



The Roots of the Iraqi Kurdish Internal Rivalries, Conflicts and Peace Process 1964-2000

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Abstract: For the past four decades, internal disputes that sometimes led to armed conflicts have left its fingerprints on the internal political development of the Iraqi Kurdish movement. In all rounds and until nowadays, two political segment groups dominated the conflicts; a group led by Masoud Barzani and the other led by Jalal Talabani. This article is explained the background of the PUK-KDP conflict and the events that led to the start of its latest round of civil fighting some years ago, and the events that followed from it until the beginning of the Washington agreement negotiations that started by the visit of David Welch to the Kurdish region and his US government invitation of the two Kurdish leaders to lead delegations of their parties for peace talks in Washington. In this article, the researcher will attempt and lay down the framework and history of the conflict, the peace process, the regional and international mediation attempts and the events that led to the Washington Agreement in addition the events that followed the agreement. This study shows the root of internal conflict of the Iraqi Kurds and the reason behind of the Iraqi Kurdish civil War. The reason for choosing this study is that its emergence as a starting point to outline the roots of the Kurdish civil war in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The rationale behind picking out this period is that it appears as the cutting-off point for discussing the Iraqi Kurdish political history is the emergence of the Kurdish opposition party that has changed the Kurdish political landscape in the region. Before starting the Iraqi Kurdish civil war between the KDP and PUK. This study is presented a significant account of confidently not publicized details about these parties. Particular attention is given to relation between the Barzani and Talabani groups' since 1964, Talabani connection with the Iraqi governments, Kurdish political challenges, the neighbouring countries involvement in the Kurdish civil war, the peace process, as well as the regional and international reactions to the Kurdish civil war. .

Keywords: the Kurdish issue, Kurdish leaders, Kurdish political parties, Kurdish internal challenges, Kurdish civil war, Iraqi governments, US, Turkey, France, British and other states mediations.

I. Introduction

The root of these conflicts and divisions dates back to 1964, when the division within the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) between the president of the KDP Mullah Mustafa Barzani and left-wing of the political bureau of KDP, led by Jalala Talabani father-in-law Ibrahim Ahmad, surfaced. The rift forced the political bureau to move to Iran after a very short period of armed challenging conflict. In 1965, and when fighting between the KDP, led by Mustafa Barzani, and the central government in Baghdad resumed, the political-bureau group returned to Kurdish area according to a new deal, with the exception of their leader Ahmad as Barzani did not approve to his return. They were integrated within the KDP ranks, however this integration was at the level of cadres and other members simply. The leadership of the political bureau left-wing was not integrated. This concern was planned to be discussed and settled at the 7th congress of the KDP, which would have held in November 1966. After a few months of delay (Mcdowall 2003; O'balance 1996).

At the end of January 1966 and as a consequence of the non-integration and lack of mutual trust, tension drastically increased between Talabani and Barzani group. Hence the political bureau of left-wing, which led by Talabani – Ahmed fled to Sulamanyah and then to the central government in Baghdad. Where they allied themselves with the central government of Baathist also dragged on joint operations with the Iraqi armed forces against the Kurdish movement, which led by Mustafa Barzani and his KDP group. After the second Baathist government came to power in July 1968 (Tripp 2002). The Talabani group joint it and side by side the Iraqi forces fought against Barzani group. In 1969, Talabani fighters with the Iraqi armed forces controlled some Kurdish areas around Sulamanyah. After Barzani defeated Talabani forces and fled them to Iran (Lambert 1997).

However, this bloody conflict continued until 1970 second Baathist government, signed the historic agreement of 11 March 1970 agreement with the Barzani KDP group. As a consequence, the KDP political-bureau left-

wing of Talabani returned to the Barzani KDP once again (Mcdowall 1992). As previously showed, similarly to 1965 and according to another deal, ordinary members of the group were re-integrated into the party and its forces but their leadership remained outside the leadership of the KDP. This was an incomplete also tense reconciliation between the two sides. The grounds for this was due to the 11 March agreement was a political victory for the Barzani KDP (O'ballance 1973).

They were managing with the political-bureau left-wing from the position of power and they were not prepared to treat them as equal partners. Moreover, the four-year armed struggle has contingent upon the split also created wounds that were difficult to heal. The KDP leadership under Mustafa Barzani were viewing the deal on their return as an amnesty and not real reconciliation. This situation continued until March 1975, when the Kurdish movement suffered the setback following the Algiers Accord between Iraqi vice-president Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran. At the same time, Jalal Talabani, who had already been in Damascus for three years, formed alongside others established the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) (Gunter 2004).

After the setback, disunity overcame and three main groups were formed; the PUK, led mainly by Jalal Talabani and Nawshirwan Mustafa; the Provisional Command of the KDP, led by Masoud Barzani and Sami Abdul-Rahman; and the Kurdistan Socialist Party. (This party was formed consequently of merging the KDP Preparatory Committee and the Kurdistan Socialist Movement, which was previously a faction of the PUK). The PUK leaders and the KDP Provisional Command were more or less the same as, or a maintenance of, the leaders of the two contender groups in the pre-1975 conflict (Gunter 2009).

Before the formation of the aforementioned parties, and to avoid falling into the same disagreement, Mahmud Othman the former chief negotiator of the Kurdish movement, alongside others, attempted to mediate between the two leaderships with the purpose of reaching a harmony on a joint framework to collaborate within. Their efforts quickly reached a dead end. Talabani showed some flexibility and readiness to work within a joint framework. In April 1975, he wrote a letter to this effect to Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who did not act in response to the letter further supposed that delivering the letter by Talabani's father in-law Ibrahim Ahmad was in itself challenging (Tahiri 2007).

On the other hand, Sami Abdul-Rahman and others members of the old KDP, who were intending to establish the Provisional Command of the KDP, were powerfully against any establish of co-operation with Talabani-Ahmed and his group. Consequently, the two contender factions went to the front with establishing their own political parties in a state of total antagonism against each other that lasted until 1977. The period between 1975 and 1977 witnessed many violent clashes and battles between the two sides and weakened the Kurdish movement to a great degree. On 1 March 1977, and after a Baathist government mediation, in Syria capital Damascus between Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani an agreement was signed to settle their differences. Nonetheless, this agreement did not last; shortly after the signature, it was interrupted by the strong protestation of Sami Abdul-Rahman and some others within the Provisional Command of the KDP and moreover the dissatisfaction of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, who was in the USA at the time receiving treatment for lung cancer. Some extremist members within the PUK were furthermore against any form of co-operation with the Provisional Command of the KDP (Pelletiere 1984; Voller 2012).

II. The Kurdish challenges from 1980- 1994

Barzani's territory, lay along Iraq's northern border with Turkey, whereas Talabani's area lay farther south, around Sulamanyah in the mountains separating Iraq from Iran. This became a reason of significance when Iran declared its invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan in 1983. The Iranian had the option of including Talabani in their plan. Otherwise they spurned this, probably due to they saw him as unacceptable secular, and further too much of a leftist. However, it was also feasible that Masoud Barzani blackballed his father's old-fashion foe. In any event, after Haji Umran the Iranians in quick succession conducted a number of other invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan, one of these to Talabani's area. This put the latter in a quandary, he did not want to support the Iranians, who scorned him. To some extent, he wished to support Baghdad, whom he was considering as his ally's. Talabani warned the Iranians to stay out of his territory, and when they neglected his warning further assaulted near Penjwin, he order his forces to struggle back (Pelletiere 1991)

In 1983, the PUK agreed to collaborate with Saddam Hussein by signing an autonomy agreement. However, the KDP re-opened its military struggle against the Baathist during the Iran-Iraq war. Also the Kurds resisted and hence the Iranian Kurdistan became the scene of an active anti-Khomeini revolt. The Iranian leader Khomeini determined to crush this insurrection, and tapped as his principal agent for this Masoud Barzani, who had succeeded to the leadership of his tribe after his father's death. As convinced, the plan called first for eliminating the Iranian Kurds' revolt after which Revolutionary Guards and the Barzanis would declared an invasion of Iraqi Kurdistan. Masoud Barzani saw this as a way of regaining his tribal land and approved to collaborate. In March 1983, the Barzanis, backed by Iran's Revolutionary Guards, destroyed the Iranian Kurdish nationalist movement. The Iranians then commenced their invasion of Iraq at Haji Umarn, using the Barzani as the spearhead of the attack. The guerrillas, knowing the area intimately, outmaneuvered the Baathists, softening them up for attacks by the Revolutionary Guardsmen.

The Haji Umarn engagement, went on for weeks, and although the Iranians were repulsed, they nevertheless retained a sliver of Iraqi territory, which Masoud expected to be hand over to him. How dismayed was he, then, when the clerics awarded to the Supreme Council Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), an Iranian-sponsored front of Iraqi dissident groups, almost all of which were fundamentalist Shias. This was a serious rebuff. To a people alike the Kurds for whom honour is grave issue, the award of Haji Umran to non-combatant Shias was a mortal insult. Barzani drew apart from his Iranian patrons to review his position. It was during this black period that he convinced a plan for ending his exclusive dependency on the Iranians (Pelletiere 1991).

However, in November 1986, and as a consequence of losing its strong position in the war, and attempting to form a Kurdish coalition against Iraq, Iran mediated between the Talabani and Barzani sides and an agreement, signed by Jalal Talabani and Idris Mustafa Barzani, was reached after only few days of negotiations. Shortly after the agreement, Idris Barzani died at the end of January 1987 and his death was a blow to the reconciliation of pace process. Nonetheless, the agreement dragged on as well as became the first significant step towards establishing the Kurdistan Front (Gunter 2004).

In 1987, talks between the numerous Kurdish parties started on establishing a framework to operate within. The talks, in which the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic party (KSDP) alongside many others mediated between the both KDP and PUK sides, lasted until May 1988 when the Kurdistan Front was formed. The front was comprised the PUK, KDP, KSDP, Kurdistan People's Party, Kurdish Socialist Party and the Iraqi Communist party - Kurdistan Branch. The front could not be able to unify the forces, resources and other bodies, as needed in the movement. So every party gave priority to its own affairs more than that of the fronts. On the other hand, it was a good methods for drawing the parties, especially the PUK of Talabani and the KDP of Barzani, closer further stopping them being against each other (Gunter 1999). Its existence furthermore played a significant role in avoiding a greater political hindrance when the Iraq-Iran war ended because the Kurdish political backbone was up to a confident extent united, when the Kurdistan Front decided that struggle should be continued by all conceivable means. It was similarly essential for rallying resistance against the Iraqi government in Kurdistan and gaining understanding as well as support for the Kurdish issue out of the country (Stansfield 2003).

The Kurdistan Front's framework continued through the drastic events that swept the area in the following years. The events were Saddam's offensive of Kuwait; the Gulf War; the uprising of March 1991; the mass exodus in April of the same year. The setting up of the safe haven for the Kurds in northern Iraq also for the Siha in southern Iraq; the negotiations with the Iraqi Government and finally the Government's withdrawal from the Kurdish areas particularly the Governorates of Dohuk, Erbil and Sulamanyah (Gunter 1992).

The differences over the failed negotiations with the government and the central government's withdrawal from the above-mentioned areas heralded a new era of dispute between both the KDP and PUK. They absolutely had different methods to the future of relations with the Iraqi government in Baghdad also with the outside world. On the one hand, Talabani and his PUK party favoured in searching of a resolution with the international community. On the other hand, Barzani and his KDP party were more for attempting completely to reach a final settlement with the central government in Baghdad. Additionally, the remarkable escalation of the areas under their control in addition the resources available to them advanced competition that worsened the dispute. To settle this question, the political leadership of the Kurdistan Front held a series of meetings and finally decided that in August 1991, to hold elections with the aim of electing a council that had to decide on the political future of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan. In October of the same year, when the central government withdrew its administration and armed forces from the above-mentioned governorates of Kurdistan. The duties of the proposed elected council were drawn-out to the administration of the Kurdish region. Another accumulation was prepared then that was of holding another election with the council's one, to elect a regional president (Othman 2001).

On 19 May 1992, for the first time election was held in Iraqi Kurdish history, the elections were held with many irregularities as well as rigging by the two main challengers. Consequently, none of the participating parties, including KSDP, approved the results and an agreement between the PUK and KDP was signed on to the way the assembly was to be divided. The results were very much close with a slight majority for the KDP, the PUK insisted on splitting the assembly by 50-50 and the KDP recognized. An administration was formed with the PUK heading the council of ministers and the KDP heading the Kurdistan National Assembly. However, this 50-50 establishment created a vertical split in every governmental department, paralysed the work of the administration, and planted the seeds of the armed conflict for the future. Another significant point to make here is that the leaders, Barzani and Talabani, who did not get the required 50 per cent of votes in the first round of the election and did not enter a second round, did not take part in the administration; they moreover barely met. This circumstances broadened the gap between the two sides, then consequently, the centres of power and decision making continued outside the administration, which developed to be a subordinate in the political hierarchy. It took orders from the leaders of the two parties and the Kurds ended up with a weak local administration, formed of two challenging halves that was loaded with increasing antagonism (Resool 2012).

In 1993, the KDP and PUK fell out once again also the parties have sporadically been in armed competition and conflict ever since, while forces from the United Kingdom, France, Turkey, and the United States fly overhead

to protect them. It was assessed that there have been over five thousand deaths since the renewals of conflicts. There have been massive cease-fires, otherwise the massive mainstream have just been words without substance(Gunter 2004).

According to some accounts such Hooks, there were two main disputes which the parties have not been able to resolve. The main conflict between the two parties' outcomes from division of revenues from oil trucks smuggling oil out of Iraq into Turkey through Ibrahim Khalil in Zakho city in the north of Kurdistan. These revenues are valued to be at least \$ 150,000 per day. The KDP controlled the areas along the Turkish borders also it was the suspicious that they were hoarding the money that caused the two parties to conduct fighting an atmosphere of tension prevailed during the period of the joint administration(Hooks 1996). As a consequence, the two parties engaged their paramilitaries and this led to small clashes between the two sides and with other parties as well, between the PUK and Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK). The Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party (KSDP), head by Hama Haji Mahmud, which had ostensibly joined the KDP the pervious summer attacked a KDP based in Sulaimaniyah. This attack ensued some deaths, also divided the PUK and the KDP over how to react. Further an armed conflict broke out in late December 1993 between the PUK and the IMK, as the latter tried to increase its influence in traditional PUK-territory. Talabani was successful against the militarily weaker IMK, but accepted mediation offered by the KDP, which brought the warring parties to the negotiating table to sign a peace accord on 20 December 1993. The PUK-KDP's also armed skirmish, the split was evident between the two foremost parties as each party maintained, directly or indirectly, the contending of the other(Gunter 2009).

Tension between the two sides reached its highest in May 1994, when the first incident of fighting started in Qaladizah and turned into an outright war that spread identical speedily to most areas except the capital Erbil. After a short period of fighting, the KNA made proposals for peace simultaneously many Kurds mediated as well. This caused in a precarious cease-fire that did not last long. As a consequence of the 50-50 composition of the KNA, it could not play an influential role on the two parties due to most of the members of each block put the interests of the party that nominated them before the Kurdish national interest.

Tree Kurdistan' was, however, to experience far more serious friction, as hostilities between the KDP and the PUK erupted in May 1994, effectively dividing the region into two zones. A trivial conflict over land-ownership advanced into a concentrated war, for which the long-standing divide between the parties and the failure to resolve it, was the underlying cause. The major source of discontent had for long been the control of the customs duties levied on all traffic crossing the northern border to Turkey. Situated in traditionally KDP-controlled territory, and administered by the same, Barzani was criticised for not fairly allocating the funds. These revenues were allegedly spent on financing their own party organisation rather than the common Kurdish Administration. This border crossing in the north is far more lucrative than in the south-eastern parts of the area of self-rule, where the PUK controls the less profitable cross-border trade with Iran. Talabani's organisation was, on the other hand, accused of embezzling large sums from the joint Kurdish Ministry of Finance and collaborating with the government in Baghdad (Othman 2001).

In July 1994, under the auspices of the then French president, the late Francois Mitterand, French officials invited the two parties to Paris and sponsored talks between them. Two delegations, led by PUK, Nawshirwan Mustafa, and Sami Abdul-Rahman, KDP, went to Paris and held talks, in the presence of some French officials, the head of the Kurdish Institute in Paris correspondingly the head of the Kurdistan National Congress for North America (KNC), the United Kingdom (UK) and the U.S Embassies, for almost two weeks. They reached an agreement that awaited the final traces and the signatures of Barzani and Talabani, who were supposed to go to Paris and sign the peace agreement in the presence of the French President, who promised to help a united Kurdish forum in France as well as other European countries. Nonetheless, after numerous suspensions and postponements, Talabani and Barzani did not make it to Paris and the mediation resulted unsuccessful (Yildiz 2007).

On 15 August 1994 and as a result of mediations by the British Parliament representatives and Socialist International also other Kurdish parties, organisations and figures, Talabani and Barzani signed another agreement in an official KNA session. The agreement did not last more than 72 hours. Indeed, it was penetrated before the British representatives leaving Kurdistan. Thereafter, and alike to the beginning of the skirmish, the United States-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC), in which both parties are members, in addition some Kurds in Kurdistan region also abroad continued the main peacekeepers between the two sides. Up to a certain degree, the joint administration moreover played a role in containing the fighting; the Prime Minister of the PUK zone, Kosrat Rasul Ali, attempted to avoid any fighting in the capital Erbil (Othman 2001).

The PUK controlled Erbil continues the second major disputes between the KDP and PUK. The PUK argued that they occupied Erbil in December 1994 to protect the Kurdish parliament from a pending KDP assaults. The PUK also declared that the Kurdistan Parliament that has not met since November 1994, has been freed to meet as it pleases. The KDP rejected to hand over any money to the Parliament of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), meanwhile the PUK took over the city. The KDP argued that as long as Erbil is dominated

by the PUK, the Parliament is not also cannot be free as well as requested that the PUK withdrawn from Erbil before they would negotiate peace with the other parties(Hooks 1996)

The final attempt in 1994 was the so-called “year 2000 agreement”, in which both parties vowed on 23 November 1994 not to fight each other until year 2000 in addition took an identical strong line in condemning Kurdish inter-fighting by “prohibiting and criminalizing” it. Like its predecessors, the agreement did not last more than a month, when the PUK captured the village of Kasnazan near Erbil and then subsequently Erbil itself at the very end of 1994. This was a turning point in relations between the two parties. Since then, the KDP boycotted any meeting with the PUK. Consequently long as they were in control of Erbil. PUK’s capture of Erbil and the KDP’s pre-condition, for meeting PUK, complicated matters moreover and made it more difficult for mediators who were faced by two tasks; to convince the PUK to withdraw from Erbil and the KDP to meet the PUK without any pre-conditions (Othman 2001).

III. The Kurdish Civil War in 1995

Despite the promising development following the Kurdish uprising and exodus of the spring of 1991, the situation in the Kurdish autonomous region came to deteriorate severely after approximately two years of democratically elected institutions. Despite repeated endeavors throughout 1994 by the INC and international players to put an end to the infighting, a despairing state of affairs prevailed, whereby the region progressively came to be seen as being 'ruled by the people with the most impressive weapons (Othman 2001).

On 27 February 1995, a massive car bomb exploded in the KDP-controlled town of Zakho in the northern part of Kurdistan region near Turkish border, killing more than 80 people. Barzani and citizen of Zakho instantly proclaimed that the PUK planted the bomb. But, an accusation strongly rejected by Talabani. It would not be far-fetched to suspect a foreign agent on a mission from Tehran, Baghdad or Ankara to have been responsible for the terrorist action, in an endeavor to additional destabilise the Kurdish area of autonomous status. Despite the PUK denying all responsibility for the attack, the relations between the two antagonists suffered as a result of it(Wanche 2002).

Another bridge between the two sides that was still standing was 60 members of the KNA, 30 from each side who remained in the KNA building with a joint committee comprised the heads of the two blocks and Ahmad Chalabi of the INC. They were on a strike inside the building in protest at the fighting – an act that Mahmud Othman thought, and told them in a meeting, was not proportionate to the gravity of the situation as real MPs should, in such situations, legislate and take decisions and not go on a strike. On the night of the 26 March 1995, and while Othman and his colleagues were mediating between them, the KDP strained to capture Erbil without giving them any hints. Their attempt failed and in retaliation, the PUK occupied the KNA building in Erbil in addition the KDP members of the assembly had to leave to Salah-al-Din and this marked the end of the KNA Bridge between them.

The internecine fighting between the PUK and the KDP enabled the Kurdistan's Workers' Party to increase its presence significantly on the Iraqi side of the Turkish border. This encouraged Turkey to make a considerable invasion into Northern Iraq in the spring of 1995 in an effort to hunt down PKK-fighters and destroy their bases. Principally unsuccessful (the Turkish army came to return several times in the following years), it did nothing to stem the Kurdish infighting that improved in scope and intensity. As the PUK and KDP continued their armed conflict in late summer of 1995, it was now Iran's turn to offer its Islamic government's services for mediation between the parties. This attempt by the eastern neighbour to broker peace between the warring factions prompted American diplomats to intervene, as Iranian influence in the area was not felt to serve the interests of the international community in the wider region: One of the most urgent issues to resolve was how to deal with the PKK, i.e. to find a common approach to the Kurdish Workers' Party, with whom the KDP had clashed militarily, and whom the PUK supported. Moreover, the allocation of the vital customs duties levied on all traffic crossing the Turkish border needed much discussion, as did the issue of demilitarisation of the capital Erbil, which was under several months of occupation by Talabani's forces (Othman 2001).

In 1995, the escalation of the conflict was noticed. Trying to mediate between the two sides, Othman, alongside others, made two trips to the region. The first was in March, with Bakhtiyar Amin and Adnan Mufti, the prior PUK-led government's deputy Prime Minister who was then independent. In this trip, they had a fairly strong international backing. They took various letters to the two leaders urging them to meet, the most important of which was Francois Mitterand's one. Bakhtiyar Amin and Othman also visited the USA before going to Kurdistan and met various US Congress members to get their support for our mission. Despite the letter of the French president and the others, Barzani refused to meet Talabani and insisted on the pre-condition of evacuating Erbil (Othman 2001).

At the same time, the CIA was trying to carry out a covert action against Saddam. As was revealed later after its failure and just before Kurdish mediator arrival to Kurdistan, it was done in co-operation between the PUK, KDP and the INC. The plan was that while a coup d'état endeavor was to take place, the PUK and the KDP would attack Kirkuk and Mosul one-to-one. But 48 hours before the start of the operation, the US officials who were stationed in Kurdistan region told the involved sides that it does not have anything to do with the

operation. In addition they could go ahead on their own. As a consequence, the KDP withdrew its deployed forces and stopped co-operation but the PUK decided to go ahead with the INC as well as attack some government troops. In addition to its unusable outcome, the process expanded the gap between the two parties and broke another bridge between them, the INC whose practical role as a mediator ended there because the KDP did not find it neutral anymore (Gunter 1996).

Consequently, Kurdish mediator's trip ended without any material consequence however to some degree, they managed to contribute to the prolonging of the fragile cease-fire between them. In June 1995, the US State Department Bob Dwyth sent a letter to the two Kurdish leaders Barzani and Talabani advising the two parties to meet under the US government's auspices in Europe. On 8 July 1995, the PUK attacked all KDP positions along the Hamilton Road and alleged, without showing any evidence, that had they not attacked, the KDP would have attacked them on the 8 July 1995 (Othman 2001).

On 15 July 1995, the Kurdish mediator from overseas reached Kurdistan and started another mediation. Meanwhile, on 16 July 1995, the US government asked the two sides to stop the fighting and do not kill any more civil people. This time the delegation comprised Lord Eric Avebury, the UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group head; Kathryn Porter, the US Human Rights Alliance president, Bakhtiyar Amin, and Mahmud Othman. Some of the KDP officials were not enthusiastic about the mediation and started to put difficulties to their mission. They objected to some members of the delegation such as the PUK politburo member Adnan Mufti even though the mediators were on their way to the region after giving their approval before setting off from London. The KDP forces also shelled Erbil shortly after the mediators' arrival to it from Barzani's headquarters in Salah-al-Din. Furthermore, they were inflexible to the mediators' proposals. It seemed that their intention was to oust the PUK from Erbil in a humiliating manner using whatever means possible also at any price. The PUK's 8 July attack furthermore contributed to the KDP's rigid stance on the mediation. It likewise broke the cease-fire, which was made-up to hold at least till the 15 July. In this respect, the mediators asked both sides, before setting off from London, to hold the cease-fire, at least until our arrival (Gunter 1996).

At the same time, delegations of the two political bureau met in Ireland at Dublin in August 1995 in the presence of representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Turkish governments. They approved on some principles that were considered to be turned into an agreement in a subsequent meeting after one month, which was held in Dublin too in September 1995. Nonetheless, no agreement was reached and the Second Dublin meetings ended in a fiasco with each side blaming the other side for the failure. This complicated matters further and developed tension (Yildiz 2007).

There seemed to be a general awareness of the importance of enlarging the Assembly, to incorporate independent observers as well as representatives from other Kurdish parties in the parliamentary organisation, who could be assigned the task of working out a plan to break the deadlock in the peace negotiations. However, how to deal with this issue appeared to be beyond the capacity of both parties. Meanwhile, Barzani continued to receive support from Turkish government for the purpose of fighting the PKK operating from KDP-controlled areas in addition in its pursuit of Turkish-Kurdish guerrillas, fierce clashes between the two Kurdish parties occurred. In the meantime, the PUK approached Iran and received similar support from Tehran as did the KDP from Ankara, the only difference being that with the Iranians came the revolutionary Islamic dimension, which was not part of the Turkish parcel (Wanche 2002).

IV. The PUK Attack on Erbil and the KDP Reaction

In July 1996, the condition again altered. The PUK permitted Iranian troops to go after Iranian Kurds who had been using bases in its territory. In return, the Iranians forces left behind a large cache of weapons, tipping the balance of power between the PUK and the KDP towards the PUK. At the end of July 1996, the situation even erupted once more when the PUK gave access to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to attack the bases of the KDP-I in the PUK-controlled areas in return for Iran's support to them. The PUK, backed by Iran, launched an offensive against the KDP in mid-August and wanted to oust them from Hamilton Road, Shaqlawa and Salah-al-Din. Although it inflicted casualties and loss on the KDP and forced them to withdraw from some areas, the offensive stopped short of reaching its aim (Gunter 1996; Hooks 1996; Mcdowall 2003; Stansfield 2003).

On 16 August 1996, the PUK broke the year-old third armistice, taking the KDP by astonish as it was that day celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. In the end, the offensive rebounded on the PUK. On 13 August 1996, Clinton sent another warning telegram. On the same day Saddam, keen on to reassume control of his territory dispatched 40,000 forces alongside the KDP (Official General Report on Northern Iraq, April 2000). The PUK was rapidly decimated. The power fighting in Kurdistan of Iraq had lastly ended. Due to the Iraqi armed forces entered Kurdistan, the US declared 44 cruise missile at military sites in Kurdistan of Iraq further extended the area of the no-fly zone. On 22 August 1996, Masoud Barzani required Saddam to send in Iraqi National Guards alongside the KDP Peshmargas to control Erbil from the PUK controlled. On 28 August 1996, the US President Bin Clinton warned Iraqi president Saddam Hussein not to move in armed forces, in replied to Barzani's demanded (Hooks 1996; Lambert 1997).

On 31st August 1996, the Iraqi help came and the KDP managed to quash the PUK in an attack that put Erbil into their hands and also Sulamaniyah at later stage. The PUK fled to the Iranian border and after a month, they managed to reorganise their forces and made a strong comeback to Sulamaniyah and other areas until the borders of Erbil in October 1996. This marked the start of a totally new and dangerous era of rivalry between the two sides and broke another bridge, the Kurdish parties that were mediating between them. The division in every sense became more established and the situation fell more into the hands of Baghdad, Ankara and Tehran, which were called to help one side against the other (Official General Report on Northern Iraq, April 2000).

On 4 September 1996, the KDP declared an amnesty under which PUK supporter were permitted to return to their houses in Erbil, provided that they signed a declaration of surrender. Returning PUK members further in some cases had to pay 'caution money'. In September 1996, also the central government in Baghdad decided to lift the economic sanction on Kurdish areas and further declared an amnesty for people in the area. The amnesty excluded, among others, those allegedly involved in 'espionage', a term broad enough to be applicable to people working for humanitarian organizations and operating in the north without Baghdad's consent.

In replied to the threat posed by this and to the deployment of Central Iraqi armed force units in Erbil, the US strongly advised all Americans None-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) to withdraw from Kurdish areas, taking thousands of local staffs with them. At this time, over five thousand Kurdish refugees from Iraq were in the Philippines, awaiting entry into the US. On 13 October 1996, the PUK, now armed with heavy weapons, returned from Iran also its Peshmarga went on to recover the territory they had lost, with the exception of Erbil. Most of the refugees then further returned from Iran between October and December 1996. Animosity between the KDP and PUK appeared to have become more firmly entrenched (Official General Report on Northern Iraq, April 2000).

V. The Ankara Process and Its Aftermath

In early 1996, and as they were parties to the talks in Dublin, the Turkish government started to mediate between the PUK and KDP sides. This mediation, which took place in the presence and with the approval of the USA and the UK representatives, produced the Ankara declaration. It contained 22 articles, of which the KDP only accepted 5 whereas the PUK accepted the complete package, according to which the so-called Peace Monitoring Force (PMF), was formed and deployed in between KDP and PUK forces. This force was in every way attached to Ankara (Othman 2001).

At the end of October 1996, the US mediated another endeavour talks for an armistice between the KDP and PUK in Turkey Ankara; yet the balance of power in Iraqi Kurdistan continues in the KDP's also Baghdad's government favour. A framework for paces talks, known as the 'Ankara Process', was established, with the KDP and the PUK as its participants and the US, the UK and Turkey acting as broker. To their annoyance, Turkmen representatives were not formally included. The Ankara process initiative by the US, the UK and Turkey, attempted to consolidate through four main initiatives: 1) the formation of an internal coalition governor in Erbil; 2) Normalization of the Erbil city; 3) transferring of all Iraqi Kurdistan border's revenue to a central bank, and; 4) setting of a date for regional elections (Official General Report on Northern Iraq, April 2000).

In January 1997, the Ankara process resumed and the two parties started meeting again. In March 1997, and while the two sides delegations were in a meeting in Ankara, a KDP official was killed in Erbil. The KDP delegation in Ankara pulled out of the meeting in protest and alleged that the PUK assassinated the official. Attempting to mediate once more, and after consulting many Kurdish intellectuals, such as Aziz Muhammad and Mahmud Othman, as members of the political leadership of the Kurdistan Front, wrote a letter to Talabani and Barzani on 2 April 1997. They urged them to assist them in convening a popular congress with the participation of the KDP, the PUK, other parties, democratic organisations and political, religious and social figures. This was with the purpose of discussing the conflict thoroughly and form a national charter according to which a united government would be established and solve other problems. They furthermore wrote that this congress would be the legal authority in Kurdistan until the holding of an election. Talabani accepted their proposals and promised help. However, Barzani had some strict conditions and said in his reply that any move or mediation should be within the Ankara peace process and recognises the Erbil parliament, in which the PUK was absent, as the legal authority (Othman 2001).

As well as the issue of the Turkish border's revenues, controlling the city of Erbil was another issue that shifted the balance in KDP's favour. And hence from then onwards and until now, the KDP, in all rounds of talks, always preferred the status quo to remain as it is, while the PUK, who did not find the status quo in its favour, wanted a radical change in the political situation. Another major problem between the two parties was that of the PKK's presence in the area. The KDP was powerfully against them and wanted them out of Iraqi Kurdistan. However, the PUK was up to a certain degree supporting them. This in turn put the Turks against the PUK increasingly. This was evident in the joint KDP-Turkish attack on 14 May 1997 upon PKK bases in Erbil and other areas not only near the Turkish border nevertheless deep into Iraqi Kurdistan. This took while the uninformed PUK delegation was holding another round of discussions with the KDP representatives in Ankara as part of the Ankara peace process(Gunter 1996).

In June 1997, the two sides started exchanging open letters and projects for reconciliation. It started by call from Masoud Barzani, during the opening session of the KNA, urging the PUK leader to come to the KNA in Erbil "for frank and open discussion". The PUK and its allies replied by a 22-point proposal. Non-of the two calls were serious because they were communicated via media channels and not through official ones. They were mainly for domestic consumption. On 30 June 1997, and after pressure from the USA and the UK, delegations from the two parties met in Degala, on the borders of the two areas, but then again the meeting did not result in any material outcome. Later, the USA and UK endeavoured to bring the two parties together in a meeting scheduled for the 15 July 1997 in Ankara; the PUK did not approve to the venue, which was later changed to London on 17 July 1997. The KDP this time rejected and preferred Ankara. Subsequently they lost hope for making them meet. At the end of July 1997, Talabani was invited to Washington. In this trip, he received a warm treatment and attention by the US administration, which asked him to go to Turkey on his way back. He agreed to the US request and visited Ankara on his way home. Up to a certain degree, this broke the ice between the PUK and Ankara (Othman 2001).

On 16 August 1997, and during the anniversary of the formation of the KDP, Masoud Barzani asked Aziz Muhammad to mediate and form a joint committee between the two parties. This was on the condition that he should bear in mind two points; first, the legality of the Erbil parliament; second, any mediation should be within the framework of the Ankara Peace process. Forgetting the content of the 2 April letter that the Kurdish mediator Mahmud Othman and his colleagues sent the two sides, and without any consultation, he accepted the task and started a new mediation. This resulted in the formation of what is known today as the Higher Coordinating Committee (HCC.) for peace, however it did not meet until February 1998 because of new clashes between the two sides (Othman 2001).

An important point to show here is that during this year, the burden of providing for the people was eased of the parties' shoulders with the passing of UN Security Council's Resolution (986) or what is known as "The Oil-For-Food Programme" (Mohammed 2013). During the previous year's 1994-1996, the parties had to allocate a share of their budgets to the people but after the implementation of the oil-for-food programme, the two parties had their budgets for themselves. In other words, although the programme developed the living conditions of the people, it did not assistance in resolving the conflict as was expected (Gunter 2004).

On 23 September 1997, and without any prior warning, the Turkish army, in co-operation with the KDP, attacked the Kurdish area in pursuance of the PKK. This was taking place at a time when the USA and the UK were attempting to bring the two leaders together. After losing wish in making Talabani and Barzani meet, they endeavoured to bring together second rank officials of the parties. They succeeded in doing so. By holding a meeting between two delegations led by Kosrat Rasul Ali, a powerful figure in the PUK whose popularity improved after leading his party's strong retaliation into Sulamaniyah in 1996, and Nechirvan Barzani, Masoud Barzani's nephew the second man in his KDP party (Othman 2001). The talks were held in London on 6 October 1997. It did not produce any outcome. As the KDP wanted to maintain the status quo, controlling Erbil and the revenues. Meanwhile The PUK wanted to change the situation. On 13 October 1997, the PUK launched a military campaign, "The Storm of Revenge", against the KDP and it made some advances at the beginning. The Turks, USA and the UK in return, asked the PUK to return to pre-12 October 1997 line. However, the PUK rejected their demand, the Turks, supported by the USA and the UK, and attacked them in November 1997 in addition pushed them back to their original positions. This started a new era of hostility between the Turks and the PUK as well as it was a clear indication of the strong Turkish-KDP links and of the fact that the USA and the UK wanted to maintain the balance between the KDP and the PUK (Gunter 1996; Stansfield 2003).

Under the peace process, following the armistice between the PUK and the KDP, a monitoring unit was set up and stationed in the buffer zone to ensure observers of the PUK and the KDP demarcation line. That Peace Monitoring Force (PMF) consisted of Assyrians (the ADM) and Turkmens, led by Turkish military officers, and watched over the demarcation line until October 1997. After holding for a year, the fourth ceasefire copulated on 13 October 1997, when fresh fighting broke out. The PUK assaults upon the KDP positions brought a temporary halt to peace talks under the Ankara process. Following the out broke of renewed hostilities between the KDP and the PUK, the PMF withdrew ceasing to have any party to play (Official General Report on Northern Iraq, April 2000).

VI. The Iraqi and Iranian involvement in the Kurdish issue, the Kurdish meeting and the US

To secure its position, especially after 31 August 1996, the PUK started to have relations with the Iraqi central government. They said that this was "mainly to avoid another Iraqi-KDP attack against them". These relations increased with time and reached their highpoint after the Turkish attack. This was when two high-ranking delegations of the PUK and the KDP met in Baghdad for "peace" talks in the presence of the dishonourable Ali Hasan Al-Majid, who was responsible for conducting the "Genocide Campaigns of Anfal" against the Kurds in late 1980s. Simultaneously, Iran was mediating too and some meetings were held in Tehran. In all these various meetings, the two sides did not change their positions, the KDP remained in favour of the status quo and the PUK wanted a solution that would end the status quo in addition guarantee sharing the budget and the

administration with the KDP. Nonetheless, these meetings decreased tension between the two sides and also between the Turks and the PUK as they exchanged delegations in December 1997(Othman 2001).

On the other hand, Talabani and Barzani exchanged four letters at the end of 1997. At the beginning of 1998; and this led to the desire meeting of the HCC in February 1998 in the presence of Aziz Muhammad. The first meeting took place on 12 February 1998 in Shaqlawa (territory controlled by the KDP). The KDP delegation was led by Sami Abdul Rahman, and also included Jawher Namiq Salim (Speaker of the KNA), and Bruska Nuri Shawaise (Central Committee Membership). The PUK delegation was led by Dr Kamal Fu'ad, and included Omar Sa'id Ali and Arsalan Bayaez (all Political Bureau). This meeting formulated confidence-building measures, including the enforcing of the ceasefire, the ending of media attacks, the release of prisoners, the ending of expulsions, the establishment of a joint committee to ensure the implementation of SCR 986, and the promotion of increased coordination between public service ministries. The meetings continued at approximately fortnightly intervals, and roughly alternated location between Shaqlawa and Koysanjaq, or occasionally Degala. These meetings should be seen as important as they proved that the KDP and PUK could sit down at the same table and discuss technical issues separately from political issues. The specialized sub-committees formed to coordinate the public service sectors proved to be reasonably successful, and resulted in the reduction of checkpoints between cities and the easing of travel restrictions between Erbil and Sulamaniyah (Stansfield 2003).

These HCC weekly meetings continued until June 1998 when the two sides reached a deadlock over the main issues. During this period, February till June, the two sides held a few meetings, of which Mahmud Othman was a party to or closely aware of, outside Kurdistan. The first was in Cairo, when they were invited to attend the "Arab-Kurdish Dialogue Conference" at the end of May 1998. The second was in London, when Dr Fu'ad Masum, Hoshiyar Zebari and Mahmud Othman addressed a seminar in the Kurdish Cultural Centre on the results of the Cairo conference and the bilateral meetings. The third was a meeting between Talabani, Hoshiyar Zebari and Mahmud Othman in London. These meeting looked promising and the two sides promised flexibility in future talks in Kurdistan in fact Talabani showed his readiness to visit Barzani in Salah-al-Din (Othman 2001).

At the same time, and when the US administration knew of the increasing Iraqi and Iranian involvement, it felt that the Kurdish card is getting out of its hands and started a serious mediation between the two sides. It sent David Welsh of the State Department to the region in July 1998; he met Barzani and Talabani and both leaderships and also officials of other parties and figures. He also made supportive remarks in two news conferences in the PUK and KDP areas. In this visit, and on behalf of his government, he invited two delegations led by the party leaders to Washington, where after two weeks of marathon negotiations, they reached the Washington Agreement on 17th September 1998 (Lambert 1997).

VII. The Washington Agreement in 1988

After the invitation, Barzani arrived in Washington and met various high-ranking US officials including the then Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, and the National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger. A week later, Talabani arrived in Washington and met the same officials. The Americans invited Barzani a week earlier to convince him to lift his veto and meet Talabani to start the peace talks that took place under their supervision.

Relations between the two sides were very tense, especially after the deadlock reached in the HCC meetings and in their previous talks in Ankara. The Ankara process proved to be a failure after Turkey's loss of its neutrality when it intervened in favour of KDP in the latest rounds of fighting in October 1997.

The Americans were willing to end the deadlock and broker an agreement between the two sides for the following reasons:

1. As a result of their dual-containment policy, they wanted to take the Kurdish card out of the hands of Iraq and Iran, whose interventions were increasing.
2. They wanted to bring Turkey back to the scene as a mediator and also put the PUK against the PKK, as was the KDP, and also normalize the PUK-Turkish relations.
3. Regain the Kurdish people's trust in Washington's policy following the significant blow it suffered after 31 August 1996, when it moved its military command control from the Kurdish region into Turkey and took the few thousand Kurds who worked in the NGOs to the USA; a move that was considered by many as a walkout.

After about three weeks of intense indirect and direct negotiations, in which the Americans played a very active role, the Washington agreement was reached. It was signed by the two leaders and witnessed by David Welsh, of the State Department. Later, Madeline Albright and the two leaders announced it in a press conference on 17 September 1998. The Washington Agreement heralded a new era of internationalizing the Kurdish issue. For the first time, the Kurds held direct and detailed meetings with the Americans, without the presence of the Turks and the Iraqi National Congress (INC). Furthermore, an American diplomat signed a document that referred to federalism in Iraq; the Arabization campaign against the Kurdish and Turcoman population when referring to Resolution 688; and used the term Iraqi Kurdistan instead of northern Iraq. This language was used for the first time in an American-signed document on Kurds despite the criticism of the Turkish and Arab lobbies in that administration (Othman 2001).

The Washington Agreement built on the previous Shaqlawa–Koysanjaq meetings. In effect, it mirrored the advances made by those meetings, but, with the sponsorship of the US, gave the Kurds increased security against the potentially destructive policies of the governments of Turkey and Iraq. The agreement was expected to draw the two political parties into closer cooperation and, hopefully, result in the formation of an interim administration, in Erbil, followed by multi-party elections to unify the KNA and the KRG. However, its implementation was characterized by limited cooperation on issues previously agreed at the Shaqlawa meetings. Issues such as the normalization of travel between Suleimaniyah and Erbil, the supplementing of civil service positions from KDP revenues, and the preservation of a ban on the use of media organs for propaganda purposes against the other side have been actively addressed with varying degrees of success. The implementation of some of the greater initiatives, such as the unification of the KRG and KNA, proved to be problematic and subsequent disagreements, at times, resulted in a significant increase of tension between the KDP and PUK, characterized by the resumption of media attacks and aggressive political manoeuvring. The main problem with the implementation of the Washington Agreement was one of interpreting the key provisions, particularly with regard to: 1) The normalization of the situation of Erbil, Suleimaniyah and Dohuk, with both parties able to operate in all cities; 2) Revenue-sharing, particularly with regard to the crossing-point of Ibrahim Khalil; 3) The establishment of a temporary unified government; 4) The re-unification of the KNA ;5) Security issues, especially with regard to the PKK ;6) The return of IDPs ;7) The timing of multi-party elections (Shareef 2010; Stansfield 2003:100).

The PUK stated that the promotion of peace in Iraqi Kurdistan required the following to be undertaken under the auspices of the Washington Agreement:

1. A normalization of the situation in the capital, Erbil, then in Suleimaniyah and Dohuk.
2. A fair distribution of revenues.
3. The formation of a temporary government and the transferring of legislative authority to it.
4. After forming the government, ensuring the security of the borders with Iran and Turkey, and developing a policy regarding the position of the PKK in Iraqi Kurdistan.
5. Return of the IDPs to their places of origin, with both the KDP and PUK releasing all prisoners.
6. The setting of a date for the next democratic elections, to be held no later than three months after the normalization of the situation in Erbil (Stansfield 2003:101).

The interpretation of the Washington Agreement by the KDP proved to be somewhat different to that of the PUK. The following were their main areas of concern:

1. The normalization of the situation in Erbil, Suleimaniyah and Dohuk, and all other cities and towns at the same time.
2. The sharing of revenues between the KDP-controlled area and the PUK controlled area should be dependent upon the current differences in revenue, and that such funding should only be used for the public service ministries.
3. The necessity of forming a government and parliament according to the results of the election of 1992 (officially, the result suggested that the parliamentary division should be 51:49 in favour of the KDP, although this is a point of disagreement between the two).
4. That no concessions would be granted to the PKK, and that they should not be allowed to be based in Iraqi Kurdistan.
5. Financial and material compensation for IDPs.
6. Elections should take place only after the normalization of relations in the major cities.
7. Issues regarding the composition of security forces are optional and no decision need be made (Stansfield 2003:102).

After signing the agreement, people in Iraqi Kurdistan were extremely happy and this was evident in the popular welcome the two leaders received when they returned to Kurdistan. The Kurds abroad and those who support the Kurdish cause also welcomed this achievement. In November 1998, the two leaders held their second session of meetings in Ankara in the presence of the Turkish, USA and British officials. In these meetings, general points, as well as Turkish security concerns, were discussed and the start of the implementation was adjourned until the two leaders return to Kurdistan. An important point to note about this meeting was the undermining of the Washington Agreement in putting a Turkish label on it by considering it as part and continuation of the Ankara process. This was what the Turks exactly wanted because of their extreme concern and anxiety about the agreement.

On 25 December 1998, Barzani addressed a news conference in Salah-al-Din and called for a clear PUK position against the PKK in accordance with the agreement; asked for a change in the short and impractical timetable for implementation and said that the agreement is a package deal that no side has the right to implement it in a selective way. On 8 January 1999, Talabani visited Barzani in Salah-al-Din. The meeting looked cordial however no real issues were discussed. The discussion was concentrated on building confidence

and the implementation was left for the HCC. After two months, during which no practical steps were taken in the implementation process, the PUK said in a statement, on 22 March 1999, that they cannot accept the status quo and called for a quick formation of a joint cabinet as well as the implementation of the other points, as stipulated in the agreement. On 16 April 1999, Masoud Barzani accused the PUK of helping the PKK and said that this was a breach of the agreement. At the time, the two parties were quite apart on the PKK issue. As a consequence of this and other issues, tension and media attacks started again after the noticed calm that prevailed by Talabani's visit to Salah-al-Din (Othman 2001).

Talking on the anniversary of the establishment of the PUK, 1 June 1999, Talabani held the KDP responsible for the non-implementation of the agreement. KDP political bureau member Sami Abdul-Rahman reciprocated and replied to Talabani on 3 June and put the blame on the PUK for the non-implementation. When tension escalated further, the US government invited the HCC to meet in Washington. The meeting lasted from 16 until 26 June 1999. The two sides discussed everything, nonetheless they agreed on minor points and disagreed on the major ones. As a result, the PUK did not accept the terms and the meeting ended in fiasco. This marked the end of the HCC periodical meetings; a lull in the implementation process; and the start of another wave of media attacks.

On 16 and 17 August 1999, and in two separate statements, Masoud Barzani strongly criticised the PUK for its stance on PKK; invited the PUK leader to the parliament "to discuss the issues frankly" and asked the PUK to accept the results of the 1992 elections, in which his party had 51 per cent of the vote and the PUK had 49. Tension continued between the two sides until mid-September 1999, when two delegations, a PUK one, led by Jalal Talabani and a KDP one, led by Nechirvan Barzani, went to the USA as part of an INC delegation to prepare for the INC conference which was held at the end of October 1999. While in Washington to see Al Gore, the heads of the two delegations met on 20 September 1999. The meeting was positive and contributed to decreasing the tension and prepared the ground for the visit of Nechirvan Barzani, leading a high-ranking delegation of his party, to Sulamaniyah after the KDP's 12th congress that was held on 6 October 1999 in Erbil. The PUK sent a delegation to the congress with a very positive and conciliatory message (Othman 2001).

The KDP delegation visited Talabani in Qala-chwalan on 20 October 1999. But simultaneously, the congress decided to arrangement the fourth cabinet of the KDP government in Erbil, led by Nechirvan Barzani. On the other hand, and only one day after the visit of the KDP delegation, Talabani was appointed, with his consent, by the leadership of his party and the Sulamaniyah cabinet as the president of the Kurdistan region. Furthermore, his first presidential decree was the establishing of the Cassation Court in Sulamaniyah. This sparked another wave of media attacks between the two sides, however it was partly eased by the New York conference of the INC held on 29 and 30 October 1999. In this conference, the PUK and KDP delegations had a coherent stance on the Kurdish demands and the issue of federalism in Iraq. The conference was a good opportunity for the two parties to meet and ease the tension between them.

After these political developments, a new point of dispute developed and that was KDP's objection to Talabani's presidential title and the Sulamaniyah Cassation Court. The PUK on the other hand insisted on the illegality of the Erbil parliament and said that their latest moves were to create a temporary legal outline to run the affairs of their area. On 20 December 1999, and while proclaiming the formation of the KDP's fourth cabinet, Masoud Barzani said: "we cannot make any bigger initiative than the one we did on 20 October 1999, to which the PUK reacted negatively". On 10 February 2000, an American delegation accompanied by Turks visited Kurdistan. Their visit did not have any material outcome it seemed to be a routine visit. In February 2000, the PUK held municipal elections in its area. The KDP did not take part in the elections and this increased the gap between them (Othman 2001).

In March 2000 of the same year, the two leaders exchanged Newroz greetings. This calmed down the tension between them and later, a high-ranking PUK delegation went to Ankara for the normalization of their relations with Turkey, the KDP was anxious about this visit. On 10 June 2000, Turkish and US Embassy officials visited the area and met the two parties. When they returned, they said that the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to the Washington agreement. Later, they invited the two sides to come to Washington as part of an INC delegation to meet AL Gore on 26 June 2000. Talabani accepted the invitation but Masoud Barzani sent Nechirvan instead.

On 3 July 2000, the two parties Prime Ministers, Kosrat Rasul Ali and Nechirvan Barzani, met under American supervision. They discussed the issues of joint administration, normalization and budget. No agreement was reached and it is quite difficult to know what exactly went because all the meetings were bilateral and no third party was present to be capable to tell the exact story of what happened. Some of their early meetings were held in the presence of silent Kurdish mediators who did not reveal the real details. At the end of July 2000, and on his way back to Kurdistan, Talabani went to Ankara and met various Turkish officials. He later said in Tehran that one of the objectives of his visit was to ask the Turks to pressurise the KDP in the peace process. This and the failure of the Washington talks renewed the tension between the two sides. Furthermore, and on 31 August 2000, the KDP official, Franso Hariri [assassinated on 18 February 2000] said in an interview with the KDP's

satellite TV that they are proud of the 31 August and will repeat it if necessary. This also added to the tension between the two sides and another round of media attacks started between them (Othman 2001).

On 10 September 2000, Barzani stated in the Erbil parliament that if the PUK wants the peace process to move forward, they should agree the points discussed in Washington in the two meetings of June 1999 and July 2000. Meanwhile, and as a result of the improvement of PUK's relations with Turkey and the increase of PKK presence in the PUK area and also its relations with Iraq and Iran, tension between the PKK and the PUK was increasing. On 20 September 2000, fighting between the two sides broke out and heavy casualties were reported. This in practice removed one of the obstacles to the implementation of the agreement, namely the position on PKK. Nevertheless, and although their view on the PKK as a "terrorist organization" has not changed, the KDP, whose pleasure over the issue was noticeable, made it clear that they would not enter any joint operations with the PUK against them (Othman 2001).

While Kurds and others were irritating to mediate to bring the two leaders together, Talabani unpredictably visited Barzani twice while on his way to Turkey and back by helicopter on 8 and 11 January 2001. The KDP returned the visit by sending a delegation to Sulamaniyah on 22 January 2001. This created an optimistic atmosphere in relations between the two parties; during which delegations were exchanged and intense HCC-level talks were held between the two parties.

The visits of Talabani and the PUK's full collaboration in the examination into the assassination of Franso Hariri contributed to the formation of such atmosphere. In this period, the two sides said in their statements that this is the most serious of all the rounds of talks and that there is more mutual faith and trust now. They also said that they have approved on the budget (revenue sharing), the opening of offices in each other's areas and the return of the internally displaced people with the help of the UN. The question of the transitional assembly was not however solved (Othman 2001).

According to the PUK, the recent agreement was over new points and as a consequence of the new peace climate. However the head of the KDP delegation Sami Abdul-Rahman stated to the PUK's satellite TV KurdSat on 15 April 2001 that these points have been proposed by the KDP since June 1999 in Washington. The PUK did not agree them at the time but they are accepting them now. He also said that "the Washington agreement does not mention a transitional assembly"; a point that the PUK was insisting on. Looking at the above record of events, one can see that despite the period of more than three years of no fighting, most of the Washington agreement is not implemented yet. However, some progress was made in exchanging the POW's; building confidence between the two sides and some of their outside contacts. On the other hand, their cooperation is more in the fields of humanitarian aid, public services and also the implementation of resolution 986 (Othman 2001).

VIII. Conclusion

The roots of the Kurdish internal conflict started in 1964. The Kurdish political groups fought with their own enemy to control their own areas to have authority over their tribes and cities. They did not attempt to solve their difference by peaceful means. They frequently attempted to negotiate with their respective countries and neighbouring countries to solve their differences. However, the neighbouring countries did not want to solve their issue but they wanted use them against each other for their own interests with the aim of dividing them. Hence, the Kurdish political developed deteriorated more and more since their leaders did not trusted each other. And that led the civil war occurred. The civil war resulted thousands of casualties and displaced hundreds of thousands people. The PUK with the Iranian support attempted to control the Kurdish capital city and kicked opposite party KDP out of the city. Hence the KDP attempted to use its own enemy which had fought against before that time to retake its position in Erbil.

The geopolitical outcome of the 1996 round fighting was the KDP being situated in the governorate of Erbil and Dohuk. Meanwhile, the PUK being in Sulamaniyah governorate also parts of Erbil and Kirkuk governorate. The cease-fire line was established in Paris, Degala and Kosyinjaq and Ankara, and continued for sometimes. The KDP's position seemed to be totally dominate, with full control of Ibrahim Khail in Zakho where PUK attacked by a car bomb, Dohuk and Erbil cities. Talabani's position was more precarious. Moreover away than ever from securing revenue needed for the party also now, administration, the PUK had furthermore been disqualified from the natural seat of government in Erbil, and now had all of its high politicians in one small city. Conceivably more significantly, Talabani was now more reliant than ever on the shore up of surrounding states. Nonetheless, in terms of popular prop up, the KDP suffered. Plenty of Kurds could not have believed that Masoud would have acted in cooperation with the central government in Baghdad. Moreover, the city of Erbil did not entirely warm up the KDP, especially with its Iraqi government allies just south of its envious. Consequently, even though not geopolitically or financially well situated, the PUK of Talabani after attacking Zakho people detested it in Bahdinan areas barely but joyed some form of resurgence of popular shore up in Erbil and Sulamaniyah,

Throwing out of opposing party member from Erbil and Sulamaniyah took place ensuing in greater developments in the number of internally displaced peoples. Stringent check-points were formed also both sides

consolidated their own power. In political terms, the political structure was now categorized by division of the territory the two main powerful segment groups further each might now go ahead and form its own regional government. Feasibly astonishingly, his structure has showed to be strangely unchanging as well permitted, in the political party domain, for the PUK and the KDP o not be overly considered with securing their power main regarding the other group. The rationally unchanging environment has made a circumstance of political elite in which internal party enforces have been showed also which has permitted the government of the region to develop in a more technocratic, peaceful attitude, rather than be coloured through partisan concern.

The fulfilment of the Washington agreement continued to remain the same, because the KDP and The PUK, the armistice has kept on intact further the media assaults have continued a few and far between. Otherwise, the enterprise to draw the two parties into a unified political structure and administrative system has met unsuccessful additionally, if anything, the political structure has been organized by moreover disagreement. After apparently prolific consultations happened between Talabani and Nechirvan Barzani in Sulamaniyah on 22 October, the end of the same month, the PUK astonishingly divided the last formally unified organ of the governmental structure, by the forming a second Supreme Court in Sulamaniyah. Additionally, the PUK dragged on moreover and assessed Talabani to the position of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. The effect on the unity of the Kurdistan region was evident.

However, the Washington Agreement offered a range of options, and the US may be seen to have accepted the fact that it was somewhat difficult to immediately unify Iraqi Kurdistan. An interpretation of the agreement includes potential areas of coordination in public service ministries, followed by a joint national assembly, possibly resulting in a unified regional executive. The wisdom of bringing these two groupings back into one small city too quickly had to be questioned, particularly when this seemingly natural tendency of separation was being promulgated by the actions of the two parties, and indigenous peace processes were operating successfully due to the preservation of geographical areas of influence and security.

The moreover advancement of municipal election in the PUK zone of Sulamaniyah areas by the PUK administration again increased a feeling of permanency to the present isolation. The elections that happened in February 2000, were selected municipal councilors and the PUK won practically all of the accessible seats. The KDP was again approved through procedure, however intends to follow suit with alike elections in the near future. Otherwise, the KDP has not been innocent in the advancements of the isolation either. The provision of a consistent tranche pf revenue to the Sulamaniyah government has not been sustained beyond the payment of one tranche of \$50 million Dollars. Additionally, the formation of the fourth cabinet in Erbil somewhat solidified the independence of Erbil government from that of Sulamaniyah, especially as a political separation between the constituent parties is still absolutely manifest.

The PUK and the KDP work out de facto power in Kurdistan region. As to the permanence of this situation, little can be showed with confidence. Although in the last few years there has been development talk of collaboration, a number of significant points of difference keep on unsettled.

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