Islamic Revolution Leader: Occupying troops must leave Iraq soon - 28 /Feb/ 2009

Islamic Revolution Leader Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei told the visiting Iraqi President Jalal Talebani and his accompanying delegation Saturday that the destiny of Iraq has always been important for Iranians and that Iran considers Iraq as an everlasting friend.

"Iran has done its best to ensure Iraq's security and stability," the IR Leader said, adding that in the future too, the IRI will do it best in this regard.

Referring to the IRI-Iraq deep relations and their historical, cultural and religious commonalities, Ayatollah Khamenei said the favorable and ample grounds require the two countries to expand their bilateral relations in different fields and pave the way for the implementation of previously-signed mutual agreements.

"With Iraq enjoying rich natural and underground resources, it does not need any financial aid," the IR Leader said adding however that the Islamic Republic of Iran would offer its experiences and progresses in different fields to the Iraqi brethren.

The IR Leader noted that the cordial Iran-Iraq ties face a slew of purposeful enemies, adding that the two countries should be careful about enemy temptations.

The Islamic Revolution Leader called the presence of American and British soldiers, experts and security forces in Iraq as harmful for the country and called for the quick withdrawal of the occupying troops from Iraq.

"Occupying troops must leave Iraq soon and any day they delay will harm the Iraqi nation," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"The occupiers are paving their way to remain in Iraq forever. It would be a big threat," the IR Leader said warning the Iraqi officials to beware against the risk.

"Iraq's progress and good is in opposing with the aliens' desires," the IR Leader said, adding the aliens were not happy with IRI-Iraq close ties.

Addressing the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, the IR Leader said "It is expected that you and Prime Minister Mr. Maleki pursue the implementation of the mutual agreements seriously."

Referring to an IRI-Iraq bilateral agreement on expulsion of MKO terrorist members from Iraq, the Islamic Revolution Leader underlined that the decision should be implemented soon.

"We are waiting for the materialization of the agreement," he said.

Touching on the EU's recent measure to remove MKO from its terror list, Ayatollah Khamenei said such a decision proved that the concept of terrorism in the West is an arbitrary issue and has nothing to do with realities.

The IR Leader noted that despite the decision, the Western countries are not willing to accept the terrorists in their territories.

Ayatollah Khamenei then touched on the issue of Iranian prisoners in Iraq, noting that most of the jailed have not violated any law. He called on the Iraqi President to set the stage for the release of the detained Iranian nationals.

Expressing pleasure with the recent successful elections of provisional councils in Iraq, the IR Leader urged the Iraqi government to beware against the Baathist elements in the country.

Ayatollah Khamenei expressed hope that by unity and solidarity, the Iraqi nation would find its real independence and shine in the Islamic world.

The Iraqi President for his part expressed gratitude for the supports of the Iranian nation and government and described his negotiations in Tehran as positive and fruitful.

Jalal Talabani said the relations between IRI and Iraq were exemplary and consolidated, adding that any expansion of the ties would further serve the establishment of pace and stability in the region.

"Though some individuals are worried about the expansion of Tehran-Baghdad ties, we consider these relations as fruitful both for our country and the region," President Talabani noted.

Considering the issue of the terrorist Monafeqin group, Talabani said terrorists are criminals who have also committed many crimes against the Iraqi people. "The Iraqi government is determined to expel them from the country and will fulfill the decision," he added.

President Talabani then touched on some provocations by the Baathist elements inside Iraq. "Unfortunately, some regional countries have failed to cooperate with the Iraqi government in the campaign against the Baathist groups," he regretted.

Meanwhile, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was present in the meeting.