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The Kurdish Nation

M. HAKAN YAVUZ AND MICHAEL M. GUNTER

In a region focused on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of the Kurdish people—the largest nation in the world without its own country—has only occasionally entered the international spotlight. Leaving that question unanswered, however, may prove to be a short-sighted solution.

Although they would constitute a majority if the historic area in which they live (Kurdistan) were a nation-state, the Kurds are but mere minorities in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the countries that encompass the Kurdish homeland. No reliable estimates of the Kurdish population exist, however, because most Kurds tend to exaggerate their numbers, and the states in which they live undercount them for political reasons. There is not even complete agreement on who is a Kurd. Nevertheless, a reasonable estimate is that as many as 7 million Kurds may live in Turkey (making up between 12 and 15 percent of the population), 6 million in Iran (11 percent), 3 million in Iraq (between 20 and 23 percent), and 800,000 in Syria (7 percent). The Kurds, a largely Sunni Muslim people, are also divided tribally, geographically, politically, linguistically, religiously, and ideologically. This, of course, further complicates their nascent but stunted sense of nationalism, and has allowed the states in which they live to use divide-and-rule tactics against them.

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those states, however, have long denied such aspirations, fearing that they would challenge their territorial integrity. The result has been a constant instability that promises to intensify as the Kurds become more politically aware and as their cause grows more visible to the outside world. Indeed, a resolution to the Arab-Israeli dispute would leave the Kurdish question as the greatest source of instability in the geostrategically important Middle East.

KURDISH IDENTITY

Scholars increasingly are analyzing Kurdish nationalism as a “natural” force. However, nationalism, whether Turkish or Kurdish, is always constructed by the cultural elite—the “identity entrepreneurs”—and shaped by political context. The major difference between Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, or Syrian nationalism and Kurdish nationalism is the presence of the state. The modernizing nation-state formed the Turkish state and Turkish nationalism and also stressed the nation’s civic aspect. Since Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran has evolved in response to modernizing nation-states, it constantly stresses its ethnic “difference” and has used events to historicize itself.

Although the Kurdish cultural elite tend to identify Turks as their “other” in the construction of Kurdish nationalism, major tribal, linguistic, religious, and regional fissures exist within Kurdish identity itself. The Kurds are a nation in formation at the crossroads of the Arab, Iranian, and Turkish worlds. The sources of these divisions are sociohistorical and have prevented the emergence of a full-fledged Kurdish identity. Kurdish life remains tribally structured in most areas and is based on local, tightly knit rural communities under a tribal-religious leader known

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as a sheikh or *seyid*. This tribal structure has played a dual role: impeding the formation of Kurdish unity by keeping Kurds fragmented, and preserving a heightened Kurdish particularism toward the Turks, Iranians, and Arabs. Tribal structure has constituted the core depository of Kurdish identity, has facilitated mobilization against centralizing governments, and has also kept a modern conception of nationalism from developing until the mid-twentieth century.

Geography has also fragmented Kurdish identity. The Kurds have historically tended to live in extremely rugged mountainous terrain that has often separated one community from another and also from those of the Arabs, Iranians, and Turks. Diverse Kurdish dialects have dominated the regions and until recently sub-ethnic identities were more powerful than Kurdish consciousness. Rival tribal chiefs have rarely wanted to see an opponent succeed in leading Kurdish social and political movements, and central governments have never hesitated to pit one tribe against another.

THE "KURDISH PROBLEM" IN TURKEY

Kurdish nationalism first began to stir with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I and the emergence of modern Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Thanks to Kurdish political mobilization during World War I and British support for an independent Kurdish state, the 1920 Treaty of Sévres that ended the war between the Allies and the Ottomans called for the creation of "local autonomy for the land where the Kurd element predominates." (Although the treaty's provisions regarding the Kurds were never implemented, fear of partition still haunts Turkish society and breeds continuing suspicion of foreigners.) Between 1925 and 1937, Kurds launched three rebellions against the autocratic regime of Atatürk (after suppressing the 1937 rebellion, during which Kurds attacked several key military posts and killed hundreds of soldiers, the Turkish state erased the villages of the province of Dersim from the map and renamed it Tunceli).

These three rebellions against the young and inexperienced republic created a cumulative image of the Kurdish people as socially tribal, religiously

fanatic, economically backward, and most important, a threat to the national integrity of the Turkish state. The republic did not deny the existence of the Kurds but instead developed a new discourse to speak of them without pronouncing the word "Kurd" in the ethnonational sense. By portraying the Kurdish tribal structure as "reactionary, backward, and dangerous," the Turkish republic depicted itself as modern, secular, and progressive. After the rebellions, politicized Sunni Islam evolved as a surrogate Kurdish identity in southeastern Turkey.

Nationalism and secularism constituted the core of Kemalist ideology in Turkey. The Kemalist project of secularism aimed to "civilize" the nation's cultural and social domains. Although nationalism presupposes the creation of an ethnically homogeneous society at the expense of other identities, "race" never became a constituting element of a Turk. Instead, being a citizen of the Republic of

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Turkey (civicness) was the foundation of this nationalism. The 1924 constitution states that "without religious and ethnic difference, every person of the people of Turkey who is a citizen is regarded as [a] Turk." Being a Turk was defined in terms of legal ties to the state. The 1961 constitution omitted "people of Turkey" and stated that every citizen was "accepted as [a] Turk regardless of ethnic and religious identity." Under article 66 of the 1982 constitution, everyone who is related to the Republic of Turkey by citizenship is a Turk. Hence the gradual ethnification of the term "Turk" in the 1961 and 1982 constitutions. In modern Turkey, the term "Turkish nation" includes all Turkish citizens regardless of their ethnic roots. A Turkish citizen of Kurdish origin is a new concept, one that has come into being in response to European pressures.

Kurdish identity itself was secularized and transformed within the broader leftist movement in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. With the spread of universal education and the sociopolitical liberalization introduced by the 1961 constitution, modern intellectuals rather than tribal and religious leaders began to shape Kurdish identity. Under the 1961 constitution, Kurdish intellectuals expressed Kurdish concerns and grievances in socialist idioms to promote the self-determination of the Kurds. Alevi Kurds played a critical role in this process.¹

Another major development was the establishment of the Revolutionary Cultural Society of the

¹For a definition and discussion of the Alevi Kurds, see M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkey's Fault Lines and the Crisis of Kemalism," *Current History*, January 2000.

East in 1969, the first organizational attempt to raise the consciousness of the Kurdish population by stressing Turkey's uneven economic development. The leftist movement in Turkey always tried to expand its base by stressing Alevi and Kurdish issues. Between 1971 and 1973, diverse Kurdish cultural associations, such as the Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations, organized regular teach-ins to raise Kurdish consciousness, blending Marxism and Kurdish nationalism to mobilize youth in the name of social justice and identity. This mobilization polarized society and led to communal violence. To stop the violence, the Turkish military carried out a coup in 1980. The coup identified Kurdish nationalism, along with radical Islam, as a divisive force and banned all forms of cultural expression.

THE PKK AND ABDULLAH ÖCALAN

Control of the centrifugal forces of Kurdish and religious movements was a key goal of the 1980 coup. The coup leaders, using oppressive measures, destroyed the organizational power of Kurdish networks within Turkey. The military jailed many Kurdish activists, but some took refuge in Europe, where they formed the core of a transnational Kurdish activism. In short, the oppression of the 1980 coup had the unintended consequence of further politicizing and strengthening the Kurdish sense of identity that found expression in a group founded by Abdullah Öcalan, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The policies of the Turkish military and regional developments in Iraq and Iran further consolidated Kurdish separatism, and the PKK launched an armed uprising to defeat the Turkish state in 1984.

Kurdish nationalists have employed several strategies, ranging from the PKK-led military campaign and the establishment of mainly Kurdish parties to the struggle for cultural and political rights. The PKK played a critical role in raising Kurdish political consciousness, establishing a web of networks inside and outside Turkey to recruit militants, and undermining the remnants of the religiotribal structure of the region by presenting new opportunities for middle-class and urbanized Kurdish youth. One of the most important unexpected outcomes of the PKK campaign, however, was the deepening and the politicization of Turkish nationalism. As a result of the PKK's military tactics, which have included the use of terrorism, Turkish nationalism has been radicalized and popularized. Because of the PKK's actions, many Kurds have

changed their criticism of the "political authority" in Ankara to criticism of Turkish nationalism, thereby constructing and legitimizing their own separatist nationalism. This new twist represents a turning point in the separation of Kurdish nationalism from the leftist movement of Turkey.

The PKK's main goal was to destabilize Turkey and create an independent Kurdish state. To this end it sought the support of some foreign countries, such as Greece, Russia, and Syria. For more than a decade, Öcalan was able to use Syria and even the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon as a base. The PKK is believed to have been responsible for the indiscriminate killing of moderate Turkish Kurds in Turkey and in Europe. Within Turkey, it consistently targeted educational institutions in the Kurdish region, branding the public schools "instruments of Ankara's assimilation policy." Between 1983 and 1999, the PKK killed 200 teachers and destroyed 150 schools to "stop assimilation"; it also blew up bridges and hospitals and assassinated "collaborators." The PKK killed both Kurds and Turks perceived as pro-state.

The Turkish government responded to the PKK campaign with its own military counteroffensive. According to state statistics, 4,302 civil servants, 5,018 soldiers, 4,400 civilians, and 23,279 PKK "terrorists" were killed in the Kurdish region of southeastern Turkey, and thousands more wounded. Many Kurdish families lost their sons, a number of whom were recruited by the PKK to fight for a separate Kurdish state. Many other young Kurdish men were wounded on the front lines of the separatist war.

It is impossible to find a neighborhood in southeastern Turkey that does not carry the scars of the war. An entire generation of youth was born and socialized during this bloody conflict. The social and political landscape was torn apart, and ethnic fault lines were radicalized. Thousands of Kurds left the country in search of security and peace. Sources of livelihood in the region—livestock and agriculture—were destroyed. During the conflict the government evacuated 1,153 settlements and relocated approximately 1 million people to large cities for security reasons. Subsequently, these forcibly relocated people constitute a major source of the growing problems in large cities. Crime in these cities has increased, perpetrated mostly by Kurdish youth who are jobless and have little hope for the future. The human cost of this conflict also includes a new generation of Kurds whose view of the state is shaped by the emergency rule that empowers local governors to suspend basic freedoms in the Kurdish provinces

and has left the Kurds of southeastern Turkey feeling that they are considered second-class citizens.

The ethnic conflict in southeastern Turkey largely ceased following Turkey's capture (with assistance from the United States Central Intelligence Agency) of PKK leader Öcalan in February 1999. After his arrest, Öcalan told journalists "I really love Turkey and the Turkish people. My mother is Turkish. Sincerely, I will do all I can to be of service to the Turkish state." However, his brother Osman Öcalan, who was the PKK's second-in-command, called on all Kurds to attack the Turkish state. The Kurds did not respond to these calls, primarily because many Kurdish associations and parties had begun to stress political over military means even before Öcalan's capture.

The state security court that tried Öcalan found him guilty of treason and sentenced him to death. The Court of Appeals upheld his sentence on November 25, 1999. Öcalan's lawyers took the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which issued an interim measure asking Turkey to suspend the execution until it could rule on the appeal. The Turkish government agreed to wait for the final decision of the ECHR, which has yet to be rendered.

The abatement of the violence in southeastern Turkey offers an opportunity for the government to resolve the ethnic conflict that has been undermining democracy and the social fabric of society. Turkey needs to recognize the cultural rights of the Kurds by lifting the ban on Kurdish broadcasting and by allowing education in the Kurdish language and the formation of a pro-Kurdish political party. The European Union, which Turkey aspires to join, could act as an intermediary between Kurdish aspirations and the Turkish state. The Kurds, however, are divided on the question of Europe's role. Extreme Kurdish nationalists consider Turkey's integration into Europe as an obstacle to the achievement of their goal of a united pan-Kurdistan. In contrast, moderate Kurds have enthusiastically supported the policy of a Europe of regions, which provides a legal and economic framework for the protection of minority cultural and political rights. They see this policy as a context within which they can achieve political accommodation between the Republic of Turkey and its Kurds.

The Kurdish question has thus injected itself into Turkish-European relations. Those Europeans who

want to exclude Turkey present the Kurdish question as a minority problem, knowing that Turkey cannot accept its Kurds as a "minority" due to the historical legacy of Europeans using "minority rights" against the Ottoman state before World War I to partition the state. The best hope for ethnic peace in Turkey is to divorce ethnic identity from political access and to stress transethnic identities such as Islam. Turkey also needs to devolve central power to municipalities and recognize the individual cultural and political rights of the Kurds within Turkey's territorial boundaries.

THE IRAQI KURDS

During World War I, the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement largely divided the postwar Middle East between Britain and France. After more haggling, Britain eventually created Iraq out of the former Ottoman *vilayets* (provinces) of Mosul in the Kurdish north, Baghdad (home to most of the new state's Sunni Muslims), and Basra in the Shiite Muslim south. Since this new, ersatz state had less legitimacy than Turkey and Iran—two

countries that had existed in one form or another for many centuries despite their large Kurdish minorities—revolt probably came easier to the Iraqi Kurds.

Iraq's division between its ruling but minority Sunni Arabs and its suppressed majority Shiite Arabs has facilitated this rebellious situation. Although the Kurds in Iran are largely Sunni, a similar religious divide does not exist in what is otherwise Shiite Iran, where the Kurds are ethnically related to the Persians. And although more than 20 percent of Turkey's Muslim population may be Alevi, the resulting split with the majority Sunnis is much less important. Finally, the approximately 3 million Kurds now in Iraq have long constituted a greater, more concentrated proportion of the population (20 to 23 percent).

The Iraqi state also feared that Kurdish separatism might set a dangerous precedent for its Shiites, who made up at least 55 percent of Iraq's population. In addition, since virtually all the country's fresh water originates in the Kurdish north, while approximately two-thirds of the oil reserves and much of the fertile land are also located there, the Iraqi government felt that Kurdish secession would strike at its economic heart.

To facilitate their rule, the British originally invited Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji of Sulaymaniya to

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serve as their governor in Mosul. The gambit failed as Sheikh Mahmud almost immediately revolted, proclaimed himself “king of Kurdistan,” and commenced secret dealings with the Turks who still claimed the area. Employing its air force with maximum results, Britain easily suppressed these early Kurdish efforts. With Sheikh Mahmud’s final defeat in 1931, Mullah Mustafa Barzani began to emerge as the leader almost synonymous with the Kurdish movement in Iraq.

Although their power was originally founded in the nineteenth century on their religious authority as Naqshbandi sheikhs, the Barzanis also became noted for their martial prowess.² For more than half a century, Mulla Mustafa Barzani fought the relatively weak Iraqi government in one way or another. Despite his inherent conservatism and even tribal mentality, Barzani was the guiding spirit of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) that was founded on August 16, 1946, and one of the generals in the short-lived Mahabad Republic of Kurdistan in Iran immediately following World War II. After the collapse of this Kurdish state, Barzani fled to the Soviet Union, where he spent a decade in exile until the Iraqi monarchy was overthrown in July 1958. Iraq’s new leader, General Abdul Karim Kassem—erring mightily in judgment—invited Barzani home as a balance against his many other potential domestic foes. By 1961, however, Barzani’s *pehmergas* (guerillas) were again in full-scale revolt.

At the height of his power in the early 1970s, Barzani negotiated the March Manifesto of 1970, which theoretically provided for Kurdish autonomy under his rule. However, some Kurds—derisively referred to as *josh* (little donkeys)—supported the government. Endemic Kurdish infighting against leaders such as Ibrahim Ahmad and his son-in-law, Jalal Talabani, and a more powerful Iraqi government now headed in practice by Saddam Hussein, finally helped lead to Barzani’s ultimate defeat in 1975. This mainly occurred because Iran and the United States withdrew their support from Barzani in return for Iraqi border concessions; United States national security adviser Henry Kissinger cynically explained that necessary covert action should not be confused with missionary work.

Following Barzani’s collapse in March 1975, his son Massoud Barzani eventually emerged as the new leader of the KDP, while Talabani established the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) on June 1, 1975.

Divided by philosophy, dialect, geography, and ultimately ambition, Barzani’s KDP and Talabani’s PUK have alternated between cooperation and bloody conflict ever since. They also have suffered grievously from such horrific repression as Saddam Hussein’s genocidal Anfal campaigns of 1987–1988 and his chemical gas attack on Halabja in March 1988, which were meant as retribution for the Kurds’ support of Iran in the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War.

After the 1991 Persian Gulf War and the failure of the ensuing Kurdish uprising in March 1991, the mass flight of Kurdish refugees to the mountains reluctantly forced the United States to launch Operation Provide Comfort. Provide Comfort created a safe haven and maintained a “no-fly” zone (a prohibition on flights in the region by Iraqi aircraft) in which a de facto Kurdish state began to develop in northern Iraq. In addition, the UN Security Council approved an unprecedented resolution (688) in April 1991 that condemned the “repression of the Iraqi civilian population . . . in Kurdish populated areas” and demanded “that Iraq . . . immediately end this repression.” As symbolic as it may have been, never before had the Kurds received such official international mention and protection.

Turkey’s permission and logistical support for Operation Provide Comfort (since January 1, 1997, Operation Northern Watch) and the Allies’ no-fly zone to protect the Iraqi Kurds proved indispensable. Without them the United States would have had nowhere else to base American planes, and most likely could not have maintained the Iraqi no-fly zone. Furthermore, given the double economic blockade placed on the Kurds by the United Nations—Iraqi Kurdistan was still legally part of Iraq, which remained under UN sanctions—and Baghdad itself, the ground outlet to Turkey became the Kurds’ lifeline to the outside world.

Many Turks, however, believed that Provide Comfort was facilitating the vacuum of authority in northern Iraq that was enabling the PKK to enjoy sanctuaries there and launch attacks against Turkey. Some even argued that the allied operation was the opening salvo of a new Treaty of Sévres, which would lead to the creation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Thus, went the argument, Turkey was aiding its own demise by aiding Operation Provide Comfort.

Abandoning support of Provide Comfort would, however, alienate the United States and strip Ankara of important influence over events. The operation, for example, enabled Turkey to launch military strikes into Iraqi Kurdistan against the PKK at will. If

²The Naqshbandis are one of the two main dervish or sufi orders (mystical brotherhoods) of Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan.

the United States refused to allow these incursions, Turkey could threaten to withdraw its permission for the Western operation. Ironically, an action that was supposed to be protecting the Iraqi Kurds was allowing Turkey to attack the PKK as well as inflict collateral damage on the host Iraqi Kurds.

Further complicating the regional equation, in May 1994 Barzani's KDP and Talabani's PUK fell into a civil war, which led to two rump Kurdish governments that continue today. A new burst of Kurdish infighting erupted in August 1995 when the PKK suddenly attacked the KDP because the KDP, as part of a deal the United States was trying to broker, had agreed to police the border to prevent PKK raids from northern Iraq into Turkey. Syria and Iran covertly supported the PKK in an attempt to prevent the United States from gaining further influence in the area, while the PUK supported the PKK as a way to open a second front against the KDP. Northern Iraq seemed to be falling into a war of all against all.

In August 1996 the situation further degenerated when the PUK began to use arms received from Iran to threaten the KDP's existence. Desperate, Barzani did the unthinkable and invited Saddam Hussein to help beat back Talabani. How could the United States enforce the no-fly zone against Saddam Hussein when some of the very people it was supposed to protect had invited in Saddam Hussein? Halfheartedly, the United States responded by bombing a few meaningless targets south of Baghdad. Saddam used the few hours he had to capture and execute some 96 Iraqis who had defected to the United States-financed opposition, the Iraqi National Congress. After Saddam withdrew, the line separating the KDP and the PUK virtually returned to the status quo before his entry, with the exception that the KDP now held the city of Irbil.

Following still more bloody Kurdish infighting, the United States finally brokered a tenuous cease-fire and invited Barzani and Talabani to Washington in September 1998 to reach a permanent settlement. The resulting Washington accord has failed to achieve anything more than the tenuous continuation of the cease-fire. Turkey remains suspicious and adamantly opposed to the emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq that would act as an unwanted magnet for its own restless Kurds.

Yet an entire Kurdish generation is growing up in northern Iraq under real self-rule. Economic conditions are improving, with the Kurds receiving a guaranteed 13 percent of Iraq's allotted funds from the oil the United Nations now allows Iraq to sell. A civil society is emerging with dozens of newspapers, mag-

azines, and television and radio stations representing a broad spectrum of opinion. The United States has repeatedly made official and public promises of support against intervention from Hussein.

THE IRANIAN KURDS

Although twice as many Kurds live in Iran as do in Iraq, the Kurdish national movement in Iran has enjoyed much less success, in part because of the relatively greater long-term strength of successive Iranian governments. This, however, did not prevent Ismail Agha Simko from leading major Kurdish revolts in the 1920s that only ended when the Iranian government assassinated him in 1926 under the false pretense of wanting to hold talks.

This Iranian technique of solving its Kurdish problem was used again in August 1989 when Iranian agents assassinated Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI), in Vienna while supposedly negotiating with him. Three years later Iranian agents also assassinated Ghassemlou's successor, Sadegh Sharafkandi, while he was dining in the Mykonos Restaurant in Berlin. These prominent killings greatly demoralized the Iranian Kurds and only caused relations between Europe and Iran to suffer in the short run.

Still, the Iranian Kurds are perhaps most famous among their Kurdish brethren for establishing (with Soviet help) in 1946 the only Kurdish state in the twentieth century: the Mahabad Republic of Kurdistan. When this rump Kurdish state was destroyed in 1947, its president, Qazi Muhammad, was summarily hanged, a blow from which the Iranian Kurds still have not completely recovered.

The collapse of the shah in early 1979 presented fresh opportunities for the Kurds in Iran. The KDPI proclaimed its goal as "democracy for Iran and autonomy for Kurdistan," as did, in practice, the Marxist Komala party. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the head of the Islamic government that followed the shah's fall, refused to accept ethnic differences between fellow Muslims that would potentially divide Iran. Although the Iran-Iraq War that began in 1980 offered initial possibilities for the Iranian Kurds, Iran was able to crush a Kurdish uprising by the end of 1983. Subsequently, the KDPI and Komala could wage only an ineffective cross-border guerrilla war from their sanctuaries in northern Iraq. The two Iranian Kurdish parties also fell into bitter internecine combat against each other, which lasted until 1988.

During the 1990s, Iran intermittently bombarded locations in northern Iraq suspected of har-

boring Iranian Kurdish guerrillas. In July 1996, Iranian troops entered northern Iraq in pursuit. Since the United States no-fly zone over northern Iraq does not apply to Turkey or Iran, the Iraqi Kurds have had to accommodate themselves to Iran, as well as Turkey, when those two states intervene in northern Iraq.

In recent years, tacit alliances have formed between Iran and the PUK on the one hand, and Turkey and the KDP on the other. Turkey has often accused Iran of supporting the PKK, as well as Islamic militants within Turkey. Iran has denied the charges and responded that Turkey offers asylum to such Iranian opposition groups as the Mojahedin-e Khalq. Large-scale demonstrations occurred in parts of Iranian Kurdistan when Turkey captured Abdullah Öcalan in February 1999.

Reformist Mohammad Khatami received more than 75 percent of the Kurdish vote when he was elected president of Iran in 1997. Eighteen Kurds were elected to the new Majlis after the first round of elections in February 2000. In a visit to the Iranian province of Kordestan in August 2000,

Khatami admitted that a high rate of unemployment still existed among the Kurds. He promised that their economic problems would receive "due attention," and claimed that the literacy rate in the region had more than doubled in recent years. Many Kurds hope that article 15 of the Iranian constitution, which guarantees ethnic and cultural rights such as the teaching of local languages and literature, will soon be put into place to strengthen and consolidate their existing rights.

TAKING STEPS

Clearly the Kurdish question has become increasingly important in Middle Eastern and international politics. Before events begin to spiral out of control, Turkey, Iraq, and Iran should take steps that will help satisfy the legitimate demands of their Kurdish populations and thus preserve and strengthen their own territorial integrity. The United States, United Nations, European Union, Arab League, and other concerned international actors should encourage this process, which promises not to be an easy task. ■

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