

## **For a Democratic Iran**

Notes for Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.

(co-chair of Canadian Friends of a Democratic Iran NGO)

International roundtable at home of Maryam Rajavi

near Paris, France

14 June 2015

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Mrs Rajavi and fellow participants,

Important points have been made this afternoon by persons from across the Middle East and a wide range of views. Permit me to add a Canadian perspective:

### **Refugees in Camps Ashraf and Liberty**

All of us here today and the tens of thousands of us who gathered yesterday owe profound thanks to the government of Albania for giving sanctuary to several hundred Iranian refugees from Camp Liberty. The rest of us, including Canada, should follow Albania's lead, especially given the continuing existential threat to all remaining unarmed residents of what is in reality now an appalling prison at Camp Liberty.

As many of you know, former Iraqi prime minister Al Maliki's forces in July 2009 attacked Camp Ashraf, murdering 11 residents and abducting 36. In April, 2011, a second attack killed 36 and injured about 350. The most recent one on Camp Liberty in September, 2013 left 52 dead; seven remain held at an undisclosed location. This means a total of 116 men and women and men dead and 1375 wounded. The UN and governments of Iraq and the US earlier undertook to protect these refugees from Tehran.

### **Muslim and other faiths in Canada**

Canada's decades-old policy of multiculturalism respects all faith communities (and those who opt to have none). Our national, provincial and municipal governments do not play favourites among religions.

Imam Dr. Zijad Delic, originally from Bosnia, and others of us are members of Ottawa's long-established Christian-Muslim Dialogue. Delic's 2014 book, *Canadian Islam-Belonging and Loyalty*, concludes that our model of citizenship allows a "pluralist approach to all of its citizens, including citizens of Muslim faith... Being a good Muslim citizen is about promoting the common good. It is in the interests of Canadian Muslims to be faithful citizens and engaged on all levels within the larger society."

The book also stresses that most Canadian Muslim intellectuals and leaders "reject the concept of being regarded as the *other* in Canadian society, instead preferring to be referred to as Canadian Muslims, who are preserving distinct religious values while simultaneously working proactively to integrate constructively within the larger society."

I understand with dismay that to date approximately 100 young Canadians have been radicalized despite this welcoming atmosphere, seemingly mostly over the Internet, and have tragically gone to the Middle East to assist the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) with its barbaric violence in Iraq, Syria and possibly elsewhere.

### **Breaking with Tehran's Mullahs**

Canada suspended diplomatic relations with Tehran in September, 2012. Despite all the harm the regime has done and continues to do around the world, Canada evidently is the only nation to have done so. I invite your own governments to do so as well on the basis that the current regime is simply impossible to deal with diplomatically.

When, long overdue, the PMOI/MEK was delisted in December 2012 by Canada's national government, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard was added simultaneously to its list of terrorist groups.

### **Buenos Aires Bomb**

David Matas of Canada, who is with us today, was nominated for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for human rights work. He has just published a fascinating autobiography, *Why Did You Do That?*. In the chapter on Iran and the PMOI/MEK, he discusses the Tehran regime's persecution of

perceived enemies abroad, giving the example of the car bomb attack on the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires in July 1994, which killed 85 and wounded over 200. The Argentinean intelligence service concluded that it was planned and organized by the National Security Council in Tehran, with Ayatollah Khameni and then President Hashemi Rafsanjani participating in the decision to do so.

### **ISIS In Iraq**

Finally, just before coming to Paris, a number of us met with Sister X (I omit her name, seeking to protect her), who is originally from Mosul in northern Iraq, who is now assisting other internally displaced persons in Kurdistan. ISIS bombed her convent in Mosul in 2009, forcing her and many others to move east to Qaraqosh. In 2014, ISIS invaded the entire region, forcing 850,000 people to flee to the autonomous region of Kurdistan. On May 13, at the US House of Representatives' foreign affairs committee she spoke about her experiences, asking Congress to support liberating northern Iraq from ISIS and to assist Iraqi religious groups to resolve differences through dialogue, not violence. She met last week-privately I believe-with the foreign affairs committee of the House of Commons of Canada.

Thank you.