

## **Self-Determination, Independence or Federation**

By Asad Khailany, Emeritus Professor

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The simple meaning of self determination is nations have the rights to establish their own governments on their own lands, adopt any system they wish; such as capitalist, Islamic, Jewish, communist, socialist, or any other system. Nations may also choose to create union or federation with other nations.

Kurdistan people like any other people have the right for self-determination. History proved that self-determination rights have never been granted, but taken. Many nations succeeded to gain self-determination rights, some achieved it by taking advantageous of some unpredictable historical opportunities; some others did it through political, or nonpolitical struggles, or armed revolutions.

Kurdistan people struggled for self-determination in all forms with exception of adopting terrorist tactics for a very long time perhaps for several centuries. Few years ago in a special election in southern Kurdistan, over 95% of legitimate voters voted for an independent Kurdistan. In spite of that all political parties accepted the federation. The question is if they accepted it.

The answer is they realized during 2003 through 2007 when America needed badly the Kurdish support in Iraq and the Kurds did not asked for independent a golden opportunity for independent was lost. The leadership concluded that federation is the best thing that they could get at this time.

They accepted a less promising alternative maybe hoping to bring all Kurdistan territories in Southern Kurdistan including Kirkuk, Khaniqeen, Mendly, Sinjar, Maghmoor, etc. to be under KRG's administration. They have not succeeded so far.

Why such costly long struggle did not succeed? In my opinion following are some of the reasons why Kurdistan people could not obtain their self-determination rights:

1. Lack of education: It is much hard to colonize, and subdue literate nations than illiterate nations. Many people in Kurdistan were scientifically and politically illiterate.
2. Tribalism: Pride of tribalism, obedience, and faithfulness to tribalism have been stronger than the same to nationalism. During the Kurdish history, tribal interests were preferred above the national interests. The enemies of Kurdistan people realized these facts well and took full advantage of it to assure that any demand, uprising and attempt by Kurdistan people to achieve self-determination to fail. Most modern or not so modern Kurdistan political parties without realizing somewhat adopted a system similar to tribalism. Obedience to a party,

- faithfulness to a party, and pride being a member of a party has been stronger than their counter parts to nationalism.
3. Desire to be the chief: Educated or not, most individuals who belong to a tribal system, or to a party, or involved in a movement want to be chiefs, and sole decision makers within that organization. Even the Kurds in diasporas we being among them yet have not being able to completely accept the principle that one can significantly enhance the movement to achieve its goals without being the sole chief of the organization, and not everyone has to be a chief.
  4. Lack of experience with democratic principles: With the absence of democratic environment in the region the political parties have not learned how to work with each other for common goals.
  5. Lack of Unity: Failure of Kurdistan political parties and organizations to adopt United Free Kurdistan as its goal. The exception to that was PKK, however PKK in the last few years joined the other Kurdistan political parties and accepted the slogan of the enemies of Kurdistan people that independent Kurdistan is unpractical, and Kurdistan people should hope only for some kind cultural and human rights.
  6. Lack of influence on media: Kurdistan people did not have the desire to immigrate to the western countries. In 1966 the population of Kurds in the United State of America was 15. Until late 1980s Kurdistan people did not spent any serious efforts to influence international news media, or create any kind lobbies among the nations and countries that are the leaders of the world. Indeed KNC was the first Kurdistan organization that realized these facts, and through its efforts the current Kurdish political parties and organizations were introduced to American peoples and the US government.
  7. Strong anti Kurdish lobby in US: The sources for information on the Kurds to our American people and to the US government were the governments of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the other traditional enemies of Kurdistan people.

What can we do as individuals? In my option recognizing the shortcoming and overcoming them is essential. It is the duty of all individual Kurd in or outside Kurdistan to use all new technology such as web sites, Face book, twitter, etc to promote, defend our nation. We should ask our self each week what I have done to help my people this week.