American Foreign policy toward the Kurdish Question: 1972-1975

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

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Declaration

I, Boukalmouna Malika, Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, I do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “American Foreign Policy toward the Kurdish Question: 1972-1975. In partial fulfilment of MLA Degree in Anglo-American Studies is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety parts, been submitted at any university.
Dedication

To my precious, sweet, and loving

My Parents, My husband, and My daughter
Acknowledgment

First and above all, I praise God, the almighty for providing me this opportunity and granting me capability to proceed successfully.

I will always owe a great deal of appreciation and thankfulness toward My Father, mother, and My Husband. Their love, encouragement, and prayers made me able to get such success and be the person I am today.

Part of this success was due to the support offered by my beloved sisters and brothers.

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Abstract

The Kurds are the world’s largest ethnic group without a nation state living in the Middle East region. Their territory is divided between 5 sovereign states: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. They speak widely different dialects and are also divided by religious affiliations and social factors. Compared to the other Kurds, only the Iraqi Kurds were achieved some of their goals of autonomy, because they revolted several times against the Iraqi central government, but their problem and their considerable geo-political importance, have pushed United States to intervene in the Kurdish question during 1972-1975. Furthermore, United States intervention aimed at achieving Cold War strategies in the Middle East region and weakening the relationship between Iraq and the Soviet Union. In this regard, United States were utilized the Kurds through two proxies, Iran and Israel to destabilize the Iraqi regime, whose building important relationship with the Soviet Union. Despite American promises of support to the Kurds, Iran’s interests overrode the support to the Kurdish issue which pushed the US to betray the Kurds in 1975.

Key Words: Kurds, Iraq, United States, Iran
Résumé

Les Kurdes sont le plus grand groupe ethnique du monde sans État-nation. Le territoire de Kurdes est divisé entre 5 états souverains: la Turquie, l'Irak, l'Iran et la Syrie. Ils parlent des dialectes très différents et sont également divisés par des affiliations religieuses et des facteurs sociaux. Comparé les autres Kurdes, sauf les Kurdes Irakiens sont réalisent ses but. Ils se sont révoltés à plusieurs reprises contre le gouvernement central Irakien afin de réaliser leurs aspirations d'autonomie, mais leur problème et leur importance géopolitique considérable ont poussé les États-Unis à intervenir dans la question Kurde en 1972-1975. En outre, l'intervention des États-Unis visait à réaliser des stratégies de guerre froide dans la région du Moyen-Orient et à affaiblir les relations entre l'Iraq et l'Union Soviétique. À cet égard, les Kurdes ont été utilisés par deux mandataires, l'Iran et Israël l pour déstabiliser le régime Irakien, dont la construction de relations importantes avec l'Union soviétique. Malgré les promesses Américaines de soutien aux Kurdes, les intérêts de l'Iran ont pris le pas sur le soutien à la question Kurde qui a poussé les Etats-Unis à abondone les Kurdes en 1975.

Mots-clés: Kurdes, Irak, États-Unis, Iran
الكردية، إيران، العراق، الولايات المتحدة ايران.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكرد، العراق، الولايات المتحدة ايران.
List of Acronyms

CIA Central Intelligence Agency
IPC Iraqi Petroleum Company
KDP Kurdistan Democratic Party
KSM Kurdistan Social Movement
OPEC Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PKK Kurdistan Worker Party
PUK Pateriotic Union of Kurdistan
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General introduction

The Kurdish question is one of the most complex issues confronting the Middle East dilemmas. Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world living in the Middle East: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria and other European countries without a nation. They are looking for self-determination and autonomy from their countries, they rebelled against their central governments in order to achieve their aspirations of autonomy. However, the mentioned governments oppressed them by many ways to protect their unity. Compared to other Kurdish minorities living across the region, who restricted and gave up their nationalist claims to demanding cultural and political autonomy, only the Iraqi Kurds have partially achieved their goals, because they revolted several times since the British colonialism against the Iraqi central government to get the right of autonomy. However, the Iraqi regimes crushed and oppressed them by many ways in order to protect the Iraqi integrity.

The Kurdish issue in Iraq has come into the limelight once again in international politics as a consequence of the American intervention in 1972-1975. United States foreign policy interested in the Kurdish question during the Cold War when it perceived threat from the spread of communism in Iraq, which pushed America to intervene and support the Kurds to rebel against the Iraqi central government in 1972. Furthermore, this intervention did not last for a long time because in 1975 United States betrayed and abandoned Kurds.

This research aims at shedding the light on different points. Its first concerns is the American foreign policy toward the Kurdish question during the Cold War. It also aims at showing the main reasons that helped United States to support and intervene in the Kurdish
question. Additionally, it highlights the major factors behind the sell out and the betrayal of America to the Kurds.

This research aims at answering some questions that were ambiguous before, in order to facilitate the logical chronology of ideas. It starts with a couple of simple questions concerning the history of Kurds and Kurdistan. Who are the Kurds? How the Kurdish identity and social formation constructed? Then how did the Iraqi Kurds revolt against their central governement? And how did Iraqi government react against this rebellion? To what extent did the United States support the Kurds in 1972. What are the main reasons behind the US support? How did America use the Kurds and betray them in 1975?

This research requires so many different theoretical sources that are concerned with the American foreign policy toward the Kurdish question in 1972 and 1975. Those sources are used in the score of books, dissertations, articles, journals and other electronic sources. This research was built upon different sources. The history of Kurds was present in the book of The Kurds in Iraq by Kerim Yildiz. He discussed briefly the past of the Kurds. Then, he moved to Iraqi Kurds revolt and the reaction of the Iraqi government toward this revolt. Another source is entitled The Kurdish Problem in Iraq by Sadaf Ismail. She tackled the Kurdish issue in Iraq since the Ottoman Empire when she dealt mainly with Kurdish uprising, in addition to the reaction of Iraqi central governement against this uprising. In fact, both works helped in the building of the first chapter. Nonetheless, the more significant works that was useful at the second chapter is the work of Bryan R. Gibson which was entitled Sold Out? US Foreign Policy, Iraq, the Kurds, and the Cold War where he was successful in high extent in highlighting the American foreign policy toward the Kurdish question during the Cold War, the intervention of United States in 1972, and the sell out of its Kurdish allies in 1975. More,
the Thesis of Peter J. Lambert “The United States and the Kurds: Case Studies In United States Engagement” affirmed that the reasons behind the American engagement in the Kurdish issue during the period between 1969-1975.

This research was based on the use of two research methodology, description and analysis. The first chapter is mainly descriptive, in order to put the reader in the right context, and make him familiar with the Kurds in general and Iraqi Kurds in particular. The second chapter was analytical, in order to strengthen the already described part with analysis of American foreign policy toward Iraqi Kurds. All these approaches are pursued under the MLA 7th edition format.

This research includes two chapters; the first chapter was entitled a "Historical Overview about Kurds", it contains an introduction followed by a brief history of Kurds and Kurdistan starting with social formation of Kurdish identity and Kurdish nationalism. Then, it discusses the Iraqi Kurdish uprising, the reaction of Iraqi central government toward this uprising and the international relationship of Kurds.

The second chapter entitled "American Foreign Policy toward the Iraqi Kurds", it contains the US foreign policy toward Iraq during the Cold War. Then, it moves to the American support and intervention in the Kurdish issue in 1972 and the reasons behind this intervention. The next part devoted to the betrayal of US to Kurds in 1975.
Chapter One

Historical Overview about Kurds

Introduction

Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world, those ethnic groups consider as a stateless. Kurdish people are separated in a vast geography living in four countries in Middle East: Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey and the European countries as refugees. Historically, they used rebellion as a tool to get their rights. The Kurdish struggle has been explained through shifting ideologies, culture, and historical experience that gave a framework to the Kurdish rebellion to take place internationally. However, their government took measures against Kurdish struggle in order to control and protect their unity. Furthermore, the Iraqi Kurds were revolted several times against the Iraqi central government to get their autonomy. In this context, they changed their tribal revolt to urban national movement, but several Iraqi regimes oppressed and brutalized them by many ways to protect Iraqi unity.

This chapter will examine the historical overview about Kurds and Kurdistan in general and Iraqi Kurds particularly, it involves also the social formation, identity of Kurds, and the Kurdish nationalism. Then it discusses Iraqi Kurds uprising against their government. This chapter also highlights the reaction of Iraqi government toward the Kurdish revolt. Finally, it moves to examine the Kurdish relationship with other countries.

I. History of Kurds and Kurdistan:

There are no fixed beginnings for the Kurdish origins and history. In recent year, Kurds are described as an ethnic group who originated from many tribes such as: Guti, Kurti, Mede, Mard, Carduchi, Gordyene, Adianbene, Zila and Khladi. They settled in Kurdish region, they...
also originated from Indo-European tribes who migrated to Zagro mountain region perhaps up 4,000 years ago. During the Arab conquest in the seventh century the term ‘Kurd’ meant the nomadic people who lived in Mesopotamia. In the twelfth century, the Turkish Seljuks prince Saandjar was considered as the first who used the term Kurdistan as a geographical notion, he established a province named it Kurdistan ; this province located in modern Iran. Furthermore, the name had into common until sixteenth century to indicate the Kurdish system of fiefs. Kurdistan was a geographical region where Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey borders meet across mountainous region. The term Kurdistan was not only a geographical expression, but it also referred to human culture of Kurdish people (Yeldiz 7-8).

At the end of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century the concepts of identity, territory and sovereignty arranged power of rebellion among the Kurdish of Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Earlier the Kurdish region split between the Ottoman and Safavids of modern Iran, then it was divided into the four countries. Both parts of Iraq and Syria stayed under the British mandate till the independence (Ozsoy 104).

1. The Kurdish Identity and Social Formation of Kurds

a. Language

Kurds spoke various dialects, but they did not had one common language between them. The famous dialect that is spoken by the majority was called "Kurmanji " it is spoken by the Kurds who are living in Turkey, Syria, and USSR ;this dialect is also spoken by the northern part of Iran and Iraq. The other principal dialect is Sorani or (Kurdi), which is spoken by southern Iraqi Kurds of the Greater Zab and Iranian Kurds who lived in Kordestan province. There are also some sub-dialects contain Kirmanshahi, Leki, Gurani and Zaza. Some of these sub-dialects are not easily understood by all Kurds (Yildiz 8).
Kurdish language has a significant role in the development of Kurdish national movement in other word, they used it as tool to get their rights. Furthermore, Kurds pressure their governments in order to recognise Kurdish language as an official language. Kurdish language also marked a distinctive feature of the Kurdish identity. (Yassin 34).

b. Population

Kurds are the world’s largest nation without a state living in four countries: Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria. Turkey has the highest number of Kurds over 15 million (20 per cent of the population). Iraqi Kurds represents 4 million (25 per cent of population) living in northern part of Iraq, they form the highest proportion of Kurdish people. Approximately, 7 million Kurds in Iran representing around 15 per cent of the country’s total population. Over 1 million are living in Syria (9 per cent of the population) (Yildiz 9).

c. Religion:

Kurdish people are Sunni Muslims, who converted Islam in the twelfth and sixteenth century by the Arab conquest. They are devoted to the Shafii school rather than the Hanafi school which was the religion of the Ottoman Empire. There are also some religions among the Kurds like: Christianity, Judaism, Alevism (doctorine of Shi ism) and Ahl-i Haqq (People of the truth), a small minority living in south and south-east of Kurdistan region; and Yazidis (Yildiz 8).

Since the recognition of Islam as an official religion in the four countries: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. Islam played an important role in the development of Kurdish identity (Yassin 35).

d. Economy of Kurdistan:
The Kurdistan region is considered as agriculturally rich area and a lot of Kurds are working in farming and agricultural production. The main cash crops are Tobacco, cotton and grain that produces by the Kurdish farmers in Kurdistan region. Initially, fruits and vegetables are produced in the mean time and consumed domestically. Oil also is a powerful source in Kurdistan’s economy, it is considered as a main cause of disputes between Kurds and their governments because of the problem of exploitation and income. Moreover, the Kurdistan region is rich from many minerals such as chrome, cropper, iron, coal and lignite. Water is important source for Kurdistan, it is running from both rivers Euphrates and Tigris, but the Kurds has no control over the flow of both rivers (Yildiz 9).

2. Kurdish Nationalism:

In the past, Kurdish people benefited from semi-autonomy from various powers, those who were looking for control and authority over their lands inhabited by Kurds. In the sixteenth century the Persian and the Ottoman Empire sought to maintain peace among their borders; consequently; they granted autonomy for Kurds in order to protect their borders. The fall down of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the First World War considered as chance for Kurdish people to form an independent state. At the result of the First World War new ideologies about nationalism were appeared which encouraged Kurdish nationalists. In addition to that, the American President Woodrow Wilson put Fourteen Points Programme for world peace, these pionts contained a declaration for non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman Empire that should be granted an opportunity of "autonomous development" (Yildiz 10).

In the 1920, the Treaty of Sèvres was signed between the Allied Power and the Ottoman Empire which conceived an independent nation for Kurdish people. This Accord created a provision for the Kurdish state inside Turkish boundaries. In 1923, League of
Nations and Great Britain negotiated Treaty of Lausanne which neglected the demands of Kurds to establish an independent state and divided Kurdistan region, it recognised to protect only the religious minorities (Yildiz 10-12).

The Kurdish national movement was started during the period following the First World War through political activities in three countries: Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. However, the three countries restrained this nationalism. Iranian and Iraqi Kurds were allied at the end of 1920’s, Turkey suppressed its last Kurdish rebellion in 1938. The Turkish government was the most uncompromising toward its Kurds and joined the Kurdish struggle to" radical policy of forced assimilation". Its policy was successful when it last longer than other countries. The Second World War helped re-emergence of Kurdish national movement in both Iraq and Iran, and a secret parties were established. In 1943-44, the Kurdish uprising started in northern Iraq led by Mostafa Barzani who found support from both Iraqi and Iranian Kurds (Bruinessen 25-26).

Due to Iranian government’s weaknesses, the Iranian Kurds revolted against their central government and established an independent republic in Mahabad in 1946. Iraqi Kurds and their leader Mustafa Barzani supported Mahabad Republic by one or two thousand armed fighters. The Mahabad republic collapsed, because of the armed forces of the young Kurdish republic lacked protection and support. In the following decade, Kurdish national movement seemed to collapse as a social force in favour of class-based politics. Turkey also witnessed an important political mobilization in its Kurdish question, whose multi-party regime helped many interest groups into active politics. In 1950-1960 Iranian and Iraqi Kurds were again rebelled against their countries and later on, this national movement arose in Turkey (Bruinessen 25-26). Kurdish élites played an important role in the development of the Kurdish
national movement, those élites helped in the growing of socio-economic changes in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria. Thanks to those élites a lot of national ideas spread among the Kurds (Yassin 42).

II. The Iraqi Kurds Uprising:

The Iraqi Kurds represents a larger minority group than the Kurds of Turkey and Iran. However, the number of Kurds living in northern of Iraq is smaller than the number of other Kurds, Iraqi Kurds represent 20 per cent of the country’s total population. That’s why The Iraqi Kurds revolted easily against the Republic of Iraq than Kurds of Turkey and Iran (Wenner 69).

After the First World War the Kurdish uprising started against the British colonialism and then against the Iraqi central government. The Kurdish leader had a tribal and religious features such as Shiekh Mahmud Barzani, but with time they changed their tribal revolt to urban national movement. The antagonism between the central government of Baghdad and Kurds proceeded. The Kurdish revolt got its strength from its leader Mustafa Barzani who resisted the Iraqi government, he started his revolt since 1930 till the next four decades (Ismail 59).

In 1935, the Kurds were encouraged their chiefs to defy the central government and benefit from its weakness. Kurds also demanded for making the Kurdish language as an official language among Kurdish regions, in addition to that "representation in national assembly", and the right of sharing Iraqi resources. But the Iraqi government was neglected the Kurdish demands (Yildiz 15). In 1958, a group of military officers under the rule of General Abdul Karim Qassem overthrew the Hashimit Monarchy and formed a new republic
in Iraq. The new political system promised the Kurds to change their situation. The provisional constitution declared "The Kurds as a legitimate ethnic group with national rights" and claimed that "Arabs and Kurds are considered partners in this nation." Most importantly, Mustafa Barzani was retuned from exile and was given an amnesty by Qassem (Entessar 116).

During Qassem regime, the relationship between Kurds and the new regime was much more flourished. Qassem used the Kurds to protect his position against his enemies. Moreover, Barzani used his new power to control the Democratic Party of Iraq and increased this power over the Kurdish national movement in Iraq. The relationship between Qassem and Barzani became worse, because Qassem refused Barzani’s demands of autonomy. Consequently, the Iraqi-Kurdish war started in 1961 until 1963 when a ceasefire accord was signed. The Qassem regime collapsed by Ba’ath party (Entessar 916-917).

1. **The Major Reasons for the Iraqi Kurdish Revolt:**

To began with, Kurds were suffered a lot since the creation of Iraq until today, the Iraqi government discriminated and oppressed them in many ways. The Iraqi’s oil overflowed from Kurdistan region, but the Kurds benefited little from the revenue of petroleum than the rest of Iraq and had no control over its oil. Furthermore, the Kurdistan region stay undeveloped, it lacked many public services like industries, roads, schools, and hospitals; however the rest of Iraq is better than Kurdistan (Everest). Kurdish people represent the highest proportion of Iraqi total population than its neighbour. However, their smaller number they constituted a greater mass in Iraq than elsewhere which enabled them to play a significant role there than they did in Turkey in Iran. Moreover, Iraq had a fewer legitimacy and validity as a political existence than Turkey and Iran, both of them are existed for a long time despite the highest number of Kurdish minorities who are living in both countries which enabled Iraqi Kurds revolted easier.
Next, Iraq was split by the Sunni and Shiit Muslims that was absent in both Iran and Turkey (Gunter 11-12). Finally, the Iraqi- Kurdish conflict was over "dispute territories" and the main reason for this struggle was the political economy of oil revenue (Ozsoy 105).

2. The Emergence of Kurdish Leader :

Mullah Mustafa Barzani was born in 1903, appeared on 1930 as a legendary leader in Barzan clan in the northeastern part of Iraq. He belonged to Sufi family that led to rebellion against the Ottomans (Malley 3). Barzani began his political activities when he arranged his revolt in 1943 and 1945 in his own Barzan clan against Iraqi government. He was exiled to Sulaimaniya where he was stopped in house arrest until 1943 when he eluded to Iran. His coming to Iran corresponded with the formation of the Mahabad Republic in the north by Iranian Kurds (Yildiz 15-16). Barzani had an important contact with the president of the Mahabad Republic Qazi Mahmud, this relationship showed a new experience to Barzani when he dealt with intellectual urban Kurdish élites. Then he joined Iranian Kurdish Democratic Party that was headed by Qazi Mahmud. Consequently, his contact with this president established basic structure for Kurdish national movement and identity that changed the tribal (Malley 4)

Barzani succeeded in transforming the ideology of identity toward the Iraqi Kurds when he took it as basic part of his ideology. When Barzani escaped to Soviet Union, he established Kurdistan Democratic Party in Iraq which became the biggest party in Iraq till today. During his residence in the Soviet Union, he developed the KDP and made it as a national organization that speaks about the Kurdish rights. Barzani became an important political leader among Arabs and Kurds. His stay in the Soviet Union also enabled him to develop the relation between Iraqi communist party and other Soviet parties. In 1958,
Barazni returned to Iraq and the KDP became the largest party at that time. The good contact between Abdu Karim Qasim and the KDP did not last long, however, they had a strong relationship with Soviet Union (Malley 4-6).

3. The Revolt of 1961-1962:

In 1961-1962, the Iraqi government activities in the Kurdish region were limited to an offensive bombing attack on Kurdistan region. Because of snow, the Kurdish fighters restricted their activities to occasional raid against the domestic gendarmerie. In any case, the hostility existed between the Kurds and Iraqi military forces, the Iraqi central government declared that Kurdish uprising is definitely broken, in November Qasim took a trip into Sulaymaniya in order to devote the new Derbend-i-Khan Dam, and might to show his control over Kurdistan. Initially, he proposed to revolutionaries a suitable amnesty if they would surrender their weapons, this offer was clearly refused by the Kurds (Wenner 73).

In January 1962, a ceasefire took place for a short period between the rebels and Iraqi forces in the territory of Dohuk, in addition to that, Baghdad and Kurdish representative was negotiated a peace agreement. In February, hostility was continued and each of them prepared their forces for any sudden attack. In April, Barzani’s forces attacked the Iraqi troops in Zakho and Mosul when he made his first victory. This victory resulted the loss of fifty men and 150 injuries from Iraqi soldiers. After the Kurdish victory, Kurdish fighters increased in number, and their operations were expanded to the northeastern and northwestern of Iraq. The Kurdish peshmerga were more provided by arms, they also were deployed in areas where they supplied by food and clothing (Wenner 73).

4. The Kurdish Political Parties:
a. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)

The Kurdistan Democratic Party was founded in 1946 during the formation of Iranian the KDP of the Mahabad Republic. Mustafa Barzani who was considered as the most important political leader in twentieth century amongst Iraqi Kurds, he was appointed as a president of the KDP. The KDP demanded for Kurds’ nationalist purposes and lived in a nation of their own, but it lacked social and economic support at that time. During Barzani’s stay at the Soviet Union (1947-1958) till the decline of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958, the KDP played only a limited role. In March 1951 the KDP managed its second congress in Baghdad that was aimed at advancing the contact between its feuding groups (Gunter 226-227).

b. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan:

In June 1975, Jalal Talabani formed the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Damascus. Despite the fact that the PUK took the KDP slogan, ‘autonomy for Kurdistan, democracy for Iraq,’ it supported Marxism and attacked Barzani "reactionary"(Gunter 229). The PUK called for expanding the autonomous region and including: Kirkuk, Mandali, Khanaqin, and Sinjar. It also demanded for stopping Arabisation process of the Kurdish region and the dismissal of cordon sanitary along the borders of Turkey and Iran. Furthermore, forming autonomous power for foreign affairs and safety for Kurdish region to become regional rather than national responsibility and "allocation of 25 per cent of oil revenue to the development of Kurdistan"(Ismail 65).

III. The Reaction of the Iraqi Government toward Kurdish Revolt:

1. The Ba’ath Regime:
On February 1963, a new Iraqi political party was emerged, it is known" the Ba’ath party", this party came with new Arabic ideologies that influenced Iraq, the new ruling party was socialist and secular. It sought to put an end to the old regime by expanding power in Iraq, thousands of Iraqi people were genocided and enjailed, because the party would crush the previous regime. Moreover, the Kurds began to talk about their autonomy and the including of Kirkuk and Mosul in the autonomous region, but the new government showed its disapproval by using military force and ‘Arabization’ process of the kurdish areas (Yildiz 17).

On November 1963, an internal conflicts within the Ba’ath party resulted in Abd al-Salam Arif to control the Iraqi government, and achieved a peace agreement with Barzani. After the death of Arif in 1966, his brother Al-Bazzaz succeeded to make a declaration which recognized the binational (Kurdish-Arab) character of Iraq, then he implicated a regional autonomy for Kurdistan this was an important step for both Barazani and Kurds. Although Al-Bazzaz had not enough support which resulted the fall down of his administration after the signing the agreement (Yildiz 17).

2. Crimes of BA’ATH Regime :

The Iraqi central governemnt oppressed and brutalized Kurds in many ways because of its doubt of Kurdish claims for autonomy. Just, in 1970 the March Manifesto negotiated between Saddam Hussien and Mustafa Barazani, he used terror and horror strategies against Kurds to undermine their political structure, and made them under Iraqi control. The Iraqi military force attacked civilians in offensive way; in 1970 many civilians were lost and missed their lives because of this attack. In 1976, a political oppression and confinement of approximately 60,000 with the links to the KDP were documented by Amnesty International (Yildiz 52).
One of the aftermath of Algiers Accord between Shah and Baghdad was the establishment of "security belt" between Kurdish borders, Iran, and Turkey. Initially, 1,400 villages destroyed and around 600,000 victims forced to resettle into ‘collective townships’. In the meantime, the Iraqi central government tried to change the demographic structure of the oil-rich Kurdish areas. Around tens of thousands of Kurdish people were moved out by force from their residence to southern deserts region and others were expelled into camps under Iraqi military control. Moreover, Arabs moved in to the Kurdish region and provided financial support and land ownership (Yildiz 52).

3. The March Manifesto of 1970:

On 11 March 1970, Saddam Hussein and Mahmud "Uthman on behalf of the KDP" negotiated the March Manifesto. This programme was achieved all Barzani’s demands:

Kurdish alongside Arabic, was to be an official language in areas where the majority of population was Kurdish, and thought throughout Iraq as a second language; Kurds would participate fully in government, including senior army and cabinet posts; Kurdish education and culture would be reinforced and all officials in Kurdish areas would be Kurds, or speak Kurdish; Kurds would be free to establish student, youth, women’s and teachers’ organizations; funds would be set aside for the development of Kurdistan; pensions would be provided to families of peshmerga killed in battle; agrarian reform (appertaining to ownership of farmland) would be implemented; a Kurd would be one of the vice president of Iraq; and finally, there would be a unification of Kurdish majority areas as one self-governing unit (Yildiz 18).
The following three years showed that Saddam Hussein lacked the ability to implement the manifesto because of many reasons; Barzani underwent several assassination attempts; and Baghdad refused the Kurd’s choice of vice president Habib Karim. The most serious reason was the inclusion or exclusion of the city of Kirkuk and its surrounding oilfields whether it would be include into the autonomous region or not. The demarcation of the borders between the two regions was agreed by the government according to the number of population-"where a Kurdish population was in the majority, it would be included" (Yildiz 18-19).

4. The 1974 Autonomy Law:

On March 11, 1974 Saddam Hussein gave Barzani two weeks to accept the Law for Autonomy in Kurdistan region. Whereas Barzani rejected this law, he started a bitter fighting against it. The law suggested forming Kurdistan as a self-governing area that had significant control and authority over its own social and economic affairs. Moreover, The autonomy law tackled in detail the region’s administrative and legislative structures. Kurdistan region should be defined in correspondence with the 1970 accord and 1957 census records. Nevertheless, this autonomy law was beyond Barzani’s demands. Furthermore, it did not cede Kirkuk and showed a highly more central government authority over the autonomous region than what was conceived by the March Manifesto (Yildiz 20).

The autonomous region was described by Act No.33 of 1974 as "an integral administrative unit with juridical personality and autonomy within the Republic of Iraq", and Erbil as its "metropolitan center", Kurdish besides to Arabic were to be the official languages of Iraq, and languages of education. The autonomous region was got its financial resources and budget from domestic taxation (Yildiz 20).
The Kurdish people refused the Autonomy Law and took to arms again. The Iraqi government prepared and spread its military forces for any sudden war. Furthermore, all Iraqi Kurds are linked to Kurdish peshmergas in the mountains. Iran was supported the revolt against Iraqi government by providing Kurds with arms and weapons (Ismail 64).

IV. Iranian Involvement in Kurdish-Iraqi Relations:

Since 1937, Iran was restricted in using Shatt al-Arab waterway which joins Persian Gulf from both sides Iran and Iraqi port. Iran under the Shah administration put pressure on Baghdad by using Kurds as a card and supporting them financially and military against the Iraqi government (Yildiz 22). Obviously, Iran had no sympathy for the Kurdish question, it just sought to reach its interests by undermining Baghdad (Ismail 64). Iran provided and supplied Iraqi Kurds by arms, it sent its Kurds to fight with Kurdish peshmerga not only that it deployed and arranged its military forces in the region (Mcdowall 338). The aftermath of this involvement ended by a peace agreement between Shah and Baghdad on 6 March 1975 (Ismail 64).

1. The Algiers Accord of 1975 and its aftermath:

On 6 March 1975, the conflict between Iran and Baghdad was concluded by peace agreement during OPEC summit in Algiers, it was an initiative of the Algerian president Houria Boumedienne. Shah and Baghdad agreed on the peace accord of outstanding borders. Iraq gave the Thalweg (deepest point) demarcation of Shatt al-Arab to Iran (Mcdowall 338). Within 48 hours Shah withdrew its military support to Iraqi Kurds and a ceasefire was negotiated by Shah on behalf of the Kurds. Moreover, thousands of Kurds escaped across borders. The Iraqi army massacred the Kurds, by killing thousands of civilians, and made a
security zone between Kurdish borders and Turkey, Syria and Iran (Yildiz 23). The peace agreement between Shah and Iraq made the Kurds alone without any support. Consequently, Barzani’s peshmerga was became ‘battered infrastructure’ (Yildiz 23-24).

V. Fragmentation and weakness:

When Iran withdrew its support from Barzani, his forces were fell down in a week. It was a big loss from which he could not find a solution for this crisis (Kreyenbroek and Sperl 22). When Barzani left Iraq with his sons Masud and Idris, the KDP seemed to have declined and the Kurdish national movement was put in chaos. In 1970, Jalal Talabani the old rival of Barzani went to Syria where the Syrian government supported him to restart the struggle against the Baath regime. In 1975, Talabani declared the establishment of his party from Damascus called; the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The PUK was included two Iraqi groups: Komala, clandestine Marxist-Leninist groupe headed by Mustafa Amin and the socialist movement of Kurdistan (KSM), led by Ali Askari. In 1976, PUK started its operation, in the mean time some members of old KDP were began to look for their weakening points. On August 1976, Idris and his brother Masud Barzani met with other members in Europe to start the ‘KDP- Provisional leadership’ (Medowal 343).

VI. The Kurdish International Relations:

1) Israel:

Since 1948 Israel and Kurds had a significant relationship that played a crucial role in the international security policy of the Jewish nation in the Middle East region, and in impact to prohibit Iraq from intervening in the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. Furthermore, in 1973 the connection between both nations were strong historically and culturally, this resulting a large Jewish Kurdish community living in Iraq. The Iraqi
Jews kept their identity, culture, and traditions which led them effecting Israel’s foreign policy toward the Kurdish question. Between 1950s and 1980s Israel provided military support to Iraqi Kurds to weaken Baghdad with the collaboration of USA and Iran. The Algerian Accord between Shah of Iran and Iraq resulted Iran’s withdrawing its assistance to Kurds, this withdrawal limited the Israel’s support to Kurds, because Israel does not have borders with Iraq. Consequently, the Israel’s support to Kurds were dramatically reduced (Mamikoiam 398-399).

2) Arab World:

Actually, the Kurdish autonomy is considered as a threat to the notion of ‘pan-Arabism’ which Arabs regarded it as a ‘near-sacred belief’ that constitutes the unity of Arab World. Therefore, the Kurdish aspiration is represented as a danger of detachment not only to Iraq, but also to Arab nation integrity. In the sight of Arabs, Turkey is using the Kurdish question as a game to enlarge and spread its power over the Arab world under the notion of "neo-Ottomanism", this ideological threat is not only to Iraq, but also to unity of Arabs (Fuller 118).

3) Other Kurds:

No one denies that there is no single Kurdish identity, these identities challenge and defy all borders and limits; i.e., the borders that marked between states could not destroy in linguistic, cultural, and familial continuity of Kurds. Indeed, Kurds confronted many limitations in using their language, because of restricted regulations that imposed by their governments (Yildiz 81).

Moreover, Iraqi, Turkish, Iranian and Syrian governments were signed an agreement in response of their borders" allowed each to attack terrorist in the territory of the others", for instance, Turkey sent its military troops across the Turkish-Iraqi
territory. This has caused the death of many Kurdish civilians and the destruction of villages. Despite the fact that Kurds resisted the national restrictions imposed upon them by the Treaty of Sèvres, they were united and allied in their shared unfortunate situation (Yildiz 81-82).

Politically, there is a historical relationship between Kurdish people, all of them played an important role in each other’s development of national movement. After the Treaty of Lausanne, the Kurdish political parties were appeared across borders. The main political parties in Iraq, the KDP and the PUK, both have their origins from Iranian PDK. Moreover, in 1957 Iraqi KDP helped to the formation of Syrian KDP (Yildiz 81-82).

**Conclusion**

Kurds originated from various tribes, those tribes settled in the mountains between Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria this region known as Kurdistan. The social formation and Kurdish identity was characterised by a variety of languages among Kurds, Islam was the main religion in Kurdistan besides other religions. Furthermore, Kurds are considered as the largest ethnic group without a nation, they are living in Middle East in four countries Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. All these elements led to the development of Kurdish national movement. Kurdish nationalists attempted several times to establish a state, but they failed. Among other Kurdish minorities, only the Iraqi Kurds achieved some of their goals, they were starting by some demands like the recognition of Kurdish language as an official language besides Arabic, representation in national assembly and sharing Iraqi oil’s revenue. The revolt of 1961 and 1962 was the most famous revolt during Kurdish struggle, because Kurdish fighters achieved victory against the Iraqi military forces. Although, in 1970
Saddam Hussein proposed the March Manifesto of 1970, he attempted to achieve all Barzani demands, but he failed to implement it. Again in 1974, Saddam Hussein also suggested autonomy law, but he again failed to apply it. Kurds were tried to build international relations with some countries in order to gain support to their question.

The Kurdish question has come into the limelight once again in international politics as a consequence of American engagement in 1972-1975. During this period United States support the Kurds in order to achieve its Cold War interests, but in 1975 America changed its policy toward the Kurds and betrayed them.
Chapter two

The American Foreign Policy toward Iraqi Kurds

Introduction

American foreign policy was much more extensive toward the Middle East when it had come to consider the region as the most strategically important area in the world. During the Cold War United States perceived threat from spreading communism in the region especially when the Iraqi-Soviet alliance was emerged, which made United States to look for many ways to undermine this alliance. Additionally, Iraq played an important role in the Middle East which make it dominate the attention of US foreign policy. Furthermore, to achieve its goals and prevent communism threat, USA gave its interests to the Iraqi Kurds who are looking for self-determination and autonomy from their government. In the twentieth century, the United States engaged with the Kurdish question when it faced a different issues in dealing with Kurds. The issue of Kurdish autonomy, its influence in the neighbouring countries and the absence of the Kurdish unity (Lambert v).

During the period from 1972-1975 United States involved with the Kurdish question through both deputies Israel and Iran. Although, Iranian goals overcame the American promises of support to the Kurds. In 1972 Nixon’s administration supported and financed the Kurds to rebel against Iraqi central government and get thier autonomy whereas in 1975 USA changed its policy toward the Kurds and betrayed them for several reasons. (Lambert 1).
This chapter examines a brief history of American foreign policy toward the Iraqi Kurds, followed by American foreign policy toward Iraq during Nixon’s administration. Then, the focus of this chapter would be proving how America used and supported the Kurds to achieve its interests during 1972 until 1975 and what are the main reasons behind this support. Finally, it ends with how United States betrayed the Kurds in 1975?

I. A Brief History about American Foreign Policy toward the Kurds:

1. Wilson’s Fourteen Points

The American foreign policy toward the Kurds dated back to the American president Woodrow Wilson who put the fourteen points the twelfth of which interested in autonomy for "the other nationalities of the Ottoman Empire" which are now under the Turkish rule (Gunter 95). He also claimed that "every people has the right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live." (Lent 294). Furthermore, on 8 January 1918 Wilson’s fourteen program showed his policy toward the Ottoman Empire. Commenting in a cable to Colonel House, "The Turkish portions of the present Turkish Empire must be assured a secure sovereignty and the other nationalities [Kurds] which are now under Turkish rule must be assured full opportunity of autonomous development" (Lambert 4).

Wilson’s programme would assured on the idea of national self-determination, and would interested upon the nationalities of the Ottoman Empire. The term Kurds was referred for the first time in the creation of "Mesopotamian state". The Mesopotamian State is a racial unit. There is an Arab linguistic unit south of line drawn from Alexandretta to the Persian border. Above this line Arabs, Armenians, Turks, and Kurds and Assyrians... "Ironically, the same document referred the term Kurdistan, but not mentioning the autonomy. Obviously,
American foreign policy were interested on minorities’ rights within Asia Minor especially when it devoted to promoting Armenian rights over the Kurds rights. Although, the US attitude would soon encourage "to examine the Kurdish rights issue as an autonomous people" within the fall down of Ottoman Empire" (Lambert 4-7).

2. The American Foreign Policy toward Iraq during Nixon’s Administration:

During Nixon’s first term in office affirmed radically to change American foreign policy and its international relations. In order to fulfill this, Nixon appointed his national security adviser Henry Kissinger a Harvard-educated professor of history and international relations. His presidency witnessed a radical shift in the Cold War strategy from ideological confrontation and challenges to an era of involvement, diplomacy, and an easing of tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as détente (Gibson 117).

During Nixon’s presidency, United States foreign policy toward Iraq passed a great changes. At the beginning of his first term, President Nixon prevented engaging the White House in regional policies and the Third World matters, he just concentrated on put pressure or "sweeping matters", like disengage the Untied States from Vietnam, the "opening to China", and accomplishing "détente with the Soviet Union, but at the end of his term, Nixon interested in the Gulf matters. He largely delivered the Gulf’s management to the State Department or to the US regional allies, such as Iran (Gibson 118).

In 1970-1971 Iran and Israel warned the White House that Iraq became a Soviet "stalking-horse" and the main source of subversion in the region, but the United States neglected this warning. The White House knew that there were few proofs about these declarations. For example, in 1968 and 1970 the Ba’ath regime killed 35 communists, thing
that really upset Moscow. In the mean time, Nixon was not interested in Iraq. On January 1969 Iraqi court accused 16 people to death, 9 of them were Jews. Moreover, the White House persuaded that the Iraqi administration was trying to push Israel to revenge against the Iraqi forces, which probably would cause war in the region. This was the first crisis that faced Nixon’s administration in his foreign policy (Gibson 117).

In this context, Shah of Iran had hostile relations with Iraq like the dispute about Shatt al-Arab waterway, it had also a deep hostility to Ba’ath regime. Initially, in April 1972 Iraq signed a treaty of friendship and cooperation with Soviet Union. This step took the White House’s attention, but at the same time was a big problematic; because Nixon had just returned from China and his security adviser Henry Kissinger was occupied in setting for a major diplomatic penetration of Moscow meeting. On August 1, 1972 Nixon agreed a risky covert action to engage in Iraq by supporting the Kurdish question. This intervention affected not only Kurdish struggle for autonomy but the path of Iraqi history and this led pave the way for Saddam Hussein to become more powerful (Gibson 117-119).

Again both Iran and Israel were trying to pressure Nixon’s administration in order to show his attitude toward the Kurdish question by exaggerating the Soviet threat to the Middle East and its profits from the withdrawal of the British forces from the region, but Nixon’s administration neglected this claims. On March 1970, the Iranian prime minister Hoveyda told Mac Arthur that the March Accord of 1970 was a part of Soviet ploy and showed that the the Ba’ath regime was "very much under the influence of the Soviet because of its dependence on Soviet military and other aid for survival". He also claimed that the March Accord was the opening way of the Soviet strategy to make a Kurdish state, which became an alliance with the
Soviet Union. Hoveyda sought to the White House to finance and support the Iranian military forces (Gibson 125).

On April 10, Israel also tried to persuade Nixon that the March Agreement was a Soviet plot. According to the director general of Israel’s foreign ministry, Gideon Rafael, told secretary Rogers that" Moscow had promised Baghdad further arms assistance, cooperation on oil matters, and support for a bigger Iraqi role in Persian Gulf affairs" Furthermore, the State Department refused this declarations and claimed that" we release that Israel have a good source on Kurdish matters but believe that Rafael has exaggerated the Soviet role in the recent...agreement"(Gibson125).

In August, the collapse of the Soviet-Iraqi relations surfaced when Saddam Hussein visited Moscow to talk about the large debt that Iraq had since the previous governments from the purchase of weapons, and to acquire more economic and military assistance. The US officials thought that Saddam received a"chilly reception". In 1972, American foreign policy toward Iraq took new path when Nixon and Kissinger visited Tehran, president Nixon addressed the Iraqi question with Shah. Furthermore, in his visit to Tehran Nixon showed his assistance to Shah(Gibson 135).

a. Dual Track Policy

During 1972, President Nixon took a dual track policy toward Iraq. When Nixon decided to intervene in the Kurdish question, the State Department sent Arthur Lowrie to Iraq in order to promote relations with the Ba’ath regime. Lowrie’s purpose was to note and report the situation in Iraq, gave information about what could benefit the United States’s interests in Iraq and the Middle East, and looked for developing the American-Iraqi relationship.
Furthermore, Nixon’s administration approved to support and arm the Kurds, but the State Department goals tried to cultivate relations with Ba’ath regime, it seemed that both branches of the US foreign policy-makers were working toward cross goals (Gibson 144).

On October 1972, Lowrie sent a report to the State Department’s regional director who advocated the importance of geographic location of Iraq, its significant role as a major "oil producer" and its political weakness made it "considerable interest to the US". While the US dealt with Iran’s Shah, the Ba’ath regime believed that America’s goals toward the party was the fall down of it which create difficulties to rapprochement. Lowrie also sent to the State Department an evaluation about the three important issues that occupy Ba’ath party’s attention: the dispute with the IPC; insurgency by Kurds in northern Iraq and the failure of Ba’ath party to establish a national front. On the global stage, Iraq get ride from its isolation and established relations with Algeria, Sudan and Saudi Arabia, but it still the closest alley to the Soviet Union. Obviously, Iraq was more closed to the Soviet Union and Iran to America. Due to Lowrie’s remarks United states could understand the situation in Iraq during the Cold War (Gibson 145).

III. The US Support for the Kurdish Question:

The intervention in the Kurdish question was a starting point to the expansion of the American foreign policy in Iraq until 1975. On the one hand, the Soviet Union increased its military support to Ba’ath regime in order to achieve its interests in the region. On the other hand, the CIA decision to finance and assist the Kurds was a good example of "superpower intervention" and Nixon’s support to Kurds in order to promote its interests in the region (Gibson 143-144).
Furthermore, the tension between Iran and Iraq was increased because of the border conflict Shatt-al-Arab waterway. Shah of Iran showed America's safeguard against Soviet threat in Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Henry Kissinger described Iran to Nixon as "an island of stability in an otherwise unstable area." The Kurds believed that their struggle for autonomy as "dissidents" re-united under Mustafa Barzani who demanded support from United States in order to achieve their aspiration of autonomy from Iraq. Barazani claimed that "We are ready to act according to US policy if the US will protect us from the wolves." He wished that Kurdistan region to become America fifty state (Mardini 2).

In 1973, Barzani warned the Iraqi central government to launch an offensive war if the Iraqi government did not pull back its military forces from Kurdistan. However, Barzani was afraid from the loss of Kurdish rights of oil revenue in Kurdistan. With this fear, Barzani stated that if America supported us "were strong enough, we could control Kirkuk and give it to an American company to operate." Whereas he was gladdened to learn American’s promises of assistance, he did not trust Iran’s Shah. Barzani would state, "we wanted American guarantees, we never trusted the Shah. Without American promises we could not have acted the way we did. We knew Iran could not do it all on its own. We accepted American aid in what we believed was the interest of Kurdish people" (Lambert 51-52).

1. **The Main Factors for American Intervention in the Kurdish Question**

Nixon agreed to intervene in the Kurdish Question because of many reasons: (1) the acceleration of Soviet-Iraqi relation after the withdrawal of British forces from the region; (2) America’s intention to make Iran’s Shah as a regional policeman to avoid the Soviet influence in the Middle East; (3) US interests about Iraq’s "nationalization of the of the IPC" in June 1972; (4) US recognized that Kurdish question could be an important tool to weaken the pro-
Soviet Ba’ath regime (Gibson 103); (5) As a good strategy to weaken alliance between Iraq and Soviet Union; (6) as a way to comfort Israel from Iraqi pressure and prevent Iraq from any intervention against Israel; (7) as an easy way for America’s to achieve its goals in Middle East’s oil (Gunter 96); (8) the rise of oil income would make the Ba’ath regime to develop its arms and weapons which could create more depression to Israel, Iran, and the United States (Lambert 51).

Henry Kissinger explained the shift in the US policy, by arguing that the decision to intervene in the Kurdish question was driven by “Cold War logic” to contain Soviet-backed Ba’ath regime in Iraq. The timing of the US intervention is closely tied to the signing in April 1972 of a treaty of friendship and cooperation between Iraq and Soviet Union (Little 3).

Moreover, The burgeoning ties between Baghdad and Moscow, including Soviet support for the nationalization of the Iraqi Petroleum company in June 1972. Iran’s Shah also had a significant role in Nixon’s decision to intervene in Kurdish question. It was in the interest of Shah to see Kurds fight against Iraq in order to achieve its goals over the conflict of Shatt al-Arab waterway and their regional dispute over supremacy in the Persian gulf (Little 3-4). Ultimately, The United States and Iran’s goals was neither victory nor autonomy for Kurds, they just looked for weakening Iraqi central government and exploit its resources. They viewed Kurds as "card to play" and a "useful tool" for undermine Iraq (Everst).

2. America’s Economic and Military Assistance to the Kurds

On October 5, Kissinger sent a report to President Nixon on the situation of Kurdish intervention. He reported that Iraqi’s economy was worsening, because of the embargo of its oil on the international market. Kissinger also announced that the Soviet were much more
interested on Barazani’s rejection to join the national front. He also reported that Barzani had
got his two monthly cash payment planeloads of arms and ammo, which contain 500
Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifles, 500 Soviet submachine arms and 200,000 rounds of ammo.
In addition to that Iran had received around 222,000 pounds of arms and ammunition from CIA
stocks to the Kurds. In the late of October, the CIA provide Iran by 222,000 pound of weapons
and ammo to the Kurdish fighters. With this assistance, the CIA thought that the Kurds could
destroy two-thirds of Iraq’s military forces (Gibson 145-146). Due to American, Iranian, and
Israeli assistance Barzani became more stronger than before according to Kissinger:

His strength facilitate his rejection of Iraqi and Soviet blandishment threat ; provides
the Shah with strong buffer force against Iraqi-direct infiltration team of saboteurs and
terrorists ; and worries the Baghdad regime, forcing it to deploy almost two-third of its
ground forces in the north, reducing its capability for offensive adventure Kissinger
increased US funding to Kurdish war from 3 million dollar to 5 million dollar each
year. Shah also increased his supply to Barazani to 30 million dollar and start to assist
with ‘logistic and long-range artillery support’ (Gibson 148).

3. The Shah’s Role in the Kurdish Intervention

The tension between Iran and Iraq increased because of Shatt-al-Arab waterway
dispute. Shah saw the loss of the waterway as a personal humiliation and attempted to get it
back by using force. The waterway conflict went beyond territorial conflict because Shah used
it as crisis to persuade President Nixon about the status of the waterway to Iran and United
states regional strategy. Iran’s Shah started his conflict with Iraq when he demanded from
Kurds insurgents to bomb the IPC’s installation around Kirkuk and Mosul. According to
Shah’s minister of court, Shah thought that the attack on the IPC’s installation would uncover
Iraq’s security and weaken its credibility with international companies of oil. The bombing caused 5 million dollar in Iraqi losses. Initially, Shah used the waterway crisis as proof to support the Kurdish war (Gibson 120).

On July, Shah met Nixon twice, but many times with Kissinger in private to discuss Iraq and the Kurdish intervention. Shah told Nixon that America’s assistance for Kurds was very “helpful”, because they appreciated that a great power like America was behind their autonomy. Kissinger told Shah that America exerted its efforts to assist the Kurds. Shah told him that Kurds had weapons, but they lacked an organisation. The Discussion during Shah’s visit resulted in many points: 1) The Soviets pressed more on Barzani to join to the national front either with Ba’ath party or communists; 2) Shah convinced Mustafa Barzani should not join the national front; 3) Nixon and Shah demonstrated that their help for the Kurdish question was very helpful; 4) Both of them agreed that they would increase their assistance for the Kurds (Gibson 154-155).

4. The Israel Support for Kurdish Intervention

Since 1965 Israel had been aiding Barzani with arms and financial aid to weaken the Ba’ath regime, create a disorder within Iraq, and prevent it from any intervention against Israel during the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. Obviously, Israel desired to confine Iraqi military forces that probably sent any support to Arab armies against Israel (Lambert 38).

Israel secretly supported the Kurdish insurgents against Iraqi central government as Eliezer Tzafrir, a former of a senior figure in Israel said"we had a strategic interest to help the Kurds because Iraq was enemy but we also viewed it as a humanitarian issue. We liked the Kurds" During Nixon’s intervention in the Kurdish question, Israel had supported and funded
the Kurds insurgents with light arms, artillery and anti-aircraft arms. Tzafrir also appreciated the Kurdish efforts when they provided Israel with good information about the events that happened in Iraqi military forces. Israel had funded Kurds with tens of million of dollars in its support, providing them by lands via Iran. However, Israel never supported the Kurds of Iran and Turkey, as Tzafrir claimed. He described the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of Turkey as "unabashed terrorist group" (Mamikonnian 395).

Furthermore, The Iraqi-Kurdish war prohibited Iraq from the engagement in Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973. The Israeli expert Ofra Bengio evaluates the Israeli support to the Kurds as ‘although limited in time and place, this support introduced the theory of the American-Israeli-Iranian conspiracy against Iraq. It proved to Iraq that although it had no common border with Israel, it could pay a price for involvement in the conflict (i.e, Arab Israeli conflict) and finally it inserted a strong bilateral element into the general Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel’s support to the Kurds was perceived as threatening the very sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Iraqi state (Minasian)

In this context, For Iraq this support was no less than an attempt to establish a "Second Israel" in northern Iraq. Since 1950s Israel special services had worked with CIA in the formation of the Iranian Shah’s intelligence agency SAVAK. The deep contact between Israel, US, and Iranian intelligence services supported the Kurdish rebels to revolt against Iraq. Israel provided the Iranian intelligence services with reports about Iraq and the activities of communists who were threatening Iran (Minasian 22-23). Due to its support to Kurds Israel got a valuable location and released its interests in the region. Because of the Algerian Accord of 1975 that signed to resolve the conflict between Iraq and Iran, Iran stopped its assistance to Kurdish rebellion against Iraq. Consequently, Israel could not benefit from Iran’s land to fund
Kurds. Apparently, Israel stopped its support to Kurds after the Iranian revolution in 1979 (Mamikonnian 396).

5. The Arab-Israeli War and the Kurds

In 1973, Israel was still funding and supplying the Iraqi Kurds as "second front against the Iraqi army." Additionally, Israel proposed to Kurds to attack Iraq during the Arab-Israeli conflict. As noted in the Pick Report:

It is particularly ironic that despite President Nixon’s and Dr. Kissinger’s encouragement of hostilities to keep the target country off-balance, the US personally restrained the insurgents from an all-out offensive on one occasion when such an attack might have been successful because other events were occupying the neighboring country (Lambert 53).

In Kissinger’s memoir, he stated that "the decision to discourage the Kurds from launching a diversionary offensive during the October 1973 was based on unanimous view... that the Kurds would be defeated." (Lambert 54). Kissinger convinced about the importance of Kurds during the October war, He thought that Kurds avoided Iraqi military forces from participating in Arab-Israeli conflict (Gibson 203).


In December, the Iraqi military forces attacked the Kurds with an offensive assault. While Mustafa Barzani arranged his headquarters at Haji Omran, Iranians established a new supply line in Iraqi borders and built a second supply road for Kurdish fighters in Qala Diza. Due to Iranians gunnery and the storming of winter, the Kurdish fighters had obliged the Iraqis to pull back to the valley. Although, the winter of 1974-1975 was somehow mild and so the
Iraqi units were could fight and attack the Kurdish headquarters. According to the US official the mountains near Rawanduz was witnessed the most serious fighting where "British radar technicians had observed regular and heavy Iraqi aircraft activity for several time." Thanks to Iranian supply and Barzani’s developed weapons that prohibited any Iraqi units to advance to the Kurdish position (Gibson 184).

At the end of December and the beginning of January, Israel was confused about transferring arms to the Kurds. According to the Israeli ambassador Dinitz, Israel sought to deliver weapons before spring, because the Kurds would find difficulties to face the Iraqi attack. Moreover, the Iraqi military held their positions in the mountains to attack the Kurdish fighters. So, Henry Kissinger was proposed that United States would provide Israel by $28 million to supply Kurds. At the beginning of 1975, it was clear that United States, Iran, and Israel provided Kurdish fighters by large arm deal. Before the Kurdish fighters used winter to push Iraqi forces to withdraw, but the situation was changed because of the Soviet influence on Iraqi military tactics which help the army to hold important position to fight. Even so, the US intervention in the Kurdish question was just for achieving its own goals of the Cold War strategy in the Middle East (Gibson 185-186). Consequently, The Kurds were not successful to dislodge the Iraqi military forces during the winter of 1974-1975 which showed to be a decisive reason in the war’s outcome (Gibson 188).

IV. The Betrayal of US to the Kurds:

During the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973 and Algiers treaty of 1975 Kissinger took an important role in organizing the CIA’s Kurdish intervention. However, the CIA warned Kissinger about stopping the support to Kurds, he carried on without giving any interest to this warning. In 1974, president Nixon was forced to resign because of watergate scandal that put
an end to his presidency, but the secretary and national security adviser Kissinger continued in his dual position, and Gerald R. Ford became the new US president (Gibson 164).

On March 1974, the Kurdish war continued and three important events were happened—the Arab-Israeli dispute, Iran-Iraq war, and the Cold War. Most importantly, the US foreign policy used Kurds as card to play against the Soviet-Iraqi alliance. In addition, The Algiers Accord of 1975 was a tragic end of the Kurdish war, because Iran’s Shah stopped his support to Kurds. When the Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani had no idea about Shah’s intention, he sent a message to Shah demanding further weaponry aid and military support, Shah decided to deal with Iraq and to neglect Barzani’s demands. During the Algiers summit Saddam Hussein negotiated with Shah about Kurdish question and their border dispute, Shah sent a message to Kissinger describing the negotiation that he got two promises from Saddam: the first promise was, to give Barazani and his fighters one week either to stay in Iraq or leave into Iran without bloodbath. The second was the security services of both countries should work together on behalf of the Kurds (Gibson 187).

Henery Kissinger thought that the Algiers Accord would enforce the relationship between Iraq and the Soviet Union, in addition to that it would weakening the United States’s Cold War strategy in both the Gulf and the Middle East region. Moreover, he reacted negatively to this suggestion and considered the accord as a bad idea, because he spent a lot of time, money and effort during three years supporting the Kurds and trying to undermine the links between Iraqi regime and the Soviet Union. Kissinger considered the Shah’s abandonment to Kurds as a big mistake (Gibson 187-190). However, other US officials were reacted positively to the Algiers Accord and considered it as an important step toward fulfilling stability in the middle east. Israel also shoked and surprised by the Shah’s
abandonment to the Kurds. The Israeli officials noted " The agreement took Israel...by complete surprise. The Shah neither consulted nor informed his Israeli and American allies about the negotiation with the Iraqis nor did he indicated that the collaboration with the Kurds was in jeopardy." Israel officials considered the Algiers agreement as a surprise to military officers stationed in Kurdistan region (Gibson 192).

Saddam Hussein promised Shah to give Barzani and his fighters one week to leave Iraq and seek refugee into Iran, but Iraq broke its promise and attacked the Kurds in other word Saddam Hussein reneged the Algiers Accord that shocked and surprised Shah (Gibson 192). Mustafa Barzani appealed and sent a message to kissinger " We feel...the United States has a moral and political responsibility toward our people who have committed themselves to your country’s policy."(Snider).

America’s goals toward the Kurds was neither triumph nor self-determination for them. The CIA declaration showed the American intention toward the Kurds when it stated "would have the effect of prolonging the insurgency, thereby encouraging separatist aspiration and possibly providing to the Soviet Union an opportunity to create difficulties for Iran and Turkey ". According to congressional investigation of CIA, concluded that " none of the nation who were aiding the Kurds seriously desired that they release thier objectives of an autonomous state ". However, America and Iran’s Shah aimed to undermine Iraq and exploit its energies (Everest).

1. The Sell Out

In 1974, Iraq won its struggle against the Kurdish revolt in winter war and Iran’s Shah viewed his conflict with Iraq should be resolved. Initially, In March Saddam Hussein
suggested for Kurds an Autonomy law to achieve Barzani demands. Whereas Mustafa Barzani refused Hussein’s suggestion, he continued on his struggle. In 1975, Iran and Iraq put an end to their border dispute in OPEC meeting in Algiers which resulted in Iran’s withdrawing its military and assistance to Kurdish revolt. Furthermore, Barzani begged Kissinger to increase further aid by sending him a letter, but Kissinger did not reply (Mardini 2). Kurdish people pleaded CIA: “Our people’s fate in unprecedented danger. Complete destruction hanging over our head. No explanation for all this. We appeal you and US government to intervene according to your promises.” (Snider).

Obviously, America betrayed the Kurds, but even then, as the Pick commission mockingly claimed "The cynicism of US and its ally had not yet completely run its course." The United States rejected even to give humanitarian assistance to the Kurdish refugees created by the abrupt stop of military aid. When Iran was later to forcibly return over 40,000 of the refugees, the United States government rejected to accept even one refugee into the United States (Everst).

The US- Iranian involvement in the Kurdish question was destroyed the relation between Iraq and Kurds as the Pick commission reported if the USA and Shah did not support the Kurdish rebellion, the Kurds « May have reached an accommodation with the central government, thus gaining at least a measure of autonomy while avoiding further bloodshed. Instead, our client the Kurds fought on, sustaining thousands of casualties and 200,000 refugees ». Consequently, Iraq was revenged with an offensive attack against Kurds: around 250,000 Kurds were forced to leave their lands to central and southern Iraq, many Arabs were moved into Kurdish region. Henry kissinger dismissed the Pick commission’s concerns: « Covert action », he said « should not be confused with missionary work » the commission
claimed that « Even in this context of covert operation. Ours was a cynical enterprise » (Everest).

When the Shah stopped his assistance to the Kurds, United States and Israel also stopped thier support to the Kurdish question. The House Select Committee which was interested in the investigation of the financial side of the Covert operation concluded that the Kurdish involvement was wrong and illegal because president Nixon was penetrated the 40 committee (Gibson163- 164). In contrast, the Picke Report gave important information about the Kurdish engagement, published documents that show the subjectivity of the report. According to the US officials, Picke wanted to use the report to reveal the CIA as an out-of-control “rouge elephant.” Kissinger thought that Pick sought “to show that [he was an] evil genius.” To a degree was right. In January 1976, when congress voted to maintain the Picke Report secret, committees’ members revealed the report to the press. The article of William safire published on Febuary 4 in the New York Times that creat disputatiousness when he accused the Ford’s administration of selling out the Kurds. The accusation in the article, “Mr. Ford’s sellout,” However, the State Department refused the article and considered it as “a collection of distoration and untruth unsupported by any documents or the records,” the Picke Report proved America’s role in the Kurdish intervention (Gibson 164).

United States decided to stop its supporting to Kurds, on March 18 Barzani told his top military commander that he could not carry on in his struggle. Barzani was very upset and desperat, he was in hard situation, he was clrarly saying that” this is the end, we must stop now”. He convinced that without an open border through which to get arms, it would be impossible to continue (Gibson 194).Following the fall down of Kurdish struggle Barazani
and his family escaped to Iran. In July 1975, Barazani needed a medical treatment in United States, he was diagnosed with cancer and he died in USA on March 1, 1979 (Gibson 195).

2. The Aftermath of the War

The tragic story of Kurds does not live and die with one man. On March 23, 1975, well over 100,000 Kurdish fighters and their families crossed the border into Iran, joining the thousands of refugees already in camps, while others accepted the regime’s ‘’generous payment’’ for surrendering their weapons. The aftermath of the war a bitter period for those who stayed behind as the regime imposed its harsh authoritarian rule on Kurdistan, creating a security zone 30 kilometers wide along with the Iranian and Turkish borders. According to McDowell, «this involved razing as many as 1,400 villages by 1978 and the internment of at least 600,000 Kurds in resettlement camps. But the worst fate was left for the villagers of Barzani’s hometown, Barzan. After its capture in 1975, the villagers were transported to an internment camp » (Gibson 195).

Despite the Israelis, Iranians, and American support, the Kurds failed to achieve their goals whether domestically or in the international realpolitik. Additionally, the Kurds lacked a unified political front and political organization which strengthened the Ba’ath regime to contribute on the political schisms within KDP (Lambert 65).

Conclusion

To sum up, American foreign policy toward the Kurds were dated back to president Woodrow Wilson when he advocate his fourteen points which interested in the self-determination of newly freed nation of the Ottoman Empire, especially the Kurds to form their state. During the Nixon administration, US foreign policy toward Iraq underwent by a great
changes. At the begining of his first term, Nixon was not interested in the Gulf matters, but the 
approchement between Iraq and Soviet Union took Nixon’s attention.

During his visit to Iran in 1972, Nixon agreed to support the Kurds in order to weaken 
the pro- Soviet Ba’athist relations. Both Iran and Israel had an important role in the American 
intervention in Kurdish question in order to achieve thier goals against Iraq. During the 
October war of 1973 United States was still increasing its support to Kurds, because kissinger 
thought that the Kurds were preventing Iraq in participating in the Arab-Israeli war. 
Furthermore, the winter war of 1974-1975 showed the Cold War features of both powers, US 
support to the Kurds and the Soviet support to the Iraqi regime. During the winter war United 
States, Israelis, and Iranians increased its financial and military aid to Kurds against Iraq, but 
this support was fruitless.

The Algiers accord of 1975, was ended the US, Iranian, and Israeli support for the 
Kurds. However, Kissinger viewed the Kurdish intervention as a valuable means of 
promoting US strategies in the middle east. It also prevented Iraq from participating in Arab-
Israeli conflict. The US policy saw the Kurds as Cold War card and a useful tool to achieve to 
prevent the Soviet influence in the middle east. United States used then betrayed the Kurds, it 
refused even to provide them with humanitarian assistance
General Conclusion

The Kurdish question has been one of the oldest problem in the Middle East region. Kurds was religiously and linguistically diverse, like other ethnic groups they shared principals like common language, race, religion, and historical experience which have shaped the development of their national movement. The Kurdish nationalists tried several times to establish a Kurdish statehood, but they were not successful in achieving this goal. Among other Kurds, only the Iraqi Kurds achieved some of their goals, because they revolted and rebelled against Iraqi central government many times for example the revolt of 1961-62. The Iraqi Kurdish nationalists changed their nationalism movement from tribal to urban movement when they formed political parties that speak about Kurdish rights.

The Iraqi government rejected this national movement when it reacted aggressively toward the Kurdish uprising, but it moved to peaceful manner when it proposed the March Manifesto of 1970 and the Autonomy Law of 1975. However, it failed to implement those proposals. Moreover, Kurds built international relations with some countries in order to create a Kurdish voice politically through gain support from those powers.

The period between 1972-1975 witnessed new path in the Kurdish question when a great power like United States engaged in its issue. The rapprochement between Iraq and the Soviet Union pushed United States to use the Kurds as a card to play in order to achieve its Cold War strategies in the region. In 1972 until 1975 United States supported the Kurds financially to rebel against Iraq, in this regard the Kurds utilized via two proxies, Iran and Israel to weaken the Iraqi-Soviet alliance. Despite the American promises of support to the
Kurds, the interests of Iran overrode support to the Kurdish question, resulting in Algiers Accord of 1975 that resolve the conflict between Iraq and Iran. When Iran withdrew its support to the Kurds, United States betrayed and abandoned the Kurds leaving them in hard situation.

The research came to conclude that the Kurdish war in 1972-1975 was a Cold War conflict: the United States was arming and supporting the Kurds, while the Soviets was supporting the Iraqi regime. Moreover, the Kurdish question have had many shortcomings, but the big weakness is that they have to depend on external powers to continue their national movement, in other word these powers used them only as a card to play to achieve their goals and divide Iraq. No one deny that the origins of Iraq’s ongoing political instability can be found in superpower interventions during Cold War.
Works Cited


