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## Column: Kurdish-Israeli Relations: What Horizon?

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The Kurdish-Zionist relations can be traced back to the era prior to the establishment of the occupation state (Israel) in 1948, where they significantly deepened and flourished after declaration of the Hebrew state. The Zionist entity has supported the Kurds in their fight against the Iraqi regimes since the monarchy time and beyond, providing them with weapons, food, health aid, and money. Also, many Mossad officers visited the Kurdish sites in northern Iraq in the sixties, where their contacts were conducted through Tehran under the rule of the Shah and later through European capitals, especially Paris and London.

The late Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani (father of present Masoud Barzani) visited the Zionist entity twice, once in 1968 and once in 1973, where he met with Zionist political leaders as well as Mossad officers. These facts and others were revealed through books and reports, particularly the book of Shlomo Nakdimona “The Mossad in Iraq and Neighbors” which provided important documents and pictures in this regard. Also, the documented facts about relations and contacts of the Kurdish leader ‘Badr Khan’ of Northern Iraq with the Zionists is another clear evidence of the deep-rooted cooperation between the Kurdish armed militias and the Mossad.

### **First: The Zionist entity and the ‘Kurdish State’**

In a conference organized by the Institute for National Security Studies last September, “Israeli” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he supports the establishment of an independent state for the Kurds in northern Iraq, adding that they (the Kurds) deserve it. On the other hand, “Israeli” Defense Minister Avigdar Lieberman told US Secretary of State John Kerry in a meeting in Paris in June, 2014 that the formation of an independent Kurdish state has become a reality and deserves support. “Iraq is breaking up before our eyes and it would appear that the creation of an independent Kurdish state is a foregone conclusion,” Lieberman told Kerry.

Also, retired “Israeli” General Michael Herzog, a researcher at the Washington Institute for Middle East Policy once said that the Zionist entity views choosing between the “extremist Sunni camp” and the “radical Shiite camp” as choosing between the plague and cholera. He added that dividing Iraq and Syria into conflicting mini-states serves the interests of ‘Israel’” which publicly supports establishment of an independent Kurdish state.

Perhaps, Ksenia Svetlova, representative of the Zionist Camp Party at the Knesset, and chair of the Lobby for Strengthening Relations between the State of Israel and the Kurdish People, was expressive in summarizing the Zionist stance towards the Kurdish state, confirming that the Kurdish state would be established sooner or later.

### **Second: Reading the reasons**

There are various reasons that explain the Zionist entity’s support of establishment of the Kurdish state, including:

1. The leaders of the Zionist entity believe in its first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion’s theory of the need to establish alliances with minorities in the region and the “Third Ring” countries that do not have common borders with the Zionist entity, but they have common interests with them. In particular, Israel has followed Ben Gurion’s “alliance of the peripheries” strategy, strengthening its ties with non-Arab Muslim states or groups in the region, in order to break the isolation of the Zionist state. Also, the geopolitical facts created by the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime and the American invasion of Iraq, which made autonomy of Kurdistan region a reality, reinforced Ben-Gurion’s strategy.
2. Fragmentation of regional states: The Zionist entity seeks to apply its security theory based on the principle of “creating crises” for opponents; and the Kurds are the crisis from which the “Israeli” entity can hit its rivals. The Zionist entity was able to use Mustafa Barzani in 1963 against the government Iraq and its army. Over 12 years, the

Zionist entity stood by the Kurds and supported them. Also, the Zionist entity used to keep a delegation of advisers in northern Iraq that was changed every three months, including a Mossad officer, a special squad officer, a technical adviser, and a medical team. The task of the Zionists was to train the Kurds on modern fighting methods, and teach them how to defend themselves. This was done in full cooperation and coordination with the Shah regime in Iran. But when Iraq signed an agreement with Iran in 1975 to end the row between them, the Zionist support to the Kurds stopped. At that time, the Zionist entity was slammed for the fact that its relationship with the Kurds was based on interests; and when there were no interests, the Zionist entity did not hesitate to abandon them (the Kurds).

However, the Israeli-Kurdish relations flourished again after the fall of Iraq in 2003, where Zionist military advisers went to northern Iraq again to train Peshmerga forces and provide military and intelligence support to the Kurds. However, the relations have not remained limited to the military and intelligence fields, but over the time and with Kurdistan's construction of its institutions, the two sides began to cooperate in many other areas. The Zionist press has also reported about cooperation between "Israel" and the Kurds in the agricultural, industrial, and economic fields. Now, the Zionist entity is trying to create crises for each of its rivals in the region, particularly Iran and Turkey, by contributing to the establishment of a Kurdish state that threatens the territorial integrity of Iran, Turkey and Syria.

3. The Zionist entity seeks to help establishment of sectarian and ethnic mini-states and provinces according to its strategic doctrine that favors the creation of ethnic political entities for minorities whose interests can converge with the Zionist interests in the region. Therefore, the Zionist entity is significantly keen on the establishment of a Kurdish state on the Syrian, Turkish and Iranian territory. Also, "Israel" supported the establishment of the State of South Sudan on the Sudanese territory; in addition to the ongoing Zionist tampering in many Arab countries in order to support some minorities and encourage them for adopting disintegration of these countries.

### **Third: The future of Zionist-Kurdish relations**

It is not easy for the Zionist entity to abandon support of the Kurds to achieve the dream of establishing a Kurdish entity that would be their strong ally.

However, based on regional and international changes, there are scenarios for the future of the Zionist-Kurdish relations:

#### ***Scenario I: Strengthening relationship***

The Kurdish-Zionist relationship would reach its peak if the Kurds succeeded in establishing their state. Then, "Israel" would engage in distinct military economic, and political relations, especially that the Zionist entity would like existence of new countries in international organizations to give legitimacy to the Zionist entity in the region.

#### ***Scenario II: Fluctuating relationship***

The Zionist-Kurdish relations may enter into a period of fluctuation due to several factors, most importantly the American stance on the establishment of a mini-Kurdish state. If the United States rejects establishment of such a state for its own reasons which may include the desire to maintain good relations with Turkey. Also, the Turkish and Iranian reaction is extremely important; if Turkish and Iranian pressures and interventions affected the possibility of establishing a Kurdish state, this would accordingly cause a state of fluctuation in the relations between the two sides.

Perhaps, if the Zionist entity succeeded in establishing “normal” relations with the Arab countries, the “Israeli” interest in the Kurdish issue is likely to decline according to the declining significance of establishing a Kurdish state in the region.

### ***Scenario III – Severing relations***

It is not easy to expect that the Zionist-Kurdish relations could be severed unless the Iranian and Turkish efforts succeeded in completely destroying the dream of the Kurdish state. At this time, the Zionist entity could abandon its support for the Kurdish project.

### **Conclusion**

It seems that in the near future the second scenario (fluctuation of relations), will be the closest scenario to reality. The possibility of a geographical connection between the Zionist entity and the Iraqi Kurdistan region is very complicated, and the communication through air navigation has been disabled after the ban decision of the central government of Iraq. Also, it is certain that the attitude of Iran and Turkey will hinder the Zionist presence in the Kurdistan region significantly.