



Kurdish National Congress of North America
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President Barack Obama,
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

July 13, 2009

Dear Mr. President Obama:

Considering the withdrawal of US military out of Iraqi cities, we are concerned about the lingering problems that have not been resolved between the Kurds and Iraqi government. We are worried that the Iraqi government, instead of practicing democracy, would exercise its power to send its military to the disputed areas of Kirkuk and Mosul, which may provoke the situation further. The Iraqi government has already attempted to do this before disputes over the Ba'athist seizure of Kurdish lands and properties have been rectified.

We ask you not to forget the Kurdish plight and work with Iraqi authorities to ensure that the Iraqi government respects the historic national geography of Kurdistan and does not exercise the same policies of previous Iraqi governments by sequestering areas that have been historically populated by a majority Kurdish population. Kurds are fearful that without sincere mediation from the U.S. government the current Iraqi government, which is not very acquainted with democratic principles, would try to perpetuate rather than correct the policies of Arabization that were begun under Saddam Hussein's regime.

Every time the Kurds have cooperated with the US in the past, they angered many regional powers including former Iraqi governments and were accused of being "foreign agents," and "traitors." This time was no different. Kurds riled many by their cooperation with the US government in its invasion of Iraq. They have continued to help the US forces during the occupation of Iraq to successfully implement American policies to make Iraq a democracy.

In the past, America twice breached its apparent willingness to assist the Kurds to achieve their national and democratic rights. In 1972, while the Kurds were holding the terms of the agreement they had signed with the Iraqi regime in spring 1970, American operatives approached the Kurdish movement under the leadership of General Mustafa Barzani, and offered Barzani American help. After the Kurdish revolution restarted in 1974, exactly one year later, in 1975, the US administration stopped its assistance to the Kurds and left them at the mercy of the tyrannical Iraqi regime. Later, Henry Kissinger,

the Secretary of State at the time, justified his foreign policy of abandoning the Kurds. Kissinger stated that the US assistance was not given to help the Kurds to achieve their rights but rather to pressure the Iraq's pro-Soviet government. When he was criticized for abandoning the Kurds after making them believe that America would not let them down, he callously said, "One must not confuse the intelligence business with missionary work."

Sixteen years later, the Kurds were again used as a tool of US foreign policy. On February 15, 1991, George H. W. Bush asked the people of Iraq including the Kurds to rise up against the despotic regime of Saddam Hussein. When they did, the former president left them unprotected against Saddam Hussein's retaliation and helicopter gunships. As a result of that cynical and morally indefensible policy, the world witnessed the Kurdish mass exodus into the mountains where dozens of innocent women, children, and elderly were dying every day.

Kurds are concerned if American forces leave Iraq prior to the democratic Constitution being ratified, and before the resolution of disputed issues between Hawler (Erbil) and Baghdad the situation could deteriorate further. The Iraqi government might send its military forces to Kurdistan. If America allows that to happen, America would mark its third betrayal of one of the most loyal friends in the Middle East. Therefore, we hope that you will personally ensure that America will not sacrifice the Kurds once again.

Further, the protection offered by the US and coalition forces to the Kurds since 1991 has allowed a peaceful civil society to develop in Kurdistan. Building a peaceful and well functioning democratically elected and ethnically tolerant society has been the stated goal for US policy in Iraq. To allow this well functioning and rebuilt part of Iraq to be subject to military or economic retaliation from an unfriendly central government will undo much of the good accomplished by the US mission and eliminate one island of stability and tranquility in the region.

Sincerely yours,
Kirmanj Gundi
President