

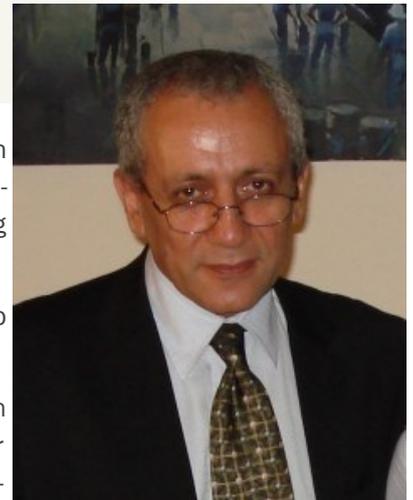


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/trumps-mek-version-of-events-wont-secure-victory_us_5898bcd8e4b02bbb1816bd33

Trump Is At War With Iran, Not ISIS

... He also signals that his war is not with ISIS but with the country Iran. Donald Trump rose to victory in part on the promise to take on ISIS and defeat the group. Yet ISIS cannot be defeated except by a coalition of forces that includes Iran. The facts on the ground in Syria and Iraq demonstrate unequivocally that ISIS forces in Aleppo and Mosul have been defeated largely due to the involvement of Iran. Trump clearly has no intention of defeating terrorism.

Massoud Khodabandeh, Huffington Post, February 07 2017



Massoud Khodabandeh

They say actions speak louder than words. Looking behind the Twitter storm which creates a smoke and mirrors effect to disguise the Trump administration's true intents, one fact is blindingly clear; for this government, Iranians are first in the firing line.

This, of itself, is not unexpected. On the campaign trail Trump threatened to tear up the nuclear deal with Iran. So it was already clear he's no fan of Iranians.

His first act as president has been to issue a direct and belligerent challenge to Iran – he included Iran in the Muslim ban and then declared that Iran is “on notice” after Iran test-fired a ballistic missile which it says is defensive. Iran is clearly in the cross-hairs for Trump and his team.

And the evidence stacks up. As a barometer for any individual or even government's aggressive approach to Iran, support for the Mojahedin Khalq (MEK aka Rajavi cult) is as accurate an indicator as any. The group has advocated violent regime change against Iran for three decades. Its supporters are in doubt that this is a rallying cry for a US-led war.

Even before taking office, revelations about potential Trump administration advisers and officials giving support to the terrorist MEK cult caused concern among foreign policy [experts](#). After all, anti-Iran pundits can choose from literally thousands of civil groups and personalities to act as advisors and partners in challenging Iran. The MEK's dirty past includes the [anti-Imperialist](#) inspired murder of six Americans in pre-revolution Iran which it later celebrated in [songs](#) and publications. (The family of U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jack Turner – “We were the first victims of terror before there was ever a war on terror” – is currently [seeking redress](#) for his death.) The new president has apparently brushed aside such concerns and has chosen to surround himself with [people](#) who have advocated for the MEK.

By not denouncing the MEK Trump has done several things. One is to signal that he is at war not with Iran but with Iranians. The MEK is [hated](#) more profoundly than any of Iran's current political leaders by Iranians inside and outside the country.

He also signals that his war is not with ISIS but with the country Iran. Donald Trump rose to victory in part on the promise to take on ISIS and defeat the group. Yet ISIS cannot be defeated except by a coalition of forces that includes Iran.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/03/trumps-belligerence-towards-iran-plays-into-the-hands-of-tehrans-hardliners>

Trump's belligerence towards Iran plays into the hands of Tehran's hardliners

... The threat to Iran is not just from Trump but rather the combination of a reckless, ignorant leader, surrounded by hawks blind to nuances on the ground and bent on regime change. Some of his senior appointees have backed MEK, a fringe Iranian opposition group extremely unpopular in Iran. They fought alongside Saddam Hussain against Iran in the eight-year ...

Saeed Kamali Dehghan, The Guardian, February 04 2017

Distorting realities, ignoring nuances and hijacking people's fears: that's the recipe for a demagogue who lives not on his own wits but others' miseries. It is particularly bad when the person or the country being targeted by that demagogue does little to straighten things out, which is exactly what is happening right now with Iran and [Donald Trump](#).

Iranians know too well from their own experience with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, their hardline former president, how dangerous it is to have a politician telling you passionately half of the truth without caring that the other half is often a lie or a distortion of facts.

Trump's increasingly bellicose approach towards Iran, first by imposing a blanket travel ban, then putting [Tehran "on notice"](#) after a ballistic missile test, as well as by [reported plans](#) of new sanctions, carries two subtle messages. The first message is that Iranophobia is going to be his adopted weapon to distract attentions at home, appeal strongly to the US's wealthy Arab allies who are already [welcoming him as a moderate president](#), and please Benjamin Netanyahu. Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, [reacting on Twitter to the missile test](#), is right to point out that Iran only spends a fraction on defence compared to the US's Arab allies in the region, which are big recipients of US, UK and French arms.

Trump's second message, albeit one barely admitted by his officials, is that his administration's problem is not just with the Iranian state, but with its people too. His executive order suspending all entries to the US from seven predominantly Muslim countries affects Iranians to a greater extent than it does nationals from the other six states.

There are [more Iranians](#) in the US, and far more Iranian students are likely to be affected by the new measures than



those from Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen put together. Last year, there were 12,269 Iranian students studying in the US, according to data by [the Institute of International Education](#), compared to 5,085 from the six other countries. Iranians are struggling to understand why they are being targeted in this way.

The most high-profile Iranian affected by the recent travel ban so far has not been an Iranian revolutionary guard, [but Asghar Farhadi](#), the award-winning Iranian director whose new film *The Salesman* has earned him a nomination for a second Oscar. Images that came out of airports were heartbreaking but inadvertently showed how successful Iranians are in the US. There were Harvard-bound Iranian sisters detained, scientists stranded, artists in limbo.

Iranians expatriates in the US have indeed been immensely successful. In fact, Iran's brain drain problem is due to the many talented students who emigrate to the US. [Omid Kordestani](#), the executive chairman of Twitter, the very platform Trump uses to broadcast his views on a daily basis, is Iranian. The founder of eBay, Pierre Omidyar, is Iranian. [Maryam Mirzakhani](#), who won the Fields Medal, the highest accolade in mathematics, in 2014, is another example.

No American national has been killed by an Iranian on US soil since 1975 and [the US has produced more Islamic State fighters than Iran has](#). Yet for over a decade, the US has viewed Iran and its nuclear activities as its biggest threat.

Now [Iran](#) has shut down most of that programme and agreed to a high level of inspection currently not applied to

any other country. But the US is still worried. What is increasingly clear is that the US will remain worried so long as the Islamic Republic is in power.

This is not to say that Iran is not involved in any fishy business. At home, the country's human rights record remains dismal. A number of political prisoners are languishing in jail, with some on hunger strike. Religious minorities are discriminated against and the country has a high rate of executions. The biggest current problem is Iran's involvement in Syria, where it is staunchly supporting the brutal Bashar al-Assad, although large segments of Iranian society are critical about it, as seen in [a funeral that turned into a rare display of dissent](#) earlier this month. But Trump's focus on Iran has been disproportionate, politically biased and overblown.

The threat to Iran is not just from Trump but rather the combination of a reckless, ignorant leader, surrounded by hawks blind to nuances on the ground and bent on regime change. Some of his senior appointees have backed MEK, a fringe Iranian opposition group extremely unpopular in Iran. They fought alongside Saddam Hussain against Iran in the eight-year war in the 1980s. Breitbart, the American news website closely linked to the [Trump administration](#), recently pushed the claims of the former Shah's son, Reza Pahlavi, introducing him as the alternative to Iran's problem. Pahlavi does not have a strong base in Iran and the monarchy, despite occasional nostalgia for its glories, remains unpopular.

Iran, too, has to do more. It should learn how demonising another country can backfire and should do all it can to keep Europe on its side. This is why if Iran wants to win support at this critical moment, the [continuing detention of British-Iranian mother Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe](#) does exactly the opposite. Iran should realise how such poor treatment of innocent people affects minds in the west. For its own sake, as well as hers, it should release her.

Iranians have paid a high price for the inflammatory statements of their statesmen, but they have paid a bigger price for the ignorance of the opposite side to domestic politics in Iran, its lack of knowledge about the country's history. Trump's behaviour only plays into the hands of hardliners in Iran, particularly those who want to show the president, Hassan Rouhani, was wrong to find peace with the west.

For nearly 38 years, Iranian leaders have failed to convince their people that the US, which they call "the Great Satan", was their "enemy" too. Trump's first fortnight in office suggests that he may do that job for them. □

<http://www.nejatngo.org/en/post.aspx?id=8845>

Iran, a Major Victim of Terrorism

Western Bloggers, February 25, 2017

From the very beginning of the Revolution in 1979, Iran has suffered many terrorist attacks. One could even say Iran is somehow one of the major victims of terrorism in the world. If you take a look at the history of countries in the world, you'll notice that no other country has ever lost such a great number of officials in terrorist acts as Iran has. Interestingly, those who are claiming to be at war with terrorism provide those responsible for the death of civilians with office and the free rein to work in their countries.

The contradiction sharpens and reaches to the point that one of these terrorist groups rented an office a block away the White House which is the so-called pioneer of war on terror! All these measures prove the fact that terrorism is divided into two forms of "good" and "bad" from the point of view of certain Western countries; since they describe those who are for them as "good terrorists" and those who are against them as "bad terrorists".

That is why each year Iran faces different kinds of labels by the West as well as the usurper Zionist regime.

Below you will find brief accounts of the terrorist attacks carried out against the Iranian people over the last 38 years.

[...]

Zahedan bombing (2007)

A car filled with explosives stopped in front of a bus full of Revolutionary Guards in Ahmabad district, Zahedan, Sistan-Baluchestan Province at 6:30 a.m. on 14 February 2007. A few seconds later the bombs exploded, killing 18 Guards.

[...]

Ahvaz Bombings (2005)

The Ahvaz bombings were a series of bomb explosions that took place mostly in Ahvaz, Iran. The first bombing came ahead of the presidential election on 12 June.

Shiraz bombing (2008)

A terrorist bombing inside a mosque in Shiraz in April 2008 killed 14 people including 10 men, 2 women and 2 children. More than 200 were also injured. □

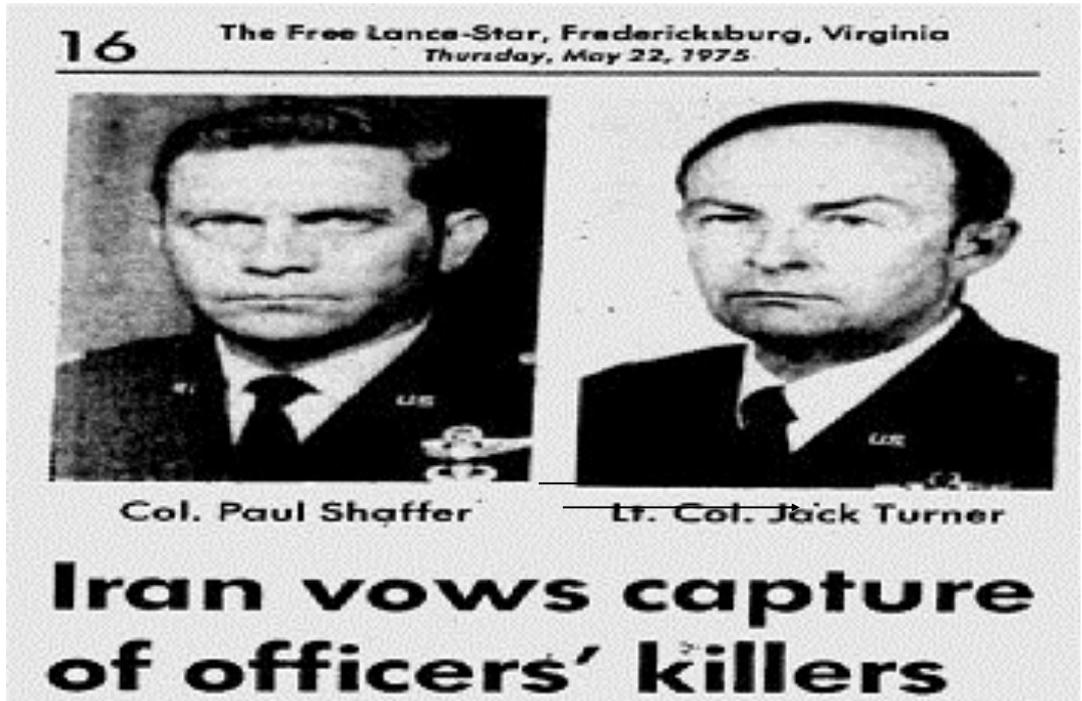
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The facts on the ground in Syria and Iraq demonstrate unequivocally that ISIS forces in Aleppo and Mosul have been defeated largely due to the involvement of Iran. Trump clearly has no intention of defeating terrorism.

But most importantly, this tolerance, even [warmth](#), shown toward the MEK in American foreign policy circles is a message that can be read from afar and by everyone else in the world: the American war box is virtually empty. Aside from a handful of puny sanctions, bringing the MEK into the equation means that not only does the America not have a stick to wave at Iran, it appears foolish enough, befuddled by ideological zeal perhaps, to tie its fate to the most unlucky and doom-laden group there ever was.

Laughably, parasitically, the MEK has consistently tied its fate to whichever it assumed was the winning side. However, the choice of MEK sponsors no longer looks so astute. Ayatollah Khomeini quickly saw through the [MEK's smarmy overtures](#) to share power and promptly exiled them from Iran. The next step was to ally with Saddam Hussein against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war – a feat of spectacular treachery for which no Iranian will ever forgive them. After Saddam's fall the MEK believed that the chaos in Iraq which gave rise to the insurrection of Al Qaida in Iraq would somehow carry them forward. The MEK even flirted with support for ISIS and the [Syrian Free Army](#) hoping they would find a home in the new Caliphate. Instead, the MEK were evicted from their base and sent into deeper exile in Albania, a country with no axe to grind against Iran. Long term sponsors have included Israel – which tasked MEK operatives with the assassination of Iranian nuclear scientists – and the anti-Shia Saudi Arabia. Both countries are bogged down with interminable troubles of their own. And now the MEK are hoping to cosy up with the Trump administration.

The Obama administration kept the MEK at arms' length



Col. Jack Turner and Col. Paul Shaffer victims of Mojahedin Khalq terror campaign

and never entertained direct support for the group. When the government of Iraq held the US, along with the UN, responsible for removing the MEK from Iraq to a third country, the then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was forced to agree to remove the MEK from the US terrorism list before any third country would legally be able to accept them on their territory.

Since 2001 Trump's predecessors have built up strong homeland defences and led counter-terrorism efforts particularly against the threat of ISIS to the US and Europe. It is now likely that this legacy will be squandered by an administration with an overriding hatred of Iran. Instead of understanding the benefit of developing strategic partnerships with countries like Iran and Iraq in the global fight against terrorism, the Trump administration would rather rain down terror on the Iranian people.

But the biggest delusion would be to believe that the MEK could be a reliable or effective partner in any sense. If Donald Trump has any insight into his own modus operandi – the erratic demands and refusal to take criticism – he will have a direct view of how the MEK operates. Aligning America's foreign policy with the whims of a [mind control cult](#) will not secure victory over Iran. Instead, it will diminish America's standing in the world, and it will certainly not make the world a better or safer place. □

<http://www.nejatngo.org/en/post.aspx?id=8849>

Nasty deals with MKO terrorists

... She explains that the American terror victims of the MKO were serious to pursue the case of their murdered loved one. "The family of Lt. Col. Jack Turner, one of the victims, filed a lawsuit, arguing his death was in revenge for the killing by the shah's intelligence agency, Savak, which was supported by the US and Israel, of nine anti-shah elements fleeing arrest ...

Mazda Parsi, Nejat Society, February 27 2017

What makes a terrorist who has assassinated your country fellow men a dear trustworthy friend?

The beginning paragraph of the extensively published article of Jon Gombrell of the Associated Press indicates how controversial is the affairs between the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (the MKO) and the United States: "An official in U.S. President Donald Trump's cupboard and no less than considered one of his advisers gave paid speeches for an Iranian exile group that killed Individuals earlier than the 1979 Islamic Revolution, ran donation scams and noticed its members set themselves on fireplace over the arrest of their chief."

This short statement of the article is enough to learn that the MKO is a cult-like group with deceptive methods of fund raising and brainwashed members who set themselves on fire to protest against the arrest of their Sheguru; it has assassinated some US citizens while it is donating large amounts of money to some other US citizens!

A few cases of the MKO's paid sponsors are discussed in Gambrell's report while the MKO's pay roll is full of bipartisan US politicians who intentionally or unintentionally ignore the true nature of the MKO as a destructive terrorist cult. The group has the blood of the Iranian people, Iraqi people, US military personnel and civilians on its hands. The group has also been involved in massacring its own members who disassociated themselves and did not go along with the attitudes and approaches of the Cult during different periods.

Donald Trump's aggressive policies against Muslim countries, particularly Iran, is warmly welcome by the MKO. The group's propaganda machine is evidently pleased to see the perspective of further sanctions the US might impose on Iranian people. But, Are the Iranian people deserved to be treated like this? Are they deserved to be banned from entering the US?

Michael Jansen of the Jordan Times writes about Trumps' hostile acts against Iranians, "Trump needlessly and heedlessly included Iran in the group of seven Muslim countries



when imposing his hasty, poorly prepared and ill-conceived ban on US entry on citizens from these countries holding visas."

"Although federal judges issued restraining orders, temporarily rescinding Trump's ban, Iranians are upset and confused by this measure, as it is meant to apply to citizens of countries involved in "terrorist" incidents in the US.," She adds. "There have, in fact, been no attacks by Iranians on US citizens in the US and only one in Iran itself."

And then, she ironically points to nasty deals that are based on hypocrisy. "This took place in 1975, when two air force officers were killed en route to an air base," She reminds the audience. "This was before the 1979 overthrow of Washington's ally, the shah, by the Islamic Revolution."

She explains that the American terror victims of the MKO were serious to pursue the case of their murdered loved one. "The family of Lt. Col. Jack Turner, one of the victims, filed a lawsuit, arguing his death was in revenge for the killing by the shah's intelligence agency, Savak, which was supported by the US and Israel, of nine anti-shah elements fleeing arrest," Jansen repeats what Gambrell had ended his article with.

"The commander and members of this group [anti-shah elements], the Mujahedin e-Khalq, were executed in 1976," Jansen links the MKO terrorist background to their today's paid sponsors. "It does not make sense that the Turner family is suing Savak, which is long gone, or the Mujahedin, an enemy of the current Iranian regime and the friend of some senior members of the Trump administration." □

continues from page 8:

Turkish, Iranian, and Arab nations are trapped inside their states and have little to no control over their diplomatic and military operations.

States seek to survive their hostilities, while nations pay the unfathomable price of suffering their leaders' decisions. Reclaim the name of the country and do not allow it abused as the first political move towards a military attack.

Second, denounce those treacherous forces among the expat opposition – now led by the cultic People's Mujahedin of Iran (MEK), and Reza Pahlavi, the son of the former Shah – that demand "regime change" in Iran.

Neither of these characters has the slightest legitimacy inside Iran. A blind hatred of the Islamic Republic is definitive to these expat forces, no matter what the consequences for Iranians as a people. That hatred is categorically different from any legitimate critical stand vis-a-vis Iran.

There must remain no false claim that any one of these discredited expat oppositions represents the Iranian people. They do not.

Third, give voice to the legitimate internal dissidents who oppose foreign intervention and domestic tyranny at one and the same time.

These forces must be mobilised to denounce war and demand civil liberties in one breath. Their active opposition to a possible US war on Iran will have domestic, regional, and global echoes.

Fourth, the more democratic, a nation the lower the possibility of a military invasion by the US and its allies.

If the ruling regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq had any semblance of democratic legitimacy, they would not have been so easily demonised, invaded, and destroyed.

Iranians do not live in a democratic country. They cannot freely mobilise a demonstration denouncing Trump's war-mongering and Ali Khamenei's tyranny at the same time.

Nevertheless, they habitually turn their periodic presidential and parliamentary elections into a major force to register their democratic will within the tight limits of the ruling theocracy.



The US president needs a war and all the indications point to Iran as what seems like the easiest target in his crosshairs, writes Dabashi

The forthcoming presidential election in May 2017 must be turned into a full spectrum of staging their antiwar and democratic will, whether they opt to participate in this election or boycott it, they must use it as a stage to show the world their opposition to "regime change" by nefarious forces cooked up in the US, [Europe](#), and their own region.

Fifth, the globally celebrated Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi and the lead actress Taraneh Alidoosti have publicly denounced Trump's Muslim ban and [declined to come](#) to the US to attend the [Academy Awards](#) for which their new film, *Salesman*, has been nominated.

In a bold and brilliant move, Sadiq Khan, the Muslim mayor of London, has just announced on that designated night – February 26 – he will have a public screening of Farhadi's film at Trafalgar Square, in which around 10,000 people are expected to attend, and leading British filmmaker Mike Leigh is scheduled to speak.

On this, and other international public scenes, Iranian artists and intellectuals and their non-Iranian colleagues must use their forum to denounce war on their homeland.

Iran without borders

Sixth, the expat intellectuals must clearly and unequivocally denounce economic sanctions and war on their homeland.

They must remember how expat Iraqi intellectuals were used and abused by the US propaganda to pave the way for the invasion of Iraq.

Whatever qualms they may have with the ruling regime –

and they are plenty – is secondary to the territorial integrity of their homeland and the physical wellbeing of their people.

Seventh, prominent Iranians in the US in various industries must start employing their social capital and call their senators and representatives, opposing more sanctions and warmongering against their homeland.

They need to find out more [about the so-called](#) “Authorization of Use of Force Against Iran Resolution, H J Res 10”, introduced by Representative Alcee Hastings days before Trump’s inauguration.

They need to find out who inspired this man to pave the way for the US military action against Iran, and how to counter it.

Eighth, Iranians outside their homeland must join antiwar mobilisations in Asia, [Africa](#), Latin America, and Europe, and make their voices integral to all other antiwar voices. They must exit their habitual nativism and learn a far more global antiwar culture.

Ninth, the Iranian community in the US has an even more critical role to play. They must join the [massive protests](#) against Trump’s domestic and foreign policies. If their concerns against war on Iran is to be taken seriously, they must equally care about Trump’s war on the environment, on [Native American rights](#) to their lands, voter suppression, [the immigrant communities](#), deregulation of Wall Street, assault on public education and healthcare.

Tenth, none of these may, in fact, prevent the war, but they can strip American militarism of any claim to legitimacy.

Our task is not to side with either of the two ruling regimes in Iran or the US. Our task is to unite Iranians, Americans, and other nations against any and all acts of violence and warmongering in any country.

Hamid Dabashi is Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York.

The views expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera’s editorial policy.

An <http://opinion.ai> (Translated by iran-interlink.org)

Iranian Mojahedin member punished for stealing food cans in a Babrru market

Iranian citizen, one of the Mojahedin refugees hosted in Albania, ended up as a defendant in the Court of Tirana, reports Panorama.

He was tried for committing theft, an offense which he committed while living at the Mojahedin asylum seekers refuge in Babrru village.

The trial of 47-year-old Mohsen S. ended a few days ago. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 6 months in prison.

He was tried under ‘obligatory appearance’ as a security measure and will not end up in cells. The court suspended his prison sentence for 18 months during which he must not commit any further offence.

The Tirana Court decision clarified that the defendant, Mohsen S., was currently based at the asylum seekers centre located in the capital’s province of Babrru. On August 31, 2016, around 13:30, he was caught by the owner of a market stealing food goods in his shop.

The market in question is a short distance from the centre where Mojahedin asylum seekers have been placed. According to the Court decision, the defendant Mohsen S. placed some food stuff into the bag he had with him and tried to leave without paying. His actions were observed by the owner of the supermarket.

The owner prevented the 47-year-old from leaving his shop. In the refugee’s bag he found three cans of fish, a bottle of a carbonated soft drink and a bottle of ketchup. The supermarket owner informed the police.

After his arrest, criminal proceedings on the charge of theft were brought against the Iranian. The defendant admitted to the theft. At the same time, he admitted that he had also stolen goods the day before in the same market but stressed he was unable to pay because he had not yet received any payment from the Mojahedin organization.

Before and during the trial the defendant admitted the offense and showed deep repentance, asking forgiveness from the Court with the promise that he will not commit such an act again. In justification of the suspension of sentence for the defendant, the court emphasized that he posed little social danger, had no previous convictions and the fact that the defendant is seeking asylum in Albania. □

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/ten-iranians-preempt-trump-war-170220032936103.html>

Ten things Iranians can do to preempt a Trump war

Donald Trump wants the US to go to war with Iran, but Iranians can still stop or at least delegitimise his efforts.

Hamid Dabashi, Aljazeera, February 20 2017

Are nations entirely helpless in the face of blatant warmongering targeting their homeland? What can ordinary people do, independent of the state that is ruling them, to prevent, or at least make it difficult, for US militarism, now under the command of [a mentally unstable](#) "commander-in-chief", first to demonise before starting to bomb them?

For those of us who still actively remember the preparatory stage of the United States-led invasion, destruction, and occupation of first [Afghanistan](#) in 2001 and then [Iraq](#) in 2003, we know how demonising entire nations was and remains the indispensable first step before starting to bomb a country.

That history has now assumed an added urgency. [Donald Trump](#) needs a war and [all the indications point](#) to Iran as what seems like the easiest target in his crosshairs. He will never pick a fight with [China](#), or Russia, or even [North Korea](#). Like all bullies, he picks a fight he thinks ([falsely](#)) he can easily win.

A war with [Iran](#) will "justify" his [Muslim ban](#), drum up his xenophobic base, distract people from his terrifying domestic atrocities, create a state of emergency in which no resistance is tolerated, critical thinking and civic opposition will be equated with treason, Muslim registry and [even internment](#) will not be too off their marks.

In what follows, I enumerate 10 things Iranians, as a people, can do to preempt a war on their country. Although I will be specific to Iran – for I think it is the most obvious target of Trump's warmongering – the same ideas can be extended to any other potential target of US militarism, which predates and will outlast Trump.

Reclaim the nation

First and foremost reclaim the term "Iran" for the nation and away from "the state" that rules over it.

In the current diplomatic and journalistic parlance, "Iran" summons both the "nation" and the "state" that claims it together. This is a false coupling.

As a signifier, "Iran" belongs to the Iranian people. The state, the current or any other, is an appendix to it.

Like all other states around it, "the Islamic Republic" is today integral to a geopolitics of the region with almost all their soft and hard powers active in each other's territories.

From [Turkey](#) to Iran to Saudi Arabia – at the head of an eleven Arab nation coalition – are militarily engaged outside their own borders.

[continues on page 6](#)



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UP TO DATE
NO. 100
FEBRUARY 2017

Publication of Association AAWA e.V.

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