

K.N.C. Ninth Annual Conference Overview

This year's Ninth Annual Conference, of the Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC) was held in beautiful Pleasanton, a small town by the eastern hillside of the Oakland hills, about 25 miles east of San Francisco. It spanned a day-and-a-half of intense activities and camaraderie and was held at the Holiday Inn, Pleasanton, on Friday and Saturday, July 12-13, 1996.

Friday afternoon was specifically devoted to internal KNC affairs. Dr. Fouad Darweesh, California Coordinator and the afternoon moderator, started the conference with the traditional "Ay Raqeeb," (which has become the national anthem for the Kurds of Diaspora), followed by a moment of silence in honor the martyrs of Kurdistan, before giving his remarks and launching on to the rest of the busy agenda. Following Dr. Darweesh, Dr. Jamal Fuad gave the Treasurer's report with up-to-date figures on the financial status of KNC, to the members.

The rest of the afternoon was spent on the presentation and discussion of the proposed draft of the amended Bylaws and other KNC internal affairs. It is well to remember here, that the Board of Directors had formed a committee composed of Drs. Hikmat Fikrat, Jamal Fuad and Saman Shali to draft a new amended Bylaws after soliciting input from various members of the Board and the general membership. The draft was prepared and approved by the Board before sending it to the general membership for comments. It was this approved draft that was presented to the Annual Conference for approval by the general assembly.

The Bylaws discussion panel was chaired by the President Dr. Najmaldin Karim and included Dr. Ahmed Uthman in addition to the amendment committee. Discussion and consideration of other proposals, from the floor, continued until a final amended

Bylaws was approved and adopted by the general assembly. Other KNC issues, particularly those related to the establishment of a center in Washington, were then discussed until the meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM for a free evening with no scheduled activities.

Saturday was the day when most of the presentations and panel discussions took place. In addition to addresses by the President (Dr. Karim), the Executive V.P. (Dr. Uthman), and the Secretary (Dr. Fikrat), the assembly listened to a welcome address by Mrs. Sharrel Michelotti (the Vice Mayor of Pleasanton), and to presentations by: Dr. Barham Salih, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Representative; Kak Fadhil Mirani, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Representative; Kak Kani Xulam, American Kurdish Information Network (AKIN) Representative; Dr. Awat Aliyar, KDP-Iran Representative; and a representative from Western Kurdistan.

Panel discussions occupied the afternoon time. Dr. Karim chaired a panel on "Affairs of Greater Kurdistan an Update in Light of Recent Developments." Participants in this panel were: Dr. Barham (PUK), Kak Fadhil (KDP), Kak Azboy (Northern Kurdistan), and Dr. Awat (Eastern Kurdistan). The two representatives from Southern Kurdistan discussed outstanding issues of contest between the two parties in a frank and friendly manner and later on, responded amicably to questions from the audience.

Following those presentations, Dr. Fikrat chaired a panel on "Affairs of Greater Kurdistan in Light of New Alliances in the Middle East." Participants in this panel were: Dr. Khailany, Kak Bakhtiar, Dr. Shali, and Kak Badrakhlan. A question and answer session followed the presentations. The last panel of the day was chaired by Dr. Darweesh and discussed the "Developmental Affairs of Kurdistan - Emphasis on Urgent Needs Funded, Possibly, by Iraqi Oil Sales Funneled

Through the U.N." The participants were: Dr. Jamal Fuad, Dr. Mohamad Ahmed, Kak Mohammad Sinjari, Kak Hawar Ziad and Mr. Tom Ver Plough.

Saturday evening was banquet night. It started with a social no-host hour before serving dinner and watching a slide show presentation of Kurdistan, its countryside, some cultural folklore, and its people by Mary Ann Smothers Bruni, author of "Journey Through Kurdistan."

Music, songs, Kurdish folklore dancing and other festivities started after dinner and went well past midnight. Kak Najimuldin Ghulami and Kak Kawa traveled from Sweden specifically for the occasion and everyone loved his melodic voice and the beautiful Kurdish songs and tunes they were playing. Members, their families, and their guests all enjoyed an evening of hearty dancing, camaraderie and festivities. The banquet was ended with "Ay Raqeeb" and that marked the adjournment of the Ninth Annual Conference.

KNC, Secretary Report Dr. Hikmat Fikrat

Honored Guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

Welcome to our Ninth Annual Conference. Welcome to beautiful Pleasanton.

Please allow me to extend a hearty welcome to all, with a special welcome to our non-Kurdish friends who have supported us selflessly throughout the years. Welcome again to all of you.

Since our last meeting in Orange County, the Kurdish cause has, unfortunately, had more setbacks than successes. This is very saddening and heart wrenching, but it is a fact of life that we have to recognize and do our best to rectify through concerted and coordinated efforts on the part of all

Kurds, both in homeland and in Diaspora.

Conditions in Northern Kurdistan - Kurdistan of Turkey - is deteriorating by the day and as we speak. Even semi-legal Kurdish parties and representations are harassed and imprisoned, that is not to mention the continuing mass murders and imprisonment of parliamentarians and ordinary people, plus a host of other human right abuses that are daily occurrences.

Indeed, the regime has become so bold and despotic in its aggressiveness that only a few days ago its air force bombarded regions in the Sulaimania province, deep inside Iraqi Kurdistan and far far away from its borders as punishment for presumed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) partisans camps there. These aggressive acts and the ongoing human rights abuses are blatant violation of all international norms and human rights conventions.

Unfortunately, our own administration often turns a deaf ear and even issues apologetic statements, if any, when it comes to matters concerning its so called trusted allies. Yet, despite all these abuses our brethren from the north and the Kurdish Parliament in Exile continue to struggle for a just peace and a meaningful recognition of their national and human rights.

Conditions in Eastern Kurdistan - Kurdistan of Iran - are not getting any better either. In addition to its human right abuses, the regime still refuses to grant our people any sort of national recognition or even allow them to study in their own language.

However, perhaps it is in Southern Kurdistan - Kurdistan of Iraq - where the Kurds are facing their worst nightmare, since it is the area where the Kurds had a de facto government (which, unfortunately, is now all but defunct) and, therefore, the ongoing stalemate, ineffectiveness, and tragedies are totally self-inflicted.

It has been over two years now since some unfortunate turn of events changed aspiring Southern Kurdistan into a war theater and planted fratricide among the people in place of hopeful cooperation in an effort to grab this historic opportunity that was presented to our people by a freak of history.

During this time, this nascent experiment with democratic self rule in Kurdistan has turned into a skeleton of administrative offices and civil service functionaries trying to maintain a semblance of sanity and a facade of law and order amidst the chaos of civil war. What is most disturbing about all this is that most Kurds in southern and other regions of Kurdistan are beginning to lose faith when they see that their first real opportunity for an emancipated Kurdish state and a democratic self rule that respects human rights is being shattered by stupidity.

During these past two years also, Many attempts have been made to bring about peace. Mediation efforts abound, it seems that most countries of the world have tried their hand in solving this reticent problem, but to no avail. The French tried first and hammered out a wonderful accord that both parties agreed to, but unfortunately regional powers did not allow it to be implemented. Also, to protect their own interests, all the neighboring regional powers have tried repeatedly to bring an end to this infighting without success.

The U.S. has tried directly and indirectly (even with open threats to discontinue "operation provide comfort") again without success — Fortunately, the U.S. has not given up yet and still has an ongoing effort. Comically enough, and to the disgust of all, even Saddam Hussien got into the act and offered his good offices.

Kurdish groups and political parties, both inside Kurdistan and in Diaspora have done their share in these mediation efforts, but they have not

been any more successful. In the spring of 1995, and at KNC's initiative, a conflict resolution conference was held in Washington, D.C. Resolutions and appeals were sent to both side as well as follow-up letters but also to no avail. To be sure, each time such a mediation effort takes place, a peace accord or a memorandum of understanding is signed and many promises are made, but only to be broken sooner than later. It seems that the lack of trust has grown so intense and the rhetoric has become so overwhelming that none of these accords are able to hold water.

The saddest part of this unfortunate situation is that the main culprit behind this senseless tragedy is that presumably intelligent and experienced politicians and political parties are falling prey to the manipulation of regional powers and doing the dirty work for them. The Kurdish leadership, in pursuit of its own narrow partisan and self-righteous interests, is committing political suicide and, in the process, is dragging along with it the Kurds of Southern Kurdistan (and perhaps of all Kurdistan) through a painful process of slow death.

This bitter pill might been swallowed easier if it was the direct work of some demon like Saddam; but it is not. Unhappily, we are now faced with demonizing our own people. This is not to say, of course, that the likes of Saddam are not now watching with glee and satisfaction, and indeed, even fueling the fire every now and then, but it is to say that it ultimately is our own making.

But let us not just complain about our leadership, it is not only the Kurds in Southern Kurdistan that are to blame for the continuation of this tragedy. It is all the political leadership in greater Kurdistan; it is all the rank and file of the various Kurdish movements everywhere; it is all the intellectual Kurds abroad as well. Among these, the greatest blame rests most on the Kurds in Diaspora, who having the

freedom to voice their opinions, are not proactive enough (perhaps out of despair) to work for an end to this slow painful suicide and thus are thereby allowing it to proceed to its conclusion.

It is a blame and a responsibility that we all share and bear for not speaking out boldly at this critical time and for not acting in unison to stop this suicidal civil war and its disastrous reflections on the Kurdish cause.

Yet and despite all these sad events, one cannot despair and our work must go on for the good of the Kurdish cause.

To its credit, the Kurdish National Congress in addition to its mediation work on the home front, has done a credible job in the past year through the media, with the Congress and among the people of this country in lobbying for and advancing the Kurdish cause.

The Kurdish National Congress being the non-partisan organization that it is, and being a Pan-Kurdish organization with membership from all the regions of Kurdistan, is perhaps the most suitable medium to air the grievances of the Kurdish people. It can serve as a forum where issues of immediate concern to the Kurds can be discussed. It can also be an effective vehicle for communicating such grievances and issues to the Congress and the U.S. Government and to other international organizations.

KNC has played, and will continue to play, an active role in introducing the Kurdish cause to Americans and in helping secure recognition for it. It needs your support to continue its valuable contributions to our cause.

Let us all wish it success in its future work, and thank you.

**Speech by Dr. Barham Salih
Representative of PUK
(Southern Kurdistan)**

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I bring to you greetings from Mam Jalal and the PUK leadership and their wishes for a successful KNC conference.

It is a pleasure for me to come to a KNC event and have the opportunity to meet brothers and friends and also to talk about the issues that concern all of us. On the way here, I was thinking to myself, whether this is yet another Kurdish conference I'm attending to talk about ourselves among ourselves without any consequences. That won't be the case because these activities have become the hallmark of main Kurdish activities in Diaspora. This time we look at the situation closely, and see clearly we can affect events even in a more effective way. Sure, we need to examine ourselves, we need to talk about our problems, we need to discuss among ourselves and search for a solution for the many problems facing our people.

However, we also need, particularly the Kurdish activists in Diaspora need to talk about the task of trying to acquire international support for our people. With those objectives I talked with Kak Fadhil to find a solution among ourselves and also on the work that is needed to raise public consensus about the Kurdish issues and to promote our cause. And, I think the KNC in that regard, can play a very crucial role. The KNC is a very important force among our people. The KNC organizes the Kurdish community in the United States. We live in an interdependent world. A world dominated by the United States and the impact of its policies on our people, on our future, on the regional order in the Middle East, cannot be over-estimated and therefore, the role of the KNC.

The KNC can play in that regard, in

terms of affecting the U.S. foreign policy can be very crucial and valuable. We need to look at the many other communities who live in this country, like the Greeks, Armenians, the Jewish community and even some of the Arab communities. Sure, I cannot compare the Kurdish community and the Kurdish constituency to the ones I mentioned, because of our numbers and therefore, politically we are much less powerful. However, I argue that the legitimacy of the Kurdish nationalistic course cannot be challenged and there is a great sympathy with the Kurdish cause in the United States of America. And, I also argue that the political consequences of the Kurdish issue and political ramifications of regional stability are part of the U.S. interests and are no longer in dispute.

Transcribed

**Speech by Kani Xulam,
Representative of the American
Kurdish Information Network**

"The Challenge at Hand"

Dear Friends and Fellow Kurds,

Rojbas Xusku Birayen Delal,

As is customary, I would like to start my remarks by thanking Dr. Najmaldin Karim, President of the Kurdish National Congress of North America for inviting us, the American Kurdish Information Network, to address you on the state of Kurdish affairs in Northern Kurdistan. Let me also express my personal appreciation to the members of the organizing committee whose work is enabling us to get together here in Pleasanton, California. Thank you Dr. Fikrat. And thank you to all of you who helped him make this conference a reality.

I bring to this gathering of Diaspora Kurds the greetings of the Speaker of the Kurdish Parliament in Exile, Kak Yasar Kaya. As many of you know, he honored this audience last year in

Southern California. He wishes the Kurdish National Congress success in its deliberations. It is his sentiment and ours too that any move by any Kurdish organization which advances the cause of liberty for Kurdistan should be supported by all Kurds irrespective of their political orientations.

We are gathered here to acquaint each other with the developments that are taking place all over Kurdistan. In the north, the Turkish army continues to depopulate the Kurdish country-side with its time-honored scorched-earth policies. Of the 12 thousand Kurdish villages that dot the mountains of northwest Kurdistan, 3,134 of them have been leveled to the ground. Their close to 3 million inhabitants have been forced to flee their homes to look for shelter in more tolerant lands. A way of life known as Kurdish is targeted by an army that is consumed by hatred. Those who carry your blood and mine are hammered, day in and day out like nails by bullets, bombs and insults.

As Kurds, we can not remain spectators to this assault. Nor can we approve of the arms sales to Turkey by countries such as the United States, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Ours is the lot to undo the wrongs of yesterday by a native force of our own that completely undoes the status quo. On that principle alone, we reach out to the world not as supplicants but as Kurds wishing to be friends to all who respect and accept our fight to self-determination. The battle cry may be an old one, but it is alive and echoes daily in the mountains of Kurdistan, it is: Ya Kurdistan Ya Naman.

To that end, the war of liberation that began in Turkish Kurdistan some 12 years has grown by leaps and bounds. The unrelenting Turkish policy of culturally suffocating all the Kurds has much to do with the success of this native liberation movement. Equally important has been the fearlessness and selflessness of Kurdish fighters who are imbued with a sense of united Kurdish

nationalism. This Kurd knows of Kurds who fought in Korea for the United Nations in 1950's and Kurds who fought in Cyprus for Ankara in 1970's. Today, although there may be some jash left, in the heart of all Kurds lies the determination to free their country. Some 5 thousand women, 35 thousand men have taken up arms to restore us to our humanity as free Kurds. They are making history as their acts of bravery are echoing throughout the Middle East. Controlling rural northwest Kurdistan, they are now moving to the cities, striking the enemy with great force of will to bring equality on the battlefield.

On July 1, 1996, a Kurdish woman in her mid-twenties, with a degree from a Turkish university, known to her friends as Zilan, strapped her body with explosives and walked toward a parading Turkish army unit with a telling message, when she neared the commandos and ignited the explosives, 15 soldiers and two of their officers were killed immediately. Naturally, the parade was called off. Those who had an inkling of things to come noted that the level of Kurdish hatred of Turkish oppression had now reached levels that would consume Ankara if they persist in that occupation.

As is the custom of true believers who commit acts such as these, Zilan had left a note behind. It began with the words: "To the Patriots of Kurdistan, In the lives of nations, there are historical milestones. These milestones, sometimes, effect not just the nation at hand, but also the course of human history. The French Revolution is often cited in this regard. The religion of Mohammed, Islam, is another example. Sometimes too, individuals make a difference that transcends times and its results effects the lives of generations. Alexander the Great for example, was such an individual.

Kurdistan too is witnessing changes that can only be classified as historical. An unwanted people, subjected to all

kinds of abuse, is now coming together despite the investments and bribery of unholy adversaries, to keep it apart. Those who believe in Kurdistan and are willing to fight for it are now forming an army for it. The Kurdish Front, the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, is bringing together Kurds for the challenge of breaking the shackles of captivity. The Kurdish Parliament in Exile is now going around with the Kurdish message of peace and friendship.

There is a lot of pain and suffering too. Our adversaries armed to teeth want to trample on us 'till eternity.

But make no mistake about it. This is also the first time that we have been able to challenge the adversary in a most serious manner. The Kurds can smile now. They don't need to walk with their head down. Others respect us when they see that we are fighting for ourselves. I am happy to share a generation with the likes of Mazlum who burned himself to death in Diyarbakir Military Prison to protest the brutality of the Turks toward the Kurdish inmates, Berivan who was killed in the line of duty in Cizta Botan and Beritan who jumped to her death from the rocks in Xankurke rather than surrender to the Turkish soldiers who had cornered her from all sides.

I am walking to my death to give voice to my peoples' enduring desire for freedom and liberty. I urge you not to remain indifferent to the enslavement of the Kurdish nation."

Heval Zilan no longer lives among us. Apparently her flesh became instant ash and her blood vaporized. I have no doubts that her soul now is in the company of Kurdish martyrs names that are endearing to all of us: Ahmedi Xani, Qazi Mohamed, Cigerxun, Malla Mustafa Barzani & Sheik Mahmoud. She wanted to make our common dream a reality. We can only bow to her memory.

Of course, this audience would have

preferred to have Zilan live a life of dignity. We would have liked her tools of immortality to not be machine guns and hand grenades but laptop computers and home pages of the Internet with the Kurdish message of hope for a better future for the entire world. It would have been beautiful to see her here among us to relate to us her love for freedom, her passion for Kurdistan and perhaps that would have given us inspiration to set aside our differences for the greater good that is composed of Soran, Behdinan, Botan, Tolhildan, Serhad, Howraman, Goran & Dersim.

Zilan's supreme act aside, Kurdistan is on fire. The fighting that began with the gunshots, later saw the introduction of helicopters and fighter planes. Today, there is fighting on other fronts, the latest over the airwaves of England, Portugal and Poland. I am referring to the saga of MED-TV, the first Kurdish satellite television station that spanned 34 countries in Europe, Middle East and north Africa. This Kurdish experiment in broadcasting became enormously popular among a people who were never given a mirror of their own to marvel at themselves. But the laws of nations have now been suspended. Poland, because of pressure from Turkey, has chosen not to honor its contract with MED-TV.

In Turkey, the charade that Turkey is the only democracy in the Middle East goes on. On June 23, 1996, the Kurdish party HADEP which stands for People's Labor Party, had its convention in Ankara. As is custom, a Turkish flag was hung in the hall. According to eyewitnesses, a masked youth lowered the Turkish flag and in the process was filmed by Turkish television crews. For days after, Turkish television stations nationally played and replayed the scene, galvanizing Turkish national sentiment to do away with the Kurds once and for all. flags were distributed. Balloons were raised. War mongers expressed joy over the hysteria. Despite the second Kurdish cease-fire still in effect, an all-out effort is now declared

to keep the Kurds in shackles.

In the midst of these developments, the adversary that we knew assumed a new mantel, this time that of an Islamist Prime Minister. The new government led by the leader of Welfare Party, Necmeddin Erbakan, met with United States representatives over the 4th of July holiday at the American Embassy in Ankara. The former mechanical engineer not only asked his American guest for more deadlier American weapons but also a few days later invoked God's help to do away with the Kurds. The new Satan in Ankara, if these early pronouncements are any guide, would like to follow the butcher of Baghdad with scenarios that bring to mind the Koranic versus of Anfal.

For us, the challenge does not offer any choices. Ours is a fight to prevail over death. It is now or never or now and forever. We ask you, as Zilan did, to take your part in this liberation struggle. If we don't want to be the last generation of the Kurds we need each other not as discordant voices but as a united front to withstand our adversaries. If our misery can bring together Baghdad, Tehran, Ankara and Damascus, for Kurdistan, we should put our differences aside and fight not each other but those who are committed to our demise. We have only one battle to wage and it is for Kurds and Kurdistan.

Thank You.

**Presidential Address
Dr. Najmaldin O. Karim,
President of the Kurdish National
Congress of North America**

Good Morning! Honorable
Guests and Friends,

Welcome to the Ninth Annual KNC Conference. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to thank you for attending this conference. Your participation will contribute to its success.

The past year's events have moved fast both in our homeland and internationally. Saddam Hussein seems more entrenched in power with no prospect of leaving. The Rafah party rules in Turkey affirming the same failed old policies towards the Kurdish issue. Iran continues with its bone-headed policies vis-a-vis the Kurds. While Syria has entered a new game and is using the Kurdish card better than ever with Israel re-entering the Kurdish game this time with the wrong side.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin first by telling you about the state of the KNC. In the past year the KNC has remained active in its lobbying efforts in the nation's Capitol. Our contacts with the State Department continue to ensure their continued effort in resolving the KDP-PUK conflict and to ensure U.S. commitment in safeguarding the interests of the people of Kurdistan in the current UN-Iraq agreement on the food-for-oil deal.

We have continued our contact with members of U. S. Congress and coordinated our efforts with other NGOs to work on specific legislation in support of the Kurdish people. The passage of the Porter Amendment which cut aid to Turkey was a result of such coordination and I would especially like to recognize the leadership role of Kathryn Porter (President of the Human Rights Alliance) who was instrumental in the final passage of the amendment. Our work with other NGOs specifically Amnesty International and the American Federation of Scientists has succeeded in freezing the administration's request for sale of Cobra helicopters to Turkey this year. We are now working on efforts to start a Kurdish-Turkish dialogue in solving the Kurdish question in Turkey by bringing representatives of both communities with Americans from prominent think-tanks who yearn to see a just solution to this destructive conflict. We will soon begin similar efforts with regards to the Kurdish

question in Iran.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I recently returned from Paris where I attended the Kurdish Institute's Congress which is held every three years. During that visit I met with Ahmet Turk, Sadat Yortel and Kendal Nezan, the President of the Kurdish Institute in Paris. We held lengthy discussions on the situation in Turkey and steps needed to revitalize efforts to bring the Kurdish question to the forefront of the international scene following the set back of the past year.

Friends, the highlight of our activities in the last year was the 1996 Newroz celebration that was held in Bethesda, MD. The event showed the importance of the KNC and the role it plays in Washington, D.C. We had Kurds from different parts of the U.S.A., representatives of the U.S. Government, Congress, NGOs, and friends of the Kurds in Washington, D.C. Our honored guest and 1996 award recipient was Congressman Steny Hoyer, a staunch supporter of the Kurds.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since it was founded 8 years ago, the KNC has progressed and grown and has been the only non-partisan Kurdish organization in Diaspora that has survived this long that remains effective despite the odds it faced. Eight years ago the situation in Kurdistan was desperate, and obviously our goals were modest. Since we adopted a United Free Kurdistan front in 1991, the situation has changed. The Kurds now have a de facto state in the southern part with quasi-international recognition. In Turkey there is fierce resistance to the oppressive Turkish policies and the Kurdish question has attracted international attention despite recent setbacks. The policies of the Iranian Republic have created a new opportunity for our people. Security Council members are inclined toward normalizing ties with the Iraqi regime. The

U.N. has taken advantage of the KDP-PUK conflict to further aid the Iraqi regime by giving it more leverage and placing goods allocated to Kurdistan in Baghdad under the regime's control. If it was not for the U.S. pressure, Saddam would succeed in accomplishing his goals. Iran and Iraq are getting closer to the detriment of our people and Iranian Foreign Minister Vilayati was full of praise for himself in declaring that if it were not for Iran, a "Kurdish" state would be reality. The Rafah party is now in power with Ciller as its Foreign Minister, has declared that they will continue to fight the terrorism, a codename for Kurdish nationalism in Turkey. They were recently joined by Israel in the so called security cooperation, which in essence provides Turkey with the intelligence information which it currently lacks.

We believe that this is a dangerous development since it is the first time in history that the Jewish state has publicly sided with a regime that is committing what many believe to be genocidal acts against the Kurdish people in Turkey. The Israeli-Turkish Pact has raised the ante on Syria to use its Kurdish card both in Turkey and Iraq with the Iranians actively involved. This has complicated the Kurdish problem even more than it already is.

We can only alleviate these dangers and reverse the situation by lobbying strongly through our friends in the Jewish community and the sizeable Kurdish-Jewish community in Israel.

The Iraqi opposition remains more divided and incompetent than it has ever been and the U.S. policy toward the opposition is more confusing. As for the Kurdish leadership itself we believe that they have not been up to the task and have betrayed the trust of the Kurdish people. This is especially true in Iraqi Kurdistan where there is a de facto division of Southern Kurdistan where the KDP controls and rules the province of Duhok and part of the Erbil province and the PUK rules most of

Erbil including the city, the whole Sulaimania province, the liberated part of Kirkuk and Garmyan.

All efforts of mediation including those of the KNC have been ignored, and intensive U.S. mediation has not succeeded. The leadership puts more credence in the regional powers of Turkey, Iran, and Syria, all oppressors of the Kurds, and openly against any Kurdish entity. Both parties have shown callous disregard towards human and democratic practices. Prominent and ordinary citizens have been assassinated, tortured, and imprisoned and their property has been confiscated, pillaged, and stolen. These actions have been cited by many as proof that the Kurds can never rule themselves and somehow manage to ruin all opportunities. The Kurdish people continue to suffer while the militia's rule and revenues that belong to the people of Kurdistan go to the party functionaries and leaders who are not accountable to anyone. In Turkey, former Prime Minister Ciller was roaming the European capitals supported by the U.S., demanding Turkey's admission to the European Customs Union as a way of combating the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and prevent the Rafah from coming to power. We now see Tansu Ciller defending Rafah policies before the same governments. Mrs. Ciller's motives are obvious and self-serving. She is trying to save her political and financial fortunes which she accumulated while Prime Minister, that the Rafah party exposed. Now this unholy alliance has declared that they will continue the same policies that has resulted in more than 20,000 dead, over 3 million homeless, more than 3,000 villages and towns destroyed, and billions of dollars in economic loss. Let us make it clear that Turkey will never be able to silence our people by force. These actions have only intensified the resistance and determination of the Kurdish people in Turkey. The Kurdish Parliament in Exile has not been able to accomplish what it started to do

especially in the U.S. MED-TV which was widely watched by the people of Kurdistan who are deprived by the government from practicing their language, has now been banned due to extensive Turkish government lobbying.

We believe that the people who are in position of leadership inside Turkey should not be led by emotions. They should be more calculating and exploit the opportunity provided by strengthening the nonviolent nationalistic Kurdish movement in Turkey and take advantage of the limited opening in the Turkish constitution to strengthen mainstream pro-Kurdish parties like HADEP and others, to better publicize the Kurdish question both in Turkey and abroad and to avoid helping Turkish propaganda. Such a policy will attract the support of the international community including the U.S.A. We believe acts of violence abroad will only hurt the cause and helps Turkish propaganda.

In Iran, while the leadership has faithfully tried to advance the Kurdish cause both inside and abroad, we have not seen significant changes over the past year. There has been sporadic, mainly ineffective, military operations, with the political situation remaining the same.

Efforts are continuing in unification of the KDP-I and KDP revolutionary branch. We met with Mr. Jalil Gadani to discuss this and encourage them to continue their efforts and at the same time we have continued our close fraternal relationship with the KDP-Iran. We believe that unification is crucial to the success of the movement. We commend the leadership on these efforts to achieve this goal.

In Syria there has been no significant change in policy and the prospect for change is slim. While there are reports of disaffection by different Kurdish political groups or parties in Syria, we

don't see a credible political movement to expose regime's continued denial of fundamental basic rights of the Kurdish people in Syria. Most political parties and organizations are under control of one or other Kurdish political parties in Iraq or Turkey with no independent policy of their own. We believe this not only harms the Kurdish cause in Syria but that of the entire Kurdish national movement.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, the current division and conflict between the KDP and PUK, the lack of strategic understanding between the KDP-I and other political groups in Iranian Kurdistan on one hand and Kurdish political groups in other parts of Kurdistan and the on and off fighting between the PKK and KDP and the selfish misguided tactical alliance between separate Kurdish political parties and regional governments will lead to a bleak future for the entire people of Kurdistan.

Therefore I call upon the Kurdish leadership to rise above their selfishness and narrow interests and put the interests of the Kurdish people first, and to start intensive consultations and dialogue to implement steps in convening a wide conference that involves representatives of major Kurdish political parties, organizations, and personalities both inside Kurdistan and in Diaspora to draw a comprehensive plans and strategy and clear vision as to how to achieve our goals and to avoid tragedies.

The KNC stands ready to help convene such a conference and to actively participate and work towards its success.

LONG LIVE KURDISTAN!

THANK YOU!

Remarks by Jaff Azboy to the Kurdish National Congress

We are at the threshold of the 21st century. For us, this is the beginning of a seventh millenium, and we are still without a country!

We constitute the largest ethnic group in the world whose homeland is not yet recognized as a state by the other nations of the planet. We must be the captains of our own destiny.

It is our right, as Kurds, to govern our own affairs as set forth by Article I of the United Nation's International Covenants on Civil, Political, Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

The area in which the Kurds constitute 90% or more of the population, is at the center of great geopolitical interest and conflict. The interests of the great powers have placed them in alliances with those who continue to oppress us and deny us our fundamental rights. With the end of the cold war, those alliances are shifting, unreliable, and unstable.

At this moment, we Kurds, have a unique opportunity to insert ourselves as a people in this vital area. It is no longer possible for the great powers to ignore our Kurdish reality. America ought to have learned from its experiences in Iran and Iraq that it cannot rely on authoritarian regimes that have oppressed us, and that it needs the Kurds to help stabilize the region.

We have been there, and we will be there and they need to deal with us. We can't let them use us and divide us. We can no longer be ignored. But so long as we are divided against ourselves, we will be used for the advantage of others and our interests as a people will be defeated.

As we examine the history of different ethnic groups that have struggled for their lawful rights, one will see that

success has been achieved only by those who have demonstrated their abilities to come together regardless of individual political differences.

The key to securing human rights in Kurdistan is to bring our cause to the attention of policy-makers in America. The U.S. is the only super-power, and its uncritical support of Turkey, its supplying Turkey with military might to demolish our villages and kill, maim and torture our people, is a re-run of its flirtation with Saddam when he too, razed 4,000 of our villages, gassed and evacuated our people.

Regardless of our differences here or in Kurdistan, we American Kurds, must present a united front under one roof in our approach to the powers in Washington, D.C.

Speech by Awat Aliyar KDP Iran (Eastern Kurdistan)

"Iran and The Kurds"

Iran is a regional power with sizable Kurdish population. Feuding between Kurds and the Iranian state has persisted the longest of all Kurdish conflicts and goes back to 350 years ago. The policy of Iranian state vis-a-vis the Kurds has been one of duplicity, deception and intimidation. Today briefly, I am going to talk about the relationship of Iranian state, under the Shah and Islamic republic with Iraqi Kurds.

Fear from the emerging Iraqi Arab nationalist republic and Kurdish movement in Iran, convinced the Shah's regime to render limited support to Iraqi Kurds against the Iraqi government in the 1960's and 70's. The Shah weakened the Iraqi government and at the same time prevented the spill over of Kurdish revolt to Iran. The betrayal of the Iraqi Kurds by the Shah in 1975 and its consequences is well-

known.

After the Iranian revolution and the 8 years old conflict, between Iran and Iraq, a new Islamic regime led by Khomeini succeeded to rally part and by the end of the war, the entire spectrum of Iraqi Kurdish opposition.

The miscalculations of Kurdish leadership and false hope that Iran would be the victor of the war, led to the military defeat and severe destruction of Iraqi Kurdistan.

In the after-math of the Gulf war, when Iraqi Kurdistan fell to the hands of Kurds, initially there were indication that the Kurdish leadership has learned hard lessons and would not allow Iran to manipulate them for the third time in a relatively short period of time. There were expectations that this time, the Iraqi Kurdish leadership would rely on themselves and the unprecedented international support and specifically, strong American commitment to assist them. While Iraqi Kurdistan was in the process of reconstruction and building a political entity by establishment of regional administration and a parliament, Iran not only refused to recognize and establish normal relations but called it the 2nd Israel in the Mid-East and undermined the authority of rule of law by its surrogates, under the cover of Islam. Regionally Iran master-minded Turkish, Iranian and Syrian axis to offset the consequences of the Kurdish entity in the region. Iran also shelled border towns and dispatched armed terrorists teams for sabotage.

After the eruptions of civil war in May 1994, an ample opportunity for further Iranian involvement was created. Iran openly interfered and on occasions equipped parties of the conflict with arms, ammunition and logistical support simultaneously. Today, Iranian influence in Iraqi Kurdistan is at its peak and its extent is unprecedented, which has caused a deal of concern and anxiety among many Kurds, western powers and specifically, the U.S. Government.

The goal of Iran in this juncture is:

- 1) To discredit the Kurds in the eyes of the west and depict them as people without a serious political agenda who cannot rule themselves.
- 2) To be the dominant force and the only power-broker in shaping present and future Iraqi politics by simply creating Shia opposition and manipulating the Kurds which jointly constitute a striking majority. It is worth mentioning that the major Iraqi Shia opposition do not recognize the federation for Iraq and the Kurdish entity.
- 3) To create an impediment for Iranian Kurds.
- 4) To challenge American influence in the entire region.
- 5) Last but not the least, to spread Shia Islamic fundamentalism to weaken nationalistic tendencies among the Kurds.

While at the present time, only Iranian political, military influence constitute a threat, but there is likelihood that Islamic fundamentalism would be another for which Iran to project its power and influence. The ideology which denies the national aspiration of all kinds and in contrary to women rights all democratic and progressive achievements of mankind in the past century. Shia Islamic fundamentalism in a political tool of Iranian clergy to dominate the region, quite similar to the strategy of the deposed Shah, who used the race and Aryan unity to achieve identical objectives.

Friends, it is abundantly clear that the window of opportunity is gradually narrowing and once again Kurds are missing the opportunity. The Kurdish leadership can not continue business as usual in such an volatile and precarious circumstances.

We, the Kurdish community abroad, must be more vigilant and stop accepting the pretext and justifications of those policies which are doomed to failure. Total reliance on all regional

powers especially the Iranian state, who is a pariah in the international community does not serve the long-term interests of the Kurds. Those who depended the most on Iran, have lost the most.

Remarks by Barham Salih PUK Representative

Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a fact that all of us should be aware of. We are surrounded by powerful countries; Turkey, Iran and the Arab world. I think that the Kurdish movement cannot ignore the ramifications of these geopolitical facts in conducting our policies. The division of our movement and being surrounded, as I said, has mitigated certain consequences to our decisions.

It is very idealistic for outsiders to demand that we not have any relations or contact with our neighbors, the Arab World, Turkey and Iran; who are occupying all of our homeland. Kurds of Iran have to go through other parts of Kurdistan, Iraqi Kurds likewise and Turkish Kurds also need to play the regional game.

It is out of character that Kurds have been helpless and the regional powers manipulate them. The Kurdish movement has been able to manipulate the regional factors. The Kurdish issue today, lies at the heart of the differences between these three major power centers.

What is critical in this situation, is that now, we are talking about a total reliance and relationship of becoming agents with these powers and their strategies or actually, we are trying to maneuver in that very limited and harsh environment. This requires a serious examination of our reality.

As far as the PUK is concerned, we are true to the basic principles to not cross the red line and become engaged

as tools with enemies against the indigenous Kurdish population. In the Kurdish movement in Iraq today, the factor of politics and obligation under international law to security conditions of the borders.

Does that mean the Kurdish movement has become an agent of Iran or the other powers? I say no, that is not necessary because the failure to do that under the international law can offer justification to these power to interfere. The critical issue is that the Iranian Kurds have their unique situation like that of the Turkish Kurds and the Iraqi Kurds.

We have to live within the context of general Kurdish strategy to be able to take advantage of the regional and international dimensions to our interests without the danger of becoming agents and tools of these powers. The danger of the influence of Iran in Iraqi Kurdistan is being exaggerated, but Iran is a major power bordering our country and we cannot ignore it as we cannot ignore Turkey or the Arab World.

But, the question is our decision-making, who is making it? Are we making it to the interests of Iran, Turkey or Saddam Hussein or Syria or do we regards our own national interests? That may be a general statement is the proper way and effective under that situation. And, we should not follow optimistic slogans like for example, in the 1980's many Kurds in Iraq were critical of Abdulrahman Quasimlow because he was caught cooperating with Saddam Hussein. I believe that Dr. Quasimlow is a Kurdish nationalistic leader but where else could he gain access to Iran.

So there is a fine line that is the line of becoming an agent or obtaining your political independence regarding the international situation.

Transcribed

Speech by Saif Badrakhan Situation in Syria and Turkey

Because of the geopolitical situation of the 2 millions Kurds in the occupied part of Kurdistan of Syria, they did not stage any form of violence or armed resistance, but concentrated on politically peaceful activities, keeping Kurdish nationalism alive and helping other parts of Greater-occupied-Kurdistan.

In spite of their peaceful political resistance to occupation, the Kurds in Syria faced a campaign of forced Arabization, deportation and destruction of their national identity and culture at the hands of the consecutive Syrian governments from 1946 through to the present. The pan-Arab nationalism movement and the Syrian governments applied the fascist policies of forced assimilation and Arabization. All Kurdish schools, publications, language and organizations were prohibited and outlawed. In addition, from the 1950's to the present the Syrian government used a planned campaign of terror, torture, arrest and murder against the Kurdish people, the Kurdish activists and political organizations. In 1962 they suspended the citizenship of 120,000 Kurds (300,000 at the present time) and depopulated more than 320 Kurdish villages and moved-in Arabs in their place. They changed the names of the Kurdish areas, for example; Kabania to Am Al Arab, and Afrin to Jabal Aluro-ba, etc. These policies kept the Kurdish area poor and backward without any modern infrastructure. As a result, large numbers of Kurds have left the Kurdish area for the Syrian cities of Halab and Damascus, out of economic necessity. From this situation of the Kurds of Syria, we can generalize that the occupiers of Kurdistan will use all of their power in order to destroy the Kurdish national identity and culture, whether the Kurds use peaceful or violent resistance or do nothing. Always those governments who occupy Kurdistan will follow their strategic

goal of assimilating the Kurds by force.

This situation reflects the fact that the Kurdish revolution and armed struggle are not the reasons behind the occupiers of Kurdistans' destructive policies against the Kurdish nation. It is the fascist strategic policies of these dictatorial regimes to assimilate the Kurds by force and genocide.

Northern Kurdistan and Turkey

In Northern Kurdistan, the Kemalist Turkish state implemented genocidal destructive policies against the Kurdish nation. Between 1919 to 1938, Turkey used policies of assimilation, depopulation and genocide against the Kurds. Approximately 800,000 Kurds were murdered by the Turkish army. From 1938 to 1970, the Kurds of Northern Kurdistan did not stage any armed resistance against Turkey. But Turkey did not stop its fascist policies of destroying the Kurdish national identity and culture. It did not allow the Kurds to speak Kurdish, they forced them to learn Turkish and to say "we are Turks". Because of these policies, millions of Kurds were forced to immigrate out of Kurdistan to the Turkish cities.

The two military coups d'etat in 1971 and 1980, did not allow any form of democratic and civil opposition to exist. In addition, the military government decided to destroy the Kurdish nation and Kurdish identity at any price.

The PKK's armed legitimate resistance to occupation started in the 1970's and in 1984 as an organized movement of self-defense and resistance to the Turkish military dictatorship and occupation of Kurdistan.

The last 12 years of armed struggle were the only way to face the Turkish policies. The success of the PKK in

moving the armed struggle from guerrilla war to a mass movement in Kurdistan is a great accomplishment for the Kurdish nation. For the first time in the modern history of the Kurds, a Kurdish national liberation movement is able to face the Turkish military and security machine. In Northern Kurdistan there are more than 350,000 Turkish troops supported by 100,000 village guards and security forces.

Turkey is bleeding from this war and there is great destruction in Kurdistan - the loss of 3300 villages and 3 million Kurds have been deported from Kurdistan. As a result of this war, there is a political, social, security and economic crisis in Turkey. This war is costing Turkey about \$10 billion each year and 20% of its budget.

The Islamic movement is very strong and is establishing a great challenge to the Kemalist state and ideology. The Kurdish issue is forcing itself in Turkey and on the international arena. As we know, the essence of politics is power. The PKK created a powerful entity which is very important in any equation of peace and stability in the Middle East in the future.

At this stage of the Kurdish struggle and balance of power, it will be very destructive to the Kurdish nation's interests to ask the PKK to lay down its arms and follow a nonviolent approach. I am saying that because there are many Kurdish intellectuals inside the KNC and in Europe who are pushing the issue of nonviolence as the only form of struggle and asking the PKK to lay down their arms hoping that the Turkish government will give the Kurds something. This line of thinking is not realistic; Turkey is a dictatorship and fascist regime.

I want to tell these intellectuals, you are wrong, instead of criticizing the PKK

and the Kurdish people's armed legitimate resistance to Turkish occupation, you should support their struggle for liberation. I challenge you to go to Turkey and demonstrate in front of the defense or interior ministry and ask for peace and freedom for the Kurds and see how the Turkish authorities will treat you. If any of you can bring a peaceful solution to the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, please do it. The answer to this, you know it, Turkey will never negotiate with us or give us any thing until we change the balance of power.

You should rethink your position and attitude. You should give your support to the Kurdish national liberation movement in Northern Kurdistan.

Long Live United Free and Independent Kurdistan.

Speech By Kurdish Student Association

The Kurdish Student's Association is a small group that strives to at least unite Kurdish students in Southern California.

The challenges that the Kurdish students face is unlike any other student group, both as an activist and an academic. I bring this point up because if the Kurds are to survive as a distinct nationality and people, they absolutely need to support the Kurdish student. As an activist it is the Kurdish student that will take the reins from this generation and try to continue the path of liberation, it is the Kurdish student that has self-immolated themselves for Kurdistan, it is the Kurdish student that fills the ranks of the political parties, both as cadres and guerilla fighters, and it is the Kurdish student that protests the enemies' political embassies and consulates.

The Kurdish students who even more than the youth are also the future

intellectuals and professionals of the Kurdish nation. It is the Kurdish student that will be the future representative of the Kurdish people. A nation cannot live without literature, poets, historians, scientists and various other intelligence and academia. Without people to devote their lives to study, teach, and propagate the Kurdish language, where would the Kurdish language be now? Unlike other nations, the Kurds are obviously stateless--they have no government funded institutions that can support Kurdish culture and society. Instead, you have governments in the Middle East that viciously attack the Kurds and their very identity. Because without a language, literature, and history--we have no identity. Thus Kurdish intellectuals are at the front line and are targeted as such. In this war against our very self-identity, it is the young Kurdish student that will eventually blossom into the flower of Kurdeyetti, as a professor, business man, or author. This is where the pen is the most potent weapon, and this is where the future of the Kurdish nation lies. We must recognize that our enemies wish to destroy our culture first. Then we must first defend our heritage against this onslaught. So I urge you, the influential and the professionals out there, many who were former students yourself, to be active in the support of the struggling student, because if we do not help our own, who will.

Letters and Telegraphs

Dear Dr. Najmaldin Karim,
President of K.N.C.

In occasion of K.N.C.'s 9th Annual Conference, I congratulate you and the respectable members full-heartedly, wishing all success for the K.N.C. in a democratic way to enable itself to be at the service of the Kurdish struggle and

its interests.

It is obvious that your organization has proved itself to be one of the greatest Kurdish bodies abroad, and it will be greater if it cooperates with the other Kurdish organizations in solidarity. Of course, at this crucial situation we do need more unity.

Once again, wish you all success.

Your brother,

D. Mahmoud Uthman

July 5, 1996

Najmaldin O. Karim, M.D.
President
Kurdish National Congress of North America
P.O. Box 10627
Silver Spring, MD 20914-0627

Dear Dr. Karim:

Thank you for your invitation to participate in the Ninth Annual Conference of the Kurdish National Congress. As you know, the U.S. Government appreciates the positive contribution of the K.N.C. in keeping Americans informed of the problems in northern Iraq and in helping the Kurds there to recover from the repression they have suffered under Saddam Hussein.

Unfortunately, the press of work in our office on both Iraq and Iran will not allow me to attend the K.N.C. Conference. You and your colleagues can be assured of our continued interest and support in helping all the Kurds and all the Iraqi people. In fact, one of my most pressing responsibilities concerns the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolution 986, which marks an important victory for the Security

Council and all the friends of the Iraqi people. We are working hard to ensure that the resolution is implemented as the Council intended, with the UN delivering relief to the Kurds and the other peoples in northern Iraq according to the terms of the resolution, and without illicit gains by Saddam and his regime.

Again, my thanks for your invitation, and best wishes for a successful conference.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Deutsch
Director,
Northern Gulf Affairs.
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Iraqi Kurdish Tribes Society

Dear brother Dr. Hikmat Fikrat
Please, read this letter in your 9th Conference and thank you in advance.

Dear brothers and members of KNC in the U.S.A:

I give my best greetings to all of you and wish you all the progress in your effort.

It is a fact that you are aware of my father's assassination "Hussein Agha Surchi" and our family members in "Kaleken" village. I am writing this letter to your organization, because my father had a special respect and gratefulness for it in his life.

Massoud Barzani had promised my father that he will never create any problem for him and above all he

invited himself, on 6-16-96, to have lunch in our house. My father innocently trusted his promise and prepared every kind of hospitality possible for him. But unfortunately he was rewarded by the wildest way of attack on Kaleken by using machine guns and artilleries, burning all the houses with looting our belongings besides of murdering my father and others.

It is obvious that this crime was rejected by the Kurds all over the world, even America mentioned that cruelty in its publication. You will find below an answer to Lord Avery from Hoshiar Zebari.

"Even though Lord Avery's words were not reliable neither locally nor internationally, especially in the British Parliament - I may say that his speech was not taxable. We do announce our invitation to Lord Avery to visit Kurdistan and investigate the facts himself but it seems that Mr. Avery has been misled by false information besides he seems to be a righteous person and believes everything either true or false. For his information, we have a good relationship with the United Nations in Geneva, and they never interfere in our problems. If there is a problem, we are also very cooperative with the Human Rights organizations, based on these facts. Whatever Mr. Avery says is baseless and worthless, besides, it may end up against him."

Also, for your information, Barzani's family is still holding 34 hostages in the jail. At a time when the Kurds need unity and more protection, meanwhile Barzani's family aiming fortune and their own interest in disregarding

Kurdish interests. On the contrary, they are ready to sell Kurdistan for their own interest; they do not have any pity on the poor classes, even if they are K.D.P. members.

As you know, my father was an independent person, he never tried to interfere himself in other's businesses, and he tried sincerely to take care of his own tribe. We urge you and your conference to condemn this inhuman action of Barzani's gang.

With my full respect

Sincerely

Jawher Hussein Surchi

Translated from Kurdish
