













# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



# THESIS

H3525

STRATEGIC RESOURCES OF IRAQ, TURKEY AND  
IRAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF KURDISH  
NATIONALISM: THE DOMESTIC, REGIONAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

by

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December 1989

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T247258





## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION <b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>		1b RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY		3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE		4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School	6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) Code 56	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Naval Postgraduate School	
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, California 93943-5000		7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Monterey, California 93943-5000	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER	
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS	
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO	PROJECT NO
		TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) STRATEGIC RESOURCES OF IRAQ, TURKEY, AND IRAN AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF KURDISH NATIONALISM: THE DOMESTIC, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT			
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Hawley, K.M.			
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Master's Thesis	13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1989, December	15. PAGE COUNT 165
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.			
17. COSATI CODES		18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)	
FIELD	GROUP	Kurdistan; Kurds; Iran; Iraq; Turkey; Strategic Resources	
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) <p>This research examines the strategic resources of Iraq, Turkey and Iran with particular emphasis on those assets found in the Kurdish regions of these nations. Strategic resources, in the context of this discussion, are defined as oil and nonfuel mineral assets and agricultural potential, to include degree of soil productivity and availability of water supplies. To the extent applicable, industrial development is discussed as well. Kurdish history, language and culture and the Kurdish nationalist movement in the three nations are also examined. Superpower and regional interests in the Kurdish nationalist movement and the governments of the nations involved are also addressed.</p>			
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS		21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Prof. Ralph H. Magnus		22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (408) 646-2294	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL Code 56Mk

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Strategic Resources of Iraq, Turkey and Iran and the  
Development of Kurdish Nationalism: The Domestic,  
Regional and International Context

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
December 1989

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the strategic resources of Iraq, Turkey and Iran with particular emphasis on those assets found in the Kurdish regions of these nations. Strategic resources, in the context of this discussion, are defined as oil and nonfuel mineral assets and agricultural potential, to include degree of soil productivity and availability of water supplies. To the extent applicable, industrial development is discussed as well. Kurdish history, language and culture and the Kurdish nationalist movement in the three nations are also examined. Superpower and regional interests in the Kurdish nationalist movement and the governments of the nations involved are also addressed.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The three nations--Iran, Iraq, and Turkey--which contain the significant portion of the area sometimes called Kurdistan are vastly different from one another. Not only are their forms of government distinct, they are ethnically, and within a Muslim context, religiously different as well.

National security as well as regional and international relations in these three nations have been complicated by the Kurdish issue in varying degrees. In each country, the dimension of the dispute differs and the governmental approach to the problem varies.

The focus of this presentation concentrates upon the strategic resources in the Kurdish areas of Iran, Iraq and Turkey, and explores the possibility of the existence of a relationship between the concentration or exploitation of resources in Kurdish areas and the level of Kurdish-government strife as a whole. Strategic resources, in the context of this discussion, are primarily energy assets such as oil and hydroelectric potential, and agricultural assets, such as arable land, animal husbandry and river systems. To the extent that they apply, nonfuel mineral assets will be discussed as well.

## II. OVERVIEW OF HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The Kurds are a fiercely independent, racially homogenous group who are believed to be the descendants of Indo-European tribes which settled in the Zagros mountains over 4000 years ago.<sup>1</sup> The inhospitality and inaccessibility of this mountain region served as an effective barrier to the influence of other groups and facilitated the development of a separate and distinct cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> Over time, as the Kurds moved northward and expanded the area that they inhabited, contact with other cultures and governments became inevitable. This contact led to conflict between the autonomous, mountain-dwelling Kurds and the governments in the plains who endeavored to extend their influence into, and beyond, the mountain regions. The Kurds, located as they were between the Ottomans in Turkey and Safavids in Iran, assumed the de-facto role of "border police" after the 1514 Battle of Chaldiran, when the Ottomans routed the Safavids from the eastern portion of Anatolia.<sup>3</sup> The 1639 Treaty of Erzerum established a firm

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<sup>1</sup>Trevor Mostyn and Albert Hourani, eds, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Middle East and North Africa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 463.

<sup>2</sup>Samande Siaband, "Mountains, My Home: An Analysis of the Kurdish Psychological Landscape," Kurdish Times, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer, 1988), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Mosteyn and Hourani, Cambridge Encyclopedia, p. 465.



border between the Ottomans and the Persians and resulted in the first official division of the Kurdish population.<sup>4</sup> However, the effect of this division was not immediately felt by the Kurds inhabiting the buffer zone, who moved freely within their own area.

This system worked happily until the nineteenth century, when both the Ottomans and Qajars (Iran) extended direct administration in the area. This triggered a series of unsuccessful revolts until the end of the century which demonstrated the difficulty Kurdish leaders had in working together.<sup>5</sup>

These unsuccessful revolts were merely the opening salvos in an on-again, off-again war for autonomy which continues to this day. This sense of budding nationalism has been alternatively encouraged and discouraged by those who have sought their own advantage in the context of Kurdish efforts for self-determination.

Linguistically, the Kurds are less homogenous. Most texts separate the Kurds into two main dialects, Kurmanji and Sorani, the former being the primary dialect of the north and the latter of the south, and make reference to the sub-dialects of Zaza (primarily spoken in Dersim, now Tunceli, Turkey), and the Iranian sub-dialects of Leki,

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<sup>4</sup>Donald Bruce Disney, Jr, The Kurdish Nationalist Movement and External Influences, Master's Thesis for Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 1980. p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Mostyn and Hourani, Cambridge Encyclopedia, p. 465.

Gurani, and Kermanshahi.<sup>6</sup> However, one author disputes the use of the word "dialects" to describe what he instead terms Kurdish "languages" which possess "the phonetic and syntactic variations among them, (which) are as pronounced as, for example, those between Italian, Catalan, Spanish and Portuguese."<sup>7</sup> This distinction between Kurdish "languages" as opposed to "dialects" is significant and doubtless is a serious stumbling block to cooperative efforts geared towards fostering a Kurdish national identity. Further, the lack of a single script makes written communications difficult across national boundaries. "Roman letters are used in Turkey and Syria; Cyrillic in the USSR; and Arabic in Iraq and Iran--hardly a unifying factor."<sup>8</sup>

Culturally, the Kurds possess a tribal heritage with nomadic roots. This heritage is more evident today amongst the mountain Kurds, exerting less influence on those living in the plains and urban areas. As a result of migration to the urban areas in search of either seasonal or permanent

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<sup>6</sup>Mostyn and Hourani, Cambridge Encyclopedia, p. 464. The dividing line separating the two main dialects is described as "(1) Kurmanji, spoken northwards as far as the USSR from a line drawn roughly from Mosul across to Urmiya; (2) Sorani (or Kurdi), spoken roughly southwards from Urmiya to Khanaqin in the south on both sides of the Iran/Iraq border. In Iraq the Kurds are thus divided between the two major dialect groups."

<sup>7</sup>Mehrdad Izady, "A Kurdish Lingua Franca?" Kurdish Times, Vol. 2, No. 2, Summer, 1988, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Sim, Kurdistan: The Search for Recognition, (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1980), p. 2.

employment, the importance of tribalism is waning.<sup>9</sup> The degree of tribalism is a function, to some extent, of the language spoken. Sorani speakers tend to emphasize tribal relations to a greater degree than Kurmanji speakers, and Sorani is the language used for most intellectual discussions. Kurmanji speakers are sometimes regarded by their Sorani speaking brothers as less culturally sophisticated, although their fighting prowess is admired. Kurmanjis, on the other hand, often regard Sorani speakers as "unmanly, unreliable, and culturally arrogant."<sup>10</sup>

Nomadism, once the mainstay of Kurdish society, is now almost a thing of the past.

Following the partition of Kurdistan, the new frontiers, especially that between Turkey and Iran, prevented the traditional summer and winter migrations. The semi-nomads were stripped of the right to cross the frontiers. In some cases the lines of the frontier cut tribes into two or even three groups....Certain factors did delay the sedentarization of the Kurdish nomads: the climate was favourable to stockrearing and the grazing was good, there was a shortage of irrigated land, and the tribes preferred to live an independent life without any obligations to the state. But eventually, as the state consolidated the centralization, nomadism faded out.<sup>11</sup>

Most Kurds are Muslims, with the majority adhering to the Sunni sect. Significant numbers of Shia Kurds are found in Iran near Kermanshah. Also, in northern Iran are found

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<sup>9</sup>Mostyn and Hourani, Cambridge Encyclopedia, p. 464.

<sup>10</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds Between Iran and Iraq," Middle East Report, July-August 1986, p. 16.

<sup>11</sup>Gerard Chaliand, ed., People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan (London: Zed Press, 1980), p. 115.

Kurds "who are Ali-Ilahi, a sect even farther from the Sunni creed than the Shia...."<sup>12</sup> In addition, some Kurds are Zoroastrian Yezidis.<sup>13</sup>

The mountain-dwelling Kurds tend to be taller and more fit than their Arab, Persian and Turkish neighbors, and are often blue-eyed with light-colored skin. Their clothing is designed for comfort and utility. One author described traditional Kurdish dress as follows:

It consisted of baggy trousers secured at the ankle (although Barzan trousers, were "flared" at the bottoms), a cummerbund or heavy leather belt, shirt, longish jacket frequently embroidered...and a turban, the colour, fringe, or mode of wearing often denoting the individual tribe. The men invariably wore...a curved dagger...and a weapon, even an ancient firearm, was carried as a prized prestige accessory....Kurdish women were not veiled and wore traditional dress of their own.<sup>14</sup>

The Kurds have historically resisted subjugation or taxation by force of arms. As a result, they have earned a reputation as fierce and fearless fighters.

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<sup>12</sup>Hassan Arfa, The Kurds: An Historical and Political Study (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Edgar O'Ballance, The Kurdish Revolt 1961-70 (London: Archon Books, 1973), p. 35.

### III. POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF KURDS

"Kurdistan" cannot be found on most present-day maps, and even among students of history and culture there is some disagreement as to the boundaries of the country that Kurdish nationalists seek to establish. Due to population shifts over the years, Kurds have settled in significant numbers in areas as diverse as Lebanon and West Germany, far from their ancestral home. However, the area known as Kurdistan can broadly be described as follows:

A beautiful, mountainous land beginning in the east near Lake Rezaiyeh at the slopes of the Zagros mountains, Kurdistan stretches southeast roughly halfway between Sanandaj and Hamadan in Iran and passes westwards through the oil-rich Kirkuk region of Iraq--where the Kurds have had their longest and bloodiest struggle--towards Malatya in Turkey. From there the region is bounded to the north by the high mountainous chain of Mercan Dag and Harhal Dag, which forms a natural boundary between the Turks and the Kurds.<sup>15</sup>

Five countries possess significant Kurdish populations. An accurate assessment of the population is impossible to obtain, due to a tendency by Kurdish nationalists to increase the estimates, while governments are often

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<sup>15</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 1.

motivated to reduce them. Approximate population figures<sup>16</sup> are as follows.

Turkey: Estimates range between four and almost nine million, depending on the source consulted. Although scattered across Anatolia, the bulk of these individuals live in the southeast, in the area east of a line drawn between Gaziantep and Erzican. Thus, Kurds constitute anywhere from slightly more than seven to almost 17 percent of the population.

Iran: Estimates vary from two and one-half to more than five million Kurds, the bulk of whom live along Iran's western border in the Zagros Mountain region. Based on current population figures, Kurds in Iran comprise between four and ten percent of the total population.

Iraq: Estimates range between two and one-half to three million persons, the bulk of whom live in the northern portion of the country, and to the east of the Tigris River. Thus, the Kurdish population is between 14 and 17 percent of the total population.

Syria: Small pockets of Kurds exist north of Aleppo and near Cizre on the Syrian Turkish border. These number from approximately 600,000 to more than 800,000. As a percentage

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<sup>16</sup>Kurdish population estimates derived from Sim, Kurdistan, p. 3; Middle East Reports, July-August, 1986, p. 21; and Chaliand, People Without a Country, pp. 108, 211, 222; Country population totals from PCGLOBE PLUS (Comwell Systems Inc: Tempe, Arizona, 1989), as follows: Iran: 51.9 million; Iraq: 17.6 million; Turkey: 54.2 million; Syria: 11.6 million; USSR: 286.4 million.

of the total, Kurds make up between five and seven percent of the population.

USSR: Kurdish communities are found in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Population estimates range from 200,000 to slightly under 300,000, only a fraction of a percent of the total population.

In Iraq, the reorganization and renaming of the administrative boundaries (provinces) make it difficult to determine which provinces are "Kurdish" and which are not. The provinces of Suleymanieh, Arbil and Dehok comprise what is officially termed the "autonomous region" of Kurdistan; however, significant populations of Kurds live in Kirkuk, Nineveh (Mosul), Badinan and Wasit. Government "arabization" efforts have altered the present population distribution in the areas historically inhabited by Kurds.<sup>17</sup>

In Turkey, the Kurdish population comprises a majority or a significant minority in some 18 vilayets in the eastern portion of the country. These include Adiyaman, Agri, Bingol, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Elazig, Erzincan, Erzurum, Gaziantep, Hakkari, Kars, Malatya, Mus, Mardin, Siirt, Tunceli, Urfa, and Van. In addition, there are significant pockets of Kurds in the vilayets of Sivas and Maras.<sup>18</sup>

In Iran, the Kurds inhabit a region which spans several provinces. The population is centered in Kurdistan, but

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<sup>17</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, pp. 154-156.

<sup>18</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 102.

also inhabits Western Azerbaijan, Kermanshah, and to some extent Luristan as well. Additionally, some 400,000 Kurds reside in the towns of Gutshan and Dorgaz in Khorrasan province.<sup>19</sup>

Map 1 shows the area where Kurds have existed historically in large numbers, and which is generally viewed as the historical boundaries of Kurdistan. Kurdish nationalists might argue with the dimensions of the boundaries shown, and the governments of Iran, Iraq and Turkey would want it pointed out that these nonexistent boundaries encroach upon their sovereign territories. Nonetheless, the map provides the reader with a general idea of the area under discussion.

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<sup>19</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, pp. 107-108.



#### IV. IRAQ

##### A. OVERVIEW OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES: LAND AND WATER ASSETS

Iraq is geophysically located on the Arabian Plate, which is bordered to the north by the Turkish plate and to the north-east by what is termed the "Zagros Crush" or "Zagros Thrust" zone. This zone separates the Arabian Plate from the Central/Eastern Iranian Plate and runs from Turkey along the Zagros Mountain range. As the Arabian Plate pushes to the north, earthquakes are frequently felt in the Zagros Crush Zone. This zone bisects the region commonly termed Kurdistan. The Iraqi portion of Kurdistan is located in the north east corner of the country, and suffers a significantly disproportionate amount of earthquake activity in comparison to the remainder of that country.<sup>20</sup>

The general climate in Iraq is especially harsh in the summer months, with temperatures ranging from 95 to 120 degrees fahrenheit. In the evenings, near rivers and in the mountain regions the temperatures are somewhat cooler. Because of the direction of the summer winds, termed "Shamal winds" which blow across the desert towards the Gulf, rather than over the Gulf waters towards the land mass, these winds

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<sup>20</sup>Peter Beaumont, Gerald H. Blake and J. Malcolm Wagstaff, The Middle East: A Geographical Study (London: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.), pp. 20, 26.

offer little relief and are of the hot and dry variety.<sup>21</sup> The most favorable climate during the summer, then, is to be found in the Kurdish areas.

Iraq is a land where rainfall is generally scarce and water is a valuable resource. Precipitation in Iraq ranges from less than 100 mm to more than 1500 mm per annum. The bulk of this rainfall occurs during the winter months in the Kurdish region, where precipitation ranges from 400 to 1500 mm per annum. The remainder of the country receives between 100 and 200 mm per annum, a significant difference. Iraq is unique of the three nations which comprise Kurdistan with regard to the distribution of precipitation. While Turkey and Iran receive significant amounts of rainfall in their Kurdish regions, they also enjoy similar levels in other areas of their countries. Iraq's precipitation, however, is concentrated primarily in the Kurdish area.<sup>22</sup>

Water resources are measured not only by precipitation but also by evapotranspiration and water surplus figures. The essence of these figures is that they demonstrate the potential for water loss through evaporation and transpiration and measure the degree of water surplus or deficit for a given area. Again, the most favorable evapotranspiration figures are found in the Kurdish region,

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<sup>21</sup>W.B. Fisher, The Middle East, Fifth Edition (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1963), pp. 372-373.

<sup>22</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 65.

with a low of less than 570 mm ranging to a high of 1140 mm. Evapotranspiration figures for the remainder of the country are in excess of the latter figure.<sup>23</sup> Surplus figures show a similar trend. Surplus water supplies in the Kurdish region are greater than 1200 mm per annum, while the remainder of the country shows figures of 100 mm or less.<sup>24</sup>

The bulk of Iraq's water resources, then, are situated in the Kurdish region. However, statistics alone tell only part of the story. The effective use of water resources in the agricultural sector depends not only on rainfall quantity, but also on soil characteristics, such as degree of productivity and salinity.

Again, the gifts of nature were bestowed most abundantly in the Kurdish region. The north-eastern portion of Iraq is composed of predominantly reddish brown and mountain soils, which are highly productive, especially for cereal crops such as wheat and barley. The south-eastern portion of the country possesses alluvial soils, which are extremely rich and productive but require constant and careful maintenance due to their marshy characteristics. Rice, as well as dates, are popular crops in this region. High silt and clay levels, as well as excessive salinity which must be mitigated by controlled flooding and draining of the area, hamper the exploitation of these soils. Additionally, the

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<sup>23</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 72-73.

<sup>24</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 80-81.

region copes infrequently with floods and droughts which limit productivity in the area.<sup>25</sup>

The amount of cultivatable soil in Iraq is a subject for debate, with government statistics quoting a figure of some 12 million hectares. Approximately four million hectares of this potential cropland is in the northern and central portions of Iraq, and is rain fed land. The remainder, some eight million hectares, requires irrigation and is in the south. "Some observers believed that the amount of land classed as cultivatable was unrealistically high because it was doubtful that water could be made available to begin cultivation. The area actually cropped annually has been about 3 million hectares...."<sup>26</sup>

#### B. AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

With the increased emphasis on oil production to obtain foreign exchange in order to fund the Iran-Iraq war and to rebuild the infrastructure following that war, agricultural production in Iraq has suffered. Prior to the discovery of petroleum, agriculture was the most important sector of the economy. The decline of an agricultural base in Iraq has serious internal security ramifications for the nation. Although productivity has always been low, agriculture has

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<sup>25</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 331-335.

<sup>26</sup>Richard Nyrop, ed, Iraq: A Country Study, Foreign Area Studies Series, (Washington, D.C.: The American University, 1979), p. 154.

historically provided the bulk of employment for Iraqi citizens. The continued shift of workers from the countryside to the cities has the potential to cause serious problems if the economy is unable to absorb the displaced workers. The decline of agriculture did not happen overnight, but was a result of overambitious and mismanaged government policies over a very long term which failed to consider the ambitions of the population as well as other economic factors.

For most of this century, farming techniques employed in Iraq were not much different from those used in biblical times, resulting in low crop yields relative to land under cultivation. Soil fertility was maintained, not by fertilizers, but by leaving the land fallow. A tenant farming system benefitted the usually absentee landlord rather than the peasant who worked the field. As a result, sharecroppers were not motivated to learn new farming techniques or invest in expensive equipment.<sup>27</sup>

During the 1950s, increasing oil revenues led the government to establish a comprehensive development policy. This effort began with the creation of an independent Development Board to optimize the country's potential and provide guidance to all economic sectors. Despite its best efforts, the Board faced an uphill battle and was criticized

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<sup>27</sup>Edith and E.F. Penrose, Iraq: International Relations and National Development, Nations of the Modern World Series, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978), p. 174.

for its slow approach to development which emphasized public projects rather than improving the average person's standard of living. The Board, responding to the criticism, invited the British economist Lord Salter to examine development issues in Iraq and provide advice. Salter recommended that improving the lot of the largely poor populace be a priority over grandiose projects, such as dams and roads, and also suggested that the various ministries provide inputs and work closely with the independent Board.<sup>28</sup>

During the development years of the 1950s, agriculture employed some 70 percent of the population, but contributed only 30 percent of the national income. Development Board attempts to implement Salter's advice into the agricultural sector were largely ineffective. The Board had difficulty getting the money to the peasant who needed it, and funds allocated to agriculture were often not spent. Additionally, the government was fearful of inciting the landlord-sheikhs with land reform initiatives and land taxes.<sup>29</sup> Poverty in the rural areas was so severe, and many of the landlords so unjust, that often the peasant preferred to take his chances in the newly industrializing cities. Migration of farmers to urban areas depleted the already inefficient agricultural sector's labor force.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Penrose, Iraq, pp. 167-172.

<sup>29</sup>Penrose, Iraq, p. 177.

<sup>30</sup>Penrose, Iraq, pp. 164-165.

The 1958 coup which brought Kassem to power was quickly followed by land reform initiatives. The purpose of these initiatives was not only to benefit the peasant, but also to strip power from the politically dangerous landlords. The essential feature of land reform was to distribute the land to the peasants, who would then pay for the land with long-term government loans and, as a condition of ownership, join government cooperatives. However, land reform was not a panacea. Lands were taken from the sheiks quickly, and distributed to the peasants slowly. Government management of the cooperatives, which farmers were reluctant to join, was often pathetic. To make matters even worse, the country was in the throes of a serious drought at the time. "Agricultural production fell and during the 1960s never really recovered."<sup>31</sup>

The 1970s ushered in new land reforms which were aimed primarily at the Kurdish tribal chiefs. The government sought first, to break up the chief's large holdings and second, to initiate a program of collective farming.

Collective farms (the conversion of a cooperative into a unit worked as a single farm under collective management) increased rapidly in the early 1970s, from six in 1972 to 72 in 1974. Growth was much slower thereafter, and the total stagnated at 79 in...1977....The area of collective farms continuously increased, however, amounting to 180,000 hectares in 1977. In addition state farms were established....<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Nyrop, Iraq, pp. 159, 160.

<sup>32</sup>Nyrop, Iraq, p. 161.

Increasing the area of collective farming, however, did not offset the overall decline in total area under cultivation. In addition, the farmers were not motivated to work harder, and production suffered as well. Barley production declined from 954,000 tons in 1957 to 458,000 tons in 1977, and wheat production dropped from 757,000 to 696,000 tons during the same time frame.<sup>33</sup> 1982 figures show a slightly improved yield, at 965 and 902 for wheat and barley, respectively.<sup>34</sup>

Eighty percent of all cultivation in Iraq is dedicated to the production of wheat and barley, which "is concentrated in the northern, wetter parts of the country, and in the Tigris-Euphrates lowlands...."<sup>35</sup> It is this land which is most economical to farm because it suffers least from the effects of salinization, and would be least affected by changes in river distribution patterns, as the land is rain fed.<sup>36</sup> Also, since the land is located in the most favorable summer climate area in Iraq, it is prime land for growing multiple crops per year, rather than limiting production to single crops in the cooler months.

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<sup>33</sup>Nyrop, Iraq, p. 266.

<sup>34</sup>Phebe Marr, The Modern History of Iraq (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985), p. 260.

<sup>35</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp 331-333.

<sup>36</sup>Marr, Iraq, p. 260.



The main drawback to this land, from a government point of view, was its location in Kurdistan. The Iraqi government, in an effort to assume control over the area, established many collective farms in this region after land reform was initiated.

Already by 1975 reports were growing that agricultural conditions were deteriorating. Migration to the cities continued and labour shortages were reported....Even the drive towards collective farming seemed to have lost momentum; only seven new farms were set up between 1973-74 and 1975-76 and total reported membership had decreased by 1396. Half of the increase in agricultural cooperatives was...in the autonomous area of Kurdistan,...An additional one-third of the co-operatives were in Nineveh and Kirkuk, also in the north. Thus, well over half of the new cooperatives were founded in an area where the local inhabitants had recently been defeated....<sup>37</sup>

By the late 1970s, according to one estimate, roughly half of the Iraqi workforce earned their living in the agricultural sector, but contributed only eight percent to the nation's GNP.<sup>38</sup> Another estimate paints an even gloomier picture, with only 30.2 percent of the workforce engaged in agriculture in 1977.<sup>39</sup>

The continued migration to the cities has resulted in an increase in the number of people working in the service sector, which is now the largest sector of the economy, the

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<sup>37</sup>Penrose, Iraq, p. 459.

<sup>38</sup>Nyrop, Iraq, pp. 262, 118.

<sup>39</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit data extrapolated from Annual Abstract of Statistics 1978 and cited in Joe Stork, "Iraq and the War in the Gulf," MERIP Reports, No. 97/June, 1981, p. 14.

major employer being the state itself.<sup>40</sup> Services is an all-encompassing definition which includes many low-paying and poverty level jobs, such as cigarette selling and street sweeping. Construction has also siphoned off many agricultural workers, and now contributes 10.3 percent of the GDP, slightly more than agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

Low productivity has resulted in increased imports of food products.

In 1958, Iraq imported little food and exported certain grains. By 1964-1966 it was importing 14 percent of its agricultural supply; by 1975-1977 the figure had reached 33 percent. Between 1974 and 1981, cereal imports had increased over two and a half times. By 1982, food constituted 15 percent of all imports. Some of the increase was due to a growing population, as well as a rising standard of living....More was due to rural migration.<sup>42</sup>

Continued decline in the agricultural sector, both in absolute and relative terms, means that Iraq will become increasingly reliant upon food imports for her survival. Should the single resource economy suffer severe international oil shocks, or if a futuristic concept such as cold fusion becomes a reality, Iraq could face real hunger as a consequence of a lack of diversification. Further, the increased migration to the cities has social effects as well, fostering a loss of traditional values and methods,

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<sup>40</sup>Stork, "War in the Gulf," MERIP, No. 97, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup>Stork, "War in the Gulf," p. 14.

<sup>42</sup>Marr, Iraq, pp. 259-260.

the "marginal man" syndrome, increased disaffection, alienation and potential for political upheaval.<sup>43</sup>

Baghdad is well aware of the weakness of the agricultural sector. Initially tentative government efforts, begun in the late 1970s, to move away from capital-intensive collective farming and towards privatizing the sector quickly gained momentum as a result of the war.

In spite of considerable investment in agriculture on the state's part, production levels have not greatly improved, and shortages of labour and other constraints connected with the war have combined to necessitate fairly large scale imports of foodstuffs....At the same time, 80% of all loans to the agricultural sector in 1981 were to private firms or individuals, and a form of agricultural "reprivitisation" has taken place....Farmers were no longer required to belong to or sell through agricultural cooperatives or state farms, and could now sell direct to public sector or private wholesale markets.<sup>44</sup>

The success of this policy shift will depend upon the government's continued commitment to the agricultural sector, both in terms of privatization and in stemming urban migration by creating an environment where employment in the industry is an attractive option.

Success also hinges on the government being able to reduce the Kurdish threat to stability in the fertile agricultural areas. This has been accomplished by the resettlement of hundreds of thousands of Kurds from the

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<sup>43</sup>A detailed discussion of this concept is found in Rafael Patai, The Arab Mind, Revised Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), Ch. XII.

<sup>44</sup>Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship (London: KPI, Ltd.), p. 266.

border areas of Iran and Turkey to the cities of Arbil and Sulaymania as well as to settlement centers in western Iraq. According to Kurdish sources, these are forced relocations which require that the displaced Kurds abandon their fields and orchards, leaving them unable to support themselves. Additionally, they have accused Baghdad of replacing the resettled Kurds with Egyptian farmers, and, with the Kurdish threat in the area reduced, investing significant sums (some \$3225 million) in infrastructure development such as roads and water development projects, as well as housing and tourism.<sup>45</sup>

#### C. OIL AND DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ

Prior to the discovery of oil, Iraq's economic base rested upon agriculture. Initially, oil had little impact upon the economy, as the concession system limited the profits which accrued to the population.

The development of the oil industry in Iraq can be said to have undergone four distinct phases. The first phase was one of minimal government involvement in the industry and minimal profit accruing to the nation as a result of development of oil resources. As the level of industrialization in the country was so low, there was little domestic need for petroleum products, a general lack of awareness regarding the importance of petroleum

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<sup>45</sup>"Carrot and Stick in Iraqi Kurdistan," Middle East Economic Digest, 11 August 1989, p. 18.

resources, and consequently no outcry over foreign interference in the industry.

The first phase of development began when oil concessions were granted in Iraq in 1925 for a period of 50-75 years to a consortium which was originally known as the Turkish Petroleum Company. The consortium, later renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), obtained drilling rights to the entire country.

The consortium partners of the IPC established a monopoly by squeezing out a multi-national holding company (Mosul Oilfields, Ltd., or MOF) which was originally a British concern but later came to include shareholders from Italy, Germany, Holland, France, Switzerland and Iraq. This was accomplished by IPC's paying MOF's overdue rent while at the same time placing IPC members on the MOF board of directors, obtaining MOF shares and reorganizing the company. By 1941, the company was a wholly-owned subsidiary of ICP, thus ICP controlled all oil production in the Mosul and Kirkuk areas. In return for drilling rights in Mosul, the Iraqi government required the IPC, unlike their Kirkuk venture, to construct a specified number of drilling rigs and pump a specified amount of oil annually, and gave the company a seven and a half year timetable for production to begin. Government royalties consisted of 20 percent of the total oil produced.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Penrose, Iraq, pp. 137-139.

This imposition of conditions upon the oil companies ushered in the second phase of development as the government came to realize the profit potential of the industry. The government was highly interested in infrastructure improvements, such as drilling rigs, pipelines and refining capacity, which would enable increased production and bring the country greater profits. Baghdad's enthusiasm for increasing both production and profit was at odds with the oil companies' desire to carefully control the amount of oil on the world market in order to avoid a price collapse. It was inevitable that the situation would come to a head, ushering in a third phase of development in which the government mounted a concerted effort to reduce IPC control over petroleum resources.

In the early 1950's IPC subsidiary companies (Mosul Petroleum and Basra Petroleum) developed fields to the west and south of Kirkuk. Development increased in the 1960's when the government took matters into their own hands, voided 99.5 per cent of the inactive oil concessions and formed the Iraq National Oil Company (INOC). Government development of fields, such as the North Rumaila field in southern Iraq, was accomplished with the help of Soviet technicians.<sup>47</sup> A French corporation, Entreprise de Recherches et d'Activites Petrolieres (ERAP), was awarded a development and exploration contract. In 1972, the

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<sup>47</sup>Sluglett, Iraq, p. 100.

government began nationalizing all foreign oil interests, completing the process by 1975.<sup>48</sup>

Nationalization, the fourth phase of development, meant total government control of the oil industry and was seen in Iraq as an important step in throwing off the last vestiges of the imperialist yoke. However, this step, while popular with the masses, did not result in an immediate rise in the standard of living, as it occurred during a time which was marked by a general stagnation in the industry.

The era of stagnation ended shortly after nationalization was initiated with the events of the early 1970s. The Ba'ath government was able to capitalize on and take credit for the enormous increases in oil revenues and concurrent rise in living standards which occurred in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, the OPEC oil embargo and the sharp rise in oil prices. It was at this point that Iraq entered an era of full and complete control over her vast oil resources, and thus the responsibility for managing and preserving them rested entirely in the government's hands.

The Kurds were quick to realize two important points: one, petroleum revenues accruing to Iraq were substantial, and two, a significant portion of these revenues were generated from the Kirkuk oil fields, viewed by Kurdish

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<sup>48</sup>Public Affairs Department, Exxon Oil Corp, Middle East Oil and Gas, Exxon Background Series (New York: Exxon Corporation, 1984), p. 12.

nationalists as a part of a proposed autonomous region of Kurdistan.

Oil...was at the heart of the dispute....They demanded that the region of Kirkuk, Iraq's richest oil-producing area, be included in the autonomous province, but the Baathist leaders rejected the demand. The Kurdish leader not only claimed that "Kirkuk is Kurdistan," but also demanded a share of the national budget proportional to the Kurdish population. The Kurds estimated their population to number a quarter to a third of Iraq's ten million people...(and) demanded about 20 to 25 percent of the Iraqi national budget.<sup>49</sup>

The late Kurdish nationalist Mullah Mustafa Barzani, interviewed by The Washington Post in 1973, indicated his willingness to entrust the management of the Kirkuk fields to American oil companies. Naturally, Baghdad was less than delighted with this turn of events, having already taken steps to change the ethnic composition of the region in preparation for an "official census" to determine what portions of Iraq should be designated as the autonomous region of Kurdistan. Government measures to squelch the Kirkuk issue included the forcible deportation of Kurdish families to Iran and remote areas of Iraq, as well as assassination attempts on Barzani and his son Idris.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>R.K. Ramazani, The Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, International Straits of the World Series (Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands: Sijthoff and Noordhoff, 1979), pp. 104-105.

<sup>50</sup>Peter Sluglett, "The Kurds," Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq (CARDRI), Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction? (London: Zed Books, 1986), p. 196.



On May 30, 1988, Iraq announced the development of several new oil fields, including ones at Balad, West Qurna, East Baghdad, Nasiriya, Saddam, Khabbaz, Safwan and Haji. According to the Iraqis, these new fields have the potential to increase Iraq's total production by as much as a million barrels per day.<sup>51</sup> While this figure may be optimistic, the increased production potential may be behind Iraq's increasingly brutal management of the Kurdish threat. In August 1988, poison gas was used against Kurdish citizens at 27 locations in the north-west corner of Iraq near the Syrian and Turkish borders. Baghdad's concern for the security of the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline (discussed in Chapter V), as well as a major highway and railway line, are also possible motives for the attacks, as part of a government effort to "permanently clear the Kurdish civilian population from the region surrounding these facilities."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: Iraq, No. 3, 1988, p. 11.

<sup>52</sup>The Kurdish Program, Program Update, March 1989, Cover map, p. 1.

## V. TURKEY

### A. OVERVIEW OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES: LAND AND WATER ASSETS

Turkey is a land of 54.2 million persons who inhabit 301,381 square miles<sup>53</sup> of some of the most potentially productive agricultural land in the region. The relief characteristics of this land, particularly in the eastern regions, have served to impede the exploitation of the asset. Not only does the altitude make farming difficult in parts of the nation, it also limits passage through some of the mountainous terrain, particularly in those areas lacking rivers which could be used as travel routes.

In Turkey, two major, though not continuous, mountain belts are usually recognized. The Pontus Mountains are an interrupted chain of highlands paralleling the Black Sea coast. They rise in altitude in an easterly direction to heights of more than 3,000 m south of Rize. Inland from the southern coast...is the much more formidable range of the Taurus Mountains....Between the two ranges the central or Anatolian Plateau lies sandwiched. This is almost everywhere about 500 m in height and relatively isolated from the coastal regions.<sup>54</sup>

The area traditionally referred to as Turkish Kurdistan is bounded by the northern (Pontic or Pontus) mountain chain, the Taurus Mountains to the west, and the borders of Iran, Iraq and Syria to the east and south. This region

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<sup>53</sup>PCGLOBE PLUS.

<sup>54</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 17.

covers some 230,000 square kilometers and consists of 18 provinces which encompass nearly one-third of all Turkey.<sup>55</sup>

Turkey is subject to often severe earthquake activity which results from the movement of geological plates in the mountainous areas of the region. Turkey's eastern provinces are located primarily on the Arabian plate, which is moving upward. The Turkish plate, encompassing central Anatolia, pushes westward against the Aegean Plate, which is moving in a southwesterly direction, overthrusting the floor of the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>56</sup>

Turkey's climate, by the standards of the region, is quite favorable for agricultural pursuits. A warm "Mediterranean" climate prevails in the western and southern regions, and along portions of the Black Sea coast. The central plateau and the eastern regions of the country experience colder weather with a clearly-defined winter season. In the latter region, cold winters limit the growing season to only a few months.<sup>57</sup>

Turkey enjoys a relative abundance of precipitation as a consequence of her geographic position relative to the surrounding seas, which are an important source of moisture. Altitude as well as wind patterns also play a role in the distribution of rainfall. Throughout the country, mean

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<sup>55</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 47.

<sup>56</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 20-21.

<sup>57</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 75.

annual precipitation totals range from a low of 200 mm in the central plateau to a high of greater than 1500 mm, mostly in the coastal regions. In the mountainous area of eastern Turkey, where a significant portion of the Kurdish population resides, precipitation averages about "800 mm/annum, but the sheer size of the area gives it tremendous importance in the water balance of the region."<sup>58</sup>

Evapotranspiration figures for all of Turkey do not exceed 1140 mm, with figures of less than 570 mm predominating in the Kurdish region.<sup>59</sup> Surplus water figures vary greatly, from greater than 2400 mm/annum along parts of the Black Sea coast, and greater than 1200 mm/annum along parts of the Mediterranean Sea and the mountainous areas of the southeast, to less than 100 mm/annum in the central Anatolian plateau and along the Syrian border.<sup>60</sup>

Both the Tigris and the Euphrates River originate in Turkey and are fed almost exclusively from water which originates in the snowpacks of the mountainous areas of the east, where the bulk of the Kurdish population resides. The Tigris-Euphrates river system is of critical importance to agricultural development in the region. The Euphrates River

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<sup>58</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 64-66.

<sup>59</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 73.

<sup>60</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 82-83.

provides water to Turkey, Syria and Iraq.<sup>61</sup> Exploitation of this river in the form of dam projects in eastern Anatolia have the potential to change not only the overall climate of eastern Turkey, but also the degree of stream flow in the latter two nations.

Soil characteristics vary throughout Turkey. Terra Rossa soils, which are extremely productive, are found in the western part of the country along with red prairie soils. The central plateau and the southern region near the Syrian border consist largely of chestnut, brown and reddish brown soils, best suited for dry farming. In addition, sierozem soils are also found. These desert soils are unproductive in and of themselves, but if carefully managed and irrigated, can be very productive. In the mountainous regions of the southeast, forest soils predominate. However, the steep nature of some parts of the terrain encourages erosion and has only marginal agricultural utility, primarily for such activities as grazing.<sup>62</sup> Terracing of land and increased use of fertilizers could increase fodder productivity in this area.

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<sup>61</sup>Marion Clawson, Hans H. Landsberg and Lyle T. Alexander, The Agricultural Potential of the Middle East (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc.), pp. 203-205.

<sup>62</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 34-39.

## B. AGRICULTURE AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN TURKEY

Turkey is relatively rich in agricultural resources, obtaining significant revenues from exports of cotton and tobacco. Additionally, Turkey produces substantial amounts of cereals, grapes, olives, figs and tea, and has a virtual monopoly on hazelnut production. Opium production, once a problem, is now strictly controlled by the government and exported for pharmaceutical applications. Fishing and animal husbandry also contribute to this sector of the economy.<sup>63</sup> "Finally, one cannot resist mentioning a really off-beat agricultural product: snails. Apparently, French gourmets have started out-eating the home production and have turned to Turkey as an important source of supply...."<sup>64</sup>

Agricultural development in Turkey has made fairly steady progress since the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. Traditionally, a large percentage of the population has engaged in farming, and favorable climate and soil characteristics throughout the country ensure a comparative advantage in this sector.

Prior to the establishment of the Turkish Republic, agricultural development was hampered by a lack of

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<sup>63</sup>Anwar M. Shabon and Isik U. Zeytinoglu, The Political, Economic, and Labor Climate in Turkey, (Philadelphia: Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania, 1985), pp. 64, 89.

<sup>64</sup>William Hale, The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), p. 10.

infrastructure development as well as unsophisticated farming methods. Initially, most development, both industrial and agricultural, was concentrated in Western Anatolia, principally in the areas around Istanbul and Izmir. This region contained not only the greatest and wealthiest proportion of the population, but its location allowed easy export to European markets.<sup>65</sup> Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's development goals were focused on expanding road and railway networks and thereby opening up the central and eastern portions of Anatolia so that they could contribute to the development of the economy.

Agricultural development during the 1920's faltered, partly due to a drought at the end of the decade and partly due to the depression, which caused a drop in commodity prices. Government intervention in the sector during this timeframe was slow in coming. At the establishment of the Republic the processing of food and textile manufactures continued to take precedence over industrial and large-scale agricultural development. This was due in part to

...the economic and political situation of the 1920's. War losses had to be made good, and the unity of the state had to be maintained against dissension and rebellion. Entrepreneurial skill was scarce after the removal of most of the Armenians and Greeks, capital was short, while low customs duties and foreign concessions were maintained by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 430.

<sup>66</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 431.

There were a few government contributions to agriculture during this decade, however. A tithe of some 12.5 percent of annual production was eliminated and a sales tax was substituted which applied only to products which were shipped via rail or sea or sold outside the producer's village. The government was able to make up the difference from the loss of these revenues by income which was generated from the government-controlled monopoly industries, such as tobacco, matches and alcoholic beverages, as well as by raising import tariffs when the Lausanne Treaty tariff restrictions expired in 1929. Also, the Agricultural Bank (Ziraat Bankasi) was reorganized, its capital doubled, "and the administrative bodies in the rural districts...became its shareholders."<sup>67</sup>

In the 1930's, agricultural development continued to take a back seat to industrial expansion. The government did, however, provide price supports in the wake of collapsing commodity prices at the start of the decade, a function which in 1938 was taken over by the "Office of Soil Products" or TMO (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi). Additionally, indirect benefits did accrue to the farmers who produced crops with industrial applications, such as cotton, hemp and beets.<sup>68</sup> During this period, the government's stated concern for the farmer, on the one hand, and failure to

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<sup>67</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, pp. 41, 43.

<sup>68</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 62.



develop the agricultural sector, on the other, has received retrospective criticism. However, with commodity prices at an all-time low,

...there was no incentive for increased production of Turkey's traditional exports. A widening gap in the balance of payments could not have been cured by devaluation, granted the inelasticity of demand for export items. In these conditions, restriction of imports was virtually inevitable. Assuming that domestic consumers were not to be starved of even the most basic manufactured goods, such as sugar and textiles, then import replacement industries were necessary to keep them supplied.<sup>69</sup>

Infrastructure development, critical to large-scale marketing of agricultural output, was minimal in the Kurdish regions during this timeframe. Revolts broke out in the area, the most notable of these in Dersim (now Tunceli) in 1937. "Turkish efforts to establish roads and gendarmerie posts in Kurdish districts soon ran into opposition....A 'state of siege' introduced there in 1936 lasted until 1950 while the area remained closed to foreigners until as late as 1965."<sup>70</sup>

In the 1940's, Turkey's price support policies benefitted the government. The TMO had improved their storage capacity, and with their monopoly on grain imports and exports, they were able to make a killing during the war years when grain prices rose. Despite the rise in prices, agricultural production during this time actually fell. The farmer did not directly benefit from the price increases,

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<sup>69</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 80.

<sup>70</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 18.

since he "was obliged to sell to the TMO" which "paid prices which were well below free market levels...."<sup>71</sup> During this decade, the government dabbled in land reform initiatives, selling off portions of public domain land to Balkan immigrants and landless peasants, but had less luck breaking up the holdings of large and mid-sized estate owners, despite initiation of legislation to facilitate such an action. The essential feature of the law was that, after parceling out public domain land, the state would distribute private holdings of 500 hectares, followed by 200 hectare holdings, and lastly, that 20 hectare holdings that were sharecropped would be cut to five hectares. This last portion of the land reform law proved enormously unpopular, and was quietly withdrawn at the end of the decade. All in all, only 3600 hectares of private estates were transferred under the provisions of the legislation.<sup>72</sup>

Industrial development during the 1940s continued to receive priority, but fewer than six percent of industries, mostly handicrafts, were located in the Kurdish regions at mid-decade.<sup>73</sup>

During the 1950's, the Democrat Party, which had gained power at the start of the decade, expressed a determination to dedicate more attention to agriculture as well as

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<sup>71</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, pp. 62, 63.

<sup>72</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, pp. 63-64.

<sup>73</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 52.

industry. During the first three years, superb weather conditions produced bumper crops and Turkey became an important wheat exporter. "But in 1954 harvests reverted to normal, or worse; not until 1958 was there another wheat surplus."<sup>74</sup> For the first four years, the economy hummed along, but by the middle of the decade inflation began to set in. The government reacted to the growing discontent of the population by silencing the opposition, imposing censorship laws and restricting the activities of the Republican People's Party.<sup>75</sup>

At the start of the decade, the Democrats backed up their words with deeds: increasing the number of loans to the agricultural sector and importing tractors to increase productivity. Eastern development efforts included the building of roads as well as hospitals and schools.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, the government nearly doubled its investment in efforts such as irrigation projects to improve agricultural development. The sector saw more growth during the first half of the decade than the last, although some experts argued that the money could have been better spent on other production factors such as instruction in

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<sup>74</sup>Geoffrey Lewis, Modern Turkey (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 142.

<sup>75</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 86.

<sup>76</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 18.

scientific farming methods, fertilizers, and higher quality seeds.<sup>77</sup>

To sum up, the Democrat's legacy in Turkish agriculture was a mixed one....Quite probably, the government would have done better to have mixed tractors with other innovations, to produce a higher rate of production growth, and avoid some of the side effects of hasty mechanisation. On the other hand, the case presented by their critics is far from proven. What is virtually undeniable, moreover, is that a substantial proportion of the rural population was markedly better off in 1960 than in 1950, and most villagers were likely to compare this performance with the virtual stagnation in agriculture during the last decade of RPP rule. In political terms, at any rate, the DP's agricultural policy could hardly be described as a total failure.<sup>78</sup>

By historically emphasizing industry over agriculture, Turkey had neglected an area in which it had comparative advantage. In the 1950s, attempting to rectify this neglect, Turkey applied industrial techniques to agricultural pursuits rather than utilizing the significant surplus labor force available in the country. This resulted in increased unemployment, flight of workers to other countries and growing urbanization of the population. Further, the economic problems which resulted from the Democrats' overambitious development schemes influenced the decision by the military to take over the government in 1960.

During the 1960's and 1970's, the agricultural sector continued to become less labor intensive and more capital

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<sup>77</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, pp. 94-96.

<sup>78</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 99.

intensive, and relied less on climatic conditions and more on industrial factors such as fertilizers and mechanization.<sup>79</sup> Large scale irrigation projects were a part of this shift. During this time, the number of tractors in use increased some eleven-fold, from roughly "40 thousand in 1960 to 441 thousand by 1979."<sup>80</sup> Although the eastern provinces continued to lag significantly behind their western counterparts in modernizing farming techniques, the number of tractors in the Kurdish region increased some 46 percent between 1965 and 1967. Despite this increase, only three percent of the country's total agricultural machinery was located in the region.<sup>81</sup>

Mechanization accelerated the growing interdependence of the agricultural and industrial sectors. Not only was the agricultural sector providing goods for domestic consumption and continuing to be an important source of foreign exchange earnings, it also was providing an increasing number of crops with industrial applications.<sup>82</sup> Increased mechanization of agriculture further aggravated the already

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<sup>79</sup>Shabon, Turkey, pp. 62-63.

<sup>80</sup>The World Bank, Turkey: Industrialization and Trade Strategy (Washington D.C.: The World Bank, 1982), pp. 292-293.

<sup>81</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 51.

<sup>82</sup>Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yildizoglu, "Agrarian Change: 1923-70," in Irvin C. Schick and Ertugrul Ahmet Tonak, eds., Turkey in Transition: New Perspectives (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 284.

growing tendency towards urban migration, not only in the developed west, but also in the Kurdish region:

The population of industrial cities tripled and even quadrupled between 1940 and 1970. It is noteworthy that, in addition to major industrial centers such as Istanbul, Izmir and Adana, provincial cities with large agrarian hinterlands (such as Urfa, Diyarbakir and Malatya) experienced population explosions between 1960 and 1970.<sup>83</sup>

In the 1970s, state investment in the Kurdish region continued to place a priority on security-related infrastructure projects and mining projects rather than agricultural development. Roads, railways and airports were constructed or improved to connect the military bases in the area. In addition, oil was discovered at Raman, Siirt and Diyarbakir. These fields, while small by middle eastern standards, were producing four million metric tons by 1971, most of which were earmarked for domestic use and which became significant to the economy when oil prices rose in the early 1970s.<sup>84</sup>

Turkey is divided into nine agricultural regions. The principal crops and climatic conditions are listed in Table 1 below.

Despite the wide variety of crops produced and the diverse climatic conditions of the country, the agricultural sector in Turkey remains highly specialized. "In 1980, 71%

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<sup>83</sup>Margulies and Yildizoglu, "Agrarian Change: 1923-70," pp. 284-285.

<sup>84</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 53.

TABLE 1<sup>85</sup>

Region No./Name	Principal Output	Average (C) Temperature	Average (mm) Rainfall
I/Central North	Cereals, Rice, Vegetables, Fruits, Tubers	11	375
II/Aegean	Olives, Grapes, Pulses, Tobacco, Cotton, Vege- tables, Tubers	16	800
III/Marmara	Sunflowers, Rice, Roots, Sugarbeets	14	700
IV/Mediterranean	Cotton, Cereals, Citrus, Vege- tables, Rice, Pulses	18	700
V/North East	Fodder, Wheat, Tubers, Pulses, Livestock	7	400
VI/South East	Fodder, Cereals, Tubers, Live- stock, Pulses, Vegetables, Grapes	8-9	450
VII/Black Sea	Hazelnuts, Tea, Rice, Tobacco	14	1500
VIII/Central East	Fodder, Cereals, Fruits, Tobacco, Sugarbeets	12	400
IX/Central South	Cereals, Vegetables, Sugarbeets, Grapes, Pulses, Livestock,	11	350

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<sup>85</sup>Adapted from World Bank, Turkey: Industrialization and Trade Strategy, pp. 290-91.

of the cultivated area was devoted to cereals, of which wheat and barley accounted for 85%."86

### C. ENERGY RESOURCES

Turkey, unlike Iraq and Iran, has a relative paucity of oil reserves relative to her neighbors.

Petroleum is in fact the one important natural resource of which Turkey is notably deficient: her known commercially viable reserves are almost entirely confined to Siirt province, in southeastern Anatolia and meet only a small percentage of her present consumption.<sup>87</sup>

Turkey's oil imports consume an increasing portion of her total budget, and have been a cause for the government's concern. To a considerable extent, Iraq's requirement for a secure route for their oil output benefitted Turkey. The two Iraq-Turkey pipelines which run from Kirkuk to southeastern Turkey and on to the Mediterranean for ultimate delivery to tankers are an important source of revenue in the form of transit fees which are frequently paid for in oil.<sup>88</sup> In an effort to continue this mutually beneficial relationship, Turkey has proposed that the second pipeline

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<sup>86</sup>World Bank, Turkey: Industrialization and Trade Strategy, p. 286.

<sup>87</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup>United States General Accounting Office, Energy Security: An Overview of Changes in the World Oil Market, Report to the Congress, August, 1988 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), pp. 134-136.



be enlarged to double the capacity to 1 mn b/d, which would match the capacity of the first.<sup>89</sup>

Turkey has endeavored to limit her dependence on imports through development of alternative energy sources. Coal and lignite are located in abundance throughout the country and are used to a great extent. However, their polluting effects have had an adverse impact on the environment and quality of life, particularly in the cities.

Hydroelectric power is just beginning to be exploited in the eastern portion of the country. Between 1972 and 1980, production of hydroelectric power increased more than three-fold, from 3204 million kilowatt hours to 11,351 million kwh.<sup>90</sup> Turkish development projects in the southeast, discussed below, have already resulted in the completion of two of the 19 hydroelectric dams which are included in the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP). Turkey hopes to generate enough electricity for her own needs and possibly become an energy exporter as a result of this project. Both Iraq and Syria, who suffer an uncomfortable dependence upon Euphrates water, are concerned that Turkey's new construction will limit the availability of the resource, a possibility that the Turks have not denied, since no treaties regarding water rights exist between the nations. To further complicate the

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<sup>89</sup>Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report: Iraq, No. 3, 1988, p. 13.

<sup>90</sup>World Bank, Turkey: Industrialization and Trade Strategy, p. 455.

situation, the dam is under construction in the very heart of Turkish Kurdistan, and Turkish Kurds, rather than welcoming the contribution to the local economy, fear further "Turkification" efforts by Ankara. As a consequence, the Turks are alert to the possibility of sabotage against the project.<sup>91</sup>

Uranium, critical to development of nuclear power, has recently been discovered in Izmir province near Bergama in Saricaoglu. This find is significant in that it is the first discovery of uranium in sufficient quantity to have potential for commercial exploitation.<sup>92</sup> Turkey is planning on developing nuclear power plants as a major source of energy in addition to the measures described above. Also, an active search for additional oil reserves is underway which Turkey hopes will compensate for shrinking domestic output. Turkey anticipates that these efforts, combined with an enthusiastic energy conservation campaign, will result in a significant reduction in dependence on foreign energy sources.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup>FBIS, "DIE WELT Reports on Building of Ataturk Dam," WA102100 Bonn DIE WELT in German 28 October 86, p. 3, (Article by Peter M. Ranke: "Monstrous Machines Roll Day and Night in the Name of Progress") 12 November 86, pp. T4-5.

<sup>92</sup>"Rich Uranium Reserves in Bergama," Newspost Turkish Digest, 12 October 1989, pp. 5-6.

<sup>93</sup>Jim Bodgener, "Turkey," The Middle East Review 1989, p. 167.

#### D. NONFUEL MINERALS

Turkey is one of the most important producers of chromium, producing about six percent of the world output. Turkish chromium's excellent quality commands double the price of South African chromium, which is by and large the price leader of this mineral. Because there is no ready substitute for this mineral, the demand for it is relatively inelastic. (This was made apparent by a price variation for the mineral of only five percent between 1978 and 1984, despite a reduction in demand during 1982-1983).<sup>94</sup>

Turkey also produces bauxite, copper, salt, phosphates and boron minerals, as well as small quantities of lead. Tungsten, manganese, wolfram, mercury, and sulphur are also produced. With the exception of chromite, boron, and occasionally copper, most of these minerals are devoted to domestic applications.<sup>95</sup> Table 2 shows the locations of significant mineral deposits.

#### E. TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk realized the importance of infrastructure development to the modernization of Turkey. Since the formation of the Republic, development in the form of railways and improved roads has been constructed

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<sup>94</sup>Raymond F. Mikesell, Nonfuel Minerals: Foreign Dependence and National Security (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1987), pp. 80, 97, 178-179.

<sup>95</sup>Hale, Modern Turkey, pp. 11-13.

TABLE 2<sup>96</sup>

## LOCATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT MINERAL DEPOSITS

<u>MINERAL</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>
Coal	Zonguldak Basin	Zonguldak
Lignite	Elbistan Tuncbilek Soma Seyitomer	<b>Maras</b> Kutahya Manisa Kutahya
Oil	Batman	<b>Siirt</b>
Iron Ore*	Divrigi Camdag Hasancelebi Egmir	Balikesir Kocaeli <b>Malatya</b> Balikesir
Copper	Ergani Murgul Kure Sinkot Cayeli Mandenkoy	<b>Elazig</b> Artvin Kastamonu Artvin Rize <b>Siirt</b>
Bauxite*	Seydisehir	Konya
Chromite*	Fethiye Guleman	Mugla Eskisehir
Boron Minerals	Emet Bigadic	Kutahya Balikesir
Phosphate*	Mazidagi Kilis	<b>Mardin</b> <b>Gaziantep</b>
Lead	Keban	<b>Elazig</b>

\*Several other sites in addition to those listed **Bold** indicates provinces with significant Kurdish populations

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<sup>96</sup>Adapted from Hale, Modern Turkey, p. 12, and Chaliand, People Without A Country, p. 102, n. 1.

principally in support of industrial applications, and, until fairly recently, has been concentrated in the western and central regions of the country where most of the industrial development had taken place. Today, only three major roads cross the eastern portion of the country:

...the northern highway, which begins in Ankara and reaches the Turco-Iranian frontier via Sivas, Erzincan, Erzurum and Agri; the central highway, which extends as far as Lake Van via Kayseri, Malatya, and Elazig, and the southern highway, a prolongation of the coastal Mediterranean road, which crosses the High Mesopotamian Plain and follows the borders of Iraq and Syria.<sup>97</sup>

When compared to the western and central portions of Turkey, the infrastructure in the east is seriously undeveloped.

The rail network in Turkey is 5127 miles long, consisting largely of "old and slow" trains.<sup>98</sup> Like the roads, the rail lines tend to thin out as they approach the eastern quarter of the country. Air travel is fairly well developed, and remains the most efficient method of traveling across the country, although planes do not fly to all areas on a daily basis. Busses, though uncomfortable by western standards, have well-developed routes and are an efficient means of individual travel.

Infrastructure improvement is critical not only to the success of the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) but also to

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<sup>97</sup>Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Eastern Turkey (Istanbul: Grafik Sanatlar Matbaacilik ve Ambalaj San. A.S., 1986), no page numbers.

<sup>98</sup>Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls, Turkey (Chester, Connecticut: The Globe Pequot Press, 1986), p. 7.

the growth of the region as a whole, for several reasons. The Turkish government anticipates increased tourism (and accompanying tourist receipts) as sightseers travel to Mount Ararat and the historical cities in the area subsequent to the development and improvement of amenities. Additionally, high quality hotels and roads are a prerequisite for investor travel in the area and an effective transportation system is needed to ensure that produce and other goods are transported to market quickly and in good condition.

Communications development in the southeast includes the expansion of television broadcasting capability in the region. Turkey's two existing television stations were recently augmented by a third, known as "Channel GAP" which broadcasts to fourteen cities in the GAP region for three and a half hours daily. Program fare includes entertainment and agricultural programs, as well as "health, and tourism and cultural education shows."<sup>99</sup>

#### F. SOUTHEAST ANATOLIA PROJECT (GAP)<sup>100</sup>

The most significant agricultural and industrial development in Turkey's history will occur in the eastern portion of the country in the coming decade. Construction

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<sup>99</sup>"Channel GAP Starts Broadcasting on 2 October," Newspot Turkish Digest, 28 September 1989, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, information in this section is adapted from Republic of Turkey, Undersecretariat for Treasury and Foreign Trade, Buyers Highlights from Turkey: GAP Special Issue (Ankara: Export Promotion Center, 1988).

has already begun on a series of massive hydroelectric, irrigation and water storage projects in eastern Anatolia. When completed, the project will encompass one-tenth of the total land area of Turkey and include 13 sub-projects (seven on the Euphrates River and six on the Tigris River) consisting of a total of 15 dams and 18 power stations. Turkey anticipates that this project will eventually double the total agricultural output of the nation.<sup>101</sup> Under the title "Southeast Anatolia Project" or its Turkish acronym, GAP, this development is centered upon the construction of the Ataturk Dam. When completed it will be the fifth largest in the world. The 180 meter tall earthen dam will consist of eight 300 megawatt turbine assemblies which will produce sufficient hydroelectric power for eastern Turkey's needs along with the potential for export of electric power. The dam and its associated development projects will also irrigate some 9000 square kilometers of land between the Tigris, Euphrates, and the Syrian border, where wheat, grapes, cotton, sugar beets and fruit trees will be grown. The project has necessitated the evacuation of dozens of villages, many of them Kurdish, in the Harran plain in order to flood the reservoir. This giant reservoir is held back by the Ataturk Dam as well as the Karakaya and Keban Dams. When it reaches its full size, this huge lake, in addition

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<sup>101</sup>Ali Balaban, The Southeastern Anatolian Project (Ankara: Ankara Universitesi Basimevi, 1988), pp. 3, 6.

to the irrigation projects, has the potential to change the climatic conditions of the region.<sup>102</sup>

The Ataturk Dam project, which is "being built by Turkish contractors, and without foreign financing"<sup>103</sup> is the flagship of the Lower Euphrates Project. The Lower Euphrates Project also includes the Sanliurfa tunnels, two parallel tunnels which will carry water under pressure from the Ataturk reservoir to Sanliurfa to provide irrigation to the lower plains of Sanliurfa, Harran, Mardin and Ceylanpinar. These tunnels will be the largest of their type in the world, some 26 kilometers long and 7.6 meters in diameter.<sup>104</sup> In addition, a hydroelectric power plant is scheduled for construction at the Harran main canal, the outlet of these tunnels. The total area to be irrigated under this project exceeds 500,000 hectares at a minimum. In addition, plans are being formulated to develop an irrigation pumping station in the Siverek-Hilvan area, in the north of Sanliurfa province. This will be augmented by a pumping facility to be installed between Bozova and Hilvan, which will increase the potential area of irrigation by nearly 230,000 hectares.

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<sup>102</sup>FBIS, DIE WELT Reports on Building of Ataturk Dam, 12 November 1986, pp. T4-5.

<sup>103</sup>"PM Ozal: There are No Longer Any Obstacles to Prevent Turkey's Development," Newspot Turkish Digest, 5 October 1989, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup>Balaban, Southeastern Anatolian Project, p. 9.



The second development project is the Karakaya Hydroelectric Power Project, which was completed in 1987 and began operation in late 1988. It consists of a 173 meter concrete dam which was built 166 kilometers below the Keban Dam for the sole purpose of hydroelectric power generation. This project produces some 7354 GWh of power annually.

The third development project is the Border Euphrates Project. It is a combined hydroelectric power generation and irrigation project which includes two dams, the Birecik Dam and the Karkamis Dam which will be located 92 kilometers below the Ataturk Dam. This project will supply a good portion of the water for a fourth development project, the Gaziantep irrigation project, which will irrigate an area of some 89,000 hectares of plains area along the Syrian border. This project also includes three dams, one of which--Hancagiz--has been completed.

A fifth project to increase irrigation capacity west of Bozova is the Suruc-Baziki Irrigation Project, which will irrigate an area of some 146,500 hectares and extend the irrigated area of the Sanliurfa-Harran project to the Syrian border.

The proposed Adiyaman-Kahta Project is linked to the Ataturk Dam project and is designed to increase irrigation, water storage and hydroelectric power capacity in northern Adiyaman Province. This project is slated to include five dams which will irrigate 77,824 hectares of land and provide

an energy output of 5091 GWh. The seventh project, the Adiyaman-Goksu-Araban project, will supply irrigation water to southwestern Adiyaman, northeastern Gaziantep, and a portion of southeastern Kahramanmaraş provinces, as well as potable water to Gaziantep city.

An eighth project under development is the Dicle (Tigris)-Kralikizi Project. This is a combined irrigation and hydroelectric project which consists of two dams, constructed in series, on the Tigris River. A canal system from the Tigris Dam will provide irrigation to an area of some 126,000 hectares.

Two projects in the Batman area are designed to increase irrigation and hydroelectric potential. The Batman Project, scheduled for completion in 1992, consists of a 74 meter rockfill dam which will provide 483 GWh of energy output and irrigate some 8000 hectares. The Batman-Silvan Project includes two reservoir dams, the Silvan and Kayser, which will produce some 964 GWh annually.

The eleventh and twelfth projects have been designed to improve irrigation and hydroelectric potential in Siirt Province. The Garzan Project is two-fold: it includes the Garzan-Kozluk irrigation project to divert water from the Garzan river for irrigation purposes, and the Ilisu Project, which entails construction of a dam 50 kilometers south of Siirt on the Tigris River. The latter project is expected to provide 3830 GWh annually.

The final project, the Cizre Project, is designed for irrigation and hydroelectric applications. It consists of a dam, a power plant and two irrigation systems. Total output of this project will be 89,000 hectares of irrigated land and 1200 GWh of energy generated annually. In addition, two separate irrigation systems, the Silopi System and the Silopi-Nerdus system, will be completed this year and are included in this overall project. This will increase the total irrigated area under this project by 34,740 hectares.

These projects have been designed to optimize the potential of the land and take into consideration other factors, such as quality of soil, degree of erosion, access to urban areas and industrial development potential. The region has been divided into zones which consider these factors as part of the planning and prioritization process.

These zones are as follows:

- ZONE 1: This zone includes the Diyarbakir-Batman area the Greater Sanliurfa area and the Cizre-Silopi area. Agro-industrial development will be intensive in this region and facilitated by the extensive irrigation projects which are under development in the area. This zone is characterized by easy access to urban services and superior land capability.
- ZONE 2: This zone includes greater Gaziantep and Siirt. Because the land in this area is marginal, priority will be placed upon industrial development around Gaziantep and animal husbandry will be emphasized in the Siirt region. This zone is characterized by easy access to urban services and low land capability due to marginal soil characteristics and erosion.
- ZONE 3: This zone encompasses the outlying regions of zone 1. The goal for this area is to improve infrastructure, such as roads and railways, for easier

access to markets. This zone is characterized by poor access to urban services and superior land capability.

- ZONE 4: This zone encompasses the areas within Southeast Anatolia which are exogenous to the areas listed above. Development of this zone will receive low priority, unless significant mineral deposits or tourist potential become apparent. This zone is characterized by poor access to urban services and poor land capability.

In addition to the above-listed zones, some areas of the GAP region, such as Adiyaman and the Mardin-Kiziltepe area, have some of the combined features of the first two zones listed above.

In order to develop these zones, Turkey has, in addition to the projects listed above, concentrated on improving the chemical industry in the region with a goal towards increasing production of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides as well as plastic wrapping materials for agricultural business applications. Concurrently, Turkey is seeking to improve transportation, telecommunications and take greater control of urban development in the region, to include planned housing development, sewage treatment plants, roads and potable water systems, as well as encouraging the development of hotel industries to support the anticipated influx of businesspeople and investors to the region. Finally, Turkey is actively wooing investors with ready cash and technological capabilities, such as Japan, to assist in financing these development schemes.

In the past decade, Turkey's attempt to strengthen the economy by developing agriculture in the east while

investing in large scale industrial projects has had the goal of encouraging the eastern portion of the country to contribute to the nation's economy while improving quality of life in the region. The government had hoped that this investment, by improving the economy and unemployment levels in the area, would reduce the strife in the eastern regions, feeling that the source of Kurdish discontent was "economic impoverishment" and "years of neglect" as well as "official persecution and exploitation."<sup>105</sup> The resumption of fierce hostilities between Kurdish elements and the government within the past ten years suggests that the success of the government plan is by no means certain.

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<sup>105</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 18.

## VI. IRAN

### A. OVERVIEW OF GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES: LAND AND WATER ASSETS

Iran is a harsh and rugged country with a wide variety of temperature and climate extremes ranging from the forested mountains to the north and east to the central and southern desert plains. Rich in natural resources, its most significant asset is oil. This nation also enjoys significant deposits of coal, copper, iron ores, lead, zinc and other metals and minerals.<sup>106</sup> Agricultural land, forestry, and fishing assets are significant by middle eastern standards.<sup>107</sup>

Iran encompasses an area of 636,293 square miles and has a population of 51.9 million inhabitants.<sup>108</sup> Roughly 54 percent of these individuals inhabit the urban areas. Over a third of these city dwellers are concentrated in the capital city of Tehran. The remainder of the population is logically distributed, with the bulk of the residents

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<sup>106</sup>Jahangir Amuzegar, Iran: An Economic Profile (Washington D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 1977), pp. 8-10.

<sup>107</sup>The Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile: Iran 1987-88 (London: The Economist Publications Limited, 1987), p. 25.

<sup>108</sup>PCGLOBE PLUS.

occupying the fertile regions while the desert and mountainous areas remain sparsely populated.<sup>109</sup>

Iran is geophysically located on the Iranian and Arabian plates, which are bisected by the Zagros thrust zone that runs along the mountain chain. The instability of the area caused by plate movement produces significant earthquake activity in the region, most notably along the boundaries of the plates.<sup>110</sup>

Soil characteristics vary throughout the country. In the central plateau, gray and red desert soils predominate. These soils, by and large, have a high salt content and are generally unsuitable for farming. To the north, in the Caspian lowlands region, very fertile hydromorphic soils are found. In the southern portion of Iran, alluvial soils are found around the Shatt al Arab region, as well as reddish prairie, chestnut and brown soils along the southern coast. An FAO study, which classified soil potential for agricultural purposes in Iran, determined that the soils with the greatest potential and fewest limitations occurred with greatest frequency in the region bounded by Kermanshah, Tehran and Tabriz. (The northern border of the country, the soils around Mashad, and to a lesser extent, the soils around Ahwaz and Shiraz, were found to be equally productive

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<sup>109</sup>EIU, Country Profile: Iran 1987-88, pp. 10-11.

<sup>110</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 21, 25.

as well).<sup>111</sup> In the Zagros Mountains region, a variety of soil types are found, ranging from brown steppe soils to non-saline alluvial soils to the predominating semi-arid lithosoils.<sup>112</sup> These soils support forestry, agriculture and animal husbandry. Thus, the Kurdish region of the country is only one of several agriculturally productive areas.

The climate in Iran varies greatly by season and region. Extremes of temperatures occur in January (coldest) and July (hottest). In general, colder temperatures occur in the north and mountain regions of the country, while the Persian Gulf coast and the desert regions experience extremes of heat. In the Kurdish areas, the temperature has a range of some 25 degrees centigrade. January temperatures are at or near freezing, and the temperature gradually warms until August, which is the hottest month for the area, though cooler than the desert and southern regions.<sup>113</sup>

Precipitation varies throughout the country as well. In the mountainous regions of the west and north, mean annual precipitation can be greater than 1500 mm, while in parts of the central and southern portions of the country, less than 100 mm per year can be found. In general, the most

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<sup>111</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, pp. 35, 39-40.

<sup>112</sup>W. B. Fisher, ed., The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume I: The Land of Iran (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 252.

<sup>113</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 220-228.



favorable precipitation totals are found in the same regions where soil potential is also greatest.<sup>114</sup> The Kurdish areas receive an average of about 600 mm per annum, greater than the country's average of 400 mm<sup>115</sup> and sufficient to support dry-farming or animal husbandry endeavors. Approximately half of this precipitation occurs during the winter months.<sup>116</sup>

Water surplus figures follow a similar pattern. The greatest mean annual water surplus figures (in excess of 1200 mm/annum) are found in the northern Caspian lowlands and in the area to the east and south of Lake Urmia,<sup>117</sup> where a substantial portion of Iran's Kurdish population resides.

Other sources of water for agricultural purposes include stream discharges. Unlike Iraq and Turkey, Iran lacks major rivers, and instead must rely upon smaller stream systems to augment precipitation. Perennial streams are found in the mountain regions, most notably in the Zagros. In the central Zagros, where the Kurdish population resides, these streams flow in a predominantly westerly direction. By and large, navigation of these stream systems is impractical, for depending upon the season their waters are either too

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<sup>114</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 65.

<sup>115</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 234.

<sup>116</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 236-237.

<sup>117</sup>Beaumont, Middle East, p. 81.

strong or insufficient to support watercraft. Additionally, the sheer canyons and gorges (called tangs) created by these streams over time makes passage through the Zagros region difficult in places.<sup>118</sup>

#### B. LAND USAGE AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN IRAN

Of the total land area in Iran, only about 12 percent is usable for agricultural pursuits. Cereal, fruit, nut and rice crops predominate. About one-third of all arable land is irrigated.<sup>119</sup> In the Kurdish region the percentage of arable land is greater than the national average, approximately 20 percent of the total land in the area. Dry farming, which predominates in Kurdistan, is greatly affected by the region's variable rainfall levels. Grains, sub-tropical fruits, tobacco and vegetables are the predominant crops.<sup>120</sup> While the northern quarter of the country is, as a whole, the most agriculturally productive, the Kurdish area is contained in the northwestern portion of Iran known as the "Azerbaijan breadbasket," which produces most of the country's wheat and barley.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 268-273.

<sup>119</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 566-568.

<sup>120</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 573.

<sup>121</sup>Herbert H. Vreeland, ed., Iran, Country Survey Series (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1957), p. 178.

Much of the remaining area is suitable for grazing, providing that precipitation is sufficient to ensure growth of scrub grass to support the herds. Drought can and does have a devastating effect upon the region's agriculture and animal husbandry efforts, and with that, a serious effect upon the region's economy. One estimate noted that, between the Kurdish and the Baluchi regions, where pastoralism is an important sector "on average, during one year in every five a total of between 800,000 and one million head of sheep and goats perish in drought conditions."<sup>122</sup>

Agricultural development in Iran is inexorably linked to land reform initiatives. It was only when land reform began to take hold that mechanization was implemented on a large scale, and production saw significant increases. The first weak effort at land reform was instigated by the Democratic Party during the Constitution period (1906-1921), to no real effect.<sup>123</sup>

Reza Shah, the father of the late deposed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, recognized, like his counterpart Ataturk in Turkey, the importance of the development of the agricultural sector. However, like Ataturk, his energies were devoted more towards modernization of the society and development of industry. During Reza Shah's reign, infrastructure development, such as road paving, railway

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<sup>122</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 573.

<sup>123</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 689.

building and establishment of government offices and banks took priority over agricultural development. The Shah experimented with new agricultural techniques on his own land holdings, but did not pass his acquired knowledge on to the population at large. He also established a few model farms and initiated dam construction and irrigation projects. His focus on industrial development led him to establish industries which could utilize the native crops of the region, such as tobacco, sugar beets, and fruits. However, these efforts were largely limited to the more populated areas of the country, and those who lived in the hinterlands (such as the Kurds) saw little change in their style or standard of living.<sup>124</sup> What few initiatives he took in the area of land reform were largely a disappointment. In the early 1930s, Reza Shah secured Majlis approval to convey Public Domain lands, some of which were in the Kurdish region, to those who were cultivating it. The effort was largely unsuccessful, in that first, few lands were actually transferred, and second, many of those lands that were transferred ended up being resold to large landowners when the peasants were unable to keep up with the

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<sup>124</sup>L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "Reza Shah the Great: Founder of the Pahlavi Dynasty," in George Lenczowski, ed., Iran Under the Pahlavis (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978), pp. 30-33.

payments.<sup>125</sup> A later land reform effort met with similar results:

In 1937, Reza Shah introduced the Land Development Act, which was designed to encourage the optimum use of land on the part of both landlord and peasant. Unfortunately, the act remained a dead letter, because its implementation was entrusted to the landlords. Those landlords who disliked the act, did nothing; those who attempted improvements met with opposition from the peasants who saw no point in increasing production until the sharecropping scheme was changed. In 1929, the Majles authorized the Ministry of Justice to examine possibilities of reforming sharecropping agreements, but no action was taken.<sup>126</sup>

A different sort of initiative by Reza Shah was to have a far greater impact than land reform on tribal societies, including the Kurds. The Kurds in Iran who earn their living today from animal husbandry are semi-nomadic; moving from their permanent homes during the summer months in search of grazing land.<sup>127</sup> Formerly, many of these tribes had no permanent homes except for the tents which they carried with them. The movement of these tribes made it difficult for Reza Shah's government to keep track of them, rendering them a threat to internal security due to the influence of tribal leaders and a missed opportunity for government revenues via taxation. Additionally, their traditional form of life was out of step with the Shah's efforts at modernization.

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<sup>125</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 691.

<sup>126</sup>Roger M. Savory, "Social Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era," in Lenczowski, ed., Iran Under the Pahlavis, p. 96.

<sup>127</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, p. 410.

The answer...lay in the forcible settlement of the tribes. But the army and gendarmerie, who were ordered to carry out this policy, frequently treated the tribesmen harshly and unjustly, and the land set aside for the tribes was often unsuitable for cultivation. Tribal chiefs were taken to Tehran and kept under surveillance as hostages for the good behavior of their tribes. These policies left a legacy of bitterness. Although after 1941 the tribes regained much of their freedom, they never regained their former power.<sup>128</sup>

Reza Shah's abdication in favor of his son in 1941 after the invasion of Soviet and British troops put agricultural initiatives in Iran on "hold" until these forces departed and the Shah regained control of the country. (Infrastructure development, however, was enhanced by the occupation, as establishment and maintenance of supply lines was a priority of the occupying forces.) Initial efforts to reform the agricultural sector upon the departure of occupation forces were met with little enthusiasm:

...the Council of Ministers approved a bill which stipulated that landlords increase the crop-share of peasants and share-croppers by 15 percent. The bill was enforced in some areas, but since it was valid for only one year, it lapsed in the face of the united opposition of the landlords, who in 1947 constituted a conference to review the effects of the law and recommended its discontinuance....The political power of the landlords, expressed mainly through the Majlis, two thirds of whose members were landowners, continued to prevail until the new Land Reform Law was implemented....<sup>129</sup>

During the 1950s, the Shah began the distribution of the "Crown Domains." These were lands which had been acquired by the Shah's father under somewhat questionable

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<sup>128</sup>Savory, "Social Development in Iran during the Pahlavi Era," p. 97.

<sup>129</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 689-690.

circumstances. Many of these lands were sold to the peasants who worked them, to the Shah's political benefit at home and abroad. However, his actions failed to convince other large landowners to follow suit.<sup>130</sup>

The 1960s ushered in the most significant land reform initiative on the part of the Shah. Prior to the implementation of land reform initiatives in 1962, roughly one percent of the population owned approximately 56 percent of the land under cultivation. In addition, large holdings (between nine and 13 million acres) were retained by the government, religious endowments, and the so-called "Crown Domains."<sup>131</sup>

One of the notable features of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's rule was an emphasis on planning. The Shah's 1962 "White Revolution" had agricultural planning and reform at the forefront, in addition to modernization of other sectors. The broad features of the Shah's agricultural program entailed the transfer of lands to peasants on a large scale. Landlords were required to cede lands to the tenants who worked it, and were compensated for the land in installments. The value of the land was assessed based on the taxes that the landlord had previously paid on the property, resulting in a favorable price for the purchaser. The landlord was allowed to retain one village, but was

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<sup>130</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 691-692.

<sup>131</sup>Fisher, Cambridge History, pp. 686-688.

required to take one of three actions with regard to it: 1) Sell it to the peasants in the manner described above; 2) lease it to the peasants; or 3) Divide the land between themselves and the peasants, receiving compensation from the peasants for the portion ceded in accordance with the value of the property.<sup>132</sup>

The Shah's goals for the agricultural sector were ambitious. His desire to strengthen and modernize agriculture in Iran were tied to his hopes for a post-oil economic base which included a vital industrial sector and self-sufficiency in the agricultural sector. However, agricultural self-sufficiency can only be realized if those individuals working the land receive a reasonable compensation for their efforts. The Shah's attempts at land reform failed for a variety of rather complex reasons, among them being that many large landowners were not, in the end, eliminated and the land was not distributed across the board to those persons working it. A selective distribution policy, excessive state intervention and control in an effort to boost production, and attempts to water down land reform initiatives by those with vested interests (not the least of whom were the clergy, who retained significant holdings as endowments) resulted in the bulk of the peasantry being pushed aside and not receiving the

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<sup>132</sup>Lenczowski, Middle East, p. 211.



originally intended benefits of the program<sup>133</sup>. The Iranian farmer found himself no longer a serf to an individual landlord, but instead a powerless shareholder in a government-run corporation. The net result was that small shareholders sold their shares to large shareholders, moved to the cities and sought jobs in industry<sup>134</sup>.

With the overthrow of the Shah, the new Islamic Republic formulated four major economic points which were agreed upon by all factions. These points, which after a decade have not been met, continue to be the stated basis of the regime's economic policy. They are:

- oil production should be reduced so as to extend the life of the reserves;
- Agriculture should be given priority or at least equal importance with industrial development;
- Industrial development policy should strive to make Iran self-sufficient rather than dependent on foreign powers;
- Economic development should lead to more social equality, social justice, and not to a widening of the socio-economic gap.<sup>135</sup>

The renewed emphasis on agriculture was a hopeful sign for the farmers, who looked forward to meaningful land

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<sup>133</sup>Fred Halliday, Iran: Dictatorship and Development (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1979), pp. 121-123.

<sup>134</sup>Robert E. Looney, Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution (New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1982), pp. 50-66.

<sup>135</sup>Middle East Research Institute, University of Pennsylvania, MERI Report: Iran, (Kent, G.B.: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1985) p. 38.

reform initiatives that would provide them with a decent standard of living. Their hopes were soon dashed. Many pro-Shah landowners who had retained large holdings fled the country, and peasants confiscated the land. "New land distribution measures were proposed from 1980 on but never implemented, although some confiscations effected by peasants were not reversed."<sup>136</sup> In 1982, the Council of Guardians vetoed "as un-Islamic...economic measures that were deemed to interfere with private property" which included "a land reform bill, which would have divided still existing large holdings among poor peasants...."<sup>137</sup> This action was interpreted by many as "both an element and a directional signal in the treatment of peasants" by the government.<sup>138</sup> No less than seven land reform bills were put forward, implemented and later reversed in the four years following the Shah's overthrow. Clearly, rather than improving the lot of the peasants, the revolution worsened the situation, but, since the revolution's base of support was urban rather than rural, the government could afford to

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<sup>136</sup>Nikki R. Keddie, "Islamic Revivalism Past and Present, with Emphasis on Iran," in Iran Since The Revolution: Internal Dynamics, Regional Conflict, and the Superpowers, Barry M. Rosen ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 13.

<sup>137</sup>Keddie, Iran Since the Revolution, p. 13.

<sup>138</sup>Keddie, Iran Since the Revolution, p. 14.

ignore the needs of the poverty-stricken farmer, at least for the short term.<sup>139</sup>

Other factors have had a negative effect on agricultural development in Iran. The ambitious program of irrigation through the use of deep wells<sup>140</sup> begun under the Shah has resulted in a reduction of the water table, rendering the existing qanat system less effective. A group of revolutionary agricultural volunteers, the Jihad-e Sazandegi (construction brigade), have endeavored to provide the farmers with technical guidance but, lacking it themselves, have succeeded more in annoying them rather than improving their lot. The Iran-Iraq war further impeded agricultural initiative, particularly in the Kurdish regions along the Iran-Iraq border, as farmers who were caught in the crossfire of fighting in the area abandoned their fields.<sup>141</sup>

Good weather in recent years has mitigated to a small extent the lack of investment in and attention to the agricultural sector. Good harvests notwithstanding, the government's claim that agricultural output has increased by more than "4 percent a year must be treated with great

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<sup>139</sup>The Economist, 6 February 1988, p. 44.

<sup>140</sup>For details of this program, see Amuzegar, Iran: An Economic Profile, p. 37.

<sup>141</sup>EIU, Country Profile: Iran 1987-88, pp. 25-26.

circumspection" given that foodstuffs continue to make up about a third of the total value of imports.<sup>142</sup>

### C. ENERGY RESOURCES IN IRAN'S KURDISH REGION

Iran's oil reserves are significant, comprising between almost seven<sup>143</sup> to more than ten percent<sup>144</sup> of known world reserves. However, the bulk of this resource is located outside the boundaries of the Kurdish region in a series of fields which run from the southwestern border of Iran down along the Persian Gulf. The only important field in the Kurdish region is the Naft-i-Shah field, located in immediate proximity to the Iraqi border. This field is connected by two pipelines (one carrying petroleum and the other carrying natural gas products) to one of Iran's older refineries, the Kermanshah refinery, which was built in 1935. This refinery processes only a very small percentage of Iran's total refined output. When built, its capacity was 2000 barrels per day. In 1972, the facility was upgraded to produce 20,000 barrels per day.<sup>145</sup> This

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<sup>142</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 1, 1988, pp. 13, 16.

<sup>143</sup>EIU, Country Profile: Iran 1987-88, p. 31.

<sup>144</sup>Amuzegar, Iran, p. 7.

<sup>145</sup>Nyrop, ed., Iran, p. 301; Exxon, Middle East Oil and Gas, pp. 10-11.

refinery's output provides petroleum for domestic consumption rather than export.<sup>146</sup>

Gas reserves in Iran are also significant. At 480 trillion cubic feet, they comprise almost two-thirds of the total reserves in the Middle East.<sup>147</sup> However, few if any of these resources are found in the Kurdish areas. The bulk of natural gas fields are situated between Bandar Bushehr and Bandar Abbas along the Persian Gulf coast. The Gorgan and Sarakhs-Kangiran fields are found in the north near the Soviet border, and the Sarayeh field is located near Qom. Three small fields are located south of Naft-i-Shah,<sup>148</sup> but at least two of them require the broadest interpretation of the boundaries of "Kurdistan" to be considered as within the ancestral territory of the Kurds.

Development of hydroelectric, thermal electric and gas generation plants assumed increased importance in Iran beginning in the 1960s. However, much of this development was concentrated near large population centers and industrial regions. As a result, few projects were undertaken in the Kurdish areas. Significant hydroelectric resources in the Kurdish region include the Aras Dam and the Shahpor-Avval Dam, which produce some 61 megawatts between

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<sup>146</sup>Fereidun Fesharaki, Development of the Iranian Oil Industry: International and Domestic Aspects (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1976), p. 212.

<sup>147</sup>Exxon, Middle East Oil and Gas, p. 22.

<sup>148</sup>Exxon, Middle East Oil and Gas, pp. 10-11.

them, compared to a total of more than 800 MW produced by hydroelectric resources throughout the country. Another significant power source in the area is the Kermanshah Gas Thermal Electric Plant, one of more than 30 plants of its type in the country.<sup>149</sup>

#### D. OTHER MINERAL RESOURCES IN IRAN'S KURDISH REGION

Geological surveys of Iran's mineral wealth are by and large acknowledged to be incomplete. Given the state of the economy of the Islamic Republic, the uncertain welcome which foreign geological experts might receive and the expense of a complete, large scale survey, it is unlikely that a comprehensive and methodical exploration of Iranian mineral assets will be undertaken in the near future. Any discoveries which are made will more likely be the result of fortuity rather than a systematic attempt to determine the full extent of the nation's mineral wealth.

The Kurdish region in Iran does not possess a monopoly of any of the minerals known to exist in the country. However, the region does contain certain minerals in quantity. Exploitation of existing minerals is unlikely in the near future owing to the expense required to establish mines and transport the minerals to industrial centers where they would be processed for use. In addition, since these

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<sup>149</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Iran: A Survey of U.S. Business Opportunities (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), pp. 106-108.

minerals are available in quantity elsewhere in Iran, there is little motivation to develop the assets in the Kurdish areas.

Pre-revolution mining laws, promulgated in 1957 and amended in 1972, may also have served to impede motivation by private investors to develop mining ventures in Kurdish regions. These laws sought to ensure government control over mining ventures by requiring that licenses or permits be obtained to conduct exploration for certain types of minerals, to form a mining corporation or to begin mining. These regulations also required a payment of a percentage of profits from some mines to the government, and complete government control over exploitation of certain types of minerals (such as fuels, iron and copper) deemed to be national assets.<sup>150</sup> These laws no doubt discouraged investment in regions such as Kurdistan where infrastructure development was poor and exploitation of resources would require enormous investment of the sort not often available from private investors.

Like energy resources, the extent of mineral assets found in Iran's Kurdish areas will fluctuate depending upon where the boundaries of the Kurdish region in Iran are drawn. Using the broadest possible definition of Iranian Kurdistan, it could be said that lead, copper, and zinc are currently exploited in the region. Copper is extracted at

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<sup>150</sup>Department of Commerce, Iran, p. 202.

the Mazraeh and Baychebogh mines in Azerbaijan, but these reserves, at 100,000 tons, constitute less than one percent of Iran's total copper assets, the bulk of which are found in Khorasan and Kerman provinces. Lead and zinc reserves of the Anguran mine, also in Azerbaijan, are somewhat more significant, at six million tons. Gold deposits are said to be found in the region as well, however, they have yet to be exploited. The only gold mine in Iran, the Muteh mine, is well outside the Kurdish boundaries, to the south of Qom, and it discontinued operations in 1972.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup>Department of Commerce, Iran, pp. 196-201.



VII. THE KURDISH NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN IRAQ, TURKEY  
AND IRAN

A. THE KURDS IN IRAQ

The Kurdish nationalist movement has historically been pressed with the greatest vigor in Iraq. This may well be as much a function of opportunity due to the frequently unstable political situation as an expression of nationalist awakening. Perhaps the best-known of the Kurdish nationalist leaders was the late General Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who battled the Iraqi government from the early 1920's until the 1970's. In addition, he played a strong role in the short-lived Iranian Mahabad revolt of 1946. Upon the collapse of the Kurdish effort in Mahabad, he fled to the Soviet Union, but returned to Iraq after the 1958 coup which brought Kassem to power. Government promises of autonomy were later reneged upon when Kassem began to view the Kurdish cause as a potential threat to his authority. (This, in and of itself, was ironic as Kassem was said to be of Kurdish descent himself). Full-scale revolt began in 1961 and continued for nine long years, with occasional cease-fires negotiated each time a new government came to power, or when both sides determined that a "breather" was in order.

The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) of Iraq, which was formed in 1946 along the lines of the Iranian KDP, provided

the organizational support needed to sustain the insurgency for such a long period of time. The war concluded on 11 March 1970, with the signing of a peace treaty which promised that:

The Vice-President would be a Kurd;

Kurds would be represented in the army and State bureaucracy in proportion to their numbers;

Kurdish representatives would be included in the Revolutionary Command Council;

Police chiefs, judges and governors in the Kurdish provinces would be ethnic Kurds;

Kurdish would be the official language in Kurdish areas; and

...that a Kurdish autonomous region with a legislative assembly, should be set up within four years.<sup>152</sup>

Not surprisingly, few of these points were implemented. Arguments developed almost immediately regarding the boundaries of the autonomous region, fueled by each side's interest in the oil-rich area around Kirkuk. KDP-government relations remained strained, but an attempted coup in 1973 led the Ba'ath government to invite the Kurds to join the government. By this time, the Kurds were mistrustful of the government since they had reneged so often on previous agreements. Some Communist party Kurds joined the government, but others remained allied with the KDP.

In the meanwhile, the government in 1970 began a program of "Arabization" of areas rich in natural resources, including Kirkuk, Mosul and Khanaqin and other areas in Arab

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<sup>152</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 11.

Iraq where Kurds had settled.<sup>153</sup> The government, which had agreed to appoint Kurdish governors in the Kurdish areas, refused to appoint one in Kirkuk, where 65% of Iraq's oil reserves were located.<sup>154</sup> Kurds who worked in the oil industry around Kirkuk were fired, a policy of military harassment and repression of Kurds was instituted and assassination attempts were made against Kurdish leaders, including two attempts on Barzani himself. A massive exodus of Kurds to KDP-controlled areas followed. The government banned the KDP and the sympathetic Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), and attempted a rapprochement with minority leaders, leading the Kurds to believe that the government "was hoping to divide the Kurdish nationalist movement and thereby dominate it."<sup>155</sup> By August 1974, full-scale fighting had erupted, with Iraq committing the full strength of the military to the fray. The Kurds, for their part, were able to continue fighting because they were receiving financial and military support from Iran, the United States and Israel (this support is discussed in greater detail below). The Kurds were pushed into the mountains along the Turkish and

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<sup>153</sup>Stephen C. Pelletiere, The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Gulf (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 168. Relations between Iraqi Communists and Kurds have varied in intensity over the years. For details, see footnote 223.

<sup>154</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 167.

<sup>155</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 12.

Iranian borders, and 150,000 civilians fled across the Iranian border.<sup>156</sup>

In 1975, the Shah and Saddam Hussein attended an OPEC conference in Algiers and, in a conference mediated by President Boumedienne, hammered out an agreement to their long-standing border dispute. The Shah, in exchange for Iraqi border concessions which included a drawing of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway borderline to his liking (at the thalweg rather than on the Iranian bank), agreed to cease his support of Barzani's Kurds. Thus, once the Shah obtained the strategic advantage that would enable him to check Soviet designs, the Kurds were abandoned. Withdrawal of Iranian aid meant the collapse of the Kurdish insurrection, and Barzani fled to Iran. He later emigrated to the United States, where, at the age of 76, he died on 1 March, 1979 at the Walter Reed Army Hospital.

The ignominious rout of the Kurds in Iraq led to a split in the movement,

...each side accusing the other of responsibility for the defeat. Jallal Talabani, ousted from the KDP leadership by Barzani in 1964, had settled in Syria, but in the aftermath of the collapse saw an opportunity to restore his position. He returned to Kurdistan and...announce(d) the formation of a new resistance movement, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Meanwhile the remainder of Barzani's old KDP had been reformed under the control of his sons, Idris and Massoud. Renamed the KDP (Provisional Leadership) the movement revived guerrilla warfare in 1976...provoking an Iraqi offensive on 17 March 1977. The following year, more fierce clashes were reported, giving rise to speculation

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<sup>156</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 12.

that the upsurge was partly attributable to heavy-handed government treatment of the civilian community, and even to Soviet backing.<sup>157</sup>

The Iran-Iraq war resulted in an unusual alliance between the Baathist government and various Kurdish elements. Jallal Talabani put aside his differences with Baghdad and permitted Iraqi forces to transit PUK-controlled areas in order to supply arms to Iranian Kurds. Later, he formalized his truce with Saddam Hussein and actively fought with the Iraqis against the Iranians in exchange for that now-familiar promise of limited autonomy. This rapprochement seems inconceivable unless one considers the situation that both Talabani and Hussein were confronted with at the time. Talabani's falling-out with the Barzani Kurds, who were fighting on the side of Iran, was serious, and his hatred for them overrode nationalist feelings. Also, Talabani, if he could gain even limited autonomy, would be viewed as a hero by his people. If the Baathists reneged, he would still have his weapons and would be able to renew the struggle. Hussein, on the other hand, was in desperate straits in 1983, and was unable to fight a two-front war. As a consequence, he had no choice but to make the offer to Talabani in order to avoid defeat.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>157</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, pp. 15-16.

<sup>158</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, pp. 185-187.

By 1984, Talabani realized that the concessions he sought were not likely to be forthcoming. Recognizing that Baghdad was unwilling to permit meaningful Kurdish participation in the government, Talabani and the PUK pragmatically allied themselves with Iran for the remainder of the war.<sup>159</sup>

Shortly after the cease-fire was declared, Saddam Hussein moved quickly to eliminate the Kurdish threat to his regime. His systematic use of chemical weapons against the Kurds was described by Senator Pell of Rhode Island as "a crime against humanity" and "genocide."<sup>160</sup> The swiftness of the effort was remarkable: the cease-fire was declared on 20 August, and Iraqi troops were busily mopping up a successful operation against the Kurds by 10 September. Some 60,000 Kurds fled into Turkey before the Iraqi military sealed the border, many with "'blistering, sores on hands, faces and feet' that were consistent with chemical related injuries."<sup>161</sup> Subsequently "the systematic leveling of Kurdish Iraq" began and entire villages were bulldozed. The Iraqi rationale for this action was that they were "taking families from isolated 'uncivilized' hovels and installing

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<sup>159</sup>Isam al-Khafaji, "Iraq's Seventh Year: Saddam's Quart d'Heure?" Middle East Report, March-April 1988, p. 37.

<sup>160</sup>Julie Johnson, "U.S. Adamant in Charge Against Iraq," New York Times, 10 September 1988, p. A4.

<sup>161</sup>Clyde Haberman, "Questions Linger as Iraqi Push on Kurds Ebbs," New York Times, 11 September 1988, pp. 1, 23.

them in new complexes with electricity, schools and running water."<sup>162</sup> These villages, "such as Khobata, located between Arbil and Mosul" have been likened to American Indian reservations.<sup>163</sup>

Iraq indicated that attacks against the local Kurdish population were retribution for Kurdish aid to the Iranian Pasaran. The location of the attacks tells another story. Most of the villages that were gassed were located in a Kurdish area far from the Iranian border and not known for rebel activity. However, what is significant about this area is that includes a vital oil pipeline, a major highway and railway line, and is in a location where a second oil pipeline is under construction and a natural gas pipeline is planned. Thus the "deliberate depopulation" of the region would appear to be more for economic and internal security reasons rather than for retribution and the stated uplifting of families living in uncivilized conditions.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup>Clyde Haberman, "Kurds Can't Go Home Again, Because the Homes Are Gone," New York Times, 18 September 1981, p. 1.

<sup>163</sup>Robert Ghobad Darius, "The Iranian Revolution of 1978-79: Potential Implications for Major Countries in the Area," Enver M. Koury and Charles G. MacDonald, eds., Revolution in Iran: A Reappraisal (Hyattsville, Maryland: Institute of Middle Eastern and North African Affairs, 1982), p. 43.

<sup>164</sup>The Kurdish Program, Program Update (Newsletter), March 1989, pp. 1-4.

## B. THE KURDS IN TURKEY

The vast majority of the Kurdish population in Turkey has historically resided in the eastern and southeastern portions of that country. The formation of the Turkish Republic under Mustafa Kemal Ataturk spawned three Kurdish revolts in fairly short succession: in 1925, 1930 and 1937. The first revolt, led by Shaikh Sa'id, a tribal chief who also was the religious leader of a Nakashbandi Dervish sect, expressed the concern of the Kurds over the secularization of the government and assumed the dimensions of a Jihad. The Kurds felt that religion was the one factor which united them with the Turkish majority. In addition, they were angry at government attempts to strip power from the tribal leaders in the east, and were upset by the poor economic conditions which prevailed in the Kurdish areas. This rebellion was fairly violent, and many joined the fray for monetary rather than religious gain. The Kurdish concern regarding the absence of religion from government was one shared by large numbers of the Turkish majority, so the government attempted to modify public support by arguing that there were other reasons for Kurdish resistance. They suggested that the Kurds wanted to form a separate state with Iraqi Kurds and hinted that they were backed by the British, with whom the Turks were arguing over the fate of the Mosul Vilayet. The Kurdish resistance was vastly outgunned and outmanned by government forces, and the revolt



was put down. Several of the leaders, including Shaikh Sa'id, were hanged, while others were imprisoned. The government cited the revolt as a reason to crack down on the Kurds, and the harsh treatment that they received influenced the tribal chiefs in the Mosul area to choose Iraq over Turkey in the referendum.<sup>165</sup>

It was during the second revolt that nationalist aspirations came to the fore. The son of Shaikh Said, Salah-ed-Din, had escaped to Iraq where he came in contact with a budding Kurdish nationalist organization which was made up of others like him who had fled Turkey. When Turkey declared an amnesty for the Kurds who had fought in the 1925 revolt, he returned to Turkey and formed a political group called the "Association of the Friends of the Kurds" whereupon he was arrested, tried and imprisoned. In June 1930, Kurds from both sides of the Turkish-Iranian border attacked army posts on the Zilan Plain. After two months of fighting they were pushed back by the Turks and many fled across the Iranian border and others to the heights of Mount Ararat. The Turks lodged a protest with the Iranians, demanding that they cease allowing the Kurds to attack from the Iranian side of the border. The Iranians, anxious to maintain good relations with the Turks, sent a detachment of troops who pushed the Kurds into the mountains from the opposite direction, where they dug in. Turkish military

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<sup>165</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 34-38.

aircraft conducted bombing raids against them, inflicting many civilian casualties. While the Kurds were trapped in the mountains, Kurds in Syria were mustering support for their brothers fighting in Turkey. The Syrian Kurds sent a detachment of 200 men, which was quickly repulsed. Kurds in Iraq also attempted to aid the cause, but they too were routed. Although the revolt was put down, it was significant in that this was the first time that Kurds were seen to act out of clearly nationalist, rather than personal or tribal, interests.<sup>166</sup>

The third revolt occurred in 1937 in the Dersim area. The Turks had established a series of police outposts in the area, which were attacked by local tribes who were able to push the police out of the district, whereupon they assumed control. Syrian Kurds, in the meanwhile, had attempted to enter Turkey to incite revolt amongst the Kurds in the southern regions, but they were pushed back. In August of that year, two Kurdish leaders sent a communique to Baghdad imploring the foreign powers to investigate the situation in Dersim, alleging that the Turks used poison gas against them. The Kurds took refuge in the mountains through the winter and banked on other tribes coming to their aid for a spring offensive. This much-needed help did not arrive, and in the spring the Turks pushed them up into the mountains, captured them, and either executed or imprisoned them. Some

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<sup>166</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 38-43.

50,000 Kurds who participated in the revolt, and who were not killed or put in prison, were dispersed to other vilayets by the government.<sup>167</sup>

The result of these revolts was that Turkey came to realize the necessity of eliminating what had the potential to become a serious internal problem within the country. The survival and prosperity of the country required either neutralization of the Kurdish threat, or the loss of a substantial portion of the nation. An attempt to accomplish this was made through a process which has been termed "Turkification." Essentially, the main feature of Turkification lies in the idea that Kurds are not Kurds at all; rather, they are "mountain Turks" who because of their isolation, have forgotten their mother tongue. Accompanying this notion, the government promulgated laws which prohibited the wearing of the Kurdish national dress and any written or spoken form of the Kurdish language. (This language ban was eventually written into the Turkish constitution in 1982).<sup>168</sup>

The government took steps to change the names of the Kurdish towns to Turkish-sounding names. However, the 1961 constitution which granted increased freedom of speech, press and civil liberties, permitted the coverage of Kurdish

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<sup>167</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 43-44.

<sup>168</sup>Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Problem in Turkey," Middle East Journal, Vol. 42, No. 3, Summer 1988, pp. 39839-9.

activity in Iraq. These events were followed closely by the Kurds in Turkey, which caused the government continued concern. Indeed, up until the mid-1960's, portions of eastern Turkey were designated "off limits" to foreign travel in an effort to control the Kurdish population.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Kurds in Turkey began to affiliate themselves with various Turkish leftist movements, and because Kurdish parties were illegal, were overrepresented in these organizations. The Turkish Worker's Party (TWP) was the first of these to acknowledge the existence of a Kurdish race and criticize government repression of the Kurds. The first legal Kurdish organization, the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the East, or DDKO, was founded in 1969. The military government later dissolved the TWP, imprisoning its leadership, and banned the DDKO.<sup>169</sup> In the late 1960s, the Turkish military, in an effort to neutralize Kurdish anti-government activities, initiated counterinsurgency operations in the east, which increased in intensity after the 1971 military takeover. However, military action has not, even to this day, succeeded in suppressing the Kurdish movement, which has instead grown and become more, rather than less, of a threat. This could well be due to other factors, such as the increasing urbanization and politicization of the once rural, tribal and nomadic Kurds. Many of these individuals are unemployed

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<sup>169</sup>Gunter, "Kurdish Problem," pp. 392-393.

or working only occasionally, generally in the agricultural sector, and living in "shantytowns" on the outskirts of the cities.<sup>170</sup> The nationalist movement is attractive to these disaffected individuals who are on the outskirts of society as well.

There are several Kurdish political movements that are active either in Turkey or based in other countries which span a wide range of political orientation. The Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan (SPTK) was suppressed by the government in 1979, and its leader, Kemal Burkay, is currently in exile in Sweden. Its platform was moderate in orientation, taking the position that Kurds and Turks can live in peace either in a federation with equal rights for all or by creation of a separate Kurdish state. A Kurdish Democratic Party of Turkey, formed in 1965 along the lines of Barzani's KDP in Iraq, split into several smaller groups a few years after it was formed, many of them Marxist in orientation. These included the Revolutionary Democrats, the Kurdish Vanguard Workers Party or "Peshang" (Vanguard), the National Liberation of Kurdistan, and others. None of these groups however, has received the publicity or noteriety of the Kurdish Worker's Party, or PKK. The PKK (who often call themselves the "followers of Apo" or "Apocus," after the nickname of their leader Abdullah Ocalan) takes a much more radical approach. The PKK has

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<sup>170</sup>Chaliand, People Without a Country, p. 89.

been behind most of the anti-government violence in Turkey in the last decade or more. In 1980, They formulated an alliance with ASALA, the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia, and have been alleged to have engaged in the manufacture and sale of heroin in order to trade that drug for weapons.<sup>171</sup>

Masoud Barzani, who inherited the leadership of the Iraqi KDP from his father, the late Mullah Mustafa Barzani, has taken exception to the violent tactics of the PKK in a recent interview with a Turkish newspaper. He indicated that the PKK is mistaken if they believe that they are the sole representatives of the Kurds in Turkey.<sup>172</sup>

According to another report, many villagers live in fear of the PKK. The so-called "village guards"--individuals who are hired and armed by the government to protect a village--recently have been threatened by PKK forces, who have ordered them to surrender their weapons or be killed. As a result, at least one village has evacuated their homes in fear of their lives in favor of living in tents in the city of Van. The reporter of this story noted that the government security forces in the region tend not to discriminate between terrorist and villager, and the often harsh reaction of these forces benefits the PKK by creating

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<sup>171</sup>Gunter, "Kurdish Problem," pp. 394-395.

<sup>172</sup>Mihrisah Safa, "Iraki Kurtlere, Siyasi Multeci Muamelesi Yapin," Hurriyet, 12 August 1989, p. 18.

a climate of fear. The reporter pointed out that it is the villagers who need protection, and that the army is unsure of who the enemy is.<sup>173</sup>

Another recent development in the Kurdish issue in Turkey is centered around the many refugees who fled the chemical warfare attacks by the Iraqi army. Perhaps due to an uncomfortable reliance on Iraqi oil, Turkish doctors were reluctant to state that the cause of the burns was chemical warfare, and cited that their condition could be attributed to "poor nutrition and health habits."<sup>174</sup> At the same time, the Turkish government transferred, against their will, some 2000 Iraqi Kurds to Iran.<sup>175</sup>

Iraqi KDP leader Masoud Barzani, on one hand, expressed his appreciation to Turkey for accepting the Kurds who have fled Iraq, but he also criticized the Turkish government for failing to regard the Pesh Mergas as political refugees. In Barzani's view, these Pesh Merga refugees are entitled to the same financial compensation that Bulgarian Turks are

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<sup>173</sup>Ismet Solak and Atila Korkmaz, "Koylude Apo Korkusu," Hurriyet, 10 August 1989, p. 19.

<sup>174</sup>Clyde Haberman, "Kurd's Symptoms: Gas or Poor Diet?," New York Times, 12 September 1988, p. A1.

<sup>175</sup>Alan Cowell, "Turkey Moves Out 2,000 Iraqi Kurds: Transfer to Iran Puts Fate of Other Refugees in Doubt," New York Times, 8 September 1988, p. A1.

receiving from the Turkish government. He also stated that the Turks must accept that there is a Kurdish people.<sup>176</sup>

Recently, there is a trend towards more open reporting on the Kurdish issue in the Turkish press. The Barzani interview is one example of this trend. In addition, an opposition leader and former prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, discussed the Kurdish question in detail in a recent interview in Hurriyet, a daily newspaper. He advocated several changes in the manner in which the Turkish government deals with the Kurdish population, to include:

- Social and economic development of the southeast;
- Urging the government to separate and distinguish between Kurdish citizens and terrorists;
- Policing the interior with civilian forces (gendarmes), who are responsible to the Department of the Interior, rather than with army forces, who should be used to protect the borders;
- Withdrawal of Articles 141 and 142 of the Constitution, which are alienating the European community;
- Release of all prisoners of conscience;
- Modification of the image of "Kurdish origin" citizens by the Turkish government;
- Allowing Kurdish-origin citizens to speak their language and practice their culture freely; and
- Land reform in the southeast, which will give priority to local residents rather than Bulgarian Turkish refugees.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>Safa, "Iraki Kurtlere" Hurriyet, 12 August 1989, p. 3.

<sup>177</sup>Nurcan Akad, "Ecevit, sivil guvenlik gucu onerdi 'Askeri, Dogu'dan cekelim'," Hurriyet, 9 August 1989, p. 19.



This trend towards greater openness in discussions of the Kurdish question indicates not only a growing concern over the nationalist aspirations of the Kurdish community, but also an increasing sensitivity to the opinions of the European community on the part of the Turkish government. This sensitivity is motivated in part by Turkey's quest for full membership in the European Economic Community (EEC), of which Turkey is now an associate member. EEC members, such as West Germany, Sweden and France have had a long-standing interest in the Kurdish question. The French, for example, recently accepted some 337 Pesh Merga as political refugees and were visited in their military camp by Mrs. Daneille Mitterand, wife of French President Francois Mitterand.<sup>178</sup> Mrs. Mitterand, who is active in French human rights causes and who leads a world human rights organization called Frances Libertes, recently addressed the Human Rights Caucus of the U.S. Congress, "making an impassioned appeal...to help save the Kurdish people from annihilation."<sup>179</sup> Many PKK exiles, in particular, have formed an extensive and highly effective network across Europe and are especially

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<sup>178</sup>Fatih Gullapoglu, "Pesmerge ikiyuzlulugu," Hurriyet, 10 August 1989, p. 3.

<sup>179</sup>"Capital Line: People Watch," USA Today, 25 October 1989, p. 4A.

active in Sweden and Germany, churning out nationalist publications in several languages.<sup>180</sup>

### C. THE KURDS IN IRAN

The Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran has varied in intensity throughout the century, with long periods of dormancy punctuated by occasional, energetic outbursts. Generally speaking, the Kurds might be said to serve as a barometer with which to judge the strength of the government. When the government is strong, the Kurds are silent. When the government is weak or disorganized, the Kurds seize the opportunity to press their demands for greater control over their own affairs.

The Kurdish Revolt of 1880 in the Azerbaijan region of Iran is regarded by many Kurds as the first modern-day Kurdish nationalist uprising, but in fact it was more the result of regional and inter-power rivalries. Obaidullah was a Kurdish sheikh who invaded northern Iran with the idea of creating a Kurdish Muslim state and annexing it to Turkey. His provocation, ostensibly, was an attack by Persian troops into the Kurdish area of Turkey which resulted in the killing and kidnapping of several Kurds. Some analysts feel that the Shaikh's actions were instigated by the Ottoman Sultan, who wanted to counter Russian efforts

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<sup>180</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, "Between Guerilla War and Political Murder: The Worker's Party of Kurdistan," Middle East Report, July-August 1988, p. 41.

to foment discontent among the Armenians by encouraging them to agitate for a Christian enclave. In exchange for the Russians abandoning their efforts in Armenia, the Sultan, Abdul Hamid, called off the Kurdish revolt. Still others feel that a combined effort by the English and the Russians persuaded the Sultan to rein Obaidullah in.<sup>181</sup>

In the early 1900s, a Kurdish tribal shaikh, Ismail Aqa, known as Simko, came to prominence. As a result of the slaughter of the Armenians of World War I, roughly 25,000 Jelus, or Christian Assyrians, fearing the same fate, had fled Turkey and settled in an area west of Lake Rezayeh (Urmia) in Iran. This huge influx of people created economic pressures, and the region was unable to support them, as they had no money of their own. The Assyrian religious leader, Mar Shamun, arranged a meeting with the powerful Simko to discuss the possibility of the establishment of an Assyrian-Kurdish autonomous region. At this meeting Simko shot Mar Shamun in the back, and this action touched off the massive slaughter of local Azeris, who had nothing to do with the murder, by angry Assyrians in retribution. This effectively neutralized the Azeris in Simko's efforts at a power grab. The Assyrians, who were persuaded by the British Dunsterforce to fight against the Turks, met with a series of hapless circumstances and miscommunications which rendered their help largely

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<sup>181</sup>pelletiere, The Kurds, pp. 50-51.

ineffective. In the end, they were neutralized as competition by the Turks on one hand and the Kurds on the other. This left Simko free to pursue his designs on the region. Greed, rather than nationalism, appeared to be his motivation, and given the lack of effective government control over the northern regions of Iran, he was able to range unchecked until 1922, when the Iranian Army was finally able to put him down. He was pardoned by Reza Shah in 1924, to whom he swore undying loyalty, but in 1926 he allied himself with two other tribes and attempted to take the area again. He was at last put down and captured and escorted to the Turkish border, where the Turks put him under house arrest. He was finally released, and tried to foment insurrection again but did not meet with any success, and was killed a short while later.<sup>182</sup>

There was scant evidence of Kurdish discontent in Iran after this incident, with the exception of a small revolt in Kurdistan province which was quickly put down, and a brief unpleasantness in Baneh during the Second World War, until 1946. 1946 was the year of the now legendary Kurdish Republic in Mahabad. The opportunity for revolt occurred as a result of the post-World War II environment in the area. The Russians, who had occupied northern Iran, and the British, who had occupied southern Iran during the war to protect the oil reserves from the Germans, had agreed to

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<sup>182</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 48-62.

leave their respective areas six months after the cessation of hostilities. The Russians, however, were reluctant to leave without an oil concession. As a result of the Russian presence to the north, the Iranian military was unable to move in that direction to counter Kurdish activity without appearing to be provocative, and thus provide the Russians with an excuse to use force in the area. Qazi Mohamed, a Sunni Kurdish religious leader, became the first and only president of the short-lived republic. Assistance was provided by the Barzanis from Iraq, but it was the Soviets, who, by their presence in the region, enabled the revolt to occur. The Soviets were engaged in active agitation of the population in the northern portion of Iran, although there is some disagreement over whether the Soviets sought out the Kurds or the Kurds sought out the Soviets prior to the events that led to the establishment of the republic. The Soviets finally departed Iran when the Iranian government inferred that they would receive the oil concession that they sought, subject to a vote of the Majlis. The Soviet mistake was in assuming that this would be a rubber-stamp vote, and that their concession was assured. Instead, the Majlis, no doubt with the happy complicity of the government, rejected the Soviet request. However, this charade got the Iranians "off the hook" with the Soviets, by attributing the denial of the concession to the vicissitudes of democracy. In January of 1947, with the Soviets well

away from northern Iran, the Iranian army took Mahabad and hanged the leaders of the revolt. Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who later achieved prominence in Iraq, escaped to the Soviet Union by zig-zagging through Iran, Iraq and Turkey with 442 of his fellows, where he stayed for 11 years before returning to his native land.<sup>183</sup>

Kurdish activity subsided in Iran after this affair. With the exception of the leaders of the revolt, retribution was not exacted on the Kurdish community. The local aghas resumed their preeminent positions in exchange for the maintenance of local discipline, and although infrastructure improvements in Kurdish areas were rare, so too was severe harassment of the Kurdish population by the government.

By the late 1970s, the Kurds in Iran with nationalist aspirations were led by two main factions.

In the northern part of Iranian Kurdish territory, a coalition of tribes was led by Sheikh Essadin Husseini, based at Mahabad. He was traditional and feudal in outlook and the tribal leaders supporting him were unwilling to surrender their power to modern revolutionary intellectuals. In the southern part, dominance had been gained by the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), led by Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, a left-wing revolutionary.... There was also an influential political group, the Komula, consisting mainly, but not entirely, of left-wing politically active Kurds, which was much smaller.<sup>184</sup>

The 1979 Revolution which brought Khomeini to power provided yet another opportunity for the Kurds to press their nationalist aspirations at a time when government

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<sup>183</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 70-102.

<sup>184</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 132.

forces were in disarray. While several sources detail the initial support that the Kurds provided to Khomeini, this writer heard contradictory reports from individuals who had come from Kurdistan during the mass evacuation of Americans after the fall of the Shah. They indicated that bands of Kurds had violently attacked pro-Khomeini demonstrations. At any rate, the friendly feelings, if they ever existed, did not last long.

Three weeks after Khomeini took power, Kurds seized the army barracks at Mahabad, the site of the Kurds' tragic, lost republic....The Mahabad incident was merely a warm-up, and on March 20, 1979, the Kurds in Sanandaj, the capital of the Iranian province of Kurdistan, followed their compatriots' example. Because...the Shia religious leader in charge...had refused to give the Kurds arms, they surrounded the barracks and seized the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards and the radio station, killing an indeterminate number....<sup>185</sup>

The situation worsened when the Khomeini regime attempted to prevent Kurdish wheat farmers from engaging in profiteering when the price of wheat more than doubled in the wake of the revolution. This, more than political concerns, "touched off the revolt. Cheated, as they believed, of their chance to make a killing, the Kurds went for their weapons."<sup>186</sup> The Kurds boycotted the voting for the new constitution, as they had boycotted the referendum on the Islamic Republic. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou turned down a position in Khomeini's government and accused the ruler of "trying to take Iran

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<sup>185</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, pp. 178-179.

<sup>186</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 180.

back to the Middle Ages." The government turned to Iraqi Army-style warfare against the Kurds, using jet aircraft, helicopters and machine guns. The Kurds suffered reverses, but rallied and retook Sanandaj, and declared the establishment of an "autonomous republic."<sup>187</sup> The situation was at an impasse until Iraq invaded Iran, and the Iranian Kurds threw their lot in with Iraq. "By 1981, the Iraq-Kurdish cooperation had grown sufficiently serious for Tehran to offer recognition to all 'ethnic rebels' who surrendered their arms, an offer directed mainly at the Kurds. There was no response from Kurdistan."<sup>188</sup> By 1983, both Iran and Iraq were busily supporting Kurdish factions in an effort to undermine their opposition. The Iranian government attempted to mitigate the Kurdish factor by initiating a major offensive against Iranian Pesh Mergas, who were driven into the mountains. By 1984, Iran's relationship with the Iraqi KDP was showing signs of strain, and the Kurdish element in the war was diminished in importance. Ghassemlou fled to Iraq, and Hussein preferred, in the interests of survival against a possible Iranian-Turkish cooperative military offensive, to maintain a low profile. By 1986, the Iraqi KDP-Iran alliance had mended to the extent that Barzani's forces were able to assist Iran in the taking of an Iraqi garrison at Sitak in

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<sup>187</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, pp. 180-183.

<sup>188</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 184.



March, and contribute to the seizing of Mangesh, located in close proximity to the Iraq-Turkey pipeline and the Oil Road.<sup>189</sup>

In the wake of the war, the Iranian Kurds have been quiet. The 1989 assassination of KDP leader Ghassemlou in Vienna has significantly rended the movement and reduced its effectiveness. If a charismatic successor emerges, is likely that he will wait for the most opportune moment, which--if the Kurds remain true to form, will occur when the government is at its weakest--to reinitiate a Kurdish rebellion in Iran.

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<sup>189</sup>O'Ballance, The Gulf War, pp. 132-212.

#### VIII. U.S. AND SOVIET INTERESTS IN THE KURIDSH ISSUE

United States' interests in the Kurdish issue are largely unrelated to the nationalist aspirations of the Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Rather, the Kurds and their quest for autonomy are peripheral to the United States' relationships with those nations which possess a significant Kurdish population. These relationships often have an important political, military and economic dimension. To a considerable degree, United States' interests have also served as a counterpoint to Soviet interests in the area. American interests are not static, but change over time with changes in the relationships between the United States and the governments of the nations involved.

Similarly, Soviet interests have little to do with the nationalist aspirations of the Kurds, rhetoric notwithstanding. Soviet involvement with the Kurds has been, by and large, related to pursuit of border security and protection and enhancement of Soviet assets.

In the wake of the Second World War, the United States' primary concern in the Middle East was containment of the communist threat. This effort took the form of military and financial aid to friendly nations to counter Soviet influences. At this time, the dissatisfied and politically unsophisticated Kurds were easily subject to Soviet

influences, as they recognized that the relationships between their host governments and the United States were based on matters of mutual interest.

The Soviets were no strangers to dealing with a wide variety of ethnic groups with nationalist aspirations, having achieved, from their point of view, considerable success around their own periphery. One of their most dramatic and open attempts at obtaining influence along the northern tier occurred in Iran immediately after the war. The establishment of so-called "republics" in Azerbaijan and Mahabad could never have occurred without a Soviet presence in northern Iran.

The Mahabad Republic, discussed in detail above, was the first large-scale though short-lived Kurdish success, and has since served as a rallying point in history for Kurdish nationalists. Indeed, the grave of Qazi Mohammed, the leader of the failed revolt, is revered as a shrine by many Kurds.<sup>190</sup>

The United States had no role in the quelling of this revolt, but its very occurrence strengthened the Shah's appeal to the United Nations for relief from Soviet interference. Soviet agitation of the population in Azerbaijan in 1945 had largely escaped the notice of the west. What brought Soviet designs into focus was the USSR's

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<sup>190</sup>William O. Douglas, Strange Lands and Friendly People (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 64.

failure to withdraw from Iran six months after the cessation of hostilities in accordance with the provisions of the Tripartite Treaty of 1942. Largely ignored by the west, which was focusing its attentions on rebuilding Europe, Iran was left to "buy her freedom by alienating her northern oil resources to Russia, by permitting Communist infiltration into her government, and by leaving unsolved the Azerbaijan issue...."<sup>191</sup>

The wonder is that the Soviets left Iran at all. They, of course, had hopes of bringing both a "Republic of Azerbaijan" headed by an Azeri communist named Ja'far Pischevari and a "Republic of Kurdistan" into their sphere of influence, but Kurdish leader Qazi Mohammed had other goals in mind.

The idea of the Soviets was...to speed up the secession of Azerbaijan from Iran and its union with the Azerbaijan S.S.R., and they did not want the Kurdistan state under its bourgeois and tribal leaders to become independent and, instead of forming the nucleus of a communist Kurdish state, to be attracted towards a Western type of democracy.<sup>192</sup>

To prevent such an occurrence, the Soviets arranged a meeting in Tabriz between Qazi Mohammed and the Azerbaijan leaders in an effort to iron out differences. They came to an agreement which included military, cultural and economic cooperation; that any negotiations with the Iranian government would be either joint or with notification of

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<sup>191</sup>Lenczowski, Middle East, pp. 182, 183.

<sup>192</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, p. 86.

each party; and agreed that the majority in each area would run the respective governments. However, they did not discuss where the boundaries of the two republics would lie. Qazi Mohammed was determined to create a much larger "Kurdistan" than the Republic of Mahabad. His rather grandiose aims envisioned an independent Kurdistan which stretched from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and included incorporation of the Kurdish areas of western Azerbaijan. The Kurdish tribal leaders who supported Qazi Mohammed's Komula were also distinctly unenthusiastic about communist domination, and possessed a historical enmity towards the Azeris. Further, since the area controlled by the Komula was located entirely within the Azerbaijan boundaries, the fight to take the southern Kurdish regions no doubt lost some appeal after the nationalist warriors discovered that the area was heavily reinforced and that Kurds in Kurdistan province were cooperating with the Iranian government.<sup>193</sup> The departure of the Soviets no doubt emboldened the Iranian army, while the Kurdish tribal leaders who declined to participate in the battles had most likely concluded that Iranian concessions, if granted in Azerbaijan, would be more advantageous to Pischevari's communist-Azeris in the long run. No doubt these tribal chiefs saw clearly that it was "most unlikely that the Soviet Union sought an independent Kurdish state, but rather

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<sup>193</sup>Arfa, The Kurds, pp. 82-98.

to detach it from Iran and integrate it fully into Soviet Azerbaijan."<sup>194</sup>

The Soviet involvement in the ill-fated Kurdish republic was, at best, half-hearted. Their primary goal was incorporation of Iranian Azerbaijan, and, despite promises of financial aid, their support to the Kurds consisted of a printing press, some arms and ammunition, and some military band instruments.<sup>195</sup> Later, Stalin himself indicated that one reason for interfering in northern Iran was the Soviets' concern for the security of their Baku oil fields, which due to their proximity to the Iranian border, they regarded as highly vulnerable to sabotage. Additionally, Stalin felt that the Soviet Union deserved a share of Iranian oil concessions and was being thwarted by the west.<sup>196</sup>

Iran, having pushed back the Soviet menace with hard work and clever maneuvering, viewed the 1947 Truman Doctrine as the answer to its prayers. Concrete assistance from the U.S. to Iran was immediately forthcoming. "On October 6, 1947, the two countries concluded an agreement extending the life of the American advisory military mission to the Iranian army" and followed this up with grants of military

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<sup>194</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 21.

<sup>195</sup>Edgar O'Ballance, The Kurdish Revolt, 1961-1970 (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1973), pp. 50, 55.

<sup>196</sup>Amin Saikal, The Rise and Fall of the Shah (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 212-213, n. 43.

hardware, economic planning advice and some \$10 million worth of aid under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act. Although the Iranians felt that the aid was not nearly enough, it proved to be the first step in a long and close relationship with the United States<sup>197</sup> which culminated in arms deliveries totalling more than \$2.5 billion in the last year of the Shah's reign.<sup>198</sup>

The fall of the Shah produced renewed, if half-hearted, interest in the Kurdish issue on the part of the Soviet Union.

During 1979, Moscow tried to work out an alliance with the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDP)...However, Kurdish politics in general were fragmented, including within the KDP. While the Soviet overtures found some response, the dominant faction of the KDP was not interested because it remained at odds with the Tehran government over Kurdish autonomy at a time when Moscow's higher priority was good relations with Tehran.<sup>199</sup>

Turkey, of course, was one of the primary beneficiaries of the Truman Doctrine's largess. During the postwar era, the Kurds in Turkey were not a factor in relations between that country and outside powers. Three prewar Kurdish revolts in swift succession, which protested principally the

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<sup>197</sup>Lenczowski, Middle East, p. 187.

<sup>198</sup>Anthony H. Cordesman, The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1984), p. 895.

<sup>199</sup>Muriel Atkin, "The Islamic Republic and the Superpowers," in Nikki R. Keddi and Eric Hooglund, eds., The Iranian Revolution and The Islamic Republic (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), p. 198.

secularization policies of Ataturk and the increasing influence of the new government over what had once been almost exclusively Kurdish domain, had been forcefully and decisively put down by Turkish forces. To ensure that the Kurdish nationalist movement remained dormant, the Turkish government deported Kurdish dissident leaders to other areas of the country.<sup>200</sup> Since the bulk of the quieted Kurdish population remained in the underdeveloped, non-industrial region of eastern Anatolia, they ceased to be an issue in the immediate postwar years.

America's relationship with Turkey continued to grow closer over the years. With the exception of the Cyprus crisis, the two countries have by and large enjoyed a mutuality of interests. U.S. and NATO bases in Turkey facilitate security interests in the region and enable the United States to keep a watchful eye on the Soviets. American security assistance to Turkey assists that nation in maintaining the second largest military force in NATO. As a result, the U.S. has little inclination or desire to confront Turkey regarding human rights abuses against the Kurdish population--unlike the members of the European Economic Community, who continue to pressure Turkey on this score.

Turkey, for their part, is convinced that foreign agitators are behind the current troubles in their eastern

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<sup>200</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 4.



regions. They cite testimony by PKK defendants on trial for terrorist activities, who stated they were trained in guerrilla camps in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. Additionally, the Soviet Union has had a long, if tenuous, relationship with Kurdish rebels in Turkey--providing financial aid as long ago as the 1920s--as well as in Iran and Iraq. The USSR established two radio stations, in 1958 and 1968, respectively, which transmitted programming designed to foster discontent among the Turkish population as a whole, and the Kurds in particular.<sup>201</sup>

More recently, relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union are showing signs of improvement, beginning with the opening of a border crossing in November 1989 between the two nations at the border town of Sarp near the eastern Black sea. This border crossing will be the gateway for imports and exports between the two countries. Turkey plans to export products such as agricultural items, textiles, and construction goods, and receive in return leather goods, lumber and oil from the USSR. This commodity exchange program will coincide with the opening of a Turkish consulate in Baku and a Soviet consulate in Trabzon. Additionally, Turkish construction companies have agreed to undertake four construction projects in the USSR, and are in the process of negotiating a contract for 24 additional

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<sup>201</sup>Gunter, "Kurdish Problem," pp. 400-403.

projects.<sup>202</sup> The gradually improving relationship between the two nations may well cause the USSR to pursue a more cautious attitude towards involvement in Kurdish affairs in Turkey.

During the latter part of World War II, Iraq contended with a two-year Kurdish uprising which the government was able to put down. In the postwar years, Iraq, like Turkey, was spared any major Kurdish uprisings, mainly because the principal leader of the Kurds, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was a guest of the Soviet Union after he escaped following the collapse of the ill-fated Mahabad Republic in Iran. (Because of his association with the USSR, Barzani became known for a time as the "Red Mullah"--a moniker that stuck, despite the fact that he was neither a communist, though he willingly treated with anyone who would help him achieve his nationalist goals, nor a Mullah--Mullah, in fact, was his first name).

Soviet efforts to influence the Kurds in Iraq from afar continued, although "Soviet radio propaganda and subversive pamphlets in the Kurdish language failed to stimulate the Kurds, who had little in common with the Russians, into insurrection."<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup>"Turkey, Soviets to Launch Border Trade," Newspot Turkish Digest, 28 September 1989, p. 5.

<sup>203</sup>O'Ballance, Kurdish Revolt, p. 57.

The year 1955 was an important one in terms of American relations with Iran, Iraq and Turkey. The Baghdad Pact came into being that year, providing a collective security arrangement which augmented the United States' containment policy in the region. Although the U.S. was not a signatory to the pact, aid to the three countries reflected America's satisfaction with the arrangement which it had engineered.

This happy arrangement came crashing down with the 1958 overthrow of the monarchy in Iraq by Abdul Karim Kassem. From a Kurdish point of view, the most significant aspect of that revolution was that it enabled Barzani and his followers to return from exile in the Soviet Union. Barzani's return was the opening chapter in a revival of the Kurdish nationalist struggle in Iraq, a struggle in which both the United States and the Soviet Union became involved.

The events which led to U.S. involvement in the Kurdish struggle in Iraq are discussed in detail above. The United States was plainly unhappy with Iraq for a variety of reasons; not the least of which was Iraq's hostility towards Israel, support of radical movements in the region, and close relationship with the Soviets, all of which were seen as a threat to U.S. interests in the area.

Rather than drawing closer to the USSR, Iraq was actually seeking to pursue a more independent tack. By banning the ICP and also refusing a Soviet request to provide support to the Palestinians against Jordan, Iraq was

placing self-interest and preservation of the Ba'th government at the forefront. The Soviet Union attempted to bring Iraq back into the fold by concluding a friendship treaty in 1972 and delivering some \$1.7 billion in arms, including plenty of spare parts which mitigated resupply problems, over a four year period. Iraq used this enormous military assistance to pull even further away from the Soviets and at the same time, to crush the Kurdish rebellion. The Iraqi military build-up no doubt influenced the Shah to conclude that the time was opportune to negotiate the 1975 Algiers Accord.<sup>204</sup>

While the Iraqis were using their new weapons against the Kurds, the Kurds were receiving aid which came from a variety of sources, including the United States, Israel, and the Shah of Iran. Each contributor was pursuing his own agenda. The Shah's reasons for providing support to the Kurds did not include sympathy for their nationalist aspirations. The Shah, as the self-proclaimed "Guardian of the Gulf" and an ardent anti-communist, had strong concerns about the rise of Soviet influence in the area. The decision to provide aid to the Kurds was formulated in 1972 by the Shah and then-President Nixon:

The shah proposed to President Nixon that with a little prodding it should be possible to incite the Kurds over the Kirkuk issue. It is not known what arguments he used although one would assume that he emphasized the

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<sup>204</sup>Cordesman, The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability, pp. 889-890.

conclusion of the (Iraqi) friendship treaty with Moscow, the Baathists' plan to legalize the Iraqi Communist party and take it into a government coalition, and the fact that reportedly, the Iraqis were going to grant the Russians port facilities at Basrah. These points probably provided arguments enough.<sup>205</sup>

Two additional points may have provided important impetus to the decision, at least as regards the timing of the decision to aid the Kurds: first, the sharp rise in the price of oil during the early 1970's and second, Iraq's decision to nationalize the oil fields.

After rejecting Kurdish requests for aid in August 1971 and March 1972, the U.S. agreed to cooperate two weeks after the IPC nationalization. In addition, Barzani promised that if he won he was "ready to become the fifty-first state." He also promised, if successful, to turn over the oil fields to the U.S., and that the U.S. could look to a friend in OPEC once oil-rich Kurdistan achieved independence.<sup>206</sup>

Regardless of which circumstances or arguments proved more compelling, the end result of this meeting was that the United States became involved outright in the Kurdish issue. "Nixon went over the heads of his top intelligence advisors, overrode the objections of the CIA, and outflanked the State Department<sup>207</sup> to order operations supporting the Kurds."<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>205</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 167.

<sup>206</sup>Edmund Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. 140.

<sup>207</sup>According to the Village Voice, 11 February 1976, the State Department, which had objected to Kurdish aid in the past, may well have been initially unaware of the grant to the Kurds. "The Pike Report reveals 'highly unusual security precautions and the circumvention of the 40 Committee by the President and Dr. Kissinger that details of the project would otherwise leak--a result which by all accounts would have mightily displeased our ally. It is

The Shah provided the bulk of the assistance, compared to a token amount of U.S. aid (some \$16 million worth), mostly in the form of small arms and ammunition. Some of these arms were obtained via Israel, and were Chinese and Soviet weapons which had been captured during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Other weapons were bought from Cambodia. The origin of manufacture of these weapons was supposed to make the Iraqis believe that the Kurds were being supplied by the Russians rather than the west.<sup>209</sup> No doubt a secondary function was to enable the Kurds to put to good use any compatible Iraqi ammunition that happened to fall into their hands.

It is unlikely that the Iraqis were convinced that the Kurds were being aided to any significant degree by the Soviets, if the assertion is true that, during the Iraqi army's 1974 offensive, some of the MIG-23 aircraft used to attack the Kurds in their mountain strongholds were piloted by Soviet military personnel. Additionally, neighboring Iran was said to have become actively involved in the Kurdish-Iraqi battles by 1975, with Iranian army tanks actually firing shells across the Iran-Iraq borders and some

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also clear that the secrecy was motivated by a desire that the Department of State, which had constantly opposed such ventures in the region, be kept in the dark'." Quoted in Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, p. 139.

<sup>208</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 167.

<sup>209</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, p. 140.

Iranian army units taking the fight across the border into Iraq.<sup>210</sup>

America's main role throughout this time, revealed in the 1976 Pike Report, was apparently to guarantee the Shah's continued support as the conflict heated up. In a 13 September 1976 interview with Edmund Ghareeb, Mullah Mustafa Barzani stated, "We wanted American guarantees. We never trusted the Shah. Without American promises we wouldn't have acted the way we did."<sup>211</sup>

Al-Ahaad, a Beirut newspaper, indicated that American aid to the Kurds began well before the 1972 meeting between President Nixon and the Shah of Iran. The newspaper reported on 10 August 1969 that two American CENTO officers, a General Hunter and an officer of unknown rank named Perkins, met with Barzani at his headquarters that same month on at least two occasions. According to this account, Barzani signed a secret agreement which netted him \$14 million in financial and military aid, with a promise of more if he were effective in overthrowing the Baath regime. In exchange for this financial support, Barzani allegedly agreed to certain conditions. These conditions included absolute secrecy regarding the deal, excluding even senior personnel in Barzani's organization; a promise not to interfere in any way with Iran, either against the Shah's

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<sup>210</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 12.

<sup>211</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, p. 140.

government or in support of Iranian Kurds; rejection of Soviet aid,<sup>212</sup> denial of membership in the Kurdish movement to communists and severance of any links with the Soviet Union; and that the United States agreed to back the Kurdish autonomy effort provided it did not go beyond autonomy, and that Barzani be the sole arbitrator for the Kurds in negotiations with the United States. Further, the United States reserved a certain degree of control over the Kurdish insurgency, cautioning Barzani against initiating "any act contravening United States directives." When asked about the validity of the report nine years after its publication, an unnamed high level State Department official indicated "that no such agreement had been reached between Barzani and the U.S. government."<sup>213</sup>

American involvement in the Kurdish autonomy effort was, in the end, an effort to obtain the following objectives:

- Ensure that Iraq was kept busy fighting the Kurds, so that they would not turn the full force of their newly acquired military might on America's ally, Israel. Limiting Iraq's role in Arab-Israeli conflicts ensured that Iraq would not have a significant role, either as a spoiler or by imposing unacceptable conditions, in any future peace negotiations.
- Reduce the likelihood that Iraq would threaten Iran, or engage in agitation of anti-Shah forces, or encourage

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<sup>212</sup>According to one source, the Kurds in Iraq "were being supported by the USSR" in the early 1970's, suggesting that either this account was inaccurate or the Kurds did not abide by the secret agreement. See Cordesman, The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability, p. 890.

<sup>213</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, pp. 138-139, 210, n. 22-24.



secessionist aspirations among the Arab population in southern Iran.

- By sapping Iraq's energy, the Kurdish revolt ensured that Iraq would have reduced motivation and resources which could otherwise be devoted to radical movements in the smaller Arab states.<sup>214</sup>
- Iraq's preoccupation with the Kurds enabled the Shah to consolidate his position as "Guardian of the Gulf" free from the concern that his position of authority might be challenged by Iraq.

The Pike Report "indicated that the Shah, Nixon and Kissinger hoped that 'our client (Barzani) would not prevail'....This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to continue fighting."<sup>215</sup> Clearly, a Kurdish victory would have an uncomfortable impact first, upon the Shah himself, and secondly on Turkey, both of whom were staunch American friends.<sup>216</sup> In order to control the pace of the fighting,

...the Iranians had imposed tight controls to prevent Kurdish partisans building up ammunition stockpiles which might have given them more freedom to manoeuvre. Pesh Mergas even recounted stories of lugging ammunition crates over the mountains only to find, on opening them, that they were full of dirt. To prevent stockpiling, the Iranians even insisted on seeing empty shells before supplying new ones.<sup>217</sup>

For the short-term, the United States achieved the desired objectives in the handling of the Kurdish issue. Iraq was kept occupied by the Kurdish insurgency for several

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<sup>214</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, pp. 140-142.

<sup>215</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, p. 140.

<sup>216</sup>Ghareeb, The Kurdish Question in Iraq, p. 141.

<sup>217</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 15.

years to the satisfaction of our important regional allies, Iran and Israel. However, in the long-term, the results are less clear-cut.

## IX. REGIONAL INTERESTS

The regional interests of the three nations with significant Kurdish populations are not limited to neighbors who also have Kurdish populations, but also involve neighbors with interests relating to resources and ideological issues. The following examines the relationships of these three nations with each other and with other regional neighbors in the context of these issues which confront their security and economic well-being.

### A. IRAN AND IRAQ

In looking at Iran's relationship with Iraq, it is interesting to note that, historical animosity notwithstanding, cordial relations have occasionally existed in the past between the two neighbors with significant Kurdish populations along a shared border. Iranian-Iraqi adversarial relations, however, have frequently involved intrigues in which the Kurds played a pivotal, if pawn-like role.

The Shah's decision to "incite the Kurds over the Kirkuk issue"<sup>218</sup> with American and Israeli help exploited the Kurdish dissatisfaction with the distribution of Iraq's strategic oil resources. The Iraqi government's decision to

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<sup>218</sup>Pelletiere, The Kurds, p. 167.

exclude oil rich Kirkuk from a Kurdish autonomous region was a sore point, and the financing provided via the Shah enabled the Kurds to press for a more equitable arrangement.

Friendlier relations with Iraq were sealed with the signing of the Algiers Accord, which resolved the long-standing Shatt-al-Arab dispute and resulted in the withdrawal of U.S.-Iranian-Israeli aid from Barzani's forces fighting in Iraq. This withdrawal resulted in the collapse of the Kurdish resistance in Iraq. Clearly, the Shah preserved the upper hand in this exchange, obtaining the strategic advantage that he sought in return for calling off what essentially amounted to a proxy war by the Kurds against the Iraqi government.<sup>219</sup> Additionally, although Baghdad's Kurdish campaign was quickly becoming unacceptably expensive, Iraq had begun to make some headway using sophisticated Soviet-supplied arms. "For Iran the benefit of supporting the Kurds as a counter to the hostile Baathist regime was not regarded as worth the price of an ultimate confrontation with Iraq. From the Kurdish perspective, the Iranians had treacherously sold them out."<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>219</sup>As the conflict heated up, it became more than a proxy war. Fighting between Iranian and Iraqi troops occurred along their mutual border, and according to Iraq, Iranians firing U.S.-made Hawk missiles shot down two Iraqi fighters who were conducting operations against the Kurds near the Iranian border. See Ramazani, Persian Gulf, p. 105.

<sup>220</sup>Ramazani, Persian Gulf, p. 108.

The 1979 collapse of the Shah's government led Iraq to reconsider the equitability of the agreement. They concluded that the agreement was unfair, negotiated during a weak moment. This, combined with a fear of Khomeini-incited Shiite Fundamentalist expansionism, as well as a feeling on the part of Baghdad that they could prevail quickly, led Iraq to attack Iran.

Iran's enemy status began anew with the Iran-Iraq war. The Kurds, as noted previously, were quickly made a factor in the war effort by both sides. The Khomeini regime's support of Kurdish elements in Iraq forced Saddam Hussein to come to terms briefly with Jalal Talabani, trading Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) logistical assistance for limited autonomy concessions. Iran, not to be outdone, paid Idris and Masoud Barzani's Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) to fight against the Iranian KDP, which was supported by Iraq, and later, to fight against Iraqi forces directly. Later, Talabani came to his senses, traveled to Tehran, and placed himself at Khomeini's disposal.<sup>221</sup> However, in the final analysis, while the Kurds played a role in the war, their

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<sup>221</sup>Edgar O'Ballance describes the various Kurdish alliances as follows: "The chaotic Kurdish situation was that the Iranian KDPI (fighting against Khomeini) was being supported by Baghdad; the Iraqi PUK (fighting against Baghdad) was fighting alongside the KDPI; while the Barzani-KDP (supported by Teheran) was fighting against the KDPI and the PUK. The outbreak of the Gulf War...simply reinforced these cross-alliances." The Gulf War (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1988), p. 133.

tendency to switch sides without warning made them more of an annoyance than a decisive factor.

Kurds were conscripted into the Armed Forces of both combatants. Although both had a large deserter problem, there was some compensation, as many of the Kurds who fought in the war became infected with nationalism. To both Iran and Iraq, their Northern Sector was a sort of "Balkan side-show," producing more problems than solutions. Neither felt that the outcome of the war would be resolved in that area, which to both was an inconvenient minor sore.<sup>222</sup>

Khomeini also tried to establish religious organizations amongst the Iraqi Kurds, but these were not well received. Additionally, Tehran funded a "Kurdish Muslim Army" in Iraq headed by one Abbas Shabak, once affiliated with Talabani. For a time the army was permitted by the PUK to operate, but after a few years Talabani's forces infiltrated the group, captured their weapons and dispersed their personnel.<sup>223</sup>

Saddam Hussein no doubt greeted the death of Ayatollah Khomeini with joy and a very large sigh of relief. The late Ayatollah's appeal to Shi'ites was based to a large extent upon his unique and compelling charisma, as well as his message. No successor with the same magnetic drawing power has yet come to the fore, and Baghdad is no doubt hopeful that Khomeini's passing will be followed by a significant reduction in the fervor of his movement.

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<sup>222</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 213.

<sup>223</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, "The Kurds Between Iran and Iraq," MERIP, No. 141, July-August 1986, pp. 23-24.

## B. IRAN AND TURKEY

Recent relations between the governments of Iraq and Turkey have been marked by cooperative efforts to contain the Kurds and eliminate the potential threat that they pose to the internal security of the region.

Turkey considers the Kurdish movements of Iraq and Iran as threats to its own security in several ways. In the 1960s and 1970s, the guerrilla struggle in Iraq and later in Iran strongly affected the national awareness of the Kurds of Turkey as well. Groups in Turkish Kurdistan organized support for the Kurdish parties in Iraq and Iran....The Worker's Party of Kurdistan (PKK) even established military bases in Iraqi Kurdistan, under the protective umbrella of the KDP.<sup>224</sup>

Turkish-Iraqi mutual concerns regarding the Kurdish threat led to the creation of what might be likened to a "hot pursuit" agreement between the two nations, which allows their respective armies to cross each other's borders to flush out Kurdish insurgents. The agreement was tested in 1983, when the Turkish military conducted largely unsuccessful cross-border raids, with the Iraqi government's blessings, against PKK bases in Iraq.<sup>225</sup> While the Turks arrested few of their own subversives, they were able to round up significant numbers of PUK personnel, many of whom were delivered to Baghdad and imprisoned or executed. According to PUK leader Jalal Talabani, the number of executions had exceeded 1400 by 1983. In September of 1983, a PUK splinter group captured and held as hostages two

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<sup>224</sup>van Bruinessen, "The Kurds," MERIP, No. 141, p. 26.

<sup>225</sup>van Bruinessen, MERIP, No. 141, pp. 24-26.

Turkish pilots who had crashed in Iraq, but fear of threatened Turkish military reprisal led to their swift release.<sup>226</sup> Despite PUK efforts to avoid future confrontation with Turkish military forces, other actions followed:

In August 1986, the Turkish air force coordinated air raids with an Iraqi army attack on areas in northern Iraq that were held by the Iraqi KDP, causing many casualties (165 dead, according to radio Baghdad). Most or all victims were, however, Iraqi Kurds, not PKK fighters. On March 4, 1987 the Turkish air force again bombed alleged PKK camps in northern Iraq.<sup>227</sup>

Additionally, the two nations cooperated during the Iran-Iraq war to minimize the disruption of oil supplies. Iraqi oil was transported by truck and pipeline through Turkey during the Iran-Iraq war. This Mediterranean outlet became especially important when Syria shut down the pipeline running through their nation.

The Iraq-Turkey Lines are two pipelines running from the Kirkuk region and having a combined capacity of 1.5 mmbd. Current volumes through the lines are slightly less, at around 1.3 mmbd. Exports via the Mediterranean enabled Iraq to continue to obtain revenue despite being cut off from the Gulf in the course of the Iran-Iraq war.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 137.

<sup>227</sup>Martin van Bruinessen, "Between Guerilla War and Political Murder: The Worker's Party of Kurdistan," Middle East Report, No.153, July-August 1988, p. 46.

<sup>228</sup>United States General Accounting Office, Energy Security: An Overview of Changes in the World Oil Market, Report to the Congress, August, 1988 (Washington D.C.: U.S.



Due to a shortage of Iraqi Army troops who were needed at the front, some 15,000 detribalized Iraqi Kurds known as "Jash" were recruited by Baghdad to provide security along the Iraq Oil Road to prevent pipeline sabotage by PUK, PKK and splinter group forces. The Turks aided the effort on their side of the border by encasing the pipeline in heavy security (barbed wire, minefields, depopulating the area, and shooting at anything that moved). This cooperation was important, because sabotage threatened from both sides--while PKK forces were taking refuge in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq, PUK personnel and other anti-Ba'th groups were hiding out across the border in Turkey.<sup>229</sup>

Exports via Turkey, however, were not without a price. Transit fees notwithstanding, the advantage obtained was lessened when Turkey was slow to reimburse Iraq for oil purchased via the pipeline. In the wake of the cease-fire, the Kurdish threat, added to a desperate need for oil revenues, will continue to make pipeline security important, and may have been the reason for Iraq's aggressive post-war actions against the Kurds.

Another Turkish-Iraqi issue with internal security implications concerns water. Iraq is dependent upon the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for much of her water resources. The GAP project, discussed above, could result in the

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Government Printing Office), pp. 134-136.

<sup>229</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, pp. 136-137.

controlling or limiting of Euphrates water by Turkey, a move which would affect Syria as well. Turkey has not denied this possibility, since no treaties regarding water rights exist between the nations. The issue of control of scarce water resources has caused Turkey to be on the alert for possible sabotage against GAP construction projects.<sup>230</sup> This sabotage could well be internal, from PKK elements, but should Turkey choose to restrict the flow of water to Syria or Iraq, those Kurds with many years of experience crossing the mountainous Turkish-Iraqi border could well play a role in a sabotage effort conducted on behalf of their governments, who may be compelled to put aside their differences in the face of a water shortage that could threaten their survival.

Recently, Turkey, perhaps in an effort to mitigate the threat, has pursued a more conciliatory course with regard to the issue of water resources. Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, in a 27 September 1989 speech to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, has proposed a "Peace Pipeline Project" which would shift unused water resources via pipeline to neighboring nations with more arid climates.<sup>231</sup> Ozal's speech did not specify which neighbors would receive the benefits of this project, and it is likely that Turkey

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<sup>230</sup>FBIS, "DIE WELT Reports on Building of Ataturk Dam," 12 November 1986, pp. T4-5.

<sup>231</sup>"PM Ozal addresses CEPA in Strasbourg," Newspot Turkish Digest, 28 September 1989, pp. 1, 7.

has concessions such as withdrawal of Syrian support for Kurdish insurrectionists or reduced Iraqi oil prices in mind when it promulgated the water distribution plan.

### C. TURKEY AND IRAN

There are many physical and historical similarities between Turkey and Iran. Both nations have a largely non-Arab population, non-Arab languages (Ural-Altai Turkish and Indo-European Farsi, respectively) predominate in each country, and both nations entered the modern age under the strong leadership of charismatic rulers--Ataturk in Turkey, and Reza Shah in Iran. The geographic juxtaposition of these two nations has fostered cooperation over the years; however, the 1979 revolution in Iran strained the once-close relationship, as the secular Turkish government now perceives the radically religious emphasis of the Islamic Republic of Iran as having the potential to threaten the internal security of Turkey.

During the years of Mohammed Reza Shah's rule, Iran was careful to ensure that Turkey was notified of any domestic security activities against the Kurdish population in Iran.

Each spring and autumn, almost as a rite, the Iranian Air Force engaged in systematic bombing of Kurdish villages. These "pacification" operations had become so regular that the Turkish side would be given prior notice of the aerial bombardments so as to avoid any misunderstandings over

possible airspace infringements in this mountainous border territory.<sup>232</sup>

The revolution in Iran, which was followed by fighting between the Iranian Kurds and the new Islamic government, came at a critical time in Turkey's history. The Turkish government was facing major political and economic problems, was threatened by terrorist activities and unrest from several quarters, and could ill-afford further destabilization in the form of a reaction to the events in Iran by the Kurdish population in the eastern provinces. The potential for Iranian "contamination" of the Kurds in Turkey led General Evren, who had not yet engineered the coup in Turkey, to declare martial law in six southeastern provinces on 20 April 1979. This was followed by military exercises in the Diyarbakir area by the army and the air force as a show of strength.<sup>233</sup> On 12 September 1980, General Evren took control of the troubled government in Turkey. The new regime quickly took steps to eliminate terrorist activities, which included a crackdown on PKK Kurds in the southeast.

In October one of the biggest security operations was directed against the so-called "Apocu" organisation of left-wing Kurdish secessionists, and eight of the ringleaders were killed. This success against the Kurdish

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<sup>232</sup>Mehmet Ali Birand, The General's Coup in Turkey: An Inside Story of 12 September 1980 (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1987), p. 68.

<sup>233</sup>Birand, General's Coup, p. 78.

extremists received considerable prominence in the media...<sup>234</sup>

More recently, Iranian-Turkish relationships have become less cordial. The Kurds are central to the dispute. On 10 April 1988, Turkey announced that they would shoot down any military aircraft entering Turkey illegally after Iranian airplanes dropped bombs on the Turkish side of the border while providing air support to Kurds entering Turkey from Iran.<sup>235</sup> Turkey has indicated that they believe Iran is aiding PKK forces, and that Kurdish forces are being trained in two camps in Iran near the Turkish border. According to one source, Iran has supplied PKK Kurds with civilian identity cards and Iranian revolutionary guard uniforms. Additionally, Turkey suspects that there is a strong relationship between Hizbollah (Party of God) in Lebanon and the PKK.<sup>236</sup>

Iran, for its part, has publicly declared a distrust of Turkey's secular government, accusing Turkey of being a pawn of Saudi Arabia and the United States. This followed the expulsion by Turkey of Hojatoleslam Sabri Hamedani, an imam at an Iranian mosque in Istanbul, for statements strongly

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<sup>234</sup>Kenneth Mackenzie, Turkey Under the Generals, Conflict Studies, No. 126, January 1981 (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict), p. 23.

<sup>235</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 2, 1988, p. 10.

<sup>236</sup>Reuters, "Turkey Believes Kurdish Rebels Forging Closer...", SMPT Mail News Service, 14 October 1989, Ankara, Turkey.

critical of Saudi Arabia. The imam criticized the Saudis for beheading 16 Kuwaiti Shiites who were implicated in bombings in Mecca in July, 1989. The Turkish government responded to the elderly imam's attack by hustling him onto the first bus out of town, an action which the Iranians contended was cruel, indicating that they felt he at least should have been put on a plane instead.<sup>237</sup>

The decline in Iranian-Turkish diplomatic relations has accompanied a similar recent decline in the trade relationship between the two nations. In 1985, exports to Iran from Turkey totalled \$1078 million and imports were \$1265 million. One year later, these figures had dropped to \$564 million and \$221 million, respectively.<sup>238</sup> By 1987, the Iranians had instituted fierce austerity measures which resulted in a 95 percent reduction in the volume of goods imported into Iran from Turkey. Even with this reduction, Turkey continued to be one of the larger suppliers of imports to Iran, along with West Germany, Japan, Italy and the United Kingdom.<sup>239</sup>

Iran's recent conclusion of a ten year trade agreement with Bulgaria, designed to produce up to \$1 billion a year in trade between the two nations, has also raised Turkey's ire. Turkey has been struggling under the weight of

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<sup>237</sup>Nicosia, "Iran Criticises Turkey," 10 October 1989.

<sup>238</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 3, 1987, p. 10.

<sup>239</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 1, 1988, pp. 7, 16.

hundreds of thousands of Bulgarian Turks who have crossed into Turkey fleeing the so-called "Bulgarization" campaign designed to eradicate their Turkish identity. Turkey is irritated that Iran, as well as other Moslem nations who have concluded agreements with Sofia such as Libya, Syria and South Yemen, would place trade issues before the plight of fellow Moslems facing persecution. To add insult to injury, Iran subsequently offered its services as a mediator between Bulgaria and Turkey.<sup>240</sup>

Still, Turkey seems determined to keep its options open as regards Iran. Although discussions regarding a possible oil pipeline from Iran to the Mediterranean have yet to bear fruit, they crop up on a regular basis.<sup>241</sup> Iran continues to purchase the lion's share of Turkey's fertilizer output, an industry which earned Turkey \$26 million in 1988 and is projected to amount to revenues of \$40 million in 1989.<sup>242</sup> Additionally, Turkey's Council of Ministers has recently ratified a protocol to export electricity to Iran. As part of this protocol, the Turkish Electricity Board will

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<sup>240</sup>Mushtak Parker, "Turkey: Knowing Who Your Friends Are," The Middle East, August 1989, p. 18.

<sup>241</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 2 1988, p. 15.

<sup>242</sup>"Urea Fertilizer Production," Newspot Turkish Digest, 5 October 1989, p. 5.

construct step-up transformer stations in Maku, Iran and Dogubeyazit, Turkey.<sup>243</sup>

#### D. SYRIA

Syrian-Iraqi relations have never been cozy, as each views the other's politics as a perversion of the original Ba'thist ideology. The two nations' differences are often expressed in the context of disputes which center around either Syrian support for Iraq's Kurds or Syria's lack and Iraq's abundance of petroleum. Similarly, Syrian-Turkish relations have been marked by disagreements which range from border disputes to accusations of interference in each's internal affairs. Relations with Iran, by contrast, grew warmer with the founding of the Islamic Republic, but more recently have begun to show signs of strain.

Syria has a small Kurdish population, and has been accused of funding, with Soviet help, PKK activities on both sides of the Turkish-Iraqi border. Syria not only provided sanctuary to PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who is wanted in Turkey on a variety of charges, but also has provided training for PKK forces.<sup>244</sup> Additionally, Syria provided aid to the Kurds during the fighting in Iraq which preceded the 1975 Algiers accord and support for Jalal Talabani's

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<sup>243</sup>"Electricity Energy Export to Iran," Newspot Turkish Digest, 12 October 1989, p. 5.

<sup>244</sup>van Bruinessen, "Guerrilla War," Middle East Report, July-August 1988, pp. 42, 44.



left-leaning PUK, which was at ideological odds with Barzani's KDP.<sup>245</sup>

Syria argued with Iraq over oil as far back as 1966, when the Syrian government ceased pumping oil through the pipeline crossing Syria to the Mediterranean in a dispute with the IPC over transit fees. (The Syrians, in fact, wanted Iraq to nationalize their oil industry so Damascus, perhaps feeling cheated as one of the few Middle Eastern countries without oil assets of their own, could charge their Arab brothers even higher fees.) The dispute was resolved in a few months, but it resulted in Iraq being made aware of the vulnerability of pipeline delivery methods.<sup>246</sup> The pipeline again became an issue during the Iran-Iraq war. Syria, supporting Iran, refused to allow Iraq to use the pipeline, a move designed to benefit Iran by threatening Iraq's ability to continue funding the war.

Water delivery via the Euphrates river, discussed above, could well be the issue that brings Syria and Iraq together. Syria relies upon irrigation water from the Euphrates river, and while Iraq enjoys the benefits of the Tigris, it is also heavily dependent upon the Euphrates as well. Syria's water supply, if allocated, reduced or held hostage by Turkey, could well persuade that nation to put aside its differences with Iraq and initiate a joint diplomatic or military

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<sup>245</sup>Marr, Iraq, pp. 233, 236.

<sup>246</sup>Sluglett, Iraq, pp. 99-100.

venture to ensure continued access to the vital resource. However, in the near term, rather than attempt rapprochement Syria appears content to use the PKK as a "trump card" by continuing to shelter Ocalan and permitting "the PKK to be a serious nuisance to Turkey but not to the point of provoking Ankara to take military measures against Syria."<sup>247</sup> It remains to be seen if Turkey's recent proposal of a water "peace pipeline" will mitigate the water resource issue and result in Syria's distancing itself from the PKK in exchange for a secure source of water.

More recently, Syria has begun to draw away from Iran, a move which no doubt pleases Iraq. During the war, Syria accepted gifts of petroleum in exchange for support of Iran against Iraq, but more recently the Syrians have been required to pay full market price. Differences centering around the two nations' policies in Lebanon have contributed to the strain in relations.<sup>248</sup> The increasing isolation of Iran vis-a-vis the Arab world has also been a factor in the distancing of Damascus from Tehran.

#### E. ISRAEL

Israel's involvement in the Kurdish issue was primarily motivated by the security threat posed to that nation by Iraq, and the desire to obtain strategic advantage by

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<sup>247</sup>van Bruinessen, "Guerrilla War," Middle East Report, July-August, 1988, p. 44.

<sup>248</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 2, 1988, p. 10.

fostering closer relations with oil-rich, non-Arab Iran. Iraq opposed the creation of the state of Israel, and technically, the two nations have been at war with one another since 1948. By contrast, Israel's dealings with Turkey are marked by a studied avoidance of the Kurdish issue, preferring instead to emphasize regional similarities, as both nations are pro-western, non-Arab, and have historically concerned themselves with countering Soviet encroachment in the region.

Israel's relationship with Turkey is quiet but close. Arms transfers to Turkey of weapons such as Israeli-made air to surface missiles, antitank shells, machine guns and ammunition have been taking place since the mid-1970s. Additionally, Turkey has received intelligence training from Israeli intelligence, and Israel's Mossad has maintained a station in Turkey for more than thirty years.<sup>249</sup>

Israel's sensitivity to Turkish government concerns over minority issues extends to the "Armenian question." The Turkish government maintains that there was no Armenian genocide, per se, and that, subsequent to an Ottoman government order to relocate the Armenians, civil war erupted in which Moslem deaths far outnumbered Armenian ones. Turkey objects not only to terms such as "massacre" or "genocide" in describing the events that took place, but

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<sup>249</sup>Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection: Who Israel Arms and Why (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 14.

also resents that the Turkish government is being held responsible for events that occurred in 1915, under an Ottoman government.<sup>250</sup> Israel's approach to this issue is sympathetic to the concerns of Turkey in that:

...the Israeli government forbids any mention of the Turkish genocide of Armenians in 1915 in any government-controlled media or government-sponsored activities. It does not allow the showing of television programs dealing with the events of 1915, and has taken actions against any mention of the Armenian cause. Israeli schoolchildren never hear about the Armenian holocaust, and the Israeli Foreign Ministry makes every effort to prevent any public or scholarly event that mentions what happened in 1915. In 1982, even the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide was a target of Foreign Ministry displeasure and pressure, because the Armenian genocide was also scheduled to be discussed.<sup>251</sup>

Given the "kid gloves" treatment of this issue on the part of the Israelis, it is unlikely that they would choose, at least for the present, to jeopardize their friendly relations by involving themselves in the equally-sensitive Kurdish minority question in Turkey.

Israel, as noted previously, displayed far less reticence in involving itself in Kurdish undertakings in Iraq. Mullah Mustafa Barzani apparently visited Israel on at least two occasions, in 1967 and 1973, and former Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was said to have met with Kurdish

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<sup>250</sup>The Turkish government's viewpoint is described in detail in Erich Feigl, A Myth of Terror. Armenian Extremism: Its Causes and Its Historical Context (Freilassing, Austria: Edition Zeitgeschichte, 1986).

<sup>251</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, p. 17.

leaders in Tehran during a visit to Iran in 1966.<sup>252</sup> Israel's support of Barzani's Kurds in Iraq prior to the Algiers Accord, providing both weaponry and training,<sup>253</sup> was designed more to keep the Iraqi government busy rather than support a freedom-loving and oppressed group. Indeed, the extent of and duration of Israeli aid, valued at millions of dollars and lasting for more than a decade, began with assistance from Mossad as early as 1958 and was augmented in 1963 with "arms, ammunition, and Israeli military advisors."<sup>254</sup> This was followed by "the rumored presence of Israeli instructors among the Kurdish guerrillas"<sup>255</sup> who provided training courses to rebels in the Kurdish mountains beginning in August, 1965.<sup>256</sup>

Israel took their cues from Iran in providing aid to the Kurds in Iraq. Israeli-Iranian relations became especially close during the early 1960s and continued throughout the Shah's reign. Despite the absence of formal diplomatic ties, the Iranians maintained "an interests section in the

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<sup>252</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, p. 19.

<sup>253</sup>Sluglett, "The Kurds," Saddam's Iraq, p. 197.

<sup>254</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, p. 19.

<sup>255</sup>R.D. McLaurin, Mohammed Mughisuddin and Abraham R. Wagner, Foreign Policy Making in the Middle East: Domestic Influences on Policy in Egypt, Iraq, Israel and Syria (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977), p. 136.

<sup>256</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, p. 19.

Swiss embassy" while Israel maintained a de facto embassy in Tehran.<sup>257</sup>

During the Arab oil boycott, Iran quietly supplied oil to Israel. Additionally, Israel's Mossad provided training to the Shah's SAVAK. Arms deliveries from Israel to Iran spanned both the Shah's and Khomeini's regimes. The historical strength of the Israeli-Iranian relationship, however, is best exemplified by an ambitious plan between the two nations,

...to develop a long-range missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads. The missile was the product of Israeli research and development, starting in the late 1950s. In the spring of 1977, Israeli Defense Minister Shimon Peres signed a secret agreement in Tehran for the development of a more advanced missile. Iran was to finance it through the delivery of \$1 billion worth of oil....The project was halted by the end of the shah's reign; its details were revealed when the new Iranian regime published documents found in the Israeli embassy building in Teheran....<sup>258</sup>

Doubtless, Israel would be delighted with the creation of an independent Kurdistan, but it is unlikely that this is seen as a realistic possibility in the near future. Indeed, the Kurdish affiliation with Israel, even more than with non-Arab Iran, may have permanently tainted the Kurdish autonomy movement from the point of view of neighboring Arabs who might otherwise have developed some sympathy for

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<sup>257</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, pp. 9-10.

<sup>258</sup>Beit-Hallahmi, The Israeli Connection, pp. 11-12, citing M. Bailey, "The Blooming of Operation Flower," Observer, 2 February 1986 and E. Sciolino, "Documents Detail Israeli Missile Deal with the Shah," New York Times, 1 April 1986a.

their cause, perhaps motivated by disagreements with Saddam Hussein.

Iraq, moving away from the Soviet Union and towards the West, appears to be subtly moderating its stance towards Israel. By participating in the 1982 Arab League Summit, Iraq

...tacitly recognized Israel's right to exist in return for the creation of a...Palestinian state. Saddam Husayn went even further, stating that a condition of security for Israel was necessary for a resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>259</sup>

Moderation by Iraq not only brought that nation closer to the West, it also served to reduce the likelihood that Israel would be interested in any near-term future funding of the Kurds. The ever-pragmatic Israelis, though, would no doubt attempt to renew their Kurdish relationships in Iraq should that nation prove bellicose at some later date.

Despite the recent absence of sharp rhetoric by Iraq, relations cannot be said to have thawed convincingly between the two nations. This view is supported by one writer who raised the possibility that Israel may have been behind the downing of an airplane carrying an Algerian cease-fire negotiating team flying near the Turkish-Iranian border in 1981, in a precautionary effort to keep the Iran-Iraq war going.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup>Marr, Iraq, pp. 305-306.

<sup>260</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 104.

## F. SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia's relationships with Iran, Iraq and Turkey have changed over the years. Saudi Arabia's principal concern regarding these countries is to ensure that they maintain either a stable regime friendly to them, or should a nation prove belligerent, work to isolate it from its neighbors in the region. In the case of Iraq and Turkey, the former formula has been successful, but the strained relationship with Iran has necessitated implementation of the latter tactic. Saudi Arabia is unlikely to involve itself in the Kurdish issue, even in radical Iran, for two reasons: first, the possibility that sponsorship of Kurdish insurrection in Iran could spread to friendly Turkey and Iraq, and second, the non-Arab heritage of the Kurds provides little motivation for an offer of aid. Instead, the Saudis have tended to influence events using either cold, hard cash or the oil weapon--offering financial aid to friendly nations such as Iraq and Turkey, while undercutting bellicose Iran by refusing to cut back oil production, resulting in a lower world price for oil and reducing Iran's profits in the face of desperate need for revenues.

During the Pahlavi era, Iran and Saudi Arabia often disagreed regarding regional security issues, but cooperated in other areas. Not only were they among the original founders of OPEC in 1960, but in the succeeding two decades the two nations initiated several economic and industrial



agreements, negotiated an accord regarding the seabed and continental shelf of the Persian Gulf in 1968, and organized the 1969 Islamic Summit Conference in Morocco.<sup>261</sup> Since the fall of the Shah, however, Iran's hostile attitude towards the Saudi regime, its radical Shiite posture and largely non-Arab population leave the Saudis disinclined to offer aid to that nation. Diplomatic relations with Iran were terminated in April, 1988, after Iranian agitation during the 1987 Hajj resulted in riots and hundreds of deaths, and Iran refused to ensure that pilgrims refrained from similar activities during the 1988 Hajj. Indeed, Ayatollah Khomeini told pilgrims they had an obligation to demonstrate--compelling Saudi Arabia to sever ties in order to ensure security during the annual pilgrimage.<sup>262</sup>

Saudi Arabia is unique in "that it is the only major pro-Western state with significant influence"<sup>263</sup> in Iraq. The two nations share much in common: significant oil reserves, a common border, a predominantly Arab heritage and strong, centralized, and Sunni leadership. These factors, as well as strategic Saudi Arabian aid to Iraq, contributed to the lessening of hostile rhetoric by Baghdad in the late

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<sup>261</sup>Nyrop, Iran, pp. 63, 236-237, 446.

<sup>262</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 2, 1988, pp. 9-10.

<sup>263</sup>Anthony H. Cordesman, The Gulf and the Search for Strategic Stability: Saudi Arabia, the Military Balance in the Gulf, and Trends in the Arab-Israeli Military Balance (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 33.

70s and an increase in cooperation between the two nations.<sup>264</sup>

This cooperation manifested itself in Saudi Arabia's unsuccessful diplomatic attempts to convince Syria to reopen the pipeline transiting that country from Iraq to the Mediterranean in an effort to aid Iraq's economy during the war.<sup>265</sup> Saudi initiatives in the form of economic pressures were somewhat more successful in encouraging Syria to "distance itself from Iran" in order to avoid "hurting the Arab cause."<sup>266</sup> Additionally, Saudi Arabia gave Iraq a quiet gift of some "350,000 BPD of oil to market in late 1982" to help with war deficits.<sup>267</sup> These gifts of oil continued throughout the course of the war.

Perhaps the most recent visible evidence of Saudi Arabian contributions to Iraq's internal security are IPSA 1 and 2. IPSA is an acronym for Iraq's Pipeline in Saudi Arabia. IPSA 1, which terminates at the Saudi Arabia Petroline, has been completed and has a current volume of .5 mmbd. IPSA 2 is under construction and completion is anticipated by late 1989 or early 1990. It is expected to have a capacity of 1.6 mmbd and will run parallel to IPSA 1 and the Petroline, terminating at Yanbu on the Red Sea.

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<sup>264</sup>Cordesman, Gulf, pp. 35, 421, 758.

<sup>265</sup>Marr, Iraq, p. 298.

<sup>266</sup>EIU, Iran: Country Report, No. 4, 1987, p. 15.

<sup>267</sup>Cordesman, Gulf, p. 758.

These pipelines greatly enhance Iraq's ability to gain foreign revenues despite a lack of access to the Persian Gulf.<sup>268</sup>

Saudi Arabia's motives in aiding Iraq are not completely altruistic. By taking the lead in emphasizing collective security, regional diplomacy, and maintaining stability in the area, Saudi Arabia lessens the likelihood of what could be potentially destabilizing superpower interference. (Indeed, a rumor circulated in the early years of the war that the Saudis were actively seeking to engineer the replacement of Saddam Hussein because of his poor performance in prosecuting the fight against the radical regime in Iran.<sup>269</sup>) Further, Iraq, like other nations in the region who rely on generous Saudi financial or logistical aid, has a stake in the continuance of the present Saudi regime.

Turkey, too, shares common points with Saudi Arabia. Although not an Arab nation, Turkey maintains a pro-western stance and is possessed of a largely Sunni population. Turkey has received aid from Saudi Arabia, considers that nation a friend, and has little tolerance for vehement criticism of its benefactor within its borders. This has

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<sup>268</sup>GAO, Energy Security, pp. 34-36.

<sup>269</sup>Jabr Muhsin, "The Gulf War," Committee Against Repression and for Democratic Rights in Iraq, Saddam's Iraq: Revolution or Reaction? (London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1986), p. 235.

moved Iran to accuse Turkey of being a pawn of the west (see Section C, above).

One important Turkish export to Saudi Arabia is labor. Between 1966 and 1989, at least 222,175 Turks have been employed in various capacities in Saudi Arabia. This figure is second only to West Germany, which has hosted more than 500,000 guestworkers during the same period. The trend in labor export has been shifting towards the Arab world in recent years, with approximately 97 percent of migration to Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iraq.<sup>270</sup> This relationship will have continued significance for as long as Turkey has a surplus labor force and receipts from expatriate workers constitute an important source of foreign exchange.

#### G. OTHER REGIONAL ACTORS

Relationships between the three nations with significant Kurdish populations and other regional actors has, in the last decade, been a function of the regional actor's position vis a vis the Iran-Iraq war. The Kurdish issue, with the exception of Syrian interest, has not played a large role. Turkey, as a neutral in that conflict, was able to maintain relationships with nations as diverse as Saudi Arabia and Libya, but the support of other nations in the area was largely a function of a unified Arab effort whose purpose was to defeat a radical, non-Arab enemy.

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<sup>270</sup>"Manpower Export Deployed to Arab Countries," Newspot Turkish Digest, 12 October 1989, p. 5.

Iraq has, in the past, had differences with its Arab neighbors. However, when Iraq's internal security was threatened when Iran appeared to be gaining the upper hand, most of the regional Arab powers, the notable exceptions being Syria and Libya (who supported Iran), provided backing to Iraq, loaning money, materials or outlets to the sea in order that Iraq could continue the war.

Iraq's relationship with Egypt has evolved over time. Egypt, once a pariah in the Arab world in the aftermath of Camp David, received some of its worst criticism from Iraq. The relationship has since warmed. Egypt supplied Iraq with spare military parts during the war,<sup>271</sup> Egyptian pilots who acted as trainers and advisors,<sup>272</sup> and also supplied a large percentage of foreign workers, many of whom worked in the troubled agricultural sector.<sup>273</sup> Anwar Sadat, prior to his assassination, gave Saddam Hussein permission to conscript these foreign workers to help the Iraqi war effort.<sup>274</sup>

Jordan offered help to Iraq as well during the Iran-Iraq war, "(providing) routes to 'Aqabah on the Red Sea' over

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<sup>271</sup>Marr, Iraq, pp. 298, 305.

<sup>272</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 105.

<sup>273</sup>Celine Whittleton, "Oil and the Iraqi Economy", Saddam's Iraq, p. 60.

<sup>274</sup>Muhsin, "The Gulf War," Saddam's Iraq, p. 235, citing Foreign Report, the Economist Newspaper Ltd, London, 6 May 1982.

which 500,000 b/d of oil were transported in 1983"<sup>275</sup> as well as opening that port to Iraqi shipping. Additionally, Jordan sent a brigade of troops to guard Iraqi installations which freed Iraqi troops for battle. Jordan also offered the services of two armored divisions comprised of approximately 20,000 troops, but the offer was politely refused.<sup>276</sup> Iraq did accept military and technical advice from Jordan at the start of the war, and by 1983, Iraq was borrowing from Jordan to help defray the rising costs of the protracted struggle.<sup>277</sup>

Other regional actors put aside differences with Iraq as well. Kuwait, for example, shipped Iraqi oil out of its port "and the Gulf states...which, while anxious to prevent the spread of Khumaini's message among their own population, were initially not entirely averse to Iraq's being considerably weakened by the conflict," in the end contributed significant sums to the Iraqi war chest.<sup>278</sup>

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<sup>275</sup>Marr, Iraq, p. 305.

<sup>276</sup>O'Ballance, Gulf War, p. 105.

<sup>277</sup>Cordesman, Gulf, pp. 399, 758.

<sup>278</sup>Sluglett, Iraq, p. 259.

## X. CONCLUSION

It is impossible to draw decisive conclusions from this research due to its scope. The "Kurdish question" in Iraq, Turkey and Iran will likely remain unanswered for some time to come. However, what this research does suggest is that any degree of increase in the development and/or exploitation of strategic resources by governments is but one of many factors which has influenced and will continue to play a role in the intensity of Kurdish nationalist activity.

In Iraq, increased government control of oil assets began in the 1960s and was followed by nationalization of the oil industry in the 1970s. As a result of this action and a rise in the price of oil in the early 1970s, substantial revenues accrued to the government. During the same timeframe, a growing government interest in the success of the agricultural sector resulted in greater mechanization and larger farms in an effort to foster efficiency. The Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq provided some of its fiercest and most unified opposition between 1960 and 1975, and was overcome by the well-equipped Iraqi army only when it lost its principal source of support. More recently, attacks by Iraqi forces against Kurdish villages suggest an economic dimension. These actions have been concentrated in

areas containing vital resources, such as pipelines, railways and highways, and where additional development is planned.

In Turkey, the increased development of the southeastern region began after 1960 and increased in magnitude through the present day with the commencement of construction of the ambitious GAP project. These events coincided with a reawakening of the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. The movement became more cohesive in the 1970s and increasingly violent, owing primarily to the activities of the PKK, in the 1980s.

In Iran, the Kurdish area remains largely undeveloped. Half-hearted efforts over the years at agricultural reform were largely viewed as failures. For years, the Naft-i-Shah oil field and Kermanshah refinery were the only (albeit now ancient) evidence of industrial progress in the region. While they are relatively unimportant to Iran's oil industry today, they held a much more prominent position in the government's domestic oil distribution and development schemes in the immediate post-war era, which was marked by the 1946-47 ill-fated attempt to establish a Kurdish Republic at Mahabad. Today, despite a renewed outburst of nationalist fervor which followed the fall of the Shah, the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iran is no closer to its goal of autonomy than it was ten years ago. The movement lacks cohesion and the Islamic Republic of Iran has largely



succeeded in, if not crushing it, dividing and containing it in order to use it against itself and Iran's neighbors for the government's own ends.

In addition to development of resources, other factors affect the Kurdish nationalists prospects for the future. While the Kurds are regarded by some as a potentially destabilizing factor in the region, they enjoy the sympathy and support of those who attach an importance to democratic and liberal ideals such as self-determination, "concern for minority rights and...distrust of central government interference."<sup>279</sup>

Urbanization will also affect the movement in the years ahead. As the Kurdish population in Iran, Iraq and Turkey continues to migrate from the countryside to the urban areas, greater numbers of Kurds will be exposed to greater opportunities for higher education which will serve to raise their political consciousness. Despite the often vigorous attempts to crush the Kurdish nationalist movements by the central governments of the three nations, it is possible that the historical resilience and strong cultural identity of the Kurds will motivate them to continue to press their demands through the use of armed struggle. Alternatively, education and assimilation could translate into a more moderate, political approach within the framework of existing government systems.

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<sup>279</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 21.

Government use of force to control the Kurdish population will likely continue in the years ahead in varying degrees. In Iraq, the Baath government has had some success in quieting the Kurds with armed troops and deportation measures, and has even resorted to the use of chemical weapons against Kurdish villagers. The Kurdish movement in Iraq has been fragmented since the death of Mullah Mustafa Barzani in 1979, unlike the movement in Turkey, which gained cohesion, determination and a radical outlook in the face of strong government countermeasures. In Iran, the movement, already fractured, still struggles to recover from the assassination of Abdul Rahman Ghasemlou.

Superpower involvement is a factor which is unlikely to have an impact on the Kurdish nationalist movement in the near future. Given the current state of affairs in the above-mentioned countries, it is unlikely that the United States will involve itself in Kurdish affairs to the extent that it did in the 1970s.

First, the revelations of the Pike Report make the U.S. an untrustworthy ally from a Kurdish point of view, though the Kurds would likely accept U.S. aid (in the improbable event that it was offered) provided no strings were attached. It is also likely that, if aid were offered, no Kurdish movement would rely on American support to the extent that Barzani did.

Second, U.S. relationships with the nations of Iran, Iraq and Turkey will doubtless continue to take priority over Kurdish interests, at least in the near term. With the death of Khomeini in Iran, the U.S. remains optimistic that normalization of relations will take place at some future date. American security interests in Turkey will also continue to take precedence over Kurdish nationalist aims or human rights abuses in that country, provided that government actions against PKK "terrorists" do not result in widespread, excessively brutal or unacceptably flagrant repression of the Kurdish population as a whole. In Iraq, a similar situation exists--as that nation continues to rebuild following the war with Iran, American business as well as diplomatic interests in that country will be at the forefront of American initiatives.

Third, American interests in the Kurdish issue have historically encompassed the dimension of competition with the Soviet Union for influence in the region. The Soviet Union is still recovering from their debacle in Afghanistan, and is also faced with ethnic unrest and economic problems on their homefront. These events will likely make them more cautious and any Soviet initiatives in the region will more probably be diplomatic in nature rather than clandestine. However, one cannot completely rule out Soviet interference in Kurdish nationalist aspirations should a golden opportunity arise.

...Moscow has staked a modest investment in Kurdish affairs. Students currently research Kurdish problems in Moscow, Leningrad, Erivan, Baku, Tblissi and Tashkent--a greater number than in any other country. However Soviet sponsorship of Kurdish forces is more likely to remain merely mischievous: an independent Kurdistan might well show a spirit of independence not consistent with overall Soviet policies and might even fall under Western influence.<sup>280</sup>

Long-term prospects for Kurdish nationalist aims will depend upon four important factors. The most important of these is the international climate. The superpowers appear to be expressing an interest in threat reduction measures such as arms control and elimination of chemical weapons, as well as a concern for quality of life issues such as the eradication of world hunger and improvement of the environment. The success of these initiatives is by no means certain, and only time will tell if the world becomes more oriented towards issues which express a concern for human rights and democratic ideals. If this is indeed the case, the Kurdish struggle may finally come to the sustained attention of the world and move public opinion to support them in their efforts to achieve cultural expression, if not autonomy. If the latter occurs, it will most likely be in the context of a limited form of autonomy within the existing boundaries of the countries involved.

The second factor is the governments of the nations with significant Kurdish populations. Resolution of the "Kurdish question" requires active and sincere government

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<sup>280</sup>Sim, Kurdistan, p. 21.

participation in mediation efforts. This will only take place when the cost of quieting the Kurds by other means becomes unacceptably expensive, either monetarily or in the number of lives lost.

The third factor concerns the splintered nature of the Kurdish nationalist movement. The solidarity which was so strongly in evidence during the heady days of the Mahabad Republic has, over time, dissolved into bitter feuding and infighting which places ideological differences ahead of nationalism and has divided the factions into mere pawns on the regional chessboard. As long as the Kurds continue to argue amongst themselves, they will be unable to press their demands in an effective and compelling manner.

A final factor concerns the increasing level of violence, much of it directed against their own countrymen, primarily associated with the Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey. For the present, they are becoming better known as a result of PKK terrorist activities. For the long term, the movement will suffer reverses if the Kurds continue to be portrayed as terrorists. Like the Palestinians, who gained notoriety through terrorism but were unable to achieve any progress until they moderated their stance and united under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, the Kurds too must unite behind a compelling spokesman who will be able to define and articulate their goals to bring the support of world opinion to their cause.

APPENDIX

KURDISTAN

Middle East



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