



Kurdish National Congress of North America
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Mr. Barack Obama, President
United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

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Honorable President Obama:

The apparent U. S. support to the Kurds in 1972 convinced the Kurdish leadership to believe that America had an interest in the Kurdish plight and would assist them to achieve their national and democratic goals in Iraq and transform Iraq to a democratic state. Unfortunately, that support was nothing but a gambit and an empty promise. That fact became apparent in 1975; exactly one year after the war had reignited between the Iraqi regime and the Kurds, when Henry Kissinger, the Secretary of State at the time, played a very crucial role in forging a pact between Iran and Iraq. He successfully was able to bring the parties together in Algiers under the "Algiers Agreement" that ended the Kurdish revolution. Later, Mr. Kissinger referred to the ostensible U. S. support to the Kurds: "...it was to put pressure on Iraq's pro-Soviet government."

Mr. President, if it were not for America's support, which ultimately turned out to be mendacious, the Kurdish leadership would probably have used a different approach with the Iraqi government to achieve a common ground. But Kissinger's meeting with General Mustafa Barzani in 1972 changed the dynamic of the Kurdish view vis-à-vis America's involvement in Iraq. As a result of Kissinger's deceptive approach, the Kurdish leadership were not only unable to achieve a common ground with the Iraqi government, but also endured a catastrophic collapse before the Iraqi despotic regime.

Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1991, created a menace against the stability of the region. Saddam's ambition to obtain nuclear weapons led the American administration to form a formidable international coalition against his aggressive ambitions. After Saddam's invading forces were driven out of Kuwait, President Bush refused to let the American led forces pursue the Iraqi army and remove Saddam's regime. At the time, America had fortified support from the international community and could have easily deposed Saddam Hussein. Instead, President Bush called upon the Iraqi people, as he put it, "to rise against the dictator, and take the matter into their own hands..." when the Kurds and the Shiites successfully rose up against the Iraqi tyranny in their respective regions, the very same president who encouraged them to rise turned his back on them and permitted Saddam's repressive forces to have a free hand in suppressing

the Kurds and the Shiites. As a result of President Bush's reckless and callous behavior, a human catastrophe was created in Kurdistan-Iraq. Some two million people fled into the bitter cold mountains to escape an imminent death. While in the mountains, hundreds of innocent people including women, children, and elderly were dying on a daily basis. Eventually, under world pressure and some of his own constituents, President Bush decided to create a "safe haven" right above the 36th parallel which included Mosul, Duhok, and Arbil. Later, by a political decision, this safe haven border was shifted to exclude Mosul and encompass Sulaymani. The selection of the 36th parallel was an arbitrary measure the U. S. administration used to temporarily secure a haven to protect the people of Kurdistan from Saddam's murderous forces. Although it saved the Kurds, this measure left more than 50% of historically Kurdistan lands outside of Kurdistan. Ironically, a pan-Arab myopic political mentality has been pressing to demarcate the 36th parallel line as the permanent border of Kurdistan-Iraq.

After Saddam's removal in 2003 and the birth of a new political culture in Iraq—the post-Saddam Iraq allowed for a new Constitution to be drafted for which more than 80% of Iraqi people voted. The Kurdish leadership played an important role in drafting this Constitution in which all nationalities, ethnicities, religious and sectarian factions are fairly represented. Consequently, the Constitution was adopted. In this Constitution, article 140 calls for normalization of the arabized areas of Kurdistan and allows their respective residents to vote and decide whether they want to reunite with their ancestral national geography or remain under the Baghdad administration. However, under the U. S. tutelage, the Iraqi authorities have been dragging their feet and creating one obstacle after another to prevent the sequestered Kurds from deciding their own fate. Ever since the new Constitution was adopted, the U. S. administration has been giving only lip service to implementing the Constitution. Through its passivity, the US government appears to be engaging in another cynical retreat from support of a Constitution which could transform Iraq to a functioning democracy and stable state.

At the inception of the Iraqi liberation in 2003, the Peshmarga forces liberated Kirkuk and all the Arabs who had been brought to arabize this historically Kurdistan city fled. The American administration returned them to the city and prevented them from returning to the regions where they had come from. Americans did that under the pretext of "this process has to be legally implemented"—as if those Arabs originally had come to arabize Kirkuk and other areas of Kurdistan "legally." As a result of this U. S. cynical realpolitik, the Iraqi authorities have been able to trivialize the legitimate and constitutional demands of the Kurds to resolve Kirkuk and other pending issues peaceably and within the context of justice and genuine equality.

Mr. President, as long as the Arab dominant Iraqi government sees no or limited American involvement with regard to implementing the Constitution, they perpetuate their unrealistic policies towards Kurdistan—an approach that could take Iraq back to its dark and totalitarian era. Mr. Aseel Nujaifi's (Governor of Mosul) attitude is a clear indication as to what could happen to the people of Kurdistan if America leaves Iraq without resolving the pending crucial issues between Baghdad and Arbil. Therefore, in this post election epoch, our people

and their leadership expect your administration to take a more visible role in working with the Iraqi authorities to implement the provisions of the new Iraqi Constitution. The people of Kurdistan along with their leadership committed themselves to help America to succeed in Iraq—they honored their commitment. It is time for America to do the same by helping them to regain their historical national territories which were confiscated. The two previous American betrayals still echo in the hearts and minds of our people. They fear that the third U. S. betrayal may be on the horizon, particularly when American policy pertinent to Kurdistan has been delivered in an opaque fashion and not measured with transparency.

America could not find a people more friendly and peaceful than the people of Kurdistan in the region. They deserve America's moral and political support. Mr. President, we believe you more than any leader in the world possess the moral authority to emphatically tell the Iraqi Arab authorities to honor the original Constitution supported by more than 80 percent of Iraqi voters and end this political maneuvering. If this is not resolved prior to the US withdrawal, Iraq could easily fall back into the days of dictatorship. Please do not let the people of Kurdistan down. We shall continue to pray for your success.

Sincerely yours,
Kirmanj Gundi
President