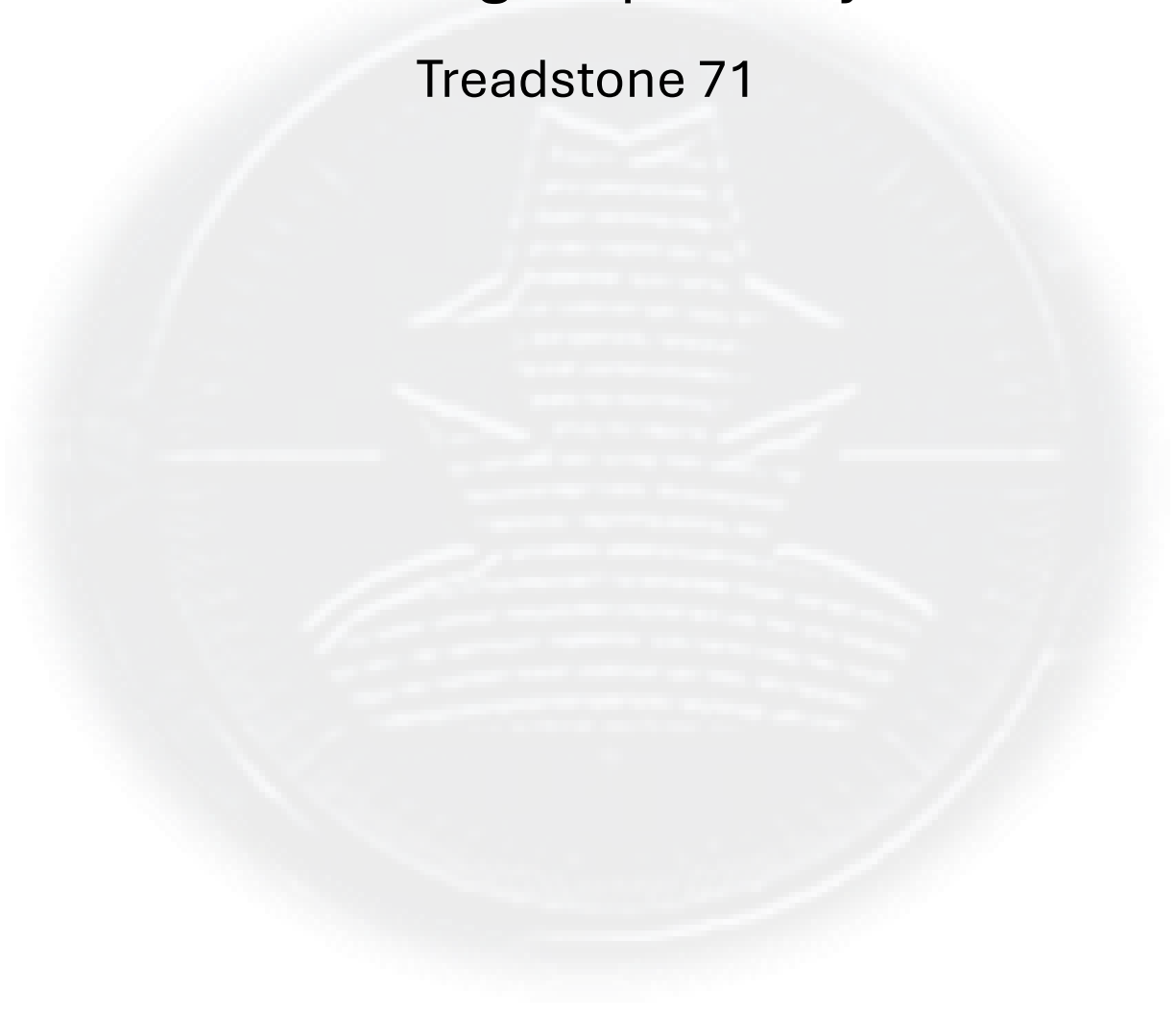


Brief: MOIS False Tactics and Ruses

Hostage Diplomacy

Treadstone 71



Background

In an indirect response to staunch support from 510 German legislators for Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan and the MKO's fight against the IRGC, the Iranian regime has intensified efforts to destabilize and discredit opposition groups. German legislators condemned Iran's human rights abuses, advocated for designating the IRGC as a terrorist organization, and called for a democratic republic in Iran. Considering the IranFree2024 rally scheduled for June 29 in Berlin, our analysis reveals the regime's use of blatant inconsistencies, disinformation, and desperate lies to counteract this support. Below is the posting from Iranian authorities -

According to [Khabar Online](#) News Agency, after the news of the deterioration of the condition of the leader of the terrorist group of the Hypocrites and his transfer to the intensive care unit, the group of Hypocrites is trying to deny the story by taking various measures to prevent internal pressures and tensions, to the extent that they published unpublished pictures of a meeting with a retired member of the French Parliament to refute the claim of his deteriorating condition. They were telling a false narrative about Maryam Rajavi's situation.

An informed source in France said that the 70-year-old leader of the Hypocrites group was attacked again on Monday, and they are trying to stabilize his vital signs by using high-dose drugs to prepare the conditions for him to attend his annual ceremony for a few minutes on June 30 at any cost in order to reduce some of the internal pressures of the people.

Also, according to informed sources in the French government, which were obtained by IRNA correspondent, the French government has set a two-month deadline for the evacuation of the headquarters of this group, which they attacked two weeks ago and confiscated some espionage equipment, weapons, and unauthorized persons in it.

The French staff of the group has proposed several sites for relocation, such as an abandoned factory on the outskirts of Paris, which the French police have rejected due to the lack of constant control and supervision, and have also rejected the group's proposal to move to a new location in the city of Paris because "the presence of the hypocrites is dangerous to the security of France."

Some news reports indicate that the French government is pressuring to evacuate the main headquarters of the Hypocrites and its leaders in Auvers-sur-Oise and set a three-month deadline.

Analysis

The Iranian regime uses a combination of disinformation, misinformation, and narrative control to achieve multiple strategic objectives, including undermining opposition groups like the MKO, manipulating international perception, and maintaining domestic stability.

In a concerted effort to undermine a strong statement of support from German legislators for Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan and the recognition of the MKO's struggle against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC), the Iranian regime has resorted to disinformation and propaganda.

The Iranian regime's efforts to destabilize and discredit opposition groups like the MKO have intensified in response to a significant show of support from German legislators. In a landmark statement, 510 members of the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) and state parliaments endorsed Maryam Rajavi's 10-point plan for a democratic Iran and called for the recognition of the MKO's struggle against the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC). The coalition, comprising 160 federal representatives and 350 state representatives from diverse political parties, called for the recognition of the MKO's resistance against the IRGC and the classification of the IRGC as a terrorist organization. They condemned the Iranian regime's human rights abuses, particularly against women, and demanded accountability for the 1988 massacre. Prominent figures signed the declaration, including four federal ministers, two state ministers, and former federal ministers. They emphasized the need for a democratic republic in Iran, rejecting any form of dictatorship.

In retaliation, the Iranian regime has employed a range of disinformation tactics aimed at undermining the legitimacy of the MKO and distracting from its repressive actions. Through false narratives, fabricated claims, and manipulative use of state-controlled media, the regime seeks to create confusion, sow discord within the opposition, and mislead international observers. This introduction outlines the regime's disinformation strategies and juxtaposes them against the principled support from German legislators, setting the stage for a detailed analysis of these contrasting approaches.

Iranian Disinformation Tactics

The Iranian regime, threatened by the substantial support for opposition groups and critical statements from international bodies, employs disinformation tactics to undermine these narratives. Below is an analytic breakdown -

Disinformation Tactic	Description	Example from the Text	Impact
False Narrative	Creating and spreading false stories to distract and confuse.	Claiming Maryam Rajavi's deteriorating health and MKO's attempts to hide it.	Attempts to destabilize and discredit the opposition leadership.
Fabrication	Making up events or deadlines to instill fear or uncertainty.	False claims about the French government's deadline for MKO's evacuation.	Creates a false sense of urgency and crisis around MKO's operations.
Misleading Information	Providing inaccurate information to shape perception.	Misrepresenting safety inspections as attacks and confiscations.	Attempts to portray MKO as engaged in illegal activities.
Propaganda and Narrative Control	Consistent use of state media to propagate the regime's narrative.	Using IRNA and Khabar Online to publish unfounded allegations.	Reinforces the regime's narrative both domestically and internationally.
Disinformation through State Media	Leveraging media to spread propaganda and manipulate facts.	Publishing speculative health updates about opposition leaders.	Distracts from the legitimacy and strength of the opposition.
Manipulation of Diplomatic Relations	Using diplomatic channels to pressure other countries to act against opposition.	Alleging espionage equipment and unauthorized persons to justify actions against MKO in France.	Aims to isolate MKO internationally and justify harsh measures.

Comparative Analysis

Aspect	German Legislators' Statement	Iranian Regime's Disinformation Response
Human Rights	Condemnation of human rights abuses and call for accountability for the 1988 massacre.	Denial and distraction from the regime's abuses, focusing instead on false narratives about MKO.
Support for Opposition	Explicit support for MKO and recognition of their resistance against IRGC.	Labeling MKO as terrorists and spreading false narratives to discredit them.
International Diplomacy	Urging the international community to recognize the Iranian people's right to rise against the regime.	Using diplomatic channels to spread false information and manipulate perceptions.
Designation of IRGC	Canada listed the IRGC as a terrorist organization.	Framing opposition groups as the actual threat and deflecting attention from IRGC's activities.
Political Change	Emphasis on the necessity for a democratic republic and rejecting any form of dictatorship.	Propaganda focuses on portraying the regime as reformable and demonizing opposition efforts.

Iranian Regime's Disinformation Response

In response, the Iranian regime, operating from a position of weakness, has launched a series of false and misleading statements aimed at discrediting the MKO and diverting attention from their human rights abuses. Key tactics include -

1. **False Narratives** - Iranian state media falsely claimed that Maryam Rajavi was in poor health and that the MKO was attempting to conceal this. This narrative aims to create instability within the opposition by spreading doubt about its leadership.
2. **Fabricated Claims** - The regime falsely reported that the French government had set a deadline for the MKO to vacate their headquarters, suggesting increased international pressure on the group. Iran intended to create a sense of urgency and crisis around the MKO's operations.
3. **Misleading Information** - Iran fabricated the allegations of espionage equipment and unauthorized persons at the MKO's headquarters in France to paint the organization as involved in illegal activities. This disinformation attempts to legitimize raids and harsh measures taken against the MKO.

4. Propaganda and Narrative Control - Using state-controlled media outlets like IRNA and Khabar Online, the regime spreads speculative health updates and other unfounded allegations to distract from the growing international support for the opposition.
5. Manipulation of Diplomatic Relations - Iran uses diplomatic channels to pressurize countries like France and Albania into acting against the MKO, often leveraging false claims to justify these actions. This tactic aims to isolate the MKO internationally and justify repressive measures.

The German legislators' statement stands in stark contrast to the Iranian regime's disinformation. The legislators explicitly condemned human rights abuses in Iran, supported the MKO's resistance, and called for international recognition of the Iranian people's right to resist the regime. They urged the designation of the IRGC as a terrorist organization and the implementation of an oil embargo against Iran.

The Iranian regime's response involved spreading false narratives to destabilize and discredit the MKO, fabricating crises to create a false sense of urgency, and manipulating diplomatic channels to pressure host countries. The tactics divert attention from the regime's abuses and maintain control through misinformation.

The Iranian regime's disinformation campaign against the MKO highlights its desperation to counter growing international support for democratic change in Iran. The German legislators' robust support for the MKO and condemnation of the Iranian regime's actions reflect a significant step towards recognizing and addressing the need for political change in Iran.

Broader Review

The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) is orchestrating a campaign against Iranian refugees and opposition groups, mainly targeting the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (MKO) and anyone expressing interest or assumed to be expressing interest in the Freelan2024 rally. The MOIS employs a variety of tactics to undermine, intimidate, and gather intelligence on opposition members and their supporters.

The regime's sophisticated online tactics include the creation of fake MKO accounts on platforms like Instagram. These operatives offer attractive travel packages for the June 29 rally in Berlin under the hashtag #Freelan2024Summit. The offers, which include free travel and training packages worth 10 to 25k Euros, target journalists and students with malicious URLs designed to track and collect information on those who click them. Additionally, the MOIS has created accounts impersonating NCRI spokespersons on WhatsApp, sending video clips and messages asking for personal information. Reports indicate direct threats to families in Iran, deterring them from attending the rally. Individuals in cities like Cologne and Düsseldorf have received calls threatening their families if they attend. The regime also uses technology such as camera-equipped eye lenses to record attendees at the rally. Defectors from the MKO, now collaborating with MOIS, host Instagram live sessions to discredit the MKO and promote regime narratives.

These tactics intend to undermine the credibility of the MKO, deter participation in opposition activities, and gather intelligence on dissidents and their networks. The MOIS's actions have a chilling effect on opposition activities, both inside and outside Iran, fostering fear and hesitation among potential rally participants and supporters.

The Iranian regime's primary goal is to suppress dissent by intimidating and monitoring opposition members, thereby preventing any organized resistance that could challenge its authority. By labeling the MKO as terrorists and foreign agents, the regime aims to delegitimize their cause and reduce their support base domestically and internationally. The regime uses these tactics to gather detailed information on opposition members, their activities, and their networks, which they will likely use for future operations.

The timing of these actions corresponds with heightened MKO activities and international criticism of Iran's human rights record. The regime is under significant internal and external pressure, including economic challenges and social unrest, which heightens the need to suppress any potential threats to its stability.

The impact so far includes a slightly diminished rally participation, as targeted potential attendees have canceled their plans due to threats and intimidation. Increased fear and hesitation among Iranian dissidents and their families have led to decreased public dissent and reduced participation in opposition activities. Although not a significant number, these actions have drawn condemnation from human rights organizations and foreign governments, highlighting Iran's repressive measures against dissidents.

To counter these tactics, rally organizers collaborated with local and international security agencies to safeguard participants and ensure the event's security. Garnering support from international organizations and governments to condemn Iran's actions and protect dissidents is essential. Providing cybersecurity training for rally participants to prevent data breaches and protect against surveillance will also be beneficial.

The Iranian MOIS will likely continue and intensify its efforts to disrupt the June 29 rally. Potential future tactics may include increased cyber-attacks targeting event organizers, participants, and related infrastructure. Physical infiltration of the rally with undercover agents to cause disruptions or gather intelligence is possible. The regime may amplify disinformation campaigns to discredit the rally and its organizers and enhance surveillance operations, possibly using advanced technology to monitor and record attendees.

The Iranian regime's actions against the MKO and other opposition groups are part of a broader strategy to maintain control and suppress dissent. Opposition groups and the international community can better protect human rights and support democratic movements within and outside Iran. Implementing robust security measures, raising public awareness, and fostering international cooperation are crucial steps in mitigating the regime's efforts and ensuring the success of opposition activities such as the Berlin rally.

As described above, Iran secured the release of a French national held hostage in Iran. The exchange involved Iranian agents conducting security checks and monitoring opposition offices in France, which subsequently led to the release of the hostage. The incident has significant implications for international diplomacy, national security, and the tactics employed by the Iranian regime.

Iranian agents conducted three attacks against an opposition office in France last year, resulting in the arrest of five individuals. This year, a French entity ensured safety and security at the opposition office by having about half a dozen people inspect fire extinguishers, exits, doors, and other safety measures. Another group, likely from the French equivalent of the customs and border control, checked everyone. Outside the gates, French authorities stationed 30 to 40 police officers as a precaution and as part of the false show of force.

French authorities took them from Germany and Italy for questioning but released them after four hours as there was no basis for their extradition.

Tactic	Intended Impact	Intended Targets	Level of Maliciousness
Creation of Fake MEK Accounts	Gather intelligence, track supporters, spread disinformation	Journalists, students, rally attendees	High
Attractive Travel Packages with Malicious URLs	Collect personal information, track opposition supporters	Potential rally participants	High
Impersonation of NCRI Spokespersons	Extract personal information, spread misinformation	MEK supporters, general public	High
Direct Threats to Families	Intimidate and deter participation	Families of potential rally attendees	Severe
Camera-Equipped Eye Lenses	Record and identify rally attendees	Rally participants	High
Defectors' Instagram Live Sessions	Discredit MEK, promote regime narratives	MEK supporters, general public	Moderate
Cyber Attacks on Event Organizers	Disrupt rally organization and operations	Rally organizers, participants	High
Physical Infiltration of Rally	Gather intelligence, cause disruptions	Rally participants	Severe
Amplified Disinformation Campaigns	Discredit rally and its organizers	International community	High
Enhanced Surveillance Operations	Monitor and record opposition activities	Rally participants	High
Security Inspections and Arrests in France	Intimidate opposition, gather intelligence	MEK members, opposition groups	Severe
Hostage Diplomacy	Extract concessions, demonstrate negotiation power	Western nations, opposition groups	Severe

Figure 1 Analysis of Iranian MOIS Tactics

As previously stated, the inspections and the arrests occurred shortly before the release of a French national from Iran. Following the release, Iran published a propaganda piece disparaging the actions and motives of the opposition, portraying the security inspections as a legitimate safety review.

The primary actors involved in this incident are the Iranian regime, French authorities, and the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (MKO). Iranian agents and possibly MOIS operatives engaged in monitoring and attacking opposition offices in France. The events involved multiple security inspections and arrests, followed by the release of a hostage. The inspections were ostensibly for safety purposes but were likely a front for intelligence gathering and intimidation.

The event underscores Iran's willingness to use hostages to achieve its objectives abroad, including the suppression of opposition groups. It demonstrates the regime's use of propaganda to frame its actions in a favorable light and discredit the opposition. Iran aims to discredit and suppress the MKO, which poses a significant threat to its authority. The regime uses hostage diplomacy to gain use in negotiations with Western nations. The timing of these actions aligns with the anniversary of previous attacks, likely to reinforce intimidation. The release of the hostage serves as a strategic move by Iran to show its capability to negotiate

and extract concessions. The Iranian regime's disinformation campaign against the MKO reflects its desperation to counter growing international support for democratic change in Iran. The German legislators' support for the MKO and condemnation of the regime's actions highlight the need for political change in Iran. Implementing security measures, raising public awareness, and fostering international cooperation are crucial to mitigating the regime's efforts and ensuring successful opposition activities.

