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Conflicting Interests: Tehran and the National Aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds

Doron Itzchakov



Mideast Security and Policy Studies No. 142

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BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY
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© The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies
Bar-Ilan University
Ramat Gan 5290002 Israel
Tel. 972-3-5318959
Fax. 972-3-5359195

office@besacenter.org
www.besacenter.org
ISSN 0793-1042

December 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The national aspirations of the Kurdish minority in Iraq pose a challenge to the four countries that have a large Kurdish population. It is not by chance that the decision to hold a referendum provoked furious reactions among the leaders of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. According to the received wisdom, the success of Iraq's Kurdish minority in realizing its national self-determination will serve as a catalyst for separatist tendencies among the Iranian Kurds. However, Tehran's firm opposition to the move stems not only from the fear of a "chain reaction" but also from strategic and geopolitical consideration. In other words, the controversy between Shiite Iran and the Kurdish minority in Iraq is not the result of an historical memory of an uprising that led to the establishment of the "Republic of Mahabad" in the 1940s, but consists of other levels that express opposing aspirations in a changing geopolitical space.

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INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish nation, numbering some 30 million, is dispersed in four countries: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. This community, which for various reasons failed to realize its aspiration for national self-determination after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, has remained an ethnic minority divided over those countries. It is true that the Kurdish population is not monolithic and has various tribal identities, different religious perceptions, diverse political interests, and particularistic loyalties that led to rivalries and splits. It is no less true, however, that this did not detract the Kurds from striving to realize their national aspirations, a longstanding struggle that has exacted a heavy human and material toll and has left the Kurds the world's largest national group without a state of its own.

The Iranian Kurdish minority, which in the absence of official data is estimated at eight million people, is the country's second largest ethnic minority after the Azeri community. As mentioned, the Iranian Kurds are not of one piece. In addition to differences based on political, ideological, or tribal background, there is a structural lack of uniformity that also has a religious background. Unlike other countries where the Kurdish minority belongs mostly to the Sunni sect of Islam, in Iran some of the Kurds, especially those living in the northwestern district of Kermanshah, are Shiites and are therefore accorded preferential treatment by government institutions. As a result, this population does not rush to publicly oppose the policy of the Islamic regime. Moreover, the regime's "divide and rule" policy, as well as its tight control and iron fist exercised against the Kurdish population, have affected the cohesion of this minority.

The recent progress of Iraq's Kurdish minority toward national self-determination, expressed in the September 25, 2017 referendum, posed considerable challenges not only to the central government in Baghdad but also to other states with large Kurdish populations. It is therefore not surprising that the decision to hold the referendum aroused angry reactions among the leaders of Iraq, Turkey, Iran, and Syria's Assad regime, which enjoys an Iranian-Russian defense umbrella. At the same time, the Iranian angle of this issue is particularly interesting due to the serious dilemmas it poses to country's internal and external policy. Not for nothing did the Islamic Republic adopt a hostile and aggressive political line that was implemented in a variety of steps to thwart the move.¹

The most prominent argument among researchers on the subject is that the success of the Iraqi Kurdish minority in realizing its national identity will serve as a catalyst for separatist tendencies among the Kurds in Iran. Despite the general truth of this claim, the Iranian-Kurdish case differs from its counterparts in Iraq, Turkey and Syria, and some would argue that this minority is far behind in terms of realizing its national aspirations.² This raises the question of whether the Islamic regime's hostility toward the referendum stems from fear of Kurdish separatism in Iran, or whether there are other considerations informing policymakers in Tehran, which have not been properly addressed until now. But to examine the basic assumptions underlying the received wisdom, an historical review is in order so as to glean some meaningful insights into the subject.

THE HISTORICAL BACKDROP

The relations between the Kurdish minority in Iran and the central government experienced ups and downs both during the monarchy and under the revolutionary regime. In the historical consciousness of the Islamic Republic is still etched the uprising of the Kurdish minority under the leadership of Qazi Muhammad, which led to the establishment of the Republic of Mahabad (January 1946) under Soviet patronage. The formation of this entity, despite its brief existence, was a precedent for Kurdish success in realizing its national aspirations. However, it is important to examine the historical context that led to this development.

In late August 1941, the Allies invaded Iran, which found itself under foreign rule. On the one hand, the presence of the Allies on its soil was anchored in the Tripartite Agreement between Britain, the Soviet Union, and Iran (January 29, 1942), designed to ensure that the invasion would be perceived not as permanent occupation but as a mutually agreed temporary arrangement whereby Iran would maintain its political independence. Specifically, Moscow and London agreed to recognize Iranian sovereignty and territorial integrity, and undertook to withdraw from its territory no later than six months after the end of the war.³ Iran, for its part, agreed to Allied control of major traffic arteries in its territory for the transfer of supplies and equipment to the Soviet Union, substantial parts of which were occupied or besieged by the Nazi Germany. At the same time, a mechanism was created that enabled the Soviets to establish themselves in northern Iran and the British in the south and center of the country. Moreover, at the beginning of the invasion, the Allies overthrew Reza Shah (1921-41) and entrusted the throne to his twenty-year-old son, Muhammad Reza (1941-79). This move left a mark on the fragile political reality that prevailed in Iran at the time.⁴

At the end of the war, and in line with the Tripartite Agreement, the British agreed to withdraw their forces from Iranian soil within six months after the end of the fighting. In contrast, Moscow's actions indicated a long-term intention to stay in the country, which in turn ushered in a series of Iranian-Soviet crises. The most prominent crisis emanated from an uprising in the provinces of Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, which began in October-November 1945, with Soviet incitement. The Azerbaijan Democratic Party, founded in September of that year (with Moscow's encouragement), demanded territorial autonomy, and when the Iranian army came to suppress the uprising, it was stopped by Soviet forces.⁵

In December 1945, Ja'far Pishevari declared himself prime minister of the autonomous Azerbaijan. A month later, in January 1946, Qazi Muhammad declared the establishment of the "Republic of Mahabad" in northwest Iran.⁶ Although the two national movements recognized the authority of the central government in Tehran, their demands focused on the establishment of autonomy in internal affairs and the granting of status to the Kurdish and Azeri languages. This step was seen as a dangerous precedent that could erode the basis of Iranian national

identity.⁷ It was only in May 1946, after Iranian Prime Minister Ahmed Qavam promised the Soviets an oil concession in northern Iran that the Red Army withdrew from the northern part of the country.⁸

Following the withdrawal, the Iranian military entered the Kurdish area, overcame the little opposition of the Kurdish Democratic Party in Iran (KDPI) supporters and succeeded in restoring control of the disputed districts in December 1946. Qazi Muhammad was caught and executed in the central square of Mahabad, together with several of his Democratic Party colleagues. Mustafa Barzani, Muhammad's co-leader of the uprising, fled to the Soviet Union with a handful of supporters, staying there for over a decade, until he was allowed back to Iraq after the July 1958 coup that overthrew the Hashemite monarchy and brought to power a military junta headed by Abd al-Karim Qassem. Thus ended the Iranian crisis, with the failure of the Soviet attempt to divide the country and to control its northern part. Yet fear of the great power to the north remained etched in the memory of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and was to play a central part in his foreign policy considerations in the years to come.⁹

The Kurdish national movement of Iran experienced a long period of rehabilitation after the collapse of the "Republic of the Mahabad", punctured by occasional purges as the shah strove to reassert his authority following the August 1953 ousting of Prime Minister Muhammad Mosaddegh, but in March 1967 clashes with the central government resumed. After 18 months of fighting the Kurdish uprising was suppressed, largely due to the opposition by Barzani, who at the time was supported by Iran, Israel and the United States in his struggle for Kurdish autonomy in Iraq.¹⁰

Sustained until March 1975, when it was suspended following the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement regulating Iranian-Iraqi relations, Tehran's support for the Kurds reflected no sympathy for their national cause, let alone for Barzani's political ambitions given his role in the establishment of the Mahabad republic. (Some Iranian circles even considered him a Soviet agent using Kurdish nationalism as a tool for fomenting separatism in Iraq, and subsequently in Iran and Turkey.)¹¹ Rather, it was designed to weaken the Iraqi regime and armed forces in view of the bitter hostility between the two states.

In the 1970s, the nature of the Iranian Kurds' struggle changed with the election of Abd al-Rahman Ghassemlou as KDPI chairman. His slogan, "Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan," meshed well with the growing social discontent in Iran, gaining considerable momentum during the turbulent events of 1978 that culminated in the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic headed by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Yet whatever hopes the Kurds held for the new regime, these were quickly dashed due to internal divisions and the government's uncompromising policy. The expectation of cultural autonomy did not materialize and the Kurds were confronted with a demand for immediate disarmament. As a result, in March 1979, clashes between the Kurds and the security forces of the new regime ensued, and in August of that year Khomeini declared jihad against the Kurds. The fighting between the sides continued intermittently during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), causing many casualties among the Kurdish fighters and the civilian population.¹²

No less importantly, a string of assassinations in 1989-96 decimated the Iranian Kurdish leadership and created a political vacuum that is still felt to date. Ghassemlou, for example, was assassinated in July 1989, while meeting with representatives of the Islamist regime in Vienna; his successor, Sadegh Sharafkandi, was similarly murdered in September 1992 in a Berlin restaurant together with two other Kurdish leaders and the interpreter who accompanied them.¹³ Following the murder, an international arrest warrant was issued against Ali Fallahian, who headed the Iranian Intelligence and Security Ministry at the time. Small wonder that the assassinations left a mark on the activity of the Iranian Kurdish leadership and its readiness to pursue the implementation of the community's national aspirations.¹⁴

STRATEGIC AND GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The leadership vacuum currently prevailing within Iran's Kurdish minority points to other reasons for the Islamic Republic's objection to the national aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds, namely the fear that Kurdish autonomy in northeastern Iraq will reduce its leverage in the war torn country. Arguably the main beneficiary of the March 2003 US-led international invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's

longstanding regime, Tehran's deep penetration of Iraq's political, diplomatic and security spheres is a well-known fact - and a major step toward the realization of its ambitions for regional hegemony.¹⁵

Another consideration that directly affects Iranian policy is the fear that Kurdish autonomy will lead to US penetration of this area, given the close cooperation between Washington and the Kurdish Peshmerga forces since 2003, including the latter's struggle against ISIS. These fears, however, may be exaggerated as the Trump administration has failed to back the Kurdish national aspirations, withdrawing its support for a referendum expressing reservations about the move and calling upon the leaders of the Kurdish movement to forego its implementation.

Moreover, the administration's aloofness to the Iraqi government's reliance on Iranian-backed Shiite militias in the October 2017 offensive that drove the Peshmerga from territories they had held for some time, notably the oil rich city of Kirkuk and its environs, left a bitter taste among the Iraqi Kurds. Despite all the above, Tehran's fear of infiltration by the "the Great Satan," as Khomeini had famously called the US, has not yet fully receded and remains a source of concern for the Supreme Leader and the Revolutionary Guards' commanders. As a result, a variety of belligerent statements against the (very limited) American presence in Iraq by Shiite militia commanders operating in Iraq under Iranian direction can be heard.¹⁶

Iranian apprehensions were further exacerbated by the gradual warming of relations between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which threatened to weaken Tehran's status and influence in Iraq. Not for nothing was the visit of the Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr to Riyadh seen as a snub to Tehran and was criticized by senior Iranian officials.¹⁷ Likewise, the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi to Riyadh and his meeting with King Salman and US Secretary of State Tillerson elicited strong Iranian criticism for fear of a change in Iraq's foreign policy.¹⁸

Iranian-Saudi rivalry did not of course begin as a result of the struggle for hegemony in post-Saddam Iraq. This rivalry ensued not long after the establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979, due to Ayatollah Khomeini's desire to establish Islamic rule based on the principle of

“Velayat-e Faqih” in the country hosting Islam’s two holiest sites. The ayatollah hoped that support for his teachings in this important country, due to its special historical status, would serve as a springboard for leadership of the Muslim world. As a result, he argued that the protection of Mecca and Medina should not be vested in state, especially if that state did not show true Muslim piety, by his definition. But while the militant rhetoric against Riyadh pleased Khomeini's supporters, such a challenge was perceived by Sunni Muslims as defiance of the Saudi royal family’s historic rule as a protector of the holy places.¹⁹

Another point of prolonged contention has been the issue of pilgrimage to the holy sites in Mecca and Medina. On the one hand, Riyadh accused Tehran of exploiting the Hajj for purposes of propaganda and subversion. On the other, Iran accused the Saudi authorities of negligence that caused many deaths of Iranian pilgrims over the years. In January 2016, another round of tension culminated in the torching by an angry mob of the Saudi embassy in Tehran in response to the execution of a prominent Shiite cleric (Sheikh Nimr Baqir al-Nimr) by the Saudi authorities.²⁰ As a result of the incident, diplomatic relations between the two countries were severed, and despite the attempts at reconciliation the gaps in their positions remain unchanged. At present, the two states are divided on so many issues that it seems that there is no area where they stand on the same side of the aisle. The fighting in Yemen, the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, as well as Hezbollah's effort to promote the “axis of resistance” in the Middle East are bitter battlegrounds for both countries.

Another aspect of the Kurdish issue relates to the land corridor Tehran seeks to establish from its territory through Iraq, northern Syria, and Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea. The uncertainty surrounding the Kurdish question and the possible impact that this dilemma placed on the Kurdish minority in Syria were among the reasons for diverting the route southward to the area of al-Mayadin and Deir ez-Zor. It is not by chance that Iran is concentrating its efforts on the militias operating under its direction in order to gain ground on the border crossings between Iraq and Syria, and even warned Washington and the coalition forces operating in the Syrian desert in this respect.²¹

TEHRAN'S *MODUS OPERANDI* BEFORE AND AFTER THE REFERENDUM

The Iranian strategy prior to the referendum comprised a number of basic elements, including media propaganda for deterrence, a divide and rule policy, coordination of joint steps with Turkey, and a campaign to delegitimize the Kurdish move. The first step taken by Tehran after Barzani made known his intention to hold a referendum was a broad propaganda campaign on two parallel axes: One, through senior government officials; the other, through the commanders and spokesmen of the armed militias operating in Iraq on behalf of Iran. Notably, the most activist and militant line against the referendum was voiced by the spokesmen of the Shiite militias. Hadi al-Amiri, leader of the Badr Organization, was quoted by Fars News Agency, affiliated with the Revolutionary Guards, as saying that the Kurdish leadership's failure to abolish the referendum would lead to bloodshed and even civil war in Iraq. Likewise, Qais Khazali, commander of the Iran-backed Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq militia, derided the Kurdish action as an Israeli plot. A similar pejorative was voiced by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and other senior figures in the Iranian religious establishment, who condemned the Iraqi Kurdish minority's aspiration to autonomy as a Zionist plot to establish a "new Israel" in the region. It is clear, therefore, that the concern among Iranian policymakers stemmed from the fact that the establishment of an independent entity, which would not be under Tehran's control and would disrupt its operational and strategic plans was "intolerable," and they therefore acted to obstruct the process.

To the media propaganda was added a policy of divide and rule designed to disrupt the Kurdish move. According to a report by al-Sharq al-Awsat, Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force, arrived in Suleimaniya in April 2017 to meet with senior members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led until his death in October 2017 by Jalal Talabani. At the meeting, Soleimani reportedly urged the PUK leaders not to support the referendum and even tried to convince them to take action to cancel the move initiated by Barzani, Talabani's longtime nemesis.²²

A similar attempt at persuasion was carried out in Iran itself among the Kurdish minority in the Kermanshah district. It should be recalled that quite a number of Shiite Kurds reside in this district who are affected by the Iranian regime's long-term policy of divide and rule. It is thus that the Iranian Kurdish minority found itself divided on the issue of the referendum. While the Kurds in northwestern Iran, who are Sunni, supported the move, a significant portion of the Kurds in Kermanshah opposed it. Moreover, the Islamic regime's efforts to use the religious identity of Shiite Islam, as well as Khomeini's worldview, as a transnational tool that consolidates the population in order to blur ethnic identity and prevent isolationism, has left a mark on the Kurdish national movement in Iran.²³

The Iraqi Kurds' aspirations for national self-determination even led to Iranian-Turkish cooperation despite the substantial differences between the two states over the Syrian crisis. Cooperation came after a long period of bitter disagreement over the legitimacy of the Assad regime, but the Kurdish referendum created a conjectural convergence of interests based on the pragmatic assumption that "the enemy of my enemy may be my friend." Consequently, the two states adopted similar tactics, including persuasion attempts to have the referendum abolished, a threat of economic closure of Kurdistan, a halt to the export of goods to the Kurdish region, a disruption of the media, and extensive security coordination. It should be remembered that in the absence of an outlet to the sea, Iraqi Kurdistan is besieged by its surrounding neighbors - this in addition to the fact that its economic structure relies heavily on trade with Iran and Turkey.

Tehran's actions in the wake of the referendum were largely in line with its earlier threats, closing its air space, then the land crossing along its border with Iraqi Kurdistan. Similar action was carried out by Ankara, and this combined effort led to an effective economic strangulation on the Kurdish region. The fuel supply was halted and the import of goods was almost completely suspended, despite the heavy damage caused by this measure to Iranian merchants. At the same time, verbal attacks on the Kurdish referendum continued, and the Revolutionary Guards carried out a large-scale exercise along the common border, which simulated a ground invasion and occupation of territory, with the clear aim of signaling to the Kurds the seriousness of Tehran's intentions.

Tehran's strategy consisted of two main components: the use of proxies and satellites and the use of a "soft intervention" to increase its sphere of influence. The first pattern of action includes the use of militias consisting of civilians operating under militant Shiite indoctrination in order to promote the Islamic Republic's objectives. This strategy dates back to the early days of the theocratic regime. The establishment of the "Islamic Revolution Committees" was the harbinger of such activity aimed at protecting the regime against its opponents. Later, the Basij organization was formed, composed of motivated and dedicated volunteers with the aim of protecting the regime against both external and internal threats. The organization, which began operating in April 1980, played a decisive role in the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88).²⁴

The war was a formative event for the newly established revolutionary regime, which led both to the construction of the concept of self-reliance out of Tehran's sense of isolation during the conflict and to the formation of the command echelons of the current military-security establishment. Moreover, the bloody confrontation with Iraq left a mark on the worldview of senior military and Revolutionary Guards officials and contributed to the establishment of a network of personal connections that is reflected in a chain of current appointments in the top security echelons. The war also offered a window of opportunity for establishing fighting militias operating on behalf of Iran, notably the Badr militia that fought alongside Iran during the eight-year war, in what was to mark the beginning of the use of the proxies' model. The integration of the Badr organization into the new Iraqi political structure created after Saddam's ousting has significantly increased its strength, as evidenced by the appointment of its leader, Hadi al-Amiri, to the position of minister of transport in 2011-14. To this day, Amiri maintains close ties with the Iranian leadership and with the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards, attesting to his loyalty to the Islamic regime.²⁵

The idea of establishing a fighting Shiite force operating under Tehran's auspices in other states was also born during the Iran-Iraq War. The establishment of the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon was an achievement for Tehran in promoting the "axis of resistance" and spreading its regional influence. There is little doubt that Tehran's successful experience with

Hezbollah inspired and promoted later Iranian initiatives to establish a network of fighting militias, with the aim of promoting a range of Iranian interests in areas of importance to it.

The entry of US-led coalition forces into Iraq in March 2003 served as another catalyst for Iran to establish Shiite militias that would operate under its direction in Iraq. The first was Jaysh al-Mahdi (Mahdi Army) founded by Muqtada al-Sadr, though dismantled in 2008 and replaced by the Saraya al-Salam organization. Iran later helped establish the organization of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (League of the Righteous) led by Qais Khazali, which operates parallel to the organization's political wing, al-Sadiqoun. Subsequently, in 2007, the Revolutionary Guards established the Kata'ib Hezbollah (Hezbollah Brigades), which operated mainly against the coalition forces in Iraq. However, there is little doubt that it was the establishment of al-Hashd al-Sha'bi organization as a roof organization of some 40 militias that fought alongside the Iraqi army against ISIS that created the golden opportunity for the realization of Tehran's regional ambitions. For while operating in accordance with the Iraqi parliament's decision of November 2014 (which subordinated these militias to the Iraqi political-security establishment), their affinity is largely with the Revolutionary Guards and the Iranian regime more generally.²⁶

The involvement of the Islamic Republic in the Iraqi conflict was also reflected in the establishment of other organizations, such as the Khorasani militia. Similar models, inspired by Tehran, are organizations such as Kata'ib Imam Ali; Kata'ib Sid al-Shuhada, established in 2013; Kata'ib al-Imam al-Gha'ib; Abu al-Fadhal al-Abbas, and others. Parallel to these organizations, groups were founded with various ethnic and religious characteristics, such as the Babylon Brigade and Kata'ib Rouh Allah Issa Ibn Maryam, based on Christian factions established against the backdrop of the war with ISIS; the Turkmen division commanded by Ilmez Najjar; and the Yazidi fighters belonging to Sinjar's resistance units, who took part in the campaign for northern Iraq in August 2014.²⁷

The activism employed by al-Hashd al-Sha'bi was of decisive importance in thwarting the Kurdish national aspirations after the publication of the referendum results. Thus, for example, the Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq militia took

an active role in recapturing Peshmerga-controlled areas, often by setting fire to public buildings and displaying sectarian fanaticism. In this context, it is noteworthy to mention the call by Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq leader to the Iraqi prime minister to assist the Kurds living in the Suleimaniya district, location of the PUK headquarters. This call came following his meeting with Ala Talabani (who headed the PUK delegation) in the city of Najaf, intended, apparently to sow division between the Kurdish factions in Iraq.²⁸

While it is true that the intricate structure of the factions within al-Hashd al-Sha'bi represents particularistic tendencies and loyalties that will likely shape Iraq's future in the foreseeable future, it seems that for the time being, the Iraqi government is not displaying sufficient maturity to impose its will on the various factions who continue to show loyalty to Tehran and obey its orders.²⁹

The consolidation of Iran's regional status has also led it to adopt a "soft intervention" strategy that involved considerable investment of economic resources. This policy was manifested in the establishment of cultural centers and the investment of great efforts in claiming a prerogative to rehabilitate Iraq and Syria's war damages. To this end, Tehran is prepared to invest considerable sums in rehabilitating electricity, telecommunications and large-scale engineering projects, as it did in Lebanon in late 2006. It appears that Iran's efforts are intended to increase dependence on and sympathy with its regime, but another angle indicates a considerable intelligence benefit that Iran may gain as a result of the rehabilitation in infrastructure. Decentralization in Iraq has enabled Tehran to become the main power broker in the country in return for large-scale economic aid, and it is clearly the hope of the revolutionary regime that this form of "indirect control" will serve as a model for its power projection in other parts of the region.

CONCLUSION

The far-reaching geopolitical changes attending the 2003 Iraq invasion, notably the end of the 82-year-long Sunni minority rule, opened a wide window of opportunity for Tehran to realize its hegemonic ambitions. Moreover, the concentration of international attention on the struggle against ISIS enabled the Iranians to strengthen their position in Iraq and Syria and to act without hindrance in advancing their envisaged “Shiite crescent.”

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that Tehran frowned on the burgeoning aspirations of the Iraqi Kurds for self-determination. And while the bitter memories of the "Mahabad Republic" played a role in the Islamic regime's mindset, it was marginal in comparison with the geopolitical and strategic considerations. As a result, Barzani's announcement of the referendum was met with such fierce opposition from Tehran and was accompanied by harsh retaliatory measures, which led to the isolation of the Kurdish region; the recapture of territories held for years by the Peshmerga; and the sowing of divisions with the Iraqi Kurdish national movement regarding its future policy.

For the time being, it appears that Tehran's efforts to thwart the Kurdish self-determination drive have borne fruit. Yet it is already possible to say that the changes brought about by the referendum will reverberate in the foreseeable future, despite Barzani's decision to step down from his current position.

Notes

- 1 See, for instance, Fars News Agency, Iranian Parliament Announcement from September 24, 2017.
- 2 Ofra Bengio, "The Kurds in a Volatile Middle East," Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* No. 130, February 2017.
- 3 Alireza Azghandi, *Ravabete Khareji-e Iran 1320-1357* (Tehran: Nashr- e Koms, 1997), p. 106.
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- 5 Donald Wilber, *Iran Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 104-5.
- 6 Abdol-Reza Houshang Mahdavi, *Siyasat- e Khareji-e Iran dar douran- e Pahlavi* (Tehran: Nashr- e Pikan, 2010), p. 107; Nazer Najimi, *Khoadat- e Tareekh- e Iran az Shahrivar 1320 ta 28- e Mordad 1332* (Tehran: Entesharat-e Qalini, 1991), p. 78.
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- 8 Abdol-Reza Houshang Mahdavi, *Sakhnehay az Tareekh- e Mautser- e Iran* (Tehran: Entesharat-e Alami, 1998), pp. 354-356.
- 9 Eden Naby, "Rebellion in Kurdistan," *Harvard International Review*, 2/3 (November, 1979), pp. 1, 5-7, 29; Azghandi, *Ravabete Khareji-e Iran*, pp. 44-45.
- 10 Hashem Ahmadzadeh and Gareth Stansfield, "The Political, Cultural, and Military Re-Awakening of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Iran", *Middle East Journal*, 64/1 (Winter 2010), pp. 11-27.
- 11 Israel State Archives, File No. 7154/19, "Conversation with Iranian ambassador to Moscow," October 5, 1962.
- 12 Hashem Ahmadzadeh and Gareth Stansfield, "The Political, Cultural, and Military Re-Awakening of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Iran," pp. 16-18.
- 13 Michael M. Gunter, "The Kurdish Question in Perspective," *World Affairs*, Spring 2004, pp. 197-205.

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- 14 Bengio, "The Kurds in a Volatile Middle East," pp. 34-35.
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