

**Parallel History and Diplomacy:
Turkey's Position toward the Kurdish Question in 1925 and from 2003-2006**

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Fifth Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture
Indiana University
November 3, 2006

In Memoriam: Celebrating the Lifelong Contributions of a Marvelous NELC Scholar at IU

Universities as educational establishments devoted to the production and dissemination of knowledge, when aiming to carry these heavy responsibilities conscientiously, contribute to the real and permanent good in this world, and as such they are the true philanthropic institutions-- performing *sadaqah jariyah*. Small numbers of teachers and researchers in these learned institutions manage to leave powerful legacies of scholarship through their publications and, more importantly, a *silsilah* of accomplished pupils. Even smaller numbers succeed in leaving behind the most eternal and valued of societal capital: a personal reputation, a good name. As Shaykh Muslihuddin Sa'di of Shiraz has sagaciously said:

Sa'diyaa mardi nekunaam Namirad hargiz
Murda aanast ke naamash ba neku-yi nabarand
(Oh Sa'di, a person of good name shall never die;
Dead are those who's names are not uttered for good deeds!)

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC) at Indiana University, during its short history that now approaches a half a century, has faced and met considerable challenges, and has been blessed by the leadership and services of some remarkably dedicated scholars, teachers, mentors and leaders such as Professors Wadie Jwaideh (the founder and long-time Chairman of NELC). This scholar of Middle Eastern history, languages and literature was a pioneer of his fields at Indiana University. NELC owes much to him for his many contributions.

Not long ago we encountered a series of crises, which briefly threatened the very existence of NELC as an academic unit on our campus (1999-2000). We are however very pleased to have regained our academic strength and administrative credibility, and emerged more determined to keep NELC as an important part of IU's mission for providing and promoting international education in the United States. We are especially pleased to be able to celebrate the accomplishments of our former colleagues through the annual Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture in Arabic and Islamic Studies and Victor Danner Memorial Lecture in Islamic Studies. Both of these Memorial Lectures were inaugurated during the academic year 2002-2003, and we are delighted to publish the lecture (No. 5) by Professor Robert Olson, *In Memoriam*, to honor our colleague and to share their cherished memories with you.

The Memorial Lecture in this volume was made possible with the generous support from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS) of Indiana University, members of the Jwaideh family, their close relatives, students and friends around the world. We are grateful for their help.

It is with great pleasure that we can now announce that the Jwaideh Memorial Lecture Fund originated in 2003 and administered by the Indiana University Foundation to insure future funding for this important memorial lectures has surpassed our initial target and is fully endowed and its continuity assured thanks to those who have made generous contributions. We are delighted that these lectures will continue for decades to come, and thanks to you future generations will continue to benefit from the latest social sciences and humanities research and analysis on the Middle East.

Dr. Alice Jwaideh's enthusiasm and dedication, widely supported by other members of her extended family, combined with equally important organizational support and financial contributions from our colleagues Professor Suzanne Stetkevych and Dr. Robert Olson of the University of Kentucky, were critical to the creation and success of the Jwaideh lecture fund during its first year. We are gratified by the generosity of many who have made donations to the Jwaideh fund and we are happy to gratefully

acknowledge them in this publication.

Many members of the Jwaideh family have honored us by their presence at the lectures over the past several years. We are very pleased to have Professor Robert Olson, a former student of Professor Jwaideh and one of the foremost authorities on the history and politics of the Kurdish people, a topic of considerable importance to the intellectual work of Professor Jwaideh, to have delivered this lecture in memory of his mentor. We are also grateful to Dr. William Tucker of the University of Kansas, another accomplished student of Professor Jwaideh, for sharing memories of his mentor with us. We are pleased to include his remarks in this publication. I personally would like to thank both of them for presenting the fifth Jwaideh Memorial Lecture at Indiana University on November 3, 2006.

It is our hope that through the publication of these lectures, we are able to perpetuate the legacies of great teachers, true scholars and inspiring guides. Indeed, it is the hope of immortalizing the memories of such exemplary colleagues and their good name and reputation that, with your generous help, we will be able to undertake presenting these Memorial Lectures for years to come.

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Professor Wadie Elias Jwaideh had a long and distinguished career both within and outside of Indiana University. He received the degree of Licentiate in Law from the University of Baghdad in 1942. In 1960, he received his Ph.D. from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. During this time, he also held a lecturer position in Arabic at Johns Hopkins University.

His dissertation entitled “A History of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement” is the most comprehensive study ever made into the Kurdish question. This work established him as one of the world’s leading experts on the Kurds. It was published posthumously as *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* in 2004 by Syracuse University Press.

Dr. Jwaideh joined the faculty of Indiana University in 1960 and became the founder and chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literature and Professor of History until his retirement. In 1972, Professor Jwaideh was given the Lieber Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching. A number of his colleagues and former students contributed articles for a Festschrift in his honor. Dr. Robert Olson edited this book, entitled *Islamic and Middle Eastern Society* (Amana Books, 1987).

After his retirement from IU in 1985, Dr. Jwaideh accepted an appointment as Adjunct Professor of history at the University of California at San Diego, where he taught until 1990.



Professor Robert Olson, an accomplished scholar of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic history, teaches in the Department of History at the University of Kentucky. He received his Ph.D. from Indiana University in 1973 where he studied with Professor Wadie Jwaideh. Professor Olson’s recent books include: *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics* (2004) and *The Goat and the Butcher: Nationalism and State Formation in Kurdistan-Iraq since the Iraqi War* (2005). In addition, he served as a member of the Strategic Assessment Group of the Central Intelligence Agency's Future Panel on Turkey and the Kurdish Question from 2000 to 2003.

Tribute to Professor Wadie Jwaideh

Even though I've come a long way, I'm very happy to make this trip to Bloomington. I see a lot of old friends and former professors. If you haven't seen this new book by Professor Wadie Jwaideh [*The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*], it took awhile for us to see it in print. A lot of us have lived with it for a lot of years and it is a very, very important work which unfortunately was thoroughly mined by other scholars before it was published. That's a testament to the importance of the man and his work.

I feel very, very fortunate in having been Professor Jwaideh's student here from 1965 until 1971. I feel fortunate because he was a man of great, great learning, both in terms of depth and breadth. I think very few people probably would be able to come out of this institution now and say that with one single professor they had a variety of courses ranging from Middle Eastern history to Islamic political theory, classical Arabic literature, and medieval Arabic geographical literature. I studied in all of these fields with him and I think I am a much richer person for having taken his courses. It has meant a great deal to me throughout my life, personally and professionally.

This book I commend to you because I think if you look at his book you will see in it a lot of the most important things about him. Dr. Jwaideh was a man who was the consummate historian, from my perspective, and who brought an extra dimension to his work because he had been involved in the making of that history. This is a rather unusual book. You will read the book and it is a very smooth-flowing narrative and a very cogent analysis. The interesting thing is to turn to the notes, the annotations. I suggest to you that part because he had actually lived some of what he wrote about in this book.

I think you know I am not giving away any state secrets, to say that he had served in more than one ministry in the Iraqi government before and during World War II. He had actually been in charge of supplying the Kurdish provinces in northern Iraq during the war and had interacted with many of the persons whose names grace at least the later pages of this study. So one of the great joys and benefits of having studied with him was that here was a man who wrote history but who also had a role in making the history that he talked and wrote about.

Professor Jwaideh was, from my point of view, the consummate historian. He was an old school historian and I say this for some of you here who may have a slightly different take on the profession of historian these days. That is to say, he was a man who actually believed that there are such things as facts. He realized that the people he wrote about had lived at some point and in the course of living they had said certain things and written certain things and done certain things. One of the most important things that a good historian can do is to go look at the evidence to find out, in so far as possible, what in fact had been said, what reasons were given by the participants in the history, what actions had been taken, and what the consequences of those actions were. Now that sounds, to some of you no, doubt, simplistic. But I suggest to you that if we had more people who wrote and studied that way today, we might have a more peaceful and an easier world without very unfortunate policies being rushed into in very haphazard ways.

Dr. Jwaideh -- as I like to tell my students down in Fayetteville -- was a historian who wrote history that touched the ground. In other words, he was a historian who was methodologically sophisticated; he understood theories, but he also understood that there are realities, and that the theories to be applied must be germane or relevant to the realities about which one writes. This is a major lesson that I took away from this university and from him. He was one of the finest historians I've ever worked with. He was one of the finest academics I've ever been around, and he was always there for his students.

In addition to all of the things that I've just said, something else was very important about him. Dr. Jwaideh was able to work with and for his students and to educate his students in cooperation with his colleagues. He was not a man who worked in isolation from others. He did not go out and say, well this is what you need to learn from me and you don't have to worry

about Professors. X, Y, and Z. He was a person who worked very well, for example, with the other person with whom I also had wonderful courses and who is with us tonight, Professor Charles Jelavich.

One of the things that I took away from working with these two gentlemen here at Indiana University was the way that they cooperated and worked together so that their students benefited from their wide range of knowledge and from the fact that their knowledge overlapped. Professor Jwaideh worked with Western Asia and Professor Jelavich worked with Southeastern Europe. These two areas were right across a not very wide body of water from each other. So in a sense what the two of them enabled me to become -- something I hadn't anticipated but which I very much value today -- to become not just a historian of the Middle East or Islamic worlds or a historian of Southeastern Europe, but in the old sense they helped me to become a Mediterranean historian. I will always be immensely grateful to them for that cooperation and for that walking down the path together intellectually for the benefit of the students.

Again, this has been a great honor for me to come and speak about Professor Jwaideh and to remember him. We used to call him our "Ustadh" or master. He was demanding. He expected a lot of us, but he was not unreasonable. We knew when we were not performing to his standards because he was famous for those eyebrows -- something nobody else has ever used so well. When things weren't going well and we weren't meeting his expectations, his eyebrows would look very much the way a thunderstorm looks coming over the plains of Kansas. So we never had to wonder about whether or not we were living up to what we were supposed to be doing as his students.

Professor Jwaideh was, simply, a person who made possible not so much our careers but our learning, our knowledge, and -- I think I can say this for Professor Olsen as well as myself -- our love for the Middle East and Islamic culture, and who helped us to understand a very complicated and at times very problematic part of the world.

At this point I would like to introduce Professor Robert Olson, my old friend of 40 years. I think it's unfortunate for both of us to realize that it's been that long, but we started out together here about 40 years ago. We had a lot of classes together, a lot of time together, a lot of conversations, a few arguments, etc. Dr. Olson has been at the University of Kentucky almost as long as I've been down in Razorback country.

Bob Olson is a worthy heir to Professor Jwaideh from the standpoint of being an honest, empirical historian who has worked with the Kurdish people and with Kurdish history among many other topics. Originally in his career, Robert Olson worked with Ottoman history and the history of Iraq in the 18th century. He is the author of 50 articles and a number of books, beginning with his book on the siege of Mosul in the 18th century. He also published a book back in the 1980's, for which I wrote a very brief introduction, on the rebellion and the Kurdish national movement in Turkey. He has continued to work with Kurdish history and Middle Eastern diplomatic history since then.

I am happy to emphasize that my friend and colleague Robert Olson has established himself as one of the outstanding scholars of our generation in the study of Kurdish history, Turkish history, and the relationships among Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and the other important countries in the Middle East region. Professor Olson will speak tonight about the history of Turkey's relationship with the Kurds, the situation of the Kurdish people in Turkey, and some of the possible scenarios and possibilities for the future.

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In Memoriam

The Wadie Jwaideh Memorial Lecture in
Arabic and Islamic Studies

2006

Jwaideh Memorial Lecture Series
Publication No. 5

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures
Indiana University

**Parallel History and Diplomacy: Turkey's Position toward the Kurdish Question
in 1925 and from 2003-2006**

This essay addresses and offers an interpretation of the position that Turkey faced regarding the challenge of Kurdish nationalism in 1925 and again from 2003-2006. Turkey, of course, faced the challenge of Kurdish nationalism in the eighty-years interim between these two dates, but its dilemma became particularly acute after the U.S. invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003. In 1925, Turkey confronted the Kurdish rebellion of Sheik Said (*Şeyh Sait*) which compelled it to accept the June 5, 1926 *Frontier Treaty between Turkey, Iraq, and Great Britian* by which Iraq, under British mandate, annexed the Mosul province (*vilayet*) of Iraq—one of the three provinces (the others being Baghdad and Basra) which made up Iraq during the Ottoman Empire. The June 5, 1926 treaty also established the international boundary between Turkey and Iraq which still exists. In 2003-06, the Kurdish question confronting Turkey, much like in 1925, was again the challenge of Kurdish nationalism, although in 2005 the external challenge from Iraq was stronger than in 1925. Also, the Kurdish nationalist movements in both Turkey and Iraq in 2005 were much more comprehensive than they were in 1925. In 2005, and even more so subsequently, unlike in 1925, the Kurds of Iraq had for all practical purposes attained independence, but like their position under the British mandate, they could not declare independence because in 1925-6—an independent Kurdish state did not suit the imperial global strategy of the British Empire. In 2005, the Kurds of Iraq could not announce independence because of the policy of the American occupation forces and of the American government that it was pursuing a strategy that Iraq should be a unified state despite the realization that it would not achieve that status. This essay also

investigates the domestic, foreign, geopolitical and geostrategic factors that contributed to Turkey's acceptance of the loss of Mosul province in 1926. Additionally, the inability to intervene militarily from 2003 to 2006 in Iraq in spite of what Ankara perceived as a growing threat from the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK (Partia Kakaren Kurdistan) guerrillas ensconced in northern Iraq who began to perpetrate increased military and terrorist attacks in Turkey itself in 2004 will factor into this discussion.

This essay does not investigate the origins of Kurdish nationalism in detail, but accepts that most scholars, whatever their differences, acknowledge that Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, other than participation of Kurdish intellectuals, largely of urban origin, was a post-WWI development.¹ I have argued extensively elsewhere that the challenge of Kurdish nationalism has been since 1925, and still remains, the central

¹ The classic study of the origins of Kurdish nationalism is by Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development*, unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1960; translated into Turkish as *Kürt Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi: Kökenleri ve Gelişimi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 1999), which has a good account of the origins of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999) provides good coverage in all four countries as well. Also see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheik Said Rebellion: 1880-1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989); Hakan Özoğlu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); Kemal Kirişci and Gareth Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); Martin Strohmeier, *Crucial Images in the Presentation of a Kurdish National Identity: Heros and Patriots, Traitors and Foes* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). For the origins and development of Kurdish nationalism in Iran see Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, CO: Lynn Rienner Publishers, 1992, revised 2006); Farideh Koohi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2003). For Iraq, in addition to Jwaideh and McDowall mentioned above, see Edmund Gareeb, *The Kurdish Question in Iraq* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981); Sa'ad Jawad, *Iraq and the Kurdish Question, 1958-1970* (London: Ithaca Press, 1981); Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurdish Predicament in Iraq: a Political Analysis* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999). Gunter has an extensive bibliography on the Kurds and the Kurdish questioning in *Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2004). Lokman Meho's two volume bibliography is an indispensable reference to any researcher: *The Kurds and Kurdistan: a Selective and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1997); and with Kelly L. Maclaughlin, *Kurdish Culture and Society: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2001). I have left out many books appearing in Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Kurdish, but references to most of them can be found in the above mentioned works.

challenge faced by the Turkish state; a position I still hold.² The first major episode in this developing paradigm was the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925. While the main fighting between the government and the Kurds lasted only two months—February and March—it proved a severe test for the new republic and for the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) which had just been partially demobilized after a devastating three-year war with Greece which ended with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on July 23, 1923. In the war against Sheikh Said, government forces were compelled to mobilize some 52,000 troops comprising about 25,000 fighting men; these forces fought approximately 15,000 Kurdish fighters.³ The most significant consequence of the war was that Turkey was compelled to sign a peace treaty with Iraq and Great Britain in which Turkey accepted the accession of the Mosul province (*vilayet*) to Iraq under British mandate.⁴

The circumstances of the Sheikh Said rebellion were the major factors impelling Turkey to sign the treaty. While many Turkish scholars were, and still are, convinced that Britain had a hand in stirring up and supporting the rebellion, I have concluded in my studies that this was not the case. I maintain that Turkey was much more concerned with the security implications of the rebellion on the future configuration of the Republic of Turkey than on gaining control of the oil fields of the Kirkuk region. The inclusion of the Mosul province within Iraq with its Kurdish population and the role that it would play in British governance of Iraq was also more important to the British than the oil of the Kirkuk region. Saying this does not mean that oil was not important; it was, but not as

² I first argued this in my *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism...* and in *The Kurdish Question and Turkish-Iranian Relations: From World War I to 1998* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998), xviii.

³ For the numbers of Turkish and Kurdish fighting forces and how they were ascertained see, Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism...*, 102-08.

⁴ For the negotiation leading to the signing of the treaty see *Ibid.*, 128-52.

important as the issue of the Kurds for both Turkey and Great Britain, and, hence, Iraq.⁵ That 16 of the 18 articles of the treaty dealt with frontier security and with the Kurds attests to this. Articles 6 through 13 and Articles 15 and 16 dealt specially with “Good Neighbourly Relations”—the bulk of the neighbors being Kurdish.⁶

Article 14 of the treaty, the only article that did not deal with the frontier or the Kurds, stipulated that the government of Iraq would pay the Turkish government ten percent of the royalties it received from the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) under Article 10 of its concession of March 14, 1925. The exchange of the ten percent for 500,000 pounds sterling and other matters pertaining to the oil concession were dealt with in an annex to the treaty and did not merit an article in the treaty itself. This was done to shield the transaction from as much public scrutiny as possible, as the British conceded that “it is somewhat in the nature of a bribe.”⁷ The negotiations also demonstrated that oil was not the salient factor in the settlement of the Mosul question. The issue of oil was rarely mentioned in the internal documents of the Foreign Office (FO), the Colonial Office (CO), or the Air Ministry (AM) records in direct relation to the frontier dispute with Turkey or with regard to the wider policy implications of the British, or, as far as can be determined on the available evidence, Turkey’s policies toward the Kurds, whether the Kurds were within Turkey or residing in the Mosul province. Indeed, Tevfik Rüstü, Turkey’s foreign minister, told British Ambassador to Turkey Sir Ronald Lindsay that Turkey was not primarily interested in territory, i.e. the Mosul province, and only

⁵ An official copy of the treaty can be found in *Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers Treaty Series*, no. 18 (1927), cmd. 2912. There is also a draft of the treaty in cmd. 2979. There is also a copy in J.C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: a Documentary Record: 1535-1914*, volume 2 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1956), 143-46. However, Hurewitz’s citation for the treaty, 1930 Treaty Series, no. 7, cmd. 3488, is incorrect.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Colonial Office (CO) 730/98. CO 730/98 and CO 100 have detailed accounts of the negotiations, drafts and counter drafts of the final treaty.

then raised the request that Turkey be allowed to participate in the oil exploitation of Iraq.⁸

The alacrity with which the Turks accepted what the British offered suggests strongly that they were much more interested in security and in the control of the Kurds of Iraq, than in oil. After all, the Sheik Said rebellion had demonstrated to Ankara that it would have its hands full during the next decades with the Kurds within Turkey's border and that they did not have the resources to control the Kurds both within Turkey and Iraq. Ankara no doubt thought that the British, both for their purposes of governance of Iraq and in order to have decent relations with Turkey, would make every effort to make sure that the Kurds of Iraq presented no threat to the Republic of Turkey. In some ways, then, the June 5, 1926 treaty can be seen as a tacital understanding of cooperation between Turkey and Great Britain to control nascent Kurdish nationalism. It is possible that Turkey raised the issue of participating in Iraq's oil exploitation and/or revenues as a guise to cover their profound and real interest in the security measures of the treaty, which they very much wanted to obtain in the wake of the Sheikh Said rebellion.

During the negotiations of the treaty, the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office submitted a long memorandum to the principal negotiators, Ambassador Lindsay et. al., regarding the factors that "would influence or decide Turkish policy in the Question of Mosul."⁹ The memorandum and its policy recommendations were significant for the subsequent policies pursued by the British in Iraq, especially regarding the Kurds; they also bear a keen resemblance to the policies pursued, by intent or default, by the United States after its invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ FO 4061, no. 62, October 23, 1925; the following discussion is based on the memorandum.

The policy makers who drafted the memorandum suggested that there were two internal political issues the Turks had to consider. One was the need for prestige, and the second was the question of Kurdistan. The memorandum stated that Turkey's policy was to assimilate the Kurdish population, but Great Britain's policy "was to plant the seeds of autonomy among the Iraqi Kurds."¹⁰ Britain's policy would, in turn, strengthen the resolve of the Kurds in Turkey not to assimilate with the Turks. If the Kurds of Turkey "sooner or later" claim their right to unite with their "semi-independent brothers in Irak, it would mean the loss of valuable population and territories to Turkey—a threat which must be averted at all costs."¹¹ The British thought that it was this concern that explained the Turkish suggestion of a guarantee of the Turkish and Iraqi frontiers. In addition, they speculated, three other external factors were influencing Turkish policy: one, Mustafa Kemal wanted Turkey to join the League of Nations; two, Turkey wanted to join the League to take advantage of the protection it offered against potential invaders; and, three, Turkey's desire to join the League was a top priority because the Locarno treaties had demonstrated strongly the isolation of the Soviet Union: Turkey did not want the same thing to happen to it.¹²

The choices and options open to Turkey in 1925 bear resemblances to its options in the wake of the American attack on Iraq in 2003 and the Turkish government's and Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) decision not to join the Americans in their war. Among their reasons was their desire not to jeopardize the negotiations for establishing a date to

¹⁰ FO 406/56, no. 62, October 23, 1925.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For the objectives of the Locarno treaties see Jon Jacobson, *Locarno Diplomacy: Germany and the West, 1925-1929* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 3-91. For how the Locarno treaties negotiations affected Turkey's diplomacy regarding the negotiations leading to the June 5, 1926 treaty, see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism, 1880-1925...*, 132-37.

begin their admittance to the European Union (EU). This would provide them with more multi-lateral security options, in addition to NATO, with regard to the threat from non-European nations. Even if such negotiations were to continue for ten or fifteen years, the interim would provide Turkey with choices regarding its relations with the U.S., Russia, Iran, the Arab states, as well as Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Balkans.

The memorandum also spelled out the financial needs of Turkey stating that “to flaunt the League” would lessen Turkey’s chances of obtaining financial aid from its members. Military operations against Iraq would prove costly to Turkey, but the authors of the memorandum thought there was a slim possibility that Turkey might think the wealth of the oil deposits worth the risk. When it came to military considerations, the drafters of the memorandum advanced several cogent arguments against the possibility of a Turkish invasion of Iraq. For example, Turkey might take Mosul, but could it hold the city, especially in light of the Sheikh Said rebellion? Britain could get reinforcements from India. Turkey’s lines of communication were tenuous. The Turks would have to remember that the Kurds were in the back of them and they would be vulnerable to British attacks from the rear. Also, the interior of the country [Turkey] would be open to attacks from the Royal Air Force (RAF). Finally, such an attack would be an indirect violation of the League of Nations’ decisions, and the political and economic costs of these violations would be high.¹³ The restraints on Turkey invading the Mosul province in 1925 are uncannily similar to reasons why, eighty years later, Turkey again refrained from invading Iraq or even attacking the PKK (Partia Kakaren Kurdistan-Kurdistan Workers Party) guerrillas that were still ensconced in the Kandil Mountains of northern Iraq while American forces were occupying Iraq rather than Iraq being under British

¹³ FO 406/56, no. 62, October 23, 1925.

mandate as it was in 1925. The main difference was that the U.S., the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank had replaced the British Empire, the League of Nations, and the London and Paris banks as institutions influencing Turkey's policy.

Four months after the signing of the June 5, 1926 treaty, Sir Ronald Lindsay was sanguine that, despite the setback for British-Turkish relations—as a result of the Sheikh Said rebellion, relations between the two countries would improve. Turkey's pro-European foreign policy, its secular-driven domestic policy, and its financial needs all would demand that Turkey have decent relations with Europe. It was clear by 1925 that Turkish nationalism would not be friendly to communism or the Soviet Union. Lindsay thought there was only one major impediment to improving relations and that was the issue of Kurdish nationalism:

“The Kurdistan rebellion of last year was a terrible shock to this policy [of improving relations]. There is nationalism in Kurdistan, but it is Kurdish and not Turkish, and Turkish nationalism, inculcated by the Govt. is too narrow and sectarian in character. Small wonder that the tribes [Kurdish] broke into revolt.[Turkish] Govt. feels that at any cost it must suppress Kurdish nationalism; yet it finds that just across the border H.M. [His Majesty] Govt. *purposed to find a sort of Kurdish National Home* (emphasis added), and so we return to the point from which we started—that the Mosul Question is the only stumbling block in the path towards Anglo-Turkish friendship. After the agitations [Sheikh Said] of the past month or two it looks as if the game is fairly in the hands of H.M.G. and they can play it out as they like. *Perhaps H.M.G. are already irretrievably committed to fostering nationalism in Southern Kurdistan* (emphasis added), if not, there are strong reasons for wishing the League will not impose on the mandatory power any obligation in that direction.”¹⁴

¹⁴ FO 424 (Confidential Print), no. 501, July to December 1925; Lindsay to Chamberlain [Austen], October 16, no. 50, October 20, 1925. Austen Chamberlain was Foreign Minister at the time.

Four days later, Lindsay reiterated his belief that “*Kurdistan constitutes the most serious menace in sight to the present regime* (emphasis added).”¹⁵ Lindsay opined that

“even before the end of Abulhamid’s [Abülhamid II (1878-1909)] reign the young Turks were at loggerheads with Kurdish nationalism, and with the disappearance of the Armenians the last reasons for tolerating it have gone. Between it [Kurdish nationalism] and the secular-minded young republic, there can be nothing but irreconcilable hostility. The only question is whether so long as the republic lasts, shall we see a series of revolts followed by repression; or whether the task will be too great for the government and Kurdistan will be left severely alone with its local ad.[administration] of sheikh-Beys....”¹⁶

The drafters of the October 23, 1925 memorandum also concluded that a military “adventure” on the part of the Turks would be a policy of desperation and would have doubtful success. They thought that a Turkish attack on Mosul province was unlikely, although it was speculated there might be an intensification of “military bluff” on the part of Ankara. The Turks might continue what the British termed a policy of obstruction and of legal objection “as long as the game plays.” The drafters also broached the possibility that Great Britain might obtain a compromise settlement with Turkey without the aid of the League of Nations. In order to obtain compromise, two conditions had to be met: some kind of guarantee against the loss of Turkish Kurdistan; and some face-saving device by which Mustafa Kemal could justify himself to Turkey.¹⁷ The Justice and Development Party-JDP (AKP-Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) of Turkey faced a similar situation after March 2003 from the challenge of Kurdish nationalism both within Turkey and especially in Iraq. Ankara faced both the threat of the PKK forces in Iraq and more challengingly the growth of Kurdish nationalism in Kurdistan-Iraq and state-formation

¹⁵ FO 424 (Confidential Print), no. 52, October 20, 1925, Lindsay to Chamberlain.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ FO 406/56, no. 62, October 23, 1925.

developments in the regions of northern Iraq controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the two strongest Kurdish organizations in Iraq.¹⁸

On November 5, 1925 Chamberlain answered Lindsay's concerns that the British proposed, "*to find a sort of Kurdish national home southern Kurdistan* [northern Iraq] and that the British "*are already irretrievably committed to fostering nationalism in Southern Kurdistan* (my emphasis)."¹⁹ The foreign minister stated:

I fully appreciate the force of your contention that Anglo-Turkish relations could be placed on a satisfactory footing if only means were found to eliminate the direct menace to the very heart of Turkey's policy which is implied in the proposal *to found a sort of Kurdish National Home in northern Iraq* (my emphasis), just across the southern frontier of Turkey. His Majesty's Government are, however, in an unfortunate dilemma in this matter for the commission of the council of the League of Nations have stipulated as essential conditions for union with Irak of the territory south of the Brussels line that due consideration must be paid to the desire of the Kurds to use Kurdish, to build schools, and to have autonomy in local administration in the hands of Kurdish officers and police."²⁰

Indeed, as early as September 3, 1925 Chamberlain informed Lindsay that Leo S. Amery, secretary of the colonies, had informed the council that the British were already carrying out its wishes, which would be "made more effective." On September 4, Amery stated to the council of the League that "the Kurdish population enjoys wide measure of

¹⁸ For the reasons why I use the term Kurdistan-Iraq to define the status of the Kurds in Iraq see my, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004...*, 207-13.

¹⁹ See footnote above.

²⁰ CO 730/86 draft from Chamberlain to Lindsay, November 5, 1925; the same correspondence can be found in FO 424 (Confidential Print), no. 63, November 30, Chamberlain [Austen Chamberlain was British foreign secretary from 1924 to 1929] to Lindsay; CO 730/98 and CO 730/102 have a full discussion with regard to paragraphs three and four which stipulated "regard must be paid to the desires expressed by the Kurds." The extent of Kurdish autonomy in northern Iraq as of March 1925 is detailed in a "Memorandum on Administration of Kurdish districts in Irak," in CO 730/99, February 24, 1926; CO 730/91, Sir John Shuckburgh, head of the Near Eastern Department in the Colonial Office, to Sir Samuel Wilson in January 1926. The Bussel line was established in December 1925 and subsequently was accepted as the international boundary between Turkey and Iraq that still obtains.

racial autonomy at this moment, *and we are prepared to extend it...but we shall not create an autonomous Kurdish state* (emphasis added).”²¹ “This means,” said Sir John Shuckburgh, “that we are in our usual unhappy position of facing both ways. Our obligations to the League require us to foster Kurdish nationalism (with limits); our relations with the Turks *to make it appear that we are doing nothing of the kind* (emphasis added). This could be especially embarrassing to “the Turks in dealing with their own Kurdish problem.”²²

The challenge facing the Turkish government from 1925 to 2005 of Kurdish nationalism emanating from both Iraq and from within Turkey remained steady despite the expulsion of the British from Iraq in 1958. During this period, Turkey never attempted to invade Iraq or the former province of Mosul with the intention of occupying its territories or the oil and gas fields of the region. The TAF’s incursions during the 1990s were largely to destroy PKK bases located in northern Iraq. The 1500 to 2500 Turkish troops stationed along Iraq’s side of the international border after 1980 also was largely due to the inability of Iraq’s armed forces to protect northern Iraq after the commencement of its war with Iran in 1980. The subsequent unsettled situation in northern Iraq compelled Turkey to make incursions into Iraq, at times with a force of up to 55,000 troops.²³ Such incursions continued up to 1999. Subsequent to the February 1999 capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the PKK, Ankara attempted to use diplomacy rather than large incursions to contain the Kurds, although armed conflict intensified again after 2003.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Robert Olson, “The Kurdish Question and Turkey’s Foreign Policy, 1991-95: From the Gulf War to the Incursion into Iraq,” *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4 (1995): 1-30.

Turkey's Response to Kurdish Nationalism from Sheikh Said through WWII

While the British were fostering Kurdish nationalism in northern Iraq and, at the same time, trying to establish a unified and viable Iraqi state including both Arabs and Kurds; as a result of the June 5, 1926 treaty, Turkey was left to deal with the Kurdish nationalist challenge within Turkey on its own with no interference of the British in Iraq. The issue of Kurdish nationalism remained the most significant domestic and foreign challenge, although there were others, to the Turkish state from the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925 through WWII and indeed right up to the time this essay was written in 2005.²⁴

The challenge of Kurdish nationalism, as perceived by Ankara, is indicated by the fact that of eighteen armed engagements of the TAF between 1924 to 1938, seventeen of them were against the Kurds. Only two engagements, that of Menemen in December 1930 and the actions in Hatay (Alexandretta) in 1938-9, were not against the Kurds. In the post-WWII period, with the exceptions of Korea (1951-53) and Cyprus (1974 to present), all of the TAF actions were against the Kurds. Turkish forces did, however, participate in NATO peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Somalia and Afghanistan. Also, both before and after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Turkish officers were in command of UN peacekeeping forces in Iraq to monitor the ceasefire signed in 1998 which ended the war fought between the KDP and PUK from 1992 and 1998.

The challenge of Kurdish nationalism represented by the Sheikh Said rebellion was made clear early on. In April 1925, in the immediate aftermath of the crushing of the

²⁴ For the impact of the evolution of Turkey's policy as a result of the 1930 Mt. Ararat and Dersim Rebellions see Martin van Bruinessen, "Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the Chemical War against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)," in George Andreopolus, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994): 141-70. For the growing role of Turkey's air force in the suppression of Kurdish revolts and rebellions see, Robert Olson, "The Kurdish Rebellions of Sheikh Said (1925), Mt. Ararat and Dersim (1937-38): Their Impact on the Development of the Turkish Air Force and on Kurdish and Turkish Nationalism," *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2000): 67-94.

rebellion and just after the capture of Sheikh Said, İsmet İnönü, the Turkish prime minister, made the following statement:

We are frankly nationalist...and nationalism is our factor of cohesion. Before the Turkish majority other elements have no kind of influence. At any price, we must Turkify the inhabitants of our land, and we will assimilate those who oppose Turks and “le Turkquisme”. What we seek in those who would serve the country is that, above all, they be Turks and “Turquistes”. They say we lack solicitude for religious currents; we will crush all who rise before us to use religion as an instrument.²⁵

Forty years later, İnönü had still not changed his mind. In an interview with well-known Turkish journalist, Abdi İpekçi, the long-time foreign and prime minister stated, “The destiny of the regime in domestic policies and in the military arena was absolutely dependent on a definite and positive result in the rebellion in the East.”²⁶ İnönü left no doubt that by “a definite and positive result in the rebellion in the East,” he meant a decisive military defeat that would forever vanquish any hope for the realization of Kurdish nationalism to take root in Turkey.

Five years after İnönü’s 1925 statement and during Turkey’s suppression of the Kurdish rebellion around Mt. Ararat, Mahmud Esat(d) Bozkurt, the Turkish interior minister, made his well-known declaration echoing that of İnönü’s in 1925:

Only the Turkish nation has the privilege of demanding national rights in this century. There is no possibility that other ethnic groups’ demands for such a right will be recognized. There is no need to hide the truth. The Turks are the sole owners and the sole notables of the country. Those who are not of Turkish origin have only the right to serve

²⁵ Bilâl N. Şimşir, ed. *İngiliz Belgeleriyle Türkiye’de “Kürt Sorunu 1924-1938): Şeyh Said, Ağrı ve Dersim Ayaklamaları,”* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991), 2nd edition, 58. This quotation was also included in dispatch from Sir Ronald Lindsay to Austen Chamberlain date April 28, 1925, no. 331 in FO Confidential Print Series, no. 424, no. 262, 156-7. İnönü made the above remark in an address to the Türk Ocakları (Turkish Hearth Association) in Ankara on April 25, 1925.

²⁶ Abdi İpekçi, *İnönü Atatürk Anlatıyor/İnönü Explains Atatürk* (Istanbul: Am Yayın Evi, 1981), 27.

and to be slaves without question, of the noble Turkish nation.²⁷

From the signing of the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 to the signing of the Treaty of 1926 and even thereafter, one of the main factors that remained an issue between Turkey and Britain was the latter's policy toward the Kurds. Although there is no evidence that the British incited or even supported the Sheikh Said rebellion, right up to 2005 there were many Turkish historians and politicians who still believed that this was the case. Britain's policies towards the Kurds from 1920 to 1926 must have seemed very similar to its policies toward the Zionist movement in Palestine and the larger implications of that policy for the Ottoman Empire from 1880-1918. The Turkish government in 1925 still contained many diplomats and bureaucrats thoroughly familiar with Britain's support for the Zionist movement and/or Jewish settlement in Palestine.²⁸ While the Ottoman and Turkish archives are not yet accessible on these topics, the Turkish arguments made by İsmet İnönü at the Lausanne conference and subsequently, as well as those by Tevfik Rüstü, demonstrate clearly that the Turks thought the British were trying to create a national home for the Kurds in Iraq. The British, as we have seen above, were clearly implementing such a policy. The dilemma facing Turkey in 1925 was: what was more important? The domestic security of the new republic or trying to retain Mosul and be

²⁷ Nouri Pasha, *Ağrı Dağı İsyanı/ The Mt. Ararat Rebellion* (Istanbul: Med Yayınları, 1993), 93-7; also, Ihsan Nouri, *La Revolte de l'Agri Dagh* (Geneva: 1980). Bozkurt's statement first appeared in *Milîyet* newspaper on September 19, 1930.

²⁸ The literature on Zionism is voluminous. But with regard to the subject as I treat it here two good accounts are Mim Kemal Öke, *Siyonizm ve Filistin Sorunu, 1880-1914/ Zionism and the Palestine Question* (Istanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1982) and the same author's *II. Abdülhamid, Siyonistler ve Filistin Meselesi/ Abdülhamid II, Zionists and the Palestine Question* (Istanbul: Kervan Kitapçılık, 1981; Isaiah Friedman, *Germany, Turkey and Zionism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977). For the full context of these developments see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion...*, 142-6.

engaged in low intensity warfare with Great Britain for the next decade or so? The Turks chose internal security and let Mosul go; a decision still rued in 2005.

Indeed, it could be argued that the challenge of Kurdish nationalism and the fact that its first strong challenge appeared in the Sheikh Said rebellion influenced, either directly or indirectly; by intention or default, all of the six principles (altı ok) that were to define Turkish nationalism (Kemalism) right up to 2005—although some of the principles began to be challenged in the 1990s and more strongly so in the first years of the 21st century. Nationalism (milliyetçilik), secularism (laiklik), republicanism (cumhuriyetçilik), revolutionism (inkilâpçılık), and populism (halkçılık) were the hallmark principles and policies of state ethnic nationalism from the inception of the republic to the present. The emphasis on Turkish nationalism excluded the expression of any sentiments inclusive of the national feelings or identity of the Kurds. One of the purposes of secularism was to make sure that Kurds would not be able to use religious discourse to frame nationalist sentiments. Revolutionism meant that the state would use any forceful measures necessary to bind the loyalties of citizens to the state. This foreclosed any possibility that Kurds (or any other minority) would be able to establish civil associations to strengthen or sustain their identity. The principle of populism reinforced that of revolutionism as emphasized in Article 88 of the 1924 constitution that specified, “The people of Turkey, regardless of religion and race, are Turks as regards citizenship.”²⁹ Indeed, the word Kurd or Kurds was never mentioned in the constitution. This is a problem that still persists in the historiographical literature of Turkey in which scholars do not recognize that the policies of the 1920s and 1930s still persist in the

²⁹ Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 378-9.

writing of the history of Turkey. Ömer Taşpınar, in a critique of this mindset, has stated, “There is, in fact, an intriguing continuity between the societal and political cleavages of the foundational decades of the Turkish Republic in the 1920 and 1930s, and the cleavages that polarized Turkish society in the 1980s and 1990s,”³⁰ Taşpınar mentions the merits of the book that he was reviewing, but says, “surprisingly the book fails to emphasize explicitly the continuity of Kurdish in modern Turkish history.”³¹ If the issue were to be addressed, even in 2005, it had to be done implicitly, kind of in code to the *cognoscenti* of the details of the history of Turkey. Taşpınar succinctly analyzed how the failure to recognize Kurdish (and Islamic) identity in the 1920s and 1930s affects the subsequent history of Turkey’s history and politics:

It is very interesting that Turkey managed to avoid an identity-based polarization along Kurdish and Islamic lines during the Cold War interlude. In fact, the ideological polarization that the country witnessed between 1950 and 1980 masked the domestic identity problems of the Kemalist Republic that were rooted in a form of nation-building that suppressed the Kurdish and Islamic identity of Anatolia. It is no coincidence that the Anatolian periphery had responded to secularist and Turkish nation-building with more than a dozen Kurdish-Islamic rebellions between 1925 and 1938.³²

³⁰ Ömer Taşpınar, in his review of Meliha Benli Altunk and Özlem, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2005) in *The Middle East Journal*, vol. 59, no. 3 (Summer, 2005): 498-99.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. The main objective of my *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism, 1880-1825*...was to argue this very point. Hakan Yavuz also addresses this question in, “Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3 (Autumn, 2001): 1-25 and the same author, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) in which he provides an explicit recognition of the continuity of Kurdish and Islamic opposition to the Turkish and its unidimensional ethnic nationalism. Other scholars have also recognized this continuity, among them are: Kemal Kirişçi and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London: Frank Cass, 1997); Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey’s Kurdish Question* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999); Robert Olson, *The Kurdish Question in Turkish-Iranian Relations: From World War I to 1998* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998); *Turkey’s Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2001); *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004: Revolution, Ideology, War, Coups and Geopolitics* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2004); and *The Goat and the Butcher: Nationalism and State-Formation in Kurdistan-Iraq since the Iraqi War* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2005).

Taşpınar's analysis is what I have argued above in more detail.

The point I argue here is that even though the constitution was ratified one year before the Sheikh Said rebellion and some of the six principles were beginning to be implemented, the rebellion resulted in a further solidification of the principles in their implementation, especially regarding the Kurdish nationalist challenge. The June 5, 1926 treaty that ceded the Mosul province to Iraq (and Great Britain) lessened Turkey's ability to control the future configuration of trans-state Kurdish nationalism, especially, as we have seen above, it was the British intention to foster Kurdish nationalism in Iraq in order to govern Iraq as an instrument to restrain the Sunni Arabs and Shi'a Arabs of Iraq in the interests of its wider Middle East and imperial policies.

The Return of the Mosul Question

The Mosul question again became of crucial significance to Turkey during the negotiations between Turkey and the U.S. regarding the role that Turkey would or might play in the planned U.S. invasion of Iraq. It should be noted here that the Bush administration had decided to attack Iraq sometime before the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC. A strong indication of this intent was clearly indicated on July 14, 2002 when U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, one of the main advocates behind the U.S. war against terrorism, a fervid supporter of Israel, and a strong advocate of war against Iraq, and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Marc Grossman, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey, well-known in Ankara, and also a strong supporter of Israel and of the Turkey-Israel relationship (alliance), visited Turkey to finalize preparations for the war. During their one day visit, which had been preceded by extensive talks already conducted between

American and Turkish negotiators that apparently began as early as January 2002, the two U.S. officials reportedly told the Turks that when the U.S. invaded Iraq its forces would also occupy Mosul city, Mosul province, and Kirkuk province. By doing so they hoped to eliminate the competition between Kurds, Turkomans, and Arabs in these provinces.³³ Wolfowitz and Grossman also requested that Turkey allow some 80,000 American troops (later lowered to 62,000) to transit and be stationed in Turkey and to allow U.S. engineers to make site inspections of six Turkish air bases and three harbors in order to calculate how many improvements were needed to accommodate the anticipated influx of troops and war material.

According to different sources, Wolfowitz and Grossman indicated that the U.S. would offer Turkey an economic package worth \$14-16 billion. Part of the package was to reduce U.S. tariffs on Turkish textiles. The two Americans also indicated the U.S. would consider erasing \$3.5 billion of Turkey's \$5 to 6 billion debt to the U.S.³⁴ When Wolfowitz and Grossman returned to Turkey on December 3-4, 2002 in order to flesh out negotiations that had been taking place between the two parties since Wolfowitz and Grossman's July 15 departure, it was clear that the talks were not going well. On December 30, Prime Minister Abdullah Gül, in an interview with editors of Turkey's leading newspapers and broadcast media, said that regardless of U.S. policies and objectives, Turkey, too, "had its own scenarios" with regard to the disposition of Iraq and the oil and gas fields of northern Iraq.³⁵ Just what Gül meant became clearer on January 5, 2003 when Foreign Minister Yaşar Yakış told Sedat Ergin, the leading

³³ For the details of these negotiations and the population statistics of the various ethnic groups in these provinces see Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004...*, 159-213.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 161-82.

³⁵ *Hürriyet*, December 31, 2002.

political journalist for the mass-circulation *Hürriyet*, in a private interview that he and his staff were reviewing and examining all treaties dealing with the negotiations and disposition of the Mosul province after WWI and, in particular, the June 5, 1926 treaty. Yakış' raising of the validity of the June 5 treaty is significant as it was signed, as we have seen above, in political and diplomatic circumstances similar to the one that Turkey faced in 2005 with the one major difference being that Americans had replaced the British as the major negotiating protagonist. The negotiations between the Americans and Turks in 2002 bear similarity to the *pourparlers* in 1924 between the Turks and the British before the signing of the June 5, 1926 treaty.

Yakış raised the issue of the validity of the June 5, 1926 treaty, in spite of the judgment of numerous scholars that the matter had been settled and that Turkey had accepted the international legitimacy of the treaty, in particular that it had accepted a 500,000 pound sterling settlement to be made in 25 annual installments by the Iraq Oil Company (IOC). The thorough scrutiny of the circumstances surrounding the 1926 treaty by some of Turkey's top diplomats and international lawyers suggested Ankara's unhappiness and nervousness about the possible consequences of a U.S. attack and occupation of Iraq resulting in a potential ineffectual government or a hostile state being created in Iraq leading to the establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq. It was clear by December 2002 that Turkey would not be happy with a U.S. dominated Iraq that was to keep U.S. military forces in Iraq for the foreseeable future. Even in such circumstances, it was clear to the Turks that the U.S. would have to have the cooperation of the Kurdish armed forces for the success of any kind of federation that might be established.

Yakış stressed four major concerns of Turkey in the wake of any U.S. war against Iraq: one, the Kurds must not be allowed to become stronger, especially through control of the oil and gas sources located in northern Iraq; two, the Turkomans (of which it is generally estimated comprise a population of 500,000 to one million in Iraq) must be protected and be equal participants in any government in Iraq as well as the Kurdish-controlled portion of any federation to be established. According to Yakış, at the time of the treaty in 1926, Mosul and Kirkuk were largely Turkoman cities and for that reason they should profit equally with other groups in Iraq from the exploitation of the country's resources; three, the foreign minister also noted that the foreign ministry staff was examining whether Turkey possessed certain rights with regard to the 1926 treaty and whether these rights had been violated in the years subsequent to the signing of the treaty. Here Yakış was referring to whether or not the government of Iraq had paid all twenty five payments of the 500,000 pound sterling that had been agreed to; four, he emphasized that Turkey's intervention and stationing of troops in northern Iraq in the 1980s and 1990s had been done in agreement with KDP and the PUK.

By mid 2005 it was clear that three of Turkey's concerns had been nullified: the Kurds were stronger, the Turkomans' influence had been greatly reduced, including that of the Iraq Turkoman Front (ITF) which had been closely allied with Turkey and whose influence had been further reduced by the January 30, 2005 national assembly and provincial elections.³⁶ As a result of the elections, Turkey's support for the Turkomans was also weakened, compelling Turkomans to seek accommodation with the victorious Kurdish party. Concern number three was still in operation as Turkey still had some

³⁶ For the details of the elections see Robert Olson, *The Goat and the Butcher: Nationalism and State-Formation in Kurdistan-Iraq since the Iraqi War* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2005),

1500 to 2500 troops stationed along Iraq's side of the 1926 international border. By 2005, however, the troops were no longer stationed in northern Iraq with consent of the KDP and PUK, but rather their acquiescence to a Turkish *fait accompli*. The TAF had made clear on several occasions that they would not remove the troops until U.S., Iraqi, and Kurdish forces, or some combination thereof, attacked, disarmed, and removed the PPK guerrillas still holding out in the Kandil Mountain region of northern Iraq. Concern number four, as to whether Turkey possessed certain rights or, indeed, any rights with regard to the treaty, or whether these rights had been violated in the years subsequent to the signing of the treaty, were largely discredited by a host of scholars and commentators.³⁷

Some politicians and journalists argued that Turkey did have rights based on Article 14 of the treaty dealing with the oil issue. Some also claimed that all twenty five payments had not been made to Turkey. Investigations indicated that, indeed, all payments had not been made, but by the 1970s Turkey had agreed to forego the last few payments in lieu of Iraq's decision to build two pipelines from the Kirkuk fields that would pass through Turkey on the way to terminals on the Mediterranean Sea at Ceyhan (Dörtyol).³⁸ The fact that the issue of the 1926 treaty was not brought up again by the Turks indicated that they accepted that it did not provide a basis or excuse for a Turkish invasion or occupation of portions of northern Iraq.

The significance of the potential of the challenge of Kurdish nationalism was acknowledged by the governments of Iran and Syria as well as by Turkey and Iraq. But the Iraqi government was under British mandate and control from 1920 to 1958 and

³⁷ See Robert Olson, *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004...*, 171-77.

³⁸ Ibid.

could do little about the strengthening of Kurdish nationalism, as that was the policy of the mandatory government to which it was beholden. Also, Syria could take no effective action against Kurdish nationalism as it was under French mandate, although the challenge of Kurdish nationalism in Syria was not as much of a challenge as it was in Iraq or Turkey. Iran, like Turkey, did face a Kurdish challenge, although its suppression of Kurdish nationalist movements was less harsh than that of Turkey. But this also meant that it was possible for the Kurds to mount a strong challenge to the central government as they did in 1946 when they created the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad which lasted for one year before being crushed by Tehran.³⁹

The significance of the Kurdish challenge is indicated further in that it determined the international boundary between Turkey and Iraq that still remains. The 1930 Mt. Ararat rebellion contributed to determining the border between Turkey and Iran with the signing of the *Turkey-Iran Frontier Treaty* on January 23, 1932 which, with the addition of a small adjustment in 1937, still is in force. Only the border with Syria was not directly affected by Kurdish rebellion. The border between Turkey and Syria was defined in the Lausanne Treaty (July 24, 1923) which followed the boundary agreed upon between the Turks and French in the Franklin-Bouillon Treaty agreement of October 20, 1921, which excluded Hatay (Alexandretta) and Antakya (Antioch) which were annexed by Turkey in 1939.⁴⁰ Although it should be noted that there are many

³⁹ For accounts of the origins of Kurdish nationalism in Iran see, Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1992); Farideh Koochi-Kamali, *The Political Development of the Kurds in Iran: Pastoral Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave/McMillan, 2003). For an excellent account of Kurdish nationalism in mandatory Syria see, Nelida Fuccaro, "Kurds and Kurdish Nationalism in Mandatory Syria: Politics, Culture and Identity," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa, CO: Mazda Publishers, 2003): 191-217.

⁴⁰ The treaty was named after Henri Bouillon who was the French foreign minister at the time.

Kurdish villages and towns along and close to the border, especially in the eastern provinces of Syria which abut heavily Kurdish populated areas in Turkey.

In addition to determining the borders between Turkey and Iraq and between Turkey and Iran, Kurdish nationalism was one of the most important issues and, in the case of Iraq, the most important issue, in the relations among all four countries throughout the interwar period, with the exception of the Cold War period as mentioned above. This was also the case from 1980 onwards. During these periods there were myriads of regular meetings among and between the border security forces of all four countries frequently supplemented by high-level meetings and visits of foreign and prime ministers.⁴¹ At times of Kurdish unrest and rebellion such as in Turkey from 1925 to 1938, in Syria from 1925 to 1932, the developments leading to the establishment of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in Iran in 1946, and the period of civil war in Turkey between government forces and the PKK; all were occasions for extraordinary vigilance on the borders and against Kurdish nationalist movements in all four countries. It must be noted that from 1979 to 1998 the headquarters of the PKK was in Damascus. Indeed, the Sa'adabad Pact signed by Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan on July 8, 1937 occurred while Turkey was in the midst of combating the Kurdish rebellion in Dersim. Abbas Vali argues that the Sa'adabad Pact was an attempt "to regionalize the Kurdish question in the context of an anti-communist alliance that in itself signified the persistence of

⁴¹ For an account of some of these meetings and visits see, Robert Olson, *Turkey's Relations with Iran, Syria, Israel, and Russia, 1991-2000*... 11-124 and *Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004*...; the entire book.

anxiety about the possible threat Kurdish ethnicity could pose to Turkey or Iran [or Iraq] should the regional conditions prove favorable.”⁴²

The Kurdish problem, the internal challenges of Kurdish nationalism, and the Kurdish question with its external challenges, have been and continue to be among the most important issues facing the Turkish state in the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century. Although its direct challenge was somewhat mitigated from 1950 to 1983 by Kurdish nationalists, with the exception of the KDP, preferring to ensconce their nationalist sentiments in Marxist and socialist movements and discourse, but even then the authorities were not fooled. One of the objectives of the 1980 military coup and, probably the most important along with challenge from Islamist forces, was to squash Kurdish nationalism or, at least, to make it more manageable. It is important to note that from 1980 onwards the Turkish government, press and TAF usually used the word “*irticai*” or reactionism to define both Kurdish nationalists and nationalism as well as the movements and political parties of political Islam. The choice of “*irticai*” instead of Kurdish nationalism was undoubtedly, in part, not to bring more attention to Kurdish nationalism or the Kurds. By the 2000s this practice had been by and large abandoned.

On February 28, 1997 Turkey’s National Security Council (MGK) announced a series of “briefings” proclaiming the “greatest threat facing the nation is not the PKK in and of itself, but the cooperation between the PKK and the “reactionaries”, i.e. the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) and its constituencies. The MGK stated that it had written a new national military strategy that emphasized, “Internal threats were much greater to

⁴² Abbas Vali, “The Making of Kurdish Identity in Iran,” *Critique*, no. 7 (1995): 10. This article first appeared in French as “Genèse et structure du nationalisme kurde in Iran,” in *Peuples Méditerranéens*, nos. 68-9 (1994): 143-64.

the Turkish state than external threats.”⁴³ The TAF claimed they had learned that “separatists” (*bölücüler*), i.e. the PKK, and “reactionaries” (*irticai*) were exchanging intelligence information and perpetuating “joint actions against the state.”⁴⁴ It is necessary to note that both Kurds and Islamists, even of the Welfare Party, were lumped together much like religious and nationalist elements who participated in the Sheikh Said rebellion. The February 28 process (*süreç*) was the first time that the Kemalist elite were compelled to characterize their external Kurdish question, Kurdish nationalism in Iraq, Iran, and Syria as an immense and growing internal problem as well. Fingers were not pointed directly at the KDP and PUK because, at the time, they were cooperating with the TAF in attacking the PKK forces in Iraq. Henceforth, *irticai* began to be used less frequently in the mass media and by state and military officials.

An indication of how serious Ankara took the threat of PKK guerrillas in Iraq and their terrorist actions in Turkey was that from 1992 up to Erbakan’s ouster in June 1997, both Süleyman Demirel, while he was prime minister (1991-93) and president (1993-2000), and Bülent Ecevit, leader of the Democratic Left Party (DSP) and deputy prime minister in the Mesut Yılmaz (Motherland Party-ANAP) government, advocated that the border between Turkey and Iraq should be moved anywhere from nine to sixteen miles south of the 1926 demarcation line—clearly a violation of the treaty. This was the territory that Turkish troops had occupied since the 1980s and permanently after 1992. As of mid summer 2006, Turkish troops still occupied that stretch of land despite the demands of the KDP and PUK that they evacuate it. TAF commanders stated that they would pull out their troops but only after the Americans forces, Iraqi government forces,

⁴³ *Hürriyet*, April 29, 1997.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

the KDP or PUK, or some combination of all four, would attack, disarm and disband the PKK guerrillas, which Turkey referred to as terrorists, still in Iraq. The issue had reached the boiling point by mid July, but it was still unclear what Turkey's actions would be.

2005—Mosul and Kurds, Again

The foregoing should make it clear that the challenge of Kurdish nationalism and how to manage it, both within Turkey and Iraq as well as in Syria and Iran, were the most salient issues confronting Turkey in 2005 much like the issues in 1925 that led to the June 5, 1926 treaty. In July 2005, the significance of the June 5 treaty once again became a focus of attention illustrating the rise of Kurdish nationalism and the state-formation developments taking place in Kurdistan-Iraq and the strengthening of Kurdish nationalist movements in Iran and Syria. The intense ideological tension that it was creating was especially clear in statements made by Demirel. In an exclusive interview with editors of the *Turkish Daily News* referring to the threat of the PKK guerrillas in Iraq and the rise of PKK terrorists acts in Turkey during the past six months, Demirel said that Turkey would again have to deploy up to 200,000 troops along the Turkey-Iraq border to stop the infiltration of PKK guerrillas into Turkey and to keep them from cooperating and fighting with PKK fighters within Turkey. He said that the problem had reached the level that it had because of parliament's rejection of the March 1 resolution (*tezekersi*) that would also have allowed Turkish troops to join the Americans in their invasion of Iraq, permitting Turkish troops to maintain a strong presence in northern Iraq, that certainly would have resulted in the TAF attacking and destroying the PKK bases in Iraq. He elaborated, "The exclusion of what today we call northern Iraq, which

was the Mosul province of the Ottoman Empire in the pre-WWI era, has now turned out to be the most serious security problem of Turkey.”⁴⁵

Demirel’s statement implied that he would support a Turkish military thrust into northern Iraq, especially in light of the strong state-formation developments that were taking place in Kurdistan-Iraq. Bülent Ecevit also called for military intervention, partly because he was unhappy with what the EU was offering Turkey regarding admittance to the EU.⁴⁶ Demirel acknowledged that Turkey could not intervene in northern Iraq as the U.S. would not allow it because of its dependence, both militarily and politically, on the Kurds, especially to combat the resistance to the American occupation which raged in summer 2005. But short of invasion, which he did not rule out, it was incumbent on the Turkish government to deploy up to 200,000 troops along the border as it had done in the 1990s even if it jeopardized relations with the EU and Washington.⁴⁷

It must be noted that Demirel’s response to Ecevit, and his other concerns, came just a few days after he had opined that the accession of the Mosul province to Iraq had turned out to be one of the most serious security problems of Turkey to the extent that he was willing to sacrifice relations with the EU and with the U.S. because, “otherwise the government will be the awkward situation of not being able to fulfill one of its key duties, which is to provide security for its citizens. Those who govern Turkey should think about that; although I am not warning.”⁴⁸ Apparently, the government was listening. Prime Minister Erdoğan, just recently returned from a visit (July 19-20) to

⁴⁵ *TDN*, July 19, 2005.

⁴⁶ For the context of Ecevit’s remarks see Henri J. Barkey, “Turkey and Iraq: The Perils (and Prospects) of Proximity,” United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 141, Iraq and Its Neighbors Series, July 2005. On line <http://usip.org/pubs-specialreports/sr141.html>, page 19, fn.12.

⁴⁷ Many accounts estimated that Turkey had deployed up to 300,000 troops in eastern and southeastern Turkey against the PKK in the 1990s.

⁴⁸ *TDN*, July 19, 2005.

Mongolia, where he had visited the ancient historical sites of the first Turkic empires and no doubt was overcome with the patriotism that had filled Mustafa Kemal when he went into Anatolia to ignite the war of independence. When asked by a reporter whether the TAF would bomb the PKK bases in northern Iraq, he replied, “We will see what is necessary. Maybe it will not be necessary for us to do anything. But the price is getting to be heavy as our young people are dying. How long can one bear this?”⁴⁹ When asked whether Turkey was ready to pay the political and economic cost of such an operation, Erdoğan responded, “even if the cost is high, we are ready to do it.”⁵⁰

A few days after Demirel said that Turkey should deploy up to 200,000 troops along its border with Iraq, Ertuğrul Özkök, managing editor of *Hürriyet* and a strong supporter of the nationalist republican elite, echoed Demirel’s call for a build up of several hundred thousand troops along Turkey’s border with Iraq in order to stop PKK incursions and terrorists attacks launched from Iraq against Turkey—and to prevent the PKK from using northern Iraq as a refuge. Özkök attributed this necessity to the decision of the AKP government not to join the Americans in their war against Iraq and to the lack of success and incompetence of the American occupation of Iraq. The developments in Iraq were now threatening the peace and stability of Turkey. Özkök opined that the developments in Iraq would “end up creating a new Israel.”⁵¹ He added that there was no possibility that the KDP or PUK would attack the PKK in Iraq. It was time for Turkey, said Özkök, to take matters into its own hands and no longer depend on the empty promises of others.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid, and July 22, 2005.

⁵¹ *Hürriyet*, July 27, 2005.

The differences between Demirel and Ecevit had repercussions and significance for Turkey other than the challenge of Kurdish nationalism, but the implication of Ecevit's argument, whatever his intentions, was that it came at a time when the conservative republican elite felt as challenged by Kurdish nationalism as the young republican leaders had felt during the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925. It must be noted that many scholars and intellectuals still thought that the British had had a hand in igniting the rebellion from their position in occupied Iraq. In 2005, once again Turkey found itself facing both an internal and external challenge from Kurdish nationalism, and a Kurdish nationalism that was much stronger in 2005 than it was in 1925. Once again it was a domestic challenge as well as one from the Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq. And just as the British fostered Kurdish nationalism in Iraq from 1920 to 1958, it certainly must have been realized by many Turks that American occupation of Iraq by design, intention, or default, was encouraging the development of state-formation among the Kurds in Kurdistan-Iraq. While the U.S. did not support militant Kurdish nationalism in Turkey and considered the PKK as a terrorist organization, it did support Kurdish linguistic, cultural, and political rights in Turkey, but at the same time it was also unwilling to attack the PKK bases in northern Iraq. Among the reasons for not doing so, included its military and political relationship with the Kurds of Iraq that circumscribed whatever action they might be willing to take against the PKK in Iraq. Additionally the Kurds of Iraq did not want to be seen as attacking other Kurds when they were at war with others for attacking Kurds.

Also notable is that five days after Demirel's comments about the exclusion of Mosul province from Turkey's sovereignty, Turks celebrated the signing of the Treaty of

Lausanne (July 24, 1923) by which the international community recognized the Republic of Turkey within its present borders with the exception of the province of Hatay and the province of Mosul which, as we have seen above, was not decided until 1926.⁵² What is notable about the Treaty of Lausanne, unlike the Treaty of Sèvres, is that it does not mention Kurds or Kurdistan. Indeed, the Kurds were not even to be considered a minority as only non-Muslims fell into that category. The republican elite gathered both in Lausanne and in Turkey to commemorate the signing. Erdal İnönü, the son of İsmet İnönü, the main negotiator of the Lausanne Treaty, reaffirmed, much to the delight of Demirel, the principles of the treaty. Others called for the government to be aware of “threats” to Turkey’s existence, noting that the Lausanne Treaty symbolized the failure of the efforts to destroy Turkey’s territorial integrity, obviously by not mentioning the Kurds as had the Treaty of Sèvres. Thus, in July 2005, the challenge of Kurdish nationalism to the Turkish state was signified in three major ways - the PKK guerrillas in Iraq, the perpetration of PKK resistance and terrorist acts in Turkey, and the commemoration of the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne.

While in mid 2006, it was still uncertain as to whether Turkey would make an incursion into Iraq and, if it did, it would probably do so with the acquiescence of the Americans. Given this, the question remains: what were the reasons that Turkey did not take a more aggressive military and political stance against the threat, as they saw it, of the state-formation developments that were taking place in northern Iraq under the watch of the American occupation and the overflow of those developments in the Kurdish nationalism movements in Turkey? The reason seems to be that Turkey sought to

⁵² In many texts the date of the signing of the treaty is given as being on July 23, but Turks accept the date of July 24.

contain Kurdish nationalism in Iraq by participation in the U.S. rebuilding project in Iraq and by participating in the Wider Middle East Initiative (WMEI) project that the U.S. proposed in 2004 by means of which the U.S. and Europe sought to politically and economically dominate the countries of the Middle East, especially the Arab countries, by bringing pro-American, market-oriented, capital intensive, and Israel-tolerant governments to power.

Turkey and the Wider Middle East Initiative (WMEI)

While attending the G-8 Summit at Sea Island, Georgia on June 8-9, 2004, Erdoğan committed his government to participate in the U.S. WMEI. As mentioned earlier, this was a project to democratize the Arab countries of the Middle East and to foster regime change in Iraq, if necessary, through war, as demonstrated by the U.S. war against Iraq and its occupation of that country. Democratization was to result in pro-American, pro-Israel, market-oriented governments or regimes. The first step of the WMEI project was the invasion and occupation of Iraq. It must be noted that even as the war in Iraq raged during the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, the European countries as well as Canada and Russia, concurred with the objectives of the WMEI. The process was to continue to bring Syria, and eventually Iran, online so to speak. However, the strong resistance in Iraq considerably delayed the expedition of the WMEI. Indeed, by mid 2005 it looked liked its delay might be indefinite.

In spite of set backs to its pacification and control of Iraq, in mid 2005 the U.S. was still vigorously pursuing the WMEI. One aspect of the WMEI was to strengthen the economic and trade relations between Turkey and Israel, between Israel and Jordan, among the Palestinians, between Jordan and the Palestinians, as well as among all of

these groups and Turkey. This was to be accomplished by the establishment of Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZ) in which, in exchange for Israeli participation or Israeli goods (usually 8 to 10 percent), the goods manufactured in the QIZs could be exported via Israel to the U.S. and NAFTA countries.⁵³ Such goods could be exported to the U.S. and NAFTA countries tariff free as Israel was a favored nation trading partner of the U.S.

Ankara understood the WMEI as a crucial aspect of the U.S. Middle East policy. In April and July 2004, Turkey and Israel had signed several economic and trade agreements. During Israel's Assistant Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's mid July 2004 visit to Turkey, the two countries completed negotiations regarding Israel's purchase of water from Turkey which had been in the works for some time. Most notably among the agreements signed was one to have Israeli companies bid on the privatization of Turkish companies—Tekel, Petkim, Turkish Air Lines (THY), and Türkcell—the latter the largest Turkish mobile telephone company. Turkey also invited Israeli companies to participate in several projects in Turkey's South Anatolian Project (GAP).⁵⁴

The NATO Summit held in Istanbul on June 27-29, 2004 indicated Turkey's acceptance and eagerness to participate in the WMEI. The negotiations carried on at the summit confirmed to the Turks that NATO countries agreed to extend their responsibilities and obligations into the Arab world by approving and participating in the U.S.-led WMEI. This was affirmed in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI-İstanbul İşbirliği Girişimi) declaration issued at the conclusion of the summit.⁵⁵ The declaration

⁵³ For the origins of the IQZs see Robert Olson, "*Turkey-Iran Relations, 1979-2004...*, 166-69.

⁵⁴ For more details on Olmert's visit, see Robert Olson, "Turkey's Policies toward Kurdistan-Iraq and Iraq: Nationalism, Capitalism and State Formation," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (forthcoming, winter 2006).

⁵⁵ *Hürriyet*, June 28, 2004.

stated that NATO would cooperate with the U.S. in the WMEI, the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of WMD, border security, civil defense, natural disasters, NATO maneuvers, military reform, as well as providing assistance in the area of civil-military relations. The ICI was an extension of the WMEI announced at Sea Island some three weeks earlier.

During the NATO Summit, in a June 27 meeting with Prime Minister Erdoğan, President Bush asked the Turks for a one-year extension of the U.S. use of İncirlik air base in order to supply food, fuel, and military supplies to U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq. One of the reasons for the Turks' agreement was that by June 2004 Turkey's exports to Iraq had reached \$800 million which indicated that for the entire year exports might well reach \$1.6 to \$1.8. The \$1.6 billion figure would be only \$400 million short of the \$2 billion figure that the Turks had hoped to have access to from the \$18.6 billion allocated by the U.S. Congress for the rebuilding of Iraq. Another reason that Turkey was eager to participate as a transit and supplier country to the U.S. forces in Iraq was that the trucking companies, many of them Kurdish owned, helped to alleviate the employment and poor economic opportunities in southeast Turkey.

State Minister for Trade Kürşad Tüzmen made it clear on several occasions that even the Iraqi resistance's taking drivers of the trucks hostage and sometimes killing them, would not halt Turkish trade with Iraq: "We are a country that wants to demonstrate greater capabilities in strong markets. As a result, we will continue our trade with Iraq."⁵⁶ Tüzmen said that before the hostage taking of Turkish drivers, 4000 vehicles a day crossed the border into Iraq, and as of August 8, 2004, 3900 vehicles were passing daily. He was confident that Turkey would meet its objective of exporting \$1.6

⁵⁶ *Hürriyet*, August 6, 2004.

to \$1.8 billion of goods to Iraq by the end of 2004.⁵⁷ His remarks also indicated that Turkey was implementing the decisions of the June G-8 and NATO summits and the policies of the WMEI.

By October 2004, there was more evidence that Turkey was acquiescing to the U.S. and Iraq's government policies of allowing and encouraging Turkey's trade with Iraq. On October 24, the Turkey Chamber of Commerce and Markets (TOBB) declared that the projected \$1.8 billion trade between the two countries was a "vital artery/ *hayati dammar*." It also increased its economic and political relations with Kurdistan-Iraq. In October, the announcement that the AKP government had agreed with the KDP to begin air flights between Istanbul and Ankara for "humanitarian" reasons, showed promise, but by mid 2005, the flights had not yet begun. In December 2004, it was also announced that Turkish companies would be allowed to participate in several oil deals signed by various oil and gas companies with the Iraqi government and with the approval of Washington.⁵⁸ In December 2004, more confirmation that the Iraq government, the U.S. and the Kurds would allow Turkish participation in the exploitation of Iraq's oil and gas industry came when the Iraq Interim Government (IIG) announced that it had awarded its first post-war oil field contracts to Turkish and Canadian firms. Turkey's Avrasya Company won the contract to develop the Khurmala Dome field in Kurdistan-Iraq in Kirkuk province.

Turkey had more good news regarding its oil and gas interest in Iraq when it was announced on July 5, 2005 that Pet-Oil, a Turkish company in partnership with an American company, was drilling and soon expected to lift oil from fields in the Kifri

⁵⁷ All indications are that Turkey met those goals.

⁵⁸ For the details of these deals see Robert Olson, "Turkey's Policies toward Kurdistan-Iraq and Iraq: Nationalism, Capitalism and State Formation (forthcoming in *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Winter 2006).

region of northern Iraq under the control of the PUK. Güntekin Köksal, the owner of Pet-Oil, said that the two companies expected to find “billions of barrels of oil here.”⁵⁹ In fact, he claimed that reserves containing billions of barrels of oil had been discovered: “Oil was flowing like a stream.”⁶⁰

A spokesman for the PUK who was interviewed by the *Turkish Daily News* regarding the contracts given to Pet-Oil stated, “The deals with the Turkish companies should not be seen as an effort by the Kurds to set a precedent to run the Kirkuk and Mosul fields. The PUK agreed with other Iraqi opposition groups before the fall of Saddam Husayn that the energy resources of Iraq would be run by the central government in Baghdad and not by individual groups.”⁶¹ He said the deals with Turkish companies were reached long before the agreement by the opposition groups and were simply production sharing deals and did not provide any concessions to foreign companies. The same PUK official said that the PUK leadership had taken the decision to preserve strong relations with Ankara, and thus, maintain the view that Turkish oil and gas companies as well as other Turkish firms would remain active in northern Iraq. The permission of the U.S. to allow Turkish oil and gas firms to operate in Kurdish-controlled regions of northern Iraq was obviously an effort on the part of Washington to allay Turkey’s opposition to its policies in Iraq; one of which was to strengthen Kurdish autonomy. Thus, elements of the WMEI seem to have been put into place before it was officially announced at the June G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia.

During Erdoğan’s June 7-11, 2005 visit to Washington and New York, he had many meetings and discussions that emphasized if Turkey wanted fuller participation in

⁵⁹ www.kurdishmedia.com, December 14, 2004.

⁶⁰ *Zaman*, July 5, 2005.

⁶¹ Ibid.

the WMEI, it should: one, continue to strengthen its economic ties with Iraq and Kurdistan-Iraq; two, expand further its already manifold defensive, security, trade and economic relations with Israel; and three, reduce its relations with Syria and Iran and to do so despite its reservations regarding U.S. policies in Iraq which, most likely, would lead to an eventual Kurdish state.

In Washington at a June 7, 2005 meeting of the American-Turkish Council (ATC), one of the keynote speakers, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, a former U.S. Trade Representative, told the Turks that they should “look beyond accession to the European Union and adopt a more global perspective. Now, the European Union is clearly important for Turkey’s future, but so are countries of the broader Middle East.” It was particularly important for Turkey “to recognize that it should be operating in a global environment. So, at least my suggestion is that as Turkey moves forward, obviously it wants to have good relations with Europe and the United States, but it needs to have a 360 degree perspective.”⁶² Zoellick listed three sets of shared interests in which Turkey and the U.S. could cooperate: democratization in the broader Middle East; reconstruction of Iraq; and in development in the broader Middle East.”⁶³ “So,” continued Zoellick,

“my hope is that as Turkey looks to its own future, the connections that it has with Europe, which are implemented, need to be complemented by a global perspective. That’s where the partnership with the United States becomes particularly valuable. The United States is a unique country in terms of its global reach and the insights and relationships one builds, I hope, can be relevant to our interests as well.”⁶⁴

⁶² *TDN*, June 12, 2005.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Zoellick, as a former U.S. Trade Representative, was deeply familiar with the Turkish economy. He was also a strong advocate of the QIZs mentioned earlier. In 2002, during then Turkish Prime Minister

Zoellick's suggestions seem to indicate that Turkey had some choices to make if it wanted to participate as fully as possible in the U.S. WMEI: one, to acquiesce in the developments in Iraq which had led and were continuing to lead to a strengthening of Kurdish nationalism and Kurdish control of northern Iraq and to the creation of an independent Kurdish state whenever the Kurds thought desirable; two, to continue its policies of cooperation with Israel in a variety of trading and economic issues, including Turkish participation in the Palestinian economy and in QIZs that might eventually be set up in the West Bank of Gaza or, three, jeopardizing the above options by lessening cooperation with Israel or by militarily intervening against the PKK forces in northern Iraq. The tensions in July 2005 showed just how acute these choices were.⁶⁵ The possibility that Turkey would have a Kurdish state on its border in the near future was made even clearer on July 31 when Mas'ud Barzani, the leader of the KDP and the President of the Kurdish-controlled regions in northern Iraq announced that he was genuinely surprised that many "circles" believed that the Kurds did not deserve federalism as a solution to the Kurdish question: "We have the right to establish our own state. When we only want federalism, they [some circles] should be grateful. We are

Bülent Ecevit's January 14-19, 2002 visit to Washington, Zoellick told a large contingent of Turkish businessmen accompanying Ecevit that the U.S. encouraged the "diversification of the Turkish economy and particularly the export of hi-tech products. He also advocated Turkish businessmen's participation in QIZs, especially if they were tied to Israel. For a more detailed review of Zoellick's views on Turkey and the QIZs see Robert Olson, *Turkey- Iran Relations, 1979-2004...*, 166-68.

⁶⁵ The increased role of Turkey in the Palestinian economy was demonstrated strongly in that just two days after the ending of the G-8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland on July 9, 2005, former World Bank President James Wolfensohn and currently the UN's special envoy to Israel and the Palestinians for economic development the West Bank and Gaza, met with TOBB President Rifat Hisarcıkoğlu regarding Turkey's participation in the \$3 billion that the G-8 countries had allocated for these purposes. The discussions dwelt on Turkey's construction companies' participation in the construction of facilities at the Erez check point. Since Israel had already been allocated \$50 million for this purpose, it appeared that the Turkish companies would be working as sub-contractors for Israeli construction firms. This project was to be done with the guidelines of the "Ankara Platform"; an agreement by a consortium of Turkish, Israeli and Palestinian businessmen to undertake cooperative agreements in the West Bank and Gaza. This was to be done with the blessing of the U.S. as part of its WMEI.

equals. We are not a minority.”⁶⁶ On the issue of Kirkuk, Barzani was adamant that “Kirkuk must come back to Kurdistan.”⁶⁷ He said that as far back as 1974 Mullah Mustafa Barzani, the then leader of the KDP, had told Ba’th officials that even though the Iraqi government occupied Kirkuk, that, whenever possible, the Kurds would liberate it. Mustafa Barzani told the Ba’th negotiators they would not get him to assign Kirkuk to the government of Iraq.⁶⁸

There are, of course, differences between Turkey’s diplomacy of 1925 and 2005. One of the main differences is that Kurdish nationalism was nascent in both Turkey and Iraq in 1925: in 2005 it the driving force dominating Turkey’s domestic and foreign policies and one of the main factors in determining the future physical and political configuration of Iraq. A second difference between the two dates is that Great Britain fostered Kurdish nationalism from 1920 to 1958, but not with the intention or purpose of creating a Kurdish state. For the British, Kurdish nationalism in Iraq was an instrument to use as a balance against Pan-Arab and Iraqi Arab nationalism as part of its imperial policies to support bland (dynastic) Arab nationalism in the wider Middle East as a vehicle for controlling their colonial territories in the Middle East, and they implemented such policies. In 2005, the Americans declared that they supported a “unified” Iraq, whether or not this was their real policy. Because of their inability to pacify the resisting forces in Iraq, the Americans were compelled to rely on Kurdish forces to help them pacify the resistance to the occupation. This American policy along with the Iraqi Kurds own desire to achieve independence were forces that inevitably would lead to the implementation of policies establishing an independent Kurdish state in Iraq. By 2005, it

⁶⁶ www.kurdishmedia.com, July 31, 2005.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

was too late for Turkey to change the direction of developments in Iraq. Even if TAF did make an incursion against the PKK fighters still in Iraq, it would most likely be a contained operation and done with the acknowledgment of the American occupation forces and, thus with the knowledge of the Iraqi government, in which there were many Kurdish ministers, not to mention that the President of Iraq was a Kurd. Indeed, by August 2006, Ankara had abandoned plans to attack the PKK guerrilla bases in Iraq. Turkey was compelled to accept the fact that a Kurdish state was to exist on its southern border with all the ramifications that this would mean for the Kurds of Turkey. This would be a reversal of the policies followed and implemented by Turkey for the last 80 years. But in 2005 and in future decades, unlike the developments after 1925, the Kurdish state in Iraq would be a great attraction for the Kurds of Turkey as well as of Iran and Syria. This was made clear throughout 2005 when there were scores of demonstrations by Kurds in southeast Turkey, as well as in Iran and Syria, who were demanding that they, too, like the Kurds of Iraq wanted Turkey to be a federal state. This development, unlike the Sheikh Said rebellion, would be much more difficult to squash or surpass. In 2005, Sheikh Said must have been smiling—and winking at the Americans as he so.⁶⁹ But his smile is tremulous as he also realizes that the adversaries of Kurdish nationalism are ever at the ready.

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⁶⁹ In this article I have no intention of going into all the ramifications of a constitution for Iraq and whether it will be approved in the referendum to be conducted in mid October 2005 or not. But the draft of the constitution, as it existed in mid September 2005, indicated that for all practical purposes the Kurdish-controlled region of Iraq, especially the three provinces of Dohuk, Arbil and Sulaymaniya were fully autonomous. Indeed, Kurdish-controlled regions extended significantly into the provinces of Ninawah, Salahuddin, Diyala and Kirkuk (At-Ta'mim). For a good assessment of the constitution and what it forebodes, see Peter W. Galbraith, "Last Chance for Iraq," *The New York Review of Books*, 15, no. 15 (October 6, 2005).

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