

Obama Blacklists Kurdish Group In Gesture to Tehran

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The Treasury Department has blacklisted an Iranian Kurdish opposition group based in northern Iraq, a move that was greeted enthusiastically in Iran's state-run media as part of a initiative by the Obama administration to forge better U.S.-Iranian relations.

The Party of Free Life of Iranian Kurdistan, known by its Kurdish acronym, PJAK, was created in 2004 and has never engaged in international terrorism or in military activity outside of Iran.

But its guerilla fighters have clashed frequently with Iranian Revolutionary Guards units in Iranian Kurdish towns and villages, making it a primary target of the Iranian regime.

[...]

PJAK and PKK are not two separate organizations," a Turkish official told Newsmax. "They are one and the same. That's just a fact." But when pressed, the official could not provide any evidence of cooperation between PJAK and PKK, and acknowledged that the two groups were based in different parts of the Qandil mountain range of northern Iraq.

Independent observers traveling to the region have found no PKK presence at PJAK bases, and no political, military or strategic cooperation between the two groups.

[...]

PJAK leader Rahman Haji Ahmadi warned that if Turkey is successful in dislodging PJAK fighters from Iraq's border with Iran, this could have dire consequences for Iraq's security.

"Turkey wants to control the Qandil mountains with Iran. When they do, they will open the border and allow al Qaeda and Ansar al Isslam fighters to come in. And this will make Erbil [the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan] like Fallujah used to be," he told Newsmax.

Read the full story here:

http://www.newsmax.com/timmerman/obama_iran_kurdish_group/2009/02/09/179886.html

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