

THE NORTHERN IRAQ: 1990 - 2000

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the situation in the Northern Iraq from 1990 to 2000. It is a well known fact that the regional status quo in the Middle East was threatened by the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. This was one of the reasons for the coordination of the states under the umbrella of United Nations to restore regional peace and stability in the Middle East.

This study will focus on the following questions: Why is the Northern Iraq so important for regional peace and stability? What are the consequences of the Gulf Crisis, the Operation Provide Comfort and Safe Haven, established for Kurdish refugees? What is the importance of the Northern Iraq in the perceptions of USA, Turkey, Israel, Syria, Iran and Iraq? What are the differences between the two major groups in the Northern Iraq? This study states that the Northern Iraq is a vital calculation ingredient in the regional peace and stability. In contrast to its geographical area that it occupies, it affects and is being affected by the regional as well as international developments in a great scale.

Keywords: Northern Iraq, Gulf Crisis, Refugee, Operation Provide Comfort, Turkey

KUZEY IRAK: 1990 – 2000

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, 1990 yılından 2000 yılına kadar Kuzey Irak'ın durumuna odaklanmaktadır. 2 Ağustos 1990'da Irak'ın Kuveyt'i işgal etmesi ile Orta Doğu'daki bölgesel statükonun tehlikeye girdiği bilinmektedir. Bu, devletlerin Birleşmiş Milletler şemsiyesi altında toplanıp Orta Doğu'daki bölgesel barış ve istikrarı yeniden inşa etmek için bir araya gelmelerinin nedenlerinden biriydi.

Bu çalışma şu sorular üzerinde duracaktır: Kuzey Irak bölgesel barış ve istikrar açısından neden önemlidir? Körfez Krizi, Huzur Sağlama Operasyonu ve Kürt mülteciler için kurulan Güvenli Bölgeler'in sonuçları nelerdir? ABD, Türkiye, İsrail, Suriye, İran ve Irak'ın algulamalarında Kuzey Irak'ın önemi nedir? Kuzey Irak'taki iki büyük grup arasındaki farklılıklar nelerdir? Bu çalışma Kuzey Irak'ın bölgesel barış ve istikrar hesaplamalarında hayati bir öge olduğunu belirtmektedir. Kapsadığı coğrafi alanın aksine hem bölgesel hem de uluslararası gelişmelerden büyük oranda etkilenmekte ve bu gelişmeler üzerinde büyük etki yaratmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuzey Irak, Körfez Krizi, Mülteci, Huzur Sağlama Operasyonu, Türkiye

1. INTRODUCTION

The Middle East has always been one of the important regions in the world politics throughout the history. Its importance comes from its location, rich oil resources and being the birthplace of divine religions.

The strategic location of the Middle East historically both affected and has been affected by the Great Power Politics. It used to be a part of the Silk Road, its importance increased after the construction of the Suez Channel. Being located among the three old continents, it is evident that its strategic importance will continue in the future, too. The rich oil resources in the Middle East also are among the key factors of world politics. Religious differences in the Middle East also played a major role in determining and shaping of the world politics. Middle East plays an active role not only in world politics but also in Turkish domestic politics as well.

The regional status quo in the Middle East was threatened by the Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 (Aykan, 1996: 340). It was a serious threat to the vital interests of US and major Western powers in the gulf region. This was the reason for the coordination of the states under the umbrella of UN to restore regional peace and stability in the Middle East.

Gulf Crisis changed the regional atmosphere in a way that it was evident that the things will not be considered as it used to be (Köni, 1996: 128). The refugee crisis which occurred after the suppression of the Kurds by Saddam Hussein played a big role for major powers to take Iraqi Kurds into consideration in the configuration of the new atmosphere between 1990 and 2000.

The status and the situation of Northern Iraq between 1990 and 2000 also occupies a special importance for a better understanding of the picture which emerged after the US led intervention to Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

This study, in this sense, aims at addressing the importance of Northern Iraq in regional peace and stability. The consequences of the first Gulf War, Operation Provide Comfort and Safe Havens established for Kurdish refugees are also examined.

The study also questions the importance of the Northern Iraq in the perceptions of Turkey, USA, Israel, Syria, Iran and Iraq in their policy calculations between 1990 and 2000.

Major differences between two rival groups in the Northern Iraq, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) are also tried to be clarified within this study.

The situation of the Northern Iraq in 2000 also proved to be helpful in providing a secure ground for the question under consideration.

2. OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT

The withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait did not bring stability to the region. It placed another crisis instead; the Kurdish refugee crisis. During the Gulf War, Kurds in Northern Iraq and Shiites in Southern Iraq rebelled against Iraqi

regime. However, neither the Kurds nor the Shiites was successful in their aims and were suppressed by Iraqi forces.

The US administration was reluctant to support the Kurds in the Northern Iraq in their rebellion against Iraq in gaining their independence. The concern of the President Bush was not to threaten territorial integrity and political unity of Iraq, which might destabilize the whole region. A Shiite government in Iraq would jeopardize the vital interests of US in the region. President Bush pursued a non-involvement policy in the activities in the Northern Iraq after the liberation of Kuwait (Caşın, 1996: 228). President Bush perceived the issue as a domestic event in the north of Iraq. This lasted until the outbreak of the refugee crisis in 1991 (Oran: 1998, 52).

After the suppression of their rebellion against Baghdad by the end of March 1991, a great amount of the population in the Northern Iraq fled their homes and moved to the border of Turkey. The government of Turkey was determined not to accept any refugees from the border (Oran, 1998: 53). However, harsh climate conditions, intense international pressure resulted in the acceptance of 400.000 refugees.

There were different propositions for the settlement of the refugees. One argument was the establishment of a security belt for their protection. But Turkey was against this argument. Turkey was afraid of a West Bank type of structuring in Palestine (Oran, 1998: 60).

Turkey's proposal was the establishment of "safe havens" (Bulloch and Morris, 1992: 27) in the valleys of Iraq, under the military protection of UN. Then it would be possible to depart the refugees from the Turkish territory and abandoning the possibility of a long and costly stay of the refugees in Turkey (Oran, 1998: 64).

The reason was not only an economic one. It had different dimensions. The Kurds in Iraq used to remain semi independent and use their cultural rights (Freij, 1998: 19). It would be a threatening example in radicalizing the Kurds in Turkey. There were security considerations, too. Turkish authorities were worried and irritated by the fact that unknown and unidentified PKK terrorists might cross the border easily among these refugees.

On March 31, Turkey was demanded to open her borders for the entrance of the refugees (Olson, 1992: 475). In the meeting of the National Security Council this demand was discussed and it was announced that this situation "causes a threat to the security of Turkey" and that "the border will not be opened until the UN Security Council acts immediately".

The violation of human rights and the urgent need for humanitarian aid in Iraq were resulted in two developments. While UN Secretary General, by using his own initiative, started to negotiate with Iraqi government for humanitarian aid on one hand, UN Security Council passed the Resolution 688 on the other (Oran, 1998: 67).

UN Security Council Resolution 688 of 5 April 1991 envisaged a relief action for the Kurdish refugees and the dispatch of a UN fact finding mission to the influenced area. It did not include military intervention (Özdağ, 1999a: 69). There were political and legal niceties as how far this resolution empowered the

multinational coalition forces to proceed within Iraq and protect the Kurds if they were attacked by the forces of Saddam Hussein.

According to Başeren, none of the states intervening in Northern Iraq tried to explain the situation by using the violation of human rights in legitimizing their use of force. US administration based her legal arguments on the resolutions 678 and 688 (Başeren, 1995: 225). As it is known Resolution 678 gives a right “to restore international peace and security” Resolution 688 points out that the outcomes of the suppression of Iraqs’ own citizens and the intense demands of the refugees to cross international borders in the region “threatens international peace and security” (Başeren, 1995: 227).

Kemal Kirişçi argues that this opened the way for Turkish Government and her allies to establish “safe havens” and to form military bases and troops for the protection of the refugees (Kirişçi, 1996a: 25).

The aim of the Resolution 688 was not the withdrawal of Saddam Hussein’s regime in the area at any way or at whatever cost, but the establishment of the rule of law with its all dimensions. This includes the preservation of the region from being a base for the threatening and destroying actions for the neighboring countries.

Resolution 688 provided relief action for the refugees in Northern Iraq. The UN forces including USA, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, England and France were deployed in Northern Iraq near the Turkish border on 17 April 1991 upon the invitation of Turkey. The Operation Provide Comfort was deployed in order to provide humanitarian aid to the refugees and to prevent the oppression of the Iraqi forces on the refugees in Northern Iraq (Torumtay, 1996: 59).

From the beginning of the deployment of the Poised Hammer forces both Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Turkish Military have been concerned about the possibility of that Western States might try to use this force to intervene in any other crisis in the Middle East whether or not it involved Iraq (Sayari, 1992: 13). There was also a Turkish concern that it might not be possible for her to exercise full control over the activities and actions of this force.

There were reports that the Poised Hammer Force had contacts with the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq without the consent of the Turkish authorities, and that helicopters taking off from Incirlik base in Adana conduct reconnaissance flights in Northern Iraq, aircrafts using for transportation belonging to this force dropped aid supplies to the areas where PKK was supposed to be known active (Oran, 1998: 122). Besides these reflections in the media, the official response of Turkish authorities, from Military or Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was to deny such kind of reports and stress that “all of the activities of this forces was determined by the Chief of the General Staff Office.”

Turkey had an expectation that this force can guarantee the continued security of the activities commissioned by the UN for the preservation of the humanitarian needs of the regional demands at the same time protecting the territorial integrity of Iraq.

There were the repeated mandates of this force (for a period of six months) to reside it in Turkish territory. It seemed that there was an unwritten consensus between Turkish officials and officers that the benefits of this force outweigh the

costs. The mandate of this force was extended for 16 times that whoever was in opposition in Turkish Parliament opposed to the deployment of this force in Turkey but extended the mandate of the force when she is in power. In the 14th extension, Operation Provide Comfort was turned into "Operation Northern Watch" and its task was restricted to air watch (Oran, 1998: 250).

Turkish officials at the same time acted carefully not to lead the presence of this force to upset her good neighborly relations with Iraq. There were the announcements and declarations of the Turkish officials that "all the activities of the Poised Hammer Force will be according to the rules determined by Turkish authorities and be consent to it" (Oran, 1998: 150).

Facing with some difficulties regarding the extension of the mandate of the force and the coordination and the policies of the force, Turkish Government limited its mandate to 3 months instead of 6 months.

3. DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF NORTHERN IRAQ

3.1. Turkey

Turkey is a country which is directly influenced by the happenings occurred in Northern Iraq. Turkish decision-makers were worried about the consequences of a mass influx of refugees on the security of Southeast Anatolia (Kirişçi, 1996a: 28).

Turkish government does not welcome any type of happening apart from Iraq's territorial integrity concerning Northern Iraq. There was a great concern that this could eventually lead to the formation of an independent or an autonomous state in Northern Iraq and that the terrorist PKK might be operating from Northern Iraq more easily (Kirişçi, 1996a: 29). Moreover, the emergence of a Kurdish federated state would create a volatile situation in an already unstable region.

The prevention of PKK from using Northern Iraq in its terrorist actions against Turkey was high on the agenda of Turkish decision makers. Operation Provide Comfort served as a crucial tool for Turkey to establish good relations with Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq.

Resulting from the double embargo (Barkey, 1997: 2) (international sanction over Iraqi government and the Iraqi sanction imposed on Northern Iraq) the groups in Northern Iraq depended heavily on Turkey. Massoud Barzani pointed out that "Turkey has become our only window to the world since 1991; we consider our relations with Turkey as extremely vital" Barzani also emphasized that "Operation Provide Comfort is our only security in the area" (Kirişçi, 1996a: 32).

Turkey also benefited from this relationship. Many international agencies purchase their humanitarian supplies to be sent to Northern Iraq from Southeast Anatolia which provide an additional source of income to the region.

KDP traditionally was active in the areas of Northern Iraq bordering Turkey. Barzani's willingness to cooperate with Turkey and readiness to be pragmatic in Northern Iraq gained the trust of many Turkish decision makers. But the case was not similar with PUK (Özdağ, 1999a: 84).

The possibility of the idea that Kurdish groups might take a step further towards an independent state was an area of tension between Turkey and the

Kurdish groups (Robins, 1993: 661). The Turkish government viewed PUK and KDP efforts in suspicion in 1994. Turkey was alarmed when Kurdish groups of Northern Iraq met in Paris and announced that elections are going to be held and military forces are going to be formed. Turkey regarded this as a growing threat to Iraq's territorial integrity.

There appeared out to be a kind of security interdependence between Turkey and Kurdish groups. This appeared out to continue as long as the uncertainty of Iraq continued and PKK remained as a source of threat to Turkey. The dichotomy appeared that the Kurdish groups in Northern Iraq needed PKK to be around (Kirişçi, 1996b: 19). In that circumstance Turkey would ask for their cooperation against PKK. There might be the possibility of a fear between Kurdish groups that if PKK did not exist, Turkey would lose interest in cooperating and helping them.

It is apparent that the Northern Iraq policy of Turkey will continue to be influenced by regional as well as international politics. Syria, Iran and Iraq also oppose the idea of an independent Kurdish state like Turkey (Barkey and Fuller, 1997: 74). Territorial integrity of Iraq is essential for these countries.

3.2. United States of America

Kurds did not occupy an important place in US politics before the Gulf War. They gained importance as US initiated her "Dual Containment" policy.

The theoretic base of Dual Containment Policy was foregrounded by Martin Indyk, the representative of Foreign Relations in National Security Committee of Clinton administration, on May 18, 1993 in a meeting held by "Washington Institute for Near East Policy". By the withdrawal of Great Britain from Middle East in 1971, US gained the responsibility of the whole region on behalf of the Western World. The base of her Gulf policy was to use Iran and Iraq against themselves and create a balance. This policy was dominant during 70s and 80s. However, it could not be pursued anymore after Iraq's attack of Kuwait (Özdağ, 1999a: 109).

The aim of Dual Containment Policy was to isolate Iran and Iraq from world politics and to leave them to deteriorate. In other words, the aim of this policy was the overthrow of the theocratic regime in Iran, in Iraq, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and even the Baath Party regime. For Iraq, Indyk argues that, the aim of US administration was to overthrow the Iraqi regime" (Özdağ, 1999a: 110). After the initiation of Dual Containment Policy, US decision makers announced that they are in favor of Iraq's territorial integrity. But the Iraqi left of Dual Containment aimed the fragmentation of Iraq.

In the mean time if the policy pursued against Iran became successful, Iran would also be fragmented. Indyk, who took the containment policy of George Kennan against USSR as a base for his policy, knew that the most important factor of dissolving multi-ethnic countries was to foreground the economic backwardness of some regions. The containment policy over USSR was able to overthrow not only the communist regime but also resulted in the dissolution of USSR (Özdağ, 1999a: 117). Likewise, the aim of Dual Containment was the overthrow of mullah regime in Iran, Baath Party regime in Iraq and the dissolution of these states.

There was an intense opposition against this policy. UN Security Council members such as China, France and Russia opposed this by arguing that this would form an obstacle to their economic relations with Iraq. Gulf Countries such as United Arab Emirates and Qatar also were not happy with this policy. It should also be noted that they were also afraid of the situation which might appear after the possible dissolution of Iraq. The Shiite minority in Iraq might gain their independence which might serve as an uneasy example for their Shiite minorities in their countries (Dağı, 1998: 97). Western European countries and Japan opposed this since it would block their economic relations with Iran. Turkey declared that she opposed any kind of policy aiming the dissolution of Iran and Iraq.

The dissidents of this policy in America based their source of criticism on the simultaneous containment of Iraq and Iran. Critical specialists argued that the containment of Iraq needed a powerful Iran; the containment of Iran needed a powerful Iraq.

According to Abromowitz, ex ambassador of US to Ankara, the long-term strategic benefit of US was the containment of Iran, for the short term, because of the responsibilities of American administration over the protection of Kurds, in Northern Iraq, was to contain Iraq (Özdağ, 1999a: 120). USA might find it essential to give a decision on territorial integrity of Iraq or dissolution of it which are contradictory to each other. According to H.Barkey, US administration also was not so sure about the territorial integrity of Iraq (Barkey, 1997: 3).

Northern Iraq was perceived as an area which strengthens the Dual Containment Policy in US policy over Iraq. However, it should also be noted that a rapid and spontaneous departure of Saddam Hussein from the political life would not be desirable by US because of the possibility of the lack of control over the possible happenings.

The ex-ambassador of France to Ankara, Eric Rouleau, argued that the real reason why US did not want to lessen the degree of sanctions over Iraq was not related to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, but with the entrance of Iraq to world oil market and the decrease in costs, the monetary problems that Kuwait and Saudi Arabia might face while they pay back to US and with the increase of the power of Japan and Germany by the cheap oil prices" (Özdağ, 1999a: 121).

In fact the Dual Containment Policy was not valid anymore. It survived only on papers. The thesis of normalizing the relations with Iran –in USA in 1997- gained intensity in 1998 and other Gulf countries pursued a period of détente in their relations with Iran (Özdağ, 1999a: 221).

There appeared a difference in dual containment. In May-June 1997 in Foreign Affairs Zbigniew Brezezinsky, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Murphy in their article "Differentiated Containment" argue that; 'Every US president since Richard Nixon has recognized that ensuring Gulf security and stability is a vital US interest. As to the situation in the aftermath of Gulf War, Dual Containment was supposed to be a temporary solution, and the Saddam Hussein, still poses a threat to the security of the Gulf (Brezezinski, Scowcroft and Murphy, 1997: 21). They also argue that the US should take a nuance position toward Iran. There was an increasing worry about the conventional military capabilities of Iran Gulf they argue that so far there was

little reason to believe that this would pose a direct challenge to US regional supremacy (Brezzezinski, Scowcroft and Murphy, 1997: 24).

According to them, a more nuanced and differentiated approach was in line with America's long term interests. This new policy would keep Saddam Hussein boxed policy would time keep the Gulf War Coalition United and that it should also be recognized that the attempt of United States up to 1997 at unilateral isolation of Iran was costly and ineffective in implementation (Brezzezinski, Scowcroft and Murphy, 1997: 26). All parties should understand and recognize a strategic reality: The US is in the Gulf to stay (Fuller and Lesser, 1997: 45). Any accommodation with a post-Saddam regime in Iraq or with a less hostile government in Iran must be based on that fact.

3.3. Israel

Even before the establishment of Israel it was obvious that this new nation and state will be in conflict with neighboring Arabs. To balance this siege at least to a degree, it was argued by the first president of Mossad Revven Siloah in 1930 that the only way was to cooperate with the peripheral countries out of this circle.

This approach was implemented as the basis axis for Israeli policy from her establishment up to 1979 by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion. Turkey, Iran and Ethiopia have a special importance in this "peripheral" policy (Özdağ, 1999b: 225). These countries which are at the author circle of the Arab countries that surrounds Israel are perceived by Israel to form friendly relations and, thus, lessen the intense Arab pressure (out flank strategy) (Özdağ, 1999b: 227). Israel at the same time wanted to use every identity conflicting with Arabs. Among these identities Barzani, who had never been in good terms with Iraq and the Kurdish groups in had a considerable importance (Özdağ, 1999a: 188).

In order to reach an adequate analysis of Israel over Northern Iraq, the new threat perception of Israel should be taken into consideration. There are arguments among Israeli intellectuals (According to Efraim Inbar) that the distinguishing feature of the near future for Israel is the fact that US can and will not be able to help Israel in the amount that it used to be. In fact the Israeli security is more reliable now, after the Gulf War there exist a possibility of total Arab attack if US overlooks (Baram, 1996: 152). He adds that in this new power distribution US may be unable to preserve peace and security in the Middle East. In spite of her hegemony in world politics, US cannot impose a pax-Americana in the Middle East. According to Inbar, what imposed the peace process on the parties were the regional developments rather than American diplomacy. Countries such as Libya and Iraq still pose a challenge in this new phase. Israel has to eliminate all threats against her in his new atmosphere that Israel is not an unconditional ally for US anymore (Özdağ, 1999b: 226).

In this atmosphere Israel saw her security in the fragmentation of Iraq, which has the potential of being the strongest Arab state after Egypt. Turkey has never had hostile relations against Israel in the region. Does Israel want to see that Turkey's unity is jeopardized? The answer given to this question in some spheres is that Israel wants to see that the control of GAP (South East Anatolian Project) and water of Euphrates and Tigris is in a weak hand (Özdağ, 1999b: 229).

It does not seem to be easy for Israel to find new friends for her in the region. Being two democratic countries in the region, there is a great importance on their respect to the reciprocal gains of both countries (Özdağ, 1999b: 232).

3.4. Syria

A Tripartite meeting was held in Damascus on August 23, 1994 among Iran Syria and Turkey. The three foreign Ministers, Ali Akbar Velayati of Iran, Faruk Al Shara of Syria and Mümtaz Soysal of Turkey, who was to become officially foreign Minister on 27 August, expressed their opposition to the fragmentation of Iraq (Olson, 1996: 84, 85). Some Turkish editorial writers declared that the August summit marked "a new era" in Turkish Syrian relations. All three foreign ministers declared their opposition to the creation of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq.

It might be deduced that Syria realized that Europe and US do not want the destabilization or weakening of Turkey as a result of Syrian support for PKK. Syria may well have a role in inter regionalization of water schemes when the peace process between Arabs and Israelis finalize. Any pipeline carrying water from the upper reaches of Euphrates and the Seyhan and Ceyhan Rivers would have to traverse Syrian territory. Syria would like to extract from that potentiality. Such a role demanded that Syria should no longer pursue policies against the regional geo strategic understanding. This would mean less support of PKK activities against Turkey. Another dimension of such a policy is that Syria would be less able to use the Kurdish card against the Baathist regime in Baghdad (Bölükbaşı, 1991: 15).

One of the major questions concerning Turkey and Syria was the Syrian support of PKK. So, why did Turkey not take any stronger action against this? Ankara undoubtedly did not want to attack a major Arab country (Olson, 1996: 88). Such an action would hurt Turkey's relations with the entire Arab world in varying degrees. In order not to hurt her relations with other Arab countries, Turkey did not take further steps in response of the Syrian support to PKK.

Syria's concern of Northern Iraq and Kurdish groups seemed to be lessened when geo strategic distribution in the region was analyzed. This problem found its reflection in the fight of rival groups KDP and PUK, too; where to become closer (Olson, 1996: 89).

The establishment of an independent and internationally recognized state in Northern Iraq is perceived as a potential disaster and a challenge by the states concerned both politically and physically (Olson, 1996: 91).

3.5. Iran

The national security concerns between Turkey and Iran over the Kurds was given prominence when President Demirel met with President Rafsanjani on 15-27 July 1994.

The emphasis placed on preventing the emergence of an independent Kurdish state in Northern Iraq was the major topic of discussion (Olson, 1996: 92).

From the Gulf War to the end of 1995, Turkish and Iranian relations regarding the Kurdish issue went through many fluctuations. Despite the agreed upon cooperation over Northern Iraq, the emergence of areas in Northern Iraq which were

no longer under the control of the authority of Iraq meant greater competition between Ankara and Tehran over that space (Olson, 1996: 95). The problem lied where the sphere of influences of these countries will be drawn. And this problem found its reflection also in the fight of rival groups KDP and PUK; where to become closer.

There was an emerging situation in which the KDP controlled territory was under the Turkish sphere of political as well as economic influence and the PUK controlled territory had closer ties with Iran (Özcan, 1999: 328).

3.6. Iraq

In 1993, Ankara established diplomatic relations with Iraq at the charged affairs with ambassadorial rank (Selim Karaosmanoğlu, the Iraqi ambassador to Turkey; Faruk Abdullah Yahya Al Hicazi).

Iraq government lost her authority over the Northern Iraq after the Gulf War with Operation Provide Comfort, the further consequences of which might destabilize the region. Her relations with Turkey were now more fragile and sensitive than it used to be.

Both governments varied their relations with the groups according to the differences in the circumstances. The fighting between the rival Kurdish groups illustrates the dilemma of Turkey. Their fight against each other and the weakening of one would pose a challenge that the weaker party would seek closer cooperation with PKK (Olson, 1996: 102).

The improvement of relations with Turkey on part of Baghdad regime may indicate that while Baghdad is resentful of Turkey's relations with the leaders of KDP and PUK and its influence in Northern Iraq, Baghdad did not think that Turkey wanted to annex or militarily occupy Northern Iraq; but, she rather wanted to remain as the dominant political party to have a great influence over KDP and PUK (Gözen, 1997: 50).

It seems to be ironical that Turkey was in favor of lifting the sanctions against Saddam Hussein, whom she tried to collapse from power during Gulf War with Western allies. But the activities of the PKK after the Gulf War and the Kurdish nationalists in Turkey, many of whom found sanctuary in Northern Iraq and Iran, made Turkey seek some cooperation with its southern neighbors (Gözen, 1997: 58).

4. TWO RIVAL GROUPS KDP AND PUK

The combat between the forces of KDP and PUK in other words between the forces of Barzani and Talabani happened out to be the result of a debate about a territorial dispute. At least it was considered like that in the world community (Barkey, 1997: 3). In fact there are social, political, economic and many other historical reasons for the combat of these two rival Kurdish groups.

Kurds in Iraq form two distinct groups in terms of their culture, their language even the geography they live in. What brought these two groups together was to act against Saddam Hussein.

The region falls into two parts namely Bahtinan and Soran. Zap River separates these two areas. The east of Zap is Bahtinan and west of it is called Soran. The

dialects of the language are different in these two regions (Özmen, 1996: 50). The dialect that is spoken in Bahtinan is called as "Kırmanci". However, the Kurds in Soran region speak the same dialect with the Kurdish Iran namely "Sorani". The difference in their dialect is so big that it causes problem in the understanding of their language (Özmen, 1996: 57). Once there appeared a political difference, the differences in language also widened. Two different sides are careful in using different terminologies and words.

Although these two groups belong to the some religion, Islam, there are religious differences between them. While the Nakşibendi tariq is common among Bahdirans (Barzani supporters), Kadiri tariq is more common in Soran (Talabani supporters) (Özmen, 1996: 59). In fact they perform Islam in different ways. Bahdinan Kurds perform Nakşibendi tariq in a different way. In the past many Christian Asuri accepted Islam and then become Kurds. This influence is evident in Barzan villages.

Soran Kurds are Şafiiis. Sheik Abdulkadir Geylani, whose tomb is in Baghdad, has a distinctive place in the lives of the Soran Kurds. Their way of performing Islam is similar to other Muslims. Soran Kurds are the neighbors of the Turkomans geographically; moreover, in some of the regions they live together and are relatives through marriages.

The differences in cultural daily life reflected itself in the politics and separated them completely. Apart from short periods, these two groups formed different organizations and carried out their struggle. For most of the time they struggled both against the Baghdad regime and themselves (Ülger, 1996: 208).

KDP was established in August 1947. While Mustafa Barzani became the leader of the party, a Sorani Kurd Habib Kerim became the Secretary General. Small Kurdish groups in Iraq started to join to KDP. KDP was a coalition of various fractions employing in his body.

The opposition of leftist intellectuals such as Jalal Talabani and Ibrahim Ahmet in KDP became apparent in 1964. They departed by criticizing the administration of Barzani being "individual". The dissolution of KDP became clear after the defeat of the Kurds by 1975 Algier Agreement between Iran and Iraq (Ülger, 1996: 210). Talabani and his supporters established PUK. After the 1975 defeat, KDP started to gain its pervious power in 1976. The traditional base of KDP is the Kurdish tribes residing in the Bahdinan region near the Turkish border (Zaho, Dohuk, Amedia) (Ülger, 1996: 212).

KDP announced that she struggles for autonomy (Berzenci, 1996: 193). Her basic motto is "Democracy in Iraq, autonomy to Kurdistan". In addition to this she tries to point out "self determination". She foregrounds the unity of the all Kurds also. But at the same time she is careful to argue that her struggle is limited to Iraq. KDP is blamed as a party of "tribes" by socialist Kurdish intellectuals. She is being criticized by relying on tribal features rather than trying to abolish them (Gunter, 1996: 51).

Although KDP has a principle of pursuing good relations with Turkey, she opposed to the "Hot Pursuit" agreement. She never welcomed this agreement (it was abolished in 1988 and gave a right to the parties, Iraq and Turkey, a hot pursuit of 40

km in neighboring countries) since she thought it as a violation to her area of authority.

PUK is the second biggest Kurdish group in Iraq. She is more active in Soran region (Arbil, Süleymaniye, Selahuddin), the south of Barzani region. Although she occupies some Marxists, she is a social democrat party and is a member of Socialist International (Özmen, 1996: 57).

The actual fact was that North Iraq was divided into two. Barzani and Talabani formed their own administrations in the territories that they control. The entrance to the other side was under control and custom was applied to the goods. There was also a great struggle over the scarce resources that there was an international sanction to Iraq and moreover Iraqi government employed a sanction to Northern Iraq (Ülger, 1996: 210). It was evident that the two parties were so apart from each other that it appeared out to be impossible to reach conciliation between two parties during the 1990s.

5. THE SITUATION OF NORTHERN IRAQ IN 2000

Despite the negative effects of Iran-Iraq war and the outcomes of the war in the Gulf the regional power of Iraq was decreased. However, Iraqi regime was able to survive. USA declared openly that she aimed to overthrow the existing Iraqi regime. In order to support the Iraqi opposition US Congress saved 97 million dollars.

International community placed an embargo on Iraq. The UN sanctions over Iraq can be summarized like this;

- Getting rid of mass destruction weapons and having a control over not acquiring these weapons.
- The selling of oil according to a procedure (oil for food)
- Compensating the losses of the third parties, companies and citizens as well as of the Kuwait.

The process of Iraq's approval to the decisions of UN Security Council and solution of the problems in accordance with UN had not been carried properly and the problems appeared aftermath of Gulf War stayed unresolved (Oran, 1998: 263). The clearance of Iraq from mass destruction weapons remained as a vital necessity for the removal of the sanctions. Moreover, it provided a ground for the US led intervention to Iraq which resulted in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

In April 1996 UN Security Council passed the resolution 986 to lessen the humanitarian needs of the people caused by the embargo (oil for food).

The extraordinary situation in Northern Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War was another source of trouble between Turkey and Iraq. The most conflicting issue that Iraqi government pointed out with her relations to Turkey was the ban of the north of 36 parallel to Iraq air forces. British and US aircrafts used the İncirlik Base under the 'Operation Northern Watch'. This was another conflicting issue between Iraq and Turkey (Oran, 1998: 259).

The activities of Turkomans in Iraq also created uneasiness in Baghdad (Nakip, 1996: 38). Turkey, under these conditions, at one hand tried to establish economic

relations with Iraq according to the legal bases of international rules for her benefit, at the other hand tried not to fall in a position of violating UN Security Council resolutions. Turkey wanted to establish an economic partnership with one of her biggest economic partners in the pre-embargo period.

Turkey started to pursue an active policy over the territorial integrity, political unity and independence of Iraq. The relations with the two parties in Northern Iraq KDP and PUK were followed under control. By the initiation of Ankara Process Turkey took the initiative and avoided the situation to fall into an undesirable situation.

6. CONCLUSION

From the beginning of the First Gulf crisis Turkey sided and acted with the international community. This behavior continued during the Second Gulf Crisis. However, it should not be forgotten that the situation which appeared out after the Second Gulf Crisis is somehow different from the First Gulf Crisis.

The extraordinary situation appeared in Northern Iraq after the Gulf Crisis caused a great sensitiveness in Turkish public opinion. It is in this period that United States developed stronger relations with local allies, Barzani and Talabani. The consequences of the relationship that has its firm grounds in this period played an important role in the restructuring and reformulation of Iraq.

This study, which aims the analysis of the situation of the Northern Iraq between 1990 and 2000 in order to prepare a firm ground to analyze the current state of affairs in regional as well as international politics, foregrounds that Turkey had red lines in policy formulations during the First Gulf Crisis. It is also needed to be pointed out that Turkey has red lines in the current state of affairs. Any kind of action that is not compatible with the red lines will find a strong regional as well as international opposition. The red lines that Turkey and other neighboring countries such as Iran and Syria have are the territorial integrity and political unity of Iraq.

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