

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Political

QUESTION OF: The Question of the establishment of a Kurdish state

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Introduction & Background

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JA9U7DVy1O7czDmA2arm_t0O0zuLnRRvyQ74iYiXZQ8/edit?usp=sharing

The Kurdish people have been administered and governed as part of a larger entity for centuries. Notable examples of this include: the ancient Persians, the Macedonians (under Alexander the Great), the Arabs, the Turks, the Persians again, and the Ottomans. Following the First World War and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the victors, the Allied and Associated Powers (namely the United Kingdom and the French Republic) divided Kurdish populated lands into their colonies which would eventually become the independent nations of Syria and Iraq. In addition, Iran and the newly created Turkey have significant Kurdish minorities.

Opposition to a Kurdish state

In the present day, the most significant pushes for a Kurdish state exist inside Syria and Iraq. These nations oppose the creation of a Kurdish state as it would mean giving up land that is considered to be sovereign Syrian and Iraqi land by the respective governments, which can also

contain valuable resources.. The Iraqi government in particular fears that Kurdish independence will lead to the dissolution of Iraq as a whole. Additionally, the nations of Iran and Turkey are in opposition to Kurdish independence in Syria and Iraq due to concerns over it inspiring their own Kurdish population to seek independence; in a potentially violent manner. Also, not all people of Kurdish descent live in heavily Kurdish areas, with many migrating to cities. Even in regions the Kurds consider to be Kurdistan, ethnic Kurds are not the sole residing group. Those regions are often also inhabited by Arabs and other ethnic and religious minorities (who may also lack statehood).

Arguments for a Kurdish state

One of the most prominent arguments for a Kurdish state is that the Kurdish people have never had their own state and that they should be able, via the principle of self-determination, be able and allowed to create one. In the past decade, Kurds have been on the forefront of the international fight against the Islamic State, which, according to some, increases the legitimacy of calls for a Kurdish state. Additionally, proponents of an independent Kurdistan do not believe that one would destabilize the Middle East further than it already is. Many proponents of a Kurdish state (within Iraq and/or Syria) also do not believe that it would pose a threat to Turkey or Iran, but instead would be a potentially valuable trading partner. Another argument for a Kurdish state is that, particular in Iraq, governmental control has broken down and the Kurds have been running their own affairs and defending themselves (from groups such as the Islamic State).

Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

In the later half of the twentieth century, many political groups decided to attempt to seek a Kurdish state through violent means. Some examples of this include the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in Turkey, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Syria, and the Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK) in Iran. Others formed political parties which were deemed legitimate and legal by the governments of the respective nations (i.e. the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] in Iraq). Following the Gulf War of 1991, the U.S. and U.K. no-fly-zones allowed for de facto autonomy in Iraq. This was made de jure by the new Iraqi constitution following the U.S. led overthrow of Saddam Hussein. In September of 2017, Kurds in Iraq held an independence referendum in which the overwhelming majority voted for independence. This was not recognized by Iraq or the international community.

Possible Solutions

At present there is no United Nations resolution dealing with the establishment of a Kurdish state. However, this is not an issue that will go away. Many members of the Kurdish people have been pushing for a Kurdish state for a long time. And many non-Kurds have been pushing against it for an equally long time. It is issues dealing with principles, such as national sovereignty and self-determination, that the United Nations and the international community hold in the highest esteem. It will be up to the delegates to come to a solution to this most serious of topics. The delegates must balance their commitment to the previously mentioned principals as representatives to the United Nations and the beliefs, values, and policies of the represented nation. However, the what positions are to be taken are firmly at the discretion of individual

delegates. It is highly encouraged that delegates adopt moderate positions and work together to attempt to create lasting solutions. Ultimately, these decisions fall solely to the delegates.

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