

Week 12: American Agenda Continued: A Cease-Fire With Terrorists?

As Jay Garner leads the US and Iraq in setting up a new Iraqi government in Baghdad, American forces are busily trying to stabilize the rest of Iraq. Security is on the minds of everyone working to create this new government, which agreed to meet in one month to begin to draft a transitional government. Currently there are too many groups and too much political unrest to consider Iraq to be stable.

In order to fight some of this unrest, American forces in Iraq signed a cease-fire with the People's Mujahedeen, an Iranian opposition group deemed by the US to be a terrorist organization.

The details of the cease-fire are currently a little hazy. According to the Times, it seems the US has agreed to not damage any of the "groups vehicles, equipment, or any of its property in camps in Iraq, and not to commit any hostile act toward the Iranian opposition forces covered by the agreement." In exchange, the terrorist group is "not to fire on or commit other hostile acts against American forces, not to destroy private or government property, and to place its artillery and antiaircraft guns in non-threatening positions."

Upon reading this story I was appalled. The People's Mujahedeen was added to the State Department's list of terrorist organizations in 1997. Just a week ago the Pentagon described the group as a "vicious entity" that served the former Iraqi government. This group killed several Americans in the 1970's and aided in the taking over of the American Embassy in Tehran in 1979. We were fighting a war against these people, against terrorists, and now we were letting them take their weapons and leave.

But upon further analysis, I came to the conclusion that this cease-fire is consistent with the "American Agenda" I described two weeks ago. It is in fact the governments that harbor these terrorist groups that the US is after. In this case, it is claimed by the US that signing a deal with this group may lead to more information about Iraq's "ties to terrorism and the nature of its former government." Further, it is the hope that this group will help balance the pro-Iranian and anti-Iranian groups within Iraq. If the US disarmed the People's Mujahedeen, the US would face having to defend them against Iranian backed fighters such as the Badr Brigade.

This cease-fire is consistent with the American Agenda because the US knows it cannot take out these terrorist groups directly. Instead, it is focusing on 1) Stabilizing Iraq in order to put in a new, anti-terrorism government and 2) to use this cease-fire to gain more knowledge of government-terrorist ties in the region. Now, whether or not the US is capable of extracting this information from an enemy by pretending to have no animosity toward the group is yet to be seen.