

## **Kurdistan-Iraq and Turkey Relations, 2003-2004: The Consolidation of Iraqi**

### **Kurdish Nationalism**

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Turkish Summary

This paper analyzes the relationship between Kurdistan-Iraq and Turkey from 1 March to 1 July 2004. I argue that several important developments took place during this period that contributed to the consolidation of Iraq-Kurdistani nationalism (and, indeed affected other Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey, Iran and Syria as well), especially in regard to Turkey's policies toward Kurdistan-Iraq as a result of the U.S.-led war against Iraq that started on 19-20 March 2003.

The paper discusses the following major developments: 1) Turkey's parliament's failure to pass the 1 March (2003) resolution (*tezekeresi*) that would have permitted some 62,000 U.S. troops to transit and to be stationed in Turkey. The resolution would have also permitted Turkish troops to join U.S. forces in invading Iraq; 2) the participation of Kurdish forces (*peshmergas*) with the U.S. forces in the conquest of Kirkuk, Tikrit and Mosul; 3) the Kurdish forces' capture of Iraq's armed forces' weapons and the provision of arms by U.S. forces to Kurdish fighters; 4) the expulsion of 12 Turkish Special Forces (*Özel Timler*) from Kirkuk on 23 April; 5) the expulsion of 12 Turkish Special Forces from Sulaymaniya on 4 July (2003) that resulted in the "Bag Affair" in which U.S. soldiers' placed bags (*çuval*) over the heads of the detained Turks; 6) the refusal of U.S. Iraq occupational officers to disarm or attack PKK/KONGRA-GEL forces in the Kandil

mountain region of northern Iraq; 7) Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's 25-30 January 2004 visit to Washington, D.C. and its consequences for Kurdistan-Iraq, 8) the 1 February (2004) bombing of the KDP and PUK offices in Arbil; 9) the signing of a referendum by Iraqi Kurds demanding independence; 10) the signing of the Basic Transitional Law-BTL (Interim Constitution) on 8 March 2004; 11) rejuvenation of economic transactions among Turkey, Arab Iraq and Kurdistan-Iraq; 12) Kurdistan-Iraq's (KDP and PUK) *peshmergas*' participation with U.S. occupational forces in the battles in Falluja, Karbala and Najaf from March to June 2004.

After discussing the above developments and their consequences, I argue that Turkey was compelled to establish state-to-government(s) relations with Kurdistan-Iraq (KDP and PUK) replacing the state-to-region relationship that had existed prior to the 1 March (2003) resolution. I conclude the paper by arguing, in spite of the establishment of state-to-government(s) relationships between Kurdistan-Iraq and Turkey; it is not inevitable that such a relationship will continue, especially in view of several potential developments that could disrupt the developing state-to-government(s) relationship. Among them: 1) internecine fighting among Kurds and Turkomans or between Kurds and Arabs, especially armed conflict between the Kurds and an Arab Iraq-led Shi'a government; 2) the toppling or weakening of the Islamic Republic of Iran resulting in autonomy demands by the Kurds of Iran; 3) or, if Ankara thought that Tehran was beginning to exercise too much power in Iraq via the Shi'a of Iraq; 4) if Kurdistan-Iraqi Kurds sought to encourage Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey, or even Iran or Syria. Lastly, if U.S. occupational forces are unable to establish a strong central

government in Baghdad resulting in a weak federal structure leading to an autonomous Kurdistan-Iraq that would for all purposes be independent in everything but name.

The occurrences of the above-mentioned scenarios could result in Turkey's military intervention in Kurdistan-Iraq (it should be noted that there are already Turkish military personnel, perhaps 21-3000 on the Iraqi side of the Iraq-Turkey international border) resulting in a rupture in the further consolidation of state-to-government(s) relations between Kurdistan-Iraq and Turkey and a retardation of Kurdistan-Iraq nationalism. However, such a potential Turkish invasion or large scale intervention seems unlikely while U.S. occupational forces are in Iraq.

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