

ParsBrief

Number 31
March 2007

1. Mojahedin Khalq Organisation (MKO) to remain in EU's terror list, say European parliamentarians
2. EU says MKO Remains on Terror List
3. Iranian Mujahideen group must leave the country, says government
4. Should Washington "UNLEASH" Rajavi cult in Iraq?
5. Scooter Libby and World War III - How the Libby trial could impact US foreign policy



Brief No.31

www.nejatngo.org

March ,2007

Mojahedin Khalq Organisation (MKO) to remain in EU's terror list, say European parliamentarians

IRNA, February 28, 2007

The European Parliament, in a meeting Tuesday, clarified that a European court ruling on the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) in December referred to procedural matters and in no way changes the status of the MKO as a terrorist group .

Belgian Foreign Minister Karel de Gucht has reportedly said that he will use his veto power in the EU Council to stop any attempt to remove the MKO from the EU's terror list .

The EP's Committee for Relations with Iran held a meeting on "the MKO and consequences of the judgment of the European Court of First Instance of 12 December' to unfreeze the assets of the MKO. EU put the MKO on its terror list and ordered continued freezing of its funds in 2002 .

"It is not a ruling on substance. It is a procedural decision stating that the EU Council did not provide the right to a hearing .

So it is a procedural shortcoming," German MEP Michael Gahler, who is also vice-president of the EP's Foreign Relations Committee, told the meeting .

He said that the EU had sent a letter to the MKO stating the reasons why the group should be kept on the terror list .

"So it's not correct to believe that there was any other reason .

The problem lies in a procedural error. The MKO will try again and appeal against a final decision, but I am quite sure that the Council will not go along with the ruling (of the court) at the end of the day," said Gahler .

A legal advisor to the EU Council also explained that the European court ruling had reference to procedural matters relating to the obligations to justify the reasons and give the MKO the right to a hearing, but it does not affect the common EU position to maintain the MKO in its terror list .

Josy Dubie, Belgian senator and a former war correspondent for a Belgian TV channel, condemned the MKO as a terrorist organization .

Dubie told the meeting that he covered the eight-year imposed war in the 1980s from both sides, that is, Iran and Iraq, and witnessed MKO fighters launching attacks against their own country (Iran).

"What I discovered was a sect, a group of men and women completely and irrationally devoted to their leader, Masoud Rajavi, which shocked me deeply. I had a feeling that I was among a group of fanatics who followed the orders of their leader blindly," he added .

Dubie, since 1999, has been a member of the Belgian Senate and vice-chair of its Foreign Relations committee. He said he has been recently visited by some MKO members .

"They target people they consider to be important and try to influence them. They try to convince these people that they are a democratic movement fighting for their country. But that is the opposite of what I saw," said the Belgian senator, who also clarified that he had no sympathy for the current regime of President Ahmadinejad .

"So when I received them in my office, I told them what I had seen and they did not contact me again because when they `realize it is not going to work they abandon you and look for somebody else,'" he said .

When Maryam Rajavi was invited by certain members of the Belgian Senate, they (MKO) claimed they had been officially invited to the senate .

"I deny this propaganda. The Belgian Senate itself refused to receive Maryam Rajavi," he said .

Some individual members of the Belgian Senate, including its President Anne-Marie Lizin, received Rajavi, who lives in Paris, last October. "A large number of senators protested, including myself," said Dubie .

Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht asked the senate about this matter and said he was very sore about this meeting and regretted that she had been invited by some senators .

De Gucht reportedly told the senate that the MKO had been responsible for hundreds of attacks in Iran and elsewhere, practiced torture and used emotional blackmail .

Dubie said he asked De Gucht in the senate about the court ruling on the MKO and whether the minister was in favor of removing the MKO from the list of terrorist groups .

According to Dubie, the Belgian foreign minister's answer was :

"My answer to your question is very simple. I am in favor of keeping the PMOI on the European list and any decision to lift them or not to lift them requires the decision of all of the EU member states .

Belgium has a veto here and is prepared to use it " .

"I can reassure you that the council has no intention of taking the MKO off the list," said the minister .

Mohammad Hossein Sobhani, a repentant MKO member and an author, related his long and bitter experience with the terror group in Iraq -- how he was arrested and kept in solitary confinement for eight years in Asharf Camp and then in Abu Ghraib .

He asked the European parliamentarians not to use the "violations of human rights in Iran" as an excuse to support criminal terror groups such as the MKO .

Portugese MEP Paul Casaca, who organized the pro-MKO group 'Friends of a Free Iran' in the EP, had objected that since no MKO member was invited to speak, Sobhani should also not be allowed to talk in the meeting .

German MEP Michael Gahler said the agenda should not be changed .

"A voting of MEPs took place and the agenda was approved as it was." The chair of the EP's delegation from its Committee for Relations with Iran, Angelika Beer, said she decided not to invite the MKO "because the information provided to me told me that the MKO has not been deleted from the list of terrorist organizations and therefore I did not find it correct to invite them " .

EU says MKO Remains on Terror List

IRNA,

February 18, 2007

BRUSSELS (Press TV) – The European Union (EU) has sent a letter to the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO) terrorist group in which it enumerated the reasons it has placed the MKO on its terrorist blacklist.

Similar letters will be sent to those people or organizations which have been enlisted as terrorist groups, sources in the EU, speaking on condition of anonymity, told an IRNA correspondent in Brussels.

The letter follows the decision by the European Court of Justice last December to remove the group from the terrorist blacklist, alleging that there was no transparency in the way the list was composed.

But the EU Council declared on 30 January that it will keep the group on the blacklist.

EU imposes anti-terrorist restrictions on those organizations or groups which are in the blacklist, including freezing the assets or blocking the financial and economic funding, with the list being updated on a yearly basis.

France and Britain which had previously blacklisted MKO, have not reacted to the efforts to unblock the group's assets, EU's official website EU Observer reported.

United States declared that the MKO as a terrorist group in 1997

Iranian Mujahideen group must leave the country, says government

AP, February 2, 2007

Baghdad: The Iraqi government wants members of an Iranian opposition group to leave the country because it is a "terrorist organisation" and the Iraqi constitution bans hosting such movements, chief spokesman Ali Al Dabbagh said yesterday.

Al Dabbagh said members of the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran, or Mujahideen-e-Khalq, have been told they must go to Iran "or any other country" and should "arrange their residence in a country other than Iraq".

"The Cabinet affirms that the legal character of this organisation is a terrorist organisation," Al Dabbagh said during a news conference .

"We in Iraq have enough problems and we are passing through difficult circumstances. The constitution affirms that terrorist organisations should not be hosted ".

He said a joint committee including representatives of the US, Iraq and the Mujahideen had been established to arrange for the group's departure. He gave no deadline for them to leave.

Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki said in July he would ban the organisation, which opposes the cleric-dominated government in Tehran, from distributing statements and would restrict its fighters from leaving their camp in eastern Iraq, which was established during the rule of Saddam Hussain.

At the time, Al Maliki said the group's legal status would be reviewed. The US also considers the People's Mujahideen a terrorist organisation.

Al Dabbagh's comments came amid rising tension between the United States and Iran and weeks after the Iraqi government told the two countries to solve their problems away from Iraq's territories.

The United States has accused Iran of aiding extremist groups that attack US forces in Iraq .

In the past two months US troops have detained eight Iranians in Baghdad and the northern city of Irbil. Five of them are still in US custody.

The People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran has thousands of members in Iraq, most of them in Camp Ashraf in the eastern Diyala province that borders Iran .

Dozens of others have been stranded on the Iraq-Jordan border for years. The organisation was founded in the late 1960s and fled to Iraq in the early 1980s after it fell out with the clerical regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini .

During Saddam Hussain's rule, the movement used Iraq as a base for operations against Iran's government.

Should Washington "UNLEASH" Rajavi cult in Iraq?

Telegraph, February 25, 2007

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/02/25/wiran25.xml>

According to a report by Telegraph,US is secretly funding militant ethnic separatist groups in an attempt to pile pressure on the Islamic Republic to give up its nuclear program .

In the past year there has been a wave of unrest in ethnic minority border areas of , with bombing and assassination campaigns against soldiers and government officials .

Such incidents have been carried out by the Kurds in the west, the Azeris in the northwest, the Ahwazi Arabs in the southwest, and the Baluchis in the southeast. Most Baluchis live over the border in .

Although Washington officially denies involvement in such activity, Teheran has long said to detect the hand of both and in attacks by guerrilla groups on its internal security forces. Last Monday, publicly hanged a man, Nasrollah Shanbe Zehi, for his involvement in a bomb attack that killed 11 Revolutionary Guards in the city of Zahedan in Sistan-Baluchistan .

An unnamed local official told the semi-official Fars news agency that weapons used in the attack were British and U.S.-made. John Pike, the head of the influential Global Security think tank in Washington , said: "The activities of the ethnic groups have hotted up over the last two years and it would be a scandal if that was not at least in part the result of CIA activity ".

The Baluchistan-based Brigade of God group, which last year kidnapped and killed eight Iranian soldiers, is a volatile Sunni organization that many fear could easily turn against Washington after taking its money .

A row has also broken out in Washington over whether to "unleash" the military wing of the Mujahedeen-e Khalq (MEK), an Iraq-based Iranian opposition group with a long and bloody history of armed opposition to the Iranian government .

The group is currently listed by the U.S. State Department as terrorist organization, but Mr. Pike said: "A faction in the Defense Department wants to unleash them. They could never overthrow the current Iranian government but they might cause a lot of damage " .

Scooter Libby and

World War III

How the Libby trial could impact US foreign policy

by Justin Raimondo

February 21, 2007

Cowed into funding a war neither they nor the majority of Americans believe in, congressional Democrats are taking the line that what's needed are some "benchmarks" – well-defined criteria by which to assess whether our efforts are paying off. The idea is to make continued U.S. support contingent on the Iraqis measuring up to these benchmarks. Hillary Clinton even says we should withdraw aid providing for the security of elected Iraqi political leaders if they fail to make the grade. Now that's a way to kill someone off without leaving any fingerprints! (And a good lesson to any other would-be U.S. sock puppets who think they can take the money and run (.

The big problem with this approach, however, is that it fails to understand the dynamics of our continued presence in Iraq. In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee given on Feb. 1, Zbigniew Brzezinski, the hawkish former national security adviser to Jimmy Carter, made a statement that should have set off alarm bells and sent everyone rushing for the lifeboats:

"If the United States continues to be bogged down in a protracted bloody involvement in Iraq, the final destination on this downhill track is likely to be a head-on conflict with Iran and with much of the world of Islam at large. A plausible scenario for a military collision with Iran involves Iraqi failure to meet the benchmarks; followed by accusations of Iranian responsibility for the failure; then by some provocation in Iraq or a terrorist act in the U.S.

blamed on Iran; culminating in a 'defensive' U.S. military action against Iran that plunges a lonely America into a spreading and deepening quagmire eventually ranging across Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan".

Every moment we stay in Iraq increases the likelihood of war with Iran – that, in my view, is the most powerful argument, aside from this one, for a rapid withdrawal. No sooner had Brzezinski uttered these words than the administration began a concerted campaign to blame the Iranians for U.S. failure in Iraq, and accused Tehran of having a direct hand in the killing of American troops .

We hear much about these accusations on the front pages of American newspapers, but what we don't hear about are acts of terrorism directed at both civilian and military targets by Iranian "dissidents," who are reportedly receiving covert U.S. assistance. These groups include the Jundallah organization in Baluchistan, said to be affiliated with al-Qaeda, and the sinister, cult-like Mujahideen-e-Khalq (MEK), a shadowy Marxoid group that was supported by Saddam Hussein and still maintains a presence at Camp Ashraf [.pdf] in Iraq, as well as enjoying a wide array of bipartisan support in Congress .

Jundallah recently struck southeastern Iran, in Sistan-Baluchistan, with a series of attacks, including a car bomb in the provincial capital of Zahedan. The Iranians claim that the Jundallah militants are trained in Pakistan, and Iran has displayed samples of alleged captured armaments with "Made in USA" stamped all over them. The leader of Jundallah reportedly announced the attacks on MKO-TV, the satellite television station run out of Great Britain by the MEK, a few minutes before they started.

In an interview with the Telegraph, a Jundallah guerrilla fighter sounded very much like he was advertising his services to U.S. policymakers:

"Asked whether the satellite telephone he was holding might not lead to his being located, he allowed himself a smile. 'We are not fighting against America,' he said. Support for Jundallah was growing, he said. 'There are hundreds of others who are desperate to sign in, but we ask them to wait because we do not have enough weapons or camps'".

That was last year: surely by this time the Jundallah "freedom fighters" have more than enough weapons and camps, courtesy of Uncle Sam. Scott Ritter, in his book Target Iran: The Truth About the White House's Plans for Regime Change, has described CIA-MEK cross-border operations, in which the Americans – and the Israelis – are conducting provocations that could lead to an open conflict with Iran. The focus of these efforts, he says, is on Baluchistan and Khuzestan .

With strong bipartisan support, Congress recently appropriated millions of dollars in aid to Iranian "resistance" groups, with practically no oversight as to how that money is being

used – and the scramble for American gold is on. The American front group for the MEK, the National Council of Resistance, has plenty of high-level contacts in Washington, just as Ahmed Chalabi did in the run-up to war with Iraq. The MEK and other Iranian exile groups are busily lobbying for a similar gig as the administration escalates its plans for "regime change" in Tehran.

The Iraqi government has recently reiterated its position that the MEK is a terrorist organization, an opinion shared by the European Union and the U.S. Department of State. However, not everyone in the U.S. administration agrees. And what are we to make of the near-total redaction of a mysterious document that came to light in the Libby trial – a memo to Libby from John Hannah detailing "views of MEK leaders on continuing role in Iraq"? That's all we're allowed to know: aside from a reference to MEK briefing slides, the rest is blanked out .

The Office of the Vice President (OVP), which sponsored Chalabi, is just as intimately connected to the campaign to gin up a war with Iran as it was with the effort to lie us into war with Iraq. It is reasonable to assume the OVP is just as supportive of the MEK, and may even be directing its activities in collusion with its allies in the Pentagon .

Given that U.S. foreign policy is, to a large degree, driven by domestic politics, the motive on the part of the administration to escalate provocative covert actions inside Iran has never been greater. With Scooter Libby likely to be convicted and Fitzgerald's sights increasingly turned on Cheney, the War Party, cornered, has every reason to lash out in one last desperate bid to save its political skin .

Fitzgerald, by all indications, is coming for Cheney. After the trial but before the sentencing, Fitz will make a strenuous effort to "flip" Scooter and use his testimony to target the vice president. Murray Waas reports in the National Journal that Cheney wasn't taken in with Libby's Tim Russert fabrication for a moment:

"At the time that Libby offered his explanation to Cheney, the vice president already had reason to know that Libby's account to him was untrue, according to sources familiar with still-secret grand jury testimony and evidence in the CIA leak probe".

The Fitzgerald probe is a dagger pointed at the dark heart of the administration, the OVP, and the climactic moment of this epic battle is fast approaching. In the early days of the investigation, left-liberal bloggers were exulting in the possibility that they would see Karl Rove frog-marched out of the White House, but the trial has shown that Rove and Libby were antagonists rather than allies. Before it's all over we may yet see the vice president frog-marched out of the White House – at least metaphorically, in the form of an indictment with Dick Cheney's name on it .

What better way to distract attention away from this coming political bombshell than by dropping some real bombs on Iran ?

In the midst of the regional conflagration feared by Brzezinski, prosecuting the Vice President for obstruction of justice and/or perjury would be problematic, at best. In any case, the widening of the war would drive the story off the front pages – think of this as a grand-scale version of Clinton's bombing of the Sudanese pharmaceutical factory just as the Monica Lewinsky was returning to the grand jury.

U.S. war plans against Iran have apparently been in the making for quite some time, but the ratcheting-up of both the rhetoric and the actual war preparations indicates a new level of seriousness on the part of this administration. While most reports reassure us that the decision to go to war has not yet been made, one wonders what turn of events would push the key decision-makers, Bush and Cheney, over the line. A direct threat to one – or both – of them coming out of the Libby trial may be all the impetus they need. A cornered rat is dangerous.