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DIPLOMACY OF THE KURDISTAN REGION OF IRAQ IN THE AGE OF TERRORISM

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Abstract. In this paper, we empirically study the effects of terrorism on the para-diplomacy of Kurdistan Region of Iraq during the last two decades. The research paper analyses the form of diplomacy, in the current age, has covered new style, in particular, when the new actors (non-state actors) are playing significant roles. In this regard, the Kurdistan region government as non-state actor has successfully used terrorism as a great instrument to attract the attention of the world community and created broad its para-diplomatic relations with actors around the world. In turn, we find suggestive evidence that the Kurdistan Region Government should further enhance the ability of its foundations to sustain its relations with world community. Our findings are consistent with the idea that the threat of terrorism is never going to be end, thereby it is not easy for the state-actors to keep their eyes away from the role of any world actors (including non-state actors).

Key words: Kurdistan Regional Government, Terrorism, Diplomacy, Para-Diplomacy, Ansar Al-Islam, Peshmerga

INTRODUCTION

The Kurdish people in the south of Greater Kurdistan (the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, KRI) need no introduction to the concept and implications of terrorism. Since 1992, when the Kurdish political parties came to power in northern Iraq, the radical ideology has spread like a virus on the territory governed by Kurdistan Region Government in Iraq (KRG). Unhealthy struggle for power between the two major political parties, weakness of self-governing authorities, intervention in the KRI political system by neighboring states, severe economic hardships caused by sanctions, and civil war, among other reasons, contributed to the unprecedented spread of extremist ideology in the region.

In 2001, the emergence of local terrorist groups Jund Al Islam and Ansar Al Islam, signified a new chapter in the development of home-grown terrorism in the KRI. The lack of academic research on Kurdistan terrorist organizations was one of the reasons the real proportions of terrorist activities in Kurdistan remained hidden from the international community. Before 2003, terrorism had affected the Kurdish population in the north of Iraq on different levels: economically, individual and political security, community life, and resources. The Kurdish government alone, without international support, did not have sufficient resources to handle the terrorist threat. In the last decade, due to the growing influence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) — a foreign terrorist organization — the threat has significantly increased. While gaining global prominence, ISIL has been attracting local Kurdish terrorist groups as well. The ISIL terrorist activities were not bound to one particular location but gradually spread all over the world, which

compelled the global community to take action. Different counter-terrorism coalitions have been formed and anti-terrorist activities have been initiated, as different countries came together in a common effort to fight terror. This brings us to the key concern of the paper: *What is the degree of KRGI's participation in the anti-terrorism coalition program, and what role does the KRGI play in the global war against terror?*

The paper consists of five sections. In the first section, the author studies the connection between terrorism and international diplomacy: with the emergence of a world terrorism network, the major global actors use the war on terror to strengthen their position and gain more influence in the international arena. The second section presents a brief review of terrorist groups in the KRI and the history of their origins, and describes how a local political organization is assigned the status of a terrorist group. The third section sheds light on the connection between international terrorism and the KRI's local insurgent formations, which has enabled the Kurdish leadership to get the attention of the global community. The fourth part covers the process of world leaders coming together in a common effort to fight terrorism. In the final section, the author presents his reflections about the international role of the KRGI and the future development of its paradiplomacy.

TERRORISM AND DIPLOMACY

In his thesis for the Master of Arts degree, published by the Australian National University in 1985, Andrew Selth argues that terrorism and diplomacy share a number of parallels: both have their roots in the ancient past and both have developed in response to changes in the global environment. The purpose of each is to 'persuade and prevail, and both rely heavily on symbolism'. Among their differences, Selth mentions that, traditionally, terrorism has been used by disparate non-state actors against established authority, while diplomacy has grown as an organized tool of states within a recognized international system. Terrorism seeks radical change by violent means, where diplomacy tries to manage political change through compromise and peaceful negotiation. Diplomacy is directed towards conciliation and adjustment, its objectives largely incompatible with ideology, while terrorism almost always originates from a radical ideological base 'rarely sympathetic to such an approach' [16. P. 8]

Drawing on Selth's ideas, the author admits that diplomacy and terrorism are interconnected. In other words, whenever terrorism springs to action, global diplomatic activity picks up the pace as well. To elaborate this interconnection, the author will first look into the definition of diplomacy and then will proceed to analyze what it takes for Kurdish local extremist forces to be labelled as "terrorist groups" and thus draw the world's attention to their activity and create international coalitions against them.

H.M. Virupakshiah defines diplomacy as rational compromise sought by actors in the world community achieved through discussion of differences and challenges, rather than conflict. "Diplomacy", thus, seems to be a "principle known to, and practiced by all human societies in modern states" [18. P. 29—30].

Diplomacy functions through a 'labyrinth' of foreign officers, consulates, embassies, and special missions all around the world. It is bilateral and multilateral in character:

the bilateral nature was very prominent in traditional diplomacy. In modern days, its multilateral aspects have rapidly grown as a result of the increasing importance of international organizations, regional arrangements and collective security measures. “It may embrace a multitude of interests, from the simplest matter of detail in the relations between two states to vital issues of terrorism and war”. When the danger of war or a major crisis becomes real, nations create alliances or seek to isolate a potential victim of attack through diplomacy [18. P. 29—30].

After the events of 9/11, the level of vulnerability in the world community had reached its peak. As terrorist groups realized the “opportunities which lay beyond their own national boundaries, the scope of their operations expanded and, as circumstances demanded, many formed loose cooperative alliances with other terrorist organizations and sympathetic states” [16. P. 23].

Contemporary terrorist groups have changed their tactics and moved beyond traditional local partisan attacks. New methods employed by modern-day terrorists present a serious threat to all states, communities, groups, and individuals around the world. A single state cannot cope with the global terrorist threat independently; therefore, the necessity for different international actors (including state and non-state actors) to unite is obvious. Consequently, the function of diplomacy becomes more crucial than ever. When it comes to relations between state and non-state actors, we have to turn to the term “paradiplomacy” rather than “diplomacy”. Traditionally, diplomatic liaisons occurred only between sovereign states; nowadays, however, relations on the international arena have expanded beyond central governments: interactions are happening between state and non-state actors, on regional and even individual levels. Duchachek, cited by Herish Khali Mohammed [10. P. 67] clarifies that para-diplomacy comes to existence as a result of “decentralization of power and increase of jurisdictional autonomy in domestic affairs; regional governments are also involved in foreign policy via establishing contacts with foreign partners at governmental and non-governmental levels”. Paradiplomacy generally refers to three domains: economic, cultural and political. In this article, we will focus on the security field (more specifically, anti-terrorist efforts) in the political domain.

The former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan openly backed up the idea of paradiplomacy in the context of the global fight against terrorism and encouraged global cooperation between state and non-state actors. In his article, “World Inclusivity” published on 4 October 2002, he talks about “new insecurity” and concludes that “peace, tolerance, mutual respect, human rights, the rule of law and the global economy are all among the casualties of the terrorists’ acts”. He makes a strong argument saying that “we cannot continue to exclude the poor, the disenfranchised or those who are denied basic rights to liberty and self-determination. Or that if we do, we cannot at the same time hope to secure lasting peace and prosperity”.

Today, with every state, organization or human in the world being under the growing threat of terrorism, the global community is compelled to become proactive and take urgent measures. The more powerful world actors are forced to turn to smaller state and non-state actors for assistance. In this connection, the international community’s

interest has been drawn to the Kurdistan Region Government of Iraq, whose role as a non-state actor has grown stronger, favoring the development of its paradiplomacy.

To shed light on the practice of paradiplomacy of the KRI as a federal region, we need to look into the history of terrorism and terrorist activities on the territory of Iraqi Kurdistan. Analyzing the origin of terrorism in the region will help us get a better understanding of why global actors need to create international coalitions and fight terrorism through diplomatic effort, what success KRG diplomatic endeavors have reaped, and how non-state actors establish paradiplomatic relations with world governments.

THE ORIGIN OF TERRORISM IN KURDISTAN

The history of terrorism in Kurdistan goes back to the late 1980s — early 1990s. After the Iraqi government withdrew its troops in three provinces in northern Iraq, Kurdish forces took power in the region in October 1991, with a number of insurgent groups operating in the area. One of the most influential political parties was the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan (IMK).

The IMK, founded in 1987, represented political forces of Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan and was comprised entirely of Sunni Muslims. The IMK combined several factions, some of whose combatants had had experience fighting Islamic groups in Afghanistan in the 1980s. The IMK was believed to be the third most important political and military organization in the Kurdistan region between 1990 and 1997. After the parliamentary election in 1992, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan tried to stay away from participation in the Kurdish administration, focusing instead on developing and strengthening a separate administrative, political and military infrastructure in areas under its control [6].

In 1997, the IMK split over a power struggle, as well as policy differences. Some smaller groups within the IMK, which advocated a more radical and ultra-orthodox Islamic ideology, also broke away from the movement at different times. Of these groups, the most important militaristic factions were the *Soran Forces*, *Tawhid and Hamas*. These smaller separatist groups eventually merged together. On September 1, 2001, they announced the formation of *Jund al-Islam* (Soldiers of Islam). In December 2001, the group changed its name to *Ansar al-Islam (AAI)* (Supporters of Islam) and declared *jihād* (holy war) against secular and other political parties in Kurdistan because the group did not accept Kurdish political administration and authority. AAI was financially and militarily sponsored by al-Qaeda and the Iran and Saudi Arabian Wahhabi movement. Najmuddin Faraj Ahmad (Mala Fateh Krekar), a longstanding member of the IMK, became the leader (Emir) of Ansar al-Islam [13. P. 6]. However, as a result of growing anti-terrorist pressure and changes in the political environment following 9/11, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) soldiers (*peshmerga*), backed by the US Special Forces, carried out a large-scale military operation against AAI. On March 29, 2003, they neutralized and disarmed hundreds of AAI militants. According to the CIA report cited in Rubin [13. P. 17], more than 300—350 Ansar survivors fled to Iran. Some eye witnesses we interviewed in the course of our research testify that remaining AAI members

settled in two areas: some are still remaining in Iran, called ‘ sleeper cells ’ by the witnesses, while others joined Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL), formed in 2014. During its rise, ISIL was able to capture large areas of the Kurdistan region, which created a favorable environment for former AAI members and prompted them to join ISIL.

WHY THE KURDISH IN THE SOUTH OF GREATER KURDISTAN LABELED ANSAR AL-ISLAM (AAI) A TERRORIST GROUP

In this section, we will turn to criteria that make a political organization a terrorist group and conclude if AAI can be counted as one. We will also look into what paradigmatic steps the KRG took to handle Ansar Al-Islam with international assistance.

There has been an intense academic discussion regarding the definition of terrorism; there is no consensus in political literature as to who is labeled a ‘ terrorist ’ and when a political faction acquires the status of a terrorist group. The absence of unanimity on this matter leads to a lot of confusion in political science.

To avoid perplexity, we will allude to the most popular definition of terrorism, suggested by Schmid and Jongman [7. P. 104]: “ Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individuals, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby... the direct targets of violence are not the main targets ”. Victims of violence are chosen randomly or selectively from population to deliver a message. “ Threat- and violence-based communication process between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience(s)), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion or propaganda is primarily sought ” [7. P. 104].

Following this definition, we are going to look at how the threat posed by the AAI is related to terrorism. The US high commissioner in Iraq, Paul Bremer III, mentioned that there were “ quite a number of these Ansar al-Islam professional killers on the loose in the country ”, and their primary objective was attacking secular political parties in the Kurdistan Region [15. P. 41]. Thus, targeting and assassinating high profile politicians and government officials, the AAI was initially using the orthodox terrorist methods. Among the AAI victims were Franso Hariri, former governor of Erbil and head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, who was assassinated on February 18, 2001, and Shawkat Haji Moshir, one of the senior PUK commanders. In June 2002, AAI bombed a restaurant, injuring scores and killing a child. A number of gruesome images of the AAI victims — with slit throats, and some entirely decapitated — were posted on the Internet.

Furthermore, in September 2002, within the framework of their missions in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Human Rights Watch released a survey report on human rights abuses committed by the AAI on the territory of KRI. The report explained that the AAI was accountable for arbitrary captures of large numbers of Kurdish civilians, prolonged and illegal imprisonment, torture and maltreatment of detainees, and murdering soldiers after their surrender [6].

The aforementioned traditional terrorist practices and the multiple instances of human rights abuse allow us to further refer to the AAI as a terrorist group. The AAI

introduced a number of policies restricting personal freedom: mandatory beards for men, certain clothing and hair styles, obligatory closure of offices and businesses during prayer time and enforced attendance of the mosque. Women were obligated to wear the traditional hijab (Abaya) and veil in public. Anyone disobeying these decrees would receive punishment. Some of the AAI penalties were barbaric: in particular, amputation, flogging and stoning to death were introduced for offenses such as theft, consumption of alcohol and adultery.

Besides violation of personal human rights, the AAI was engaged into praxis that presented a threat for whole communities. The Ansar Al Islam declared a crackdown on religious practices it considered polytheistic. On September 4, 2001, the AAI's forces entered three villages whose inhabitants — an estimated 450 families — were a minority religious sect named *Ahl al Haq* (known locally as *Kaka'is*), their beliefs a combination of Zoroastrianism and Shi'ism. The families were gathered together, ordered to abandon their faith and adhere strictly to the AAI decrees. Those who refused were told they would be made to pay a “religious tax” imposed on all non-Muslims, as well as risk having their property seized. On September 23, 2001 representatives of Ansar al-Islam told the inhabitants that they had three choices: to adhere to the group's school of Islam, pay fines in lieu, or leave the area. According to Human Right Watch report in 2002, all the inhabitants of these villages fled their homes and became internally displaced. To deter these people from returning to their homes, the AAI laid mines in the agricultural plots owned by *Kaka'is* villagers.

The group promptly declared *jihad* (holy war) against secular and other political parties in Iraqi Kurdistan deemed to have deviated from the “true path of Islam”. The AAI announced it was seeking to “defend the areas under the influence of the Muslims from interference and control by the secularists”, and that among its goals was “the propagation of virtue and the prevention of vice” (*al-amr bil ma'ruf wal nahiy 'an al-munkar*), as well as ensuring the application of Shari'a and undertaking “the religious duty of jihad against the secularist apostates”.

Unless one fully complies with the AAI decrees, they immediately become a target. Inhabitants of Biyara, Tawela and the surrounding region gave Human Rights Watch testimony that they were imprisoned, tortured and fined because of their political ideology and beliefs. Some of the AAI victims were accused of violating the Islamic codes imposed by the Ansar and detained due to their alleged affiliation with the PUK.

The precedents described above are but a few examples of the AAI's detrimental impact on community and humanity. As was acknowledged by the witnesses, the threats posed by the Ansar al Islam and their actions can be explicitly classified under the definition of terrorism.

DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST GROUPS

International terrorist organization Al-Qaida openly started operating in Iraq after 2003, and its activities galvanized after the US invasion in the country. Al-Qaida's influence in Kurdistan took off when its leaders were able to draw the attention of former AAI members and those who had strong sympathy for extremism. The political

instability in the region served as a breeding ground for the unprecedented spread of terrorism in the area. The connection between Al Qaida and Ansar Al-Islam was further fortified by the AAI's strong affiliation with Mossab Zarqawi, the leader of Al-Qaida in Iraq. In particular, following the 2001 US airstrike in Afghanistan, Zarqawi led his followers out of Afghanistan to Iran and then to the Middle East, choosing Kurdistan as their main hide-out [3].

According to the 2013 IHS Markit report, “In a presentation to the United Nations Security Council in February, US Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed that Ansar al-Islam was connected with both the Baghdad regime (Saddam regime) and Al-Qaeda”¹.

Shortly after the US invasion of Iraq, Al-Qaida commenced its brutal insurgencies targeting thousands of innocent civilians in Iraq (including Kurdistan Region). According to the data presented by *Iraq body count* in January 2012, casualties in Iraq between 2003 and 2011 reached 119,735 individuals. Figure 1 illustrates the statistics.

After Zarqawi's death, there was great deal of confusion about Al-Qaida leadership structure; the situation worsened after both Abu Hamza and Abu Omar were terminated on April 18, 2010 as a result of a counterterrorist operation in Iraq. “Once again, the group was quick to name successor: Abu Bakr al Husayni al Qurashi al Baghdadi replaced Abu Omar as the nominal emir of Islamic State of Iraq (ISI)”². These events lead to the formation of the contemporary terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in June 2014.

If we compare the ISIL to its predecessors, it definitely appears to be more powerful and formidable, as it has more territories to exercise its strategy and policies. Furthermore, the ISIL comes across as far more capable of securing the territories under its authority. The situation is compounded by the ISIL's possession of heavy weapons, including anti-aircraft weapons and large caliber sniper rifles. The ISIL's members continue to equip, train and recruit highly motivated volunteers, and indoctrinate them against any groups and individuals who do not comply with the ISIL's interpretation of sharia law.

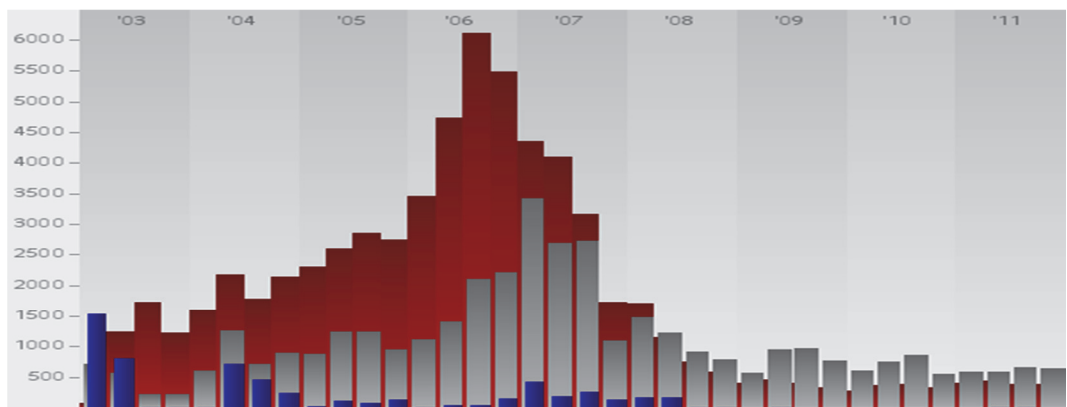


Fig. 1. Civilians killed by Gunfire Explosives Air attacks 2003—2011 by quarter

Source: [7].

¹ IHS Markit Report 2013. P. 5.

² CSIS 2011. P. 5.

The territory of the ISIL's influence is not restricted to Iraq and its Kurdistan region; the ISIL has been widely practicing its activities around the globe. According to the CNN (2018), "Since declaring its caliphate in June 2014, the self-proclaimed Islamic State has conducted or inspired more than 140 terrorist attacks in 29 countries other than Iraq and Syria, where its carnage has taken a much deadlier toll".

FINDINGS AND REFLECTIONS WORLD DIPLOMACY AGAINST TERRORISM

As was pointed out in the previous section, the threat of terrorism is not limited to one specific community — it has become international. With the emergence of the terrorist movement in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the 1990s, the global terrorist threat has snowballed. However, due to the isolation of the Kurdistan government from the world community, the KRG had to stand against the AAI alone (the UNSC resolution No. 661 imposed sanctions on the state of Iraq, including the Kurdistan region, from 1990 to 2003). Fighting terrorism solo was an impossible task for the KRG. This situation went on until 9/11, when the USA declared global war on terror, which meant launching anti-terrorist operations anywhere in the world, from Afghanistan against Al-Qaida and Taliban to Kurdistan against Ansar Al-Islam (March 29, 2003). Washington was well aware that in order to implement this plan they will need assistance of the local authorities. On November 21, 2002, the U.S. Department of State declared: "Military force alone will not suffice; indeed, for many phases of this long conflict, military power alone will not be the most important element of our campaign. We must also fight terror with every diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, and intelligence weapon we have in our arsenal".

As we have mentioned before, the connections and affiliations among terrorist groups around the world are very strong; therefore, a comprehensive and coordinated effort of the international community should be made to break the back of such global giants as Al-Qaida. In light of this, the USA called upon nations to unite and forge coalitions to fight the terrorist menace. There has been a very eager and positive response from the international community, and as the U.S. Department of State declared in 2002, "We [US-led anti-terrorist coalition] have enjoyed resounding diplomatic success in various multilateral forums". "The war being waged on the financial front is also showing impressive results. So far, over 160 countries have joined us in blocking \$113 million in terrorist assets". The US has been establishing diplomatic relations not only with sovereign governments but regional actors as well. In this regard, the Kurdistan Region Government played a significant role [17].

When the AAI initially launched their terrorist activities in the KRI, the Kurdish leadership tried to draw the world's attention to the AAI's real nature by means of paradiplomatic efforts. As a result, they were able bring the AAI case to the United Nations Security Council, and the US Secretary of State Colin Powel identified the AAI as a 'brutal terrorist group'. In his report, Colin Powel also mentioned that the Iraqi regime has a "training camp, specializing in the production and use of poisons, in territory controlled by Ansar al-Islam".

During the US-led invasion in Iraq in September 2003, Kurdish local forces fought alongside US troops against Hussein's government. As a result, Ansar Al-Islam was eradicated and, in the period between 2003 and 2014, the Kurdistan region appeared to be the safest area in Iraq.

In 2005, the two main Kurdish adversaries, the KDP and the PUK started cooperating, and a regional Kurdish parliament was formed. In September 2006, as a result of systematic efforts and in accordance with the Region's legislation and the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq, the KRG established its own diplomatic office — Department of Foreign Relations, headed by Falah Mustafa Bakir. One of its primary objectives was to promote and boost the KRG's paradiplomatic relations with the international community.

With the emergence of the Islamic State group (IS) from the ashes of Iraq's al-Qaeda branch in June 2014, a second wave of terroristic activities in the region began. The Kurdistan leadership was able to put up resistance and prevent the IS from reaching the Kurdistan territory. In this regard, the former KRI president Masoud Barzani and the Kurdistan Foreign Relations office played a great role.

The IS activities were very rapidly spreading in the area, threatening to reach the KRI capital city Erbil. As was mentioned by the Pentagon [12], when it was brought to Barack Obama's knowledge that the Islamic militants were advancing towards Erbil, the US former president authorized airstrikes in Iraq on August 08, 2014. According to Kurdistan local news sources, the US military operation was launched after a phone conversation between Masoud Barzani and Barack Obama. The US Deputy National Security Adviser for Strategic Communications, Ben Rhodes, explained the necessity of US intervention, describing Washington's initial action as a "necessary step to protect its joint operation center in Erbil, which is being used to co-ordinate defenses with Peshmerga fighters (Kurdish fighters)" [12].

After Washington's positive response to the Kurdish leaders' plea to send in troops, the door to international assistance for the KRG was opened. The US issued Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve, and numerous world states announced their participation in this coalition agreeing to provide their assistance to Iraq and Kurdistan. The following countries consented to train Iraqi and Peshmerga forces: Australia, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Outside of this coalition, a few other countries expressed their willingness to provide assistance to the KRG. When the ISIS fighters approached Erbil, the first country to provide its support and weapons to Kurdish forces was Iran [11]. In August 2014, the US-led international military coalition formed an operations room in Erbil consisting of representatives from Iraq's government, the KRG and eight other countries including the US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Canada [1].

As for recent financial support, "In May, the US House of Representatives passed the massive National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019, which includes \$290 million for the Kurdish Peshmerga" [8].

Meanwhile, outside of the US-led coalition, Russia has been providing substantial military and logistics support to the Peshmerga forces. According the Rudaw website, the Russian military assistance included 'five anti-aircraft autocannons and 20,000 shells' [14].

The international support for the KRG in its fight against ISIS has been a great opportunity for the development of Iraqi Kurdistan's paradiplomatic relations with the world. The IS intervention on the Kurdish territory triggered an increased international interest in the region, which was followed by numerous visits of state leaders, foreign ministers, ministers of defense and international delegations in Kurdistan. Global leaders showed their eagerness to continue developing their diplomatic relations with the KRG. There have been two visits by President of France in 2014 and 2017, one visit by Italian prime minister in 2014, three visits by General Secretary of the United Nations in 2014, 2016, and 2017, one visit by the Head of the International Red Cross in 2015, a visit by the President of Senate (Italy) in 2015, and a visit by the Swedish Prime Minister in 2016. Among other top-ranking officials paying a visit to the KRG were ministers from the USA, UK, Canada, Belgium, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway, Japan and other countries.

Alternatively, the former president of the Kurdistan Region Masoud Barzani was welcomed by the Turkish president in 2014, 2015 and 2017, by the Pope of the Vatican in 2014, by the President of Austria in 2015, and by the President of France in 2015 and 2016. Barzani visited Hungary and Saudi Arabia in 2015, the European Parliament in 2017, Belgium in 2017. He also participated in the World Economic Forum, where he met with the King of Jordan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the President of Azerbaijan, US Vice President Joe Biden, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, the Croatian and Macedonian presidents, the Prime Minister of Lebanon, as well as others.

FUTURE DIPLOMACY

The increase in the paradiplomatic activity of Iraqi Kurdistan Region occurred due to a direct terrorist threat. On December 9, 2017, the former Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi announced the 'end of war against IS' in Iraq. Here, the question arises: Is the KRG paradiplomacy going to come to an end with the extermination of terrorism in the area?

In regard to this question, we would like to offer some of our contemplations. Firstly, it is very unlikely that war on terror is ever going to end. If we look back at the history of terrorism, we can find some convincing evidence that it is impossible to eradicate terrorism as a phenomenon by weakening or eliminating a single extremist group. History demonstrates that it is feasible to debilitate and terminate one radical group, but, eventually, new groups will emerge and succeed, reiterating the ideology and methods of their predecessors. Secondly, although ISIS has mostly been neutralized in the territory of Iraq, the group is still active on the border with Syria. If given the opportunity, they will return to Iraq and the Kurdistan region in short order. Thirdly, after three years of systematically promoting their dogma, the Islamic State has planted the seed of radical ideology in the minds of the region's younger generation. Therefore, the probability of an IS resurgence in the area is very high. Lastly, terrorist groups around the world have a well-established network: logistic collaboration and member exchange is quite common, as could be seen in the case with the AAI in Kurdistan and Al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

The world actors are well aware of the dormant potential of world terrorism and it is in their best interests to continue diplomatic collaboration with both state and non-state actors. As it was proven in the case with Iraqi Kurdistan, regional assistance can be of crucial significance. On the other hand, the Kurdistan Region Government should further improve its diplomatic institutions to pursue its own body of foreign relations objectives and obtain stronger leverage in the international community.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary world politics, terrorism and diplomacy are greatly interrelated. In particular, with the growing threat of terrorism, the major world actors need to unite to successfully repel aggression. Traditionally, diplomatic relations were developing only among sovereign states. Recently, the importance of regional and non-state actors in global diplomacy is ramping up. One of the reasons for their growing significance is their crucial role in fighting terrorist organizations on their territories. To talk about international relations conducted by subnational or regional governments we use the term ‘paradiplomacy’. With the IS onslaught, the Kurdish leadership was able to get the attention of the world states, who sent troops to fight alongside with the Peshmerga. Thus, the KRG has been developing its paradiplomatic relations with the international community, which are bound to continue, as different actors around the world realize that terminating one extremist group does not guarantee the end of terrorism as a global phenomenon.

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ДИПЛОМАТИЯ ИРАКСКОГО КУРДИСТАНА В ПЕРИОД ТЕРРОРИЗМА

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В данной работе изучается влияние терроризма на парадипломатию Иракского Курдистана в течение последних двух десятилетий. Автором анализируются современные формы дипломатии, включающие значительную роль негосударственных субъектов. В связи с этим правительство Иракского Курдистана в качестве негосударственного субъекта успешно использовало угрозу терроризма в качестве важного инструмента привлечения внимания мирового сообщества и установило широкие парадипломатические отношения с политическими акторами во всем мире. В свою очередь, мы находим убедительные доказательства того, что правительство Курдистанского региона должно и далее укреплять свою способность поддерживать отношения с мировым сообществом. Данные выводы автора согласуются с идеей о том, что угроза терроризма никогда не исчезнет, и поэтому государствам становится сложнее игнорировать фактическую и потенциальную роль негосударственных субъектов.

Ключевые слова: Региональное правительство Курдистана, терроризм, дипломатия, парадипломатия, Ансар аль-Ислам, Пешмерга

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