

## Press Release on Iraq Study Group Report

After a long wait for a fresh idea to the deteriorating state of Iraq, the so called expert analysis of the Iraq Study Group failed to offer any fair and just solutions. The report failed to recognize that one goal of the war to bring institutional democracy to Iraq and the Middle East, while it recommend to review the Iraqi constitution which goes up against the basic principle of democracy and the vision of President Bush for new democracy in the region. Members of the ISG did not visit Kurdistan Region which is considered a huge shortcoming by the Kurds. The report plays to the wishes of the Turkish and Arab governments and ignore the rights of their only ally in Iraq, Kurdish people. The group did not visit Kurdistan nor consult with the Kurdish leadership. The report ignores the wishes of 80% of Iraqis who participated in democratic elections. It recommends reviewing of the constitution to appease minority Iraqi Sunni population and neighboring countries. The Kurdish leadership wholly dismisses the report because it does not recognize the Iraqi constitution which is the major factor to keep Iraq together. Some major recommendations which contradict the rights of the Iraqi people and especially the Kurdish people are:

*RECOMMENDATION 26: Constitution review. Review of the constitution is essential to national reconciliation and should be pursued on an urgent basis. The United Nations has expertise in this field, and should play a role in this process.*

This is against the core principle of democracy. The people of Iraq overwhelmingly voted for this constitution. Changing the constitution without going through the right process set up in the constitution is very dangerous and sets back the process of building a democratic society and culture in Iraq and consequently for the region.

*RECOMMENDATION 28: Oil revenue sharing. Oil revenues should accrue to the central government and be shared on the basis of population. No formula that gives control over revenues from future fields to the regions or gives control of oil fields to the regions is compatible with national reconciliation.*

This will take away the right of the regional government to exercise their rights according to the Iraqi constitution. If the Kurdish leadership give up this right in drafting the new Iraqi national oil law where the Shiite and Sunni in agreement against the Kurds to give the power on the oil revenue to the central government then it will be another economic disaster for the Kurdish people to secure their future in rebuilding the Kurdistan region.

*RECOMMENDATION 30: Kirkuk. Given the very dangerous situation in Kirkuk, international arbitration is necessary to avert communal violence. Kirkuk's mix of Kurdish, Arab, and Turkmen populations could make it a powder keg. A referendum on the future of Kirkuk (as required by the Iraqi Constitution before the end of 2007) would be explosive and should be delayed. This issue should be placed on the agenda of the International Iraq Support Group as part of the New Diplomatic Offensive.*

This is against the constitution and it gives in to the pressure from Turkey and the Arab countries also support the continuation of Arabization policy.

RECOMMENDATION 50: *The entire Iraqi National Police should be transferred to the Ministry of Defense, where the police commando units will become part of the new Iraqi Army. Similarly, the Iraqi Border Police are charged with a role that bears little resemblance to ordinary policing, especially in light of the current flow of foreign fighters, insurgents, and weaponry across Iraq's borders and the need for joint patrols of the border with foreign militaries. Thus the natural home for the Border Police is within the Ministry of Defense, which should be the authority for controlling Iraq's borders.* This will eliminate the Peshmarga as Border Police and the Regional Army force while they did ignore the fact they should eliminate the militias who fought against American forces and killed American soldiers. Instead the ISG wishes to dissolve their allied forces. The Regional Army forces, which part of it has been assigned the task of protecting the borders, have been very effective in controlling and stopping terrorists from crossing into Iraq/Kurdistan. This role should not be changed, on the contrary, it should be strengthened and have them better equipped and trained by the U.S., the Regional Army forces are the only protecting forces the Kurdish people have, and the Kurdish Regional Government must not give up the command of these forces to anyone until it see real stability and security in Iraq and especially in Kurdistan region, then the Kurdish parliament must approve such hand over of these forces.

Kurdish National Congress demands that the Kurdish voice be heard and direct talks must be held with the Kurdish leadership before any steps are taken to implement any part of these so called "expert" recommendations. Otherwise it will be a clear violation to the Iraqi constitution that gives the Kurdish people the right for self-determination. Although 98% of the Kurdish population voted for independence in a referendum, the KRG volunteered to remain part of Iraq to promote federalism and a peaceful coexistence. If these basic principles are ignored, Kurds in Iraq should utilize their natural right of self-determination and declare independence of Southern Kurdistan.

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