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The Kurdish Resistance in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey



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A Research Paper

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NESA 85-10126C

June 1985

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A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis,
with biographic information contributed by
 Office of Central
Reference.

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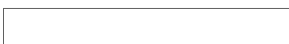
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**The Kurdish Resistance in
Iraq, Iran, and Turkey**



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Summary



*Information available
as of 11 June 1985
was used in this report.*

The Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war have enabled Kurdish militants in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey to revive insurgencies against their host governments:

- In Iraq, Kurdish militants have achieved their greatest success. They seized extensive tracts of territory along the Iranian and Turkish borders, which they have successfully held despite sweep operations by the Iraqis with support from the Turkish military.
- In Turkey, Kurds unexpectedly mounted an insurgency last summer, and, despite significant increases in Turkish troop strength in the Kurdish areas, the uprising has not been quelled.
- In Iran, a hard core of fighters survives and continues to defy the Tehran government despite successive reverses. The Iranian Kurdish resistance is presently tying down more than 40,000 Iranian troops.

Deep splits among the Kurdish rebel groups limit their ability to work together, and this undercuts the effectiveness of the movement. Nevertheless, some tentative steps toward cooperation have been taken recently by the Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas that could have serious implications for Baghdad.

The Kurdish resistance is heavily dependent upon outside assistance. Syria and Libya are the principal suppliers of arms and finances. Syria also provides training and safehavens. Iran and Iraq both arm and subsidize Kurdish guerrillas.

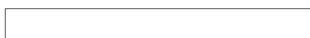
 the Soviet Union is stepping up contacts with the Kurds in Turkey.  it uses the Turkish Communist Party to influence the Turkish Kurdish insurgent groups. The Soviets apparently seek to use the Kurds to gain leverage against the regime in Ankara.

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Iraq plans to mount a major effort against Kurdish base camps in northern Iraq this summer. The Iraqis, however, can commit only limited troops to the offensive because of their continued conflict with Iran, and they could suffer serious casualties at the hands of the Kurds. If Iraq appears to be weakening under pressure of a two-front war, Turkey will try to assist by resuming cross-border attacks on the Kurds in Iraq. Such activity on Turkey's part, in our view, almost certainly would sour relations between it and Iran and could stop the developing rapprochement between the two countries.

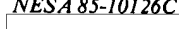


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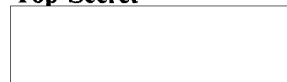
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The Kurdish Resistance in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey



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Over 15 million Kurds inhabit the strategic Iraq-Iran-Turkey triangle on NATO's southern flank.¹ Through this Kurdish territory runs the main invasion route from the northeast to the Persian Gulf. The Kurds have exploited the rugged mountainous terrain of their homeland to defy attempts by regional governments to subdue them. Generally, the Kurds have been easily contained. Periodically, however, they stage a revolt that threatens stability throughout the area. We believe the Kurds could be on the verge of another such major eruption.

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Kurdish insurgencies are under way in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey—the first time in over 50 years that Kurdish uprisings have occurred simultaneously in all three states. The unrest comes only a few years after the rebels appeared finally to have been defeated. A major rebellion in 1975 in Iraq, led by the legendary Kurdish guerrilla chieftain Mulla Mustafa Barzani, foundered after the rebels' principal backer, the Shah of Iran, withdrew his support and the Kurdish fighters were scattered into exile.

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The Iranian revolution and the Iran-Iraq war have allowed the Kurds to revive their rebellion. The collapse of the Shah provided Iranian Kurds with their first opportunity in nearly 35 years to assert their claims to independence. Iraq's arming of Iranian Kurds battling the Khomeini regime provoked Tehran to assist exiled elements of the Iraqi Kurdish community against Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. The necessity for both countries to transfer their forces from Kurdish areas to main fronts in the Iran-Iraq war has further emboldened the rebels.

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Aid from Baghdad and Tehran has produced formidable Kurdish resistance organizations. There are probably 10,000 to 15,000 Kurdish fighters established in strongholds in both

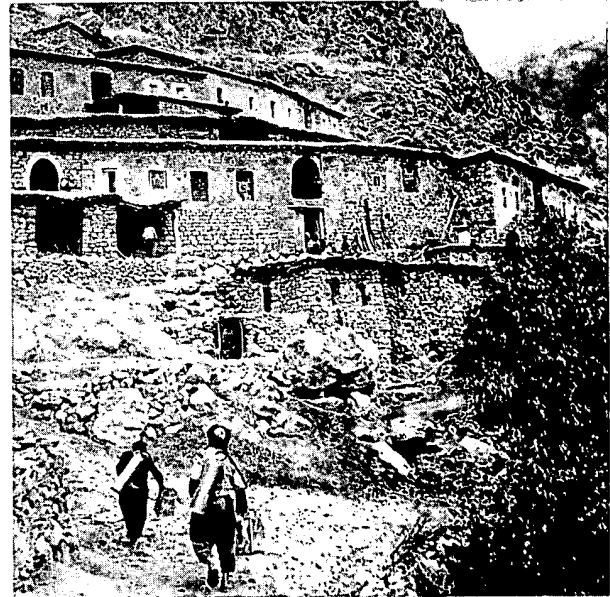
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A Kurdish village in northern Iraq

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Iraqi and Iranian territory. After starting out as Iranian and Iraqi pawns, the guerrillas have begun to act independently.

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Kurdish Resistance Organizations

The six major Kurdish guerrilla organizations have little in common except their desire for independence:

- Probably the toughest and best disciplined fighters among the Kurds are the Iraqi Kurdish tribesmen led by Mas'ud Barzani.
- Also fighting against the Government of Iraq is the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Jalal Talabani.
- In Iran, an umbrella organization of Kurdish fighters—the Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party (IKDP)—is made up of a faction loyal to IKDP leader Abdur Rahman Qasemlu; another extreme leftist group, the Komeleh; and the remnants of the once powerful Shikak tribe.

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Recent Kurdish History

The Kurds' grievances against the existing order in the Middle East go back to the peace treaties that ended World War I. Although the Kurds are the fourth-largest population group in the area, they were largely ignored. The peace treaties divided the Kurds between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. There is also a small community of Kurds in the Soviet Union.

statehood and instead asked for autonomy—whereby Kurds would enjoy minority privileges as citizens of existing states. Mulla Mustafa Barzani, in his revolt against Iraq throughout the 1960s and 1970s, fought only for autonomy. With Barzani's defeat in 1975, practically all major Kurdish resistance groups reverted to their demand for separatism.

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The Kurds refused to be assimilated, demanding the right of self-determination. They argued that they were a distinct people and as such entitled to a land of their own. Kurds speak a separate language and have distinctive customs; they also have lived in their homeland for centuries.

Many assimilated Kurds have risen to high positions in the Middle East. For example, Turkey's first Prime Minister, Ismet Inonu, was a Kurd, as was the first President of Iraq, Abdul Karim Qasem. Yet nowhere in the Middle East are Kurds accepted as full citizens if they choose to assert their Kurdishness.

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Since the end of World War I, the Kurds have been in almost constant rebellion against the various states in the region. Because of their proven qualities as guerrilla fighters and the rugged terrain of their homeland, they have been able to preserve a degree of independence; they, however, have not been able to form a state.

In Turkey, Kurds are forbidden to speak or write Kurdish. Indeed, the very concept of Kurd is considered ethnologically invalid by the Ankara government, which officially maintains that Turkey's Kurds are "mountain Turks." In Iran, religious discrimination is practiced against the Kurds—the largest Sunni minority in a Shia-dominated state. In Iraq, the Kurds are discriminated against racially and politically. They are not encouraged to join the ruling Arab nationalist Ba'th Party, and, although Kurds may speak Kurdish, the language of instruction in the schools and administration is Arabic. In all states where there are large Kurdish minorities, the Kurdish areas are the most economically backward.

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The Kurds came close to realizing their goal of statehood after World War II when they founded the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in Iran. The republic was overwhelmed by the Shah's forces after the Soviet Union, its principal backer, withdrew support. After the Iranian Kurdish defeat, Kurds generally moderated their demands. They abandoned their goal of

- The one important Kurdish resistance organization in Turkey is the Kurdish Labor Party (PKK), the most violent and anti-US of all the Kurdish rebel groups.

The tribe is led by Mas'ud and Idris Barzani, the sons of Mulla Mustafa. Mas'ud is the group's leader, although Idris, who is well respected by the tribesmen, also is capable of assuming command.

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~~X~~ **The Barzanis.** The Barzani tribe, the largest Kurdish group, numbers about 5,000 fighters, plus dependents. The tribe has a long history of fighting against governments in Baghdad. It was forced into exile in Iran following the defeat of Mulla Mustafa Barzani's revolt in 1975. From 1975 to 1983 the tribe served the Iranian Government as mercenaries against Iraq.

Mas'ud is not a dashing guerrilla captain in the tradition of his more renowned father, but he has a reputation as a shrewd diplomat.

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Legendary Kurdish guerrilla chief Mulla Mustafa Barzani in the uniform of a Soviet army general. Taken in 1946, when Barzani led the army of the Soviet-supported Kurdish Republic of Mahabad.

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[redacted] Barzanis set up an independent base in Iraq. Following the Haj Umran operation, they ordered approximately 800 of their fighters to occupy a strip of territory along the Iraq-Turkey border, [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] Other Barzani guerrillas then infiltrated the area. Successful infiltration was possible because Baghdad deliberately had drawn down its troop strength in the Kurdish north to confront Iranian invasion attempts in southern Iraq. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] [redacted] 25X1

The Barzanis have adopted a relatively low profile, and they seem intent on building their strength before they risk provoking retaliation from Baghdad. [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] 25X1
[redacted] they have not tried to take the major cities of the area, such as Zakhu, nor have they attempted to cut any of Iraq's vital lifelines, like the Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline. [redacted] 25X1

✗ In July 1983 the Barzanis spearheaded an Iranian Army probe that seized the small Iraqi border town of Haj Umran. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

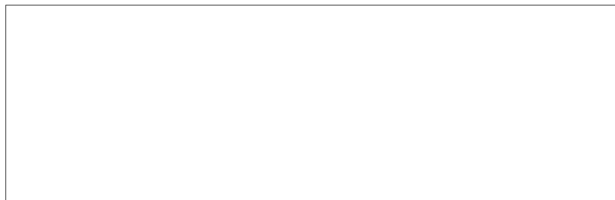
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Kurdish volunteers for Iraqi border guard

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The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The PUK, the second-largest Iraqi Kurdish guerrilla group, has 3,000 to 5,000 members. It is made up mostly of city Kurds, unlike the tribal Barzanis, and is led by the Marxist intellectual, Jalal Talabani. He and the Barzanis have long been rivals for leadership of the Iraqi Kurdish resistance. From 1976 until 1983, the PUK waged a low-level guerrilla war against Baghdad's forces in the area around As Sulaymaniyah in southern Iraqi Kurdistan.

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The PUK aligned with Iraq after the Haj Umran invasion. Talabani agreed to take Iraq's side in the war if, in return, Baghdad agreed to grant autonomy to the 2.5 million Iraqi Kurds,

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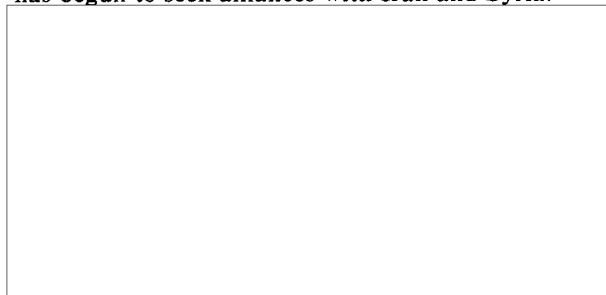
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With Talabani's help, Baghdad soon regained control over a major part of Iraq's Kurdish territory, but the autonomy talks broke down last October after dragging on for 10 months.

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With no chance of reaching an accommodation with the government, at least for the time being, Talabani has begun to seek alliances with Iran and Syria.

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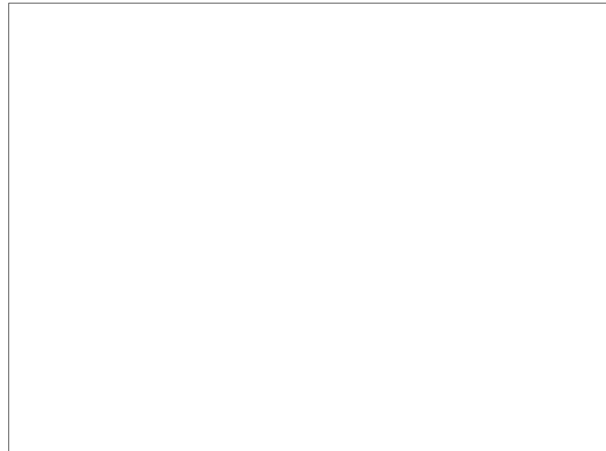


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We believe the talks foundered because of Talabani's excessive demands. he insisted that Iraq turn over defense of the Kurdish provinces to his guerrillas and that the PUK administer the Kurdish region in place of the ruling Ba'th Party. Ba'th Party officials probably regarded Talabani's proposals as a bid to share power, and a lessening of the Iranian threat removed some of the rationale for continued cooperation with him. Moreover, other Iraqi Kurdish tribes who had long cooperated with Baghdad objected to the prospect that Talabani, with whom they had bitter feuds, might gain power in Iraq.

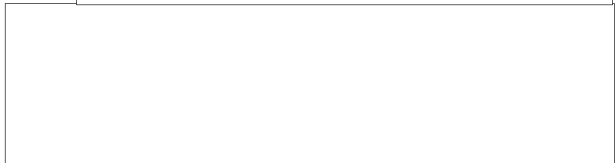
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Last February, Baghdad attacked Talabani's camps, marking the final break between him and the government.

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The Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party (IKDP). The Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party directs the Kurdish resistance in Iran. It is an umbrella organization. When founded in 1979, it included about 40,000 fighters in over a dozen groups, [redacted]

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[redacted] Today, ravaged by ruthless Iranian attacks, the IKDP has dwindled to two groups and the remnant of a third, with a combined strength of only a few thousand:

- A faction loyal to the IKDP's leader, Abdur Rahman Qasemlu, has about 5,000 fighters.
- An extreme Marxist group—the Komeleh—has about 1,000.
- The remnant of the once powerful Shikak tribe—the so-called Mount Ararat Group—has about 250.

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[redacted]

Iran's Kurds initially supported the Khomeini regime but quickly became disaffected when Tehran refused to consider their demands for a locally elected parliament, a Kurdish militia—to serve exclusively in the Kurdish provinces—and guaranteed freedom of worship. Khomeini rejected the Kurds' autonomy bid, arguing that it threatened Iran's national survival, [redacted]

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[redacted] To grant the Kurds autonomy would invite similar demands from other Iranian minorities, he claimed. Labeling the Kurds counterrevolutionaries, Khomeini ordered Kurdish cities and towns bombed. Kurdish dissidents fled into the mountains, but Iran's ground forces— weakened by the turmoil of the revolution—could not secure the Kurdish territory, and the rebels soon reoccupied the region from western Azerbaijan to Sanandaj. [redacted]

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As the Khomeini government regained confidence, however, Tehran recouped. Khomeini turned the job of pacifying the Kurdish region over to the Revolutionary Guard. The Guard members quickly regained control of most towns in Kurdistan, and last year Tehran ordered an all-out assault in which it committed 40,000 troops, including regular Army units, [redacted]

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[redacted] By October, according to Western press reports, Tehran claimed its forces had cleared a 2,000-square-kilometer area. [redacted]

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Tehran's success cost the Kurds most of their fortified bases and forced them to switch tactics. The resistance now largely is mobile, conducting guerrilla raids from strongholds in Iraq. [redacted]

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Nevertheless, with the first winter snows in December, the Kurds hit back. They harassed isolated Iranian garrisons, ambushed relief convoys, and inflicted heavy casualties on the Iranians, according to Western press reports. [redacted]

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[redacted]

[redacted]

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The Kurdish Labor Party (PKK). The Kurdish Labor Party is the only important Turkish Kurdish resistance organization. It also is the only Kurdish group that practices terrorism. The PKK originated in Turkey in the late 1960s or early 1970s and, according to statements of the group's leaders, is a Marxist-Leninist organization dedicated to the creation of a Kurdish state encompassing all of Turkey's Kurdish provinces. [redacted]

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In the spring of 1983, the PKK began efforts to stimulate a revolt in southeastern Turkey. Using safehavens in the Barzani-held territory in northern Iraq as staging areas, the PKK made hit-and-run

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[Redacted]

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Turkish-Kurdish guerrillas [Redacted]

attacks against Turkish security posts. The following summer it launched two daring raids into Turkey, killing and wounding a number of gendarmes and civilians. The raids were against two subprovincial seats, Semdinli and Eruh, in Hakkari and Siirt provinces. According to US diplomats in Adana, the raiders isolated the towns by cutting communications and for three days urged the townspeople to support Kurdish separatism. [Redacted]

The raids shocked the Turks, who are extremely sensitive to disaffection in their southeastern provinces, the site of large-scale rebellions in the 1920s and 1930s. They were taken aback by the organization displayed by the PKK and the brazen manner in which the raids were carried out. Even more disturbing was the fact that the raids were supported by some local Kurds and met with sympathy by many others, according to US diplomatic sources in Ankara. [Redacted]

Ankara responded by mounting cross-border attacks into Iraq to root out the PKK rebels and destroy their safehavens. The incursions by Turkey's troops largely were unsuccessful, in part because the Barzani Kurds offered the PKK cadres protection. Moreover, Tehran and Damascus angrily protested the Turkish action. Iran and Syria fear that Turkey, by suppressing the

guerrillas, will free Iraqi troops to confront the Iranians. According to US diplomats in Baghdad, the Iraqis and Turks had agreed in 1983 to permit Turkey to conduct cross-border raids against the Kurdish guerrillas. [Redacted]

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Iran's protests have temporarily deterred the Turks, who are reluctant to resume their raids as long as Tehran objects. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] the Turkish army supports resumption of the cross-border raids when necessary, but Turkey's civilian leaders prefer to seek an accommodation with Tehran. [Redacted]

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Meanwhile, local skirmishing is continuing, and both the Turkish Army and the PKK are preparing for future operations. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] The General Staff claims some success against the rebels, but the area's rugged terrain is hampering operations, US diplomats in Ankara report. [Redacted]

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Foreign Influence on the Resistance

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The survival of the Kurdish resistance depends to a large extent on outside support. As the Iran-Iraq war has become increasingly stalemated, foreign aid to the guerrillas has grown. [Redacted]

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Syria. We believe Syria supports the Iraqi Kurds primarily to exhaust Iraq's Army and undermine popular morale. It also hopes to keep the Iraqis preoccupied so they cannot pursue subversion against Damascus. Syria supports the Turkish Kurds to put pressure on Ankara on issues of concern. According to US Embassy officials in Damascus, the Syrians are worried that Turkey's construction of the Ataturk Dam on the Euphrates will diminish Syria's water

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[Redacted]

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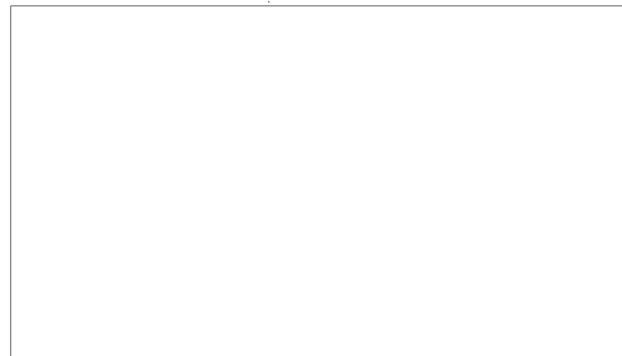
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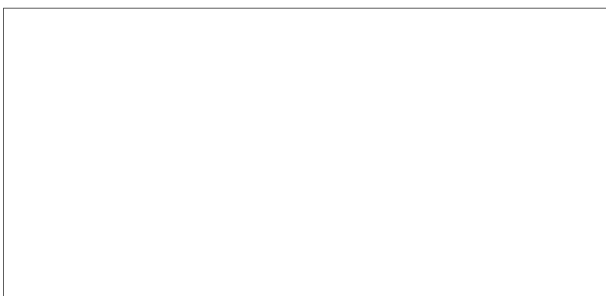
supply and limit its hydroelectric power generation. President Assad also almost certainly fears that Turkish ties to the United States work against Syria's strategic interests. During the crisis in Lebanon, the Syrians have complained to Ankara that Washington's use of Turkish military facilities has been a key element in what Damascus sees as a plan to undercut Syrian influence in Lebanon. [Redacted]



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Libya. Libya is the principal financial supporter of the Kurdish resistance in Iraq and Turkey and also supplies arms and training. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Iran also must take care that aid to the Kurds does not antagonize the Turks, since Ankara is liable to take Iraq's side in the war. After Iran successfully blocked Turkey from staging anti-Kurdish incursions into Iraq last year, relations between the two countries cooled. Turkish newspapers in November and December printed diatribes against Tehran, and some Iranian deputies attacked Turkey in the Majles. [Redacted]

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Iran. Iran supplies both the Barzanis and Talabani with arms. [Redacted]

In January, Iran initiated high-level contacts with Ankara, seeking to ease strained relations. Ultimately, Tehran agreed to prevent the PKK rebels from using the Barzani enclave. [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

Iraq. Iraq supports all factions of the IKDP. It supplies them with weapons, financing, and safe-havens. [Redacted] a 15-kilometer strip along Iraq's border with Iran between Qal'at Dizah and Panjwin has in effect been turned over to the Iranian Kurds. Inside the enclave the guerrillas maintain hospitals, barracks, arsenals, and even prisons. [Redacted]

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Iraq, like Iran, uses the guerrillas to tie down its enemy. Resistance activity in northwestern Iran forces Tehran to keep several divisions of troops in the area, [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Nevertheless, Baghdad is cautious in its dealings with the Kurds because of fears about strengthening Kurdish separatism. It gives the Kurds enough aid to keep their revolt against Iran going, but tries to prevent them from developing an independent power base. [Redacted]

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The Left. The Turks have long claimed that the Soviet Union uses Middle Eastern Communist parties as conduits for aid to the Kurds [Redacted]

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[Redacted]

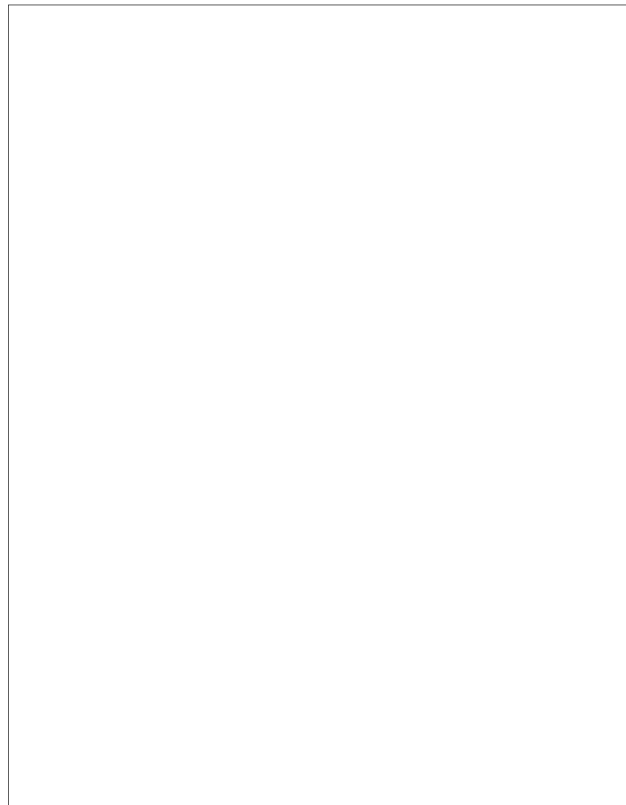
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Turkey's Special Role

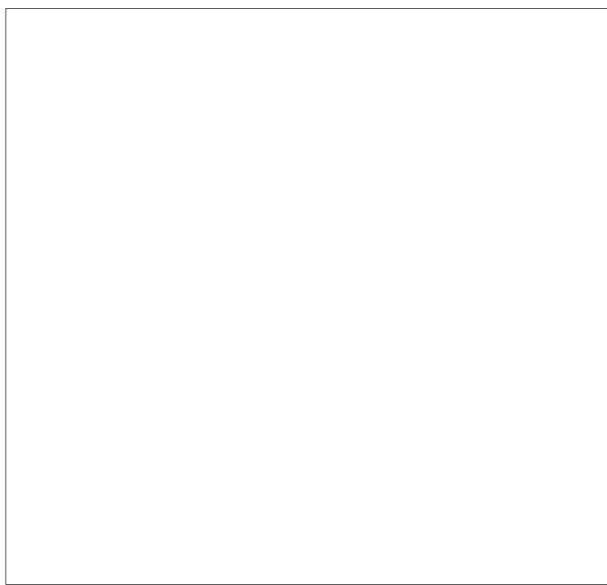
Since the start of the Iran-Iraq war, Turkey has become increasingly active in suppressing the Kurdish resistance. Of all the states with Kurdish minorities, Turkey is the most concerned about the destabilizing effects of the movement. Turkey has the largest Kurdish population in the Middle East, and Turkish Kurds are largely disaffected from the Ankara government. The Kurdish region is depressed economically in comparison with the rest of Turkey. It also remains under martial law five years after the military took power—along with other security problem areas like Ankara, Izmir, and Istanbul. Ankara long has feared a spillover effect from revolts by Kurds in neighboring states. [redacted]



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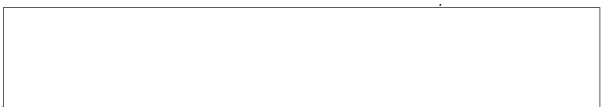
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Ankara's fears seem overdrawn but are perhaps understandable in view of Turkey's experience with the Kurds and other minority groups. After World War I, Turkey nearly was torn apart by revolts among its Greek, Armenian, and Kurdish communities. Moreover, the Kurds account for perhaps as much as one-quarter of Turkey's population. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Soviets have infiltrated the more important Kurdish organizations, using members of the Turkish Communist Party (TCP). [redacted] the Soviets are trying to direct the Kurdish insurgents to fulfill Communist objectives. According to press [redacted] earlier this year the well-organized and politically active TCP announced a united front with the PKK and publicly

endorsed Kurdish national rights. The TCP regularly propagandizes the Kurdish cause over its clandestine broadcasts from East Germany. Among other themes, the TCP calls on the Kurds to oppose US bases in the Turkish Kurdish areas. [redacted]

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In Iraq, the Barzanis last October allied themselves with a faction of the Iraqi Communist Party carrying

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[Redacted]

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on guerrilla operations against Baghdad. In Syrian press interviews after the alliance was formed, Mas'ud Barzani charged the United States was an imperialist power and "tool" of Zionist Israel. He also attacked Turkey as a member of the "hated" NATO. Barzani's comments surprised Western diplomats in Damascus. The Kurdish leader previously had been considered a conservative tribal chief, predisposed toward the United States. [Redacted]

Moscow has not attempted to incite Iranian Kurds—despite Soviet-Iranian frictions—because, in Moscow's eyes, the fiercely anti-Western Khomeini regime is an improvement over the pro-Western government of the Shah. Moscow's relations with Ankara also have taken a turn for the better in recent months. [Redacted]

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Outlook

In our judgment, the Kurdish situation, particularly in Iraq, will become more unstable during the coming months. If Tehran continues to fail in its attempts to overcome Iraqi defenses in the south, it is likely to try opening a second front involving the Kurds in the north. At the same time, Iraq has planned a major offensive against the Kurds this summer. [Redacted]

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If challenged by the Iraqi Army, we believe the Kurds will fight hard. They have won back land they believe rightfully belongs to them, and they will not easily surrender it. Moreover, after the breakdown of autonomy talks between Talabani and Baghdad, the Kurds know they have nothing to expect in the way of a political settlement. They can surrender to Baghdad—on Baghdad's terms—or they can fight. [Redacted]

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The Kurdish threat to Iraq could—in our opinion—increase sharply if any one of the following were to occur:

- The Kurds score a significant number of kills against Iraqi aircraft using shoulder-fired SAM-7s newly acquired from Syria.
- The Kurds cut Iraq's oil pipeline through Turkey.
- Iraq appears to be fragmenting under the pressures of having to fight a two-front war, a development that probably would compel Turkey to take military action against Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq. [Redacted]

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We believe cooperation between the Kurdish groups and the Communist parties in Europe and the Middle East is largely tactical. The Kurds offer the Communists a made-to-order constituency for opposing NATO, since Turkey is among the main opponents of Kurdish separatism. At the same time, the Kurds use the Communists to propagandize the Kurdish cause. [Redacted]

Moscow probably is stepping up its involvement with the Kurds in Turkey to gain leverage in future dealings with the regime in Ankara. The Soviets, however, are unlikely to jeopardize ties with Turkey or with Iran and Iraq by supporting Kurdish attempts to overthrow the governments of these countries. Moscow has a Friendship and Cooperation Treaty with Baghdad, and Soviet-supplied arms have enabled Iraq to sustain its war with Iran. In recent years,

We believe that acquisition of sophisticated weaponry by the Kurds has altered the balance of power in the north. The Kurds almost certainly have only a limited number of surface-to-air missiles, but they can use them to knock down helicopters, the scourge of the guerrillas. Iraq, therefore, must expect heavier losses than in the past if it moves against the Kurds. [Redacted]

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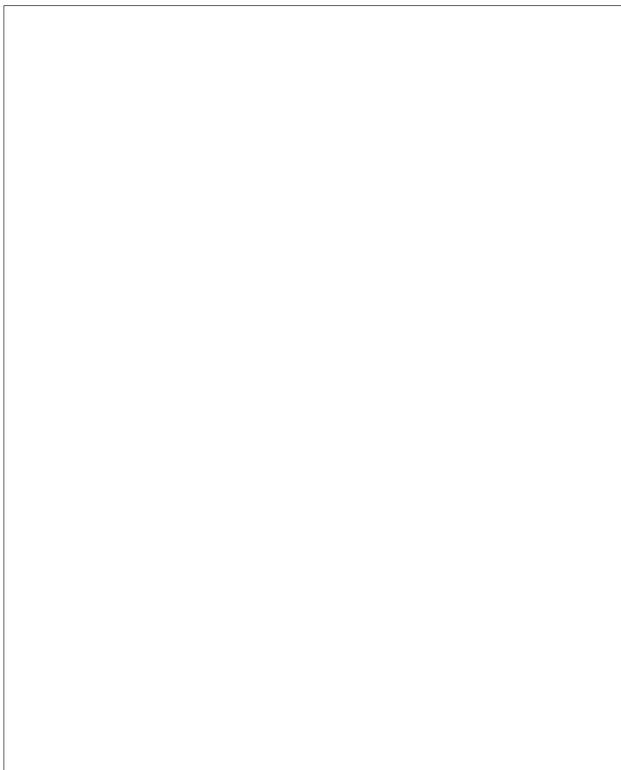
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The Kurds and Terrorism

For most of its recent history, the Kurdish resistance has avoided the use of terrorism. That situation appears to be changing, however, largely because of the influence of the Turkish Kurds. [redacted]

The Kurdish resistance in Turkey developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when violence was a part of the political process. Hence, Turkish Kurdish radicals, along with Turkish radicals generally, resorted to assassinations, hostage taking, and operations deliberately planned to instill fear. [redacted]



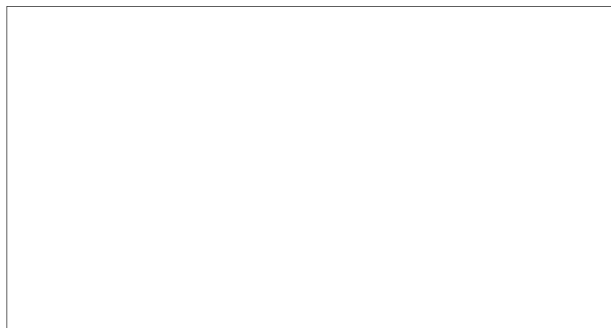
Until recently, Turkish claims of Kurdish cooperation with terrorist groups were difficult to substantiate. Last summer, however, European police noted a

marked increase in violence among PKK cadres. In Sweden, the Netherlands, and West Germany, Kurds linked to the PKK were assassinated, apparently by fellow PKK members. [redacted]

[redacted] a faction of the PKK has decided to pursue terrorist methods and is eliminating members who refuse to go along.



Last January a terrorist operation that probably was committed by the PKK occurred near Hamburg, West Germany. The Kurds joined with German radicals in firebombing trucks stored in a German Army depot. A letter to a West German newspaper linked the attack to the Kurdish resistance and the West German Red Army Faction. The letter claimed the trucks were bound for Turkey to be used against the Kurds. [redacted]



Meanwhile, in Iraq, Kurdish rebels have begun kidnapping foreigners working on development projects in the Kurdish areas. The rebels have seized over 15 technicians—from Italy, Japan, China, and Romania. Their aim appears to be to embarrass Iraq by demonstrating to foreign firms that Baghdad cannot protect their workers. [redacted]

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Nevertheless, we believe the Iraqi military will proceed with its summer offensive against the guerrillas. Iraq's Army has a longstanding grudge against the Kurds, whom it has never been able completely to subdue. To back away from the planned campaign would involve a considerable loss of prestige for Iraq's military commanders. [Redacted]

cross-border raids on the Kurds. The Turks will comply, and this will increase strains in Ankara's relations with Tehran and Damascus. [Redacted]

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US Interests

The Kurds' desire for an independent entity adds to instability in this already volatile region and is a cause of great concern to Turkey and Iraq, two states of strategic interest to the United States. Although unlikely to be formed, a Kurdish state would be small and inherently weak and could only be created at the expense of existing states. The Kurdish rebellion, moreover, provides opportunities for Moscow to gain greater leverage in the area. [Redacted]

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If the anti-Kurdish drive is not quickly successful, we expect the Iraqis to cut short the fighting. Since the start of the war with Iran, Saddam has followed a strategy of minimizing casualties. The Iraqi President, therefore, is likely to limit himself to containing the guerrillas. Complete pacification will be deferred until after the Iran-Iraq war. [Redacted]

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We believe destruction of the Iraq-Turkey oil pipeline is a more remote possibility. The line is vulnerable to Kurdish attack as it passes through areas of Kurdistan difficult to patrol. The Kurds, however, are unlikely to attack the line without Iran's permission,

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Kurdish threats to Turkish stability are particularly worrisome since Turkey forms the southern flank of NATO and US bases are located in the troubled Kurdish region of Turkey. The Turkish military ultimately is more than a match for the insurgents, but, because of widespread sympathy for the rebels among local Kurds, the Turkish Government must be careful in dealing with the rebellion. US diplomats in Ankara have reported rioting in areas where the Army has conducted random arrests to round up Kurdish guerrillas. [Redacted]

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The fragmentation of Iraq is the least likely possibility, since Baghdad appears capable of resisting the Iranians militarily. Nevertheless, Baghdad cannot afford to engage indefinitely in significant conflicts on two fronts. Iraq lacks the human and material resources to defend its southern front against Iran and also contain a large-scale Kurdish uprising in the north. At present, the northern Kurdish areas are defended by reservists of Iraq's Popular Army. These troops, according to US diplomats in Baghdad, are largely ineffective. If Iraq begins to weaken under pressure of combined Kurdish-Iranian attacks, we believe it will call on Turkey to assist it by stepping up

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