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Senators and National Security Experts Offer President Obama Policy Option on Iran, Urge Protection of Iranian Dissidents in Iraq

WASHINGTON, March 15, 2013 /PRNewswire/ -- At a briefing in the United States Senate, former lawmakers and national security officials offered what they described as a coherent, firm and effective policy to deal with the Iranian regime's intransigent nuclear posture, its nefarious regional interference and its intrigues with the Iraqi government aimed at eliminating members of Iran's main opposition movement, the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), now in Camp Liberty and Camp Ashraf.

Held at the Senate Kennedy Caucus room and moderated by former Representative Patrick Kennedy, the briefing featured former 9/11 Vice-Chair and House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Lee Hamilton, former National Security Advisor Gen. James Jones, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL), the Budget Committee Ranking Member.

Expressing hope that "voices of the people of Iran could be heard in a way that turn the tide," Senator Sessions endorsed President Obama's pledge to keep all options on the table in preventing Tehran from getting the bomb: "I can say, as a member of the other party, the Republican Party, that he would have great support of the Congress. There would be no division in the country if that decision would need to be made."

"Despite America's pledges, Iraq's promises, and the international community's obligation to protect these unarmed refugees, an unconscionable humanitarian crisis grinds on... The 3,100 residents of the ironically named Camp Liberty..., but one which could more aptly be named 'Camp Shame,' ...and 100 at Camp Ashraf, all continue to live in poor and oppressive conditions, deprived of proper medical care and legal rights," Gen. Jones said.

He added, "Since the transfer from Ashraf to Liberty, more people have perished than have been transferred abroad; nine have perished and 100 have been injured, while only seven resettled out of the country... A significant part of the problem is that the United States has not provided the customary leadership we usually bring to humanitarian calamities of this type."

Warning of another attack on Liberty residents, Chairman Hamilton said, "I must insist that they be transferred at the very least to Camp Ashraf where they will have more protection than they do now from attacks."

"Our policies should include a credible military threat, support for a unified, capable, internationally-recognized, and organized opposition to the Iranian regime... The 10-point plan by the MEK for the future of Iran is right on the mark: the ballad box, freedom of speech, freedom from the media, separation of church and state, gender equality, support for the rule of law, human rights being observed, free market system, peaceful co-existence,

a fear-free Iran without nuclear weapons. That is the platform that I can endorse with great enthusiasm," he said.

Speaker Gingrich described the attack on Liberty as "a deliberate effort by the Maliki regime to curry favor with the Iranians," adding, "The Iranian dictatorship legitimately hates the MEK because it stands for the end of the Iranian dictatorship and offers an opportunity for freedom of the world... The dictatorship is attacking the people who would... create an opportunity for freedom for Iran and peace for the region. ...It's quite clear the MEK would play a major and decisive role as part of that."

"We have a moral obligation to save the life of every person who gave up an armed camp that was safe because of American promises, and it's very important to remember that the American people through their representatives made representations of safety which led the Camp Ashraf residents to go to Camp Liberty," Mr. Gingrich emphasized.

"The United States has said that they do not believe Camp Liberty to be safe. The UN mission, Martin Kobler, won't even visit Camp Liberty and yet he is charged with the protection and safety of the residents of Camp Liberty. How ironic. But of course we should not be surprised because this is the same Martin Kobler, who clearly lied to the world and to the residents of Camp Liberty when he said that it was a safe camp... Should it be any concern to us that his wife is the ambassador from Germany to Iraq and has a vested interest in preserving and protecting her relationship with the Iraqi leaders?" Rep. Kennedy said.

SOURCE: Organization of Iranian American Communities