

Contribution by Mr. Roger Gale, MP to debate on Iran in House of Commons

Tuesday, 27 February 2007

Mr. Gale: I believe that most of us would now agree, however we voted at that time, that if there is to be regime change in Iran, it must be brought about internally. If that is the case, is it not perverse that many of those who might seek to bring about such change are proscribed?

Westminster Hall Iran Mr. Roger Gale (North Thanet) (Con): The point has been well made that we have seen in Iraq the disastrous results of armed intervention and regime change. I believe that most of us would now agree, however we voted at that time, that if there is to be regime change in Iran, it must be brought about internally. If that is the case, is it not perverse that many of those who might seek to bring about such change are proscribed? The facts have been stated, but let us get them absolutely clear. The People's Mujaheddin Organisation of Iran ceased internal operations in Iran in 2001, although it was proscribed in 2000. The United Kingdom Government have recognised that it has never made any threat to the UK or the people of this country, or attacked any property in the UK. It has handed over its weapons to the multinational force and is now a democratic organisation. The UK Government properly have recognised progress in Northern Ireland, where we now deal with people who 15 or 20 years ago we would not have entertained, in diplomatic terms. The game moves on. The European Court of Justice stated in terms that the PMOI's assets should not be frozen. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, South (Mr. Binley) is absolutely right to be ashamed that this country is leading the charge to maintain proscription of the PMOI. I have only one question for the Minister: how and when will the UK Government remove the proscription of the PMOI and allow the people of Iran to move towards internal change?