Foreign Relations of the September (Eylul) Kurdish Revolution in Iraq 1961-1968

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ABSTRACT

The 11 September 1961 Kurdish armed revolution which is known in the Kurdish political memory as the Eylul Revolution (hereafter the Eylul Revolution) in the Kurdish areas of Iraq represents a milestone in the history of the Kurdish national liberation movements. The Revolution can be said to represent the first Kurdish armed movement that prioritized building foreign relations for the achievement of several interconnected foreign policy goals.

These relations targeted regional and international powers, regional and international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental as well as a variety of non-state actors in pursuit of several foreign policy goals. This research seeks to answer the following questions: Which states or organizations were targeted, and why? What was the aim of building those foreign relations? And, more importantly, what were the instruments that were used to first build foreign relations? and subsequently, did the Kurdish national liberation movement have a pre-designed foreign policy? Through analysis of the foreign relations of the main case study of this research- the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq- this research argues that not only the Kurdish national liberation movement could pursue foreign policy and conduct foreign relations, but they also ought to build foreign relations for the achievement of their foreign goals in a complex geopolitical environment.

KEYWORDS: Eylul Revolution, Foreign Policy, Foreign Relations, Kurdish National Liberation Movement

1. Introduction

Foreign policy is an important political activity for all sorts of actors. The traditional theories of International Relations (IR) have traditionally focused on sovereign states as the main units in the international system and thus the main actors in the realm of foreign policy. Yet, developments following the end of the Cold War and the rise of several important non-state actors pursuing distinct and independent foreign policies from those of states forced the academic community to reassess their understanding of actors besides states as actors with weight and agency in international relations.

Within this context, the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq, the precursor phase before the establishment of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (the KRI) in 1991 can be considered an insightful example. The movement prioritized the pursuit of foreign policy and establishment of foreign relations with a variety of actors- be they state or non-state actors.

The political history of the Kurds in Iraq and the literature of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (hereafter the KDP) is full of references to the Eylul revolution which started against the then-government of General Abd-al-Karim Qasim in 1961. The revolution was ignited according to the KDP literature in September 1961 when Iraqi warplanes targeted Kurdish villages which in return prompted an armed Kurdish response. The revolution was commanded by the High Command of Revolution and the KDP represented by the charismatic leader Mullah Mustafa Barzani. The outbreak of hostilities between the Government of Iraq (GOI) and the Kurds ushered into a new era of on/off fighting and negotiating between the two sides. The intensity of the fighting and the superiority of the Iraqi government prompted the Kurds to prioritize foreign relations and foreign policy to first sustain the revolution and then achieve the political and diplomatic goals of the revolution. While the goals of the revolution varied at different stages, the main goal was the attainment of some sort of self-rule within the

framework of Iraq for the Kurdish areas in Iraq as well as a decentralized system of governance in Iraq where the Kurds could participate in the governance of Iraq in a partnership with the dominant Arab majority in Iraq.

1.1 Importance of the Research

The importance of the research lies in the fact that the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq has always paid significant attention and allocated significant resources and energy to building foreign relations. However, the period under study in this research, 1961-1968, perhaps witnessed the most significant and systematic efforts by the Kurdish leadership to build foreign relations for the achievement of its goals. However, academic studies have paid little if any attention to studying foreign policies of the Kurdish national liberation movement before 1991. Moreover, studies that focused on analyzing foreign policies of Middle East states or states that were involved in Middle East affairs have always depicted the Kurds as subjects, not objects, of their destiny, meaning that the Kurds were servants of other's foreign policies with no agency of their own.

1.2 Aims of the Research

This research article aims to describe the early systematic attempts at building foreign relations carried out by representatives of the Kurdish national liberation movement represented by the KDP from 1961 to 1968 with the rise of the Ba'ath party to power in Iraq. It aims to show that despite geopolitical constraints, lack of funds, personnel, expertise, and diplomatic bureaucracy, the Kurdish national liberation movement still somehow succeeded in building foreign relations with several states and non-state actors.

1.3 Research Questions

The Kurdish national liberation movement targeted several key states and employed both diplomacy and public diplomacy to achieve its foreign policy goals.

Thus, the main questions tackled by this study are as follows:

1- Which states or organizations were targeted, and why?

2- What was the aim of building those foreign relations?

3- And, more importantly, what were the instruments that were used to first build foreign relations?

1.4 Research Hypothesis

Through analysis of the foreign relations of the main case study of this research- the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq- this research argues that not only the Kurdish national liberation movement could pursue foreign policy and conduct foreign relations, but they also ought to build foreign relations for the achievement of their foreign goals in a complex geopolitical environment. Also, being landlocked in a tough geopolitical environment and desperate to achieve autonomy, the Kurds invented and employed innovative instruments to approach governments including the powerful Western countries.

1.5 Research Methodology

To answer the questions asked, this research uses descriptive as well as historical methodology. The descriptive methodology is used to describe the actions and policies of the Kurdish foreign policy-makers. The historical methodology is used to set the events in their proper historical context to enhance better understanding. This research uses secondary sources of data such as books, journals, archive documents as well as materials published by MA and Ph.D. students to analyze foreign relations of the Kurdish national liberation movement.

1.6 Research Structure

This article consists of four sections. After this introductory first section, the second section would provide a brief but concise theoretical framework to understand the theories presented by IR and FPA scholars about foreign policy, particularly foreign policies of non-state actors. The third section will provide again a brief political history of the Kurds in Iraq before the outbreak of the Eylul revolution in Iraq. The fourth section is considered the backbone of this research as it attempts to answer the major questions posed by this study. The fifth section will then provide a conclusion and the main outcome of the study.

2. Theoretical Framework

The field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) has conveniently ignored to a great extent the role and influence of national liberation movements in the realm of foreign policy. Yet, a deeper look reveals the fact that not only national liberation movements can design and pursue foreign policy, but they also ought to pursue foreign policy and conduct foreign relations to sustain the revolution and continue their military, political, and diplomatic struggle to achieve the goals of national liberation, whatever it is may be at any given time.

Since its inception, the field of International Relations (IR) has been predominantly state-centric. It has been assumed that sovereign states are the only foreign policy actors in the international arena that are worthy of careful scholarly attention. Accordingly, for IR theories, states, and international relations are synonymous and two sides of the same coin. Yet, the end of the Cold War in unpredictable ways and the apparent inability of IR theoreticians to predict this profound change in international politics ushered into a new era of IR theorizing that sought to explain international politics by focusing on actors other than states. One such attempt at theorizing was made by the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) which proposed the use of new tools and ways of describing international politics.

FPA as it came to be known, successfully challenged the abstract IR focus on states, and instead shifted the emphasis on human decision-makers. In this regard, Valerie Hudson and Christopher Vore note that "to explain and predict the behavior of the human collectivities comprising nation-states, IR theory requires a theory of human political choice" (Hudson and Vore, 1995, 210). Hudson then asserts that FPA is one area within sub-fields of IR that has discovered new tools to develop new theoretical perspectives. According to Hudson then, "International relations (IR) as a field of study has a ground… All that occurs between nations and across nations is grounded in human decision-makers acting singly or in groups" (Hudson 2014, p. 3). In addition to that, the end of the Cold War ushered into a new era in international relations when much more attention was given to the study of foreign policy. This attention was increased and reinforced after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. The attack had wide ramifications on the study of foreign policy where a new understanding emerged to the effect that actors other than states need to be taken into account as they have influence, or, "agency", and can affect international politics in their ways. In this regard, Steve Smith et al. for instance insist that foreign policy is usually about explaining the behavior of states, and analysis of foreign policy has traditionally considered the state as the central foreign policy actor. However, it is now widely recognized that other actors such as companies, regional governments, supra-national regional bodies, and other non-state actors can pursue their foreign policies and can act as significant players with agency and weight in a range of regional and international issues (Smith, Hadfield, & Dunne, 2012).

Indeed, the very definition of foreign policy as a political action has been widened to include actors other than states as entities pursuing foreign policy. Christopher Hill, for instance, defines foreign policy as "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations" (Hill, 2003, p. 3). By including the phrase independent actor, Hill includes other actors in his list of actors that can pursue foreign policy. Despite the fact Hill does not precisely include national liberation movements in his list of actors of foreign policy, one can deduce that national liberation movements also can pursue foreign policy. In the elaboration of his definition of foreign policy, Hill notes: "[T]he phrase 'an independent actor' enables the inclusion of phenomena such as the European Union; external relations are 'official' to allow the inclusion of outputs from all parts of the governing mechanism of the state or enterprise while also maintaining parsimony with respect to the vast number of international transactions now being conducted; policy is the 'sum' of these official relations because otherwise every particular action could be seen as separate foreign policy-whereas actors usually seek some degree of coherence towards the outside world. Lastly, the policy is 'foreign' because the world is still more separated into distinctive communities than it is a single, homogenizing entity. These communities, therefore, need strategies for coping with foreigners (or strangers) in their various aspects. Hill notes that the word 'foreign' is equivalent to the Latin 'foris' meaning 'outside'." (Hill, 2003, p. 236).

Walter Carlsnaes, on the other hand, defines foreign policy as "those actions which, expressed in the form of explicitly stated goals, commitments and/or directives, and pursued by governmental representatives acting on behalf of their sovereign communities, are directed towards objectives, conditions, and actors – both governmental and non-governmental–which they want to affect and which lie beyond their territorial legitimacy" (Carsnaes, 2012, p. 2).

National liberation movements are no exception. National Liberation movements can be defined as movements with ethnically, religiously, or socially based grievances that seek political or militaristic methods to bring about or achieve their goals. These movements however have to be separated from other forms of armed struggles that seek to achieve political goals. Indeed, there is a thin line between national liberation movements and secessionist movements. In his article, Robert McColl makes a definite distinction between four types of revolutionary movements: secessionist movements, rebellions, revolutions, and national revolutions. Secessionist movements are the struggle of one region of the country to withdraw from an existing state and form another independent state. National revolutions on the other hand "consciously attempt to involve entire populations in their causes. Their objectives are not merely to replace the present leadership of the state but to drastically alter the form of government and often the structure of society itself" (McColl, 1969, p. 614). However, if a national revolution is driven and led by a specific section of society that has ethnic, religious, or socially-based grievances, it can subsequently try to secede altogether from an existing state to form a new state as the case of Eritrea suggests. However, what is most striking in McColl's article is his focus on the geographical aspect of revolutions. McColl argues that modern national revolutions strive to create a territorially based anti-state or an 'insurgent state' within an already existing sovereign state. The aim is to create or establish territorial units complete with all or some (depending on resources and feasibility) trappings of statehood, namely a raison d'etre (McColl, 1969, p. 614), which often means control of territory and population and

provision of services such as education and health to the population in the guerilla power base area.

Indeed, it is hardly possible that national liberation movements can exist or achieve their goals without having foreign relations with other actors, be they state or non-state actors. Sovereign states enjoy the benefits of sovereignty, or what Collier and Hoeffler, call 'rents of sovereignty' (Collier & Hoeffler, 2005, p. 629). And, therefore, states enjoy the backing of the international system of sovereign states both diplomatically and materially. The classical international system as Weller notes is underwritten by sovereign states preserving their interests in the international arena, the most important of which is the maintenance of their territorial integrity (Weller, 2009). The rents of sovereignty confer upon states the right to continuous existence despite the inability to carry out the functions of statehood such as providing internal and external security, representation of the general population in the institution of the state, and providing adequate services. The rents of sovereignty on the other hand include foreign aid and loans (Collier & Hoeffler, 2005, p. 629). Naturally, this entails receiving massive military, financial, and political support to sustain the continued existence of sovereign states. Individual states moreover are mostly reluctant to support national liberation movements elsewhere for fear of repercussions at home. This point is vividly illustrated by Michael Hechter when he argues that since many states are nowadays multinational states, leaders fear, that supporting a liberation movement or a secessionist movement somewhere, might create problems for them at home or that it will damage relations with the host state. Moreover, host states or parent states usually possess larger markets, and thus supporting national liberation movements can seriously harm economic relations with the usually larger parent states. (Hechter, 1992, p. 278).

Therefore, national liberation movements work very hard to build and maintain foreign relations with a variety of actors and institutions. These actors can be state or non-state actors, or they can be certain institutions of the state. Over the years, national liberation movements have been adept at building relations with media agencies, public relations companies, or militaristic and intelligence departments of states. It is hardly possible that national liberation movements can sustain the revolution as well as provide some sort of functions of statehood without the support of a few states which off-course necessitates building and maintaining foreign relations.

However, what is most striking is that the literature on FPA lacks a thorough understanding and analysis of the foreign policies of national liberation movements. The Kurdish national liberation movement serves as an insightful example of how a liberation movement successfully managed to pursue foreign policy and build foreign relations despite the limitations of geopolitics and constraints imposed by the systemic structure of international relations. The history of the Kurdish liberation movement dates back to the fading years of the Ottoman Empire era. Yet, this article focuses on the period between 1961 to 1968 as it is the period in which the Iraqi Kurds made their may be hardest attempts to build and maintain foreign relations with regional and global powers as well as a variety of non-state actors to sustain the revolution, disseminate their case and obtain the much-needed international legitimacy for the revolution.

3. The Kurds in Iraq Before the Eylul Revolution

Following the demise of the Ottoman Empire, many Kurdish nationalists had hoped they would get an

independent state reminiscent of other nations which were either granted statehood or were promised an independent state. The end of WWI left a vacuum in the Kurdish-inhabited regions of south-eastern Anatolia and northern Iraq. Indeed, the provisions of the Treaty of Sevres signed on 10 August 1920 between the victors of WWI and the Ottoman Empire had promised the Kurds an independent state; a promise that was never materialized (Montgomery, 1972). Soon, realities of international politics and great-power rivalry as well as the inability of the Kurds to present a united front in enhancing the case of a Kurdish nation-state shattered any dream of an independent state for the Kurds in the Kurdish-inhabited remnants of the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Lausanne which effectively superseded the previous treaty between the Allied powers consisting essentially of Britain and France on the one side, and Turkey on the other side, conceded to most of the Turkish demands including the inclusion of the Kurdish-inhabited areas of south-eastern Anatolia into the newly-born Turkish state and abandonment of the idea of an independent Kurdish state. According to Othman Ali, Britain's motivations in abandoning the idea of an independent Kurdish state was related to the newly emerging British-Russian rivalry after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917 and Britain's attempt to appease the Kemalist Turks during the negotiations and the subsequent entry of Turkey into the Western bloc (Othman, 1997). With the fate of south-eastern Kurdish areas in Anatolia sealed, northern Iraq became the flashpoint of contention between Britain and Turkey. Having already been granted the mandate by the League of Nations over Mesopotamia, Britain insisted on keeping control over the Wilayat of Mosul (Northern Iraq) which consisted mostly of Kurds, but also, some Arabs, Turkomans, and Christians. Being unable to reach a compromise over this issue, both sides agreed to the submission of the matter to the League of Nations, which subsequently recommended the attachment of the area to the newly established state of Iraq under the British mandate (Yildiz, 2007).

However, from the start, a certain degree of recognition and legitimacy was bestowed upon the Kurdish identity and rights in Iraq which was lacking for the Kurds in Turkey, and, for that matter, for the Kurds in Iran and Syria. This recognition came through the following provisions:

• the League of Nations' recommendations to link the Mosul Province to the newly British-created state of Iraq which recommended certain cultural and political rights for the Kurds in Iraq (McDowall, 1997, pp. 145-146),

• the 1922 joint Anglo-Iraqi statement of intent regarding the Kurds, promising appointment of Kurdish officials to administer government functions in the Kurdish territory of Iraq (Romano, 2006, p. 187),

• the passing of a 1926 Local Languages Law recognizing Kurdish as the language of education and print books in the Kurdish areas of Iraq (Cook, 1995, p. 17), and

• as well as a 1932 Iraqi statement concerning the national right of the Kurds upon its admission into the League of Nations as an independent state (Gunter, 2006, p. 235).

However, the authorities in Iraq soon reneged on their promises of granting cultural and political rights. Indeed, Kurdish demands for autonomy often clashed with the insecure nature of the Iraqi state which perceived any concessions to the Kurds as a prelude to secession. The state of Iraq was not created indigenously by Iraqis themselves showing from the beginning a certain degree of artificiality. Therefore, from the beginning, any concession to the Kurds as a national minority was seen with suspicion and fear.

In this regard, Charles Tripp argues that "the defiant rhetoric of Iraqi governments often conceals a deeper fear that what the great powers created, they may one day decide to dismantle, indicating an awareness of the vulnerability of Iraq in a world not of its own making" (Tripp, 2007, p. 1399). Moreover, during the 1940s and 1950s, the Iraqi political space was gradually Arab-ethnicized reflecting the influence of the ideas of pan-Arabism poured into Iraq from Nasser's Egypt (Natali, 2005). As a consequence, the Iraqi political space became even more restrictive to the manifestations of Kurdish identity and culture and further restricted Kurdish political participation in the wider Iraqi state institutions. As Arab rhetoric became more ethnicized ignoring the calls for equality, citizenship, and satisfaction of Kurdish political demands based on some sort of limited autonomy, the Kurdish political identity was also ethnicized and gradually became further estranged from the wider Iraqi political space.

As a result, soon, the flames of revolution were ignited in the Kurdish areas of Iraq. Since the beginning, two areas became the center of the Kurdish revolution in Iraq. The first was Sulaymaniyah which was the center of Sheikh Mahmud's revolt against the imposition of Arab rule on the Kurds in Iraq. With the end of WWI, and after many insurrections and petitions, the Sheikh was arrested and forced to house arrest which lasted until he died in 1956 (Yildiz, 2007). The second center which emerged to occupy the center stage in the leadership of the Kurdish national liberation movement was the Barzan area. From there, the Barzanis led two separate revolutions against the imposition of Arab rule on the Kurds in Iraq. In his book, *Staking Our Claim*, President Masoud Barzani states that the first revolution was led by Sheikh Ahmad Barzani between 1931 and 1932. The second revolution was led by Mustafa Barzani in the years 1943-1945 (Barzani, 2020). Instead of finding a peaceful political solution to the Kurdish demands, the nascent Iraqi state and its British patrons preferred using military means to crush the revolution. And, therefore, the weak Iraqi troops assisted directly by British warplanes as well as some pro-government Kurdish irregulars crushed the revolution for the moment and forced Mustafa Barzani and his fighters to cross the border into Iran on 11 October 1945 (Barzani, 2020). In Iran, Mustafa Barzani and his fighters became the backbone of the newly proclaimed Kurdistan Republic of Mahabad which was established in December 1945 with tacit Soviet support. However, the Soviet Union succumbing to pressure from the Allies as well as astute Iranian diplomacy soon withdrew its forces from Iran. As a consequence, on 13 December 1946, the republic collapsed and its leaders including the president of the republic, Qazi Muhammed, were hanged on charges of treason. However, Mustafa Barzani did not surrender to Iranian forces and fought his way in an epic five-week march to Soviet Armenia shrugging all the efforts of the Iranian army to intercept and capture him (Edmonds, 1971).

While, in Iran, Mustafa Barzani in collaboration with Kurdish intelligentsia and nationalists formed the KDP which named Mustafa Barzani as its leader. Barzani remained in the Soviet Union until 1958 when a group of military officers under the titular leadership of Abd-al-Karim Qasim overthrew the monarchical regime under the Hashemite family and installed in its place a republican political system in Iraq. Barzani returned to Iraq and was given a hero's welcome by all components of the Iraqi society (Entessar, 1984). However, the significance of the establishment of the KDP became evident in the later stages of the Kurdish struggle to fight for Kurdish autonomy. As Ofra Bengio argues, the KDP gave the Kurds an 'organizational framework, ideological direction, and a political center' (Bengio, 2012, p. 13) to direct the Kurdish national liberation movement

for decades. The next section, therefore, focuses on the start of the Kurdish national liberation movement under the leadership of the KDP and its charismatic leader Mustafa Barzani.

4. The Outbreak of the Eylul Revolution and Kurdish Foreign Relations

The new republican political system in Iraq under the leadership of Abd-al-Karim Qasim raised the Kurdish hopes of an open political space that could accept the Kurdish identity and allows equal Kurdish participation in the institutions of the state. At first, Qasim promoted an Iraq-first identity and espoused a sense of Iraqiness based on waṭanīyya nationalism that encouraged the Arab-Kurdish fraternity. Indeed, the motives of Qasim were partly pragmatic to acquire Kurdish support in checking the power of his rivals including the Ba'athists, the monarchists, as well as the rising power of pan-Arab nationalists represented by his deputy, Vice President, Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif (Natali, 2005, pp. 49-53). And, therefore, Qasim established a provisional constitution that explicitly recognized the binational character of the state of Iraq, stating: "The Kurds and the Arabs are partners within this nation. The Constitution guarantees their rights within the framework of the Iraqi Republic"(Gunter, 2009, P. 80). Qasim also made symbolic gestures such as placing the Kurdish sun on the Iraqi national flag, adding the Kurdish dagger crossed with an Arab sword on the republic's constitution and coat of arms, and legalizing the KDP. Soon, however, pressured by Arab nationalist and military factions, Qasim retreated and restricted the political space for the Kurds. Qasim imposed 'martial law, Arabized the names of Kurdish localities, closed down Kurdish organizations (including the KDP), arrested leading Kurdish nationalists… and started bombing rural areas (Natali, 2005, pp. 49-53).

The new restrictive political space and initiation of military campaigns against the rural Kurdish areas sparked the start of the Kurdish revolution known in the Kurdish political memory as the 11 September 1961 revolution.

However, since the beginning, leaders of the Kurdish national liberation movement realized without meaningful external support, the Kurds do not stand a chance to win a war against a relatively well-armed Baghdad government at least compared to the Kurdish strength. Therefore, the Kurdish revolution formally began its first actions in the realm of building foreign relations.

The foreign relations at this stage of the Kurdish revolution had two overlapping foreign policy aims. The first aim was to obtain material support in the form of military and financial support to sustain the revolution. The second aim was to gain political support, legitimize the Kurdish revolution, and gain international recognition of the Kurdish plight. Yet, several factors severely complicated the Kurdish quest in achieving their foreign policy aims. The most important complication for the Kurdish leadership was obvious geopolitical factors. The Kurdish areas of Iraq were and are surrounded by powerful states which have similar dynamics with a large Kurdish minority inside their territories. Iran and Turkey, the most powerful regional states have always feared that any concessions to the Kurds in Iraq might have ramifications on the status and demands of the Kurdish minority inside their states and therefore have very carefully watched the development of the Kurdish issue in Iraq.

Therefore, from the beginning, the KDP realized that the states surrounding Kurdistan cannot be a genuine source of support, although on occasion they might temporarily support the Kurds for their own strategic and political interests. Doubting the true intentions of the states of Iran and Turkey, the KDP looked beyond the borders of Iraq to states such as Egypt, Israel, the

United States, and the former Soviet Union among others for support. However, for the Kurds, the establishment of foreign relations with external powers was very complicated. The Kurds were isolated geographically and politically and lacked enough (if any) personnel with fluency in foreign languages, the Kurdish diaspora was very small or non-existent. The Kurds also lacked any official representation offices abroad that could solicit the support of outside powers. Above all, powers interested in Middle East affairs were wary of building overt relations with a revolutionary movement inside Iraq. Therefore, sovereign states, despite occasionally showing signs of sympathy with the Kurdish cause, never assented to building overt relations with the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq for different reasons. This complexity prompted the Kurdish foreign policymakers to employ innovative instruments to build foreign relations and achieve their foreign policy goals.

But, there are always exceptions to the rule. Although covert and temporary, some states for their own geostrategic reasons accented to support the Kurdish national liberation movement and build relations with it depending on their war Cold-War orientation (in the case of the USA and the former USSR), or their regional rivalries with Iraq (in the case of Egypt's Arab leadership rivalry with Iraq), or regional enmity (as the case of Israel's threat perception towards its arch-enemy Iraq), or their regional hegemonic ambitions (as the case of the Shah of Iran).

For some years, Israel had developed the grand doctrine of 'peripheral strategy' which essentially articulated that any non-Arab group, organization, or ethnic group in the Middle East could be considered an ally of the Israeli state (Alpher, 2015). Kurds and Kurdistan in Iraq, and, for that matter, in Syria, were given special attention in the strategic thinking of the Israeli foreign and security policymakers. Initial contacts between the Kurds of Iraq and the Jews

agency were initiated by Rubin Shiluah- one of the designers of the peripheral strategy- who later founded the Israeli Mossad (Gunter, 1997). After the establishment of the state of Israel, this relationship helped the Kurds to receive military training and equipment. Israel also helped the Kurds to establish their intelligence-gathering agency known as 'Parastin' (Mamikonian, 2005, p. 393). Kurdish relations with Israel were also instrumental in some of the major Kurdish victories against the forces of the central government, such as the battle of Hendren in May 1966. In addition to the military assistance, the Kurds received funds and diplomatic support from the state of Israel (Gunter, 1997). These relations however were shredded in secrecy due to the sensitivities of both the Kurds of Iraq and the state of Israel and calculations related to the Cold-War rivalry between the United States of America and the former Soviet Union. However, these relations received an official stamp when the former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin revealed in 1980 that the state of Israel had supported the Kurds with "money, arms, and instructors" (Morris, 1980).

Building relations with Israel had one special element that for the Kurds was seen as extremely essential: through Israel, the Kurds sought to approach the United States and gain its support to achieve Kurdish national aims. Since the beginning of the Kurdish revolution in Iraq in 1961, the Shah of Iran, for his geostrategic reasons had supported the Kurdish movement. But, the KDP understandably never trusted the intentions of the Shah of Iran. The KDP realized that Iran would like to see the hostilities to a level that saps the strengths of the Iraqi army and weaken Iraq in the game of the regional hegemony which the Shah of Iran desired. As Ofra Bengio notes: 'Barzani feared the Iranian ruler and distrusted him no less than he did the rulers of Baghdad. He was aware of the mercenary role that the Kurds had been assigned by the Shah, describing it as: "The Shah wants the

Kurds with their heads over the water, with him holding their forelocks" (Bengio, 2012, p. 69).

One of the instruments employed by the Kurdish leadership in pursuit of their foreign policy aims was the use of unofficial diplomacy. Over the years, the KDP dispatched unofficial diplomatic representatives or roving emissaries to several states to solicit their support for the Kurdish revolution. Roving emissaries such as Ismet Sharif Vanly, Kamiran Bedir Khan, and Jalal Talabani (later President of Iraq from 2005 to 2014) visited many states as diverse as the former USSR, Israel, (Mamikonian, 2005) Egypt (Ghareeb, 1981, p. 61) Iran, and the United States, (Department of State, 1972) among others to obtain their support for the Kurdish cause. Archives of the U.S. Department of State which is now accessible clearly show the intensity of KDP's efforts to approach the U.S. government and plea directly to U.S. officials to register their support to the Kurdish cause in Iraq. Mustafa Barzani, the leader of the KDP and the Kurdish revolution, dispatched several roving emissaries to U.S. embassies in the Middle East region and North Africa and delivered his letters to them. In one document dated 12 April 1965, Mustafa Barzani delivers a letter to the U.S. embassy in Tehran in which he makes a strong plea for direct U.S. assistance (Department of State, 1965). Another document dated 5 June 1964 reports the conversation between Barzani's representatives and officials from the U.S. embassy in Cairo to press U.S. embassy officials to grant them visas to visit the United States and meet directly with officials from the State Department. (Department of the State, 1964). Initially, the U.S. government was hesitant to engage directly with the Kurdish issue in Iraq and nothing substantive emerged from the early Kurdish attempts to approach the U.S. government. This situation only changed in 1968 when the Ba'athists staged a coup that removed the military officers led by Abd al-

Rahman Arif from power. Following Mustafa Barzani's letter to William Rogers, U.S. Secretary of State on 20 April 1969, the U.S. provided an aid payment to the amount of US$14 million to the Kurds of Iraq in August 1969. However, as Marianna Charountaki argues this support was not related to any U.S. commitment towards the Kurdish revolution per se, but more aimed at enhancing relations between the Kurds and the Shah of Iran in the context of the Cold-War rivalry and the regional competition between Iraq and Iran. (Charountaki, 2011, p. 69).

On the other hand, before returning to Iraq in 1958, Mustafa Barzani was received in Cairo by President Jamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt who showed support for Kurdish autonomy. Indeed, the Kurdish rapprochement with Nasser was not arbitrary. After the coup that overthrew Qasim from power in 1963, Ba'athists and pro-Nasser military officers in the Iraqi army led by Colonel Abd al-Salam Arif hoped to join the Egyptian-Syrian union. The Kurds however feared that any such union would further weaken their place as a small minority in a predominantly large Arab union. Given this, the Kurds argued that they needed guarantees of autonomy within Iraq or even full independence, to which Nasser "gave his full backing to Kurdish demands. . . and hoped that [a] rapid agreement could be reached." (Bryan, 2015, p. 62). This was the primary aim of the Kurdish roving emissary, Jalal Talabani when he visited Cairo on behalf of the KDP alongside an Iraqi delegation in 1963. In Cairo, Kurdish roving emissary Jalal Talabani met with the Egyptian president Jamal Abdel Nasser in 1963 and described the Kurdish revolt to him as an anti-colonial struggle, "part of an overall nationalist movement," and a "just war conducted by an oppressed people against a chauvinistic dictator." (Voller, 2012). Therefore, sending Kurdish roving emissaries to foreign capitals and seeking the support of foreign states became one

instrument in the pursuit of achieving Kurdish foreign policy aims and, in the endeavor, to build foreign relations with external powers.

However, Arab states such as Egypt whose support the Kurds sought and indeed was important as the then leader of the pan-Arab nationalism, were wary of building overt foreign relations with the Kurdish national liberation movement. The Arab states engaged in an outbidding competition to influence Arab opinion by employing their pan-Arab credentials. In the influence game, each state tried to threaten or pressure the elites of rival Arab states by making pan-Arab ideological appeals to the population of the latter. And thus, states perceived to be violating causes of pan-Arabism became more vulnerable to subversion, while the states perceived as living up to norms, ideals, and aims of pan-Arabism were able to maintain the mantle of the pan-Arab leadership (Hinnebusch, 2014), extend their influence, obtain prestige and subvert or weaken elites in rivals Arab states. Hence, the Arab states were reluctant to provide serious support to the Kurdish revolution beyond providing temporary tactical or moral overtures to pressure their rivals in the Iraqi state in the game of influence-building.

The two superpowers of the time- the United States and the former Soviet Union- had multilayered interests in Iraq and the Middle East region that complicated the Kurdish quest of finding foreign allies. Crucially, both states alternated between their support for the Kurds or the Iraqi government based on the Cold War orientation of the regime in Baghdad. As Bryan Gibson states "Following the outbreak of the Kurdish War in 1961, Moscow exploited the Kurdish problem to its full advantage by alternating support for Baghdad with that for the Kurds, depending on the Cold War orientation of the regime in power. During Qasim's regime, for instance, the Soviets advocated greater autonomy for

the Kurds, simply because they believed the Kurds had the potential to destabilize Qasim's pro-Soviet regime. However, when the Ba'th Party first came to power in 1963, Moscow shifted its support toward the Kurds, providing them with overt political and diplomatic support" (Bryan, 2015, p. xviii). The regime in Baghdad was a great asset to both superpowers as it could play an important role in the geostrategic and geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the former Soviet Union. An Iraq allied with any of the two superpowers could help to contain and minimize the influence of the rival states in the Gulf and the wider Middle East region; Iraq also possessed abundant hydrocarbon resources which could enable it to be a major energy supplier and a major weapon buyer from either camp.

Lacking official diplomatic relations, the KDP leadership resorted to the use of the media as a major instrument to build foreign relations with external powers. Indeed, from early on, the leadership of the Kurdish national liberation movement realized the importance of the media, particularly the Western media to disseminate its message and get the support of external powers. And, therefore, the KDP desperately sought to cultivate contacts with media persons and journalists writing on Middle Eastern affairs. Cultivation of relations with the media establishments was ever more important as the Kurdish revolution lacked any official diplomatic representation offices in any state and the Kurds were isolated both geographically and politically. According to the veteran Kurdish politician, Hoshyar Zebari, the KDP leader, "Mustafa Barzani was desperate to internationalize the Kurdish issue for the first time and therefore paid personal attention to visiting journalists. No country would receive him, he could not travel, and the Kurds had very limited secret contacts with Western states. Barzani understood the media as a means to conduct diplomacy and encouraged journalists to come to the

region, report on the Kurds' military successes, and hear his claim that the movement had the support of all classes of Kurdish society" (Rahman, 2005, p. 24).

Interestingly, the KDP's tactical use of the media achieved some success in attracting foreign journalists and reporting on the Kurds' situation in Iraq. During the 1960s, many journalists visited the Kurdish areas and socialized with the Kurdish leadership and the wider Kurdish population. Many of these journalists continued their support for the Kurdish revolution for many decades. During the 1960s, several journalists, such as Richard Anderegg and Dana Schmidt visited Barzani and several major newspaper editorials such as *Le Monde* and *the Daily Telegraph* published sympathetic reports on the Kurdish revolt in Iraq. In one such report, a Le Monde editorial wrote that "The most striking achievement of the Kurdish rebellion is in the international arena. At last, the world is taking an interest in a problem that has existed for forty years" (Rahman, 2005, p. 24). Journalists such as Dana Schmidt also wrote widely on the Kurdish issue and published books and articles in newspapers in defense of Kurds in the New York Times and other papers to highlight the plight of the Kurds (Schmidt, 1964).

The leadership of the Kurdish national liberation movement paid particular attention to the Western media. This was not an arbitrary or random decision. The Kurdish leadership represented by Mustafa Barzani had faith in the liberal democratic states of the Western hemisphere. Having lived in the Soviet Union for almost 12 years, Barzani experienced first-hand the Soviet model of governance and the duplicity of Soviet foreign policy. Barzani believed that the Western model with its emphasis on human rights and the principle of self-determination is a better alternative than the Soviet model of communism and authoritarianism. Barzani furthermore realized that the Cold War had divided

the world into two camps, and he enthusiastically strived to put the Kurds in the U.S. camp. According to Sami Abdul Rahman, a veteran Kurdish politician, "In his heart of hearts, Barzani loved Americans… It was a relationship spanning three decades, starting with his encounter in Tehran on New Year's Day of 1947 with Archie Roosevelt, then the assistant U.S. military attaché there" (Randal, 1998, p. 162).

Indeed, the fact that Barzani lived in the former Soviet Union for many years also created misunderstandings and misperceptions about Barzani's ideological orientation. Many in the Western camp mistakenly thought that Barzani was sympathetic to communism, or he was a communist. And, therefore, through meeting visiting journalists, Barzani sought to send messages to the Western camp, particularly the United States. Indeed, the Kurdish leadership had some success in this regard. In describing the importance of the reports on Kurds and Barzani and the attempt to dispel misunderstanding about the Kurdish revolution and ideological orientation of Barzani in the United States, Bryan Gibson notes, "The articles portrayed Barzani as a freedom fighter desperately seeking American assistance to protect his people from a brutal war imposed on them by a Soviet-backed military dictator," and that Barzani "was not a communist but rather a Kurdish nationalist, seeking to establish Iraq as the West's strongest ally in the Middle East" (Bryan, 2015, p. 51). It is interesting that Barzani also sought to highlight to Americans Kurdistan's geopolitical importance within the overall U.S.-Soviet competition in the Middle East, stating in one instance, "Look at our strategic location on the flank of any possible Soviet advance into the Middle East through the Caucasus and remember that, whether as guerrillas or as regulars, we are the best soldiers in the Middle East" (Bryan, 2015, p. 51).

The Kurds also used the media for other purposes.

The Kurds considered the possibility that some visiting journalists may be hidden spies or agents discreetly reporting to their intelligence services on the Kurdish war in Iraq. Michael Gunter argues that Israel for instance had planted an operative in Baghdad even before its establishment in 1948. Posing as a journalist, Reuven Shiloah, who later founded the Israeli Mossad, traveled through Kurdistan and built relations with Kurds (Gunter, 1997, p. 4). In the same vain, Bryan Gibson argues that visiting journalists served a great purpose for the West: by sending journalists into the area, some Western circles wanted to put pressure on the Iraqi government, inform the public about the Kurdish revolt, and force the highest echelons of the U.S. government to show a stance on the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq (Bryan, 2015, p. 49). Moreover, the Kurds sought to send messages to the Western governments and dispel any misunderstanding about the Kurdish revolution being a tribal rebellion focused on a specific local grievance. Hoshyar Zebari, who for many years acted as head of KDP's foreign relations, summed up the KDP's aim in using the media as 'politicizing the intelligence' that the KPD had on Iraqi military apparatus and movements. By disseminating information on Iraq's military apparatus, Zebari states, "We wanted to send the message: we're not just a tribal fratricidal bunch, we are a good source of information" (Rahman, 2005, p. 25).

As for the second aim, the KDP sought to legitimize the Kurdish revolution and gain international recognition of the Kurdish national aspirations in Iraq. The method taken by the leadership of the Kurdish national liberation movement was to persistently highlight the Kurds' right to self-determination, their historical claim to the land, past promises of statehood, and grievances based on Baghdad's discrimination and persecution of the Kurdish people. In other words, the Kurds hoped

that by highlighting these issues to the international community, they could win legitimacy for their war against the government of Iraq. Indeed, this was part of the 'foreign policy of self-justification' (Bartmann, 2004, p. 12) pursued by the Kurdish leadership. In discussing strategies of the foreign policy of self-justification employed by de facto states, Bartmann highlights two important methods: moral and practical legitimacy. Practical legitimacy refers to the success of building state-like institutions that can fulfill the functions required of statehood. Moral legitimacy however refers to the historical rights over claimed territories, the right to self-determination, past promises of statehood, and violation of their human rights by their parent states (Bartmann, 2004, p. 16) The same method could be applied to national liberation movements. Not only transition to de facto statehood requires constant justification to obtain the support of the international community, but also during the phase of national liberation. The national liberation movements need to constantly justify their actions to the international community especially as assistance is needed for war efforts as well as to obtain diplomatic support to reach acceptable agreements with the other side of the conflict.

However, in this endeavor as well, the Kurdish national liberation movement represented by the KDP as the leading political party of the revolution faced serious hurdles and challenges. The Kurds did not have official representation offices abroad, few Kurds if any spoke foreign languages, the Kurds did not enjoy official diplomatic relations, and above all, the Kurds lacked enough funds necessary to cover the costs of their diplomatic agents. In these circumstances, the KDP increasingly came to rely upon citizen diplomacy and public diplomacy.

In analyzing the Kurds' para diplomacy during this sensitive period of Kurdish history, Vian Rahman notes that the KDP sought to disseminate its message,

gain international legitimacy and advance the cause of the Kurdish movement in Iraq (Rahman, 2005, p. 22). And, therefore, the Kurdish leadership came to rely on roving official representatives and unofficial diplomatic relations offices. For this matter, the KDP relied extensively on Kurdish student organizations in Western Europe. The most important of these was the Kurdish Students' Society in Europe (KSSE), formed after the Second World War with branches in several European countries. Most members of the KSSE belonged to the KDP and acted as its 'diplomatic representatives' (Rahman, 2005, pp. 43-44).

The actions and statements made by unofficial Kurdish diplomatic representatives to petition the United Nations, or the Western general population are indicative of the element of public diplomacy and citizen diplomacy mentioned earlier. The Kurdish desire to internationalize their struggle and the question of their rights is vividly demonstrated in the letters sent to the United Nations. In a letter sent by Emir K. Bedir Khan, the representative of the Kurdish people in New York City to U Thant, the Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1961 to 1971 to protest the involvement of the Syrian army beside the Iraqi army in the Kurdish war, Bedir Khan writes, "In consequence of the above, I am convinced, your Excellency, that you will not accept the view, propounded by the Iraqi government, that the present war in Iraq is to be considered as merely an internal Iraqi problem and of no consequence to the United Nations Members" (Voller, 2012, p. 112).

In another letter sent by Bedir Khan to U-Thant, the former demanded some international recognition of the persecution of the Kurdish people, arguing that the: "Kurdish question is a national question, a question of national rights; on the other hand, the atrocities committed by the Iraqi army have reached such dimensions that it can no longer be considered

a simple internal affair of Iraq… Your intervention… will, at the same time, cause the Iraqi government to become aware of its own paradoxical attitude in denouncing imperialism on the one hand, and practicing it in its worst form themselves" (Voller, 2012, p. 112).

The accent of the Ba'ath party to power in Iraq in 1968 changed the dynamics of politics in Iraq. Although during the monarchical regime and the transition into the republican system, the Kurds were denied their national rights as a distinct ethnic group, the Ba'athists' assent to power in Iraq toughened disturbingly the position of the Kurds. The Ba'ath party was essentially an Arab socialist party that gradually began employing dictatorial methods to silence its opponents in Iraq including the Kurds who were believed to endanger the integrity of the Iraqi state. The assent of the Ba'ath party also forced states such as Iran and the United States of America to reassess their policies regarding the Kurdish national liberation movement in Iraq. By 1968 however, the Kurdish movement at least had become known to the world and had wide-ranging relations with the outside world.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of foreign policy has traditionally focused on states as the primary actors in foreign policy. However, a deeper look into the realm or practice of foreign policymaking reveals that other actors can or ought to pursue foreign relations to achieve several interconnected foreign policy goals. One of these actors is national liberation movements and the revolutionary political parties representing or leading these revolutions. It is demonstrably clear that protracted intra-state conflicts between a compact minority and a governing majority would almost certainly bring the interference of other states into the matter. Moreover, without the assistance of third parties, national liberation movements cannot sustain

a prolonged conflict with internationally-recognized parent states. The simplest reason is that recognized states almost certainly enjoy the benefits of sovereignty which enables them to procure sophisticated weapons and obtain international monetary assistance, as well as political and diplomatic backing.

Analyzing the Kurdish national liberation movement from 1961 to 1968, this research has argued that since its beginning, the Kurds represented by the KDP and the Barzani leadership realized the significance and vitality of foreign relations. These foreign relations were vital in many ways. First, through these relations, the KDP hoped to obtain the much-needed military support to sustain the revolution. Secondly, the KDP strived to translate these relations into vital political and diplomatic support. The Kurdish revolution had limited and realizable aims as it was not an all-out war or a suicidal war in other words. By sustaining the revolution backed by the support of a plethora of states, the KDP hoped to bring enough pressure on the government in Iraq to satisfy the Kurdish political demands.

However, the lack of recognition, the non-state status of the Kurds in Iraq as well as geopolitical constraints coupled with the complexities of the Cold War created immense hurdles for the Kurds in Iraq. The KDP lacked official representation offices as well as official representatives abroad to help gather diplomatic, political, and military support for the Kurdish revolution. In these circumstances, the KDP relied on a few individuals fluent in foreign languages. These individuals had mostly migrated to Europe as students and the student associations they established essentially became a sort of unofficial representation offices or 'mini-embassies' representing the Kurdish revolution in Iraq.

Moreover, lacking official diplomatic relations, the Kurdish leadership particularly identified the media, especially the Western media, as an important tool to communicate its messages to governments. Indeed,

the use of the visiting journalists and other writers visiting the Kurdish areas as a medium to deliver messages to the general public as well as governments in the West has since become a significant instrument to implement the Kurdish foreign policy. Through receiving visiting journalists and writers, the KDP leadership hoped to open official channels of communication with Western officials. In many other cases, the Kurdish leaders also hoped that the visiting journalists might be discreet employees of Western governments and they might deliver favorable messages to their governments about the Kurdish war in Iraq.

Military, diplomatic, economic, as well as cultural instruments have often been identified as the primary instruments in the implementation of foreign policy. Indeed, the Kurds lacked most or all of these instruments to use in pursuit of their foreign policy. However, despite this fact, the Kurds excelled at the use of untraditional methods of diplomacy to communicate their message and interests to other powers. The Kurdish leadership successfully used the means at its disposal to build foreign relations in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. These goals included: obtaining political and diplomatic support for the revolution; obtaining military support for the revolutionaries; disseminating information about the revolution and justifying the Kurdish cause in Iraq; as well as garnering enough support to press the Kurdish political rights in Iraq.

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