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Kosovo, Why Not Kurdistan?

In the last week of February, the local legislative council in the southern part of the Republic of Serbia unilaterally declared independence from the central Serbian government in Belgrade. The government of the United States recognized the independence of Kosovo from Serbia the day after that declaration.

The same day, the armed forces of the Republic of Turkey invaded Iraq, a country which the government of the United States says is an independent sovereign nation. The United States government did not object to the invasion by Turkey but apparently provided the Turkish military with intelligence data so that the Turkish military might more easily kill Turkish citizens of Kurdish ethnicity who had fled to Iraq to escape the Turkish military.

The twenty-five million Kurdish-speaking people who live in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran, are reputed to be the largest ethnic/language group in the world which does not have a nation state. Kosovo, by comparison, has a population of under one million persons.

The United States supported and protected an autonomous Kurdistan in northern Iraq from 1991 to 2003, encouraging the development of a two-party democratic system in opposition to the Baathist government in Baghdad. In 2004, Kurdish national candidates for the Iraqi legislature got ninety-four percent of the votes in Iraqi Kurdistan. Until the U. S. - supported Turkish invasion of February, 2008, the Kurdish peshmurga were the indigenous troops which most reliably supported the United States armed forces in Iraq and most effectively maintained law and order in their jurisdiction.

Why not support the five million Kurds in Iraq in seeking recognition as an independent sovereign state? Why not "encourage" our ally Turkey to permit a plebiscite among its fourteen million Kurdish-speaking citizens to determine whether to join an independent Kurdistan? Why not encourage the five million Kurdish-speaking people in Iran and the million Kurdish-speaking people in Syria to separate from those authoritarian governments and join a democratic Kurdistan? It is certainly a self-centered basis for formulating policy, but wouldn't it be a relief for the United States to take a position in favor of self-determination of minority people and against repressive authoritarian corrupt central governments?

(population estimates taken from United States Central Intelligence Agency <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>)

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