martin: She is the person that is with all the  
11 activities, all the events, yes, sir. She is the leader.

12 Senator Manchin: Let me ask another -- and, General  
13 Jones, this might be to you -- in your testimony, you cite  
14 that the three most lethal events occurred between 2009 and  
15 2013 during Prime Minister Maliki's time in office. Since  
16 Prime Minister Abadi took office in 2014, have there been  
17 any changes to the situation at Camp Liberty when it comes  
18 to the security or resettlement? Have you seen any changes?

19 General Jones: I'd defer to Wes for the details, but,  
20 you know, I think the attacks have been less -- lessened.  
21 But, the fact that they -- the Iraqis' military who are  
22 regularly in the camp are still the ones who conducted the  
23 raids in previous years, and the killings, is indicative of  
24 the -- kind of the pressure that they want to keep on the  
25 citizens in the camp.

1           So, Wes, you might have some more details on the -- on  
2 that.

3           Senator Manchin: Has it improved, is probably what I'm  
4 asking --

5           Colonel Martin: It hasn't improved, and it hasn't --

6           Senator Manchin: Has not.

7           Colonel Martin: It has not improved, sir, and it has  
8 not deteriorated. It is -- they're still in that blender,  
9 waiting for that button to be pushed.

10          Abadi, he is the Prime Minister, but he is in a very  
11 precarious position, because Maliki still controls Dawa  
12 Party. Maliki still has the ear of Tehran. And, as you  
13 recall, Maliki was forced out only after ISIS took over  
14 major parts of the country. Both the Ayatollah in Tehran  
15 and President Obama was blessing him for a third term, which  
16 was against the constitution -- the Iraqi constitution.  
17 But, he was forced out when General Soleimani went to him  
18 and said, "You have to step down." And then a member of his  
19 Dawa Party was brought up.

20          Abadi has made a lot of great promises. There are  
21 demonstrations going on throughout Iraq. He's drawn the  
22 support of them. He's drawn the support of Ayatollah  
23 Sistani. And, surprisingly, he's drawn the support of the  
24 head of the Mahdi Army, Muqtada al-Sadr.

25          Senator Manchin: I have another one. This is my --

1 this is a most difficult question. This is -- when the  
2 State Department delisted the MEK as a foreign terrorism  
3 organization in 2012, it stated, "The Department does not  
4 overlook or forget the MEK's past acts of terrorism,  
5 including its involvement in the killing of U.S. citizens in  
6 Iran in the '70s and an attack on U.S. soil in 1992. The  
7 Department also has serious concerns about the MEK as an  
8 organization, particularly with regard to allegation sf  
9 abuse committed against its own members."

10 How has the MEK addressed the concerns raised about  
11 potential abuse of its own members since the delisting, sir?

12 Colonel Martin: Since the delisting, it hasn't needed  
13 to be addressed. In this same document that Governor Ridge  
14 provided Senator McCain -- I'll get you a copy of it -- I  
15 addressed that thoroughly.

16 [The information referred to follows:]

17 [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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1           Colonel Martin: I investigated those -- when I was the  
2 base commander as a military policeman, I went and  
3 investigated the allegations of abuse and along with a lot  
4 of other allegations. They were unfounded. What I found  
5 while I was there, and since then, the MEK is the most lied-  
6 to, lied-about --

7           Senator Manchin: Has the State Department corrected  
8 its findings?

9           Colonel Martin: No, sir. It -- this report was  
10 generated when Julia Frifield sent to Congressman Royce a  
11 repetition of the previous lies and all the misinformation.  
12 They had been given the requirement --

13          Senator Manchin: But, they haven't changed anything,  
14 because 2012 was when they delisted them, right?

15          Colonel Martin: They delisted in 2012, and, even when  
16 that delisting was being done -- that was Ambassador Dan  
17 Benjamin that was pushing forth that misinformation, "Well,  
18 we haven't forgot what they've done." I sat down with the  
19 State Department when I came back, under the promise to  
20 Major General Jack Gardner that I would continue to be his  
21 representative with the State Department while I was at the  
22 Pentagon -- I thoroughly investigated. Behind me is Linc  
23 Bloomfield, who has thoroughly investigated all the  
24 allegations. The allegations -- there were two mujahideens  
25 for a period of time, and then finally, when Massoud Radjavi

1 was released from prison and he was able to take back  
2 control of the MEK, what became known as "the struggle"  
3 disappeared, and they disbanded, basically. But, the  
4 current organization is taking the blame for all the other  
5 atrocities that had happened.

6 The MEK has never attacked Americans. They did not  
7 kill Turner, Schaefer, and Hawkins, the Air Force officers  
8 back in the '70s. They did not do these things. They --  
9 and probably the most embarrassing report that ever came out  
10 was the RAND study, because the RAND study was focused just  
11 on -- and the State Department paid for it -- they got  
12 friends of their position. I was at the Pentagon. I was  
13 never consulted. Others were never consulted. Only the  
14 people who was going to tell that State Department story.  
15 It's kind of like the old John Wayne western, "When the  
16 legend becomes a fact, print the legend."

17 Senator Manchin: Mr. Chairman, I'm so sorry.

18 Chairman McCain: Go ahead.

19 Senator Manchin: I was -- I really wanted to -- I  
20 really wanted to ask the question about, Are you three  
21 recommending to this committee that we help to relocate or  
22 bring them to America, or help relocate them with their  
23 loved ones throughout Europe?

24 Colonel Martin: I'll let the other two gentlemen  
25 speak, but I definitely am.

1           Senator Lieberman: Well, I'll start at the beginning.  
2           First, thank you for the fact that the defense authorization  
3           bill has some components to it that really move in a  
4           direction that we would want. So, you've already done some  
5           of that.

6           The second is, on an ongoing basis, to pressure, either  
7           when you visit -- members visit Iraq or through the State  
8           Department, through our embassy, pressure the Abadi  
9           government to know how important this is to us, because  
10          they're going to get -- how important the security and  
11          ultimate exit of the 2400 at Camp Liberty is to the United  
12          States of America. Because, trust me, they're going to get  
13          daily pressure in the other direction, from Iran. And up  
14          until this time, we've said we should find a place like  
15          Albania to go, but -- I mean, I -- as an American, I'd be  
16          proud and very secure in having these 2400 come here, and I  
17          think they'd be great Americans.

18          General Jones: I completely agree with Senator  
19          Lieberman. I think it would show leadership, it would show  
20          some responsibility in this. And I think the most important  
21          thing is to get everyone out of Camp Liberty as soon as  
22          possible.

23          Senator Manchin: I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman.

24          Chairman McCain: No problem. It was a good line of  
25          questioning.

1 Senator Rounds.

2 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 First, let me begin by just saying, I appreciate the  
4 Chairman's work in bringing this testimony and information  
5 to the committee. I agree, it's very important, and I  
6 appreciated the Senator from West Virginia's line of  
7 questioning and comments.

8 I would just ask this, just to begin with. Is the  
9 focus today with regard to how we resolve the issue  
10 surrounding Camp Liberty, is this an activity which requires  
11 more action on the part of our government, or is this a case  
12 of where it is more work being required of the Iraqi  
13 government, a combination of the two? Where is the biggest  
14 challenge we have in resolving this issue?

15 General Jones: Senator, I think that when we -- when  
16 the State Department removed the MEK from the Tier 3  
17 category, and the Department of Homeland Security -- I'm  
18 sorry -- Tier 4, right? Tier 3? Yeah, but they were Tier  
19 1, right?

20 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

21 General Jones: Yeah. But, then the Tier 3 designation  
22 was instated by the Department of Homeland Security, which  
23 is kind of an arbitrary designation, but it triggered  
24 another obstacle that delayed the departure of the  
25 residents.

1           So, I think the easiest way is to make a decision to  
2 remove that Tier 3 artificial designation, which, from my  
3 standpoint, is valueless, and to step forward and lead this  
4 effort to get these remaining people out of Iraq, whether  
5 they go to Albania -- I would prefer that they come here,  
6 simply because I think it sends a positive message. And,  
7 when you look at Mrs. Radjavi's 10-point plan for the future  
8 of Iran, it tracks very nicely with our own Constitution.

9           So, this MEK group is a democratic group, and we need  
10 to respect that, I think. And we need to do the right  
11 thing.

12           Senator Lieberman: I'd just say briefly that the very  
13 fact of this hearing is important today, because the  
14 greatest enemy of the people in Camp Liberty is  
15 invisibility, because then they get to be a pawn for the  
16 Iranians. And the fact that the hearing is being held, and  
17 very strong supportive statements by the Chairman, Ranking  
18 Member Senator Reed, members of the committee, they'll get  
19 -- they'll hear about this, both in Camp Liberty, so it'll  
20 give them hope, but also they'll hear about it in the  
21 government offices in Baghdad and, I hope, in Tehran.

22           I mean, the danger here is that, as part of what some  
23 people think is a new era in U.S.-Iranian relations, that  
24 the Iranians will try to leverage our State Department to  
25 turn away from what's happening in Camp Liberty. And that's

1 where the kind of bipartisan leadership that is reflected in  
2 this committee is so important. But, the ultimate -- the  
3 immediate goal: protect the security of the people in Camp  
4 Liberty, and get them out of there to somewhere else as  
5 quickly as possible.

6 I'll just come back to what I said in my opening  
7 statement real briefly. This is a -- to me, a message to us  
8 that we ought to be supporting political opponents,  
9 including the MEK, but others as well, to the Iranian  
10 regime, because that's probably the best way we can  
11 guarantee long-term better relations with that great  
12 country.

13 Colonel Martin: Sir, I'd defer to a note that was just  
14 passed to me by a man who I served with in combat and a  
15 close advisor to the Multinational Force Iraq Commander as  
16 well as to Paul Bremer.

17 Abadi, as I mentioned before, is very weak. And this  
18 is a golden opportunity for the United States to pressure  
19 him into allow the residents to leave and for us to bring  
20 all the residents here. As I mentioned, there are enough  
21 families throughout the United States, we can absorb all  
22 them. And, when you think about all the torment and all the  
23 horror that they have had to go through, for the past 3-4  
24 years, especially -- well, since 2009 -- and yet, they still  
25 remain loyal to the United States, hoping that we will be

1 able to do something to lift them out of that tyranny, it's  
2 time to bring them out. And it's only a matter of time  
3 before the fight between Maliki and al-Abadi is going to  
4 come to a head. And I fear Maliki has the strongest support  
5 of the militias, Abadi will be out.

6 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 Chairman McCain: Senator King.

8 Senator King: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 I'm new to this subject, so I want to ask some sort of  
10 basic questions.

11 Several times, you gentlemen used the term that "U.S.  
12 made assurances," the term "solemn promise," "guarantees."  
13 And, Colonel Martin, you mentioned a card. What did that  
14 card say? What -- I'd like to know specifically what  
15 assurances were delivered by whom and when.

16 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir, this was the Protected  
17 Persons Status under the Geneva Convention. And I have a  
18 copy of it. If you give me a second, I can find it real  
19 quick and --

20 Senator King: Well, I'd like to know what it says.

21 Colonel Martin: Okay.

22 Senator King: I mean, what I'm searching for here is:  
23 What were the assurances and the -- specifically -- and who  
24 delivered them, and when? I think that's a fair question,  
25 given that's -- seems to be the premise of this discussion.

1           Colonel Martin: "This cardholder is Protected Person  
2 under the agreement of the terms of the fourth Geneva  
3 Convention. Should the assigned person" -- it's a little  
4 blurry -- should an incident occur, it requests that the  
5 person contact the Military Police Brigade. And then it  
6 goes on, the agreement that they made, "You are being  
7 offered your release from control and protection in exchange  
8 for your promise to comply with certain regulations." And  
9 it clearly states they are protected, they will not be --  
10 they will not be arrested, they will not be harmed.

11           Senator Lieberman: And what did they have to do?

12           Senator King: But --

13           Colonel Martin: And what they had to do, sir, is go  
14 ahead and sign an agreement.

15           Senator King: That's when they were moved from Ashraf  
16 to Camp Liberty?

17           Colonel Martin: No, sir, that was a whole different  
18 set of promises. If I may, sir.

19           Senator McCain, if it's all right, I'd like to have  
20 this submitted, too.

21           Senator King: Well, you can make this for the record.

22           [The information referred to follows:]

23           [COMMITTEE INSERT]

24

25

1 Senator King: But, I want to know who made assurances

2 --

3 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

4 Senator King: -- and what those assurances were. And  
5 saying "You're a Protected Person under the" --

6 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

7 Senator King: -- "Geneva Convention" isn't a promise  
8 that the U.S. will take you in. I mean, I just -- I want to  
9 understand what the promise is that we're being urged to  
10 honor.

11 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir. I understand.

12 The first one is, they would be protected and they  
13 would remain at Camp Ashraf. That was 2004. That was with  
14 the U.S. State Department, in agreement with the United  
15 States Department of Defense. And Rumsfeld was the actual  
16 person that finally approved it, but working with the State  
17 Department.

18 The person who issued those cards, under order of the  
19 U.S. Embassy, was Brigadier General Dave Phillips, who was  
20 also part of this group that works closely, that they would  
21 be protected --

22 Senator King: But, it's your position that this Geneva  
23 Convention assurance of being a protected person constitutes  
24 a solemn promise of the United States to look after these  
25 people indefinitely?

1           Senator Lieberman: Part of this was -- you correct me,  
2           Wes -- that the residents gave up their arms. They were  
3           disarmed. And that was part of a post-Saddam policy of our  
4           military in Iraq. General Odierno was actually involved, in  
5           some ways, not at the higher level he ultimately reached,  
6           but he was on the ground in these negotiations.

7           I'll tell you, Senator King, to me one of the most --  
8           I've had it happen two or three times -- most compelling  
9           moments in my own understanding -- or getting more  
10          understanding of what happened here was to hear leaders of  
11          the U.S. military, including General Phillips, but then  
12          people on up who were Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff  
13          at the time, standing up and saying, at a public meeting,  
14          "We made a promise to these people, and we broke it." I  
15          mean, it was --

16          Senator King: Well, all I'm looking for is, What's --  
17          what was the promise, when was it made, and who made it?  
18          And perhaps you could submit that for the record. That's  
19          what I'm interested in.

20          Colonel Martin: We can do that, sir.

21          [The information referred to follows:]

22          [COMMITTEE INSERT]

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25

1 Colonel Martin: And, matter of fact, I just did.

2 Senator King: And the other piece that I want to  
3 follow up on is, I'm a little uncomfortable with this  
4 hearing because we don't have anyone here from the  
5 administration. We -- I -- there -- I'm old enough to  
6 realize there are always two sides to every story, and I --  
7 you've made a very strong case. In fact, the case is so  
8 strong, you have to wonder why isn't this -- why wasn't this  
9 taken care of some time ago, and there must be some reason.  
10 And I would like to hear --

11 Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, we could solicit the comments of  
12 the administration or the State Department or the Department  
13 of Homeland Security to determine why this hasn't been dealt  
14 with. I'm just -- again, I'm not taking any side here, but  
15 I -- I'm uncomfortable not hearing both sides of the  
16 situation.

17 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir. If I may. Congressman Dana  
18 Rohrabacher offered them a chance of what you speak of, that  
19 I would be at the table along with Colonel Gary Marsh and a  
20 representative of the State Department. They refused. I  
21 would love to sit at a table in front of you ladies and  
22 gentlemen and go through the issues with U.S. State  
23 Department. Every time we have made that offer, they've  
24 refused.

25 Earlier, your question was -- the promises. There's

1 been a series of promises, especially in 2012 from Dan  
2 Fried, that these actions would be taken to get them out of  
3 harm's way. He came to us. And General Jones was on the  
4 phone calls, as well as myself, Louis Freeh, Tom Ridge, Ed  
5 Randell, Howard Dean, and many others, and Hugh Shelton  
6 especially. And "We will do this, we will do this, we will  
7 do this." And even one of the promises, "We're going to be  
8 out at that camp on a continual basis." And I have that one  
9 in writing in this --

10 Senator King: Well --

11 Colonel Martin: -- packet.

12 Senator King: -- I understand. And I understand that  
13 the circumstances have changed because of Iran's influence  
14 in Iraq at this moment, and that that raises the level of,  
15 as you said, stress in this situation, and perhaps urgency.  
16 I fully understand that. I just want to -- I just want to  
17 get some of the details and some of the background, and I  
18 want to understand why, if it's so obvious we should do  
19 this, it's not being done. That --

20 I'm out of time, but --

21 Colonel Martin: Yes, sir.

22 Senator King: I appreciate your testimony, and I  
23 appreciate the urgency of this situation, and just want to  
24 be sure we understand all the implications when we move  
25 forward.

1 Thank you.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman McCain: Could I just mention to the Senator  
4 that we have been trying for years to get the State  
5 Department to react -- correspondence, meetings, every  
6 method that I know of, besides a congressional hearing -- to  
7 try to get this issue resolved and these people, who are now  
8 in greater and greater danger, what we promised them.

9 And, I've got to say, Colonel Martin, you didn't  
10 exactly describe -- it was -- that was in return -- that  
11 guarantee was in return for them giving up their weapons,  
12 and, in giving up their weapons, we said we would guarantee  
13 their safety and gave them -- under the Geneva Conventions.  
14 But, that doesn't mean anything but the United States used  
15 that as a rationale for guaranteeing their protection. And  
16 it's been going on for years. And --

17 Go ahead, General.

18 General Jones: After you, sir.

19 Chairman McCain: Go ahead. Please.

20 General Jones: I just wanted to say that we have  
21 worked diligently with the administration on a regular  
22 basis, on a daily basis almost. All of Colonel Martin's  
23 reports have been sent to both the National Security Council  
24 and the State Department. There are three of us at the  
25 table, but it's a part of a larger group, including six

1 former Ambassadors, former Director of the FBI, former  
2 Attorney General, eight four-star generals, one Speaker of  
3 the House, four Governors, six Members of Congress, one  
4 White House Chief of Staff --

5 Senator King: Now, when you mention those Governors,  
6 that's --

7 General Jones: -- and three former --

8 Senator King: -- that's -- you're doing well when  
9 you've got --

10 [Laughter.]

11 Senator Lieberman: And, incidentally, broadly  
12 bipartisan.

13 General Jones: Yeah, it's broadly bipartisan. And  
14 this is not work that's being done in isolation. I mean,  
15 every document has been provided. All the Colonel's weekly  
16 reports go directly to the State Department. So, we have  
17 really tried to collaborate with this, and we still want a  
18 collaborative outcome, but we need an outcome before the  
19 next tragedy happens.

20 Chairman McCain: Senator Shaheen.

21 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and  
22 thank you, Senator Reed, for holding this hearing today, and  
23 for -- our witnesses for being here to testify about what I  
24 also believe is a travesty and that we have not lived up to  
25 the commitments that we have made to the people who are now

1 at Camp Liberty.

2 I was in Iraq, back in 2009, and we heard about this  
3 issue, and I've had a chance to see the video -- a video of  
4 one of the attacks on Camp Liberty, and the people being  
5 murdered. So, I think it's an area where we need to do much  
6 more to address what has happened there. And I don't  
7 understand why people who have relatives here are not able  
8 to come and join their relatives and be resettled in  
9 America.

10 So, I guess I'm -- I appreciate that I'm asking you all  
11 for a subjective analysis of why the resettlement has been  
12 so slow, but is it just bureaucratic foot-dragging? Is it  
13 because it has not risen to the level of the attention of  
14 some of the people at State who can make it happen to put  
15 pressure on Iraq to release the residents of Camp Liberty?  
16 Or is there something else going on?

17 And, General Jones or Senator Lieberman, I don't if  
18 either of you have a perspective on that.

19 General Jones: Senator, I don't know the answer to  
20 that. All I know is that, for the last several years,  
21 things that look like they're finally going to move are  
22 replaced by another obstacle. The delisting of the MEK, we  
23 thought was going to be the end of it, but it was replaced  
24 by another listing that was somewhat, in my view, arbitrary,  
25 but it has served to delay the process even more.

1 I don't think the Iraqi government has been  
2 particularly helpful. They play cat-and-mouse with the  
3 residents. Sometimes they deny food, they deny protection,  
4 they turn off the water, they don't take out the trash or  
5 the garbage for days on end. I mean, it's just a constant  
6 problem.

7 But, I really think that the real answer is for someone  
8 in authority to just make a decision, "Enough. We're going  
9 to do the right thing. We made a commitment to these  
10 people. We didn't live up to it. It's time to finish it."  
11 And I think it's that simple. It's a humanitarian gesture  
12 that -- I, frankly, don't care what the Iranians think about  
13 this. I think it's the right thing to do.

14 Senator Shaheen: Senator Lieberman, one of the things  
15 that I have heard from relatives of people at Camp Liberty  
16 that they're very concerned about is this requirement that  
17 they renounce MEK, and concerned about what that might mean  
18 in the future and if somebody could use that to then come  
19 back and address their ability to continue to live in the  
20 United States. I've not had anybody explain to me  
21 adequately why that is something that people are being  
22 requested to do. Have you had anybody explain to you why  
23 that's so important?

24 Senator Lieberman: I have not.

25 First, Senator Shaheen, let me thank you for the

1 leadership that you've shown on this matter. You've been a  
2 real great advocate for the people in Camp Liberty. And I  
3 know all their families and friends appreciate it a lot.

4 This requirement of renouncing membership in an  
5 organization that is no longer considered a threat or a  
6 terrorist organization by any means, and really there are  
7 questions about whether it ever should have been on the  
8 terrorist organization -- seems to me to be very un-  
9 American. I mean, it's like -- it's a belief test. It  
10 seems contrary to the First Amendment. And it -- the truth  
11 is that the -- there are a lot of people there who have had  
12 a long history in Camp Liberty with the MEK. As I  
13 mentioned, they're freedom fighters. I mean, they were  
14 against the Shah, then they were part of the revolution,  
15 then they turned against the Ayatollahs, because they  
16 replaced one dictatorship with a worse dictatorship. So, I  
17 have never -- and to what extent Members of Congress can  
18 push the State Department to explain that or, really, to  
19 rescind it, because it's an -- it's an unfair obstacle.

20 And you've made a good point, it's going to raise  
21 insecurity, anxiety in the mind of people coming into the  
22 country, that somehow this is going to come back, 3, 4, 5  
23 years from now, and they may be subject to deportation.

24 I would say to you -- Senator King, I'm just taking  
25 this moment -- I think the State Department, if they were

1 here, would not question the promises made to the residents  
2 of Ashraf and then Liberty. But, what I would like to hear  
3 them explain is, Why all the delay? What's -- and you're  
4 left -- I don't know this, but we're left -- because we know  
5 how much the Iranian government wants to torture these  
6 people, essentially, wants them in the stress, and worse.  
7 And it leads us to, naturally, suspect that the Iranians are  
8 putting pressure on the Iraqis to do that, and maybe on us,  
9 in the diplomatic negotiation. But, it would seem much  
10 bigger than the status of 2400 people in a camp in Iraq.  
11 But, you know, again, America's supposed to be about the  
12 right, liberty -- the right to life and freedom of  
13 individuals. And there's 2400 individuals in this Camp  
14 Liberty whose freedom is constantly under stress.

15 Senator Shaheen: Well, thank you all very much. My  
16 time is up.

17 Colonel Martin, I'd -- I want to thank you for your  
18 good work on this, but I do want to disagree with you. My  
19 recollection is that nobody was urging Maliki to run for a  
20 third term, that, in fact, there was a lot of effort put  
21 into trying to get him to step aside.

22 So, I do hope that we can continue to do everything  
23 possible, and that this committee will do everything  
24 possible, to urge that the residents of Camp Liberty are  
25 allowed to emigrate either to the United States or to

1 someplace safe.

2 Thank you all.

3 Chairman McCain: I thank you, Senator Shaheen, for a  
4 very compelling statement.

5 Senator Sessions.

6 Senator Sessions: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 And thank you, this distinguished panel.

8 Senator Lieberman, we're glad to have you back in your  
9 old abode.

10 Senator Lieberman: Thanks, Senator Sessions. Great to  
11 be here.

12 Senator Sessions: Every now and then we did some good  
13 work.

14 Senator Lieberman: We did.

15 Senator Sessions: I appreciate that.

16 General Jones, thank you for your service, and Colonel  
17 Martin.

18 Well, I've been sympathetic to the Camp Liberty people  
19 for some time, but there have been problems. And some of  
20 this is their own problem. One of the problems, I  
21 understand, with their desire to emigrate to the United  
22 States is, they want to come as a group. They don't want to  
23 be diversely populated around the country. They want to  
24 maintain their unity. Is that true?

25 Colonel Martin: No, sir. They will come anyway they

1 can come here. The issue about coming as a group -- I was  
2 in the room when Major General Jack Gardner was talking to  
3 Madam Parsai about a place that they could possibly go. And  
4 Madam Parsai said, "Tell you what. We'll gladly go to  
5 California. And I'll tell you what, if they did come as a  
6 group, find an old ghost town that has water underneath it,  
7 and, within 2 years, you'll have a flourishing community."  
8 But, they are willing to come as individuals. They want to  
9 come out of that danger.

10 What we often forget is, this is the former National  
11 Liberation Army that was a military unit. So, when people  
12 say, "They're a cult, they wear uniforms" -- well, yes. I  
13 was a soldier. I wore a uniform, but I wasn't in a cult.  
14 They're loyal to their leadership.

15 Senator Sessions: Well, Colonel Martin, there's  
16 something unusual about the bunch. I mean, they're  
17 communists, right --

18 Colonel Martin: No, sir.

19 Senator Sessions: -- their heritage?

20 Colonel Martin: No, sir.

21 Senator Sessions: That's not so?

22 Colonel Martin: Communism and Islam does not mix, sir.  
23 They are --

24 Senator Sessions: Well --

25 Colonel Martin: -- not communists. There was a

1 communist element --

2 Senator Sessions: Theistic communist --

3 Colonel Martin: No, sir.

4 Senator Sessions: -- is that what you would call it?

5 Colonel Martin: No. There was a communist element  
6 that Massoud Radjavi was able to defeat, and that is the  
7 organization that went away. This is not a communist.  
8 They're moderate, they're democratic.

9 Senator Sessions: Well, I've been sympathetic because  
10 I think we've been awfully slow to be helpful, here. I  
11 thought we could have been helpful over the years. And I've  
12 always felt that way.

13 I'm not comfortable with a group with a military  
14 history coming to the United States as a group. I'm not  
15 comfortable about that. I think that's one of the problems  
16 they've had. So, you're telling me they'll come  
17 individually, let's talk about that.

18 Colonel Martin: I'd be glad to, sir.

19 Senator Sessions: And what is the danger -- I don't  
20 want to go back. I'm sure you've talked about the danger  
21 they face today. And I'll try to read the transcript and  
22 maybe submit some questions. Because I assume it is  
23 increasing with the Iranian influence in Iraq increasing.

24 Senator Lieberman: That's correct.

25 Senator Sessions: And that's an unfortunate event that

1 I wish hadn't occurred. So, I'm willing to look at this. I  
2 see others -- maybe we're finishing up in our testimony.  
3 But, I do have -- question the concept of bringing in larger  
4 numbers of people that only want to adhere together in the  
5 country. I'm not sure that's healthy for us at this point  
6 in time.

7 Senator Lieberman: Senator Sessions, I do want to  
8 respond to that. As I understand it -- and right now, of  
9 course, most of the folks who have left have gone to  
10 Albania. In some ways, we're raising, today, the  
11 possibility -- and I know it's been raised somewhat before  
12 -- about all of them coming here. But, as I understand it,  
13 the residents of Camp Liberty want a -- want to leave  
14 together, they want to leave Camp Liberty together, because  
15 they don't want to leave a smaller number behind. But, they  
16 don't expect to be settled in the same place if they come  
17 here or if they go to Albania. The -- here, we know that  
18 they have family and friends throughout the country, and,  
19 you know, each of them -- family and friends have said,  
20 "I'll take two" or "I'll take three," whatever. So, they'll  
21 be spread out all across America.

22 Senator Sessions: Well, I only -- my initial  
23 impression was, Why are we having such a hard time with  
24 this?

25 Senator Lieberman: It's a good question.

1           Senator Sessions: I've then learned that the group is  
2 sometimes hard to deal with, and they have very firm views  
3 about certain things they want and don't want, and it's made  
4 it difficult, and they've not been able to negotiate  
5 effectively with U.S. officials. And so, it's presented a  
6 difficult problem.

7           Thank you for your leadership and for sharing with us.  
8 And thank --

9           Colonel Martin: If I may, for a moment, sir. And  
10 General Jones will back me up.

11           We have offered to State Department to help resolve  
12 those differences. One day on the telephone, Dan Fried was  
13 complaining. He says, "Well, they don't understand the way  
14 we do things, they're a problem." And I said to Dan Fried,  
15 I said, "Then let me go with your team over to Iraq, and I  
16 will bring them to the table, and we'll resolve all issues."  
17 Dan Fried snapped back at me and said, "We don't need any  
18 outsiders involved."

19           Chairman McCain: Identify who Dan Fried --

20           Colonel Martin: Dan Fried was the Ambassador of the  
21 United States that worked the arrangement of the residents  
22 to leave Camp Ashraf and come to Camp Liberty, and then  
23 started working the resettlement process.

24           And I did find out one thing. Before I could respond  
25 to Dan Fried to that comment, "We don't need any outside" --

1           Senator Sessions: He was talking about you? Is that  
2 who he was talking about?

3           Colonel Martin: He was talking about me, but he was  
4 talking about everybody. General Jones heard the  
5 conversation, "We don't need any outsiders involved." I  
6 started to reply, but, before I could, Governor Tom Ridge  
7 stepped in. And I did learn one thing. Anybody who's going  
8 to slam a combat veteran better not do it in the presence of  
9 Tom Ridge.

10           [Laughter.]

11           Senator Sessions: Well, Tom Ridge is a strong man, I  
12 agree.

13           Well, thank you for your testimony. And we'll try to  
14 wrestle with this. I don't think the State Department's at  
15 all at fault in this.

16           Thank you.

17           Chairman McCain: Thank you, Senator Sessions.

18           Senator Blumenthal.

19           Senator Blumenthal: Thanks, Mr. Chairman. And thank  
20 you for holding this hearing.

21           And thank you to each of our witnesses for being here  
22 today.

23           I want to say, particularly to Senator Lieberman, my  
24 former colleague, that you are missed here.

25           Senator Lieberman: Thank you.

1 Senator Blumenthal: Although --

2 Chairman McCain: Not by all.

3 [Laughter.]

4 Senator Lieberman: You've visited, and you missed the  
5 opening statement, when Senator McCain thanked me for taking  
6 the time to leave the bingo game at the senior center in  
7 Connecticut.

8 [Laughter.]

9 Senator Lieberman: But, you've been to that senior  
10 center. You know how good a time we have.

11 Senator Blumenthal: We have a great bingo game. And  
12 I'll take this occasion to invite Senator McCain --

13 Senator Lieberman: Yes.

14 Senator Blumenthal: -- to join us.

15 Senator Lieberman: I've done pretty well at the bingo  
16 table, incidentally.

17 Chairman McCain: I think I qualify.

18 [Laughter.]

19 Senator Blumenthal: But, I will stay steadfast and  
20 true to my contention that you are missed.

21 Senator Lieberman: Thank you.

22 Senator Blumenthal: But, you continue to do great  
23 work. And I am very sympathetic and supportive of the cause  
24 that brings you here today, not only because the United  
25 States made a promise, and promises should be kept, as a

1 matter of morality, but I believe that our image and our  
2 standing in the world community depends on our keeping our  
3 promises as a great nation and a nation that follows its  
4 ethical precepts.

5       And I was particularly struck by your contention,  
6 Senator Lieberman, that we ought to put aside the nuclear  
7 agreement that has been reached and continue to pursue  
8 interests that may, in fact, put us at odds with Iran. And  
9 I'd like to take this occasion to say that Iran is unlikely  
10 to change its behavior or conduct in the region in the wake  
11 of that agreement. If anything, flush with additional  
12 financial resources and with the need to demonstrate its  
13 revolutionary ambitions, it almost certainly will increase  
14 its mischief in that area. And I would invite you to  
15 suggest other areas that perhaps we should pursue that could  
16 counter that continuing influence. And obviously, our  
17 keeping our promise in this instance is one that's  
18 important, but perhaps other areas where the same goals can  
19 be pursued.

20       And just to mention that Senator Cardin and I and  
21 others have introduced legislation that would provide for  
22 additional economic sanctions if it increases its aid to  
23 terrorism, and other measures to aid our allies in the  
24 region, especially Israel, to counter that threat.

25       So, if you wish to take this opportunity to comment on

1 that question, I would invite you to do so.

2 Senator Lieberman: Thanks very much, Senator  
3 Blumenthal. Thanks for your leadership in that legislation  
4 with Senator Cardin and others.

5 So, as I said at the beginning just briefly, the  
6 nuclear agreement is going into effect. And I hope that my  
7 skepticism about it is proven to be an overreaction and not  
8 well founded. But, it's over there. And I think it's  
9 amazing. We have to learn from the Iranians. They haven't  
10 changed anything else about their behavior, and I think,  
11 therefore, we should not. And so, I think the additional  
12 economic sanctions for their continuing horrific support,  
13 and contrary to U.S. interests and values -- of terrorism,  
14 human rights violations -- inside the country are very  
15 important, and the continued enforcement by the  
16 administration of the existing sanctions.

17 I mean, the truth is that, though the lifting of some  
18 of the sanctions because of the nuclear agreement will give  
19 the Iranians billions of dollars, which I'm afraid they're  
20 going to use not only to support the regime inside the  
21 country economically, but also to support their terrorist  
22 proxies outside -- the fact is that Iran is still not a good  
23 place for business to do business, because the existing  
24 sanctions on -- because of terrorism and human rights  
25 violations continue, and they're quite significant. So, I

1 think that's one thing.

2           The other that I mentioned today, and I know it's -- it  
3 takes a step to it in another direction -- but, really, the  
4 heart of this government is so contrary to the values of the  
5 United States. It's an Islamic dictatorship and really  
6 suppresses its people terribly, including -- you look at the  
7 number of people executed under the so-called moderate  
8 Rouhani, it's more than under Ahmadinejad before him. And  
9 therefore, I think we ought to be explicit about the fact  
10 that to really have good relations with Iran, they're going  
11 to have to become a more democratic, small "d," country and  
12 to find ways to support the opposition to them.

13           I mean, I referred to solidarity and the Refuseniks and  
14 in those days -- well, two things. One, as Senator McCain  
15 knows, because we've heard Sharanski say this directly,  
16 never minimize -- even this hearing, never minimize the  
17 power to those who are essentially incarcerated -- and in  
18 Sharanski's case, it was in the gulag; in this case, they're  
19 living in stress, a really frightening situation in Camp  
20 Liberty -- to know that somebody over here cares about it.

21           And the second is, Who would have guessed that  
22 solidarity would have overthrown the government in Poland,  
23 that the regime in -- the Soviet regime would have  
24 collapsed. But, they did. And these things always start  
25 with small, principled, zealous freedom fighters. And

1 they're there -- in this group, but also throughout Iran.  
2 And I think we would be derelict and disloyal to our own  
3 national values if we did not find better ways, overt and  
4 covert, to support democratic opposition to the dictatorial  
5 regime in Tehran.

6 Senator Blumenthal: Thank you --

7 Senator Lieberman: Thank you --

8 Senator Blumenthal: -- very much.

9 Senator Lieberman: -- for the question.

10 Chairman McCain: Well, Senator Lieberman, I don't  
11 think I could summarize any better than what you just did.

12 So, I want to thank the witnesses, and we'll continue  
13 this effort, which has assembled a remarkable coalition, as  
14 General Jones just pointed out, of former Attorney Generals,  
15 former head of the Homeland Security, Department of Homeland  
16 Security to all walks and all -- in both political parties.

17 And hopefully we will bring this issue to a conclusion,  
18 which means that these men and women who are suffering today  
19 on a daily basis are able to be freed of both the bondage in  
20 which they are existing and the threats to their lives which  
21 continue to grow as we see the Iranian influence grow. No  
22 doubt about the Iranians' desires concerning them.

23 So, I thank the witnesses. And this is important. And  
24 hopefully we'll -- this will spur movement forward and we'll  
25 achieve our goal.

1 Thank you.

2 [Whereupon, at 11:10 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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