U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE KURDISH POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN SOUTHERN KURDISTAN (1991-2000)

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U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Middle East Region

Washington's problem is not with Saddam Hussein per se but primarily with Iraq's potential as an independent regional power, which might someday try to opt for strategic deterrence *vis-à-vis* Israel, and which might also challenge American's custodianship over Arab oil in the future. The United States is the greatest consumer of oil production with around 25% of global consumption, while its production of oil is just 10% of international oil output. The United States imports 11.66 million barrels daily, which can be around 60 % of its national consumption. 59% of this oil is from the Arab Gulf and it is forecasted that this will increase to 60% in the next year.[1]

Meanwhile, the Arab countries are the biggest importers of goods from the United States, especially weapons imports. Therefore, the United States focused on the Middle East and Arab Gulf to preserve its national interest, and United States policy seeks to maintain United States hegemony over Middle East oil supplies. Agreement cannot be expected on any of the American foreign policy in the near future towards Middle East, and especially with Iraq, Iran and Syria. Deciding which among them is best

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1   Abdul Karim Hamudy, *Araba Al-Tijara Al-Amerikiya maha Al-arab Bilarkam,Al Mujtamah*, Vol. 1428, No.33, Ramadan 2000. pg. 32.

situated to protect and further American interests into the new century is only one of the challenges confronting the United States today.

The broader Middle Eastern political scene during the last few years can be conveniently analyzed under three headings: the super power rivalry, regional politics and domestic politics. The Mid-1970s were years of achievement for US policy in the Middle East.[2] However, impressive as it may have seemed at the time, the new American foreign policy in the Middle East and the new position it created were not free from serious flaws and weakness such as the growing American dependence on Middle Eastern oil. After the Second World War, the US foreign policy towards the Middle East concentrated on achieving more economic and political stability for the United States at the expense of this region. Kissinger recognized that "international political stability required international economic stability".[3]

Moreover, in the last decade the United States has controlled the Middle East in the peace process. A peace initiative in the Middle East has become a common feature of US foreign policy. The United States was extremely uncomfortable with and suspicious of the Ba'ath Party's avowed socialist ideology, and its hostility to the moderate Arab monarchies in the Gulf, its bitter disputes with the Shah of Iran, and their declared support for the goals of the Soviet Union. Hence, when the Nixon and Kissinger team took office in 1969 as President and national security advisor, respectively, Iraq was not seen as being disruptive to the status quo but perceived as being in the Soviet camp and as wanting to exercise undue influence in the Gulf following the 1968 British withdrawal.[4]

2   Colin Legum, Crisis and Conflicts in The Middle East, New York: Holmes& Meier Publishers, Inc 1981, pg. 1.

3   Quoted in Thomas G. Paterson, J. Garry Clifford, and Kenneth J. Hagan, American Foreign Policy: A History Since 1900, 2nd ed., Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Health, 1983, pg. 592.

4   Hanna Y. Freij, Perceptions and Behavior in U.S. Foreign Relations Towards the Republic of Iraq, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1992. pp.50-85.

There are three patterns of American policy style. The first pattern is Unilateralism, or a predisposition to act alone in addressing foreign policy problems.[5] The United States uses the Unilateralism policy towards Middle East countries. For example although Bush embraced Unilateralism in assembling a global coalition against Saddam, it was the United States that decided when to launch air strikes, it was the United States, which ended the ground war; and it was the United States that left Kurds to Saddam's revenge. It was the United States that used military force to stop Iraqi invasion of Arbil city.

Nevertheless, the United Nations (UN) disagreed, and while Britain condemned Iraq, however, it failed to muster sufficient support. High-ranking French officials bluntly told Washington that no UN resolution bars Saddam from moving ground troops into Kurdish areas within Iraq. United States bombing raids in the south made the mission a hard sell internationally. Germany, Japan and Israel offered only belated and cautious support. Russia, France, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Turkey- all part of the 1990-91 Gulf War coalition-refused to lend military or diplomatic support or even permit warplanes to fly over their air space[6]. Even the United States Senate resolution expressed bipartisan concern about where the United States policy goes from here in dealing with Iraq.

The second pattern of American foreign policy is pragmatism.[7] The United States uses the Machiavellian style "the end justifies the means" and it has used a double-standard policy against Middle East countries, and especially the Kurds because the United States liberated Kuwait after seven months of its invasion. Meanwhile, Kurdistan was invaded seventy years ago and the United States has tried to help the invaders instead of liberating Kurdistan.

<div style="margin-left:2em; font-style:italic; writing-mode:vertical-rl;">TAFHIM Online © IKIM Press</div>

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5   For a discussion of Unilateralism, see Gene Rainey, Patterns of American Foreign Policy, Boston: Allyn&Bacon, 1975, and pp. 19-43.

6   Phllis Bennis, US-Iraq policy. TNI Archives: htm, 1997.

7   For a discussion of American foreign policy highlighting these themes, see Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Foreign Policy and the American Character," *Foreign Affairs*, 62 (1983), pp. 1-16.

The third pattern to U.S. policy is legalism. The U.S. still tries to use the United Nations to make what is illegal legal, and what is legal illegal according to their interests. Bush obtained UN endorsement for his military campaign against Iraq. For example, Washington consistently backs Israel's effort to be leading regional power in the Middle East, despite its violation of international law, while seeking to undermine the regional roles of both Iran and Iraq through a policy of dual containment. During the Iran–Iraq war in the 1980s, Washington viewed Iran as the more formidable threat, and so tilted towards Iraq, sharing intelligence with Baghdad while covertly selling arms to both sides. The Kurds were the biggest victims of the United States, Iraq and Iran foreign policies in the region since 1980. There are four consequences of the American foreign policy. Firstly, "win the war and lose the peace" like the United States won the Persian Gulf War and left the region engulfed for a new war.

Secondly, the United States uses double standard behavior to gain its interest such as when the United States was unwilling to commit her own troops to overthrow Saddam Hussein following his defeat in 1991, but encouraged the Kurds to revolt in order to instigate a coup in Baghdad to end the Iraqi leader's rule, and after that they left Kurds to face a new tragedy with Saddam.

Thirdly, United States is ambivalent toward diplomacy. Diplomatic activity during the Gulf war was directed almost wholly at keeping the Allies united in their opposition to Iraq. Having defined Saddam as evil, there was little reason for the Bush administration to engage in diplomacy with him.

Fourthly, there is American impatience. The Clinton administration repeatedly turned to air strikes in December 1998. Clinton did not wait for UN decision.[8] Washington's armed actions are intended, administration officials argue, to protect Arab oil as well as Iraqi Kurds. Clinton used his

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8   Glenn P. Hastedt, *American Foreign Policy Past, Present and Future*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2000, pp.42-43.

recent air strikes to warn Saddam not to move against oil fields in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia-even though Baghdad has made no such moves since the end of the Gulf War.

The United States has been inconsistent in its policy towards the Middle East and especially towards Kurds. While decrying human rights violations against Iraq's Kurds, Washington has turned a blind eye towards Turkey's anti-Kurdish repression, and toward both Ankara's and Tehran's incursions into Iraqi Kurdistan. Many in the Arab world, see an American hypocritical policy: an Iraqi force attacks the Kurds and is flogged with 44 cruise missiles, while Turkey receives a nod of assent in 1996. Moreover, it is difficult to reestablish and stand up to Iraq next time because now Iraq is in a bad situation but it is most probable after Saddam, it will be worse because Saddam complicated the situation, and the Iraqi opposition groups have strife among themselves. The best resolution for Iraq is its division to two or three parts for the sake of peace, prosperity and political and economic stability for Iraq and the Middle East.

The No-Fly Zone and the Adoption of Resolution 688 (1991)

The end of the Cold War did more than present American foreign policy with a new set of challenges and opportunities.[9] It also has helped change the way in which foreign policy is made.[10] In early August 1990,

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9   The ending of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, together with the events following the Gulf war, were the main reasons for establishing several new principles of international law. Before these events, intervention in the internal affairs of states was considered illegal, according to the UN Charter. However, in the changed circumstances, the respect for human rights and the protection of the civil population will make intervention by the international community in the internal affairs of states just, acceptable and legal. This will apply particularly in cases where the policy of ethnic cleansing is tantamount to genocide. For example, the catastrophes in Kurdistan, Bosnia, Rwanda and more recently in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and East Timor, have all presented the international community and its organizations with the opportunity to intervene to save endangered lives in these countries. See Nouri Talabani, Southern Kurdistan in International Law, paper was presented in Washington 20-21 November 1999.

10   Glenn P. Hastedt, American Foreign Policy Past, Present, Future, pg. 126.

Kuwait was invaded by Iraq, which caused the Gulf War to start, consequently Iraq was heavily defeated and the Kurdish opposition parties achieved the golden opportunity to open the political door for the Kurdish question. The Gulf crisis changed the region irrevocably, for Iraq as well as for the Middle East as a whole, and United States foreign policy towards it. Regional and international capitals soon rediscovered the existence of the Iraqi opposition, especially the Kurdish side within it. Damascus exercised tremendous pressure to ensure that the Iraqi opposition holds its first conference under its protection in Beirut. This took place on 11th March 1991.[11]

The Kurdish uprising started on 5th March 1991 in southern Kurdistan and on the 8th Sulaymanyia City was controlled by the Kurdish people. Then, on 11th March the capital of Kurdistan, Arbil, was conquered and after few days Dhouk city also came under the control of Kurdistan Front. On March 21 the last major city of Kurdistan Kirkuk was controlled.

The attack on Kirkuk started on March 29 by the Iraqi regime. At the same time it was also reported that the United States administration had "not resolved a policy debate over whether it would be better for United States forces to stay in Iraq restraining Saddam's ability to suppress the rebellions or withdraw so Iraqi military forces could consolidate their control and then possibly challenge Saddam's claim to leadership".[12]

Soon, within a few days the uprising collapsed because the United States abandoned them. The Commission on Human Rights decision to appoint a special report for Iraq stemmed in part from a wave of unrest that struck the north and south of the country immediately after the multinational coalition suspended its military operations. Support was highest for Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, which were designed primarily to curb Iraqi foreign policy adventurism

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11   Gerard Chaliand, A people Without a Country, London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993, pp. 229-230.

12   Dan Balz and Al Kamen, "U.S. Seen Lacking Policy on Postwar Goals", The Washington Post, March 24, 1991.

by defending Saudi Arabia and liberating Kuwait. But, the American public was, however, distinctly less interested in using American military power to protect Kurds or Shi"tes in southern Iraq after President Bush announced the ceasefire. By early April 1991, the fighting had triggered a vast humanitarian calamity, with an estimated 2 million Kurds fleeing towards and across bleak mountain borders of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The public dimension of the impending human tragedy was such that United States President Bush agreed to designate safe areas for the refugees. The human concern had earlier made the Kurdish leadership accept Baghdad's offer of negotiations, and a team was dispatched there under Talabani leadership. In the attempt for negotiation, Kurdish Leaders conducted meetings with Saddam from April to November 1991. It was early in June 1991, and the barren "negotiation" were being conducted in the nearby the town of Arbil.[13]

Talks ultimately failed, and the United States forced Iraq to withdraw its administration in the Kurdish enclave. And Baghdad responded by withdrawing central government support and imposing an internal embargo on Southern Kurdistan. This created an internal border that further separated the government from non-government-controlled territories. Iraqi Kurds faced a double embargo: UN sanctions against Iraq and an internal embargo against the North.[14] As a result, these restrictions seriously limited trade and commercial traffic, and hindered the economic development of the region. The Kurdistan Front was acting as a quasi-administration, but had no revenues to pay for the salaries of civil servants and teachers and so many political and economic crisis emerged. Nonetheless, despite the fact that southern Kurdistan has been under double economic embargo since 1991, the Kurds seemed to be much

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13   Christopher Hitchens, Struggle of the Kurds, *The Journal of National Geographic*, Vol.182, No. 21, 1992, pg. 42.

14   Denise Natali, The Kurdish Experiment in Democracy: 1991-1994, *The Journal of Badlisy Center For Kurdish Study*, University of Pennsylvania, Volume IV, No. I, Spring 1996.

happier than in those days when they were under the direct rule of the Iraqi government.[15]

During this period, in the beginning the United States just wanted to neglect the Kurd's tragedy, but at the request of France and Turkey, which considered these developments to be a threat to international peace and security in the region, the Security Council met on 5 April 1991. Of the 31 Member states which spoke at the meeting, the majority viewed with alarm the magnitude of the human suffering, the massive exodus of Iraqi civilians and the Government's treatment of its own citizens. Turkey stated that Iraq's armed forces, in their attempt to quell the two insurgencies, were indiscriminately using deadly firepower.[16]

As result of its deliberations, the Security Council that day adopted resolution 688 (1991), in which it demanded that Iraq end the repression of the Iraqi civilian population, "including most recently in Kurdish-populated areas", and allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations to all those in need of assistance. Two days later, on 7 April, the United States began to airlift relief aid to northern Iraq.[17] In Mid April 1991, in response to western public opinion, the USA, Britain and France established a "Safe Haven" inside north Iraq close to the Turkish border. They claimed to act purely out of humanitarian concern and that they acted in a manner "consistent" with UNSCR 688. The UN Secretary General, however, took the view that the "Safe Haven" plan went beyond the scope of the UN.

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15   For more information, the Kurdish people called Bush (Hajy Bush) in 1991 because they thought Bush brought for them this freedom and made the Save Heaven territory for them but really, Bush was the first person who did not agree to create the no fly zone for the Kurdish. Nevertheless, the international community pressured him to agree. Bush also helped Saddam to remain in power because US was afraid Shi'a or Kurds take over the power.

16   The United Nations and the Iraq-Kuwait Conflict: 1990-1996, published by the Department of Public Information, pg. 40

17   Ibid, pg. 41.

The United Nations' Safe Haven in south Kurdistan is of an exemplary character with regard to its creation, implementation and examination of possible solutions to regional conflict. The UN refused to grant the coalition troops who were to set up the Safe Haven official status as a UN peacekeeping force. The Safe Haven did not have the backing of a Security Council resolution.[18] However, Iraq has objected to no-fly zones, saying that they were not adopted on the basis of any United Nations resolution and that their aim was of a political nature, namely to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs and to dismember it on an ethnic and religious basis. Moreover, Iraq claimed that the United States wanted to divide them. The northern zone (Iraqi Kurdistan) was created in June 1991 and covers territory above the 36th parallel. The southern zone was established in August 1992 and extended the flight ban to territory below 32nd parallel. According to these coalition countries, the cease fire agreement ending the war empowered them to impose such controls over Iraqi military flights.

Meanwhile the Iraqi National Congress (INC) was formed in Vienna/ Beirut in 1991 as the umbrella group of the Iraqi opposition.[19] Since the creation of the Safe Haven, the UN has provided the Kurdish population with some food and medical assistance to supplement what was acquired from other sources. Many non-governmental organizations have also assisted in the resettlement of Kurds in the Safe Haven zone.

The political pressure from Saddam Hussein increased and renewed the Kurdish struggle for survival. To cope with these situations, the Kurdistan Front decided to hold a general election, for the sake of establishing the first Kurdistan National Council, the regional government

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18   Kurdish Media-Reports: Draft Briefing Paper on Iraqi Kurdistan –Teresa Thornhill.

19   Its member groups included Kurdish, Shi'a and Sunni Arab organizations, disenchanted ex-members of the Ba'ath party and some formal high-ranking officers in the Iraqi army. In 1992, it held a conference in Salahaddin in northern Iraq. Masoud Barzani of the KDP, Bahr al Ulum, a Shi'a figure and Ahmad Chalabi were as Sunni Arabs elected to lead it. The INC continued its official work in Salahadin until September 1996(7), from where it hoped to launch the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and the CIA financially supported them. Many of the member groups gradually left the INC. The INC split finally with KDP in 1996 when the latter KDP brought Iraqi government troops to the enclave and many of its operatives were killed by Iraqi secret police. The PUK continues to have relations with the INC.

and the regional administration. This new agenda transferred the Kurdish issue into the world of politics and all the neighboring countries were worried by this plan. Importantly, the Kurdish leadership believed from recent experiences in the former Soviet Republics and in the Baltic that in the New World Order, Western powers would endorse the independence of a secessionist republic if the leadership were democratically elected. By holding, their own elections the Kurds hoped to reduce the friction between various factions forming the Kurdish front. The United States and Western countries indirectly interfered with establishing the Kurdish regional government.

The Kurdish Regional Government (1992-1994)

The Gulf war and its aftermath has destabilized the political, social and economic situation in Iraq and has caused widespread destruction of major physical infrastructure. The Allied Forces led by the United States forces stationed in Turkey protected Iraqi Kurdistan. The Kurds, for the first time in their recent history have attained freedom and found the opportunity to rule themselves. The United States encouraged the Kurdish political parties to establish their own government and to run their territory and the United States also insisted to preserve the Iraqi territorial integrity.

In 1992, the various political parties agreed to make arrangements necessary for holding elections in order to establish representative for regional and local governments. With the help of sympathetic governmental and non-governmental organizations, the Kurds were able to conduct elections and establish regional and local governments in a satisfactory manner.[20] Talabani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) hoped to win a narrow majority, while Barzani and the KDP believed that they would get between 50% and 60% of the parliamentary seats.[21] In 19 May 1992, during a unique national carnival, attended by U.S. and

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20   Mohammed M. A. Ahmed, Political Prospects in Southern Kurdistan, *The Journal of Namah*, Volume III, No. 2, Summer 1995.

21   Christian Science Monitor, 15 May 1992, p. 6.

various foreign observers, the first parliament was elected through a direct and secret voting system. The parliament consisted of 105 members, representing various political parties and organizations of Kurdistan. The table below shows the election results:

Table I : The Election Results

Organization Name	Votes Obtained
Kurdistan Democratic Party	437833
Patriotic Union Kurdistan	423833
Islamic Movement	49108
Socialist	24882
United Democrats	21123
Democratic People's Party	9903
Democrats	501

Source: Internet: www.kdp.pp.se/

The KDP obtained 45.4 Percent of the votes cast (437 833), gaining 51 seats, and the PUK obtained 43.9 percent (423 833), gaining 49 seats. It was agreed between the two parties that each would have 50 seats, as a one-vote majority could easily cause deep rifts as well as stultifying policy and administration.[22] The composition of the Kurdistan National Council was reflected in Table II below.

Table II : Organization of Kurdistan National Council

Organization Name	Members
KDP	50
PUK	47
Kurdistan Laborer Party allied with PUK	3
Assyrian Democratic Movement	4
Kurdistan United Christians	1
Total	105

Source: Internet: www: kdp.pp.se/

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22   Edgar O'Balanc, The Kurdish Struggle 1920-1994, pg. 199.

The results of the Kurdish elections did not resolve the leadership dilemma of the Kurdish Front. None of the five smaller parties got the 7% needed for a seat in the Assembly. Moreover, there was a deadlock between the two main factions resulting in a 50-50 provisional power sharing formula with five seats allocated for Christians.[23] Then United States and Western countries did not recognize the Kurdish Regional government officially.

Kurds from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Russia, Iran and the Diaspora were proud of Iraqi Kurds in Iraq for their achievement. The power sharing system was based on a rigid framework of political compromise to maintain the perception of an even distribution of political power. From the ministerial cabinet to local village councils, Iraqi Kurdish officials divided the political and administrative responsibilities evenly between KDP and PUK. KDP ministers could not make decisions without agreement of their PUK deputies (and vice versa) nearly all aspects of life were split "50-50".

Moreover, it was hoped that elections would bring the situation in Northern Iraq under some form of central authority, as internal disputes had resulted in a sense of lawlessness and large-scale corruption by local Kurdish leaders.[24] Moreover, the United States and the Western countries dealt with the new government, by sending delegations to establish their relationship with it.

The Kurdish National Assembly approved a motion on 4 October 1992 calling for the creation of a 'Federal state within a democratic pluralist Iraq'. This marked a departure from the usual autonomy theme and was condemned by Turkey, which feared it could represent a first step towards separatism from Iraq, and would encourage its own

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23   Middle East International, No.426, 29 May 1992, pg. 12, and Christian Science Monitor, 27 May 1992, pg. 2.

24   Christian Science Monitor, 11 February 1992, pg. 3.

PKK movement.[25] This surprising Kurdistan National Assembly decision, caused the foreign ministers of Turkey, Iran and Syria to meet in Ankara, where they made their hostile views quite clear.[26] The political strategies of these countries have been to marginalize the Kurdish movement by creating disunity and friction among political parties in the Safe Haven area. Meanwhile, the United States carefully supervised the Kurdistan Regional Government because they considered the declaration of independence to be a major threat to United States foreign policy goals and objectives in the region. The landlocked nature of the Safe Haven had increased the susceptibility of the political parties to blackmail and to pressure from neighbouring countries.

Several components of a viable political system were missing from the outset. First, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) did not adopt a constitution from which government legitimacy could be based. Second, tribal groups were not represented in elections of the national assembly. Although they were later given ad-hoc positions, such as commanders of local militias, they remained a source of contention throughout the experiment. Further, the process was designed to

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25   The Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) is the party, which has spearheaded the war of Kurdish national liberation in Northern Kurdistan (southeastern Turkey) since 1984 and was founded by Abdullah Ocalan (Apo), a Kurdish ethnic who had previously been involved in left wing party. PKK ideology was originally based on Marxism-Leninism but has been modified over the years and they organized themselves in the Kurdistan of Turkey where Kurdish population live in southeastern Turkey. Unlike peshmarga of the PUK and KDP, the PKK guerilla forces include large numbers of women. Until 1996 the PPK acknowledged the division of Kurdistan by the borders of Turkey, Iraq, Syria and the former USSR and called for creation of a pan-Kurdish state to provide a national homeland for Kurds. However, in 1996 the PKK leadership changed their demand to autonomy within Turkey, acknowledging the existing state system. The PKK has good relationship with Iran and Syria. Syria especially used them as a pressure card against Turkey because Turkey has a conflict with Syria on the two rivers Euphrates and Tigris. In February 1999, the Turkish Intelligence with the assistance from CIA and Mosad captured Abdullah Ocalan and the Turkish court decided to hang him but he is still in prison. They are afraid to execute him because Turkey wants to be member in European Union and the European Union warned Turkey if they hang Ocalan, Turkey would not be accepted to be member in the European Union. Later on, the PKK decided to give up the armed struggle and chose the path of political struggle and democracy. More than 27,000 people have been killed in clashes between the Turkish security forces and the PKK since the rebels took up their fight for Kurdish self-rule in 1984.

26   Edgar O'Balance, The Kurdish Issue in Iraq 1920-1944, *Op. Cit.*, pg. 202.

encourage a strong two party system. Although independent candidates were permitted, election laws encouraged candidates to join party lists, which entitled a nomination process by party officials. As a result, the national assembly was a politically polarized institution from the outset. Further, political loyalties were not neutralized. Despite the transfer of administrative and political responsibilities from the Front to Kurdistan Regional Government, the government largely remained a party controlled system. The Kurdish Front failed to gain international legitimacy and recognition for their parliament in Arbil, as well as concrete political and economic aid. Since Barzani needed to maintain stability for the new authority and his accord with Talabani, he dropped the autonomy plan he had negotiated with Saddam that called for a federal system in Iraq.[27]

The United States tried to help Turkey to eradicate The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) because the United States considered it as an international terrorist organization, and international terrorism threatens United States' foreign policy and domestic security. But the real terrorist was Turkey because it violated the human rights of Kurds in Turkey.

So, the United States forced the KRG to get PKK out of the enclave. Moreover, the presence of armed PKK guerrillas hindered the political development in southern Kurdistan. In October 1992, heavy fighting broke out between the PKK and the Iraqi Kurds, who were supported by the Turks, and again to a lesser extent, a year latter between just the KDP and PUK. In the first instance, both Barzani and Talabani declared in effect that the PKK was challenging the sovereignty of their Kurdish Regional administration, while in the later case-heralding their own internecine conflict that would soon break out into the open. Talabani opposed Barzani's operation against PKK militants once operating along the border of Turkey.[28] Since 1992, Barzani has become more popular and

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27 Albrecht Metzger,' Anxieties in Iraqi Kurdistan', Middle East International, No. 436, 23 October 1992, pg. 2.

28 Michael Gunter, The PKK-KDP Conflict, *The Journal of Namah*, Volume IV, Spring, 1996 Number I, pg. 7.

the area he controls is prospering as result of trade with Turkey, Iran and Iraq.[29]

Despite the shortcomings and the failure to implement democracy in Kurdistan, the area witnessed stability from October 1991 to October 1993. Nevertheless, regional interference again sowed the seeds of dissension among them. From the democracy's conception, however, the concept of sharing power between the KDP and PUK carried potential risks because both groups have competed against each other in representing and leading the Kurds since the 1960s. Thus, in implementing democracy in Kurdistan, several problems have resulted:

i. The problem of power sharing in the government. Power sharing between the two parties is based on 50-50 basis in southern Kurdistan.

ii. The newly granted right of freedom of expression raised problems. The publications law gave the political parties and organizations the right to own television and radio stations, and could publish newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals. However, in the absence of a national broadcasting station and publication, television stations and newspapers became the propaganda tools of their owners, which caused divisions among the people.

The most serious problem was raised by an attempt to unify the *Peshmarga* (Kurdish Fighters) into a "Kurdish Army". This action was initiated to reduce the number of militiamen, to increase their efficiency, and to prepare them to a new task.

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29 David McDowall, The Struggle of Kurdistan, Middle East International, No. 499, 28 April 1995, pg. 18; for more on the differences between the Kermanji and Sorani speakers see Martin Van Bruinessen, The Kurds Between Iran and Iraq, Middle East Report, Vol. 16, No. 4, July-August, 1986, pp. 14-27.

Southern Kurdistan economically and politically developed very quickly after one year of establishing KRG but the United States and Regional governments were suspicious of Kurdistan Regional Government because they feared that it would declare independence. Therefore, the regional governments (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria) and the United States tried to encourage a civil war there. Another important development was the merging of the Kurdistan Unity Party (UPK), led by Sami Abdul Rahman, with the KDP, at the KDP's 11th Party congress in August 1993.

The resulting shift in the KDP-PUK balance of power altered the perception of equality that had been maintained so far. Additionally, the UPK-KDP marriage elevated the role of third parties in Iraqi Kurdish politics that until this time were largely excluded from the political arena. Third parties became appendages for KDP-PUK internal disputes. The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK)[30] which clashed with PUK in December 1993 was instigated by KDP, while the Kurdistan Socialist's Party (KSP) conflicts with KDP were backed by PUK.[31] Throughout the experiment, unexpected events and changing conditions challenged the institutionally weak KRG. One of the most critical situations was the currency crisis of 1993. In May, Saddam withdrew the 25 "Swiss" Dinar note from the economy, which created upheaval and panic for most Kurdish families who hoarded the notes for the household savings.[32] Additionally, the creation of a dual currency system, one for the Northern and another for Middle and Southern Iraq, further alienated Kurds from Baghdad.

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30   Various small Islamic groups together in 1992 in the run-up to the elections to form the IMK under the leadership of Mulla Uthman Abdl Aziz of Halabja. Its strongest constituency is in Sulaymaniyah, possibly due to the weakness of the KDP there. The popularity of the IMK increased considerably after the 1992 elections, particularly the area of Halabja. In 1999 the two Islamic parties (Islamic movement of Kurdistan is led by Mullah Ali Abdul Aziz and the Islamic Renaissance Movement was led by Mullah Saddiq Abdul Aziz united. They established a new party by the name Islamic Union Movement of Kurdistan which is considered the third most popular party in Kurdistan. The main objective of the party is to make reconciliation among the Kurdish groups, establish political stability and economic prosperity in the enclave.

31   Denise Natali, The Kurdish Experiment in Democracy, 1992-1994, *The Journal of Namah*, Volume IV, Spring, 1996 Number I, pg. 6.

32   Ibid.

By August 1993, the general economic situation had deteriorated exponentially. In addition, the KRG was asked by the United States and Western countries to issue new currency for Kurds in Iraq but they rejected that proposal.

The Fratricidal War Started-1994

The end of the Gulf War in 1991 and the events that followed resulted in another rare historical opportunity, which unfortunately was not properly taken by the Kurds. It is sorrowful to note that the tragic history of the Kurds, a history full of oppression, internal fighting and suffering continued.[33]

Of course, geopolitical, international and regional factors have always played a huge role in this but the Kurds themselves had their share in it too. The rivalry between the two Kurdish leaders could not be contained by the stalemate election results. Hence, it was only a matter of time before clashes occurred. Clashes between KDP and PUK erupted in December 1993.[34]

In 1994, the United States tried by all means to stop the political progress in southern Kurdistan. In addition, Turkey pushed the United States to use PUK and KDP against each other and while the United States wanted to affect a balance of power between them in the enclave. In May 1994, Ali Hasu, a local tribal leader in Qala Diza and a KDP commander, sought to force some turf farmers off land, which his father had acquired, as a result of helping Mullah Mustafa Barzani in the 1970s. As Hasu was acting in his tribal capacity, the local peasants opposed to the tribal order, intuitively rallied towards the leftist oriented PUK.[35] On 1st May 1994,

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33   An article by Shahin B. Soreki, Conditions For Peace In Southern Kurdistan. Internet: www. The Kurdish Observer. com. Sept. 22, 2000, pg. 1.

34   Middle East International, No 492, 20 January 1995, pg.5.

35   David McDowall, Dicing with Death: The KDP and PUK in Conflict, Middle East International, No. 476, 27 May 1994, pg. 18.

widespread military clashes began again, this time involving PUK, KDP and IMK. Fighting continued for several months, followed by sporadic clashes in June and July and further fighting in August. In view of its geographical location and political importance, Arbil was the most heavily contested area.

Both KDP and PUK tried to gain control of the parliament building, but the PUK were more successful of the two, and, for much of the summer, it was under their control. Furthermore, the PUK had armed tribal elements among the Harkis and Baradostis in opposition to the Barzanis.[36] The fighting of May-June 1994 was widely reported in the western press. It seriously shook the trust of many western sympathizers in the leadership of the KDP and PUK, the two parties supposedly trying to establish democracy in the region. The United States did not interfere to make reconciliation between the two parties and it left them to their worst destination. Although a cease fire was agreed upon at the end of August 1994, it was clear by then that unstoppable power struggle was underway between the KDP and the PUK for the outright control of the Kurdish enclave.

In short, this was a civil war. The rivalries which had dominated Kurdish politics and society for centuries, and which had prevented the emergence of a cohesive nationalist movement in the years leading up to the World War I, were again coming to the fore. These rivalries undermined the Kurds chances of dealing effectively with their non-Kurdish enemy. A further round of serious fighting began in December 1994.[37] By late 1994, Iraqi Kurdistan had become a geographically polarized region in which KDP and PUK rivalries frustrated inter-regional movement of people, commercial goods, and humanitarian relief items. In due time, two quasi-party administrations emerged in Salahaddin for KDP and Arbil for the PUK in place of the Unified National Assembly Building.

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36   Ibid., pg. 18.

37   Kurdish Media- Reports: Draft Briefing Paper on Iraqi Kurdistan –Teresa Thornihill, pg. 6.

Moreover, the United States was upset by this result, that the PUK controlled a big part of the enclave and the United States did not trust PUK because PUK's policy towards United States was not consistent and PUK uses dual policy towards the United States. Therefore, the United States was more comfortable with the stable submission policy of KDP. Since then, peace accords and ceasefire agreements have continued between both groups. However, the revival of the KRG and return to Kurdish elf-rule can only begin with a change in political, economic and geographic conditions, continued international support, and commitment by Kurdish leaders to respect the policies of autonomy, internal security, and peace on which their experiment was based.

This time the PUK accused the KDP, who controlled the border with Turkey, of embezzling tax money levied on lorries entering the enclave there. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were collected at Khabur daily, and the PUK claimed that the KDP were in breach of an agreement to pay all such money to the coffers of the Kurdish administration. As a result of this conflict the PUK seized control of Arbil, and thus a deadlock came into existence and the KDP refused to hand over the tax money until the PUK vacated the city. Kurdish areas of southern Kurdistan suffered intense fighting between rival Kurdish groups, followed by attacks by Iraqi government troops, and later attacks by Turkish Kurds in 1995. Meanwhile, separate peace efforts by the USA and Iran produced tentative cease fires among the Kurdish factions.[38]

In the spring and early summer of 1995, Baghdad made overtures to both the PUK and KDP, and called the two parties to reach a deal with Saddam. During the spring of 1995, Iran called representatives of both parties to Tehran for discussions. By mid-summer the United States government, uneasy at the prospect that Iran might step in to fill the power vacuum that now existed in northern Iraq, sent envoys to persuade the PUK and KDP to engage in United States brokered peace talks. The talks took place in August and September 1995 in Drogheda and Dublin in Ireland, and resulted in a provisional agreement between senior

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38   Armed Conflict Report 2000- Iraq. Internet: www // kurdishmedia.com.

personnel of the two politburos. At the next stage of negotiations, however, when attempts were made to flesh out the detail of the agreement and bring together Barzani and Talabani themselves, the conflict resumed over the issues of occupied Arbil and tax money. In the autumn of 1995, Iran again invited the PUK, and the KDP to talk, but the result was abortive, and from late 1995 until March 1996, the situation was one of a stalemate.

There had been no serious fighting in Iraqi Kurdistan since summer, although the propaganda war between the factions continued. In March 1996, the United States government succeeded in instigating talks between the PUK and the KDP again, using the agreement reached in Ireland as the starting point. This time they concentrated on three issues. These were freedom of movement for Kurds between the two zones of political and military control, which were established in 1994, an attempt to re-establish a joint area and an exchange of the several thousands prisoners taken in the course of fighting. Importantly, this infighting among the Kurds only reinforced the enemies of Kurds allegations that the Kurds cannot manage their internal affairs.

The Kurdish intellectuals around the world denounced this infighting among the Kurds, and appealed to the Kurdish leadership in 1996 to abandon all these disputes and work towards unity, freedom, and self-determination in a free Kurdistan. Actually, in 1996, the internal conflict transferred to regional conflict with support from Iraqi troops, and the KDP captured most of the Kurdish region from the PUK. Following retaliatory United States missile attacks on southern Iraq, much of the captured territory was regained by the KDP and later on US-sponsored talks led to the October 23 1996 cease fire between PUK and KDP.[39]

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39   Armed Conflict Report 2000-Iraq, Political Development. Internet : www /: KurdishMedia.com.
      pp. 4-5.

Political Development from 31 August 1996 to 10 October 1997

The KDP charged that the PUK collaborated with Iran in an attempt to get military and material assistance to gain the upper hand against KDP[40], Iran's 1996 incursion into the Kurdish region controlled by Talabani pushed Barzani into Saddam's camp. Islamic revolutionary guards with the PUK's help crossed into Iraq to crush the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDP).

Talabani's despair for outside assistance was reflected in his April 1996 comment that anyone who can achieve peace is welcome. If the U.S. can do it, or if Iran can do it they are welcome.[41] Hence, Barzani sent his nephew, Nirchervan Barzani , to Baghdad to get Saddam's backing in the struggle against the PUK. On August 31st 1996, Iraqi government tanks escorted KDP forces into Arbil and the Republican Guards raised the Iraqi national flag on the Kurdish parliament building, alongside the KDP's yellow flag. Tariq Aziz stressed that Iraqi forces were there at the request of the KDP to counter Iran's assistance to the PUK.[42] The PKK also had Iranian backing to battle the KDP.[43] Barzani was hoping to achieve two things: the first was to secure an American and Allied supporting, and thus, legitimize himself as the internationally accepted Kurdish leader. Secondly, by offering to open the door for dialogue with PUK, he could insure a semblance of the survival of the Kurdish democratic experience and continue to portray himself as the sole leader of the Kurdish national movement.[44]

The West and the United States response to Iraq's incursion into the Safe Haven was confusing and ineffective, despite Talabani's claim he gave Washington 3 days warning of the imminent attack on Arbil and

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40 Middle East International, No. 532, 16 August 1996, pg. 6; and the Times, 30 July 1996.

41 Christian Science Monitor, 3 September 1996.

42 The Times, 1&2 September 1996. Iraqi authorities stressed that Iran had sent close to 3,000 troops to assist Talabani in July 1996, The Times, September 1, 1996.

43 Christian Science Monitor, 18 April 1996, pg.1.

44 Hanna Yousif Freij, Alliance Patterns of a Secessionist Movement, Vol. 18, No 1, 1998.

to have received a promise of 'lethal retaliation' response. While Britain supported the US stance that the Iraqi incursion must be punished, fellow UN Security Council members, France, Russia and China did not agree.[45]

The arguments for international intervention were indeed not clear-cut. Once in control of Arbil the KDP insisted that it had made a short-term deal with Baghdad only, in order to oust the PUK and it did not intend to allow the government of Iraq to resume control of the Kurdish enclave. However, Barzani's success was short lived as the PUK, with Iran's help recaptured many of the cities they lost and the situation in the Kurdish region has almost returned to status quo and, the PUK could control Sulaymanyiah.[46] Following the recapture of Sulaymanyiah, on 23rd October 1996, they held separate talks with Barzani and Talabani in Turkey, thereby beginning a series of negotiations under the sponsorship of the USA, Britain and Turkey.

This has come to be known as the "Ankara process". By 25th October 1996 an agreement for a cease fire was reached. A peace agreement was signed on 31st October 1996, known as the "Ankara Agreement". The "Ankara Agreement" implementation of which the KDP wanted, was delayed until the formation of a coalition government; preparation for new elections; and unification of the region's financial revenues. The agreement left KDP in control of the Khabur border crossing and of Arbil.[47] A new round of fighting took place at the end of April 1997 between the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) and PUK in Halabja, following which both sides went to Tehran for three days of talks. The result was described as a "permanent" cease fire. By the summer of 1997, the PUK refused to accept, the status quo in the enclaves. The KDP was receiving the vast majority of the enclave's revenues although only half of the population of the enclave lived in the zone it controlled.

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45   Kurdish Media Reports Draft: Draft Briefing Paper on Iraqi Kurdistan- by Teresa Thornhill, pg. 7, Internet: www.Kurdish Media.com

46   Hanna Yousif Freij, Alliance Patterns of a Secessionist Movement, op. Cit., pg. 32.

47   Kerim Ahmad, General Secretary of KCP, London 19.11.97.

In addition, it was maintaining a trade embargo on the PUK-controlled zone. The KDP also controlled the border with Syria; no progress had been made on the implementation of the points of the Ankara Agreement, which the KDP has insisted to delay. The PUK-controlled zone was thus hard pressed economically through its lack of access to the outside world. The PUK was also short of funds. In the event, a meeting took place in London on 6th October 1997 attended by four senior members of each party in the presence of representatives of the US, Britain and Turkey. There ensued a lengthy argument about the agenda and the talks ended without any progress made. Later on, PUK attacked KDP forces in southern Kurdistan. [48]

Turkey has conducted three incursions into the enclave in 1997. On 13th October 1997, as the Turkish troops were beginning to withdraw (albeit leaving behind 8,000 troops to create a "security zone" in the border region) the PUK attacked the KDP on three fronts along the 1996 cease fire. The PUK thus took advantage of KDP's exhaustion following three weeks of fighting against the PKK. The PUK offensive was launched only after days of the abortive meeting in London; it appears that the PUK acted out of deep frustration with the progress in the "Ankara process".[49]

The KDP claimed that the PKK was playing a major supporting role in the PUK offensive, but the PUK claimed that, following the start of the offensive, Barzani appealed to Turkey for military support. The United States has urged rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq to stop fighting and observe cease fire.[50] In May 1997 with the cooperation of the Iraqi Kurdish rebel group of KDP, Turkish forces invaded northern Iraq and attacked PKK Kurdish rebels and established a security zone. In October, the two largest insurgent groups in Iraq, the KDP and PUK, ended a year-long truce with clashes that escalated into a major offensive in

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48   Kurdish Media–Report: Draft Breifing Paper on Iraqi Kurdistan, Teresa Thornhill. pg.13. Internet:wwwKurdishMedia.com

49   Ibid., pg. 14.

50   BBC News, Middle East, *Iraqi Kurds Report Clashes*, Tuesday, October, 1997 Published at 19:45 GMT.

November 1997.[51] Although a 1996 cease-fire brokered by the United State failed in October, the fighting ended in late November with a new cease fire agreement. After a shaky start, the cease fire was reportedly still holding on 27th November 1997.

For the first time, the Kurdish political leaders came out of darkness of military fighting to the brightness of political resolution of their political crisis and Kurdistan transferred from the instability stage to a semi stability stage of no peace and no war stage. Meanwhile, there is hope that southern Kurdistan in this stage will move to the stability stage and total peace among all the political groups in Kurdistan will be achieved.

No Peace and No War Stage (Washington Agreement) 1998-2001

By 1998, the US foreign policy changed towards Kurdistan. In September 1998, the leaders of the two-major Kurdish parties, Barzani and Talabani, met the secreatary of state of United States, Mrs. Albright in Washington D.C. The KDP and the PUK, agreed to new power-sharing arrangements that consolidated the ceasefire agreement of November, 1997. Both parties also welcome continuing engagement of the governments of Turkey and the United Kingdom in the peace and reconciliation process. In the Washington accord, they discussed ways to improve the regional administration of the three northern provinces of Iraq and to settle long-standing political differences within the context of the Ankara Accords of October 1996. They have reached several important areas of agreement on how to implement those accords.

Both parties promised to create a united, pluralistic, and democratic Iraq that would ensure the political and human rights of Kurdish people in Iraq and of all Iraqis, on political basis decided by all the Iraqi people. Both parties aspire that Iraq be reformed on a federal basis that would maintain the nation's unity and territorial integrity.

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51   Armed Conflicts Report 2000. Internet: www//KurdishMedia.com.

Both Parties agreed that Iraq must comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the human rights provisions of Resolution 688.[52] On 9th January 1999 the KDP and PUK delegations headed by Barzani and Talabani ended their talks in the Kurdish town of Salaheddin in Arbil and they agreed on many important points:

i.   Both sides expressed their commitment to the Washington Agreement and presumed to strive to implement all the agreement's clauses and remove all obstacles and hindrances.

ii.   The KDP expressed its commitment to the clause relating to the financial issue and its implementation.

iii.   Both sides put a new framework for normalizing the situation in Kurdistan.

iv.   In order to implement the Washington Agreement, the PUK delegation expressed its commitment to the implementation of the clause relating to the PKK in northern Iraq, and it had already taken steps for this purpose and will continue to do so until the full implementation of this point to kick out the PKK forces.

v.   Both sides agreed to unify their positions toward current events and developments. Both sides also agreed to work toward improving relations with neighboring countries and ensuring the security of the region.

vi.   To hold further meetings in order to fully implement the Washington Agreement.[53]

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52   Final Statement of the Leaders' Meeting (September, 1998) Internet: http://www.puk.org/documents/wash_accord.htm

53   Internet http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/9_1_1999press.htm (End of a new round of talks between the KDP and PUK).

In December 1998, President Clinton reinforced the United States intention to protect Kurds against any aggression by the Iraqi regime.[54] On 9th December 1999, Kurdish Media interviewed Talabani and he "expressed his unhappiness with the progress of the Washington agreement. Barzani promised Mrs. Albright to take action in order to normalize the situation in the region, divide the customs revenues, fairly hold free election and form a government that would not have contact with Saddam Hussein, but unfortunately Barzani is not regarding it."[55]

Meanwhile, the United States government gave nearly $ 100 million in support of Iraqi opposition to topple the Iraqi regime. In 1999, Iraqi Government forces continued sporadic shelling of Kurdish villages in southern Kurdistan. No fighting occurred between the two major groups that controlled the area. In December 1999, a new cabinet dominated by the KDP was formed in southern Kurdistan without representation from the rival PUK. The new cabinet is led by Nechirvan Barzani, nephew of the KDP leader Massoud Barzani, and it included members of the Iraqi Communist Party, Democratic Assyrian Movement, Islamic Union, Iraqi Independent Kurdistan Workers Party and Turcoman Culture Union.[56]

The peace agreement between the KDP and PUK signed in Washington in 1998 made little progress as the KDP and PUK pursued their affairs on an independent basis. The representative of the US state department participated in the meeting of 25 June 1999 between PUK and KDP politburo and they continuously helped them to reach some

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54 Nouri Talabani, Southern Kurdistan in International Law, Kurdish studies in Washington from 20-21 November 1999.

55 Kurdish Media: Interview with PUK leader Jalal Talabani, 09 December 1999. Pg.1 Internet: http://Kurdishmedia.com/inter/int_jt.htm

56 Political developments in southern Kurdistan. Internet: www//KurdishMedia.com

57 Kurdistan Niwe (New Kurdistan), (Issue 66, 7 July 99), the organ of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) has interviewed Dr Fuad Ma'sum, a member PUK politburo, and the head of the PUK negotiation team to Washington and Dr Fuad said the meeting concentrated on the main issues such as normalization of the Kurdistan situation, disarmament of the towns, establishment of transitional government in order to provide the ground for the election, (Kurdistan national) census, to police the towns and organize the incomes.

agreement. When it came to main issues, they could not agree.[57] In December 1999, Talabani analyzed the role of the United States and Israel new policy towards Iraq and concluded that they want to utilize a weak-Iraq in at least two ways in favor of Israel and the United States.[58]

Firstly, Israel uses Iraq as a leverage in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations; and uses Iraq against Syria, which supports the Islamic movement in Lebanon that threatens Israel's peace and stability. The second issue, which is a consequence of the Iraqi-Israeli negotiations about Palestinian issue and Iraqi's decision to resettle half a million Palestinians in the Kurdish cities of Kirkuk and Khanaqeen. This is a gain for both Israel and the Arab, to dominate the state of Iraq and to damage the relationship between the two stateless nations in the Middle East, the Kurds and the Palestinians. The displacement of half a million Palestinians will reduce the pressure on Israel and will be a way of implementing the Isrealization of Palestine and the Arabization of Kurdistan.

In fact, The PUK regulated municipality elections and council structures to run their local affairs in 1999, for the first time in Sulaymanyia even though before, the Kurdistan Regional Assembly had passed a law for regulating municipality elections and council structures. But, because of the internal conflict, these elections could not be organized in the enclave.[59]

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58 Dr. Rebwar Fatah, the Director of Kurdish Media, was interviewed by a Middle Eastern Journalist when Jalal Talabani made a statement on his cooperation with Baghdad regime. Mar 11, 2000.

59 The Washington Post, one of the most influential American newspapers, said that southern Kurdistan is loosening its ties with the central Iraqi government and moving toward independence. According to journalist Howard Schneider of Washington Post who wrote from Hawler (Arbil) that help programmes supported by UN, such as selling gasoline to Turkey and using American airplanes for protection from Saddam Hussein, helped the Kurds to be self-reliant. The newspaper ran the headline, "The embargo on Iraqis strengthening Kurds. A Kurdish nation is becoming reality in Iraq." The article pointed out that the Dohuk and Hewler (Arbil) regions were under the control of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Suleimani (Suleymania) was under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The article brought to attention the peace and hopes fostered in the region since the fighting ceased between the two rival parties. However, the newspaper said that the two parties have yet to make progress in developing a united government. It said that Kurds in uniform have been keeping order in KDP and PUK controlled areas. See Kurdish Observer –Kurdish Daily News, Wednesday 02 February 2000.

On February 3rd 2000 Talabani met the representative of the UN in Sulaymaniya and they arrived at a series of understandings concerning a number of issues. These issues included UN assistance in concerning the return of internally displaced persons, speeding up the implementation of programmes, building up the capacity of local institutions to implement UN programmes, and rebuilding the economic infrastructure.[60] On the night of September 29, 2000, heavy fighting erupted between the forces of PUK and PKK in several areas.[61] After a few days, the Islamic Union Movement and some other political parties mediated between them and they arrived at a peace agreement. However, the conflict between them is still not totally resolved. On 18th December 2000, Turkish forces made an incursion in southern Kurdistan to back PUK and fight against PKK.[62]

The U.S. has tried to develop the economic field in southern Kurdistan since 1995 and they insisted on giving a certain amount of the oil for food deal under the UNSCR 986. On 14th April 1995, the Security Council adopted resolution 986 (1995), in which it provided Iraq with another opportunity to sell oil to finance the purchase of humanitarian goods and various mandated United Nation's activities concerning Iraq.[63] In addition to food and medicine, funds can also be spent on water and sanitation equipment, agriculture supplies, educational materials, housing and electrical supplies.

The U.S. State Department and the Kurds both claim that this prosperity proves that the oil-for-food program, when administered by the UN as it is in the north, is adequate for the people to survive and even thrive. The health problems in Southern Kurdistan, they say, are evidence that the Iraqi government is manipulating food and medicine supplies in order to turn world opinion against the sanctions. They point to a UNICEF

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60   KurdishMedia.com – Courtesy of Kurdistan Mnewsline 05/02/2000, Jalal Talabani PUK Secretary General interviewed by Radio Monte Carlo.

61   Internet: www.kurdistanobserver.com

62   Internet: www. puk .org.com

63   With an introduction by Boutros Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, The United Nations and the Iraq-Kuwait conflict 1990-1996, Published by the United Nations Department of Public Information New York, NY 10017.

report released after the implementation of the program that show that while infant mortality in the center and south has doubled in the last 10 years, the rate has fallen slightly in the Kurdish zone.[64]

The three Kurdish provinces contain 13 percent of Iraq's population and therefore should get 13 percent of the supplies under the UN oil-for-food program. But the rest of the Iraq's population gets only 53 percent from the oil sales, since the UN deducts money for war reparation and its own operational expenses.[65] The Kurdish people are economically and politically better off than the other regional neighbours. Still, some felt that the region could even be better off with good governance. Therefore, when the new cabinet was established in 1999, Massoud Barzani blamed the Kurdish administration for corruption and he tried to remove the corrupters and ameliorate the domestic situation.

The "oil for food" program established with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution was intended to improve the living conditions and future prospects of Iraqi citizens. However, while it provided basic humanitarian needs, it has had an unanticipated negative effect on southern Kurdistan. Rather than promote the development of local services and infrastructure, it is drawing people away from the newly rehabilitated areas of southern Kurdistan, and it made a grave impact on agrarian based economy. As a result, the majority of the Kurdish people want to leave southern Kurdistan and a steady stream of Iraqi Kurds has been flowing out of the region since the collapse of the first Kurdistan regional Government, to seek asylum in Europe and elsewhere. Sadly enough, a large proportion of educated people, intellectuals and professionals have left.

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64 David Aquila Lawrence, Iraqi Kurds enjoy a de facto state. Internet: http://www.csmonitor.com/ durable/2000/05/03, Pg. 3.

65 *Ibid,.*

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