

A Study on the Effects of Operation Provide Comfort (Poised Hammer Force) on the Establishment of a Kurdish State That Threatens Ataturk's Turkey*

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The phenomenon, which was established as “Hammer Power/Poised Hammer” in Turkey’s political genre, has a very different place in Turkish political history. It has never been seen before that a phenomenon in that America attaches so much importance to is so opposed as a whole in Turkey, where the administration and opposition are united on the same issue. However, the lack of alternative power to take refuge in the face of America and the West as a result of globalization in the 1990s, and the close relationship of then-President Turgut Özal with President Bush of America made Turkey closer to America than ever before. Turkish public opinion was that Hammer Power had undermined its sovereignty, helped the PKK, created a vacuum of authority in northern Iraq, and, above all, helped establish a Kurdish state in northern Iraq. After all these decades later, this issue has not been forgotten. Hammer Power has been one of the most important factors that has led reduce confidence in America over time and minimize relations between America and Turkey today. In this study, the reasons for the establishment of Hammer Power, organization, duties, political views, interests of countries, and developments were examined.

Keywords: politics, operation provide comfort, Poised Hammer, USA and Kurdish relations, Turkish National interests in Iraq, PKK

Introduction

From November 1994 to June 1995, I served in Northern Iraq as the Turkish Co-Commander of the “Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)” which was also called “Poised Hammer/Çekiç Güç” by the media and the public. During this time, I witnessed how certain countries, especially the US, which were supposedly friendly and allied with Turkey, fabricated a nation from a tribal people. These operations can be described as, which

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they called “Nation built”, to create a new nation, as a theoretical to the staff officer candidates in my “Unconventional Warfare” classes. But I saw how the theory came true in Northern Iraq. We reported and warned the authorities about this threat many times. So, we have come to these days gradually, I mean, the days when we are on the brink of the establishment of Kurdistan (Bozkurt, 2017, Çora, 2008a).

What is “Poised Hammer? Poised Hammer was the name given to the air force that implemented the “Operation Provide Comfort-2”, the purpose of which was to provide security for Northern Iraqi Kurds against Saddam Hussein’s possible attacks. In fact, the term “Poised Hammer” was wrongly translated by the Turkish media as “Çekiç Güç”, which meant “Hammer Power”. However, the word “poised” actually means “ready and prepared to strike”. And the word “hammer” here means a “cock”. Of course, it does not mean a “rooster”, but it is the “cock of a gun”. Although it was wrongly translated, it was widely accepted by the Turkish media and public. In this report, I am going to refer to the operation as “Poised Hammer”, the official name of which was Combined Task Force (480th Intelligence Group, 1996; Çora, 2014).

“Operation Provide Comfort (OPC)”, known as “Çekiç Güç—Poised Hammer” in the Turkish press, was an international operation launched for the purpose of delivery of humanitarian relief when the people in Northern Iraq started to flee Saddam’s military forces towards the Turkish border on April 5, 1991 (Oran, 1998).

The process, which started with Iraq’s intervention in Kuwait, led to the elimination of Iraqi defence and strategic targets of the coalition forces led by the United States by military means. The hot conflict between Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi Central Administration, which is an extension of this universe, revealed a picture that Iraqi Kurds were victims of, and the strategy of creating a safe zone was started to be created under the leadership of Poised Hammer. Turkey’s duty during operation provide coefficient depending on the extent of the problems faced on the issue of terrorism began to be discussed at the end of its restructuring and has been described as contrary to Turkey’s primary safety factors. In this study, the formation phase of Çekiç Güç—Poised Hammer, Hammer Strength’s activities, Hammer Strength-terror connections, such as Organization for the Prevention of Blindness (OPC)-Non-governmental Organization (NGO) issues examined in terms of the threat Turkey/was aimed at determining the risk parameters (Brown, 2013; Çora, 2008a).

After the Kurdish uprising that started after the Gulf War was unsuccessful and the Baghdad administration gained superiority over the Kurdish troops, the Halabja phobia broke out among the Northern Iraqi Kurds, and tens of thousands of Kurds fled to the Turkish border. This “fait accompli” on Turkey was forced to seek help from fellow Americans. The Americans placed the famous Hammer Force in Incirlik, based on the SEIA agreement that Richard Perle was architecting and taking British and French friends with them (Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2018).

Operation Provide Comfort officially started with the decree of the Council of Ministers dated July 12, 1991, and numbered 91/1993, which allowed the relevant countries to deploy armed forces in Turkey until September 30, 1991. Until 1995, that is, the year when my tenure in Iraq came to end, the deployment of the military units involved in the operation was extended for an additional period of three months once and then for an additional period of six months five times at the request of the relevant countries (Begikhani, Gill, & Hague, 2015).

After the Gulf War since 12 July 1991, total number of officers in the international forces deployed in Turkey in 1862 allowed people in this way. Hammer military power dissipation of power is as follows: USA (1416), England (183), France (139), Turkey (74), Incirlik in 1803, Pirinçlik 49, has 10 troops in Zakho.

Aircraft and helicopters distribution: USA (three cargo support and tanker aircraft, nine helicopters, 32 combat aircraft), England (eight fighter jets, two tanker aircraft), France (eight fighter jets, one tanker aircraft), and Turkey (four warplanes) (Çora, 2008b).

The state authority in Iraq, which was defeated by the coalition forces, was extremely weakened, thereby, and with the influence of foreign interventions, the Shia in the south and the Kurds in the north rebelled against the Saddam administration. In these uprisings, psychological warfare elements (radio, TV, brochures, etc.) that the USA used to overthrow Saddam played an important role. Kurds, who attacked Saddam's military units and public institutions with the weapons they captured in northern Iraq, took control in some settlements and thought they had a historic opportunity for independence (Çora, 2014).

The Iraqi army, first marching towards the Shia in the south, then turned to the Kurds in the north. The Iraqi army started bombing the region, the people of the region panicked, and more than a million people started to flee towards the Iranian and Turkish borders. By the end of the first week of April 1991, the number of those who arrived at the Turkish border had reached 460,000.

Turkey had to make a decision about approximately half a million refugees who had fled this military operation, launched by the Iraqi army in northern Iraq, and it had to make this decision in no time. Turkey had three options (Oran, 1998; Çora, 2008c):

- It would either accept refugees and provide food and accommodation with the help of the international community;
- Or, it would send them back, using force when necessary;
- Or, it would provide refugees with temporary asylum with the help of the international community and at the same time, would try to eliminate the conditions that forced them to leave their homeland.

The request of Turkey and Iran was accepted by the proposal of France and with the resolution of the UN Security Council dated 5 April 1992 and numbered 688. On April 10, the US took the initiative and demanded Iraq to end any operations north of the 36th latitude; on April 16, it announced that it would begin a large-scale military operation to secure the humanitarian relief activities and that US troops would enter Iraq to establish a safe haven.

Having previously experienced similar refugee influxes, Turkey chose the third option due to both the actual difficulty of sending these people back by force and its possible negative international repercussions. On July 18, 1991, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs allowed the deployment of the military troops of coalition countries (USA, UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, and Canada) for participating in humanitarian relief activities and discouraging Saddam from his actions.

Development of Operation Provide Comfort

During the humanitarian relief initiated pursuant to UN Resolution 688, members of the combined task force set up temporary camps for refugees. Their subsequent efforts sought to make them feel secure to travel back to their homeland. These efforts involved the establishment of a safe haven in northern Iraq, building a permanent camp in northern Iraq, and establishing stations to facilitate their travel along the mountains to Zaho.

Meanwhile, to be able to carry out these activities, coalition countries, with the permission of Turkey, brought their military personnel and military supplies to Turkey by sea and air. Coalition soldiers reaching Turkey started to distribute humanitarian relief materials with the help and contributions of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). Coalition forces mainly used Incirlik and Batman airports to distribute these relief materials.

First, emergency aid was given to asylum seekers, and refugees in Turkey were taken back to Iraq. Meanwhile, a combat air force consisting of 48 aircraft was established in Incirlik, a reinforced battalion of 1,500 soldiers was established in Silopi, and a military coordination center consisting of several helicopters and 10-12 people was established in Zaho to hold periodic meetings with Iraqi military authorities (Bila, 2016).

The ground troops of the battalion stationed in Silopi and the air unit in Incirlik were deployed to deter Iraqi administration from engaging in extermination and oppression operations against Kurds and Turkmens. After the vast majority of the asylum-seekers were transferred from Turkey to northern Iraq, it was understood that there was no need for ground troops in the battalion deployed in Silopi, and these troops returned to their countries on September 30, 1991.

Structure and Activities of Operation Provide Comfort

With the withdrawal of ground troops from the area, the first part of OPC was completed. Also, the task of delivering humanitarian relief was changed as the control of the safe haven established in northern Iraq and maintaining peace and security. Humanitarian relief activities were carried out by international aid organizations, including the Turkish Red Crescent. In this context, NGOs from the USA, England, France, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Japan, Cyprus, and Saudi Arabia and local humanitarian organizations carried out activities in northern Iraq. Operation Provide Comfort was carried out with the Combined Task Force (CTF) created with the contributions of the governments of the USA, the UK, and France. Turkish personnel also took part in the force to perform coordination and supervision. The command of the Combined Task Force was carried out by Turkish and American co-commanders (McNabb, 1999).

CTF troops were deployed in three separate regions:

- At Adana/Incirlik military facilities, combat and support aircraft were deployed to ensure the safety of CTF headquarters and the safe haven in northern Iraq.
- At the TAF Diyarbakır/Pirinçlik facilities, a unit of six helicopters was deployed to meet the needs of the MCC in Zaho and to carry out other administrative activities.

Regarding arrangements of the military materials to be kept in Turkey within the scope of OPC and the activities to be carried out, the size of the military force to be created, its structure, command-control principles, and other activities were to be made pursuant to the “Code of Practice” prepared by the Chief of the General Staff of the Republic of Turkey; however, this document was, unfortunately, not approved by the US, the UK, and France. The maximum number of fighter aircraft allowed to be deployed in Turkey according to this document and the actual number of fighter aircraft deployed in Turkey under OPC is given in the following table. As can be inferred from the table, coalition forces did not comply with the conditions set forth in the said document and went their own way at every opportunity (Çora, 2008a).

Table 1

Current Number of Air Power

	Fighter aircraft	Air support aircraft	Helicopter	Total
The USA	27/32	11/19	9/10	47/61
UK	6/8	1/2	-	7/10
France	6/8	1/1	-	7/9
Total	39/48	13/22	9/10	61/80

Table 2

Current Number of Staff Members

	USA	UK	France	Turkey	Total
Number of staff members (Incirlik)	1,184	184	113	75	1,556

The “Code of Practice” envisaged that the activities under the scope of OPC be carried out by Turkish and American co-commanders of CTF with equal authorities under the full control of Turkey. Turkish co-commander of CTF was a brigadier of the air force. Likewise, the MCC command in Zaho was carried out by Turkish and US colonels as co-commanders.

Tasks Specified in the Operation

To observe the activities of the Iraqi armed forces in the north of the 36th latitude by aerial reconnaissance, to engage in armed conflicts only when the right of self-defense arises, to report the results of aerial reconnaissance to Incirlik CTF and the MCC in Zaho and act according to the decision to be made, to provide helicopter transportation between Diyarbakır and Zaho, to monitor military developments in the region through the MCC in northern Iraq/Zaho, to report to the relevant authorities, and to ensure coordination with humanitarian aid organizations in the region.

Duties of the Military Coordination Center (MCC) (Rudd and US Army Center of Military History, 2012) are:

- To check whether Iraq is acting in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 688.
- To contact with representatives of humanitarian aid organizations and local political groups in northern Iraq, as well as with local civil and military officials, and be informed of violations and, when ordered, to deliver demarches.
- To settle possible conflicts.
- To perform military excursions in the security zone to “see and be seen”.
- To investigate, gather information about, and report incidents.
- Prepare to restart face-to-face contact with the representatives of the Iraqi army.

Military Operation Areas

No Fly Zone:

It covers the airspace above the Iraqi territory north of the 36th latitude.

Security Zone:

In the north: Turkish border from West to East;

In the east: The line from North to Akre;

In the south: The line from Akre to Dohuk;

In the west: The Tigris River.

This airspace covers an area approximately 160 nm long and 50 nm wide.

De Facto Zone:

It is located in the northeast of Iraq. This region starts from Saddam Dam in the West and covers an area of 75,000 square kilometers to the south of Dohuk, north of Mosul, south of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, and the Iranian border. This region, with a Kurdish population of 3.5 million, is completely under Kurdish control and does not contain Iraqi military units.

Ethnic Structure of Northern Iraq

The total population of Iraq is 19 million, and 96% of the population is Muslim. Fifty-five percent of Muslims are Shia and 45% are Sunni. A vast majority of the Iraqi population comprise Arabs: Arabs 67.5% (12.5 million), Kurds 23% (4.5 million), Turkmens 7% (1.5 million), and Christians 2.5% (500,000).

Ethnic Groups in Northern Iraq

The population of northern Iraq is about four million. The distribution of Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, and other Christian communities living in this region is as follows: Arabs 21% (835,000), Kurds 50% (2 million), Turkmens 25% (1 million), and Christians 4% (165,000).

Kurds: They live in tribes almost everywhere in northern Iraq.

Turkmens: They live in Mosul, Erbil, and Kirkuk. They were subject to a brutal exile policy by the Saddam administration and were forced to migrate to the south of the country. This policy, albeit less effective, still continues. For this reason, the Turkmen population is gradually decreasing; therefore, their real population is not known precisely.

There are many political parties in northern Iraq. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Talabani and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Barzani are the major political parties. In addition, there are seven Turkmen political parties, the largest of which is the Iraqi National Turkmen Party.

Parliament and the government (Kurdish Government of northern Iraq) were established on July 5, 1992. There are 50 KDP, 50 PUK, and five Christian MPs in the 105-seat parliament. The government is composed of 15 ministers.

The economic situation of the region is as follows:

- Although the region is suitable for agriculture, agriculture makes little contribution to the economy.
- The largest income of the regional administration is obtained from the Habur Border Gate.
- Due to the economic crisis, bribery, smuggling, and all other kinds of unlawful affairs are widespread.

Political Approaches in 1994-1995

Approaches of Coalition Countries

It is seen that the USA, in line with its regional policies, attached great importance to the continuation of OPC under the umbrella of humanitarian aid as well as to the realization of the operation by a multinational coalition force. It is also known that the UK and France were in favor of maintaining the activities under OPC in the same way.

The biggest obstacle to the US's Middle East policies was the Saddam administration. The low-cost OPC, which both put pressure on the Saddam administration and enabled close monitoring of other problematic countries in the region, such as Iran and Syria, was of great importance for the USA. The region was also a training center for the forces that would later be used for the invasion of Iraq.

Immediately after the first phase of OPC was completed and refugees were transferred back to Iraq, two attitudes started to be observed in the policies pursued by western countries.

The first is the official attitude adopted by these countries that envisaged protecting Kurds against Saddam administration and delivering humanitarian relief to them.

The second, on the other hand, is the unofficial attitude that served the hidden purpose of the US of establishing a Kurdish state in the region that would initially be autonomous, then become a federation, and ultimately, proclaim independence.

Operation Provide Comfort, which was going on for more than four years, not only deterred Saddam administration from attacking northern Iraq but also provided Kurds with various supports (infrastructure, culture, military, and agriculture) through non-governmental organizations and helped them become organized.

Northern Iraqi Leaders' Perspective on OPC

Kurdish leaders in northern Iraq were greatly in need of the continuation of OPC. This is because OPC not only was a deterrence against Saddam but also provided Kurdish leaders with the political support of Western countries. Northern Iraqi administration's dependence on OPC, in turn, turned the operation into a strategic trump card that Turkey could play against these leaders. However, Turkey failed to play this trump card.

The only thing that the Iraqi leaders could have offered to Turkey in exchange for the continuation of OPC was to cooperate with Turkey against the PKK terrorist organization in northern Iraq and repel the PKK in this region. However, northern Iraqi administrators, especially Talabani, were not very eager about making this offer. This was not only due to their fear that such an offer would cause an unrest among their voters but also due to the weight of the PKK on the Kurdish front that was trying to be formed.

PKK's Perspective on OPC

The PKK made no attempt to disrupt the military activities under OPC. The organization sustained this attitude even though it did not gain any benefit from OPC and even though the operation provided Turkey with a military presence in northern Iraq. Their main reason for adopting such a stance was, obviously, the fear of running afoul of western countries.

Moreover, the power vacuum that emerged as a result of the withdrawal of Saddam administration's military forces after OPC could not be filled by northern Iraqi leaders, despite their allegations, which benefited the PKK greatly.

Turkish Public's Perspective on OPC

From the very beginning of Operation Provide Comfort, the widespread opinion that the Turkish public held was that a foreign power was in our country to intervene in another country and that it had secret relations with the PKK and had a secret agenda.

This issue was raised by the spokespersons of some political parties both to score political points and with serious concerns. The media trivialized the operation; the public consented, to a certain extent, to the operation, and similar concerns were raised again in the days when the decision to extend the deployment of foreign forces approached. But, the decision was always as desired by western countries.

Saddam's Perspective on OPC

Saddam managed to stay in power after the Gulf War, contrary to all expectations. The economic embargo imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War was also not enough to overthrow the Saddam administration. Although several attempts of a coup against the government were reported, none were successful. Finally, he won 99.96% of the vote in the referendum and was awarded another seven-year term of office as the president, strengthening his image in the eyes of Iraqi people.

Saddam was, obviously, not OK with OPC. At first, he negotiated with Kurdish leaders to end the operation and even offered to them some concessions, including autonomy; however, these negotiations were undermined by western powers, especially by using Talabani.

They thought that termination of Operation Provide Comfort would be perceived by Saddam as the bankruptcy of the West's northern Iraq policy and that he would try to take political advantage of such a situation immediately and strengthen his rule (İnat & Ataman, 2016).

The Benefits and Disadvantages of Operation Provide Comfort

The Benefits of Operation Provide Comfort

- Operation Provide Comfort directly prevented the Iraqi administration's possible military operation against the Kurds in northern Iraq and indirectly prevented a possible refugee influx towards Turkey.
- It also provided the Turkish army, in our fight against the PKK, with military mobility in northern Iraq. It also brought about a number of advantages, such as close monitoring of the political and military developments in northern Iraq, gathering intelligence about the PKK, and organizing ground and air operations to terrorist camps when necessary.
- Turkey's struggle against the PKK in spite of the continuation of Operation Provide Comfort received international support and the perception of "Turkey is protecting the Kurds against Saddam" emerged in the USA and Western countries.
- It would have been easier for the Turkmens in northern Iraq to become organized and a more effective balance factor under the existing conditions. Unfortunately, not enough effort was made, and I believe, the Turkmens were left to their fate.

Disadvantages of Operation Provide Comfort

- The continuation of Operation Provide Comfort had a negative impact on Turkey's relations with Iraq.
- The operation contributed directly or indirectly to the process of establishing a de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq. Under the protective umbrella of the operation, significant contributions were made to the organization, development, and establishment of an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq.
- Turkey failed to control the activities of the NGOs in northern Iraq, which were against Turkey's national interests.
- As a result of the developments caused by the operation, the Kurdish movement in Iraq entered the world agenda. In parallel, expectations for a political solution to the PKK problem steadily grew both nationally and internationally.
- Taking advantage of the power vacuum in northern Iraq resulting from the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the region, the PKK established new camps close to the Turkish border and carried out terrorist activities against Turkey by using these camps as a base. Since Operation Provide Comfort ensured the continuation of this power vacuum, it indirectly caused the PKK's activities to increase. This power vacuum also allowed Syria and Iran to assert their political presence in the region.
- As the duration of OPC was extended, the oil pipeline could not be opened and cross-border trade could not be restarted, all of which caused Turkey's economic losses to increase further.
- Moreover, the opinion that a foreign power was in our country to intervene in another country and had a secret agenda was becoming more and more widespread in the Turkish public opinion.
- The fact that the coalition countries participating in Operation Provide Comfort did not agree to sign the Code of Practice and frequently violated the rules seriously damaged Turkey's right to sovereignty, which, in turn, damaged Turkey's international reputation.

Comments

- The aim of OPC, which was initiated pursuant to UN Resolution 688, was to deliver humanitarian relief to northern Iraq, to prevent the pressure of the Iraqi central government on the region, and to prevent refugee influx to Turkey.
- These objectives were achieved in the first four years of the operation. Humanitarian relief was delivered to the people of northern Iraq. Subsequent activities, however, aimed to provide Kurds with various supports (infrastructure, culture, military, and agriculture) through non-governmental organizations and ultimately establish an independent Kurdish state in the region (Zanotti & Thomas, 2019).
- Another important point is that Kurds' desire to become integrated into the Baghdad government weakened over time, and the separation between the Arabs and the Kurds deepened.
- Although Operation Provide Comfort was continuing to protect the opposition groups in northern Iraq against Saddam administration and provide peace in the region, this operation led to the gradual establishment of an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and planted the seeds of Kurdistan.
- During the operation, northern Iraq turned into a zone of interest for the USA and other coalition countries. Each state had its own interests in the region. These ranged from establishing an independent Kurdish state to controlling the oil in the region and having a military training zone in the region. Fearing that withdrawing its support from the operation would lead to negative international propaganda and pressures, Turkey avoided taking this step and, as a result, consistently compromised its national interests (Dikmeci, 2019).
- With the unlimited support of the USA and EU countries, which we knew as friendly and allied countries, and the NGOs they supported, a so-called "Kurdish Culture" was fabricated.
- Every effort was made to increase hostility between the Kurds and Arabs (northern and southern Iraq), and these efforts proved successful. Thus, it became almost impossible to bring Kurds and Arabs together.
- For centuries, tribes had formed the basis of social life in northern Iraq. However, tribes were weakened, and the people were made accustomed to being loyal to the central government.
- Ultimately, the physical elements of Kurdistan thought, which the people believed in and which were included in the programs of the Kurdish political parties, used in all official and private correspondence, reflected on maps, and taught in schools were completed. However, they were aware that this thought cannot come true in the short term with the existing manpower and infrastructure (Özdemir, 2018).
- Political structure: Unstable, but ready to be used; KDP is largely effective; it can take full control with foreign aid; the organization process of the party across northern Iraq has been completed and has a de facto autonomous structure in northern Iraq. The Megáli Idéa of all the political parties was Great Kurdistan. But they were aware that this could not happen in the short term. Activities of local political forces (Annex-D: northern Iraq's political structure): The Iraqi National Congress (INC), which was established to create a democratic parliamentary system in northern Iraq, received great support from foreign countries. Nevertheless, it was not sufficient to eliminate the differences between the two main dominant forces operating in the region, KDP and PUK (Bila, 2016; Çora, 2014; Allsopp & Wilgenburg, 2018).

Activities of Foreign Powers

Foreign powers continued to implement their political activities and exert political pressure in the region through NGOs, missionaries and pastors, local political forces, and media. The most effective foreign power in

the region was the USA. The main political discourses of foreign powers were as follows (Gomes, 2016):

- The region cannot become united with the Iraqi administration again;
- Kurds should solve their own problems;
- Finally, a democratic parliamentary government should be set up.

Activities of UN organizations and other NGOs (Humanitarian Relief Activities):

A total of 82 humanitarian aid organizations operated in the region. Of these, nine were affiliated with the UN and 73 were NGOs (18 national and 55 international NGOs). NGOs were financed by organizations, such as OFDA/RCC, ECHO (European Union), which were called “donors” (Department of the Army, 2015).

The distribution of NGOs by countries is as follows:

The USA (12), the UK and Germany (8), Sweden and France (5), Italy (3), Belgium, Netherlands, and Switzerland (2), The EU, Australia, Denmark, Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey (1).

These NGOs operated in one or more than one fields. Their activities were related to a number of fields, such as food, healthcare services, road construction, home construction, schools and places of worship, water supply, mine clearance, energy supply, landscaping, and refugee placement.

In addition to their humanitarian aid activities mentioned above, the NGOs were also involved in hidden and semi-hidden activities, which were:

- To act in line with the policies of their countries,
- To raise awareness of the Kurdistan State in the public and local authorities,
- To define the economic, political, and social components of Kurdish culture,
- To spread the idea of independent Kurdistan.

Activities of the Turkish Red Crescent

The Turkish Red Crescent donated 13.5 million dollars to the region in 1994. In 1995, the total aid amounted to 21 million dollars. In addition, 10 MW of electricity was provided to Dohuk and Zaho. Aids from Turkish Red Crescent included food aid, stationery materials, and tents and blankets.

General Situation in Northern Iraq

During the visits to villages in the Security Zone in northern Iraq and interviews with various political, local, and military officials, I observed that Kurds of all ages, cultures, and locations acted as if a Kurdish State was established. It was clear that these people believed or made to believe that it would never be possible for them to unite with or live under the same roof with the Iraqi Administration.

In addition to the psychological state of Kurdish people described above, local government and parliament, other local government units, the flags and signs used, Peshmerga forces, which were gradually becoming a regular army, boards and signboards everywhere containing “Kurdistan”.

A total of about 20-30 TV-Radio stations, newspapers, and magazines worked to fabricate Kurdish culture; UN organizations (especially UNICEF) and some NGOs supported and contributed to these efforts.

Although the goal was expressed as the establishment of an autonomous state or a federation for the Kurds, this goal is expected to transform into other goals in the long term: to establish a puppet state that would serve the interests of Western countries in the region, such as deploying military bases in the region and through these military bases, controlling the oil reserves in the region, water resources in Turkey, Iran dominated by

anti-USA and anti-Westernism, and ultimately and beyond these, preventing the unification of the Islamic and Turkish world (Fawn, 2019).

For the purposes described above, Western powers assumed the duty of protecting the Kurds due to the geographical and strategic realities of the region despite the fact that there were as many Turkmens and other ethnic groups who were oppressed and even massacred by the Saddam regime as Kurds. Besides, they did not want a democratic system to be established in Iraq and did not favor the idea of establishing a dialogue among the Saddam administration and the regional countries, including Turkey, and Kurdish leaders. Furthermore, they, on the one hand, allowed Saddam, the murderer of Kurds, to continue his weak rule, and, on the other hand, by planting the seeds of a hostility between Kurds and Arabs, they made it impossible for Iraq to unite, to live under the same administration, and to achieve territorial integrity (Bozkurt, 2018).

Even though a ceasefire and agreements were signed between the PUK and KDP under the pressure of the USA, it was thought that the ceasefire would be short-lived and the clashes would start again due to the fundamental differences of opinion, such as income sharing and power struggle. It was also thought that the USA tried to make the Iraqi National Congress (INC) more effective by keeping its relations with both parties at a distance, that the biggest concern of the western countries about the conflicts between the two parties was the obstruction of the road to an autonomous state, and that they thought that increasing the effectiveness of INC would eliminate this obstacle (Kurt, 2019).

Turkish Co-commander's Advises in Their Reports to the Turkish Authorities in 1995

The Turkish State should realistically determine policies for northern Iraq, taking into account our her interests and the developments in the region (territorial integrity of Iraq, an autonomous state, or a federation?).

If territorial integrity of Iraq is desired,

- The Turkish government should produce policies to encourage the Iraqi government and leaders in northern Iraq to hold talks;
- Efforts should be made to prevent the political unity of the existing parties (especially the KDP and PUK).

The immediate termination of Operation Provide Comfort (OPC), which now aimed to establish, as western powers put it, a de facto Kurdish autonomous state and then a federation and ultimately an independent great Kurdistan, was proposed. However, none of my offers was considered. Time was against Turkey: The seeds of an independent Kurdistan were already planted. The Turkish state failed to perceive that the Western countries that realized the "European weakness" of the Turks took advantage of this weakness and started to exert political pressure to take the first step towards a future independent Kurdish state. Moreover, it was unable to assess the developments in northern Iraq together with the nationwide increase in the number of activities seeking the fragmentation of Turkey under the pretense of freedom.

The Turkish Red Crescent failed to carry out effective efforts. The expected benefit was not achieved. In fact, rather than food aids consumed in a short time never to be remembered again, aids from Turkey should have aimed at the construction of housing units and mosques, opening water wells, road construction, infrastructure works, and agricultural support (animals, fertilizers, and seeds) that would not be forgotten by recipients for a long time and that would be reminiscent of Turkey. Although it was underlined that it was very important for the Turkish Red Crescent to be organized in the region to provide the above functions and to help Turkey achieve its political goals, this step was not taken, and necessary precautions were neglected.

The Turkmen's living in the region could only live in poverty with the aids of the Turkish Red Crescent due to the differences of opinion among the Turkmen Parties, UN organizations not giving aid, and being subjected to Saddam's oppression. Although it was necessary for the Turkmen in the region to establish organizations similar to the National Resistance Organization, to raise national awareness in them, to increase their trust in Turkey through larger amounts of aids, to prevent them fleeing from the region, and to ensure that they strengthen their political position in the region, none of these steps were taken.

The Turkish organizations operating in the region (The Red Crescent, National Security Organization, Gendarmerie Special Units, Special Forces, and other Turkish organizations) operated in an uncoordinated manner. Despite occasional meetings with the initiatives of the MCC Turkish Command, the desired outcomes could not be obtained from them.

Turkey's relations with Barzani and Talabani should have been reconsidered, they should have been given the feeling that Turkey does not need them but they need Turkey, transits through the Habur Border Gate, electricity aid, Red Crescent aids, and conveniences provided by Turkey for international NGOs should have been provided on the condition that they fulfil their responsibilities, and Talabani's supports for the PKK should have been noted.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the seeds of an "independent Kurdistan" were planted through Poised Hammer, US and EU backed NGOs fabricated a nation and culture through missionaries and priests, an independent Kurdistan hostile against Turkey (just like Armenians) started to be established, and thanks to the USA and the EU, Kurdistan became an undeclared state. These were the successful outcomes of psychological warfare and unconventional warfare carried out in the region. I think this should be given as a lesson to young officers receiving education in war academies. In my opinion, Turkey remained completely indifferent to these activities that were against its national interests, and I believe history will try all the political leaders of the period.

The Turkish commander asked this question to the United States Special Operations Commander Gen. Zoho: "Turkey and the US have been allies for years; nevertheless, you are trying to establish Kurdistan. Are you not afraid that the friendship between the two countries will deteriorate with the reaction of the Turkish people?" to which, he answered, smilingly, "You needn't worry. We have it all figured out. When Kurdistan is founded in 2007, Turkey will be the first country to recognize it". I was shocked. We are now very close to 2007 and I hope his prophecy will not come true. Now let us talk about the events that happened at that time and their consequences. Activities OPC through providing the PKK in northern Iraq, Turkey has had with active struggle:

OPC Strength 1990s as misleading intelligence about terrorist organizations in Turkey is the period that terror was at its peak in Turkey. The mission of OPC with peace and stability discourse is an extremely misleading image. This image was extremely eye-catching, as a matter of fact, immediately after the north of the 36th parallel was reserved for a special administration, 70 PKK camps appeared suddenly (Saral, 2012). Jay Walker stated in his research that he saw 20 PKK camps in the region and that the terrorists fed and trained foreign foods, perhaps maintaining their most comfortable period.

The PKK was strengthened during this period, especially towards Iran, which the United States saw as a major risk. At the moment of their collapse, the safe zone in question served as a PKK private zone, and the

terrorist organization was armed, trained and recovered. As a result of the application of the OPC strengthened immediately after the armed PKK and returned to their terrorist acts on the territory of Turkey. Indeed, 90 years is the period when most actions by the PKK on Turkey and most can get (Yılmaz, 2014).

Protected Iraqi Kurds against the Saddam Regime: It is a fact that Iraqi Kurds have been subjected to ill-treatment like the Halabja syndrome. This situation also arises from the Middle East Politics. The industrialization period has not been able to realize the industrialization period and the people of the heads of state in the mosaic-structured countries have always applied to arms and violence in the administration. However, the purpose of OPC is not to preserve an ethnicity but to lay the foundations of destabilizing states. In real politics, states do not sympathize with ethnicities within other states; they only strive for ethnic protection in their interests. This enables them to interfere with and have a say in the internal affairs of the target state (Kılıç, Kerilyn, & Jackson, 2017).

Americans hired, in northern Iraq, 2,000 peshmerga; Turkey reveals that it works to what is actually a portion of their Complaint as NGO organizations. We will do the road, we will distribute the food so that the use of the organizations operating in northern Iraq peshmerga in fact “information they were doing everything from collecting to ‘keeping’, making confusion when needed” (Cora, 2008b).

Turkish National Security Configuration is true that in that period of Iraq’s foreign threat in the class. Yet in the war years, the prestige of the army greatly was shaken; priority was unacceptable threat to Turkey with limited population and limited economic opportunities. In addition, Saddam, the fortress of Shi’ism, pursued a policy fed by anti-Iranism and went to a security structuring accordingly. Disturbingly accepted by Sunnis in Iraq would join the ranks of secular Turkey’s enemy was not profitable for Iraq. Supported by the PKK in Iraq against Turkey it could be said. However, Barzani had become a state within the state, and between PKK and that time was fine. In such a strategy, Iraq would have actually damaged its territorial integrity (Yılmaz, 2014).

The United States is the only country in advance and provides a grant of US allies, such as Israel and the United Kingdom. Turkey in that period than as provided by US does not have a significant amount. In addition, due to the embargo imposed on Iraq in a period of five years, Turkey has been a loss of over forty billion dollars (Çora, 2008).

Also, since the 1970s, the new elements of the political atmosphere, which wanted to be constructed with the discourse of “Less state more society”, are non-state actors. With the introduction of these institutions, politics has become universal, and such a situation has linked every internal matter to the external actor. At that time, NGOs increased considerably in the region. Ferruh Sezgin addressed this situation in Milliyet newspaper in 1994:

- Numerous international aid organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating under the auspices of OPC have diverted these activities from “teaching Kurds” to become a state by aiming for humanitarian aid.
- The same organizations and thousands of Western civilians (and their identities) to be explained in this statement to be completed by USA Turkey relations are not as precise or American hatred. But the presence of OPC has been against Turkey. Of course, Turkey’s wish to bring it, and would be expected to take precautions. But that period was warned outside powers to Turkey’s political scene before the murder. In this case, political decision makers did not dare any more (Yahnici, 2010).

As a result of the Turkish control and policy of OPC for 12-13 years, Turkey have reached in Iraq,

- Talabani is the President;
- Barzani is the “Kurdistan” president;
- The name of the Turkmen has disappeared;
- It is impossible not to worry if this “Kurdish policy” will take Turkey where to go.

The largest contribution to the establishment of Kurdistan has made by Turkey by means of OPC (Çekiç Güç). After the first Gulf war, when the USA banned the 32nd Parallel south (Shiite Region) north of the 36th parallel (Kurdish Region) to Saddam, I hope now Turkish officials can understand that this area is actually Kurdistan. Çekiç Güç will remain a black mark in Turkish history (Çora, 2015). Poised Hammer made the relations and mutual trust between USA and Turkey worse and under current circumstances it seems that they will never be the same as before again.

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