

Geopolitical assessment policies, Iran and Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract:

Iraqi Kurdistan, part of the Kurdish areas of the Middle East is one that covers an area of 74,000 square kilometers of position more or less middle and center in the Kurdish areas in the periphery is, in other words the Iraqi Kurdistan as a link between Iranian Kurdistan, Kurdistan, Turkey and Syria is considered. The Kurdistan between the five governments in the Middle East, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Armenia and between the four of civilization and culture, between four plateau, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Anatolia and the Caucasus, and on a bus route between continental Asia, Europe and Africa was also the way research is descriptive - analytical attempt to understand the geopolitical policy of Iran, Turkey and Syria to Iraqi Kurdistan is the Kurdish nation. The results of this study indicate that the neighboring Kurdistan, Iranian Kurdistan has less problems, because its basically Aryan Kurds and the Iranians are proud to racial affinity. Turkey is currently the main and most strategic sense federalism in Iraqi Kurdistan, but the enemy has not only fundamentally improve and change the situation of Kurds opposed any threat to their security and stimulate it to create separatist Kurds in Turkey knows the mention on the part of Iraqi Kurdistan, has territorial claims. And Syria denies

the Kurdish identity and politics the land they run and they refused to give citizenship and property.

Key words: Kurdish people in Iran, Syria, Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan

INTRODUCTION

Iraqi Kurdistan is a mountainous region spreading over an area of nearly 74.000 square kilometers populating approximately 6 millions of Kurds covering Dahuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Diyala, Nineveh accounts for 17% of total Iraqi territory.

Its capital city- Erbil- has an area of 40.643 square kilometers with a population of near 4 million people. It is divided into three governorship: Dhuk, Erbil and Soleymanieh. Iraqi Kurdistan has borders with Turkish Kurd area by north and limits to Iranian Kurdistan by west, which is more central in terms of its position to Kurd areas of neighboring countries. It serves as a connecting ring between Turkish Kurdistan and Iranian Kurdistan. It has also border with Syrian Kurdistan by east.

Iraqi Kurdistan has always been subject to divisions due to it heterogeneous lingual, religious, historical land cultural background particularly in an Arab-dominated country. Its geographical position is situated at western Asia, Middle East, which hosts two third of the world critical oil reserves representing a highly strategic parts of the world. Kurds are the only race that are scattered in four separated areas in terms of political geography: in Arab world- Iraq and Syria, in NATO -Turkey, and in center of southern Asia – Iran, in the former Soviet Union and in Central Asia and Caucasian area- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia. This gives Kurds a highly complicated position in international level (MollaomarIsa,

2001:30-31). Iraqi Kurdistan connects Turkish Kurds and Iranian Kurds sharing border with Syrian Kurds.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Significance of this research at the present time requires that an analytical-descriptive method be employed in line with evaluation in large scale. Data were extracted through library study and using domestic and foreigner resources within political geography, geopolitics, international relations and political sciences. Domestic resources as well as professional views and comments were uses too.

IRAQI KURDISTAN GEOPOLITICS & ITS GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Geopolitics is described as a brilliant ability to counterbalance rivals power in regional and world levels in favor of brining security, preserving national interests and expanding it (Mojtahedzade, 2002:23). Conceptually, it is something that focuses on power arraignment and is obtained due to environmental advantages that a political unit may be blessed within regional and international levels. Sometimes, national and transnational policies may be influence by national multiplicity or geopolitical position. Accordingly political leaders' ability is to put their national and transnational policies on the basis of national interest as well as environmental opportunities and limitations (Kaviani,2008:86). Iraqi Kurdistan is environmentally a mountainous area measuring 74000 square kilometers housing near 6 million people and covering Dahuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk, Diyala and Nineveh which accounts for 20% of total Iraqi territory. A look into Kurdistan's map shows that it is highly geopolitical and geostrategic area. In addition, having oil reserves and water resources has added to its importance

(Hafeznia,2002:12). Kurdistan is a name given to high lands in Middle East which is house to Kurd people covering parts of west and northwest of Iran, east and southeast of Turkey, north and northeast of Iraq and Syria as well as western Caucasia. Their high land has made them famous for mountainous people. Turks, Persians and Arabs know Kurd people as mountainous people and that is why they have occasionally negative mentality towards them (Ciment,1996).

From other hand, Kurdistan is confined within five Middle East states: Iran, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Armenia and is in the crossroad of four civilizations and cultures and four plateau: Iran, Saudi Arabia, Anatolia, Caucasia and is on the way of an intercontinental path: Asia, Europe, Africa (Hafeznia, 2007:7).

Its sustainable geopolitical threat is its confined geographical position. Any transactions with real world lies in cooperation of neighboring Iran and Turkey countries. Much of needs of Iraqi Kurdistan region is met through border paths of the two countries. It has given the two countries a big advantage which they use when challenge in Kurds- US relations emerges in order to impose their positions on Kurds.

Although Kurds problem is long-lasting, collapse of bipolar system and defeat of Saddam Hussain from Coalition forces in 1991 helped Kurds to assert themselves as an active geopolitical phenomenon in the region and in the world ending up with establishment of an autonomy government in northern Iraq(Stansfield,2003).

Geopolitical considerations keep imposing limitations on decisions and policies of Kurdistan leaders. It has left great impacts on Kurdistan government's regional policies. These considerations include:

- Despite having access to profound water resources, Kurdistan is a land-locked area in practice

- It is confined geographically by two great regional powers: Iran and Turkey and is also located on civilization crossroad of Persian, Turk and Arab.
- Kurdistan oil-rich provinces-mainly Kirkuk, Mosul and much parts of Dialeh are close to Iranian and Turkish borders, which make is a security vulnerability and jeopardy.
- Iraqi Kurdistan religious and racial divisions and existence of two main racial branches: Souran and Badini and presence of Feily, Yazidi, Shebk branches as well as Shia and Sunni Turkmens together with Assur and Nastouri minorities has created deep geotechnical gaps in this region (Hiro, 1998: 170-171 , 252-253).

CLASH OF INTERESTS BETWEEN REGIONAL STATES AND KURDISH STATE

National Kurdish movement encompasses powerful factors in large scale one of which is sharing part of nation-state in such countries as Iran, Iraq and Turkey. Creation of an autonomy Kurdish identity puts Kurds as a threat to territorial integrity of these neighboring countries (Vanly,1980: 193-203). From Kurdistan neighboring states, it has been only Iraq that recognized Kurds in the twentieth century allowing them to have an autonomy government in 1974, although mostly in non-rich and non-oil regions (Kirkuk and Khaneghein). However, Iranians keep refusing teaching in Kurdish language and Turkey basically keeps denying Kurdish identity by describing Kurds as a branch of Turks who live in mountainous areas (Dogan, 2003). Kurdistan neighboring states keep stressing on Iraq's territorial unity opposing to creation of autonomous Kurdistan territory inside Iraq as a response to prevent Kurdistan autonomy inclinations and ideas inside their Kurdish-dominated areas. They further recommend each other to take unified positions in response to Kurdish developments

and dangers (Kemp & Harkavi, 2004;141). For curbing Kurdish separatist thoughts, Iraq neighboring states encourage each other to take unified positions in the face of Kurds developments and matters (BBC, 2006). Numerous meetings have already been held by Iran, Turkey and Syria with an agenda to curb Iraqi Kurdistan crisis (Mehripour, 2002:57). It is by no means acceptable for regional states to have a Kurdish government in Iraq although it is part of the central government or with limited autonomy. Such a government can affect considerably the geopolitical position of Turkey, Iran and Syria as well as provoking other Arab states concern.

- 1- Turkey, as the leader of the notion of Kurdish government- believes that formation of such government lays groundwork for separation of dense Kurdish areas and it is a red line for Turkish government.
- 2- Formation of such government can fuel Shia-Sunni divisions in the three countries.
- 3- Establishment of Kurdish government in north of Iraq and their domination over Iraqi oil reserves can undermine oil-rich states of the region and make Kurdish government as a powerful player which enjoys oil revenues support.
- 4- Kurdish government may have no serious opposition with Israel due to having little attachment or ties with Palestine nation. It is by no means acceptable to have a Kurdish government that has ties with Israel. In addition to undermining Iraq as a serious anti-Israel state, it can also affect interests of other regional states and creates a grounding for their opposition with establishment of a Kurdish government.
- 5- If such a Kurdish government in Iraq manages to obtain autonomy in Kurdish areas, it will give them the occasion to create a hail area between Turkey and other Turk states of Caucasia and Middle Asia which is a serious blow to Turkey's pan-Turkism policies.

IRAN'S APPROACH TOWARDS IRAQI KURDISTAN

Compared to other Kurdistan neighboring states, IRI has had little problem with Kurdistan for Kurdish people describe themselves as being part of Aryan race taking proud of having racial relations with Persians (Ahmadi, 2000:58). Although Iranians have unpleasant experience of the Kurdistan during World War II which made it concerned forever of world powers intervention through Kurdistan. Depth of this concern originated from differing and occasionally competing intentions of foreign powers (SariAL-ghalam, 1997:158).

Kurdish leading parties have always had and continue to have vague and non-transparent relation with Iran. Sometimes they had mistrust of Iran and got hostile with it and sometimes got close to it. For instance, Barzani's rebellion in 1974-1975 started relying on Iran. As soon as Shah of Iran reach an agreement with Saddam over his dispute with him on Shatt Al-Arab and stopped his supports for Kurdish rebellion they were disappointed and their relations severed. In 1980s, under Iran-Iraq war-Kurdish leading parties started another rebellion against Iraqi regime to put pressure on Iraqi regime in favor of easing its pressures on Kurds which eventually ended up in Saddam's putting down such rebellion. When they were quelled by Saddam leading to their mass displacements, executions and retaliation by chemical offensive, they had Iran to resort (CGI, see Human Right watch,2004). Due to having common interests, Iran welcomed them – as it had supported them financially in 1970_to put pressure on Saddam and force it to reach a deal with Iran over utilization of Shatt Al-Arab provoking them to launch joint military operations in Halacha area in March 1988 in order to keep Iraqi forces off southern fronts. Such a non-transparent arrangement between Kurds with Iran and Iraqi government (in which Kurdish leaders hold high-rank positions) has continued to this date. Kurdish leaders believe the golden occasion that has been created for

establishing a Kurdish government has not only brought about Baghdad fierce disapproval but has made Kurds concerned about Iran's actions to stop this procedure and prevent Kurds from fulfilling their dream in having their own Kurdish government (Zibakalam & Abdollahpor, 2009:52). Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Democratic Kurdistan Party have frequently stressed on friendly ties with Tehran, appreciating Iranians assistance to Kurdish people during Saddam's chemical offensive against them in Halabja tragedy in March 1988 and Saddam's suppression of Kurds in April 1991 (Crisis team talk, 2004). One of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan members once commented that " we can neither ignore Iran nor be a hostile to it. They helped us at times we were left helpless by everyone. We want to have no problems with it" (CGI, 2November 2004). But they show they have understood Iran's intention over helping Kurds which is to discourage them not to push for their independence from Iraq and not to provoke their fellow Kurds in Iran (CGI, October, 2004). In early 1990s, Iran was part of tactical coalition with Syria and Turkey in curbing US –inclined Kurds in northern Iraq in favor of affecting their ties with the US. In line with protecting its strategic interests in Northern Iraq, Iran keeps assuring Kurds that it can defend them and has free hand to employ any and all means for that. From one hand, it expands its economic cooperation with Kurds and from the other it continues its intelligence operations in Kurdish areas by backing Islamist groups such as Ansar Al-Islam(Spokesman of government of Kurdish Autonomous Region,28september 2007). Anyway, Iran has also been keeping pace with its neighboring countries in having unfriendly position against Iraqi Kurds which is evident in Iran's ambassador to Turkey statements in April 2006 who warned formation of Kurdish government (BBC, 28 Feb, 2006).

Border business activities started to flourish since the collapse of Ba'ath regime in Iraq with Iranians spreading investments in northern Iraq particularly in Sulaymaniyahand

Kurds keep entrusting the task of building their communication infrastructures to Iranian private companies. Iran's Kish Free Zone undersigned a treaty with Kurdistan which laid groundwork to expand cooperation with Kurdistan (New agency Iran, 30 April, 2007). Iraqi Kurds are also dependent on Iran in gas importation (Saber, 10May, 2002). Kurdish leaders welcome Iran's investment in their territory and do everything to encourage it although they have expressed concerns over Iranian's intelligence operations under cover of such economic activities which ends up in Iranian influence to spread over Kurdish lands. As argued by an analyst during the period when Kurdish Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Democratic Party of Kurdistan parties took control of Kurdish lands under no-fly zone arrangement, Iran became a constructive player in Kurds policies (Lidia Khalil, 2007). Despite US efforts to curb Iranian influence in Iraq and slow down Iran-Kurdistan ties under which it rubbed five Iranian nationals in January 2007, Kurdish official authorities expressed opposition over US action to arrest Iranian nationals denouncing it as illegitimate (James Glanz, 2007).

ALGERIA 1975 TREATY AND KURDS PROBLEM

Iraq started to plunge into political isolation after 1970. It turned to Soviet Union and Saddam Hussain made a visit to Moscow in 1972 expressing his intention to be improving military ties with that country in favor of enhancing Iraqi military. He signed a thirty-year treaty with Soviet Union in that trip, and proceeded to nationalize Iraqi oil industry in the same year excluding Soviet Union, China and France from its oil boycott. Iraqi central government started to focus on Kurds problem practically when Mulla Mostafa Barzani headed back to Soleymanieh, while he had got military general degree from Moscow, following Abdulkarim Ghasem coup in 1958. Due to his socialist inclinations, he received supports from Ghasem,

but when he posed the notion of Kurdistan autonomy within the sideline of Iraq, their relation severed. Iranian and Turkish governments backed him against Ghasem. It was not a strategy but a tactic for both sides Iran and Turkey from one hand and Barzani from the other, as Barzani had socialist inclinations and had ties with Soviet Union while Iran and Turkey were mainly western-inclined. Iran and Turkey were fiercely angry with Ghasem for his unusual statements over Iraqi's right to make Kuwait and Iranian Khuzestan province as part of its mainland and threatening Turkey to back Turkish Kurds and working to spread socialism in region and backing anti-Iranian groups. From other hand, supporting Barzani made Kurdish people content with Iran and Turkey. Following the fall of Abdulkarim Ghasem and Abdulsalam Aref and victories of Ba'ath party in the wake of 1968 coup, Hassan Al-Bakr reached a deal with Kurds in 1970 under which it was agreed Kurds be awarded autonomous government in 1974. A terrorist group was sent to Soleymanieh in 1971 for committing terrorist offensives but failed and the ties between Iraqi central government with Kurds resumed.

In the battle, Shah of Iran backed Kurds widely in line with Israeli and American militaries training Kurd militants (Maseli, 1986:228).

Israel's intention for supporting Kurds along the 1960s up to 1975 was a strategy to curb Iraq and prevent it from engaging war in the east.

New round of Kurds- Iraqi government battles inaugurated in 1974 which was fiercer than the past. In these battles, General Barzani as backed by Iran to a degree that even Iranian's bombs directly aimed his enemy in the battles. Iran's backing Kurds was due to Iraqi claims over Shatt Al-Arab (Rave, 2002:188).

Asadollah Alam writes in his diaries about Iranian military aids to Kurds, pointing out that Iran's soldiers were

occasionally intervening the wars in favor of Kurds (Alam, 1992:653).

Hossein Fardoust also mentions of Iran's delivery of a strong radio transmitter to Kurdish forces (Frodoust, 502). "President Nixon sent John Canali to Iran to express US confirmation of Iran's supports for Kurds" writes James Bill (Bill, 1993:281).

A US Congress report on SIA intelligence operations on 19 January 1976 says: "Barzani never trusted in Shah (king of Iran)". However what which made these two ally with one another was their trust to US President's promise. Shah had no need for attracting US supports for Barzani, and if he aided Barzani it was a strategy to attract his cooperation.

Following Iran-Iraq 1975 agreement, Mulla Mostafa Barzani paid a visit to General Nasiri, Head of SAVAK – Iranian imperial intelligence agency- in Niavaran palace (in Tehran) on 12.03.1975. During this meeting, Barzani allegedly spoke to Nasiri about Algeria agreement and that Iran was expected to stop its supports of Kurds under the agreement.

"We have reached a deal with Arab world and now you have three alternatives: either continue your battles without us, surrender to Iraqi government or take refuge from Iran and surrender your arms to Iran" he was replied.

"We were fully trusting to you and we never expected your betrayal" It was Barzani's response.

Anyway, it was Kurds which were big losers of 1975 deal between Iran and Saddam Husain.

IRAN'S SECURITY POLICIES TOWARDS KURDS IN POST-IRAQ INVASION ERA

In a general view, Kurdistan is geographically situated in a point where Alborz-Zagros chain mountains and Taurus and Caucasia and their nearby mountains meet, although Zagros

hills (in Iran) and Taurus (in eastern and southern Anatolia) in Turkey and Iraq populate majority of Kurd people.

Despite Kurds account for the fourth great racial population in the Middle East, they have always been regarded as the main source of regional unrest and chaos.

At the present time and after fall of Saddam Regime it seems that a "Kurdish spirit" is emerging in Middle East vision specifically inside Iraq. That is why its Kurds neighboring states, Turkey and Syria on the top, have always been mindful of Kurds in spite of having non-Kurd minorities as well. Concerns are growing that US and Israel misuse the racial and religious disapprovals to undermine Iran's territorial integrity. Kurd honest nationalists have positive view towards Iran, as DrekKonian says, and they believe Persians have little hostility with Kurds than Turks and Arabs which is a result of the common grounds that Kurds share with Persians. They are eager to call themselves as cousins of Persians (Ahmadi, 1386). Some authors argue that Safavid action to establish Shia Islam as Iran's official religion, under Shah Esmaeil, and replacement of Kurd local chiefs with Ghezelbash chiefs as well as spread of Shia ideology across Iran can be named as a start of Kurds divergence from Iran (Bruinessen, 137-143).

Until the above-said developments, Kurds tended to share themselves with Persians' tragedies and disasters. They made constructive contribution to preservation of Iranian history and culture. But emergence of Safavid dynasty made these ties loose and pushed Kurds away from Iran (Hassan Arfa, 2005).

At the present time, a reasonable security approach is required in order to make Kurds aware of the fact that Iran is their strongest strategic supporter. It can also keep Iranian Kurds inside Iran calm and content. If neglected, Iraqi Kurdistan-despite its lingual, racial and cultural common points with Iran, turn to other parts of the world which is a serious and irreparable blow to the Iranian side of the story.

Iraqi Kurds are living on meeting point of three civilizations and cultures of Persia, Arab and Turk. In the wake of US invasion of Iraq, the pressures on Kurds which mainly came from living in such a meeting point and US dishonest paved the way for convergence between Kurds and Israel (Kaviani, 2008).

So Iran's security policies in Iraqi Kurdistan must aim to get Kurds to understand that it is by no means it is in their interest to get separated, although it does not seem they agree with this notion because Jalal Talebani- Iraqi President and Secretary General of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, says "separation of Kurdistan from Iraq is an attractive notion which is not well understood by Kurds as it is not to their advantage". In an interview with Shargh Al-Owsat, he went on saying that we desire be part of federal and democrat Iraq. "if we separate from Iraq and sever our relations with our neighbors it would be hard to survive and export oil", He added, "Kurds remain loyal to Iraq not only for being afraid of neighboring states but because it is not in their interest. The only thing that Kurds seek is to get participated in deciding their destination" he told (Shargh, 2004).

The second problem that is important in Iran's approach toward Kurds is to make Kurds aware that their improvement lies in their allegiance with Shia majority. It is a triple win for Kurds, Iraqi and Iranian Shia –dominated countries.

Border business activities started to flourish since the collapse of Ba'ath regime in Iraq with Iranians spreading investments in northern Iraq particularly in Soleymanieh and Kurds keep entrusting the task of building their communication infrastructures to Iranian private companies. Kurdish leaders welcome Iran's investment in their territory and do everything to encourage it although they have expressed concerns over Iranian's intelligence operations under cover of such economic activities which ends up in Iranian influence to spread over Kurdish lands. A Kurd official once noted that we welcome private companies in our territory but must also be cautious.

We can take advantage of expertise of such companies. Some of them are in associate with Iranian intelligence services and work in Kurdistan for intelligence operations (Mollaomar Isa, 2001:72).

Ramazan workshop is a company affiliated to Iran's Revolutionary Guard. It is based in Soleymanieh. Local Kurds say everybody knows this company works for Iranian intelligence services (Kendal & nazdar, 1372: 66). Iraqi and Western diplomats believe that Iran has devoted a specific part in its Revolutionary Guard for influence in Iraq. Ramadhan Company is such a unit. Quds branch of Islamic Revolutionary Guard of Iran works to spread Iran's influence across Iraqi Kurdistan. It is considered the most dangerous Iran's arm in Iraq (She Jadi, 1996:11).

A political sciences professor comments that Quds forces have get highly skillful thanks to their eight-year long experience in war against Iraq. 'Following 1991 events, Iran found a free hand in Iraq and today Quds understands Iraq's vision best than anybody else' (Ezatti, 2002:121).

'Ramadhan company' is also alleged to be backing loyal to Ansar Al-Islam- which is an Islamic group which is composed in half by Kurds and Arab Afghan nationals by other half. This group is purported to have conducted bombing operations in Kurdistan. It was collapsed during a joint Kurd-US operation in 2003 (Hafeznia& other, 2010:21).

A security official said in Soleymanieh that Iran's Revolutionary Guard has always been aiding Islamist groups(Rave, 2002:33). When attacking on Ansar Al-Islam, they led them to enter into Iran and those who had been arrested were eventually freed by Iranian authorities. They received healthcare and recovery services from Iranian authorities and were allowed to head to Afghanistan and penetrated into Iraq from there (Ahmadi, 2000). Another Kurd security official purported that Iran shields Ansar Al-Islam militants. They have military bases in Disley Mountains. Everybody knows that

some of the militants formerly lived in Marivan and Sanandaj cities (in Iran) (Wilson, 1918).

Another security official in Erbil underlined that "we had regular talks with Iranian Revolutionary Guards who appeared under cover of Ramadhan Company. We reminded them of our concerns but they reject any relations with Ansar militants. They just tell that it is hardly possible for them to control that portion of borders where Ansar has position. We answered to them what about cities? Aren't your able to control cities too?" (Izadi, 1922; 135).

Although Iranian officials keep away from Ansar publicly (Kochra, 1993:11), Kurds claims over Iran's supports for Ansar can not be so much reliable. If Iranian intelligence services back such groups as Ansar Al-Islam, it is not for their ideological common points or having unity of purpose (Smith, 1989). But as an instrument of pressure against the Iraqi government and Kurdish parties that Iranian opposition groups have been given shelter, uses, Komala, as well as groups such as the Mujahedin-e Khalq, the Kurdistan Democratic Party to maintain balance with the United States does (Alkhrstan, 2002: 76). A Kurd official underlined that Iran cooperates with Ansar groups which are not ideologically in line with Iran as a pressing force against Iraq. They are part of Iran's game (Oslan, 2003). Iran's intelligence operation in Iraqi Kurdistan is as spread as its activities in southern Iraq, but Kurds showed to be less sensitive to such appearance of Iran. A Kurd official described such operations as not so much important stressing that Iran has no official role in northern Iraq (Kurd areas). He went on saying that 'some Iranian operatives intend to create chaos for which nobody has already be arrested, So this claim cannot officially be posed against Iran (Maqsodi, 2003:129). He also expressed the intention of Iranians distrust the Iraqi regime doubts the charges at the same time, people such as Shahvani, the head of Iraqi intelligence and Falej Alnqyb, Iraq's interim interior minister were already in exile and their

views are different from those who never left Iraq (Kurds) did not have direct experience of Iranian intelligence operations and how they are doing. But he distrusted Iran's intentions. 'Many of the Ba'ath regime's remainders and officials are now working for foreign intelligence services' he added with a distrust look (Stansfield, 2003).

TURKISH APPROACH TOWARDS IRAQI KURDISTAN

Geopolitical considerations, oil reserves in Kurdistan, shared borders, Turkmen minority in northern Iraq and water resources, serve as important elements in the type of relationship between Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan. Following 1991 and de facto domination of Iraqi Kurds over Iraqi Kurdistan challenged Turkey so much (Olson, 1996: 3). During the recent years Turkey has adopted Turkization of its common borders with northern Iraq through backing Turkmen. This is an effort to make influence on Iraq and control its developments (Maqsodi, 2003:94). Turkey is highly concerned about future of Iraq and its decomposition and formation of an independent Kurdish government near its southern borders the majority of its inhabitants, who share ethnic, racial and historical Iraqi Kurdistan is inhabited (Olson, 2004: 115 - 120). Turkey is currently considered the most strategic enemy of Kurds which not only opposes federalization of Iraqi Kurdistan but every improvement of Kurdish areas because it deems Kurds as a threat to its national interest and territorial integrity (Visi, 2003:61). On the one hand independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq would jeopardize the territorial unity knows. (Stansfield, 2005:20). Prevention of formation of such a government in its neighborhood and preservation of Iraq Turkmen is another sensitivity of Turks in their southern borders (Gunter & Yavuz, 2005:122). Ibrahim Khalil customs in north of Iraq Kurdistan is crucial for region's economy which serves as a route for Turkish transit of its productions and food

substances into region. Any Turkish-Kurdish tension will end in blockage of this route (Hafeznia, 2006). Having considered these points, it must be mentioned that Turkey looks at Iraqi government as a means to curb Kurds in northern Iraq. It employs every political, economic and military instruments to that end. Turkey also desires Iraqi government to curb Kurds direct domination on Kirkuk and Mosul. It's vision toward Iraq is mixed: from one hand it aims Iraqi government be weak with no serious control over its northern part to let Turkey push its policies over Kurds and Turkish military offensives against them, from other it desires the government to be strong enough to control across Kurdish areas in north. It wants the Iraqi government be such that cannot pose blockades against Turkish strategies in Kurdish areas.

KURDS AND IRANIAN –TURKISH SECURITY

Both Iran and Turkey have common threats in their borders from terrorist groups. P.K.K. party was founded in 1970 but following the arrest of its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and in the wake of 11th September attacks the group changed its name to K.D.K to avoid being put in black list. PJAK is military arm of Turkish Labor Kurds Party which is based at Kirkuk – in GhendilMountains in Erbil Kurd-dominated province and Sulaymaniyah. Its leader is Abdolrahman Haji Ahmadi. It currently has 3000 members half of them are women (www.Kurdish-info.net, Fardipoor & Qureshi, 2007: 44). SimorHeresh, American journalist, wrote an article for New Yorker in 20 November 2006 claiming that US and Israel forces back PJAK for acting against Iran (Hersh, 2006).

In an interview with Slate Magazine, Ihsan Warya, PJAK spokesman, told on 12 June 2006 that that PJAK preparedness as one of the America-led forces was emphasized. Finally, in August 2007 in a visit to the US, Abdulrahman Haj

Ahmadi, PJAK leader, called for US political and security aids to his group (www.washingtontimes.com).

Based on an evaluation that enhancement of PJAK may lead to revival of P.K.K, Turkey warned US of any support for this group calling for PJAK to be put in black list as Iranians do frequently ([Http://pe.rain.rul](http://pe.rain.rul), 2007). Given the fact that both Iran and Turkey consider PJAK group as threat to their national interests, this has posed a challenge in Turkey-US relations paving the way for a Turkey- Iran convergence (Fardipoor& Qureshi, 2007:6).

In latest developments, both countries launched attacks on P.K.K strongholds inside Iran, Iraq and Turkey since early July 2011 as an action to undermine them (Aljezira TV, 2011/08/19).

SYRIAN APPROACH TOWARD IRAQI KURDISTAN

Many political analysts believe that Syria is the big loser of Iraq war and fall of Saddam Husain and domination of US over Iraq-Syria borders as well as new development in Iraq which rendered a federal government to Kurds. It poses great threat to Syrian national interest (Mazaheri, 2004:13). Syrian Kurds are a two-million population which live dominantly in Ghameshly and Haskeh cities which share borders with Iraqi Kurdistan. This population has always been in odds with Syrian government. That is why Syria withholds giving them Syrian nationality and does everything to curb and control them. Syria officially launched a program designed to fade Kurdish identity across Syria since early 1970s (MC Dowall, 1998:25). It fiercely opposes an autonomy Kurdish government in northern Iraq. It made, on 2003 year, Bashar Al-Assad rush to Ankara for making plans against this development. Federalism in Iraq had a sweeping reflect in Syria provoking Syrian Kurds to demand Syrian government for an autonomy government of their own (Hamshari, 15march 2003). Following

protest demonstrations in Ghameshly in March 2003 which inaugurated from northern Syria plunging into Damascus, fifteen protestors were killed and many other wounded and 2500 of them were prisoned (Gali & Yildiez, 2005: 51-2). Syrian government believes these protests are the result of developments in Iraq. Syria does everything to sweep Kurdish identity away, Arabize the region withdrawing to grant Kurds Syrian nationality (Galie & Yildiz, 2005: 7).

CONCLUSION

Kurdistan is located in an area locked by five Middle East states of Iran, Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Armenia and in the crossroad of cultural and civilizations and four plateaus of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Anatolia and Caucasia as well as intercontinental rout between Asia, Europe and Africa. Iraqi Kurdistan is a connecting ring of Iranian Kurdistan and Turkish Kurdistan and Syrian Kurdistan. Heterogeneity of religion, language, history and culture of Kurds with Arabs has been the main cause of divergence between Kurds and Arabs. They tend to feel kinship with Iranians and that is why Iran has had little problem with Kurds among other rivals. Turkey as the most critical strategic rival to Kurds opposes any form of improvement and enhancement in Kurds positions as it deems them a security threat to itself. To cure it, Turkey is preserving Turkmens against Kurds trying to sweep Kurdish identity in its common borders with Iran. Kurds are strong in both countries with wide range of terrorist activities in them which has caused great concerns for both governments. Turkey being neighbor with Iraqi Kurdistan has always felt concern over Kurds presence close to its borders and has always pursued the policy of severing ties between Turkish and Iraqi Kurds. A similar strategy is being in place in Syria where Kurdish identity is being wiped out and no Syrian nationality is granted to them. Syria shares the same look with Turkey about Kurds. Despite

divisions among Iran, Turkey and Syria on Kurdistan problem, they share something in common: no Kurdish government must be established at the first place and then curbing Kurds in their territories, if not a Kurdish government in northern Iraq, even if being part of Iraqi central government with autonomy can undermine highly the geopolitical position of Turkey, Iran and Syria.

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