Madam Speaker, for nearly a decade the United

States has invested money, sweat, blood and tears, all in the name of a

free and democratic Iraq.

Before the war, Iraqis suffered from the oppressive dictatorship of

Saddam Hussein, and recent events have led me to believe that perhaps

the new government does not value freedom any more than the last one

did.

As a Member of Congress, I've been fortunate to go to Iraq several

times to visit with our troops. And during my last visit with a

bipartisan congressional delegation, we also met with Iraqi Prime

Minister Maliki. During the 2-hour-long discussion covering many

things, I asked one question: ``Can we go see Camp Ashraf?''

Now, Madam Speaker, Camp Ashraf houses Iranian dissidents who are

called the MEK, and I represent a good number of Iranian Americans who

have family members in this camp. They are particularly worried at this

point in time, since Iraqi forces had recently killed 36 residents at

the camp just a few weeks before. Here are the pictures of those real

people that were killed by the Iraqi forces that came into the camp.

Here is an example. You notice this is an American-made HUMVEE coming

into the camp. And over here on this far picture, you see an Iranian

dissident being run over by one of those HUMVEES driven by an Iraqi

soldier.

So that is why the question was asked: can we go see the camp and see

these Iranian dissidents? And of course, Maliki said, ``no way that's

going to happen.'' It left me wondering why he would refuse to let us

see and talk to these people and get the other side of this invasion by

the Iraqi soldiers. So we didn't get to go. And later I learned that

one reason we were actually told to leave the country is because we

asked to go see this camp and what happened to these 36 Iranian

dissidents.

And now we have Camp Liberty. Camp Liberty, Madam Speaker, is the

result of the fact that in Camp Ashraf, the Iraqi government is moving

these dissidents to another camp called Camp Liberty. These dissidents

are commonly referred to as the MEK, and Camp Liberty, ironically,

should be symbolic of a name of freedom, but it's anything but that.

Now the Iraqi government, having moved these dissidents from Camp

Ashraf to Camp Liberty, is still oppressing these Iranian dissidents.

The reality is Camp Liberty is worse than Camp Ashraf.

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said it best: ``This isn't a

jail, it's a concentration camp.''

Even in prisons, we allow lawyers to see their clients and their

family to see their loved ones. But not in Camp Liberty. And remember,

these people in Camp Liberty, these Iranian dissidents, have committed

no crime. They have violated no law. You can't help but think that good

old Maliki has something to hide again.

But word is leaking out that there's not enough drinking water in the

camp, there are ruptures in the sewage system, and they're having to be

fixed by hand by the residents.

Iraqi guards have their will at the camp, and they wander around with

no rules. They violate the privacy of these Iranian dissidents, many of

whom are women.

What's more, no one, not even the U.N., is confident that once

political refugee determination is made by other countries, those

countries will accept these dissidents into their country. Why?

Because our State Department incredibly, has the MEK, these folks in

this Camp Liberty, designated as a foreign terrorist organization. In

fact, Maliki told Members of Congress, one reason he treated the

residents in Camp Ashraf so poorly is because our own State Department

designates them as a foreign terrorist organization.

This designation is an old, failed State Department foreign policy

that designated these people as an FTO as a favor to the Iranian

government. That hasn't worked out too well with our foreign relations

with Iran, has it?

Since then, we've seen that the real terrorists in Iran are the

extreme mullahs and the tiny tyrant of the desert, Ahmadinejad, not the

opposition groups that want democracy in Iran.

Both the EU and the United Kingdom have removed the foreign terrorist

designation from the group, the MEK, but not the State Department. As

Iran defiantly marches toward nuclear weapons, the best hope for the

world is the people of Iran pushing for a regime change of their own

government. The longer we keep opposition groups who want to do just

that on the foreign terrorist organization list, the less likely it is

that the light of liberty will have a chance to shine in Iran.

The Federal courts have even ordered the State Department to review

this FTO designation, but the State Department continues to delay, to

delay, delay making a decision. The State Department must remove the

MEK from the foreign terrorist organization list immediately, and then

let liberty prevail in Camp Liberty and let these people leave Iraq in

a peaceful manner.

And that's just the way it is.

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