

ID : 167426  
RefID : 08ATHENS1205  
Date : 26/8/2008 4:07:00 μμ  
Origin : Embassy Athens  
Classification : SECRET//NOFORN

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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
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S E C R E T ATHENS 001205

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2018  
TAGS: PGOV, PREL, PTER, ASEC, KCRM, KJUS, GR  
SUBJECT: ADDITIONAL REASONS NOT TO REMOVE 17N FROM FTO LIST

REF: A. ATHENS 1143  
B. ATHENS 631  
C. ATHENS 250  
D. IICT 2008 09

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES DEBORAH MCCARTHY.  
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (S) Embassy Athens remains strongly opposed to the removal

of the Greek terrorist organization 17 November (17N) from the Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) list. We offer the following new factual elements to supplement information provided in refs A, B, and C.

2. (S/NF) There are, as we understand, three basic criteria that a terrorist organization must meet to remain on the FTO List. There is little doubt that 17N meets the first and third criteria, respectively, that it is a foreign terrorist organization, and that its activities threaten the security of U.S. nationals or U.S. national security. On the second criterion (namely, whether in the past five years, the group engaged in terrorist activity or terrorism, or retains the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity or terrorism), we believe that 17N does retain the capability and intent to engage in terrorist activity based on the following:

A) IICT REPORT: The Intelligence Community Terrorist Threat Assessment of January 31, 2008 (ref D), which held that:

-- "Arrests severely weakened 17N in 2002, but subsequent reporting indicates remnants of the group are intent on revitalizing 17N, possibly in concert with other Greek terrorist organizations."

-- "(A)t-large and detained 17N members are likely to work with or assimilate into these like-minded terrorist groups as a means of continuing 17N's armed struggle despite the 2002 arrests."

B) JAILED MEMBERS' COMMUNICATIONS: Jailed and at-large 17N members continue to maintain their long-standing operational security. (NOTE: This is a primary reason why it took police almost 30 years to apprehend major group members. END NOTE.) In prison, 17N members rarely discuss their views or plans beyond the need to defend the working class against imperialism, etc. This cautious approach to operational security notwithstanding, convicted members of 17N have on occasion revealed details of the organization or at-large members. These revelations, though scarce, indicate some group members remain active in the cause.

B cont.) Examples of such revelations include the statements by convicted 17N killer Vasilis Tzortzatos, who in a July 28, 2008, press interview revealed that a driver who played a key role in at least two murders (including U.S. Captain Tsantes) remained at-large. Another article in the paper Ta Nea from August 5, 2008, reported a letter from prison by key 17N

assassin Dimitrios Koufodinas castigating other group members who had gone soft and revealed details of the organization's functioning and activities to authorities. Koufodinas took aim at those who would assist in the denigration of 17N and the "revolutionary movement," the "undermining of solidarity amongst political prisoners," and providing information to the Americans. He called for solidarity amongst the prisoners and warned that providing information could have "disastrous consequences" for those "further out."

C) UNRECOVERED EVIDENCE: 17N is characterized by the repeated use of certain articles in their terrorist acts. These items have never been recovered. When the group's chief assassin Dimitrios Koufodinas turned himself in following a nationwide manhunt, the police uncovered the group's two primary safe houses containing large caches of weapons and logistical materials. Never recovered -- and presumably spirited from the safe houses before the police arrived -- were the .45 caliber handgun (known as the "signature Welch .45") used repeatedly on the most important symbolic targets; the original typewriter used repeatedly as a means to establish the group's bona fides with the police and press; and the stamps and seals used to emblazon the 17N logo on its proclamations. In our view, their disappearance indicates likely intent to continue 17N's operations or the passage of these items to other groups as 17N's legacy to its successors.

D) FM BAKOYANNIS' STATEMENTS: Finally, we note the statements of 17N-widow Foreign Minister Bakoyannis, who has stated that she believed 17N members remained at-large and that she, therefore, feared for her personal safety. Given these concerns, the Greek police maintain heightened security the level normally pro@ficials.

3. (S/NF) e-cited IICT report was have emerged that have to the 17N cause. Revolution conducted attacks ag@ts -- notably effortQate former GOG officials presiding over the arrest and prosecution of 17N, and the January 2007 RPG attack against the U.S. Embassy. Most recently, the group "People's Will" -- apparently named after the 19th century Russian terrorist group that assassinated Tsar Alexander II and had Lenin's brother as a member -- claimed responsibility for three attacks, incorporating a sophisticated IED design (cellphone use). One of those attacks (2004) was the bombing of a court in Larissa in opposition to the planned move of incarcerated 17N members to a facility in the area. People's Will's recent targets matched the modus operandi long-established by 17N (i.e., lashing out at those business or government targets perceived or otherwise believed to be corrupt).

4. (S/NF) Based on the above, as well as information provided in refuels, we believe that 17N should not be removed from the FTO List.

5. (U) This message was cleared by all relevant agencies at post.

MCCARTHY  
;2008-08-26 16:07

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