

The Daily Telegraph

25 January 2005

Resist Iran

Sir, Your leading article (Opinion, Jan 22) was spot-on in suggesting that the West "should back the main resistance group, the People's Mujahidin" to deal with the growing Iranian threat both with respect to its meddling in Iraq and its nuclear ambitions.

The preposterous assertion by the state-run news agency, IRNA, the same day, that The Telegraph should be prosecuted for making such a point reflected the height of Teheran's concern.

As the editorial pointed out, the choice is not between appeasing and bombing the mullahs. The EU's decade-long policy of offering incentive after incentive, cloaked under "human rights dialogue," in hopes of bringing Teheran round has been a dismal failure, serving only to empower the most extremist and violent faction of the ruling regime. Gallows are busy in Iranian cities; at least 62 people have been executed or put on death row in the past two months.

As the leading Iranian opposition leader, Maryam Rajavi, said in her address to the European Parliament on December 15: "Appeasement is not the way to contain or change the regime. Nor is it the path to avoid another war. There is a third option: change brought about by the Iranian people and the Iranian resistance."

A 16-month investigation of the People's Mujahidin in Iraq by US agencies confirmed that no member of the group had violated any law or was linked to terrorism, undercutting any justification for its blacklisting by America and Europe.

As a Shia, but virulently anti-fundamentalist movement, the Mujahidin has not only emerged as the antithesis to Teheran's turbaned tyrants, but has proved to be the most effective buffer against Iran's widespread intervention in Iraq. It should be supported for the sake of both the Iranian people and Iraqis.

Ali Safavi, President, Near-East Policy Research Inc, Washington DC