

**KNC 10th Annual
Conference Overview**

The Tenth Annual Conference of the Kurdish National Congress of North American (KNC), was held on August 8-9, 1997, at the Marriott Hotel in Bethesda, Maryland. The theme of the conference was "Peace and Reconciliation in Kurdistan". Guests and delegates from Europe, Canada and the USA, including refugees, attended the conference. The conference featured several topics including peace and reconciliation, and KNC affairs. The first day of the conference focused on KNC affairs. Members participated actively and views were exchanged in a harmonious, democratic atmosphere. The Board of Directors actively participated in different panels dealing with various KNC matters. The second day of the conference was devoted to the conflict resolution in Kurdistan, which was covered on two separate but back-to-back panels.

Participants included Robert Deutsch, Director of North Gulf Affairs in the US State Department; Jonathan Randal, author and journalist; Kendal Nezan, President of the Kurdish Institute in Paris and Fuad Hussein, Middle East expert and advisor to the Foreign Ministry in Holland.

The conference was addressed by Barham Salih, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) International Representative; and Ahmed Aziz the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) USA Representative.

The conference also featured presentations by Mike Amitay, Executive Director of the Washington Kurdish Institute (WKI); Deborah Bower of Children International, who spoke of her latest trip to Kurdistan; Bakhtiyar Amin of the Human Rights Alliance; Kani Xulam of American Kurdish Information Network (AKIN); and Farook Davoodi of Iranian Kurdistan.

On Saturday night, the 9th of August, a

banquet was held that featured Kurdish music, dance and Kurdish poet and performer: Omer Dizayee. Musical arrangements were made by Hayder Ary.

The KNC's Annual Awards were presented to Kathryn Cameron Porter, President of the Human Rights Alliance, and Robert Deutsch for their services to the Kurdish people. The awards were presented by KNC President, Najmaldin Karim. The conference chairman was Omar Halmat, KNC Treasurer.

The new Board of Directors is as follows:

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**Speech by Hikmat Fikrat
KNC Secretary Report**

Honored Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Welcome to our Tenth Annual Conference and Happy Tenth Anniversary.

Please allow me to extend a welcome to all guests and members with a special welcome to our non-Kurdish friends and to our friends from outside the United States who have supported us steadfastly throughout the years. Since we last met in Pleasanton, California, the Kurdish cause has seen some disheartening reversals, particularly in

Southern Kurdistan, where all-out open hostilities broke out again last fall with both sides reaching for the jugular.

But that is only part of it, indeed, the news from all parts of Kurdistan was bad all last year. For a while, it seemed that one or the other of the many cease-fires might hold, but to everyone's dismay, the deep-seated disagreements and grievances that were hidden underneath broke out instead into an all-or-none proposition. And suddenly, the minor skirmishes we had sort of gotten used to, changed into all-out-war, thanks in part to the meddling of our friendly neighbors who sadly still hold the trigger.

But even if we forget about our friendly neighbors for the moment, it seems that by late last summer the rift between the political leadership had grown so wide that despite all kinds of mediation it will not resolve peacefully, short of a miracle. And alas, that miracle did not happen and we ended up with the infamous blunder of Hawlair that we are all familiar with.

The subsequent tug of war and events that led to the American sponsored cease-fire of October 96, and the division of the regional government into the north and south is well known to all. Quite expectedly, these and subsequent events have dealt a severe blow to the dreams of many Kurds for a free homeland that were hanging upon that very entity.

This is partly so because the eagerly awaited for peace process that was to follow has sadly fallen into a state of inanimate oblivion. Conciliatory meetings and confidence-building measures are held and taken to little avail. They are also canceled, abandoned, or violated at the whim of the participants and for the flimsiest of reasons, and without regard to the safety, security and well being of the people which has, unfortunately been mortgaged to the success of these conferences. It seems that some of the

participants, including the sponsors, are going through these motions only as a matter of form and not one of substance.

It seems ironic that only a few years ago, we used to be happy and boast about the de facto Kurdish regional government. That entity, that even though it was not recognized openly by any major power, it was, nevertheless, tacitly accepted and dealt with by many foreign states, small and large. An entity that many hoped will become the nucleus for a Kurdish state someday. Kurds from all over, were proud to have such an entity born out of free elections, even though de facto, and they had the right to boast about it.

In our last conference, we were lamenting the state of that entity that had become a skeleton of what it was at inception. But thanks to our own infighting and to the evil designs of the regional powers and their mentors, we now have two regional governments, one in the north and one in the south, and we have two prime ministers. How sad or how jolly! Perhaps some even expect us to cheer about our good fortunes? Why not? It might give us one more vote in the U.N. one of these days!

Such is but one example of the reversals we have had since our last conference and of the state of our affairs of the Kurdish cause.

To add insult to our injury, overwhelming invasions by the Turkish army into Southern Kurdistan is becoming a seasonal occurrence at the whim of their generals with impunity, and often with the tacit blessing of the U.S. to boot. These outlandish aggressions are pursued not only to punish the just cause of our brothers in the north, but also in search of the military's political agendas as well as to draw attention away from the miserable state of Turkey's economy on the home front. We seem to be their ace-in-the-hole.

Indeed, conditions in Northern Kurdistan are deteriorating by the day. Outright war, mass murders, deportations, imprisonment of parliamentarians, journalists and ordinary people, plus a host of other human right abuses are daily occurrences.

The situation in Eastern and Western Kurdistan are no better, if not worse, even though their plight is not as much in the news as with the other parts of occupied Kurdistan.

All in all, it is a sad situation that has disheartened and disenchanted many a Kurd, both inside and outside Kurdistan. Unfortunately, it has not only disenchanted the Kurds, but also many of the world-wide friends of the Kurds, and it has also eroded much of the international support and good will we had enjoyed for the past few years. Worse yet, much of the damage is self-inflicted, especially the fighting in Southern Kurdistan as well as some of the tactics used in Europe by our brethren from the north.

In my remarks at last year's conference, I had commented that:

"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."

Sadly, the first part of that prophecy has already come true and it is now up to us to forestall the rest.

In those same remarks, I had also said:

"And it is not only the Kurdish leadership in Southern Kurdistan that is 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 at home and abroad;

and perhaps the blame rests most on the Kurds in Diaspora, who having the freedom to voice their opinions, are keeping quiet and are allowing this slow painful suicide process to proceed to its conclusion, as though we are all enjoying an orgy of mass suicide.

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."

As you all know, this part is even more valid and urgent this year around than ever before.

To its credit, the Kurdish National Congress has acted several times over the past years as a catalyst in resolving these conflicts. It has used its good offices and those of many of the friends of the Kurds as well as those of experts in the field of "conflict resolution" in attempting to analyze the issues and grievances and in trying to resolve them. It has also voiced its opinions unabashedly when things had got out of hand.

But alas, none of these approaches have worked yet. Many say that the issues involved are beyond KNC's capability. I submit it is not and if we try hard enough and often enough, we might be able to get somewhere.

On other fronts and in general, the Kurdish National Congress has also 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 is a non-partisan Pan-Kurdish organization with membership from all the regions of Kurdistan and all over the North American continent. It is, therefore, the most suitable medium to air the grievances of the Kurdish people and should serve as a forum where issues of immediate, and long term 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. I believe we all should make better use of these potentials.

Despite all its successes, KNC has some failures also which is often attributable to the lack of resources. I submit that one of these failures this past spring was not being able to do enough, as an organization, for the newly arrived refugees even though most members did more than their share in their local areas.

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.

Remarks By Mike Amity Washington Kurdish Institute

I am very pleased to be here today with so many friends. The previous panel discussed the relative merits of the Washington Kurdish Institute (WKI) and the KNC. I don't believe that the organizations should be viewed as competitive in any way. In fact, it seems to me that both organizations play specific roles and have necessary functions which compliment each other.

The Washington Kurdish Institute is a non-profit, education and research organization whose motto is "For Kurdish People Worldwide." To be effective, we have to maintain strict non-partisanship and uncompromised support for international human rights standards. We have assembled an advisory committee of prominent scholars, human rights practitioners,

Middle East and foreign policy experts, and Kurds from around the world. We are becoming a resource for and about the Kurdish people.

The Washington Kurdish Institute raises awareness of Kurdistan, and how important it is to Mid-East stability. It lies at the heart of energy and water resources issues, the viability of Iraq, the stability of Turkey, and the emergence of political Islam. Yet, policymakers and the media here still consider such issues in terms of bilateral relations with Turkey, or Iraq, or Iran. We try to make people realize that without considering Kurdistan in these equations there can be little hope for peace and prosperity in the region.

We educate in a number of ways. We sponsor a "Kurdish Policy Forum," which a series of moderated discussions involving officials, academics, non-governmental organization representatives and invited guests. We have a small but growing library of books, periodicals and videos. We maintain a fax and e-mail network and send regular news updates and articles from major media outlets. Anyone interested in being added to our e-mail list, please give me your address.

The Institute also works with a wide range of local, national and international organizations and all Kurdish organizations which share our concerns. We have joined an international effort to indict Saddam Hussein and members of his regime for war crimes. We have served as the North American coordinator of a Peace Conference in Ankara. Despite being banned by Turkish authorities, myself, Board Member Mohammed Sinjari, his son Nawzad, and representatives from three prominent non-governmental organizations went to Ankara and met with Kurdish leaders, international dignitaries European parliamentarians and human rights activists. The Institute working with the Danish Helsinki Committee to bring together U.S., European and Turkish Parliamentarians in a

group that will seek dialogue with Turkish officials about resolving the Kurdish conflict in Turkey.

WKI created an Internet home page that has given us a truly global presence. We have recorded thousands of visitors from more than 40 countries. Our site has a searchable news archive, a constantly expanding bibliography and comprehensive links to Kurdish and human rights sources around the world. Through the Internet we have sent language teaching materials to Western Australia. We have linked scholars in Europe, North America and Asia. The Institute is helping a Danish women compile a Kurdish cookbook by soliciting and forwarding recipes. The cookbook will be made available online and will be published in English. So please, send us your recipes. The WKI page also has an online art gallery with works of displaced children from the Suleymania area. We are presently adding the breathtaking artwork of Simko, a Kurd from Iraq who now works for Peace Winds, an organization in Japan which provides humanitarian assistance in Iraqi Kurdistan. We contacted each other over the Internet.

We have also started a newsletter ZAGROS, which now also available online. ZAGROS contains news items, activity updates, editorials and pieces by guest contributors, book reviews, and pointers to relevant publications and Internet sites. Copies of ZAGROS are outside on the table. We provide it free of charge, so if anyone would like to receive ZAGROS, please give me your address or look for it on our home page.

Another activity we are very proud of is our Kurdish language courses taught by mamosta Michael Chyet. WKI is, as far as I know, the only place in the U.S. where Kurdish language instruction is now offered on a regular basis. This spring, five students completed our first Kurmanji course. Presently, we are registering students for the fall Sorani course. Students don't just study in

class, they also spend time with local Kurdish families who have recently arrived from Iraqi Kurdistan. In this way, the students have an opportunity to practice Kurdish, and the families can benefit from the students knowledge of life in the U.S.

These refugees represent a great new potential for the Kurdish community in North America. Service providers from Guam and more than 10 states have requested assistance from the Institute, and we have forwarded language materials and other information. We help people compose resumes and navigate an unfamiliar and often insensitive resettlement bureaucracy. Yet while immediate needs of many families have been met, in large part to the support of the community and many of you here, long term challenges, such as finding employment, housing and education remain. This is one area where one can see the complimentary role of the KNC, a community based organization which can help refugees in local communities around the country.

I will now make some general observations. First, I want to stress the importance of reconciling the conflict between Kurdish parties in Iraqi Kurdistan. As long as there is conflict and division, U.S. policymakers and the public will be reluctant to support the Kurdish people. Unless Kurds in Iraq settle their differences and unify themselves under a working government, there will be little hope for Western support or any type of autonomy.

I also believe that the U.S. government should use its substantial leverage to pressure the Government of Turkey to resolve its Kurdish conflict. I think U.S. policymakers are slowly seeing through Turkey's democratic facade and are beginning to realize that a military dominated political system is inherently unstable. Government complaints about terrorism ring increasingly hollow amidst brutal responses to Kurds and others who demand democratic rights. There is a growing realization that the

unresolved Kurdish situation underlies Turkey's mounting instability. Still, the United States remains Turkey's most important ally, and billions of dollars of U.S. military equipment enables the Turkish military to wage war in Kurdistan. I believe it is vitally important that Kurds around the country contact their representatives in Washington urging that they oppose arms transfers to Turkey. Despite objections by arms industry representatives, a coalition of organizations including WKI has helped block the shipment of attack helicopters to Turkey. This is an uphill battle, and we need your support.

I've worked with the Kurdish community for 10 years now. It's been a truly rewarding experience getting to know so many of you and working with a supportive and dedicated Board of Directors. As you might guess, working with a diverse community has its frustrations as well.

I have come to believe that the Kurdish Diaspora has a vital role to play in Kurdistan's future. Dispersed throughout the globe among foreign cultures, Kurds naturally come together and more easily overcome their differences. Removed from local politics it is clear that the interests of all Kurds living under brutal regimes coincide. Only united can the Kurdish people anywhere realize self-determination and inspire the confidence of supporters of democracy around the world. The hard part is actualizing this understanding on the ground.

Finally, I sincerely thank everyone who has generously supported the Institute. We cannot survive without your assistance, and I'm not just talking about financial assistance. People have contributed books and other publications and have forwarded material to publish in ZAGROS. Much of our furniture and artwork is donated by community members, and when the Institute hosts events, people prepare food and other supplies. We need financial support, but we also need

commitment and moral support. We cannot rely on large amounts many constituencies raise to sustain a Washington presence. We have to make a little money go a long way. The Board of Directors and I are committed to making the Institute an effective and responsible voice for Kurds. With your continued assistance, we can succeed in helping make the 21st century a new chapter of peace and prosperity for the Kurdish people.

**Speech by Kani Xulam
American Kurdish Information
Networks**

**"Adopt Leyla Zana's Case
as Your Own!"**

Dear Friends and Fellow Kurds,
Xusku birayen delal,

I want to thank Dr. Najmaldin Karim and the Board of Directors of the Kurdish National Congress (KNC) for inviting me to this 10th Annual KNC gathering. I am grateful for the opportunity. It is refreshing to be among friends and fellow Kurds. It is even more so when you consider the present state of affairs that is the lot of the Kurds. I am, of course, referring to the wars that are raging in Kurdistan.

So, in a way, it is our misery that brings us together here, despite the fact that our longing is for peace and reconciliation, as the theme of this conference suggests. It is the worst of the times but in a way it is also the best of times, to paraphrase Dickens. The pounding of Kurdish villages by the enemy forces and their collaborators goes on as I utter these words; but there is also resistance, the stuff of legends that keeps the hope of liberation alive and the dream of independence enduring.

The story of Leyla Zana, a profile in resistance, is the topic of my address today. She is a Kurdish woman who

now languishes in a Turkish jail cell. She serves time to make up for our cowardice. She reminds us that to run away from oppression, as you and I have done, is one thing, but to run away from Kurds and Kurdistan is another. To embrace the cold of exile is a personal decision and rather a heavy one, but keeping the cause of Kurds and Kurdistan at bay is simply unfor-givable.

The great Greek historian, Herodotus, notes that when a people are enslaved, its male members lose half of their manhood. Many in this audience will be quick to note that we number some 30 to 35 million Kurds. But a quicker glance at what we do as Kurds for the liberation of Kurdistan will reveal that the burning desire to bring equality to our lot and dignity to our lives is secondary to our more immediate desire to enrich ourselves. This is indeed unfortunate; worse, it is outright dishonorable.

Leyla Zana is a Kurdish woman who wanted to do something for our honor. She deserves our recognition. Because she spoke for you and me, she lost her liberty. An effort is underway to free her from captivity. I invite you to adopt her case as your own. Her freedom will represent a milestone in our people's drive for liberty. Step by step, day by day, we too could leave the darkness, that is to say, the slavery, behind and take our rightful place among the family of nations.

In Northern Kurdistan, in Amed, in 1961, Leyla Zana was born. She grew up in a village and was oblivious to the political and historical tremors that were shaping Kurdistan. For three years, she went to the local school and learned how to read and write. At the age of 15, in 1976, she was married to Mehdi Zana, a Kurdish activist, through an arranged marriage.

At first Leyla resisted the choice. Years later reflecting on her marriage, she noted: "I don't blame my family or my

husband, rather I blame the social conditions. These must be changed."

Her husband, Mehdi Zana, had been an advocate of change. As Mayor of the largest Kurdish city, Diyarbakir, he had on too many occasions raised the ire of the Turkish public officials. On Sep-tember 12, 1980, the military took over in Turkey. Mehdi Zana was arrested and imprisoned immediately. The years that followed were some of the most painful in Kurdish history. The flower of the Kurdish nation, the most courageous youth of our people, were subjected to torture and indignity especially in the Diyarbakir military prison.

On March 21, 1982, Mazlum Dogan, an advocate of Kurdish rights, burnt himself to death to protest the inhu-manity of the Turkish prison system. Ferhat Kurtay, Necmi Oner, Esref Anyik, and Mahmut Zengin followed suit on May 17, 1982. On July 14, 1982, Hayri Durmus, Kemal Fir, Akif Yilmaz and Ah Cicek began a hunger strike that culminated in their deaths. In a span of two years, 57 other Kurds would die of torture. Many others would be crippled for life.

It was the misfortune of Mehdi Zana to witness this indignity and later record it in his book entitled, Prison No.5. I am happy to announce that Blue Crane Books in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has translated this book into English and will make it available at bookstores across the country in late September. I ask you to order your own copy and read it carefully to acquaint yourself with one of the darkest chapters in our history.

As Mehdi was chronicling some of the horror that befell victims of Turkish fascism, Leyla was raising their two kids and visiting him in prisons across Turkey. In those lonely and long trips, she would learn the Turkish language, read about the struggle of the Kurds and witness the brutality of the Turkish government. Several times, she herself

would be thrown into jail and subjected to torture. These experiences would play seminal role in her politics.

In late 1980, she became a reporter for the Kurdish daily, Yeni Ulke. She visited the Kurdish villages that were set on fire and interviewed the people whose life-long belongings were en-trusted to the flames. Tales of police and army brutality were the staples of her writings. As her knowledge of state sanctioned wanton violence grew, so did her courage. She vowed to fight oppression in every way she could.

In early 1990, the Kurdish resistance had grown by leaps and bounds. The Turkish government was forced to acknowledge the existence of the Kur-dish people and its language. Without constitutional guarantees, the Kurds were given the green light to form their own party. That year saw the birth of the first pro-Kurdish party, People's Labor Party, HEP, in the history of the Turkish republic.

In the summer of 1991, the HEP party delegates chose Leyla Zana as their candidate for the city of Diyarbakir. On October 20, she received 84% of the vote in her district and became the first Kurdish woman ever elected to the Turkish Parliament. She had run on a campaign of change. The first change she ever undertook was to take the oath of office in Kurdish. The powers that be were incensed. She was called a terrorist for speaking Kurdish in public, that is to say, in the Turkish Parliament broadcast live to the country.

Two years later, in May 1993, she was invited to the United States to testify before the Helsinki Commission of the U.S. Congress. She spoke of the de-struction of the Kurdish villages, the death of Kurdish activists and the inability of the Turkish and Kurdish political leaders to address the Kurdish question with frankness in candor. She urged the lawmakers in this country to side with the democratic forces in Turkey to bring about a peaceful

resolution to the conflict.

Her counsel fell on deaf ears. The lawmakers did nothing. The war mongers prevailed. Leyla Zana became the scapegoat. In March 1994, the members of the Turkish Parliament lifted her constitutional immunity. The military-influenced State Security Court then prosecuted her on charges of treason. She was given 15 years in prison.

Our book, Free Leyla Zana!, available outside of this hall at the AKIN table, chronicles her ordeal. In it, you will also notice our effort to free her from prison. To date, 113 members of the United States Congress have agreed to sign a letter urging the President of the United States to raise Leyla's case at the highest level with the Turkish authorities. They are asking for her immediate and unconditional release from prison. I urge you to examine the list of the members of the Congress who have signed our letter. If your members of Congress are not on this list, please contact them and recommend they sign this letter.

As some of you may know, we held a reception last May in which Jose Ramos-Horta, recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, spoke on behalf of Leyla Zana. Professor Elie Wiesel, winner of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize and revered novelist and activist, has agreed to honor us with his presence in the fall for a second reception in honor of Leyla Zana. We are very excited about this prospect and hope to see you at this event.

As I address you from this podium, Leyla is confined to a prison cell she shares with a convicted murderer. In a letter to Lord Avebury last winter, she had complained of not being allowed to see the sun for the entire summer and fall. She cannot call her husband or their children, ages 16 and 21. And now, she can no longer even see her husband; last month, he was sentenced to 10 months in prison in Turkey. Should he return to Turkey from his

exile in France, he too would be imprisoned. To Kurds all over the world, this ought to be a cause for alarm.

On our part as Kurds of Northwest Kurdistan, we want Leyla Zana free, immediately and unconditionally. Her freedom, we believe, will be a watershed in the liberation of our people. This audience is no stranger to the numbers that pour out of Kurdistan. To date, in Northwest Kurdistan alone, four million Kurds, the most vulnerable among us, the villagers, have lost their livelihoods. It behooves those of us who are free to do more for the Kurdish villagers and for Leyla Zana.

To that end, we are planning a fast, a hunger strike if you will, for the fall in Washington, D.C. So far, we have half a dozen Kurds who have expressed a desire to take part in this event. Our goals are simple. We wish to express our solidarity with the Kurdish villagers who are condemned to a life of misery and hunger by forgoing our own comfort. We also wish to atone for the sins of this war and register our desire to see the debate on the Kurdish question change from violence to non-violence, from confrontation to dialogue, and from war to peace. Finally, as part of our sacrifice, we would appreciate a public statement from the Clinton Administration on the plight of Leyla Zana.

To you, I appeal from this podium to adopt our goals as yours, to take part in the hunger strike if you can, but most importantly to support us here or wherever you may be. Kurdistan is on fire and your help is needed to put out its raging flames. Now is the time to act to help and be part of the liberation struggle for your own good.

In short, you are the generation that can deliver freedom to Kurdistan. You are the hope that can blossom for the good of yourself and the Kurds. You are free to do all this and more for the countless generations of other Kurds who have yet to be born. Let future historians say that you did your share, you rose to

your responsibility, and you earned your place among the free nations of the world.

Thank you.

**Speech by Ahmed Aziz
KDP Representative**

“Prospect for peace”

KNC Members, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me, representing the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), for your KNC conference. We wish you success in your efforts for peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, before going into our main subject: “Prospect of Peace in Kurdistan,” I would like to share with you some of the recent experiences - I had, for I've just come back from our beloved land, Kurdistan. I spent two weeks there, and I was amazed at how much progress has been made since I was there, four years ago. Especially in the town of Howlair, I saw the new 3rd Cabinet Regional government working hard to solve peoples' problems, creating solutions, and for the first time, salaries were paid on time, every month. Even the six months salaries which had not been paid by the previous cabinet, have now been paid back not only to the employees of the area controlled by the KDP, but also to those there who are controlled by PUK, like Sulaimania and parts of Kirkuk. Also this cabinet could afford to payback peoples' savings in the banks which were looted by the PUK while evacuating the city.

In the area of rebuilding Kurdistan, hundreds of kilometers of road have been paved, new schools built, a trauma center is in the process of being built. You see construction all over the towns and new houses being raised. For the first time you see parks with water fountains, etc. Of course, most important is safety of the people & their

belongs. No more are there thieves or looters, no guns in the streets except for the police & guards. People were feeling that this is the first time people could leave their cars outside their homes at night without the cars being looted.

The latest good news is the announcement of the decision to employ all 1200 graduates of Sulahadeen University, that is, 100% of the graduates found jobs, this is unmatched, even in the United States.

Of course, distribution of food by the U.N. added to the well-being of the people. What interrupts the economic growth is the unjust attacks of PKK, by mining roads or kidnapping children, in the far rural areas, etc.

And now our position with PUK, we believe that we should be able to live together and work together toward building Kurdistan. We still think the best solution is through democratic elections and by reaching the goals step-by-step and rebuilding trust. All the problems won't go away by one meeting or one agreement. We need time to regain the trust and we want to see peace coming back step-by-step.

You all know that all the previous agreements failed, because they were one-shot solutions and as far as holding a cease-fire, we could reach a permanent solution one step at a time. Also we should consider the interference of the neighboring countries, and their fears from a peaceful, prosperous Kurdistan.

Let us all work toward peace.

**Speech by Bakhtiar Amin
Human Rights Alliance**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Assembly,

Allow me first to express my deep

gratitude to Dr. Karim who asked me to make a statement on the Human Rights Alliance's activities, and to present our organization. Also, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the KNC, a lot of success at this tenth annual conference.

The Human Rights Alliance (HRA) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of international respect for individual and collective freedoms and responsibilities, and the promotion of the anniversary Declaration of Human Rights. The Human Rights Alliance mission is to transform human rights standards and conventions into tangible policy initiatives through education and awareness of elected lawmakers and policymakers in the United States as well as in international and regional institutions.

The HRA searches for truth, seeks to empower local peoples, promotes public awareness and creates innovative alliances for action, as we seek to give voice to the world's forgotten and neglected, especially women, children, minorities and indigenous peoples.

The HRA seeks to change conditions "on the ground" and directly impacts peoples lives. Our programs focus on conflict resolution, confidence-building measures, minority, gender and indigenous rights, rights of self-determination and ethnic expression, democracy and civil societies by dialogue, as well as restoration of rights of cultural and social expression.

The HRA was founded almost three years ago by the well-known human rights champion and advocate Kathryn Cameron Porter; one of the best friends of the oppressed Kurdish people. In 1982, Kathryn and her husband, Congressman John Edward Porter founded the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, a bipartisan organization designed to shed light on

human rights abuses around the world. They have held numerous hearings on atrocities committed against the Kurds. Congressman Porter also has been an outspoken and courageous voice in highlighting and supporting the Kurdish cause, and Kathryn comes under continual criticism from the Turkish lobby in the United States. After her first trip to Kurdistan in 1994 she was responsible for a 10% cut in the U.S. military aid being sent to Turkey. In 1995 she was able to stop an additional \$23 million from going to Ankara. She has organized a tremendous amount of support for the Kurdish cause in Congress. Between 1995 and 1997, the HRA has sponsored and/or participated in seminars conferences, advocacy, information gathering/dissemination, briefings and hearings on the Kurds both domestically and internationally in the UN in Geneva, at the European Parliament in Strasbourg in Cairo, etc..

The HRA actively mediated between the KDP and PUK, and succeeded to bring the U.S. to supervise the mediation.

The HRA list of activities and advocacy on behalf of the Kurdish people in Kurdistan (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Syria and the former USSR) is very long. And, I do believe that HRA has been the most active organization on behalf of the Kurds in United States. It is to be noted that the HRA is active in many areas around the world.

I don't want to take much of your time, for those of you who are interested, I have some brochures (here) today and you are more than welcome to talk to me afterward.

In closing, in order to be able to continue to bring the Kurdish issue to the attention of this country and international institutions, I would like to take this opportunity to ask you for your support and contribution.

Thank you very much for your kind

attention.

**Speech by Dr. Fouad Darweesh
KNC Vice President**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Khoshko Bra,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you and to be part of a distinguished panel, with whom I have worked closely. We thank the Chairman and the steering committee for organizing this conference and for bringing us together. We are in a very critical time in the history of our people. The tragedy of being a Kurd with the same definition of being exposed to torture, imprisonment, and deportation. The loss of basic human rights continues. More sadly, the opportunity for the Kurds to have a democratic state of their own or at least some autonomy has been destroyed by the Kurdish parties themselves. Unemployment, poverty, and disease are prevalent all over Kurdistan. We must bring forth new solutions to prevent the annihilation of our people.

I. First, we must have unity among us. I appeal to every one of you to ignore our personal differences. Maybe the dictionary can help us understand the meaning of unity better. It talks about the quality of being one, the character of a thing that is whole but composed of many parts, the interdependence of its parts, the solidarity that enables it to show undivided strength, a thorough integration of its parts and harmonious cooperation. We also think of some famous quotations about unity: "United we stand, divided we fall." "The chain is only as strong as its weakest link." Napoleon Bonaparte proclaimed to the French people on June 22, 1815, "Unite for the public safety, if you would remain an independent nation."

II. The second point is organization. We must be better organized. We have to communicate with each other better.

We have to take our responsibility seriously, as leaders, as board members, as KNC members. Being a Kurd is a twenty-four hour job. We need to expand our organization, the KNC, around the world.

III. The third point is involvement. Let's not just be active in our own community, in our own affairs, but let us support the human rights of other communities. As Martin Niemoller, a German theologian during the time of Hitler, said:

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was *no* one left to speak for me."

IV. Finally, education. Those of us who are privileged to be in our adopted country, the United States, have to work hard to achieve our education, to perform our jobs well, and do all we can to be successful. We need to spread the word, to publish up-to-date information about Kurdish affairs, about our history, about our aspirations.

**Tom Ver Ploeg-Publications,
North California Activities**

Highlights of events organized by KNC members in Northern California.

Meeting: "Southern Kurdistan - The Current Situation"

In response to the movement of Iraqi troops into Southern Kurdistan in August, 1996, a meeting was organized for September 22, by the KNC for the Bay Area Kurdish Community. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for open discussion of the events in Kurdistan, including the refugee situation.

Additionally, an opportunity to ask questions directly to representatives of various Kurdish parties and Kurdish organizations in the U.S. was arranged. A speakerphone (based on a home computer) was installed and calls were placed to the following individuals. Questions from the attendees were read by the moderator and the responses could be heard by all.

Participants in the conference calls:

- Barham Salah, Representative of the PUK in Washington, D.C.
- Ahmed Aziz, Representative the KDP in Washington, D.C.
- Ehsan Abdulaziz, Representative of the Islamic Movement in London
- Kani Xulam, Representative of American Kurdish Information Network in Washington, D.C.
- We had also hope to contact Dr. Najmaldin Karim, but he was traveling that day.

Regarding the refugees, members of the KNC had discussions with the Director of the International Rescue Committee in San Francisco regarding sponsorship or otherwise assisting Kurds who were to be located in Northern California. At that time (end of September, 1996) the response was that California was not accepting refugees except those with relatives in the state. To my knowledge, very few refugees from "Fall 1996 events in Kurdistan" were placed in Northern California.

2. KNC Regional Meeting
The Northern California Chapter of the Kurdish National Congress hosted an All-California Regional Meeting on March 1, 1997.

The meeting was called to discuss events in Kurdistan and to regroup and to reassess positions and priorities. It was to be forward-looking in terms of what the KNC can contribute to serve the greater Kurdish cause.

Because of the significance of the

issues being considered, invitations were sent to Dr. Najmaldin Karim, KNC president, and to all members of the Board of Directors. The meeting was well attended by KNC members and supporters. All eight members of the Board residing in California attended. Also in attendance were former KNC President, Dr. Asad Khailany of Michigan and Dr. Jamal Fuad from Washington, D.C.

The first session began with a discussion of what role the KNC could play in resolving the current problems in Southern Kurdistan. Topics included the question of how could pressure be brought to bear on the two parties to negotiate a settlement.

A second session dealt with the role an individual can play in aiding the Kurdish people. Dr. Fouad Darweesh implored the audience to educate themselves, their family, friends, associates and congressmen about the Kurdish cause. He emphasized the importance of participation in other organizations which focus on human rights such as Amnesty International (AI) and Physicians Against Nuclear Warfare.

Communication among KNC chapters and members was discussed by another panel. Members were asked to forward newsworthy items to the "Kurdistan Review" (KNC newsletter) for inclusion in future issues.

An afternoon session dealt with the newly arriving refugees from Southern Kurdistan. Mr. Saif Badrakhan provided valuable information, on the 600-700 refugees who had been placed in the San Diego area.

3. Social Events included a Newroz Picnic held Sunday, March 23, as well as an informal picnic for the Bay Area Kurdish Community Picnic, held October 1996.

These picnics are well attended by Kurds from all parts of Kurdistan and

their friends. They don't require too much effort and are a good way to maintain social contacts. We try to have two picnics per year - one in the spring and one in the fall.

4. A cassette tape set, prepared by a KNC member, on the Kurdish language is now available. Titled "The Easy Way to Kurdish" this two tape set is an introductory course, focusing on the Sorani dialect. The tape set is available from Audio-Forum at 203-453-9794.

Saif Badrakhan-Refugees, Southern California Activities

Dear KNC Members and Distinguished Guests,

Our nation Kurdistan is passing through an important historical stage of struggle. There is destruction, civil war, and a war of liberation in Kurdistan. The Turkish military regime's attack against the PKK was a big failure. Today Turkey again moved another 20,000 troops into Southern Kurdistan trying to protect itself and its ally the KDP from the Kurdish National Liberation Movement "the PKK" freedom fighters and their successful military guerilla war.

All of us want peace and democracy in Kurdistan. But as intellectuals we have to distinguish between our enemy and our freedom fighters, between the political parties who cooperate with the enemy and the Kurdish national movement. We should seek and struggle for the Kurdish national interests and tell the truth to our people. We are responsible in front of the Kurds and history to take the side of our people and their struggle.

We should look at peace and reconciliation between the Kurdish parties from the standpoint of a grand national strategy representing the goals and interests of the Kurdish people. It is very damaging and dangerous to

surrender to our enemy's wish of dividing the Kurdish nationalist movement (between North and South) in the name of peace and unity.

Let us work together for Kurdish unity between all of the nationalist organizations and political parties against our enemies and their Kurdish cooperators. We cannot close our eyes and shut our mouths under the cover of peace and unity. We should face the truth as it is. We should pursue peace with justice, dignity and the Kurdish interests.

Dear Friends: I will give you a summary of the KNC San Diego Chapter activities:

We organized and participated in many demonstrations in San Diego and Los Angeles: 1-Participated in a demonstration at the Federal Building in L.A. with the Greeks, Armenians and Kurds. Program included the Keynote speaker: Kathryn Porter. 2-After Saddam's invasion of Erbil in September '96, we held a demonstration to protest this invasion and to protest KDP cooperation with Saddam. We were interviewed by several T.V. and radio stations. Also we held several demonstrations in front of the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles protesting the Turkish invasions and genocide against the Kurdish nation.

We sponsored a cultural booth at the 12th Annual Heritage Awareness Festival of Southwestern College. Thousands of leaflets about the Kurds and Kurdistan were distributed.

We organized and participated in several picnics and Newroz party: 1. We sponsored a picnic reception for the famous Kurdish activists and writers from Armenia: Taymure and Nina Khalil. 2. We participated with "Friend of the Kurds" annual picnic on July 27, 1997, in which over 300 people attended the activity. 3. Sponsored the 1997 Newroz party with other Kurdish groups in which more than 450 people attended. 4. KNC members attended the

PUK party and conference in August 1996. 5. Our members attended the KDP Anniversary party on August 16, 1996 and presented a speech asking the KDP to work for peace and Kurdish unity before it is too late.

We attended many fundraisers and other activities with the Greek and Armenian communities: 1. Attended American Hellenic Council fundraiser in L.A. honoring Roseanne 2. Attended a fund-raising activity for the above group in April 1997. 3. Supported and attended the fundraiser reception in L.A. for Katheryn Porter, organized by Armenian and Greek Communities. 4. Jaff Azboy and Saif Badrakhan were the main speakers at a meeting in San Francisco organized by the Committee Against Repression in Kurdistan.

Currently planning the "Free Leyla Zana Symposium" for August 23, 1998 with guest speaker, U.S. Representative of the 50th District, Bob Filner. It also will include representatives from the Hellenic American council, the Armenian community and others.

"Refugees"

Friends, now I will present a summary about the refugees situation: Between November of 1996 and May of 1997, approximately 6700 refugees arrived to U.S.A. through Guam, after Saddam's invasion of the Kurdish area and Erbil in August 31, 1996. These refugees moved from Kurdistan to Guam, were they stayed for months waiting to be moved to U.S.A. This sudden movement caused many problems particularly in orientation and adopting to the new environment. At the orientation process in Guam the refugees were given some wrong information about the life in U.S.A.

From 6700 refugees, 500 settled in San Diego, they were sponsored by refugee relatives and brought by International Rescue Committee and Catholic Charities. The KNC in cooperation with the above two organizations helped the refugees find relative sponsors, hou-

sing, orientation, jobs, and English schools for the women and youth with the help of "Friends of the Kurds" and the IRC. Another 70 refugees moved to San Diego from other states. This group had the same needs, but most of the cases required additional work.

The Kurdish refugee problem is not limited to San Diego or to the U.S.A. It is not an isolated issue. It is a national and international problem. The Kurdish nation is facing a genocide and forced assimilation by the oppressive countries occupying Kurdistan. In Northern Kurdistan there is a great destruction: the Turkish army destroyed more than 3,000 villages and forced 3 million Kurds to leave their villages to the big cities in Turkey or immigrate to Europe, Canada U.S.A. and Australia. The 13,000 refugees in Attrush Camp were forced to flee to Iraq, deep in the Kurdish area and some of them were forced to go back to Turkey.

In Southern Kurdistan there are more than 700,000 refugees from Kirkuk and other Kurdish cities live in the liberated Kurdish area. Saddam Hussein is still continuing his policy of depopulating Kirkuk and other areas of Kurdistan, while the world community, the U.N., and the U.S.A. are ignoring these facts. As a result, we have a problem of millions of Kurdish refugees spread all over the world in need of help.

Mohammed Sinjari Canada Report

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On May 7th, 1997, a peace conference was held in Ankara by non-governmental organizations. I participated as a KNC delegate. All the delegates arrived in Ankara on the same day, even though the Turkish government tried to ban the conference, going so far as canceling all domestic Turkish flights that day. The conference topic was: "The Kurdish Issue in Turkey and

Trying to find a Peaceful Solution to the Kurdish Situation within Turkey." Because the Turkish Government condemned the conference, most of the time, our meetings took place at the hotel restaurant or in the lobby in small groups. Sometimes the meetings were held outside the hotel and or at other restaurants.

I was not surprised to see that the number of Turkish secret police was equal to (if not more) than the number of NGO members. Nor was I surprised to see the secret police video taping every participant. The secret police were with us as soon as we left our hotel rooms until we returned in the evening, to go to bed. When the Turkish Human Rights Organization invited us many times, to lunch or dinner, there they (the secret police) were again, sitting at the tables next to us and ordering the best foods without paying. They ate three meals a day - for free!

The Turkish newspapers wrote that the conference was extremely unsuccessful, that it failed to reach its goals. Furthermore, they accused the conference of being pro-PKK. All the NGO's saw the real face of Turkey and the kind of so-called democracy Turkey really is. All of us knew the reality of Turkish politics; the Turkish regime does not want to solve the Kurdish question in Turkey! In my opinion, the PKK gained more from the conference and benefited more because the Turkish Government's antics' backfired.

The delegation realized that all the minorities in Turkey (Armenians, Arabs, Christians, etc.) were facing the same type of discrimination as the Kurds. "The Human Rights Organization in Turkey" is only a name. They can do nothing for the people they are supposed to help as long as the Turkish Government's repressive policies continue. I think that the Turkish Government really showed its ugly face to the NGO's attending this conference.

I have been plaguing myself with questions that I can't find the answers to: Why is the U.S. Government continually supporting Turkey regardless of its human rights records? Why aren't the American citizens raising their voices or trying to stop their government from sending money and weapons to Turkey? And last, but not least, I want to know why Turkey isn't at the top of the list for terrorism, since daily, it is terrorizing thirty million Kurds!

On May 10th, the conference moved to Diyarbakir, the largest Kurdish city in Turkey. As soon as we arrived there we could feel the great differences between Kurdish and Turkish cities, and how careless the Turkish government was when it came to Kurdish areas.

When the Kurds in Diyarbakir saw the NGO's they thought that the NGO's coming to their city would bring increased freedom after that. They were very happy and the smiles on their faces clearly demonstrated this. Our good friends - the Turkish secret police, were there as well, to keep us company. At night a Kurdish group invited us to enjoy Kurdish music and dance. The NGO's saw and felt how rich is the Kurdish culture and how friendly and polite the Kurdish people are.

The next day, my son Nawzad and I decided to cross the border into the Kurdish area in Iraq. After all the troubles we met on our way, I finally saw a sign on the border that read "Welcome To Kurdistan". I was so happy that even now I cannot find the words to describe it. But my happiness did not last long and it even turned to sadness and sorrow when we approached the first Kurdish checkpoint at the passport control office.

Ten minutes after our arrival, a sound came from behind the windows telling everybody to get out of the building because it was time for their lunch. This was something normal for my son and I. We walked out after I asked what a

good time would be to return. They told me, "Lunch time is one hour." I automatically added half an hour more because of the bureaucracy that goes on in that part of the world. After an hour and a half we returned to the office and saw a big crowd in front of the passport control office doors which were still closed.

Most of the people were shouting, screaming and knocking on the windows. After two hours from their lunch, they opened the doors. Then it took them half an hour to organize the people between windows: "This window is for Turkish people"; "This window is for non-Iraqi's or Turks"; "This window is for Kurds who are visiting Kurdistan". That was our window. My son Nawzad and I were the only ones in front of that window, however, there was nobody on the other side. We waited and waited and waited for half an hour and still nobody showed up! When I started knocking on the window a person came and asked if he could help me. I showed him my passport and asked him to complete my papers. He replied that it "wasn't his job." I asked him, "what are you doing here then if that isn't your job?" He just walked away.

Finally a lady came and took my passport and asked me to pay fifty dollars in American funds for each passport. This money is going to the families of those Kurds who sacrificed their lives for Kurdistan. I gave the lady one hundred dollars and after some paperwork she sent me to another office to get the papers stamped. When I got there, I was asked to pay one hundred dinars for photocopying each passport (a one page copy). I paid it and came back to the first window. Now I had to wait more than 45 minutes until it opened! When the lady opened the window I pushed the papers to her saying, "Now I know what is holding us back as a nation amongst other nations!"

After my son and I got our passports

back, our first stop was in Zakho city. The day following our entrance into Iraq the border was closed and no one was allowed to enter or exit out of Kurdistan because the Turkish army was entering Kurdistan. The Turks were entering the north with the cooperation and aid of the KDP in order to do battle with the PKK. The situation remained like that on the border for one entire week. Many people lost their airplane tickets because they couldn't leave, and some had to spend their vacations in Silopi and Diyarbakir because they couldn't enter Iraqi Kurdistan.

The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan never changed for the better, it maybe even got worse. Most of the Kurds and non-Kurds alike have lost their faith with the Kurdish leaders. I did not see real peshmerga but I did see many selfish people with the clothes of peshmerga. I recognized these people as "jash" (jash means donkey in Kurdish). Mr. Barzani, God forgive him, used to call the Kurds who helped the enemy fight against the revolution of the Kurds in Iraq, as "jash". They helped the enemy of the Kurds kill the Kurds for some money and other benefits.

The leaders of the Kurdish people in Iraqi Kurdistan are experts in fighting each other, experts in collecting taxes, experts in making money, and very experienced in helping the enemies of the Kurds control the Kurds while keeping their positions and power. The PKK was more anxious to kill KDP members than the Turkish army and KDP members were anxious to kill the PKK to prove to the Turks that they are good friends with the Turks. The real fighting was between the PKK and KDP. The Turkish army was only there to add wood to the fire to build the flames of the fire higher and higher. In the mean time, their mouths were wide open and laughing at them both!

The Turkish government opened Turkish schools in Arbil where they taught students the Turkish language. In the morning before they enter their

classes they sing a Turkish song. Many people in Arbil have now registered themselves as Turks, while others are trying to make connections between their nation's roots and Ataturk's roots. The Turkish government is even helping those people by giving them food, money, and helping them build strong Turkish organizations.

In my opinion, if these things continue for more than two years you will see very few Kurds in Erbil and the whole city will be Turkish. **Thanks to our Kurdish leaders!**

Some of you might accuse me of looking only at the dark side and forgetting or ignoring the bright side. I want to make it clear to all of you that I love my nation of Kurdistan and Kurds more than myself and because of that, I have suffered a great deal. My only goal in life is to see a "united and free Kurdistan." To be even more clear about it, I will tell you that I saw so many dark spots in Kurdistan that it almost made the bright side and good things in Kurdistan disappear, and that is what pushed me to feel so sorry about my nation.

But still I refuse to lose my faith with my nation because I know that the Kurds are bigger and more powerful than the political parties and their enemies, and one day I **know** we will reach our goal!

**Prospect Of Peace
In Southern Kurdistan"
by Hikmat Fikrat**

Mr Chairman, Honored Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon,

What are our present prospects for peace in Southern Kurdistan? That may be the 64 million dollar question!

In order to discuss such a question, let alone answer it, one must first:

a) Analyze the particulars that led to the

hostilities of the past three years, and
b) Identify the limitations of the three years ongoing peace efforts.

A thorough examination of these aspects must be done to be able to assess the present prospects for peace and characterize the modalities and/or mechanisms of implementing a lasting peace. Unfortunately in this short presentation one can only highlight some points.

In reviewing the roots of the present day hostilities, one may find as many reasons for the start, or the continuation, of the armed conflict as the number and diversity of the people one talks to; although most of these reasons given may soon reduced to two major ones, namely the monies from Ibrahim Al-Khalil crossing and the occupation of Hawlair. I submit that both of these factors are facades that cover up much graver issues lying underneath.

Both sides have grievances, and both sides blame the other for starting it or for later flare-ups, and also for the present impasse.

Yet, the non-partisan man on the street blames both sides, as well as the outside powers, for the present impasse and for all the pain, poverty, insecurity, and desperation he has to suffer.

For our purposes, it is really immaterial how or who started or triggered the present situation, since we are not historians, and also because often minor events lead to major conflagration (such as the 1914 Sarejvo murder of the of the Crown Prince of Austria that led to WWI). What is important in this context is the underlying issues and ingredients that may have led to it or that may lead to a major conflict with the slightest pretext of a minor, or sometimes trivial incident.

One may argue that the seeds for the present problems, grievances, and impasse were sewn with the oft celebrated elections and establishment

of the regional government, which was thereafter nurtured, not so much by any one particular side as by the nature of the beast and by the many troubling fundamental issues that lie at the root of it. Issues that eventually led to the armed conflict.

Perhaps it is worthwhile to list a few of the causative fundamental issues and contributing factors that, in my mind, led to this conflict; thus one might say it was caused:

- a) By the political vacuum that existed at the time,
- b) By the lack of democratic infrastructure,
- c) By the need for a constitution or a fundamental law of the land
- d) By the absence of the rule of law,
- e) By the scarcity of human rights' organizations and other democratic institutions,
- f) By inexperience in self-government,
- g) By self-righteousness,
- h) By crippling economic and financial problems,
- i) By human greed and personal interests, and last, but perhaps most important,
- j) By meddling from outside interested parties, regional powers and their mentors.

Undoubtedly, the elections were great and we were all happy and boastful about it. Despite many inadequacy in the electoral law and other blemishes here and there, it was acknowledged by most foreign observers to have been free.

But having free elections and a parliament does not mean that there exists an operating democratic system

that is self-sustaining.

It is representative government and as representative governance goes it is a reflection of the political realities on the ground. This being so, elections in actuality have little to say or to do about sustainable democratic rule unless the basic infrastructure for such a rule is established before hand on the ground, or instituted in the process and in a such a way that it acts not only supportively but also in harmony.

To be sure, a free election is one of the major foundations of democracy and it is the best starting step any aspiring democratic system or state can and should take. However, this very crucial step must be followed by other steps that would insure democratic rule, if such an environment does already exist. A democratic environment of the rule of law would in-and-of-itself enhance, if not ascertain, the resolution of grievances and other forms of conflict by the rule of law before it escalates into armed hostilities to be resolved by the power of the gun. Sadly, this environment did not and does not exist in southern Kurdistan, where the gun still rules:

The **fifty-fifty** regional government (as it was called by many) did not really have a chance to grow and flourish. Even if the arrangements were not fifty-fifty and some other formula had been devised, it still would have had little chance for many of the reasons outlined above. It was doomed to failure from the start. It did not practice or have in place the life-support democratic systems needed for its survival. Its many failings, often conversed about and sometimes aired in the media as political satire, began showing from the first few months. Yet, and to make matters worse, little effort was expended by either side to rectify these problems, not only in the beginning but even after it became abundantly clear to all. They also refused to infuse life back into it when it was on its death bed a year ago. There were other inadeq-

uacies and outright blunders, but in short those are some of the reasons that led to, and is fueling the present armed conflict and impasse.

Despite all these shortcomings that should have been crystal clear to the big democratic powers sponsoring the peace efforts, including the presently sponsored American initiative, no one addressed any of these issues, and even if such things might have been mentioned in passing, nothing took root and nothing was implemented to avert future conflicts.

These are serious limitations that constitute major hurdles towards any lasting peace or even truce. They darkens the future of the Kurdish cause so much more.

Yet even after all the tragedies of the past three years and even in the face of the imminent and impending loss of that precious de facto entity we used to call the regional government, which one might argue has already occurred the with north and south division, yet despite all of that neither side is willing to act as an opposition party and share power and the rule of government through democratic parliamentary practices. Indeed not only neither of the two major parties are willing to do so, but it is also true of the other smaller parties such the Socialist Party, The Islamic Movement or the Communists who are also not willing to entertain the idea.

Sad to say, in Southern Kurdistan, it is still the wild west; the language of the gun and the rule of the almighty dollar. It is not the rule of democracy, democratic practices or diplomacy.

Perhaps this is so because none of the performers in this real drama of life are believers in democratic principles nor do they practice it in their own house, or partisan affairs. Or perhaps only some of them are that way and the others have little choice. Whatever the case, the Kurdish people as a whole

would have to pay the price.

Most Kurds have been so disheartened that they cannot help but reach pessimistic conclusions. Thus:

- Given, the on-and-off hostilities and the outright wars of the past three years,

- Given, the many cease-fires and accords of peace signed in almost every corner of the world, to be violated sometimes days later,

- Given, the resulting stalemates in most of the many negotiations of the past three years that has landed us in this impasse,

- Given, the self-interest and self-oriented indecisiveness of the peace sponsoring outside parties in all of the multilateral meetings and negotiations,

- Given the built-in impotence, biases and dispositions of the present Peace Monitoring Force—PMF (a misnomer to start with),

- Given the lackadaisical nature and half-heartedness of the U.S. sponsored confidence-building measures,

Given all of these, one might resigningly say that the peace process is comatose and requires a cardiac shock and extraordinary measures to resuscitate it, much like what one sees on TV's ER or similar shows. Worse yet, even if our patient i.e. the peace process is resuscitated, it will still need good life supporting systems to be able to survive.

Disappointingly, and as outlined before, one cannot see any sign of these life-support systems out there on the ground and in terms of political reality. Therefore, the prospects for lasting peace look dim. Yet one cannot be all too pessimistic. Actually, there still are good chances for lasting peace if all sides are willing to compromise and forego their partisan interests for the Kurdish cause. Let us hope we can all help in contributing to, and in

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| <p>improving the success potential of these prospects.</p> <p>The state of "No Peace-No War" cannot last for ever and is really in nobody's interest. Let us all resolve to end it by reaching a peaceful accord.</p> <p>And thank you.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Prospect for Peace in Kurdistan How I See It. by Nijyar Shemdin</p> <p>Ladies and Gentlemen,</p> <p>Stanley Hoffmann, in his recently published book, <i>The Ethics and Politics of Humanitarian Intervention</i> wrote, "Internally strong and resilient states are an important precondition for peace and stability. Weak states, especially ones facing the risk of collapse, are synonymous with internal wars and external involvement's in them."</p> <p>All though this was written about the importance of stability in creating sovereign states from the former republics of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia it applies to Kurdistan as well.</p> <p>Prospects for peace in Kurdistan depends on bringing about stability. Stability will come about if there is total agreement on the goal.</p> <p>Our goal is political recognition of United and Free Kurdistan. What is peace?</p> <p>Peace is enjoying a secure, and democratic environment in which all Kurds are able to exercise, freely and without fear, those rights as recognized by the United Nations Charter of Human Rights.</p> <p>Achievement of peace: Peace can only come about by the true and sincere dedication of all Kurds, individuals, party and government, along with demonstrated discipline,</p> | <p>tolerance, self and mutual respect, reconciliation and compromise, coupled with persistence and consistence in implementing long and short term plans.</p> <p>Peace will only come about if Kurds are one in struggling to affirm the goal. No compromise is to be made at all.</p> <p>To bring about peace we must first have plans that are long term and short term. Long-term Plan: To build a new generation who believe in the goal.</p> <p>Educate the people, authorities, friends and enemies. Teach at the grass roots level the importance of unity, solidarity, ethics and principles. Build a society that believes in democratic values and its principles.</p> <p>Shape a political system based on democratic free elections. Protect and develop the human and natural resources of Kurdistan.</p> <p>Kurds must have plans for both internal and external implementation.</p> <p>Internal Plan to: Encourage and support all efforts to keep the present fragile cease-fire.</p> <p>Short term: Discourage media attacks by the various parties. Help free all remaining and new political prisoners unconditionally.</p> <p>Promote building trust and mutual respect between the various parties. "Strength in Unity."</p> <p>Start advisory groups or think tanks on: protecting the rights of the Kurdish people, preserving the Identity of the Kurdish people as a nation, defending the human rights of the Kurdish nation.</p> <p>Create an environment for having free and democratic elections which will lead to forming a truly representative parliament and an executive branch in the form of a government which will</p> | <p>perform under no influence from any political party and will be accountable to parliament.</p> <p>Build a legal and judicial system that is totally independent.</p> <p>Facilitate the freedom of movement of all citizens and goods to all parts of Kurdistan, without discrimination.</p> <p>Establish one strong police force to protect the citizens of Kurdistan.</p> <p>Bring the army and other forces under one command.</p> <p>Prepare for post-sanctions period regarding self-determination and autonomy.</p> <p>Protect Kurdish people from foreign attacks and reprisals.</p> <p>Secure and protect Kurdish territories and its natural resources.</p> <p>Externally: Plans must complement the one drawn for inside Kurdistan. The aim must be to create awareness and build close relations between Kurdish people and its friends as well as attempting to gain new ones. This can be done if we work on:</p> <p>Promoting deeds abroad. Spread information regarding present state of infrastructure, agricultural, economic development, resettlement, demining, education, health and humanitarian needs. Extending invitations to our friends to visit Kurdistan.</p> <p>Establishing coherent student and professor exchange program scheduling trips for youth and students, for example summer camps, study groups, etc. Securing scholarships and grants for students. Promoting awareness of Kurdish culture, history, language, traditions, and literature through various means like print, audio and visual media as well as visiting groups.</p> <p>Keeping the Kurds who live outside,</p> |
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regularly informed of the developments and events in Kurdistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is so much to be done in order to have a lasting peace in Kurdistan which is located in an geopolitical area fraught with sensitivities and enemies.

We cannot afford to fight each other. We have to be smart, pragmatic and professional in all we plan and do.

If we all stay true and sincere to the sacred goal, our petty differences will lose importance. Selfish individual interests will automatically disappear

Unless we do our homework properly, plan our work and work our plan professionally I am afraid we will lose everything we have gained. It is still not too late but we are very close to losing our golden opportunity.

Let's remind ourselves always that rights are not given but taken. We cannot take them if we persist in the present situation.

In conclusion, prospects for peace are not very bright unless we take our destiny and that of the future generations very seriously.

**Speech by Saman Shali
"Prospect for Peace"**

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

I would like to start my speech by defining peace:

1. Peace is "Freedom from civil disturbance".
2. Peace is "A pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at or in a state of enmity".

What prospect of peace are we searching for between the Kurds and their occupiers or between the Kurds?

In the past and until October '93, we

asked our friends to help us to bring peace to Kurdistan, to protect the Kurds from the aggression of the occupiers. Unfortunately, today we are asking the same friends to help us to bring peace between the Kurds, to protect Kurds from Kurds, while our enemies are enjoying and benefiting from the infighting among the Kurds.

Our energy is directed in wrong direction. While we are busy in our internal affair our occupiers increasing the aggression toward the Kurds.

Whom do we blame for our failure:

1. The main stream of the Kurdish people?
2. Our friends?
3. Our enemies?
4. Our intellectuals?
5. Our leaders?

1. The main stream of the Kurdish people, what they can they do in worst economic condition in their lives? To arrange another uprising? But against who, the Kurdish leaders whom they put their fate to lead them for a journey of independence? They are accepting all the sacrifices, for one hope, that the leaders can lead them toward independence. This hope was once ignited their hearts in 1991.

2. Our friends, they are shocked and confused to see the Kurdish leadership bring such a misery to their own people. The popularity, interest and support we had in 1991, from the world community after the popular uprising is fading away because of the infighting among the Kurds and the inability of the Kurdish leadership to accept the rule of parliament and the regional government as sole body to rule the Kurdish affairs.

Many Kurds argue that our friends did not move fast enough to improve the Kurdish economy to be independent of Iraq and neighboring countries; and did not give us any military aids to protect ourselves from our enemy and they do

not have any agenda for the Kurds. This may be true in the economic side but in the military aspect it is not true. If we have enough weapons to kill each other, it should be enough to defend ourselves in many cases. The Kurds do not have a clear agenda, how do we accept others to have an agenda for us?

3. The Kurdish enemies, their goal is clear, to destroy the inspiration and disintegration of our national identity.

4. The Kurdish Intellectual (KI), in general, the KI failed to rise to the occasion to influence the Kurdish leaderships to end the infighting. Having said that, I have to divide the KI into two groups (unfortunately, another division):

I. KI within the parties:

A. The KI failed to influence their leaders to stop the infighting for the benefit of the Kurdish people. They failed to follow the path of Kurdayaty. In the past the party was a vehicle to Kurdayaty, today Kurdayaty is the vehicle for the parties' goals.

B. Staying within their party during this infighting is a direct endorsement of the wrong direction of their leader and the party. In addition they ask the independent KI to take a position during the infighting. The IKI did take a position, they condemn any infighting among the Kurds

2. Independent Kurdish Intellectuals (IKI) (as individuals or within the organizations):

The failure of IKI to unite and to influence the Kurdish leadership to stop the infighting due to the long period of waiting and hoping that this situation will come to end by itself and also they under-estimated their influence on the Kurdish leadership.

Also, we failed to condemn any side not responding to the peace proposal clearly, because we fear that the party

will react and close negotiation door and this compromise was a big mistake specifically this occurred in the meeting which was held by KNC in Washington, D.C.

5. The Kurdish leadership: As a nation we have the right to question the character of our leaders, their morality, human rights records and their belief in democracy.

Leadership is simply defined as the "capacity to lead." Do our leaders have that capacity? Leading a nation is not as leading a group of freedom fighter? Where are they leading us?

We were very happy to have the parliament. My friends, on day one, they told the world: the way we believe in democracy, we decide democracy. We do not honor what the people said? Democracy is what we decide. In the back room. Democracy is not two leaders sitting in one room and agreeing on 50/50 share of power. Democracy will be honored even by one vote that is a true democracy. Also, they agreed to exclude the small parties because they did not have 7% of the vote as agreed before the election. On one hand you discard the result on the other hand you implement the result. Why, this double standard? If this election was an agreement why you do not give the parliament the sole power to run the Kurdish affairs.

The mentality of leaderships the self-centered personality, what they want is the chair, the power, or money. Have they forgotten our bloody history? What more do they want from people from Halabja to Behdenain and the Anafal, can they revisit our history and learn from the mistake which has been done. When will they learn?

In Conclusion: How we can help, if there is a chance left to solve this problem? So many solution come up and I agree with them and support them.

I think the KI have the mass burden of

this problem on their shoulder they are a mass outside. We do not have any influence inside Kurdistan, the KI must bright within the KI within the parties and form a pressure group to form a solid foundation as a nuclei for a Kurdish IK. IKI as a group, we do not have a teeth, we can make noise here and there, but the fact is they are there and they have the power.

If the group failed, then the KI within the parties must make their position clear toward their parties. The KI within the parties must see the benefit of this unity among the KI.

In my heart, I believe that the KI within the parties, they are not blind they can see the benefit from the peace for the Kurdish people as a whole. As I said earlier the party should be a vehicle to Kurdayaty.

Thank You.

Speech by Michael M. Gunter "Turkey, Iran, and the Iraqi Kurds"

Since May 1994, the de facto Kurdish state that was created in northern Iraq shortly after the end of the Gulf War has virtually collapsed due to an on-again, off-again civil war between its two main parties, Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).² As a result of their latest round of fighting from August-October 1996, there are now two separate rump governments in Iraqi Kurdistan: The KDP's in Irbil and the PUK's in Sulaymanya. Inevitably, the resulting instability and power vacuum have drawn in neighboring Turkey and Iran.

Beginning in 1992, Turkey and Iran (along with Syria) held semi-regular tripartite conferences on how to prevent a Kurdish state from forming in northern Iraq. This was because of the precedent such a state would create for their own restless Kurds. Since 1995,

however, no more tripartite conferences have been held as both Turkey and Iran have each begun increasingly to support opposing factions in the Iraqi Kurdish civil war. Turkey, for example, backs Barzani's KDP to win its support in preventing the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)³ from raiding Turkey from its safe houses in KDP territory bordering on Turkey, as well as a way of keeping open the oil pipeline from Iraq to Turkey authorized by the United Nations since 1996 to begin pumping again. Iran, on the other hand, supports the PUK as a way to prevent Turkish influence--along with its NATO ally and Iran's sworn enemy, the United States--from gaining influence on Iran's western border in oil-rich northern Iraq, as well as a way to intervene in its long-standing enemy, Iraq.

Although both Turkey and Iran have helped to broker separate cease-fires between the warring Iraqi Kurdish factions, each saw the other as working at cross purposes in these efforts and thus sought to sabotage the other's initiatives. Following the failure of the U.S.-Turkish sponsored talks in Drogheda, Ireland, in August-September 1995, for example, Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim--the leader of the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite opposition, the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI)--declared that "the talks failed because they were conducted with the aims of the U.S. and Turkey behind them and were against the policies of Iran."⁴ When Iran tried its hand at hosting talks between the two Iraq Kurdish parties from October 5-9, 1995 the Islamic Republic "expressed concern over the meddling of outsiders [Turkey's ally, the United States] in the region which has led to tension and instability."⁵

The renewed fighting between the KDP and PUK in August-October 1996 not only involved Saddam's forces on the side of the KDP (and the United States responding by bombing targets in the south of Iraq) but also implicit Turkish support for the KDP.

while Iran backed the PUK. The large-scale Turkish military interventions into northern Iraq in pursuit of the PKK in March 1995 and again in May 1997 also drew heavy criticism from Iran, especially because of a series of joint Turkish-Israeli protocols that began in 1996 and which Iran saw as a threat. Iran's deep incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan in July and August 1996 in pursuit of rebellious Iranian Kurds and with the help of the PUK, drew heavy criticism from Turkey, and was one of the main catalysts for the renewal of the KDP-PUK civil war from August-October 1996.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze this important, but little-known competition between Turkey and Iran over Iraqi Kurdistan as an aspect of their much larger competition in the post-cold-war Middle East. In so doing, significant light will not only be thrown upon this situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, but also various other facets of Turkish and Iranian foreign policy, as well as the Kurdish question itself.

Background

In surveying its long history Robert Kaplan recently noted: "The Turkish-Persian relationship is among the most complex of civilization rivalries."⁶ It is made all the more complicated today by the secularist-Islamist divide that separates the two neighbors in addition to their competition over oil and transport routes freed up by the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the two states were long able to maintain surprisingly friendly relations because both had calculated that such a policy would serve their respective interests."⁷ Thus, as noted above, Turkey and Iran, along with Syria, held semi-regular tripartite conferences from 1992-1995 on how to meet the common threat of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Although Turkey allowed the United States bases in Turkey to enforce the no-fly zone over northern Iraq--an action Iran strongly opposed because it seemingly

allowed the United States to threaten Iran as well as succor an unwanted proto-Kurdish state bordering on Iran--over-all Iranian-Turkish cooperation continued in the form of a joint security committee established to exchange information and carry out inspections relating to border security. In the spring of 1994, Iran turned over 14 PKK guerrillas to the Turks and did not allow the Turkish bombing of the PKK's Zaleh camp in Iraqi Kurdistan near the Iranian border--which killed 20 Iranians--to upset their relations.

For its part, Turkey agreed to crack down on the activities in Turkey of the Mojahedin-e Khalg, an Islamic socialist organization violently opposed to the Iranian government. Turkey also did not support U.S. President Bill Clinton's call in May 1995 for his country's allies to join the United States in cutting off all trade and investment with Iran in order to further the U.S. policy of double containment of Iran and Iraq. Despite its long-standing alliance with the United States, Turkey seemed determined to at least follow a policy of critical dialogue with Iran. Necmettin Erbakan's elevation in June 1996 to become modern Turkey's first Islamist prime minister, however, ironically initiated a series of steps that by attempting to draw the two states still closer together threatened instead to end their cooperation. The on-going civil war in Iraqi Kurdistan proved to be one of the catalysts in this process.

One of Erbakan's first acts as prime minister was to journey to Iran where he negotiated a \$23 billion deal for Iranian natural gas and called for talks among Muslim Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Iraq whose goal would be to replace the forces of the U.S.-backed Operation Provide Comfort or Poised Hammer enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraqi Kurdistan. Erbakan also called for a new Islamic trading organization (the so-called Developing Eight or D-8 that prominently included

both Turkey and Iran) that would seemingly reorient Turkey away from its western military and economic partners.

These initiatives upset Turkey's secularist military whose role as the ultimate defender of Turkey's secular democracy is constitutionally guaranteed through Turkey's National Security Council (MGK).⁸ Erbakan's Iranian gas deal also seemingly flew in the face of the new U.S. Iran-Libya Sanctions Act or D'Amato Law sanctioning any state investing more than \$40 million in Iran's oil and gas industry, and thus further troubled Turkey's secularists who sought U.S. support for eventual membership in the European Union.

Erbakan's initial moves toward friendship soon foundered, however, amid fresh Turkish accusations from the military about PKK infiltrations from Iran, made the by the new foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, who seemed to be working at cross-purposes with her coalition partner, Erbakan. The renewal of the Iraqi Kurdish civil war in August 1996--in which Iran supported the PUK, while Turkey sided with the KDP and thus implicitly Iraq--also worked against a Turkish-Iranian agreement on the basis Islamic unity.

Criticizing the Turkish proposal at this time to establish a security belt along its borders with Iraq to prevent PKK infiltration into Turkey and the subsequent "impudence"⁹ of a Turkish incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan, an adviser to Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani denounced "the covetous eyes of the Ankara statesmen, which are focused on the oil resources in northern Iraq." The Iranian spokesman charged that Turkey considered its actions justified because of its support for the U.S. forces of Operation Provide Comfort: "This policy has practically led to a buildup of military instability in the region, the intensification of the civil

war in northern Iraq, the violation of Iraq's territorial integrity, and the further weakening of the Baghdad government.

In December 1996, Rafsanjani visited Ankara, but Erbakan's proposal that Turkey and Iran cooperate in the defense industry field was greeted with total disdain by the Turkish military which even refused an Iranian military delegation access to the F-16 and CASA aircraft producer Turkish Aerospace Industry premises frequently visited by foreign delegations in the past. The United States breathed a sigh of relief that its NATO ally would not be sharing defense arrangements with a state it considered to be supportive of terrorist activity aimed at NATO and the West. Israel too was pleased that its incipient defense relations with Turkey would not be nipped in the bud. In a thinly veiled critical reference to the United States, Israel, and the Turkish military, Rafsanjani declared: "There are centers of power in the world who are not interested in Turkey and Iran maintaining cordial relations and we can see the footprints and traces of ill intentions in some of the incidents occasionally taking place for the purpose of spoiling our relations."¹⁰ Expressing "concern" about northern Iraq, the Iranian president added that "Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq should cooperate seriously in order to establish tranquillity and peace in the region and see to it that this region does not serve as a hotbed of crisis or instability for our countries."

In February 1997, Iran's ambassador to Turkey, Mohammed Reza Bagheri, attended a controversial "Jerusalem night" in the Ankara suburb of Sincan--a stronghold of Erbakan's Refah (Welfare) Party--where he publicly expressed support for efforts to introduce Sharia or Islamic law to Turkey. A few days later the Turkish military drove dozens of tanks through the streets of Sincan in an apparent demonstration of strength against the

Islamists. Mutual diplomatic expulsions between Turkey and Iran followed.

Later that very month, General Cevik Bir (whose name literally means "vigorous one")--the deputy chief of staff and known in the west for earlier commanding the United Nations forces in Somalia--journeyed to Washington along with Abdullah Gul, an important Erbakan deputy. There Bir (who strikes a rather impressive physical appearance, speaks good English, and even expresses some what progressive positions on the Kurdish issue) stole the Islamist Gul's thunder by condemning the rise of religious power in Turkey, and directly accusing Iran of sponsoring anti-Turkish terrorism as well as trying to destroy the secular Turkish state: "The fact that the PKK organization carries out terrorist activities against Turkey, through Iran, constitutes an important problem in our relations with this country."¹¹

Shortly afterwards, the military continued its campaign against the Erbakan government by presenting a list of some 18 demands in the National Security Council to halt the creeping Islamization in Turkish society it accused Erbakan of fomenting. These directives included a ban on pro-Sharia propaganda, tighter restrictions on religious dress, measures to prevent Islamist militants from entering the state administration and military, the limitation of the Imam Hatip religious secondary schools, and curbs on the sell of pump-action shotguns reputedly being bought by Islamists. An unpublicized tenth demand dealt with the prevention of alleged Iranian attempts to destabilize Turkey.

In order to protect our nation from a backward regime, and from an exploitation of religion, which would lead in all likelihood to conflict, the activities, attitude, and conduct of the Iranian Islamic Republic against our country's regime must be obstructed; to this aim, but without destroying our neighborly and economic relations

with Iran, a package of precautionary measures to prevent detrimental and injurious activities must both be prepared and put into application.¹²

In addition to this anti-Iranian directive, a report by the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT) declared that there are five major militant Islamist groups active in Turkey whose members receive training in heavy arms in Iran and financial support from that country.¹³ The Turkish Parliamentary Border Security Research Committee added its report concerning the location of PKK training and logistic support camps in Iranian territory.¹⁴ This report detailed increasing incidents of border violations, attacks, and mine-laying activities by PKK guerrillas infiltrating from Iran despite the agreement signed between Iran, Turkey, and Iraq on September 15, 1993, to prevent illegal crossings. In addition, the report criticized Erbakan for telling the Iranians while he had been in Tehran the previous summer that he did not believe MIT intelligence reports concerning these Iranian actions. A few weeks later General Kenan Deniz, the chief of the general staff domestic security department, declared that "Iran is using terrorism for its political ends [and] giving logistical support to the PKK and also supports fundamentalist Islamic organizations . . . to harm the established order in Turkey."¹⁵

In the middle of March 1997, Iranian foreign minister Ah Akbar Velayeti arrived in Ankara in an attempt to soothe matters. Erbakan offered apologies for any misunderstandings which he blamed on the press, but Demirel informed Velayeti that Iranian officials should not interfere in Turkey's internal affairs. In Tehran, Defense Minister Mohammed Furuzande blasted Turkey "For its cooperation with the Zionist regime, which is threatening the Islamic world."¹⁶ Furuzande also asserted that Turkey had "lost much world prestige"

because of its cooperation with Israel and added that Iran was counting on Erbakan to obstruct the implementation of any agreements with the Jewish state. A commentary appearing in a pro-regime daily supervised by Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, added that Turkey "had bid farewell to Islamic traditions."¹⁷

At the beginning of April 1997, Bir pushed the Turkish military's anti-Islamist campaign further when he declared that combating anti-secular Islamist forces had become the military's top priority, more pressing even than the on-going struggle against Kurdish separatism that had been occupying the military for more than a decade.¹⁸ General Deniz added that "allowing free rein to religious extremism . . . would be tantamount to the state committing suicide."¹⁹

Turkish incursions into Iraqi Kurdistan

On May 14, 1997, Turkey sent a reported 50,000 troops--into northern Iraq in an attempt to destroy PKK units sheltering there. Although the largest to date, this intervention was simply the latest in a long series of such actions taken against the backdrop of an involved history. This time, moreover, the growing Iranian role too came to the forefront as it had never before.

The Republic of Turkey had only given up its territorial claim to northern Iraq (Mosul) in 1925 after a protracted dispute with Britain which held the area as a mandate from the League of Nations.²⁰ Although recognizing the new situation, Turkey has continued to view what happened as having been forced upon it in a moment of weakness.

During the 1980s, the Iraqi government was unable to enforce its authority in Iraqi Kurdistan due to its terrible struggle against Iran. Accordingly, the Turkish and Iraqi governments had an agreement which allowed the Turkish

military to make frequent incursions into northern Iraq in pursuit of PKK units harboring there. Although this agreement lapsed following the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, Turkey began a new series of military incursions into the territory following the end of the Gulf War in 1991. This Turkish action was taken because PKK units once again were using the resulting power vacuum in Iraqi Kurdistan as a base from which to raid into Turkey.

These Turkish incursions were facilitated by Turkey's association with the United States enforcement of the no-fly zone over Iraqi Kurdistan following the Gulf War. They were only begrudgingly accepted by Iraq and the Iraqi Kurds themselves, however, as there was little they could do in practice to prevent them. Despite their frequency and intensity, moreover, there was also little the Turks themselves seemed able to do to eliminate the PKK from northern Iraq as the PKK simply melted away whenever the Turks came after them. Turkey blamed this situation on a variety of factors including aid and sanctuary given the PKK by Syria and Iran, among others.

In October 1992, both Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds supposedly joined forces in an attempt to evict the PKK from its sanctuaries in northern Iraq, but the PKK's supposed surrender to Talabani's PUK turned out to be more of a window dressing to appease the Turks than a defeat of Ocelan's organization. In March 1995 Turkey sent some 35,000 troops into northern Iraq in another futile attempt to wipe the PKK out. By this time the Iraqi Kurds themselves had fallen into a bitter civil war between the KDP and the PUK that was facilitating the PKK's activities. Given their own perceived interests, therefore, the KDP tacitly supported the Turkish intervention since it was helping them to rid their territory of PKK intruders. On the other hand, the PUK--already more

sympathetic to the PKK than was the KDP and located to the southeast and thus not troubled as much by PKK units the PUK denounced Turkey's actions, a position shared by Iran which did not want a NATO ally of its sworn enemy, the United States, approaching its western border in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Similarly, both the PUK and Iran tacitly supported the PKK when it attacked the KDP in the fall of 1995. During this KDP-PKK fighting, the PUK saw the PKK as a tacit ally against its enemy, the KDP, while Iran viewed the PKK as fighting to prevent a pro-Turkish KDP from asserting its influence all through Iraqi Kurdistan. Although Iran had historically supported the more conservative KDP rather than the PUK, Tehran began to switch its backing once the KDP seemed to be coming to an understanding with Turkey.

To further counter the developing Turkish-KDP understanding, Iran--in agreement with the PUK--deployed near Sulaymaniya as many as 5,000 fighters from the SAIRI's Badar Forces in November 1995, as noted above--these forces were Iraqi Shiites opposed to the Iraqi government and supported by Iran. Despite the assurances of Iran's deputy foreign minister Alaaddin Brujerdi that this deployment would not upset the balances between the KDP and PUK²¹ neither Turkey or the KDP could have been pleased.

In June 1996 the situation was further inflamed when the KDP killed an important member of the Surchi family (which led the tribally oriented Kurdistan Conservative Party) during a squabble over their ultimate allegiances in the KDP-PUK struggle for mastery in Iraqi Kurdistan. What is more in late July 1996, the PUK allowed some 2-3,000 Iranian troops to pursue rebellious Iranian Kurds deep into PUK territory in return for Iranian arms. The KDP denounced this action in no uncertain terms:

The leaders of the PUK . . . have perpetrated a treasonous and shameful deed. . . . Through this military coordination, the PUK leaders want to realize material and military gains to use in the Kurdish strife."²² Iran's moves clearly, strengthened the PUK, while weakening the KDP and thus Turkey. Following the outbreak of renewed KDP-PUK fighting in mid-August 1996 and alarmed at the turn of events, the KDP reached an, incredibly agreement with Saddam that allowed Barzani to retake Irbil from Talibani--action in part justified by both Barzani and Saddam in terms of foreign Iranian support for the PUK. Amid PUK claims of further Iraqi support, the KDP quickly followed up its newly won advantage and chased the PUK to the Iranian frontier. Seeking to counter its rival's charges of collusion with Saddam, the KDP released documents reportedly written by Talabani indicating the extent of collaboration with Iran.²³ Although the PUK denied that it had received tangible military support from Iran while the KDP tried to downplay the extent of support given it by Baghdad, in truth both Iraqi Kurdish parties had upped their ante by soliciting outside aid in their on-going civil war. .

Following the U.S. counterstrikes against Baghdad and given Iraq's pariah status, Saddam was quickly forced to pull back his overt support for the KDP. Turkey--alarmed over the fighting and resulting chaos that were allowing the PKK to strengthen its position in northern Iraq--announced that it too would intervene in Iraqi Kurdistan by establishing a security zone extending several miles into Iraqi territory to interdict PKK raids into Turkey. Iran called on Turkey to "immediately abort the plan,"²⁴ and recalled that "some political observers . . . consider the expansionist power lust of some power factions in Turkey and the multiplicity of its domestic problems . . . as the basis for Ankara's decision to attack northern Iraq."²⁵ The reference was to Turkey's former

claim to Mosul [Iraqi Kurdistan] and its oil resources, as well as Turkey's incipient domestic struggle between the Islamists and the secularists. Indeed Tansu Ciller's DYP wing of the Turkish government coalition was sympathetic, to the U.S. position on Iraqi Kurdistan in such matters as the continuation of Operation Provide Comfort, while the Islamist prime minister, Necmettin Erbakan, not only opposed them, but sought active cooperation with Iran. Surveying the wreckage of his domain, Iran's new ally, Jalal Talabani, for his part, declared: "In addition to Baghdad, we hold the Turkish Governments responsible for everything that has taken place in the area. We do not have friendly relations with the Turkish Government anymore."²⁶

Nevertheless, by the end of October 1996, the PUK proceeded to regain practically all the territory it had lost the previous month. Once again the KDP blamed Iran: "The Iranian Islamic regime has stepped up its direct intervention in support of Talabani's PUK and has sent several thousand new troops with heavy weapons across the border."²⁷ Barzani himself declared that "Suleymenyeh was taken with the help of Iranian guards, Iranian weapons, and Iranian bombs."²⁸ Sami Abdurrahman, a top aide of Barzani, claimed that "one of the reasons for these [Iranian] attacks is our friendship with Turkey. We call on Turkey to help us."²⁹

The so-called Ankara process began at the end of October 1996. It consisted of renewed mediation attempts by the United States, Turkey, and Britain to end the KDP-PUK civil war. Although further attempts were made in January and May 1997, the Ankara process failed to progress beyond achieving anything more than another cease-fire. The opposition of Iran proved a major reason for this state of affairs: "The mediation attempts made by the the U.S. Britain and Turkey are not destined to settle the Kurdish issue . . .

As a matter of fact, none of the above countries has a bright record from the standpoint of the Kurdish people."³⁰ Alluding to its opposition Tehran further explained that the United States "lacks the necessary means and instruments to mediate in Iraqi Kurdistan and does not have the ability to guarantee the cease fire and its continuation."³¹ Further Iranian commentaries denounced the Ankara process as an attempt by the United States to establish "a spying base and spring board to carry out its malicious schemes in the region,"³² and a concerted effort [by] the US and the Zionist regime . . . to create another Israel in the Kurdish areas."³³

For its part the peaceforce of some 1,000 local Turkman eventually recruited to separate the KDP and PUK forces was denounced by the PKK as a Turkish attempt "to create another Cyprus in the region"³⁴ and a Turkish occupationist Forces."³⁵ In these characterizations the PKK was clearly espousing a position similar to that held by the Iranians. In the end, however, the balance between the two warring Iraqi Kurdish factions virtually returned to the status quo that had existed before the eruption of the previous summer. As another temporary cease-fire settled over Iraqi Kurdistan, the danger of an immediate Turkish-Iranian involvement receded.

The Turkish military intervention of May 1997 into Iraqi Kurdistan in pursuit of the PKK, however, quickly led to a new low in Turkish-Iranian relations. Against the background of earlier Turkish allegations concerning Iranian support for domestic Islamist forces within Turkey itself, the Turkish military now accused Iran of not only supplying bases, transportation, medicines, hospitals, and uniforms for the PKK, but also the very S-7 heat-seeking missiles which the PKK, in an unprecedented action, used to down two Turkish helicopters over Iraqi Kurdistan.³⁶ Turkey also claimed that Iran--as well as Syria and

Iraq--was mobilizing its forces along its borders with Iraqi Kurdistan in response to the Turkish incursion. In addition, the Kurdish Hizbollah, Kurdistan Conservative Party, and Kurdistan Social Democratic Party--all reputed to have close ties to Iran--joined the PKK in battle against the Turkish-allied KDP around Haj Omran near the Iranian border.

Iran quickly denounced the Turkish invasion as not only a (violation of all international laws but the sovereign right and territorial integrity of the Iraqi Muslim nation. "37 - Turkish accusations of Iranian support for the PKK were a joint conspiracy by the Turkish military and Israel,"38 and fabrications "by Turkey's army against Iran" 39 which constituted "anti-Islamic performances of the army-led secularist elite" an "crimes they are committing with their expansionist goals."

Such reactions were clearly intensified by Iran's opposition to Turkey's growing military ties to Israel. Indeed just prior to Turkey's cross-border incursion in May 1997, Turkish defense minister Turha Tayan, had met in Israel with his counterpart, Yitzhak Mordechai, where they had conferred about "common enemies" which were officially identified as terrorism and fundamentalism, but understood by most as referring to Syria and Iran, respectively. Turkish General Cevik Bir immediately followed Tayan's visit to assure the Jewish state of the Turkish military's continuing commitment to their newly established relationship.

In an attempt at damage control, the Iranian deputy foreign minister, Alaaddin Brujerdi, made a hasty trip to Ankara where he adamantly denied claims that his country was supporting the PKK. However, Brujerdi also conveyed Iran's concern at the presence of Turkish troops in Iraqi Kurdistan, denounced the attempts to sabotage Turkish-Iranian relations, and asked

Turkey to take necessary measures against Iranian opposition groups active in Turkey.

In addition to its problems with Iran, so bad had relations between the Islamist-led coalition government and Turkey, the secular-minded military in Turkey become by this time, that the military did not even inform the government that it had invaded Iraqi Kurdistan until the operation was already twelve hours old. The reason given for this lack of coordination was the military's fear that "we were worried about the information we give leaking to the ether side."40 In other words, the Turkish military was afraid that the Turkish government would betray the state. Indeed once the invasion was on, the military also accused the government of withholding funding for the operation to cause it to fail and thus make the military look incompetent before the Turkish public. The Islamist government responded that the Turkish military was trying to divert the attention of the Turkish people from domestic problems by launching the invasion, a charge supported by Iran.41 Never before had the institutions of the Turkish state failed to unite fully behind the war against the PKK. Indeed within a month of this confrontation, the military had forced Erbakan's government to resign.

Turkey entered Iraqi Kurdistan not only to curtail the PKK's ability to raid southeastern Turkey from its formidable bases in Iraqi Kurdistan, but also to help Barzani's KDP stabilize its control over its domain in the area. Thus fortified, Barzani's would then be able to prevent PKK raids into Turkey. To explain its support for the Turkish actions, the KDP declared:

"The unjustified PKK presence in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991 has caused numerous difficulties for the Regional Government and has declared large border areas off bounds for the local authorities, established military zones

and have conducted cross-border military activity that has harmed the interest of [the] local population. The PKK has never recognized the legitimate authority of the Kurdistan Regional Government and has behaved as if it is the authority and has intervened in the administrative functions, levied taxes and intimidated the local population.] The PKK has behaved as an alternative authority and has denied the KDP the right to exercise its authority in the border areas inside Iraqi Kurdistan. Therefore we would not feel sorry for their removal by whatever force.42

Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK, threatened that the KDP would "be annihilated should you continue with your collaboration. Give up your dirty alliance at once."43 He also argued the Turkish "operation was launched through the cooperation secured between the United States, Israel, and Turkey." Its aim was "not only to hit the PKK, but Iran as well." Senidin (Parmaksiz Zeki) Sakik, one of Ocalan's hard-line field commanders, added that the Turkish incursion was aimed against the Iranian and Arab peoples. Israel is trying to implement its plans to encircle Iran, Iraq and Syria. The goal of the Turkish state is to overcome its domestic problems through this military operation and establish a buffer zone just as the one established by Israel in Lebanon.44

For his part, Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK, added that "the Ankara negotiations [between the KDP and the PUK] were foiled on 14 May because of the Turkish-Barzani collusion and their agreement to invade Iraqi Kurdistan on the pretext of chasing terrorists."45 Talabani added that he considered this invasion "a violation of Iraqi sovereignty, Iraqi national stability, and a breach of international law. In taking such action Turkey had as one of its "foremost aims" the intention of "entrenching the strength and authority of Barzani." Thus, "Turkey

has discarded its neutral role and is now an ally of Barzani. On the other hand, Talabani concluded that "our ties with Iran are good."

Conclusion

By the end of June 1997, the large-scale Turkish incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan that had been launched a month earlier seemed to be winding down with mixed results. On the one hand, Turkey and its KDP ally had apparently dealt the PKK heavy blows in its supposed Iraqi Kurdish safehouse. On the other hand, the PKK--by utilizing guerrilla tactics of retreat and avoidance, as well as the apparent aid of Iran, the PUK, Syria, and others--had survived to fight another day. In addition, disagreements between the Turkish military and civilian government over the incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan had served as one of the final catalysts to the Turkish military's engineering of a de facto coup that had resulted in the resignation of the Islamist drawn government.

Finally, the quagmire of Iraqi Kurdistan has drawn Turkey and Iran into their sharpest confrontation yet in a relationship heretofore surprisingly amicable despite their bitterly opposed domestic systems and obviously conflicting foreign policies.

Although the multiplicity of uncertain variables makes prediction a haphazard endeavor--Turkey and Iran, for example, both seemed determined to continue their multi-billion dollar natural gas deal--It seems likely that the Turkish-Iranian factor in the Iraqi Kurdish civil war would continue its downward slide into continuing difficulties and increasingly bitter confrontations, if not overt conflict. Turkey's fledgling relationship with Israel will also continue to create difficulties. A similar prognostication seemed in order for the future of Turkey's secular-Islamist relationship so attenuated by the confrontation with Iran over Iraqi Kurdistan and

susceptible to continuing Iranian interest and possible interference.

Speech by Barham Salih, PUK Representative

Friends, I am very grateful for this opportunity. It's always a pleasure to attend the KNC Conference. I am not only meeting friends but also having the opportunity to engage in a different discussion the state of affairs in our homeland. It is very difficult act to follow after friend, Dr. Michael Gunter, who presented an overview and regional dynamics of the situation and I have to admire your ability to master all of these names: PKK, PUK, KDP without mixing them up.

Friends, it's no secret, it is more than disappointing, what is happening in Kurdistan and particularly in Iraqi Kurdistan. We had a historic opportunity that came to our people in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the uprising of our people. For a while, we all thought that the historic injustice that befelled our people would be redressed and our people at the end of the twentieth century, will be accorded their right to self-government. And at the end of the twentieth century we thought they will be shining example for the rest.

Much of the hopes and dreams and desires have proven to be not so rosy, the internal fighting should be the main theme of this conference in terms of discussing it, in terms of assessing it, in terms of finding ways to overcome it, costing our people a great opportunity and has undermined the credibility of the Kurdish nationalist movement. Not only in Iraqi Kurdistan but it is safe to say, throughout the Middle East.

I will not dwell unduly on the past but I'd like to present you a theme that aims to find a way to get beyond this predicament. And, that is to pressure the leadership particularly those who are refusing to heed the warnings and stop doing what they are doing and give our people and our peoples' movements

a chance.

In the last five years, I have attended the KNC Conferences and since the out-break of the fighting, much has been said in persuasion, by attempting to convince the leaders, trying to explain to them the futility of the situation and the importance of returning to the status-quo. I would submit to you Ladies and Gentlemen that trying to convince or explain the situation doesn't go a long way because we are talking to our people who know and see the situation and are not so foolish.

What is at play here is interests, whether it is financial or whatever and it seems to be a decision by some that the status-quo is good for them and until they know that it's too costly for them politically or otherwise.

One means of pressure or avenue of getting attention is a wider, larger public campaign, particularly if by the Kurds, to hold them responsible.

I'm not going to speak in generalities here. The Iraqi Kurdistan has two parties to the conflict and these two parties: PUK and the KDP. Peace requires the cooperation of both sides, peace cannot be imposed or pursued by one side. However war can be dictated by one side and that is a fact to remember always. I see in the discussion here or in many circles of intellectuals in the Diaspora, this tendency of blaming the Kurdish people for what is happening there. I see myself as a member of the PUK leadership, the PUK is also responsible for what is happening there. However, there are mistakes and there monumental! acts of piracy leading to the situation that we are in right now. I have to tell you that the PUK from my vantage point, from my involvement in a whole host of rounds of negotiations, PUK has always said "yes," to every peace initiative including the KNC agreement, including the Paris agreement, which I see my

distinguished colleagues: Kak Najmaldin, Kak Kendal, Kak Fouad, we said yes and signed it, we said yes, to the initiative of the Americans, we said yes other Kurds in Europe, we said yes to the Iranians and to the initiative of the Iraqi Opposition, yet Mr. Barzani (KDP) refuses to do anything that will address the situation and end the quagmire.

Why is Mr. Barzani doing what he is doing? If I am looking into the situation from the point of Mr. Barzani, I will continue to the present course of action, I will never change it. I think he does not hear, loud and clear, from the Kurdish People, that what he's doing is detrimental and will cost him his credibility.

Mr. Barzani today is getting a million dollars per day and our people in Salaimania, in Zakho and Dohuk and Kirkuk are living in deprivation and destitution. This monumental! corruption has nothing to do with PUK activities, even if the PUK has a peace settlement with Mr. Barzani. We as Kurds who want to see the role of peace, we want to have a civil society, if tomorrow Mr. Tabani were to do the same thing, we would stand up and say that this is not acceptable!

I went to Kurdistan recently, we have more than 700,000 displaced people, yet KDP, under Barzani's Leadership is pocketing a million dollars a day. Some people say the PUK also has corruption. Yes, I can tell you that for sure, like any other movement or institution, we have to fight against corruption. But you cannot equate the level of corruption in the PUK to this mounumental act of piracy that has taken place further north by the KDP. Beyond that, we have shown, as I've said, in the PUK, we have the willingness to accept every peace proposal that has come our way.

I don't think the KDP has done that, instead, at every opportunity, are ready to compromise with our enemies or

with the Countries that oppress us. That seems to be the sole objective. In 1994 & 1995, he brought the Iranians in. In 1996, at a time when there were peace negotiations in London, the meeting was hosted by the Americans in London, and we were on the verge of breakthrough. between Talbani and Barzani, when, of course, the Iraqi's tanks were called into Erbil. And at the end of the 20th century and our only symbols of national identity are that little Parliament we have in Erbil, to be conquered by the Iraqi army. A year or so later, Turkish troops invited in. I believe the message from this conference, to tell Barzani is, that it is easier to compromise with your own people, with the PUK rather than dragging the Turks in and on another day dragging in the Iranians and Saddam Hussein. Enough is enough!

I say this is the context of the PUK - KDP rivalry. I believe and I will only consider the following terms: In order to make sure that our leaders have understood that our people won't stand for this kind of action that has been there, you have to be forceful and vocal in terms of denouncing these acts that are treachery to the Kurdish people. When you do that you can also with legitimacy criticize the PUK, the PKK, the Kurdish parties everywhere. If you do not stand-up and be counted in effective way. I'm not talking about generalities. Tomorrow the PUK or some people in the PUK will say o.k., what did the Barzani do, Why I do not go and ask the Iraqis this question? Or, I would like to propose this question to you. It may not be analytical, as Mr. Gunter's presentation. But I say from the Kurdish perspective and I say that at the end of the twentieth century, our people deserve better. And, we are all responsible for the fate that we have today here in Iraqi Kurdistan. We can all work together to give the peace a chance and those who are responsible for sustaining the status quo, to hear loud and clear that their action will never go unpunished.

Transcribed

**Kendal Nezan:
Address to the KNC in Washington**

Dear Friends,

It is always a great pleasure for me to meet you again at the KNC. I am very happy to be here with you for the 10th anniversary of your organization. Let me congratulate you warmly for this anniversary and wish long live to KNC.

At each congress we enjoy the pleasure of meeting old friends and thinking together of ways of strengthening our links and community organizations so as to better serve our fellow countrymen in Kurdistan and their struggle for physical and cultural survival.

I say struggle for survival, and not the Kurdish Cause or the Struggle for Freedom and democracy because our task here is not one of telling one another stories than sound fine but are obviously divorced from reality. Since 1994, it has become more and more difficult to talk about the Kurdish cause while the Kurdish chiefs who are supposed to embody that cause on the spot ally themselves with the worse oppressors of the Kurdish people in order to eliminate their rivals. The struggle for the supremacy of their group eclipses any consideration of the higher interests of the Kurdish nation for these people who, whatever they may say, have alas, become the tools and the pawns of anti-Kurdish and oppressive regimes in Ankara, Baghdad Damascus and Tehran. Their bloody infighting has already caused thousands of deaths in the population and great moral and material damage.

The great majority of the Kurdish population has lost confidence in its leaders who, consequently, have lost much of their legitimacy to quote Churchill's famous words about the Eastern European countries, the people are voting with their feet - they are trying, by whatever means they can, to leave a country which seems to them to be inexorably sinking, to be taking the road to hell. This is clear in Iraqi

Kurdistan, but also in Turkish Kurdistan where, over the last few years, 5 million Kurds have had to emigrate towards the West. The population of 3,185 villages forceably evacuated and largely destroyed by the Turkish Army represents 370,000- that is barely 7.5% of the Kurds who have been displaced and or have emigrated. The facts are there, unassailable and without appeal. By resorting to armed struggle allegedly to free the Kurdish people, the so-called saviors have played at being wizards apprentices. They may emerge richer and with more powerful parties, militias or propaganda machines, but the Kurdish lands are devastated, the population is scattered, shattered, its very survival undermined.

A few years ago, abroad, the Kurdish image still aroused a great deal of sympathy because we were considered victims, whom people were willing to regard as freedom fighters. The bloodthirsty struggles for power, the cynical and execrable political games played by the Iraqi Kurdish parties, the violent and totalitarian actions of the PKK in the heart of Europe have dramatically changed this image. Now, when one says Kurd, the first picture it conjures up for the average European is that of political tribalism crossed with extremist violence and even terrorism. A recent cartoon in the French daily *Le Monde* clearly illustrates this image. Under the title of "conflicts of the 21st Century" we see the pro-Iranian Kurds fighting the pro-Iraqi Kurds who in turn are fighting the Kurds of Turkey backed by Damascus Teheran and Baghdad... The image is equated with that of the Afghan factions, the Yugoslav militias, the Hutus and Tutsis and various Caucasian tribal and ethnic groups tearing one another to pieces. Another sign of the degradation of the setbacks Kurdish image in public opinion and the confusion engendered in Western minds by these interminable clan and factional wars in the East, is a recent Reuters dispatch on the success of the Talabans in Afghanistan with a photo of Jalal Talibani! And this was

disseminated on the Internet.

As you know, it takes decades to buildup a positive image of a cause and only a few weeks of irresponsible actions to destroy it. Great and powerful countries may, for a while, not give a damn for their image in the Western media. But, for a people like the Kurds, placed in a difficult geographic situation as they are, the support of Western public opinion is vital for the success of their struggle and even for their survival. But for this fear of the public opinion and States of the West, Turkey wouldn't hesitate to massacre hundreds of thousands of Kurds as, in the past, they massacred over a million Armenians; and the two million Iraqi Kurds fleeing from Saddam Hussein's troops would, no doubt, still be refugees huddled in Iranian or Turkish camps under the most humiliating conditions.

All those who, like you and I have devoted years and a great deal of time and energy to lobbying in support of the Kurdish cause and tried, by their writings and their actions through the media, to contribute to the creation of a positive Kurdish image in public opinion, have, today, every reason to feel disappointed and discouraged.

But do we, for all that, have the right to abandon the struggle, to admit our powerlessness in the face of the Kurdish war lords and to despair of the future? Many Kurdish intellectuals and Western friends of the Kurdish cause are today, in just that state of mind, and one can understand them without, perhaps, following their example. We can be angry at the Kurdish chiefs and their behavior, but it wasn't for them that we took up the Kurdish cause. The cause of 30 million Kurds in the Near East, despite temporary setbacks, despite misfortunes and disasters, the mistakes and crimes of this politico-military faction or the other, that cause will survive the war lords. And it is in times of crisis and general discouragement that we must be present and not abandon the population. We

must be present to analyze the situation without complacency or indulgence, to stimulate the exchange of ideas, to prepare intellectually and morally, for the future - in brief to take part in the building of a free and democratic future for our nation. That is a worthy and noble task for any intellectual for any Kurdish man or woman conscious of their civic responsibilities for the collective destiny of their people and their country.

I think that the people taking part in this Congress have passed the stage of aggressive and destructive activism. For us the question is not to criticize one group or the other in a partisan spirit. Condemnations may help ease our conscience, may express our dismay but do not solve the basic issues. Whether we like it or not, since we do not have our own state with recognized borders, we are *all* in the same boat. A boat that is under attack, which is leaking and could at any moment be wrecked, and on which petty chiefs are fighting to be captain, endangering the safety of the boat and its passengers. If the boat sinks we all are in danger of perishing or suffering lasting damage. Which is why, unlike people struggling within a recognized state to change their political regime, we Kurds, who have no permanent political homeland, must act with a great sense of responsibility, which is why our criticisms must, as far as possible cut our losses, distinguish the general and sociological causes of the mistakes of people and groups. We must first of all admit that a large part of our disappointment comes from excessive illusions which we have nourished about Kurdish leaders, despite what we know of their tortuous past. We expected war lords who have spent most of their lives commanding and deciding on their own, surrounded by simple expectants without any breadth of vision, who have had to compromise and come to terms with the worst dictatorships of the region, to then behave like upright and wholehearted democrats, respecting the

verdict of the ballot box, the law and the public purse. And all this in a country devastated by 30 years of wars and dictatorship, with a ruined population condemned to destitution. Can we expect a democracy without democrats, in a country plunged in abject poverty? Can war chiefs, who have never been accountable for the state of their party's finances, not even to their own political Bureau, become overnight by some miracle, honest and transparent civic managers? Having declared themselves to be national liberators, and persuaded themselves that they embodied the Kurdish national interest, could they then accept that their decisions and their opinions should be debated or called to question by the elected bodies of the population?

These questions, evidently, go beyond the purely Kurdish context. Remember Cambodia, which is, nevertheless, a kingdom with long established state traditions, which has had \$3,000 million invested in it by the international community to consolidate the process of reconciliation and democratization, in which the rival military political factions have not finished fighting one another and have not hesitated, in their struggle for power, to ally themselves with one or other branch of the Khmer Rouges, authors of their people's genocide. Corruption has reached proportions as alarming as in Bosnia, where nearly a third of the international aid is diverted by the former war lords, become ministers. Look at the Palestinians who have a political class much more experienced and developed than ours. Their internal rivalries continue, even in the present very difficult context, and a Parliamentary Commission has just established that every year about \$326,000 million that is 40% of the total budget of this poverty stricken people, is embezzled or wasted by the administration's corruption.

Look at what is happening in Armenia, in Georgia, not to mention the chaotic situation in Somalia, and in Algeria.

We must admit that the Kurds are *not* of a superior nature; that the Kurdish political class reflect the state of cultural underdevelopment, the social fragmentation and the weakness of democratic traditions of Kurdish society. This does not excuse the political practices of the Kurdish chiefs, any more than it consoles us for the present misfortunes. The destabilizing intrigues of neighboring states, the virtual absence of any serious political or financial support from the Western countries for the Kurdish experiment in self-administration have certainly also played an important part in the failure of the Kurdish experiment in self-administration have certainly also played an important part in the failure of the Kurdish experiment in self-administration.

Nevertheless, because of an international combination of circumstances, I am one of those who believe that all is not yet lost and that it is still possible to undo part of the damage while preparing for the future. Certainly it would be an illusion to think that, by some magic spell, we are going to move towards a united and democratic Iraqi Kurdistan. Between that ideal scenario and the catastrophic scenario of a renewal of suicidal and fratricidal fighting, the more realistic option at the moment would be the consolidation of the cease-fire under United States auspices. The Kurds have dreamed of a state for centuries; now, by a historical irony they have, in practice, two on the small territorial area of Iraqi Kurdistan. Barzaniland and Talabaniland each have an area much greater than that of the Lebanon, and each has its own government.

We are more or less back to the period of the Kurdish principalities of the 18th Century. If each one is content to manage its territory properly to put into practice its political ideas, to build an efficient and, if possible, just administration, then the spirit of emulation could finally be of benefit to the population and the Kurds will have

acquired, without having sought it, an experience of decen-tralized, pre-federal management. Will the disunited States of Kurdistan one day move towards a Confederate State?

We can hope so even though it is clear that the situation has gone out of the control of the Kurds, the Iraqi Kurdistan, has become like yesterday's Lebanon a theater of confrontation for regional powers. That is why the current situation is most precarious and we may have an resumption of the fighting at any time.

What can we do in this situation?

All those who think they still have any influence with the leaders of one or another of the Kurdish factions could, perhaps continue with perseverance to encourage them to keep up the cease fire and find, by dialogue a mutually acceptable *modus vivendi*. I personally don't think that Kurdish chiefs will be receptive to pressure coming from individuals or Kurdish groups. The Iranian terrorist Sahrarudi who assassinated in Vienna the great Kurdish patriot A.R. Ghassemlou will always have more influence on Jalal Talabani and any Turkish or Iraqi general, butcher of the Kurdish people will have more influence on Massoud Barzani than people like you and me who helped them very much during their darkest days. Only those who have the means of seriously affecting the interests of these chiefs might be able to exert a real influence over them. That is why we must, as far as we can, encourage and support the American Administration's efforts to maintain the cease-fire and ensure the aerial protection of this zone and exclude Iraq Iran and also Turkey from it. Whatever may be its own motives, this American policy is in the interest of the Iraqi Kurdish populations even though it is obviously very timid and too much dependent on Turkish approval. We should make it clear that the collapse of the Iraqi Kurdistan experience will also be the collapse of the American policy

in Iraq.

Nevertheless, our main task, it seems to me, should be to launch a widespread debate and exchange of ideas throughout Kurdish Diaspora. Our compatriots back home cannot express themselves freely. We, outside, have the means. We must lay all our problems on the table, debate them without complacency or indulgence, question our own culture, our system of education our ways of thought, our political practices which have allowed not only the emergence but the persistence of the present Kurdish political representation. This essential debate could organize itself around periodicals, but we could also envisage organizing seminars and summer schools in America and in Europe to deepen our collective thinking on the future of our people, to help open the path to modernity for the Kurdish political and cultural elite's. We should elaborate together a National Charter stating clearly the goals of the Kurdish struggle and the means of achieving these goals such a patient work of reflection, education and construction of the future will, doubtless, demand a lot of time and energy. But only we, ourselves can carry out this necessary renovation no one else will do it for, or in place of, the Kurds. And, without this renewal we will be condemned to meet again periodically to lament the disasters caused by the traditional Kurdish leaderships.

The KNC Congress is one of the places for this effort of collective reflection and for this reason it plays an important role in the Kurdish national debate.

I congratulate you on this positive role and wish the KNC every success and long life. Despite the particularly painful period we are going through, we must not lose hope in the future. The Kurdish people has virtually been in a continuous state of struggle since the Baban revolt in 1808. Since then, despite all the deportations and massacres, it has survived and even

considerably increased. It will end by also overcoming the present trials. By organizing ourselves better, by endowing ourselves with a modern national and democratic ideology, we will end up by achieving our freedom.

With this hope, I greet you most warmly.

**Presidential Address
by Dr. Najmaldin O. Karim,
KNC President**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning, thank you all for attending the 10th Annual Conference of the Kurdish National Congress of North America. This year marks the last year of the first decade in the existence of our organization, (an important event and milestone in its own right). The organization has survived despite significant odds and adversity. The KNC grown since the days we met nine years ago at a Howard Johnson Hotel in Ypsilanti. The KNC has become synonymous with Kurdish activity in Diaspora. The KNC has been the hope for the entire people of Kurdistan to present the Kurdish cause in the U.S.A. From day one, the KNC has not spared an effort to promote the Kurdish cause. We have extended help to all, worked with different political parties and organizations in Kurdistan including during the time when there was no Kurdish representation in this country.

We worked towards persuading the U.S. government to accept thousands of refugees in the aftermath of Iraqis chemical weapons attack and genocidal Anfal campaign in southern Kurdistan, and later organized and persuaded the U.S. to support the first and only free elections in Iraqi Kurdistan. The KNC was instrumental in the establishment of the VOA Kurdish service. KNC was the first organization to organize visits by representatives of the Kurdish people from Turkey to the USA, and

visits from Kurdistan of Iran and Syria. When fighting broke out in Southern Kurdistan, the KNC was among the leaders in organizing peace missions to Kurdistan and held the only organized conference on this issue. The KNC participated in the Paris Peace conference with the Kurdish Institute in Paris that resulted in comprehensive document which in our opinion represents the best solution for solving the problems that plague not only southern Kurdistan, but the rest of our land. We have continued our efforts to lobby governmental and non-governmental organizations in this county to remain supportive of the just cause of the people despite the shortcoming of their leaders. The KNC has helped Kurds on humanitarian grounds with the USA. Even today we receive letters daily from displaced Kurds in Kurdistan and throughout the world seeking help from the KNC for a way out of their misery.

Ladies and gentlemen, the KNC has been able to accomplish so much at a time when there were fewer Kurds in North America. We started the work when there was no hope. In the midst of the Anfal campaign and genocidal acts of Saddam Hussein, the barbarism of the Turkish and Iranian regimes and the chauvinism of the Syrian regime.

Ladies and gentlemen, while many new members have joined the KNC and some have left the organization. The core remains intent and determined to continue to search for ways to expand and strengthen the organization to better serve the cause of the Kurdish nation. As we enter the 10th year in the existence of our organization, we face new challenges. The Kurdish community has increased threefold since the KNC was first formed in 1988. Now we have a new generation of young Kurdish men and women who have grown up in this country with an American culture that has a Kurdish tent. The new members of our community include many professionals and educated, that if properly directed and organized form the basis of a strong

Kurdish lobby in this county that can influence policies in the future. While we admit we have not been able to assist the new refugees as we had wished, due to the lack of material resources and for logistical reasons, we must design ways to integrate the new Kurds in this country into the American society and preserve the Kurdish identity. We should embark on efforts to direct the new refugees and help them find employment, pursue their education and remain close to each other and to their homeland to while adjusting to their newly adopted country. We must allay their fears and encourage them to be patient and hopeful.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us talk about the political situation in Kurdistan.

For the Kurds in Syria the situation has remained unchanged, they are denied their cultural or political rights. Tens of thousands of Kurds remain without citizenship, thus deprived of their rights to employment or owning properties. The Kurds of Syria themselves have resigned to the fact that for their lives to improve and to gain their cultural and political freedom, the larger Kurdish question has to be solved first.

In Iran, where the Kurds constitute 10-12% of the entire population, the government's policy continues to be that of violent suppression of any move by the Kurds to obtain their political rights. Resistance continues to the regime's policies both in passive ways inside Iran and active armed resistance mainly from outside by both the KDP-I and Komala forces. Both organizations have their main bases and headquarters in southern Kurdistan which the Iranian regime has used as a pretext to destabilize the Kurdish administered areas in the south. While the election of Mr. Khatemi, the new Iranian president, signals a desire for change by the Iranians including the Kurds who have overwhelmingly voted for him, we have not seen any specific signals from the new Iranian president in dealing

with the Kurdish question in Iran. Iranian Kurdish leadership is advised, to signal to the new Iranian president about their readiness for change and find ways to end the armed conflict and to start a peaceful dialogue to reach a settlement for the Kurdish conflict, the leadership of Iranian Kurds should carefully reassess their overall strategy especially their relations with the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein and also their with and their presence in southern Kurdistan and how to reconcile the controversies and danger it has on their own struggle to achieve the rights of the Kurdish people in Iranian Kurdistan and its impact on the Kurdish administered areas in the south.

In Turkey:

The quagmire for Turkey continues.

The successive governments in Turkey since the founding of the republic had continued to deny the existence of the Kurds as a people until 1991. Since then all the governments have indicated that there is no Kurdish problem but, a terrorism problem and have blamed it on neighboring countries. For the first time in history, an Islamic government took power in Turkey largely due to U.S. and western support for the corrupt and bankrupt government of Tansu Ciller that was thought to be the only one that can stand in the way of Islamic fundamentalism reaching power in Turkey. Yet not only she failed to do so but later became a crucial partner to Rafah. The rise of Rafah's stock is also to a great deal due to lack of democracy in Turkey where the Kurds have not been able to have political parties of their own and have been banned to vote for pro-Kurdish political parties either through intimidation, deportation, torture, imprisonment, and executions.

Today in Northwestern Kurdistan, Turkish Kurdistan, there are more than 3000 destroyed villages, over 3 million people have been rendered homeless. There are more than 22,000 dead, an economy that is in ruins, yet the

military run Turkish government continues to call it a terrorism problem. We call it a Turkish Problem, a Kurdish-Turkish conflict. The Turkish military has repeatedly declared the PKK crippled and finished and that it is time for the politicians to go to work and start social and economic reforms in the southeast. Some have interpreted this as an opening towards solving the Kurdish issue, but nothing has come out of it. Now a new government has come to power in Turkey on discarded military tocks. Mr. Yilmaz, the new Prime Minister has a golden opportunity to reach out to the Kurdish population in Turkey and start true reform and peaceful dialogue to solve the Kurdish conflict. He can start by declaring a cease-fire and general amnesty, abolish emergency rule in the Kurdish provinces, release all political risoners, allow formation of Kurdish political parties and organizations, permit Kurdish broadcasting and education in the Kurdish region. For their sake Kurdish leaders inside and outside Turkey should reciprocate openly supporting the government's initiatives and the PKK should call for an immediate cease-fire and both sides renounce violence. The PKK should declare its unequivocal willingness to participate in the political process. Their will ensure a future for the Turks and Kurds in Turkey

In southern Kurdistan-Iraqi Kurdistan The Kurds are about to lose the greatest opportunity in their modern history to achieve what every Kurd has been dreaming of and sacrificed for so dearly with every thing they have possessed.

Today Kurdistan is divided between the PUK and KDP with no direct contact between the two except at time of war. The hatred and distrust is so deep that a fragile cease-fire is being kept by the Turks and Turkmen's thanks to U.S. insistence and perserverence. The division and fratricide has led one side to seek aid from the Kurds' worst enemy in their history, the government of Saddam Hussein. A taboo in the

past. The division has led to alliance with the regional governments based solely on tactical military support to survive the other side's assault at the expense of the greater interest of the Kurds. The situation in the homeland has reached a crisis. Thousands of the compatriots whose dream was to see a Kurdish government are fleeing their own Kurdish rulers. While the population at large is struggling to survive and are barely able to make ends meet, their supposed leaders are enjoying the spoils of their corruption, incompetence and treachery roaming the western capitals, living in big mansions, with hundreds of thousands of revenue that goes to a handful few, with no accountability to anyone. Mediation efforts by different groups and even the superpowers have fallen on deaf ears. All this is going on while the government of Saddam Hussein is slowly creeping back and regaining international legitimacy. The time has come for every Kurd, especially those in Diaspora to stand up to the challenge that our people face.

And demand the following of the Kurdish leadership:

1. Both leaders, Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, should declare their willingness to start a new dialogue to solve their outstanding differences in a peaceful civilized manner.
2. Free all political prisoners immediately.
3. Allow free travel in all parts of Kurdistan.
4. Abolish prison and detention centers belonging to the political parties.
5. Dismiss both so-called regional governments immediately and form a new, national unity government headed by an independent, capable person with 50% of the cabinet members going to independent personalities and the rest going to political parties.
6. Extend the term of the original parliament for 6 months and prepare for new elections by an election committee composed of an independent person-

alities and representatives of the political parties during that six months period.

7. Abolish the peshmerga forces and form independent professional whose task will be to organize a national guard that will safe-guard the border of Kurdistan.
8. Evacuate all cities and towns of military presence and organize a police force that will maintain peace and order.
9. Last but not least, effective immediately, all revenues including custom duties should be collected by an independent committee under direct control of the new prime minister and his cabinet. With these measures the Kurdish leadership will gain support and trust of the people and will be able to lead the nation to a bright and prosperous future.

The KNC stands ready to actively participate in any effort to promote peace and reconciliation in Kurdistan. It is incumbent on everyone of the US to remain vigilant and monitor the situation closely and to be ready to take whatever steps necessary to save what our people have sacrificed for and what every one of us have been dreaming for and that is:

A UNITED FREE KURDISTAN!

Greater Kurdistan Speech by Fuad Hussein

The Iraqi Kurds in Diaspora and the
peace process in Iraqi Kurdistan

Mr. President,

I would like to thank the Kurdish National Congress of North America for inviting me to participate in their annual meeting. I wish everybody present a good time and hope that the meeting will have good results.

As we are Kurds in Diaspora and many of us dream that they will go back to their hometowns some day and because the number of Kurds living abroad has increased considerably in the last five years, I, therefore, would like to talk about the Kurds in Diaspora, limiting myself to the Iraqi Kurds.

Shortly after World War II, some Iraqi Kurdish students left their country to study in Europe or the USA. A small number of them, working together with Kurds from other parts of Kurdistan, founded the Kurdish Students Society in Europe in 1956.

In the early sixties, Kurdish migrants left for Europe, mainly Germany. Most of them came from Turkey and in general they were not conscious of their Kurdish identity and, therefore, they were not involved in Kurdish politics. The number of Iraqi Kurds was very limited at that time and naturally not everyone of them was active in politics or in the student movement. The first significant change in this situation occurred after the collapse of the Kurdish revolution in March 1975. Many Iraqi Kurds became political refugees in Holland, Germany, France, Great Britain, Austria and many other European countries as well as the USA. These people have participated in the Kurdish military resistance and were already involved in politics. For a short while, the Iraqi Kurdish politics shifted from Kurdistan to abroad. The division among the Kurds in Diaspora was clearly outlined after 1975.

The number of Iraqi Kurds abroad increased and the Kurdish community acquired a different social dimension, that is to say the presence of Kurdish women with their husband and children in the Western countries. In the beginning, the majority of the Iraqi Kurds in Diaspora were men and single or married to Western women. After 1975, the Kurdish women and children became refugees in these countries. The steady flow of refugees continued until the Intifatha, the uprising in Iraqi

Kurdistan. This resulted in the creation of a safe haven, protected by the Western allied powers. During the first two years, 1992-1994, considerably less Kurds sought refuge in Europe and many Kurds who lived abroad returned to Kurdistan, either for a short time or with the intention of staying.

The fighting which began in May 1994 between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was a great Diasporantment to many Iraqi Kurds who began to consider leaving their homeland. The continuous fighting and the bad economic situation induced thousands of Iraqi Kurds to leave with their families for the Western countries. In almost every of these countries there is now a large community of Iraqi Kurds, many of whom spent years in the Kurdish struggle for freedom, but they left the country while the Kurds are in power.

Among those who left the country, especially during the last three years, we can discern the following groups:

1. educated and intellectual people
2. financially well-off people
3. women and children
4. young people

In other words, both the intellectual and the financial capital is running away from Iraqi Kurdistan. This does not mean that we do not have rich people in Kurdistan. Many of them became recently rich, because of the fighting and corruption. Those people have stayed there, but they have sent their families into exile and hence their capital will not be invested in Kurdistan, but kept in banks outside the country. The question that must be raised by those who are interested in the future of the Kurds in Iraq and of those in Diaspora is: What can the Kurds in Diaspora do to have some influence on the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and how can they help in building confidence between the two parties involved in the conflict in Iraqi Kurdistan?

I believe that the educated people, intellectuals and business men can play a major role if they take the following steps:

1. being part of the solution, not the problem
2. having a critical dialogue with both parties and their leadership
3. establishing a wide pressure group that can influence the decision-making process in both parties
4. representing the pressure group not as a political party or a third organization, but as a continuous platform for a dialogue with the Iraqi Kurdish parties and leadership and also for lobbying for the Kurdish case in Diaspora.
5. keeping the door of dialogue open with those intellectuals who have key functions in the Kurdish parties abroad or in Kurdistan, so that they may develop their own critical point of view about the policy of their own party and refuse to be part of the political propaganda in the conflict

Ladies and gentlemen, if the fighting and conflict continues, one may expect that the people abroad who are concerned about the future of the Kurds in Iraq will analyze the roots of the conflict and thereby condemn those who chose to fight. It would be better, however, to invest everything in finding a solution rather than talking about condemnation. In the first place, there is the role of fireman - the fire must be put out. The cause of the fire must be dealt with at a later stage.

I call for the creation of a pressure group among the Iraqi Kurds in Diaspora at this stage, because many people have tried individually or in small groups to find a solution, without result.

Apart from this, the Diaspora Kurds can be important in the future for the following reasons:

1. the presence of Kurds in almost every Western country
2. the influence of the Kurdish media

abroad, such as newspapers, T.V., and above all, the "Voice of America in Kurdish." Our people at home follow the broadcasts and therefore it is possible for them to be informed about the events abroad.

3. Almost every Iraqi Kurd has a relative in Diaspora. Many of them visit their relatives and so bring news from outside to their families and friends in Iraqi Kurdistan.

4. The families of most Kurdish leaders are living abroad. If well-informed they could develop a more independent view on the situation and have a direct influence on their relatives in charge.

5. The Kurdish community is huge and, if it could be well organized, it could play a financial role in the future, by supporting any party or movement that struggles honestly for the benefit of the Kurds.

6. Within a decade we will have a new generation of Kurds who were born and/or raised in the West. They could become intellectual leaders provided that they are conscious of their identity and proud of their own people. But if the fighting continues and the future of the Kurds will continue to look grim, many Kurds, and especially the second generation will turn away from their parent's identity and assimilate completely in the new society. Some will adopt a kind of self-hatred, because they cannot understand why the Kurds in Iraq have chosen the way of self-destruction.

So the Kurds in Diaspora can play an important role, now and in the future.

Before ending this speech, I would like to propose the following point for discussion:

If the educated Kurds, the intellectuals and business men do not form their own opinions and actively create a pressure group, they will be used by the political parties as part of the conflict and not as part of the solution. In that case their role will be a negative one.

**"Greater Kurdistan"
Remarks by Robert Deutsch
Director of Northern Gulf Affairs
State Department**

What I'd like to do is to talk a little bit about is what the U.S.'s objectives have been in the last two years dealing with Iraqi Kurdistan and what they continue to be. We continue to believe that for humanitarian reasons, to provide a stable area in Northern Iraq outside of Saddam Hussein's control, to prevent the repression he has historically done to the Iraqi Kurds and other inhabitants of the region until such time there can be resolution 688 or broad dialogue of the Iraqi people to come to a consensus on a government that limits the repression of Iraqi citizens. That was the best protection that could be carried out in environment in which all of the significant political groups of Northern Iraq were working together to administer the territory with humanitarian assistance from the international community to provide for the needs and with a degree of protection from the coalition forces that are operating. The fighting prevailed politically since 1994, obviously, but all that created a great opportunity for intervention in the affairs of this area. The first incident by the government which continues to be interested asserting their control.

International teams were reassembled at open opportunity for the population of the area by Iranians who see various opportunities in the area.

Our own objectives for the last two years have been to try to limit the conflict. Try to promote a reconciliation between the two major parties in order to try to limit interference, try to establish a degree of formalities so that the people of Iraqi Kurdistan could live in the best possible conditions that there could be a degree of economic revival given the various elements of difficulty of sanctions and independence. And, we have worked extensively in the last two years with the two leaderships trying to develop a plan, a

system that will allow a degree of confidence on the part of the major parties of working together. That proved more difficult than I thought when I started in this effort, two years ago. At this point I think that we feel that we have been very relatively successful in establishing the fragile cease-fire that Kendel described earlier this morning. But we also recognize that it is not stable. That in order to establish a stable situation, we do need to create environment were the principle parties and the people are all working together. We worked in coalition with U.K. and Turkey and that was a coalition that has worked reasonably well. Frankly, while I can understand some degree of redress on the part of the Kurds, seeing Turkey playing a major role in Iraqi Kurdistan, that is something absolutely necessary for us. We have no access to the area, no ability to do anything in Iraqi Kurdistan, except through our relationship with Turkey. We tried in this process to take a series of confidence-building measures to establish a fair cease-fire and a cease-fire time and to begin working on civilian issues and try to create some degree of cooperation. We have a certain degree of success in that. I remember in October, we were discussing major issues like electricity or transporting humanitarian goods to cross the cease-fire line. We established some degree of contact on such issues between the PUK and the KDP. We found everytime we made a step forward: when we had the release of political prisoners, when we solved some of the civilian services. What we found is that they'd be done in a manner followed by steps that would destroy the confidence-building element and that would stop. And then came May of the Turkish incursion that which interrupted the process fairly substantially, creating a good bit of doubt in that direction. I think what I'd like to suggest is that we still see a significant prospect with this step-by-step process in trying to develop this reconciliation which we do see it as

absolutely essential with a prospect of Barzani's stand and Talbani's stand. Two Kurdish areas in a small region of Iraq is frankly a non-starter because where it leads is the permanent opportunity for the Iranian Government, for the Government of Baghdad, Syria, or others to manipulate the tension and collapse any cease-fire. Certainly we've seen that as we've worked along: we've seen Iran, we've seen Baghdad, we've seen Damascus to a certain extent working against whatever progress we've made. And, we've seen the Iranians apply a penalty to the PUK in their dealings anytime the PUK has taken steps with us. We've seen Damascus take a negative role when the KDP has made positive noises or positive positions, as well as Baghdad expressing its concern almost everytime that the KDP has sat down with us. We've done in this process a lot of the small steps and were at the point that came to be used as for confidence-building and we're at a point where we're really faced with the next step, the need to produce concrete results in what they called which is money or money is power. After all, both parties seem to like money but what they're really interested in is that money is tied to power and to their competition. Producing real concrete measures on revenue sharing has been extremely difficult, as difficult as 2 years and while we would get very close to producing something on several occasions, we never actually had significance amounts of money change hands or move during my time. That was complicated by the fact that when we would get an agreement of small steps and progress on possible mechanisms on one side we've found the other side frequently suggesting that the small steps are not enough—that by agreeing to small steps and revenue-sharing that it would represent too much acceptance of legitimacy of the process on the other side and that the small steps aren't enough and that we must make major leaps. I'm not sure that our experience in this peace process, which I would validate from

experience on other peace processes is that a series of small steps may be possible, large leaps without a certain degree of confidence pre-established, already established by other means is not frequently possible on the other hand, its that the recent experience that the small steps generally get you to the end of the road. So it's an illuminating experience. We have had Jalal Talbani here in Washington, D.C. and I'm not the best person to comment because I was fortunate enough to have gotten my life back and for the last 3 weeks have been on vacation so I didn't actually participate in any of Jalal's visits. At the time we invited Jalal, about 6-7 weeks ago, we also invited Mr. Barzani and his invitation stands open. We do expect that some time in the course of the fall, he will probably also come to Washington, D.C. and we're also looking forward to the next steps in starting joint visits to Washington, D.C. but those are only possible as long as we can sustain the cease-fire, as long as both parties recognize that it's in their best interest, that its not in their interest for both of them to continue fighting, that nothing good can come from a renewal of the actual conflict. I think that's all I'm going to say to start with, I know that everytime I talk to a Kurdish group, I'm asked about a Kurdish policy for the U.S. Government and I'd be happy to take that one in a questions although the answer would be the same one that is always given.

Transcribed

**Remarks by Jonathon Randel
Author & Journalist**

American policy in Northern Iraqi Kurdistan has always been, at least since 1991, an ad-hoc thing. It's been their policy, with all due respect, to just keep the Kurds off the border. I can't excuse the Kurdish Leader's, which we've heard discussed this morning and I don't want to rub salt into wounds either.

The American Government doesn't know what it is doing either because frankly, there are too many players in Northern Iraq. And, we can't control them! That was true last summer and it is true now. Dual-containment has failed, in fact, I can't think of any place that is a better example that typifies that failure than in Iraqi Kurdistan. Another thing is that the American Government has to go through the Turkish Government to do anything to help the Kurds of Iraq but American policy towards Turkey has been one of constant, well, it used to be nervous patriotism in the old days and now it's a kind of wily-minded stitching together of an expedience - because we don't know what we're doing. It is just the old work of western democracy - a mess itself.

What do we do about this civil war that we called a terrorist operation? Without any policy on Turkey, we have to just what they really want. The problem is that the Turks don't really know what they're doing and that's a very serious problem. One thing that I do want to say, is that at the State Department, the new Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Mark Grosspin is as good a diplomat that I've ever met in my life and he does understand who and what the Kurds are. You're lucky in that - he's a very knowledgeable diplomat.

What I really wanted to say is what worries me is Americans of my generation. After coming back here 8 months ago, and being handed my rental car keys by a Japanese-American and served lunch by an Iranian-American - this is a country of immigrants and we grow up as 2 peoples' countries. I don't know what you're going to do here: I don't know if this is something to cry over or to crowe over. You've got some of the people from Iraqi Kurdistan in this country. I'm embarrassed because the way that American policy is, if it were more sensible and if the warlords were more sensible, those people wouldn't

have left. But they're here now. There is an enormous pool of intelligent, devoted and friendly people and I don't know if they will stay here or eventually go back. I feel morally very upset that so many of your best people are not in that country.

Transcribed

Telegrams Sent to the Conference

To the Tenth Annual KNC Conference:

Kurdish National Congress
of North America,
Marriott,
Pooks Hill, Maryland

Dear Kak Chairman, Members of KNC
and Friends:

It would have been a great pleasure to attend your conference, like I have done so many years before, to deliver my words of gratification in person, and to have the honor to meet you all again. However circumstances beyond my control, unfortunately deprived me from such profound pleasure.

I would like to extend my greetings, support and cordial wishes for your success.

I am happy and proud to say that KNC has irreversibly established itself as a successful, organization for the Kurdish patriots from all parts of Kurdistan, creating a platform for the Kurdish Nationals in North America to get together, work together and achieve together, honorable goals of KNC. To echo the voice and aspiration of our Kurdish nation to the world.

Friends, my simple message to you is: For Kurdistan sake, leave all your differences, and get together. Kurdistan today needs your unity and calibration more than any other time before. Unity is the secret of our success. Do not let enemies of Kurdistan penetrate your ranks to stir-up discord amongst you.

Long Live Your Unity.
Long Live KNC.
Long Live Kurdish American
Friendship.

Dara Attar

Democratic Party Of Iranian Kurdistan
Kurdistan
8-1-1997

Dear brother Dr. Najmaldin Karim,
President of KNC

A warm greetings,

Thank you very much for your kind invitation to participate in your 10th annual conference. I am terribly sorry not to be able to discuss with you, face-to-face, but I send you our best greetings and congratulations to your conference and your efforts as well.

Dear brother:

We do believe that K.N.C. with all of its highly educated members and experienced politicians have a great responsibility towards Kurds and Kurdistan. Each of you should consider yourselves as a representatives of Kurdistan and speak on behalf of it bravely with consideration of each part of Kurdistan and its different conflicts. Of course your job is more difficult because of the on-going conflicts in Kurdistan itself between the Kurdish political parties, therefore, you have to put more efforts and time as well, to provide what is possible to our Kurdish cause. It is obvious that more than 9 million Kurds exist in eastern Kurdistan and they are prohibited from the even the most basic national rights, even from human rights as well, above all there is a great attack of termination of this great nation by Iranian regime, of course you know better than we do that this is more than 18 years we are facing this brutality, just for a simple demand which is our national rights.

Of course the conflict between the political Kurdish parties has a great affect on the situation on Iranian Kurdistan. We hope you will be able to do everything possible for reconciliation between them as soon as possible. We wish you all success to your conference.

Sincerely
Abdullah Hassan Zadeh
General secretary of KDPI

Translated from Kurdish

Respected brother,
Dr. Najmaldin Karim,

Best greetings:

Congratulation on your conference. It is not possible for me to have trips abroad twice within a few months, but I promise to attend your meeting which will be held on October 20, 1997. Please inform me ahead of time by sending me a fax.

Very truly yours,
Salah Badreddin

Translated from Kurdish

Dear brother Dr. Najmaldin Karim,
President of KNC

Dear Board members:
Dear fellow members:

It was my pleasure to accept your invitation and discuss Kurdistan's problems face-to-face same as we did in Washington, D.C. in 1994, but lack of a passport puts me in an embarrassing situation since I'm unable to attend this conference.

K.N.C. has played the greatest role in serving Kurdistan in general and has shown the Kurdish cause everywhere in search of any solution possible that serves the Kurds and their destiny. I am positive that you have tried your best to find a solution for interior conflict in southern Kurdistan as well.

Indeed, we need your organization in the U.S.A. to introduce our nation and Kurdistan to both the United Nations and the U.S.A. administration and have them help us to regain our rights, same as any other nation.

Therefore, we all should unite ourselves everywhere in great unity and solidarity to do something fruitful for our nation.

Once again, I wish you all success possible in your conference.

Very truly
Dr. Mehmoud Uthman

Translated from Kurdish
