

## **Reality vs. Idealism**

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A Greater United Kurdistan to include all of the separated Kurdish people and lands has been the ideal of many Kurds. Although this idealism is very natural, it has proven to be a very difficult goal to achieve, given the realities of the world at the present time and in the foreseeable future. The purpose of this presentation is to outline very briefly the harsh relations of the world as it effects the Kurdish situation and to point out a much more realistic path for the Kurdish idealism to focus on. Here are the realities:

1. All the major countries with large Kurdish populations have large modern armies, air forces, national institutions, wealth, and the international support; these countries have enough of everything to be able to defeat the Kurdish uprising.
2. The Kurdish situation at the present time is not because Kurds have not tried to achieve their fundamental rights of freedom and independence, but because of drastic unevenness of the struggle, the international politics and all the other reasons of which we are familiar.
3. Iran and Turkey are regional giants and more than a match for any kind of Kurdish resistance and uprising. Iraq and Syria are large Arab majority countries and benefit from their resources and international situation.
4. Even in Iraq, although many generations of Kurds bravely fought the different brutal central governments and suffered the extreme savagery of genocide and chemical weapons, there was no progress or positive results until the larger international picture and policy was aligned with the Kurdish efforts. So the Kurdish achievement in Iraq today was not solely because the Kurds sacrificed everything to achieve it, but also because the larger international picture was approving of changes in Iraq.
5. The same changes in the larger picture are not apparent for Iran and Turkey; Syria is a fundamental part of the Arab-Israeli conflict and all of its politics are related to that issue.
6. The Islamic government of Iran is a major international headache with a horrible human rights record against the great majority of the Iranian people; the whole world has not been able to tame its nuclear ambitions.
7. Turkey on the other hand is walking slowly on the path toward democracy which should be encouraged for the benefit of the whole region. On the other hand, we Kurds know well how suddenly the Turks can change and go the other way.
8. Without getting into more detail, let's summarize the biggest fact and reality for the Kurds: that in this modern world our share was to be very little if we were to say nothing.
9. However, this reality has been changed over the last decade; now Kurds have something: The KRG, the Kurdish Regional Government in northern Iraq, which is a very important and historical change in the Kurdish situation.

It's obvious that nothing is very bad and everyone understands that something is much better than nothing. Of course everything is better than something. But let's be realistic: Iran, Turkey, Syria and many other countries in the world are already settled. So far, if they want expansion, maybe this is an idea, but for Kurds whom had almost nothing and now have something, while the idea and goal of their own development is welcome and respected, the idea of expansion is fatal and deadly.

This great something which we finally have is very precious for all Kurds, not only the Kurds of Iraq. The KRG has a flag, a President, a Prime Minister, a cabinet, a parliament, judges, an army, a territory, a border, international relations and airports, wealth and resources and enough international support and recognition; it's capable of developing its own area and in cooperating with governments of the neighboring countries; it can help the economy and the life condition and the rights of the Kurdish people in those countries.

Let's not forget the biggest reality- that Kurds have land locked; Kurds can not reach or be reached by the international community without the cooperation of the countries that Kurds have conflict with; so it is only common sense that the solution to the Kurdish problem must include cooperation and good will.

The reality most important about the KRG is that it is burdened with a very difficult dilemma; the KRG must balance its responsibilities to the Kurds it represents and the international community with the expectations of the Kurds of other lands.

It should be obvious to all of us that the KRG exists because of the extreme sacrifice and bravery of Iraqi Kurds and also because of the international community's approval due to all its circumstances, background, and culture; however, if for any reason this international protection is removed, the KRG will be at the mercy of Iran and Turkey. At that point, if it has been a trouble maker, harboring the enemies of these countries and becoming a danger to them, then it will be attacked by one or both, and will cease to exist. We wish and hope that this tragedy never happens; that will be the most tragic chapter of Kurdish history. Of course this is the most pessimistic case, but in politics we must be realistic and cautious and think about every possibility.

However, the optimistic outcome can also happen, that the KRG can manage its very delicate balance of diplomacy and work with all of the interested parties to improve the living conditions and human rights of Kurds in and outside of northern Iraq, and does its duty with due diligence to attain the confidence and satisfaction of the people.

Another aspect of reality is the duty of all Kurds to consider the KRG as the most precious miracle for them in modern times, and to place its survival at the highest priority of their Kurdish loyalty. With the support of all Kurds, as well as the support of the international community, the KRG can then represent the Kurds all over the world: from the UN to the Olympics, and by so doing, eliminates overnight the disadvantage of the Kurds who so far have had a zero share in the world's events.

We must put ourselves in other people's shoes. Of course Turkey and Iran are looking at the KRG with doubt and suspicion; but if they come to trust the KRG and realize that it is not working toward dismembering their countries, and that it is a good neighbor, then they may realize that they have at long last found a solution to the Kurdish problem: that is, a Kurdish entity across the border which satisfies the general Kurdish ambitions and cooperates with them in pacifying and improving the conditions of the Kurds within their borders.

Let's summarize and repeat the important point of this presentation: that many centuries of dreaming, idealism and struggle achieved nothing for the Kurds, but due to a miraculous combination of events, Kurds now have something. Let's all of us, with open eyes, ears, brains, and hearts, be aware of this reality and protect it with everything we have.